A Critical Review of the Leadership Styles on the Performance of Public Secondary Schools In National Examinations In Tana River County, Kenya

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ABSTRACT

In Kenya, many teachers have been elevated to leadership positions without much formal training leading to mismanagement of schools hence poor students' performance and disappointing results. The kind of leadership style adopted by a leader greatly determines the nature of performance in national examinations. Experience in Kenya reveals that many schools that were once effective in academic performance have lowered their standards due to poor leadership while others have greatly improved through effective leadership. Whereas good leadership initiates and sustains a slow but steady upward spiral, ineffective leadership makes academic standards plummet. The purpose of this study was therefore to examine the impact of principals' leadership style on the performance of students in public secondary schools in K.C.S.E. The researcher used an explanatory approach based on a descriptive analysis design to establish opinions and knowledge about the impact of principals 'leadership style on students performance in Tana River County. The study targeted 9 secondary schools in the county that had presented candidates for the national examinations between 2005 & 2009. Both purposive and simple random sampling techniques were used to select a sample of 9 principals and 40 teachers respectively. From this a sample size of 49 respondents was selected for the study. Primary data was collected from the teachers and principals using self administered questionnaires based on the profile of leadership behavior and own behavior. Both inferential and descriptive statistics were used to analyze the data. ANOVA was used to establish the perception of teachers and their principals on leadership styles exhibited by the head teachers. Correlation analysis was used to show the relationship between principals' leadership styles and student performance in national examinations. The finding of this study strongly indicate a positive relationship between the principals' leadership styles and students' performance. Autocratic leadership style was found to have a significant effect on the students' performance in national examinations. The study recommends the principals to shift to transformative approaches of leadership to enhance good performance of at the national level. The study proposes mandatory leadership training programs for the secondary school principals to update them with modern leadership trends and techniques needed for effective performance.

1.1 Background to the Study

The importance of students' achievement cannot be over emphasized, for there is so much to lose or gain depending on how well or poorly a student performs in the national examinations. Eshiwani (1983) reveals the importance of students' achievement especially in examinations. This scholar notes that the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education is a very important examination because it is the gate to many avenues either leading to higher education or employment. Those that perform poorly cannot compete effectively for the few opportunities that exist either in higher education or employment. It is for this reason that many parents struggle to pay fees for their children. However, paying school fees is increasingly becoming expensive and it is therefore only fair that the consumers get returns from it and in particular, good results in the Kenya certificate of secondary education. Pupils' learning is the main purpose of schools. If students do not perform well in their final examinations then their schools are perceived as ineffective. In particular, such studies have not been conducted in the county. This study seeks to bridge this contextual gap. Educators and the general public have often expressed concern over factors that influence students' performance in examinations. The organizational management of schools greatly influences students' academic outcomes. Rutter, Maugham, Mortimer and Smith (1979) and Wekesa (1993) noted that to improve students' performance head-teachers are required first to improve the management of the schools. This can be done by setting a clear vision for the schools and communicating this vision to the students and support its achievement by giving instructional leadership, resources and being visible in every part of the institution that account for students' performance. Generally, the results in KCSE have not been quite satisfactory. A number of reasons have been put forward as to why most schools perform poorly. Studies done

indicate that poor staffing, frequent transfer of teachers and lack of equipment are the major causes of poor performance in national examinations in Kenya (Daily Nation, April 26th, 1999:20). In Tana River County poor results in K.C.S.E have become a culture year in, year out.

The government of Kenya and the general public consistently put more responsibility on the hands of head teachers to ensure that students perform well in their examinations. Olembo and Karugu (1988) explained that head teachers and principals have the overall responsibility over the operation of schools. Due to this, it can therefore be said that head teachers are accountable for the schools' performance not only to the students but to the country as a whole. The quality of leadership makes the difference between the success and failure of a school (Millette, 1988). This scholar further explains that research and inspection clarify the extent to which the quality of leadership is crucial to improvement. In highly effective schools, as well as schools which have reversed a trend of poor performance and declining achievement, it is the head teacher who sets the pace, leading and motivating pupils and staff to perform to their highest potential. According to Sushila (2004), the head-teacher is the leader in a school, the pivot around which many aspects of the school revolve, and the person in charge of every detail of the running of the school, be it academic or administrative. The head-teacher should be involved in making most of the decisions of the school. It is therefore important that the head teacher is a leader, a thinker and a decision maker, (Lipham, 1981). A discreet head-teacher will employ teamwork as a working strategy. He will set up committees and smaller groups of members of staff to investigate ideas or strategies. It therefore behooves the head teacher to be a good team player. It is important that the performance of a school be appraised against the performance of the person who leads it, (Antony, 2007).

The general performance of Tana River County at KCSE has remained below average with most schools in the county trailing at both the regional and national levels, (Ongira & Abdi, 2004) The poor performance has persisted despite the fact that the schools in the county are assumed to have adequate and well trained teachers, fairly well qualified pupils from primary schools, and trained and qualified head teachers. Very few students qualify to join universities and sometimes none at all. The reasons for the poor performance cannot be easily discerned without focused investigation. The question is: could the poor performance be attributed to head teachers' leadership style? This is the gap to be filled by this study. The management of a school is the concern of all the stakeholders including the parents, pupils and even the government. The success and failure of a school therefore depends on the quality of leadership (Millette, 1988). Logsdon and Weigmann (1973) contend that the effectiveness of the school is largely dependent upon the type of leadership the school provides. This is in line with the ministry of education circular 1/99 on The National Policy on appointment, deployment and training of head teachers of the schools in Kenya which states that a school stands or falls by its leadership. According to Sushila (2004), the head teacher is the leader in the school, the pivot around which many aspects of the school revolve, and the person in charge of every detail of the running of the school, be it academic or administrative. The head teacher is involved in making most of the decisions of the school. It is therefore important that the head teacher be a leader, a thinker and a decision maker (Sushila, 2004). Whether this is done or not remains the concern of this study.

Griffins (1994) observe that many schools have collapsed due to inadequate leadership. The school principal, more than any other individual, is responsible for the school's climate for the outcome of productivity and for the satisfaction attained by the students and staff (Lubullelah, 1998). Kwakwa (1973) describes the head teacher as the keeper of keys, the director of transportation, the coordinator of correspondence, the quartermaster of stores, the divisor of intricate schedules, the publisher of handbooks, the director of public relations and the instructional leader. The head-teacher is therefore a key person in any education system. He takes care of the final arrangements for the education of students in a school. His role as a facilitator of all school activities cannot be taken for granted if he is expected to give the right kind of education to the students. Hence, this sets the focus of the study. Konchlar (1988) states that; schools are bad or good, in a healthy or unhealthy, moral or immoral and flourishing or perishing, as the principal is capable, energetic of high ideals or the reverse. Schools rise to fame or sink to obscurity as greater or lesser principals have charge over them. It is often said that the school is as great as the principal because everything in the school; the plant, the staff, human relationships, the curriculum methods and techniques of teaching, bear the impress of his or her personality. Schools do not become great because of magnificent buildings but because of magnificent principals. The quality of education in Tana River County, as measured by students' achievement in the national examination, is considered as below average standards, (Ongiri and Abdi, 2004). This fact concurs with what the government of Kenya noted in its master plan on education and training (1997 - 2010) that the majority of schools fall short of providing for the learning needs of their students, leading to poor academic performance, (Republic of Kenya, 1998). Ongiri and Abdi (2004) reported that many of the country's over 4,000 secondary schools post bad examinations results year in year out and that there are only about 600 schools that excel and if a student is not in any of these schools

he or she is not expected to get a credible grade. The importance of the role of principals on the school organization cannot therefore be over looked. Principals are very unique in school organizations. This was confirmed by Amoloye (2004). He called them school managers. The job of managing, according to Idowu (1998), involves among other things, the provision of leadership for men and women, coordinating both human and material resources to ensure the achievement of organizational goals. In the school system, the principal as an administrator influences his teachers to achieve the goals and objectives of the school. The fundamental goal of the school is to enhance the teaching and learning process thus producing well educated boys and girls (Adetona, 2003). Hence the school administrators should endeavor to influence the behaviour of the teachers in order to achieve the goals of the school.

