PRINCIPALS' MANAGEMENT STYLES INFLUENCE ON STUDENTS ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN THE KENYA CERTIFICATE OF SECONDARY EDUCATION EXAMINATION IN MOMBASA COUNTY, KENYA

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ABSTRACT

Despite school principals in Mombasa County here in Kenya using different management styles performance has remained significantly low in national examinations. Public secondary schools that are funded by the government in Mombasa keep on performing poorly in national examinations for the last 5 years. This study therefore sought to determine the influence of principals' management styles on students' academic performance in National examination in Mombasa County. The study was guided by the Contingency Theory that states that the management style of a person depends on several factors both in the organization that one is managing and externally. The study used descriptive research design. The study had a sample size of 708 respondents. This comprised of 16 principals, 315 teachers and 377 students. Questionnaires and interviews were the research instruments used. The study found out that the authoritarian management style was the most widely used method of leadership by principals of public secondary schools in Mombasa County. The study recommends that there should be a policy shift by the ministry of education in that they should train teachers on all the management styles.

INTRODUCTION

A management style is a method a person uses to manage people, projects or an organization in order to achieve the intended objectives. According to many academics, good managers use a variety of management philosophies to steer an organization toward its goals. Before choosing a management approach that will be successful and contribute to the accomplishment of the targeted goals to the satisfaction of the stakeholders, these leaders take into account a number of elements. These include things like the team's level of expertise and skill, the team members' attitudes and personalities, the sector, the sort of work, and the company culture. According to Goleman, (2017) the most common types of management styles are Authoritative, Consultative, Democratic, Laissez-faire, Persuasive, Transformational, Transactional and Collaborative. These leadership styles are important in that when used as required, they can help to ensure objectives are achieved to the satisfaction of stakeholders.

Authoritative management style follows a top down approach to leading (Gosling et al., 2012). Managers make decisions independently and alone. No feedback is requested from employees. Transformational management style is the most effective mode of management style that has been reported to yield desired results. Leaders with this style of management

will often push their employees to set and reach goals (Shelton, 2012). Transformational leadership involves charisma, Intellectual simulation of team members and individual consideration. The value of each team member is therefore raised. In a school environment this will be academic performance in national examinations by students. Transaction management style involves supervision, monitoring and controlling employees in an organization in order to check that they are performing as expected towards achieving results (Cherry, 2022). In a school this would be improved academic performance by students every year. This style has been known to promote unity and self-motivation among employees in an organization. This is because rewards and punishments are the hall mark of performance of the desired behaviour. The Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) examination is a national examination that is administered to students in their final year of secondary school. The KCSE results are used to determine students' eligibility for admission to universities and other tertiary institutions. Given the importance of the KCSE examination, it is crucial to understand the factors that influence students' academic performance. One such factor was the management style of school principals. The management style of a principal can have a significant impact on the school's overall performance, including students' academic performance. Therefore, this study sought to provide valuable insights into how principals could improve their management practices to enhance students' academic performance. Of all the 8961 students in Mombasa county who sat for the KCSE exams in 2021 in Mombasa county, only 1,192 (13%) got a grade C+ and above. This is the pass mark for gaining entry to the universities.

The general objective of this study was to assess the principals' management styles influence on students' academic performance in the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education examination in Mombasa County in Kenya.

Statement of the Problem

Ideally institutions that principles apply the relevant management styles performance is bound to be good and the opposite is true. However in Mombasa county student academic performance has remained significantly low despite the principals applying the respective leadership styles. This was manifested by few students making it to the university. This study came to look at the principal's management styles and their influence on students' academic performance in the KCSE examination in Mombasa county, coast. The problem was motivated by the low transition rate to university for students who sat for the KCSE examination in Mombasa County over the last five years, which has been below 13% on

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average. Consequently the critical question was, was the low transition rate to university in Mombasa County precipitated by principal's management styles?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Contingency theory, also known as situational theory, was first proposed by Fred Fiedler in 1964. It states that the effectiveness of a leader's behaviour is contingent or dependent on the situation in which the leader is acting. The theory suggests that different leadership styles are appropriate for different situations and that there is no one "best" leadership style. Instead, the most effective style depends on a number of situational factors, such as the leader's relationship with their followers, the level of task structure, and the level of support from the organization. The contingency theory points out that there is no best way to manage an organization. (Peters, Hartke, & Pohlman, 1985; Strube & Garcia 1981). Instead, it all depends on both the internal and external factors affecting the organization. This theory posits that the most effective leadership style is contingent upon various situational factors. The study variables are anchored by this theory. The study examines three management styles - authoritarian, transformational, and transactional. Contingency Theory suggests that each style can be effective under different circumstances. For instance, authoritarian management style might prove successful in a highly structured environment, while transformational management style might be more suitable for fostering innovation and change (Donaldson, 2001).