Transformational approaches to leadership have been advocated for effective management of the school system. Cohen, Frick, Gadon and Willits (1995) noted that a transformational leader is the leader who inspires people to excel and articulates meaningful vision for the organization. A leader acts in both formal and informal ways to build employee commitment in the organization.

Olaleye (2001), Ibukun (1997), Leithwood, Tantzi and Steinbach (1999) have cited empirical evidences suggesting that transformational leadership contributes to a range of organizational outcomes including motivation, commitment and capacity for teachers to develop new approaches to education. School principals are expected to exhibit this leadership quality to enhance teaching and learning in the school. Ukeje (1992) points out that the success of a leader depends on the readiness, the willingness, commitment and the ability of the followers to follow as well as the ability, the style and skills of the leaders. Consequently, the success of educational administrators depends on their 'effectiveness as well as the effectiveness of the classroom teachers. Transparency and effectiveness leads to improvement, (Duignan, 2006). Leadership style can roughly be referred to as the behaviour of a leader in which he/she influences the followers (Lutherns, 1989). Campbell (1986) observes that, what a leader chooses to do, when he /she does it, and the manner in which he /she acts constitutes his /her leadership style. Head teacher's duties, responsibilities and problems a decade ago and those of today have little resemblance. Changes in school curriculum, such as the introduction of the 8-4-4 in January 1985 in Kenyan schools which required a lot of resources, extensive parents and community involvement in the maintenance of the schools and the demands laid in the schools by all the interested parties, have a significant effect on the leadership patterns of the school's head teacher. It is also clear that where head teachers are at odds with teachers then the head teacher as well as the teachers may not operate with efficiency in their areas of responsibility. Since he is generally presumed to be the pivot and the focus of the school, it is expected that he/she should provide good leadership in order to mould the school in accordance with expected goals of education.

Two categories of behavior in which the head teacher can place greater emphasis in fulfilling his /her role as a leader include initiating structures dimension of leadership behaviors and considerations dimensions of leadership behaviors. Initiating structures involves directing and organizing work, while considerations involve human relations and group maintenance. Silver (1983) explains that initiating structures entails the establishment and classification of the role and interaction pattern within the organization. It includes those actions whereby leaders define their own roles and let the followers know what is expected of them. This covers activities such as scheduling the work to be done, assigning members of the group to particular tasks and establishing standards of programmers. William and Ingham (1974) explain that consideration refers to regard for comfort, well-being, status and contribution of followers. It is the behavior which is indicative of friendship, mutual trust, respect and warmth to his /her staff .The two are independent dimensions which may range from high to low in any individual. The consensus of empirical researchers is that an individual who exhibit both dimensions of behavior and has high score on both of them is the most effective leader (Cogan and Bateman 1993). Regardless of which characteristics are used to describe a leader today, it is generally recognized that the effective principal provides direction to the school while at the same time supporting the efforts of others (Lipham, 1981).

In his theory based on management styles of leadership employed by an organization Likert (1973) identified four approaches ranging from system 1, system 2, system 3 and system 4. The systems are characterized by unique characteristics for each with system 1 being highly autocratic in nature to system 4 which is highly democratic.

System 1 is highly disfavored by subordinates as they are forced to work under threats and punishment by the leader as he/she has all the authority. System 4 on the other, hand is the most favored by the subordinates as they feel highly appreciated which greatly boosts their productivity. System 2 and 3 involve a moderation of the two extremes; extreme autocracy and extreme democracy respectively. All these have varying degrees of motivation in the continuum. Generally speaking, strong administrative leadership by principals is the key variable that ties together all the elements identified as characteristics of effectiveness in school (Edmonds 1979).

Based on Likert's (1973) theory the researcher intended to carry out the study on leadership behavior among principals in the county to determine the impact of their leadership styles on students' academic performance at KCSE in Tana River County. Basically the study's key concern was the desire to establish the behavior of head teacher as leaders and managers of the schools in relation to their schools' poor performance; whether the principals emphasize productivity at the expense of human resource considerations or they have managed to strike a balance between these two. These practical questions are the gaps to be filled by this study by carrying out investigations into secondary school principals' leadership styles to establish if they have a positive bearing on the poor performance at KCSE. The analysis of Tana River County performance at KCSE (2005-2009) shown in table1 indicates a very low performance. The results indicate that quality grades are absent i.e. between c+ and A. The poor performance negatively affects manpower development in the region and the country at large. As Eshiwani (1993:23) states:

"If any region of the country lags behind either in the number of people who attend school or in the number of people who pass important national exams, the region cannot effectively participate in the democratization of education."

Unless the problems are unearthed, the students will continue to perform poorly in the KCSE and this will have a negative influence on the county's socio economic development. Effectiveness can be measured in terms of performance in the students (Duignan, 2006). Studies of the instructionally effective schools in the inner cities of America have identified the principal as the key person who sets the climate for instructional effectiveness. A study of urban schools by Edmond (1979) found that strong leadership and a climate of high expectations led to a higher achievement. He also observed that strong administrative leadership by the principal is the key variable that ties together all the elements identified as the characteristics of effectiveness in the schools. It is in view of this that the researcher intended to determine the impact of principals' leadership styles on students' KCSE performance.

1.2 The Concept of Leadership

There are varied meanings of the term leadership due to different perspectives and contexts within which the word is observed. According to Koontz and Weihrich (1988), leadership is seen as the art of influencing people so that they will strive willingly and enthusiastically towards the achievement of group goals. Burns (1978) views leadership in an organization as a process in which one person successfully exerts influence over others to reach desired objectives. Dressler (1997) says that leadership is the management of the human resources in order to manage their performance by inducing them to work willingly. Further definition given by Hersey and Blanchard (1988) portray leadership as the activity of influencing people to strive for group objectives. For an organization to be successful, leadership is indispensable. Effective leadership gives directions to the efforts of all workers in accomplishing the goals of the organization. Without leadership and guidance, the link between individuals and organizational goals may become tenuous. Leadership is an important element in the process of direction. It is a universal phenomenon found in every group of people. According to Likert (1974), a leader is a person who has the ability to influence the behavior of others in a group activity. He says that a person is said to have an influence on others when they are willing to carry out his wishes and accept his guidance. A leader guides and directs other people towards achieving their objectives. He creates and sustains enthusiasm among them and gives their effort a purpose. In discussing the importance of a leader, Likert quoted by Sergiovanni and Carver (1969) acknowledged that the leader helps members to become aware of new possibilities and more significance goals.

Bars (1981) say that leadership is the process of directing and inspiring workers to perform the task –related activities of the group. He further defines leadership as the process of directing and influencing the related activities of the group. The definitions illuminate three important implications. First; leadership must involve people /followers. Through their willingness to accept directions from the leader, group members define the leader's status and make the leadership process possible .Without followers, all the leadership qualities of a manager would be irrelevant. Secondly, leadership involves an unequal distribution of power among leaders and group members. Though leaders have authority to direct the activities of the group, some group members will obviously affect those activities in a number of ways. Finally, on top of being legitimately able to give their followers orders or directions, leaders can influence their followers in a variety of other ways. Cole (1997) explains that leadership is a vital element in the social relationships of groups at work. Groups need leaders and leaders need followers. He further says that leadership is a concept that many people have written about but few have defined it.

"Leadership is 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 other group members to commit themselves freely to the achievement of group tasks or goals (Cole 1997: 157).

This definition encompasses several important features of leadership: leadership is interpersonal influence exercised in a situation and directed through the communication process, towards the attainment of a specified goal or goals. Leadership is not necessarily confined to one person but may be shared between members. Usually an appointed leader is normally in charge of a group, but he/she may not always be the leader in practice. Okumbe (1998) quoting Kahn defines leadership as the influential increment over and above mechanical compliance with routine directives of the organization. In this definition leadership is seen as a process whereby one person influences others to do something of their own volition, neither because it is required nor because of the fear of the consequences of non compliance. Okumbe says further that leadership is therefore a process of encouraging and helping others to work enthusiastically towards objectives. He/she contends that it is the human factor that binds a group together and motivates it towards goals by transforming the group's potentials into reality.

Hoyle (2003) quoting Lunenburg says: "observers have pondered why some successful school leaders use a consistent leadership style in all situations and others use a more situational style." Moreover, he says that researchers seem silent in seeking answers about the impact of certain leadership styles across schools, school leaders and situations and some findings about how some leaders appear to read the school culture and adjust their leadership style and address initial racial and social issues that impact on students' learning. Stogdill (1957) leadership studies attempted to answer two questions: what does a leader do when he is acting as a leader and how does he go about what he does? From this observation there evolved the tentative definition of leadership as the behavior of an individual who is directing the activities of a group towards goal achievement. From the foregoing definition, the term 'leadership' appears not to have a definite meaning and hence it can be concluded that there are as many definitions to the term as there are authors. Leadership might be interpreted simply as "getting people to do things willingly" or interpreted more precisely as "the use of authority in decision making." Its exercise may be an attribute of position or because of personal knowledge or wisdom (Stogdill, 1957).

1.3 Statement of the Problem

The Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education results in Tana River County have generally been poor all the years. As observed in table 1.1 below, the county has had a very low mean score between the years 2005-2009.

Table1.1. Tana River District KCSE performance for the period 2005-2009

YEAR	ENTRY	A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D+	D	D-	E	Y	X	Z	MS
2005	418	0	0	0	0	3	10	16	14	85	140	109	7	0	0	0	3.33
2006	415	0	0	0	2	2	12	22	57	123	219	118	7	0	0	0	3.41
2007	407	0	0	2	3	5	18	43	74	84	124	56	2	6	3	0	3.66
2008	305	0	0	0	1	1	9	18	32	60	114	56	7	2	2	1	3.44
2009	209	0	0	0	0	3	8	17	29	43	48	42	8	0	1	0	3.446

(Source: Tana River, District Education Office, 2013)

From the data, it is evident that a large proportion of students   have consistently attained low grades in national examinations. This is in spite of the fact that schools in this region are endowed with appropriate resources. The government provides the ministry of education bursary schemes to the needy students each year. There is also the allocation of Constituency Development Funds (CDF) to each constituency to assist students from poor backgrounds. Additionally, most schools have laboratories, qualified teachers, and small class sizes. Despite these efforts, the performance of secondary schools in national examinations has remained dissatisfactory. Studies carried out nationally reveal significant relationship between leadership and performance in academics. The reasons for the poor performance cannot be easily discerned without focused investigation. The success and failure of a school depends on the quality of leadership (Millette, 1988). The effectiveness of the school is largely dependent upon the type of leadership the school provides. In depth studies have not been conducted in the county. Schools in this county have displayed varied results with varying leadership. The performance of

secondary schools in the county has persistently remained poor over the years despite the government and non state efforts to uplift the academic standards. Schools that were previously performing well like Tarasaa High school are no longer effective. The cause of this persistent poor performance is the gap that this study sought to bridge. The question is: could the poor performance be attributed to head teachers' leadership style? This is the concern of this study.

1.4 The Purpose of the Study

The primary purpose of the study was to establish the impact of the head teachers' leadership style on KCSE performance.

1.5 Specific objectives of the Study

The study aimed:

 i). To determine the leadership styles as perceived by the teachers in public schools in   Tana

    River County

ii). To establish the differences in perception of the principals' leadership styles of public secondary schools in Tana River County between head teachers and teachers.

iii) To find out the differences in head teachers' leadership styles according to school types in   Tana   River County.

iv). To examine the relationship between principals' leadership style and students' performance   in   KCSE   in Tana River County.

1.6 Research Questions

   i)   What are the different leadership styles exhibited by public secondary school principals as perceived by teachers in Tana River County?
   ii) What are the differences in the perception of the principals' leadership styles in public secondary schools in Tana River County between principals and teachers?
   iii) What are the differences in leadership styles of principals in relation to school types in Tana River County?
   iv) What is the relationship between the principals' leadership styles and students' performance in KCSE in Tana River County?

1.7 Significance of the Study

The findings of the study would enable universities, training colleges and the Kenya Education Staff Institutes (KESI) to improve the scope and caliber of pre-service and in-service preparation programs for school administrators. Possibly leadership could be taken as a unit of its own. The study is likely to benefit schools' head teachers as they would be able to re-examine and appraise their own leadership styles and thus improve on their weak areas and thereby improve on the overall academic performance of the schools. The findings are likely to make teachers appreciate the role played by good styles of leadership in the enhancement of the school's performance. Consequently, it is hoped that the study will bring out better ways in which leadership in schools might be applied in order to improve student performance. Finally, the information gathered could help to provide more literature for further studies in the field of the school administration.

1.8 The Scope and limitation of the study

The study covered only nine schools that had KCSE results during the research period (2005-2009).The study focused on the impact of the principal's leadership style on KCSE performance in the district. The principals and teachers of the sampled schools were the only respondents. The study was limited to Tana River County public secondary schools. This was because no such kind of research has been done in the county despite the persistent extremely poor performance in KCSE. Performance was limited to KCSE examination results. The study was also limited to only nine schools that had KCSE results between 2005 & 2009. The study was only restricted to principals' leadership styles exhibited and their impact on KCSE performance.

1.9 Delimitations of the Study

The study was confined to only principals and teachers in the nine public secondary schools in Tana River County. Secondly, the teachers in the sample involved were those in session in the respective institutions by the time of the study. The study only focused on personal leadership style exhibited by public secondary school principals in the county.

2.0 Literature review

2.1 Theoretical review

This study was based on theories and models of leadership styles, especially the Likert theory (1973) on organizational management and leadership styles. In this theory four system approaches to leadership have been identified: system 1; system 2; system 3 and system 4. Each of these systems is characterized by its own unique approaches ranging from system 1 that is extremely autocratic and its corresponding effects on overall leadership in an organization to system 4 that is extremely democratic in nature, characterized by its own unique approaches and resultant effects on overall leadership in an organization. System 2 and 3 are authoritarian and democratic approaches but at varying levels. System 1 is characterized by low non- existent confidence in subordinates and lack of involvement in decision making by subordinates. In this the workers   are coerced to work under threats and punishment. Authority is centralized at the top of the organization's structure. System 2 leadership style, also known as 'benevolent' authoritarian system of leadership, is a diluted dictator system and paternalistic in nature. Here the leader has some regards for subordinates. Whereas some few regards are given to subordinates motivation still remains low and they only make decisions that matter of little wait. The decisions that matter continue to be centralized at the top. Clearly the leader has little faith in the ability of the subordinates. In system 3, management has substantial though not complete confidence in the subordinates. Subordinates are fairly motivated and have a leeway in the decision making process-that leaves the subordinates feeling appreciated. Even low level subordinates are given responsibilities. Studies based on the above four systems reveal that system 4 is the best management style for an organization because it has little grievance, low employee turnover, absenteeism and increased job satisfaction resulting in general increased productivity. Subordinates are rewarded to be motivated. Since the decision making process is decentralized they feel appreciated and highly energized to work towards the achievement of organizational goals.

Behavioral theorists tried to look at the factors that led to effective leadership. Their concern was what leaders do. Contingency theorists noted that the type of leadership style will depend on a number of factors. Different situations will call for different leadership styles. Silver (1983) indicates that leadership whether it is directed towards the nations, armed forces, informed groups or large organizations, has been a topic of deep interest for centuries. Three broad categories of practices have been identified as crucial for leadership's success in almost all settings and organizations (Riel, 2003).They Include setting directions, developing people, and developing the organization. Whereas the mastery of these basics provides no guarantee that a leader's work will be successful in a particular school context, lack of their mastery is likely to guarantee failure. The traditional approach to the study of leadership evolved into the search for traits or personal characteristics of effective leadership.