The Conceptual Framework
Independent variable   **Dependent variable**
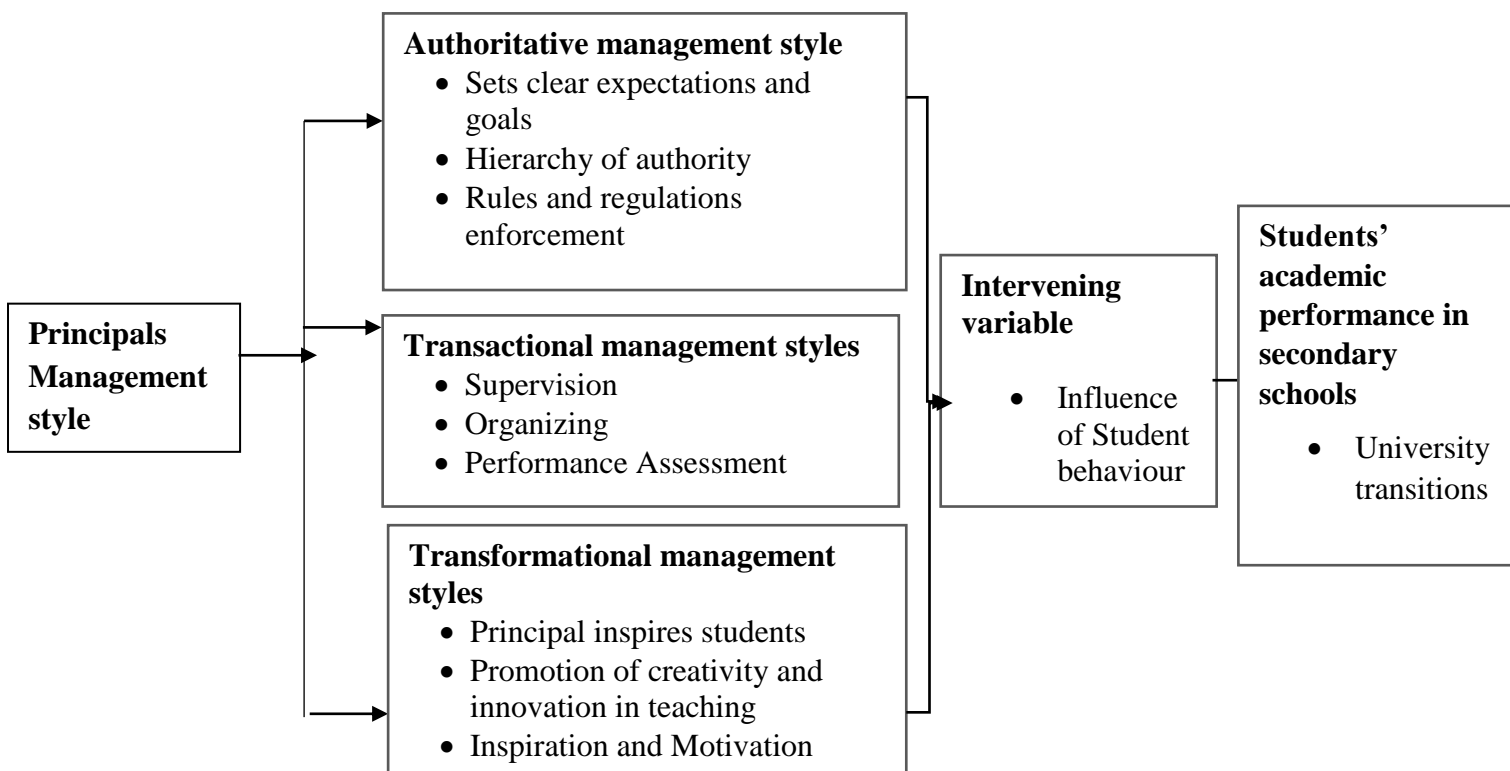
Figure 1.1 Shows the conceptual framework