The traits theory is the oldest leadership perspective. Bateman and Zeithanal (1993) emphasized that the trait approach assumes the existence of leadership personality and that leaders are born and not made. Davies (1990) also agrees that the trait approach stresses the personality of the leader above all factors. Stogdill (1974) quoted by D'Souza (1989) identified the clusters of traits as; capacity or intelligence, achievement, participation, responsibility, status and situation. He stresses that different leadership skills and traits are required in different situations. Despite its importance, the trait theory has some limitations too. Gordon (1987) agrees that traits associated with leadership in one situation do not predict leadership in another. He says that there is also no consensus as to what exhibit the behavior of the leader. This has ignored the role of subordinates and its effects on leadership. Hersey and Blanchard (1988) agree that leadership is a dynamic process varying from situation to situation with changes in leaders, followers and situations. Stogdill says that leaders exhibit characteristics such as capacity: intelligence, alertness, verbal facility, originality and judgment; achievement: scholarship knowledge, athletics and accomplishments; responsibility: dependability, initiative, persistence, aggressiveness, self-confidence and desire to excel; participation: sociability, cooperation, adaptability and humor; status: socio-economic, position and popularity, Situation: mental level, status, skills, needs and interests of followers and objectives to be achieved. Stogdill (1974) concluded that a person does not become a leader by virtue of possession of some combination of traits. He also concluded that situational variables evidently influenced the leader's behavior patterns. He pointed out that different types of group of activities require different types of leaders. His findings shifted the trait theories research activities on leadership towards establishing how leaders

interact with groups under various conditions. Research has shown that leadership behavior appropriate in one situation is not appropriate in another; (Stonner & Freeman 1989). Desirable leadership qualities and behavior may also change as organization's culture changes.

The situational approach was a further extension of the behavioral and the trait theory and was commonly referred to as contingency theory (Silver 1983). Silver described the contingency theory as that which maintained that a group's success in accomplishing its tasks depended on the appropriate matching of the leader and the situation. Tannenbmum and Schmidt (1961) as quoted by Betts (1963) contended that a different combination of situational elements required different styles of leadership. They suggested that there were three important factors or forces involved in finding the most effective leadership style; forces in the manager, the subordinate and the situation.

Fielder's contingency model (1967) as quoted by Dixon (1994) suggested that there were three factors which influence a leader; a member's relations, tasks structure and position power. The theory identified two basic leader motivations: task motivation and relationship motivation .Task motivation emphasized on completing the task while the relationship motivation emphasized a machinery good interpersonal relations. The leader behavior research has also stimulated the development of frameworks for the design of management training program of which the managerial grid approach is one of the best known examples.

Aldair's model (1968) argued that for a group to be successful there were three types of needs; task needs, group needs and individual needs. Vroom- Yetton -Jago (1993), as quoted by Luthans (1981) model attempted to provide a specific model i.e. how decisions 'ought' to be made in given situations. The model emphasized the participative dimension of leadership. Vroom-Yetton-Jago (1993) model differed from Fielders (1967) and Hersey and Blanchard's model (1988) in that it stressed on assessing the situation before determining the best leadership style. The path goal theory differed from Fielder's contingency model (1967) as it suggested that the same leaders in different situations could use various styles. Unlike other contingency models, the path goal approach not only suggested what type of leadership might be most effective in a given situation but also attempted to explain that it was the most effective.

Leader member relations determine the effectiveness of the leader. A survey conducted by Bennis (1959) to find out what differentiates a leader from a good manager; found that there are four competencies evident to some extent in every individual in the group. They include management by attention, management by meaning, management by trust, management by self. According to Bennis, in management by attention a good leader attracts the interest of subordinates mainly because of his commitment to the job. He knows and understands the job and also what he wants. In the management by meaning leaders know exactly what they are doing. In management by trust the leader creates an atmosphere of trust through what Bennis calls a constancy factor. The constancy factor is inherent in the leaders. The subordinates see him as a person who can be relied upon. In other words, they will be able to predict that, given a set of situations, the leader would behave in exactly the same way. In management self the leader knows what his strengths are and deploys them effectively. To the leader, failure is only a tool to perform more effectively. The leader learns from his failure. Based on these theories and models, this study sought to establish the degree in which these leadership styles influence the students' performance in national examinations in Tana River County.

2.2 Leadership Styles

According to Bennis (1998) effective organizational leaders are relatively consistent in the way they attempt to influence the behavior of group members. The manager who makes all the major decisions in one situation is not likely to be insensitive in another. The relatively consistent pattern of behavior of most managers is too complex to be described by a single style and some managers modify their style to match a situation; the concept of leadership styles is useful.

2.2.1 Autocratic Style

Burns (1978) states that an autocratic leader maintains most of the authority by issuing orders and telling group members what to do without consulting them. To the autocrat (or authoritarian) the basis for leadership is formal authority. Autocratic leaders may have a few favorite subordinates but they usually regard close interpersonal relations with group members as superfluous. The autocratic style of leadership is generally not favored in modern organization as expressed by the consensus of several current leadership theorists (Aldag, 2001). This system of leadership is the equivalent of systems 1 and 2 of the theoretical framework. As with any leadership style, there are some situations in which an autocratic style is appropriate. Many autocratic leaders have been successful as high level leaders in the private and public sectors (Aldag, 2001).

2.2.2 Participative Style

A participative leader is one who shares decision-making authority with the group (Aldag, 2001). Participative leadership occupies enough space on the continuum to warrant being divided into three sub-types: consultative, consensual and democratic. A consultative leader solicits opinions from the group before making a decision yet does not feel obliged to accept the group thinking. An acceptable way to practice consultative leadership would be to call a group meeting to discuss an issue before making a decision. A consensual leader also encourages group discussions about an issue and then makes a decision that reflects the consensus (general agreement) of group members. Consensual leaders thus turn out more authority to the group than do consultative leaders. The consensus leadership style results in long delays in decision making because every party involved provides input. Yet consensus often leads to commitment to the decision. Again, this system of leadership parallels systems 3 and 4 of the conceptual framework. The consensual leadership style is used successfully by many Japanese managers. Distributed leadership recognizes individuals in formal and informal positions to take responsibility for leadership activities by a network of interactions (Woods, et al., 2004; Harris, 2004, 2005; Spillane, 2006). Based on empirical studies, Harris (2004) found that distributed leadership has contributed to a sustainable improvement of schools in terms of achieving higher levels of both student attainment and achievements. In this context, distributed leadership was characterized by a form of collective leadership in which teachers developed expertise by working together, concluding that engaging many people in leadership activity was the core of distributed leadership in action. Day (2004) asserts that distributed leadership enhanced teacher participation and commitment while Duignan (2006) asserts that transparency and effectiveness of team management leads to improvement of the processes, content, and outcomes of teaching and learning. A democratic leader confers final authority on the group. He or she functions as a collector of opinions and takes a vote before making a decision. Democratic leaders turn over so much authority to the group that they are sometimes classified as free-rein leaders.

The participative style of leadership has been recommended in the management literature dating back to the early 1950's (Aldag 2001). Many organizations today are achieving good results with participative management. As some companies have learned, participative leadership style does not create some problems. One executive has noted that some managers personally feel at a loss of power when participative management is implemented. Another problem is that participative leadership requires employees who want to participative and who have worthwhile input.

2.2.3. Free-Rein Style

Newstrom and Keith (2002) say that a free rein leader turns over almost authority to group members and does as little as possible. Given a situation in which the work to be done by each employee is clearly defined; such leaders maintain hands –off policy. They make few attempts to increase productivity to their employees. At times the free–rein leader is an abdicator who cares very little for achieving productivity goals or developing subordinates. At other times, the free –rein style is appropriate and leads to high productivity. Such leadership situations include directing the work of highly skilled advertising, copywriters, research scientist, or stock analysts. These individuals may neither require technical direction nor encouragement yet in the long run; even self-sufficient professionals require some feedback and recognition from their manager in order to sustain high performance (Newstrom & Keith, 2002). The style of leadership adopted by a head teacher greatly determines his effectiveness and hence the performance of the institution. It is also good to realize that effective leadership can be learned. D'souza (2003; 11) says:-

"Some people have natural leadership gifts. With seeming ease they work well with others. They motivated co – workers and their Subordinate, and they never seem to make demands on people. Unfortunately most of us don't fall in that category. We do the next best thing; to acquire these people's skills usually through experiences. "
This brings out clearly the fact that majority of people need education and training. To be able to motivate the teaching staff, guide the board of governors and satisfy the legitimate needs of parent customers, head teachers needs to develop skills of leadership and management. This should be in recognition of the fact that a leader has dual responsibility –to help the organization achieve its objectives and helping to satisfy the needs of the subordinates (D'Souza, 2003).

2.3 Impact of Leadership styles on performance

Various types of educational organizations ranging from nursery school to universities and research organizations exist in society. Though they highly differ in terms of their administrative departments, they all have a responsibility of imparting knowledge, skills and cherishable human qualities in the learners. Administrative support to teachers is generally important for teachers' well-being, (Edmond, 1979). Research

studies have shown that administrative support is associated with job satisfaction and teacher motivation. Lack of principal's support on the other hand can create an atmosphere of helplessness and ill-will and leads teachers to feel unimportant and frustrated (Lipham, 1981). Indeed, the literature and current studies on transformational leadership have strongly been influenced by Burns (1978: 20) who contrasted transformational leadership with transactional leadership which promotes personal and mutual interests between individuals and the leader in transactional leadership with that of transformational leadership which primarily seeks common purposes in uniting the group to go beyond individual interests in search of higher goals. Similarly Yulk (2006) affirms that the essence of transformational leadership is to inspire commitment of the followers to share objectives, increase their social identification even to the extent of developing their skills and collective efficacy.

Many scholars found that transformational leadership with empowerment of transforming competent staff contributes to commitment, which in turn leads to extra efforts towards greater productivity, ownership, a healthier organizational climate and cultures towards greater effectiveness (Gamage, Sipple, & Partridge, 1996; Leithwood & Jantzi, 1999; Gamage & Pang, 2003; Huber, 2004). Researchers also found that transformational leadership has impacted in changing the attitudes of subordinates towards school improvement and has altered their instructional behavior (Leithwood, Begley & Cousins, 1992). James, Dunning, Connolly and Elliot (2007) conducted a study on how school leadership relates to improved quality of school environments in Wales primary schools. They have concluded that all elements of the collaborative practices were important in enhancing school improvement and increasing student achievements. A study by Rutherford (2002) on the impact of collaborative working environments in enhancing student performance and achievements concluded that the successful head-teachers promoted collegial approaches while practicing positive, dynamic, and flexible leadership styles.

Marsh and LeFever (2004) conducted studies on the educational role of school leaders in two different policy contexts. In Policy Context 1, standards of student performance were common and well-established with authority devolved to schools for restructuring in meeting these standards. In contrast, within Policy context 2, the student performance standards were just emerging while authority was not devolved to the schools. Marsh and LeFever (2004: 392) assert that even though in both policy contexts, the school principals had developed school visions; the focus of principals' visions in the two policy contexts was different. The principals in Policy Context 1 focused their visions primarily on student results with a strong linkage of their visions on curriculum and instruction to student achievements. It rarely existed as a vision on teaching and learning that was isolated from student achievements. Principal support not only affects commitment directly. It also influences commitment indirectly through peer support. It is presumed that when principals foster shared goals, values and professional growth, solidarity and supportive learning community are likely to result. This is to say that when a principal's leadership style is perceived strong and positive, teachers are more likely to work cooperatively and share a common sense of purpose. Therefore the principal not only exerts a direct influence on teacher's commitment, but also enhances commitment through fostering a collegial environment. Leadership is not a single act without the commitment and support of teachers. The commitment of effective followers bridges the gap between what is possible for a leader as an individual and what is possible through the combined efforts of followers. Leadership is therefore a process through which followers and leaders commit to accomplish the aims of an organization.

Considerable research indicates that there is a relationship between leadership style and performance. According to William (1974:19) the leadership behavior of elementary school principal is one of the determinants of a school to attain its stated educational goals. The leadership styles are generally based on a two dimensional model (Rue & Byan, 1993).These are the task oriented and relationship oriented. These two types of relationship behaviors roughly parallel the autocratic and democratic styles of leadership respectively. They are the equivalent of systems 1, 2 and 3, 4 respectively. They are sometimes referred to as initiating structure and consideration. Initiating structure and consideration leadership tendencies can be present in behavior in varying amounts and relationship at different times.

The main duty of the principal is to enhance teaching and learning in the school. Adetona (2003) noted that the task of the principal is to produce well educated boys and girls through effective teaching and learning. Positive school cultures are associated with higher student motivation, good academic performance, and improved attitudes of teachers towards their job. A review of literature showed that the relationship between principal leadership and student learning outcomes is mediated by school conditions including purposes and goals, school structure, and school culture (Hallinger & Hech, 1998). Evidence has also suggested that principals are in a unique position to influence school learning culture; (Deal & Peterson, 1990; Leithwood & Jantz, 1997; Ajayi &

Ayodele, 2002). A significant challenge for principals today is to identify the situations of the school, such as school culture, the likely direct effects on students and the type of leadership behavior the principal should employ. A Leadership model developed by Bass and Avolio (1997) identified three leadership behaviors. Transformational is identified by certain behaviors which include inspirational, motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. Transactional leadership is identified with exchange of rewards for meeting agreed – upon objectives. Monitors followers to ensure mistakes are not made but allows group to exist. In this case, the leader intervenes only when things go wrong. A non-leadership construct, laissez-faire leadership, is an absence of leadership. According to the organizational development phase model (Gones,1988), the culture and the organization of a school is influenced by its principal. This belief stems from the work of Rutter (1979) cited in Jones (1988) who showed that among the important factors related to better student achievements such as examination performance, are styles and rules of the organization. This implies that the leadership style of the principal as an organizational leader in the school plays an important role in bringing about outstanding scholastic performance.

In his study on four schools in the United States, Weber, cited in Clark, Jacobson, Romkey and Salwen (1989), found eight factors present in successful or effective schools. Among these factors were strong administrative leadership, high expectation for student achievement, positive school atmosphere and regular evaluation of students' progress. The literature on In Search of Excellence (ISE) has shown the importance of the role of the principal as a key factor in school effectiveness (Clark et al. 1989). Principals' leadership has an effect on the school in many ways, such as on school climate (Alageswari, 1980; Rahimah, 1981), its learning situation and level of professionalism among teachers (Mukherjee, 1970), satisfaction among teachers (Thandi, 1972; Noran & Sharifah, 1990), mediating between school and parents (Cohen and Manion, 1981), and school performance (Ogawa, 1985; Eberts & Stone, 1988). Halpin (1969) as quoted by Sergivoann and Carver (1969) carried out another similar study. He studied the behavior of superintendent in fifty Ohio schools. His finding seemed to agree with the Hemphill (1969) study that effective leader behavior was associated with high performance on both dimension. The same studies done in Kenya by Omondi (1985) and Kihara (1991) led to the same conclusion. Omondi (1985) in his study on leadership behavior of Nairobi Secondary School head teachers found that the head teachers of Nairobi secondary schools were high in both consideration and initiating structure. Keller and Andrew (1963) also pointed to a significant influence between leadership and student achievement and staff morale. In a study of school productivity they said:-

"All of the statistics give strong support to the hypothesis that the leadership behavior of the principal was significantly productive of the school. The weight of evidence supported the hypothesis that morale of the staff of school was related to productivity." (Keller & Andrew 1963: 182). For this study a school that achieves highly has to have a head that gets high score on both consideration and initiating structure. This is the head teacher who will be committed to improving the quality of performance and welfare of both teachers and students. A study by Gibbon (1992) on the relationship between the leadership styles of principals and the organization climate in secondary schools in the republic of South Africa established that significant differences in the leadership styles of principals existed as the function of the age, sex and professional experiences of the principal. Also schools with enrolment of 601-800 students were found to be more participative than higher or lower ones. These findings contradicted the findings by Matula (1986) maybe due to cultural differences. A study by Mangoka (2003) on leadership behavior in Nairobi and Machakos district secondary head teachers found that the leadership behavior was characterized by higher scores on both initiating structure (system 1 and 2) and consideration (systems 3 and 4).