Chemers (2014) points out that an effective management style begins with analyzing a problem and consulting on the best solutions that can be used to solve it. After consulting decision making comes in. In a school, setting the principal is expected to make decisions.This is where authoritative management style. Effective decision making process involves coming up with decisions that are informed, timely and reasonable (Zane, 2016).The principal is expected to follow a decision making framework (Chitpin & Evers, 2014). Transformational management style has been known to be the style that yield results in many environments compared to the others (Bass & Riggio, 2006). Transformational leaders are known to listen to employees concerns and come up with solutions that are ideal to achieve what is required. Transformational leaders are known to be optimistic about future goals and also adapt their style in order to accommodate various individuals in their teams (Shelton, 2012). This inspires motivation in team members to achieve their goals.

A transactional leader sets the performance of the organization (Sarkar & Ray, 2014). In school environment this could be school performance. For example the principal might set up goal that his year, the school needs no student with a D- (minus) in any class from form one to forma four. So the principal might set a reward and punishment framework. If this is achieved class teacher is given a token of appreciation like a certificate of appreciation. If the same is not achieved, then the teacher is put on a Performance Improvement programme (PIP) where the progress of improvement will be monitored. Transactional management style is a give and take process (Thapa & Parimoo, 2022).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research design of the study

This study used the descriptive survey research design. Descriptive survey research design, as explained by Neuendorf (2016), is a type of research design that aims to describe the characteristics of a population or phenomenon. In this type of design, the researcher collects data from a sample of individuals using standardized methods, such as questionnaires. The main purpose of descriptive survey design is to describe the frequency, distribution, and nature of variables in a population or phenomenon. It is often used in research to explore attitudes, opinions, behaviours, and other characteristics of a group of people.

Location of the study

This was in the county of Mombasa at the Coast region. Mombasa County is an administrative city and the entry point for cargo into Kenya from other countries through the Kenya Ports Authority (KPA).The county has 53 public secondary schools (Ministry of Education, 2022).

Target population

The target population comprised 9,807 respondents of the government sponsored schools Mombasa. As per the information received from the County Education Officer and Teachers Service Commission (TSC). Mombasa currently has 53 public secondary schools (i.e. 11 boys only, 13 girls only and 29 mixed secondary schools). This 53 schools have 1,103 teachers teaching in them (principals included) and 8,704 students in form 4 classes. This information is as at 31st December 2021. This brings the total target population to 9,807

Sample Size

The researcher began by identifying all the 53 public secondary schools in Mombasa County. Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) do suggest that for a large population, a sample size of 10% to 15% may be appropriate for a sample while for a smaller population, a sample size of 30% or more may be necessary. For the principals, 30% of the 53 schools were picked. This was 16 schools. This also formed the sample population of the Principals. For teachers, the researcher identified the Teachers Service Commission(TSC) teachers in the public secondary schools in the county. As per information gotten from the TSC office in Mombasa these are currently 1050.Thirty percent of this were picked from the population of the teachers that was used for the study (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003).This was a sample of 315 for the teachers. For students, the target population was extra-large and therefore the Taro Yamane method was employed to determine the sample size. Taro Yamane method is used because it ensures that the sample size is large enough to accurately represent the population being studied. The formula is shown below:

Taro Yamane formulae:

$$n = \frac{N}{(1+N (e)^2)}$$

where:

n is the sample size required

N is the population under study

e is the margin of error which in this case it will be 0.05

n = $\dfrac{8704}{(1+8704(0.05)^2)}$ n = 377

The total sample size for students was therefore 377. The total sample was therefore 708 respondents.This was composed of 16 Principals,315 teachers and 377 students

DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION OF THE FINDINGS
Response rate

Return Rate
Table 4.1 questionnaire return rate

Category	Questionnaires administered	Questionnaires filled & returned	Percentage (%)
Principals	16	16	100%
Teachers	315	221	70%
Students	377	309	82%
Total		**708**	**84%**

The questionnaires return rate was 84%.This is as shown in Table 4.1. A high response rate means that the results of the study are likely to be accurate and representative of the population that was studied (Lopez, 2018).