2.5 Summary of Literature Review

It is obvious that there is no monopoly of a particular style of leadership claiming to be the perfect one leading to improved school performance and students' achievement. School principals are required to be more flexible in adapting appropriate leadership styles with the creation of collaborative working environments with higher-levels of commitment, motivation, ownership, developing, trusting and healthier school cultures, facilitating higher productivity and increased student achievements. The above literature review has clearly demonstrated that leadership roles of school principals have led to increased student performances and achievements in academics. In particular, the research on effective schools indicates the importance of strong administrative leadership, high expectations and focus on student achievements. Changes to school culture, dedicated and qualified staff, setting appropriate school goals in conformity with school and systemic expectations, monitoring students' progress with adequate resources are factors that encourage and stimulate school performances and student achievements. Leadership is the ability to influence the thoughts and behavior of others. Leadership binds people together and motivates them towards achievement of goals in their organizations. A key factor influencing effectiveness of schools is the nature and quality of the leadership and management provided by each school head.

2.6 Knowledge gaps

Most of the studies in the literature review in relation to the impact of principal's leadership style on KCSE performance have been conducted in foreign environments outside Tana River County. This study therefore sought to establish whether the same factors apply in the KCSE performance in Tana River County as suggested. Additionally, the reasons for the persistent poor results in national examinations over the years in this county, is the critical gap that this study attempted to fill.

3.0 Research Methodology

3.1 Research design

The researcher used an explanatory approach using a descriptive analysis design to establish opinions and knowledge about the impact of principals 'leadership style on KCSE performance. This design was deliberately selected for the study because it allows for quick data collection at a comparatively cheap cost (Grinnel, 1993). The study aimed at collecting information about teachers' opinions and attitudes on head teachers' leadership styles in the secondary schools in the county.

3.2 Target Population

A target population is a group of individuals who have one or more characteristics in common that are of interest to the researcher (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003). In this study the target population was composed of all the secondary schools in Tana River County. For the purpose of this study an accessible population was drawn from the public secondary schools that presented candidates for the KCSE examination in the period 2005-2009. Only 9 out of 14 schools met this criterion and were considered for the study. Principals and teachers from each of the sampled secondary school were the actual respondents.

3.3 Sample and Sampling procedure

A sample is a small subset or a small part of the total number that could be studied. Sampling is the process of selecting a representative part of the population for determining characteristics of the whole population (Orodho, 2005). The county has fourteen secondary schools out of which two are girls' and two boys' schools and the rest are mixed schools. All the nine head teachers of the nine secondary schools were purposively included in this study. The study involved 25% of the 158 teachers, in each school randomly picked, in order of convenience. Thus a sample of 40 teachers and 9 principals was selected for the study. According to Khan (1993) there is no fixed number of percentages of subjects that determine the adequate sample size of a population. The ideal sample is large enough to serve as an adequate representation of the population about which the researcher wishes to generalize and small enough to be selected economically in terms of subject availability, expense in terms of time and money and complexity of data analysis.

Table 3.1 sampling frame

Schools type	Number of schools	Schools in the sample	Number of teachers	Sample
Boys' schools	2	2	38	10
Girls' schools	2	2	30	8
Mixed schools	10	5	90	22
Total	**14**	**9**	158	**40**

Source: primary data

3.4 Data collection Instruments

The researcher used self administered questionnaires to collect primary data from the respondents. The questionnaires had both structured and unstructured questions to collect qualitative and quantitative data respectively. A questionnaire is an instrument used to gather data which allows measurement for or against a particular view point. Questionnaires are self formulated simple questions which generate responses from individuals. They are time saving to both the researcher and the respondents (Orodho, 2005). The researcher

prepared two questionnaires: The profile of Leadership Behavior (Form LB) and profile of Own Behavior (Form OB). In addition, general questions to collect data on demographic variables were used. The Form OB questionnaire was designed to enable the schools principals to describe their own styles of leadership while Form LB was aimed at enabling teachers to describe the leadership styles exhibited by the head teachers (Likert, 1976).

3.5 Piloting

Piloting was done in two schools that were not included in the sample for the study. The schools were randomly picked out of the four schools not in the study sample. Piloting was necessary to find out if the respondents would find the instruments clear, precise and comprehensive. This was to enhance their reliability. The procedure used was similar to that which was used during the final data collection.

3.5.1 Reliability of the Instruments

Reliability is a measure of the degree to which results yield consistent outcome after repeated trials. It is the consistency in producing reliable results (Mugenda, 1999; Orodho, 2005). An instrument is reliable when it measures a variable accurately and obtains similar results under the same conditions over a period of time. To determine the reliability of the instruments the researcher adopted the test-retest method to detect random error that could occur due to inaccurate coding, ambiguous instructions to the subject, interviewing fatigue and interviewers bias. Using the technique the researcher administered the instruments twice to the same group of respondents within intervals of two weeks. The completed questionnaires were analyzed manually and comparison of answers in the first and the second was done. Pearson product moment formula for test retest was used to compute the correlation coefficient to determine the extent to which the contents were consistent in eliciting the same response every time the instrument was administered. A coefficient of 0.8 would make the instrument be judged as reliable for the study.

3.5.2 Validity of Research Instruments

Validity measures what the research instrument intends to measure. The researcher therefore used other methods to validate the data collected. This was done by comparing the data collected with existing publications. The questionnaires were tested and pretested on two randomly picked schools not in the study to make sure that the research instruments were valid to the study and other groups would be comfortable using them.

3.6 Data Collection Procedure

The researcher got an introductory letter from Kenyatta University and a research permit to conduct research in Tana River County from the Ministry of Education. The researcher booked appointments with the schools through the head teachers. The researcher visited the schools to administer the questionnaires to both the principals and sampled teachers. This was done through the assistance of the head teacher's office. The respondents were thereafter supplied with the questionnaires for data collection. Fully filled up questionnaires were then later collected before data analysis was done.

3.7 Data Analysis Techniques

Data analysis is the process of systematically searching and arranging interview transcripts, field notes, data and other materials obtained from the field with the aim of increasing an understanding of them and enabling the researcher present them to others (Orodho, 2005). Analysis involves working with data, organizing items, breaking them into manageable units, synthesizing them and searching for pattern. After fieldwork the data collected through use of questionnaires was classified into usable categories. The categories were turned into raw data through coding and tabulations. The data was further analyzed to provide meaningful final results with the aid of SPSS and Microsoft Excel software. Both inferential and descriptive statistics were used to analyze the data. ANOVA was used to establish the perception of teachers and their principals on leadership styles. Correlation analysis was used to show the relationship between principals' leadership styles and student performance in national examinations.

3.8 Ethical issues in research

The researcher endeavored to remain ethical in the conduct of the study. An introductory letter was attached to every questionnaire explaining the purpose of the study and seeking voluntary participation of the respondents. Furthermore, the confidentiality of the respondents was also assured.

4.0 Research Findings and Discussion

4.1 interpretation and discussion of the results

The sample of study constituted 49 respondents. From the study findings six principals were males (66.7%) and three were females (33.3%). On the other hand the number of teachers in the distribution represented 32 males (79.4%) and 8 females (20.6%) an indication that affirmative action is yet to be realized in secondary schools' appointments. The researcher's personal involvement contributed to a high response rate of 100% for the principals and 85% for the teachers.

Table 4.1 Profiles of Respondents and Response Rate

		Male	%	Female	%
Class	Principals	6	66.7	3	33.3
	Teachers	32	79.4	8	20.6

Source: primary data

4.2 Leadership styles Exhibited by Principals

The research was conducted to establish the impact of principals' leadership styles on KCSE performance in Tana River County. In order to measure the leadership style of head teachers the researcher used a scale with 24 items to measure various aspects of leadership tendencies. 14 items in the scale measured the head teachers' leadership tendencies for system 1 and 2 (autocracy) and the rest were based on systems 3 and 4 (democracy). The 24 items were measured using a Likert scale ranging between 0 and 4. A response, 'never' in an item was given a score of 0, 1 for 'little', 2 for 'some' 3 for 'considerate' and 4 for 'very great'. A score of between 0 and 1 falls under system one (extreme autocracy), a score of 2 falls under system two (moderate autocracy), a score of 3 falls under system three (moderate democracy) and a score of 4 falls under system four (extreme democracy). A high score on an item implied a democratic one (system 3 and 4) and a low score implied an autocratic leadership tendency (system 1 and 2). According to the data analyzed majority of the principals appraised themselves to be more democratic in their leadership tendencies at 66.6%. The teachers appraised their principals as being autocratic at 59.6%. The perception of the head teachers' leadership styles was different as the principals indicated that they were democratic while the teachers rated them as autocratic.

4.3 Perception of the Principals and Teachers on the Principals Leadership Styles

Table 4.3 Principals' Perception of Their Leadership Styles: N=9

ITEM	Never		Little		Some		Considerate		Very great	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
States points and views of others even though they disagree			1	11.1%	3	33.3%	4	44.4%	1	11.1%
Allows members of staff to question his views			2	22.2%	2	22.2% 33.3%	3	33.3%	2	22.2%
Encourage others to express their feelings frankly			2	22.2%	3		3	33.3%	1	11.1%
Display confidence and trust in others					2	22.2%	5	55.5%	2	22.2%
Friendly and easy to talk to			1	11.1%	2	22.2%	5	55.5%	1	11.1%
Expect others to do their very best			1	11.1%	3	33.3%	3	33.3%	2	22.2%
Encourage members to bring new changes as well as creative ideas			2	22.2%	1	11.1%	3	33.3%	3	33.3%
Are willing to take risks (E.g. try new ideas)			2	22.2%	3	33.3%	2	22.2%	2	22.2%
Are not defensive when criticized			2	22.2%	2	22.2%	3	33.3%	2	22.2%
Avoid treating others in a condescending (patronizing manner)					3	33.3%	4	44.4%	2	22.2%
Accept that you are capable of making mistakes			1	11.1%	2	22.2%	3	33.3%	3	33.3%
Avoid being impatient with the progress being made by the group					3	33.3%	2	22.2%	4	44.4%
Avoid dominating the discussion			1	11.1%	2	22.2%	4	44.4%	2	22.2%
Use 'we' and 'our' rather than 'I' then 'head' or 'my'			1	11.1%	2	22.2%	2	22.2%	4	44.4%
Show no favoritisms, treat all members equally			1	11.1%	2	22.2%	3	22.2%	4	44.4%
Give credit and recognition generously							4	44.4%	5	55.5%
Accept more blame than may be warranted for any failure or mistake					3	33.3%	2	22.2%	4	44.4%
Avoid imposing a decision upon the group					2	22.2%	3	33.3%	4	44.4%

Table 4.3 indicates of how head teachers perceived their own leadership styles. According to the data analyses generally, in all the items, in total the principals averagely appraised themselves to be more democratic in their leadership tendencies at 66.6%.

4.4 Teachers' Perception of Their Principals' Leadership Style

According to the data analyses the teachers averagely appraised their principals to be more autocratic in their leadership tendencies at 59.6%. From the findings therefore it can be deduced that most of the head teachers used a mixed approach to leadership reflecting the use of autocracy, democracy and sometime reacting depending on the situation at hand. This style of leadership could be described as transformative style whereby a leader acts in both formal and informal ways to build employee commitment in the organization.

Table 4.4: Teachers' Perception of Their Principals' Leadership Style. N=40

	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
States points and views of others even though they disagree	1	2.9%	12	35.3%	8	23.5%	6	17.6%	5	14.7%
Allows members of staff to question his views	7	20.6%	10	29.4%	6	17.6%	9	26.5%	2	5.9%
Encourage others to express their feelings frankly	4	11.8%	14	41.2%	7	20.6%	6	17.6%	3	8.8%
Display confidence and trust in others	3	8.8%	11	32.4%	8	23.5%	5	14.7%	7	20.6%
Friendly and easy to talk to	1	2.9%	6	17.6%	8	23.5%	10	29.4%	9	26.5%
Shares information frankly	3	8.8%	6	17.6%	9	26.5%	7	20.6%	9	26.5%
Expect others to do their very best	2	5.9%	5	14.7%	10	29.4%	9	26.5%	8	23.5%
Encourage members to bring new changes as well as creative ideas	5	14.7%	5	14.7%	8	23.5%	7	20.6%	9	26.5%
Are willing to take risks (E.g. try new ideas)	5	14.7%	7	20.6%	8	23.5%	6	17.6%	8	23.5%
Are not defensive when criticized	4	11.8%	10	29.4%	7	20.6%	7	20.6%	6	17.6%
Avoid treating others in a condescending (patronizing manner)	4	11.8%	6	17.6%	8	23.5%	9	26.5%	7	20.6%
Accept that you are capable of making mistakes	3	8.8%	9	26.5%	10	29.4%	6	17.6%	6	17.6%
Avoid being impatient with the progress being made by the group	4	11.8%	8	23.5%	9	26.5%	5	14.7%	8	23.5%
Avoid dominating the discussion	5	14.7%	7	20.6%	8	23.5%	9	26.5%	5	14.7%
Use 'we' and 'our' rather than 'I' then 'head' or 'my'	2	5.9%	10	29.4%	9	26.5%	8	23.5%	5	14.7%
Show no favoritisms, treat all members equally	4	11.8%	7	20.6%	10	29.4%	6	17.6%	7	20.6%
Give credit and recognition generously	4	11.8%	6	17.6%	9	26.5%	8	23.5%	7	20.6%
Accept more blame than may be warranted for any failure or mistake	3	8.8%	10	29.4%	7	20.6%	8	23.5%	6	17.6%

4.4. Analysis of variance for perception of teachers and principals on leadership styles used by head teachers in schools

In order to measure the leadership style of head teachers the researcher used a scale with 24 items to measure various aspects of leadership tendencies. 14 items in the scale measured the head teachers leadership tendencies for system 1 and 2 (autocracy) and the rest were based on systems 3 and 4 (democracy).The 24 items were measured using a likert scale ranging between 0 and 4.

Table 4.5 Leadership Styles in Different Types of Schools

Type of School	N	Mean	S.D	S.E
Teachers	40	1.24	0.4760	0.0321
Principals	9	3.61	0.2898	0.0123

As shown in the table 4.5, teachers perceived the head teachers to be either autocratic or extremely autocratic since their mean score of perception was found to be 1.24. A score of between 0 and 1 falls under system one (extreme autocracy), a score of 2 falls under system two (moderate autocracy), while the head teachers perceived themselves to be democratic or very democratic as can be shown by a score of 3.61. A score of 3 falls under system three (moderate democracy) and a score of 4 falls under system four (extreme democracy). A high score on an item implied a democratic one (system 3 and 4) and a low score implied an autocratic leadership tendency (system 1 and 2).

A significant difference in perception by the teacher was established with a lower F value (0.0031) than the critical value (1.98)

Table 4.6 Analysis of Variance for Perception of Teachers and Head teachers on Leadership Style used by Head teachers

Source of Variation	DF	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F Ratio	F Probability
Between Groups	28	5.321	0.3212	4.019*	0.0012
Within Groups	1	65.901	0.0127		
Total	12	57.8043			

*significant at 0.05

Table 4.6 shows a summary of the one-Way Analysis of Variance for the perception of head teachers and teachers on the leadership style used by the head teachers in the schools under the study. The F value obtained is 4.019 which is less than the critical value of 5.231 and the p value shows a significant level of 0.0012 which is less than the set value of the study which is 0.05. This implies that there is a significant difference in perception between the head teachers and teachers on the leadership style used by school head teachers. While head teachers perceive themselves democratic, teachers perceive them autocratic.

4.5 Leadership Styles in Different Types of Schools

Leadership distinction was found to exist as a function of the school type.

Table 4.7 Description of Leadership Styles in Schools

Type of School	N	Mean	S.D	S.E
Boys boarding	2	1.32	0.5740	0.0538
Girls boarding	2	1.12	0.4898	0.0714
Mixed Boarding	5	3.45	0.555	0.1061

The mean scores indicate that the head teachers use different styles of leadership depending on the type of school: boys boarding, girls boarding or mixed day and boarding schools. The mean score indicates that in both boys' and girls' boarding schools (1.32 and 1.12 respectively) the head teachers were found to be practicing either autocracy or moderate autocracy while in mixed day and boarding schools (3.45) they were democratic and more relaxed in their administrative approach. Therefore it can be deduced that the administrative styles of head teachers were different depending on the type of school.

Table 4.8 Analysis of Variance for Type of School and Leadership Style Used by Principals

Source of Variation	DF	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F Ratio	F Probability
Between Groups	11	3.9393	0.9848	2.3488*	0.0031
Within Groups	1	53.865	0.2867		
Total	12	57.8043			

*significant at 0.05

The F ratio obtained in table 4.9 is 2.3488 which is greater than the critical value of 0.9848, and the F value of 0.0031 which is less than 0.05 (the significance level of our study). This is an indication that there are significant differences in leadership styles of principals in Tana River County according to school type noted.

4.6 Relationship between Principals' Leadership Styles and Students' KCSE Performance
An effort was made to establish any significant relationship between principal's leadership style and KCSE performance in Tana River County. The findings of the study established that the mean score of the sampled schools within the research period was 3.08. This implies that the performance in the schools was below average. With about 59.6% of the teachers perceiving their principals to be autocratic and 40.4% perceiving their principals as democratic and the very low kind of performance posted by the sampled schools it comes out clearly that the leadership styles affect performance. The correlation analysis on table 4.9 further confirms that the leadership styles had a direct bearing on performance.

Table 4.9 Correlation Analysis of the Relationship between Principals' Leadership Styles and Students' KCSE Performance

Correlations

		Principals' leadership styles	Students performance in secondary schools
Principals' leadership styles.	Pearson Correlation	1	0.766
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.001
	N	240	240
Students Performance in public secondary schools.	Pearson Correlation	0.766	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	
	N	240	240

The analysis shows that the correlation coefficient of 0.766 is statistically significant. Since the value of significance 0.001 reported is less than 0.05 (at the 95% level of confidence) the relationship is statistically significant. The 0.766 correlation coefficient obtained implies that there is a strong relationship between the leadership style used by head teachers and the performance of the students at KCSE. The autocratic leadership styles of Tana River county principals therefore have a direct impact on the poor performance.

5.0 Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations
5.1 Summary

From the analysis, it is clear that leadership styles of the schools' principals have an impact on the schools' performance in KCSE examinations. The summary of the findings were organized according to the research questions. Majority of the principals appraised themselves to be more democratic in their leadership tendencies. The teachers appraised their principals as being autocratic. The study established that there was a notable significant difference in perception between the principals and the teachers in relation to the principals' leadership styles being used in the schools at 0.05 levels of confidence. Therefore the leadership styles exhibited by the principals are an inclination towards systems 1 and 2 which is autocratic going by the teachers' appraisal as they are the recipients of the principal's orders and directives. From the findings therefore it can be deduced that most of the head teachers used a mixed approach to leadership reflecting the use of autocracy, democracy and sometime reacting depending on the situation at hand. This style of leadership could be described as transformative style whereby a leader acts in both formal and informal ways to build employee commitment in the organization. The findings are in line with Cohen, Frick, Gadon and Willits (1995) who noted that a transformational leader is the leader who inspires people to excel and articulates meaningful vision for the organization. A leader acts in both formal and informal ways to build employee commitment in the organization. Olaleye (2001), Ibukun (1997), Leithwood, Tantzi and Steinbach (1999) have cited empirical evidences suggesting that transformational leadership contributes to a range of organizational outcomes including motivation, commitment and capacity for teachers to develop new approaches to education.

The study also established that there is a significant difference in leadership styles in relation to   school type in Tana River County. This is because the F ratio obtained was greater than the critical value while the F value was found to be less than the significance level of the study. In boys' and girls' boarding schools, the head teachers were found to practice either autocracy or moderate autocracy while in mixed day and boarding schools they were democratic and more relaxed in their administrative approach. Conclusively the administrative styles of head teachers in Tana River County were different depending on the type of the school. These findings concur with the findings of another study in the literature review that investigated the relationship between the leadership styles of principals and the organization climate in secondary schools in the republic of South Africa which was done by Gibbon (1992). It was basically to determine the statistical significance of the relationship between selected demographic variables and leadership styles. The variables were, age, sex, professional experiences of the principal and the type of the school. The findings were that significant differences in the leadership styles of principals existed as a function of the type of school and professional experiences of the principal. Also schools with enrolment of 601-800 students were found to be more participative than higher or lower ones. These findings contradicted the findings by Matula (1986) maybe due to cultural differences. There is a significant difference in leadership styles according to school types. Unisex schools were led with high levels of autocracy and mix day and boarding schools were led with positive significant degrees of democracy.

The findings of the study further reveal that there is a significant relationship between head teachers' leadership style and students' performance at KCSE. The strong positive correlation coefficient attests this. The principals in Tana River County had an average of autocratic leadership styles which related very well with their students' poor performance. These findings agree with Millette (1988) who stated that the quality of leadership makes the difference between the success and failure of a school. This confirms that leadership styles are varied and they influence the outcome of students' academic achievements.

5.2 Conclusions

The study aimed: to determine the leadership styles as perceived by the teachers in public schools; establish the differences in perception of the principals' leadership styles of public secondary schools between head teachers and teachers; find out the differences in head teachers' leadership styles according to school types and examine the relationship between principals' leadership style and students' performance in KCSE in Tana River County. From the findings of the study it was observed that there is a discrepancy between what is advocated for by the head teachers and what they actually practice. Whereas most head teachers appraised themselves to be more democratic in their leadership tendencies, the teachers appraised them as being autocratic. Generally the dominant leadership style exhibited by the principals in the county is autocratic. While head teachers perceived themselves as democratic, the teachers perceived them as autocratic. The type of school affects the leadership style of the head teacher with both boys and girls boarding schools having autocratic type while mixed day and boarding schools having more relaxed and democratic type of leadership. From the findings of the study it was further revealed that there is a significant relationship between head teacher' leadership behavior and student's performance at KCSE. The autocratic nature of the principals' leadership styles in county contributed significantly to the poor performance of the students in the national examinations .This is an indication that leadership styles are varied and have a direct impact on students' performance as reflected in the students' poor performance in KCSE. This concurs with Goldhaber (2002) and Harris (2004) who stated that good leadership can certainly contribute to school improvement by abetting the motivation, participation, and coordination of the teachers. The findings of this study show that head teachers' leadership styles make or break schools.

5.3 Recommendations

It is recommended that principals need to establish fair administrative policies well understood by staff members. The policies should be applied with fairness and openness to individuals and the staff in general in relation to assignment of duties and promotions. A reputation of fairness should be fostered by the principals as this would motivate a spirit of loyalty and love in the people under him, leading to a high productivity and improved performance in particular**.** The principals need to shift to transformative approaches of leadership for effectiveness so as to improve the very poor performance of their students at K.C.S.E. The in-service leadership training program should be organized for the principals (including their deputies) in various leadership areas after their promotion to those positions. In training them, it is recommended that the major areas to be included in the training modules should include; leadership, human resource management and general public relations. The principals should be more flexible in adopting appropriate leadership styles with the creation of collaborative working environments with higher-levels of commitment, motivation, ownership, developing, trusting and healthier school cultures, facilitating higher productivity and increased student achievements. The implication is that for a school to be effective in achieving improved KCSE performance standards, adjustments need to be made in significant ways to the needs and goals of their teachers. Openness of conduct, communication and free exchange of ideas should highly be upheld. The team leaders should be able to delegate tasks and authority. Problem-solving and the management of competing forces must be key components of leadership training for school improvement if schools are to become the high-achieving learning communities espoused by governments in the changing times of the new millennium.

5.4 Suggestions for further Research

This study was conducted only in Tana River County. There is therefore, a need to conduct a similar study in other counties in the region to establish whether there is an impact of the principals' leadership styles on students' KCSE Performance in public schools. The parents' opinions should be included in the study. Observational studies aimed at finding the leadership styles approved or disapproved by principals are encouraged for future researchers as the use of questionnaires in this research could have influenced the responses of the respondents.

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