Responses on management styles of principals by respondents

The results of the study were based on the study objectives. The first objective was to establish the influence of principals' authoritative management style on students' academic performance in national examinations in Mombasa County. Questions were given to the respondents with a view to finding out the influence of principal's authoritative management style on students' academic performance. Principals, Teacher and students were administered questions separately then each category of respondents analyzed in table format. The findings of the study suggest that most principals in Mombasa County in Kenya use an authoritative management style when it comes to academics. This is consistent with the findings by Haris and Leithwood (2010) study which found that principals who use an authoritative leadership style are more likely to have schools with higher student

achievement. A study by Rowe et. Al. (2008) found that the authoritative leadership dimension was one of the most important leadership dimensions for student achievement. Leithwood and Jantzi (2008) also found out that principals who use an authoritative leadership style are more likely to have schools with higher student achievement.

The second objective was to establish the influence of Transformational management style of principals   on students' performance in National examination in Mombasa County. Notably, a majority of principals reported that they "Never" or "Rarely" engage in certain aspects of transformational leadership, such as providing opportunities for students to develop leadership and problem-solving skills and involving students in decision-making processes related to their education. The data shows that student involvement in decision-making processes related to their education is infrequent, with the majority of teachers reporting "Rarely" or "Never." This aspect aligns with the notion of shared leadership, where students have a voice in shaping their educational experiences (Harris & Muijs, 2003). The overall pattern of limited engagement with transformational leadership practices among principals suggests an opportunity for improvement.

The third objective was to determine the influence of principals transactional management style on students' academic performance in National examination in Mombasa County. A substantial percentage of principals reported infrequent engagement in regular supervision and monitoring of teaching staff to ensure they meet academic standards. Transactional leadership often involves monitoring and ensuring compliance with established standards (Bass & Riggio, 2006). Limited supervision may impact teaching quality and consistency. A majority of principals reported that they rarely assess the effectiveness of the school's organizational structure in supporting student academic success. An effective organizational structure is crucial for school efficiency and student achievement (Bolman & Deal, 2003). Limited assessment may hinder improvements in this area. Half of the principals agreed that they either never or rarely use performance assessments to identify areas where students need additional support. This was also echoed by teachers and students. These findings indicate potential areas for growth and improvement in the implementation of Transactional management practices within the context of supporting student academic success. The majority of teachers and students reported that their principals rarely provide regular supervision and monitoring of teaching staff to ensure they meet academic standards. Transactional leadership typically involves setting clear expectations and monitoring performance. The limited engagement in supervision and monitoring may affect the

consistency of teaching quality (Bass & Riggio, 2006). Teachers perceived that principals rarely assess the effectiveness of the school's organizational structure in supporting student academic success

4.4 Inferential statistics
4.4.1 Multiple linear regression

Multiple linear regression was used to examine the relationship between the dependent variable and three independent variables in the study. The goal of multiple linear regression was to create a linear equation that best describes how the independent variables collectively influence the dependent variable. The multiple linear regression model was represented by the following equation:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \textstyle\sum$$

Where:

Y   is the students' academic performance dependent variable

X1   is the Authoritative management style independent variable

X2   is the Transformational management style independent variable

X3   is the Transactional management style independent variable

β_0,   is the intercept (the value of the dependent variable when all the other variables are zero

β_1, β_2 and β_3 are the regression coefficients representing the change in the dependent variable associated with one-unit change in the corresponding independent variable when all the other variables are constant.

$\sum$ is the error term

Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)

Multiple regression analysis was used by the help of SPSS system. First the significance of the contributions of the predictors to the students' academic performance in National examination was tested and the results are as shown in Table 4.22 below:

Table 4.2: Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)

<table>
<tr><th colspan="7">ANOVAª</th></tr>
<tr><th colspan="2">Model</th><th>Sum of Squares</th><th>df</th><th>Mean Square</th><th>F</th><th>Sig.</th></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="3">1</td><td>Regression</td><td>343.596</td><td>3</td><td>68.719</td><td>9.481</td><td><.001[b]</td></tr>
<tr><td>Residual</td><td>594.352</td><td>704</td><td>7.248</td><td></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>**Total**</td><td>**937.948**</td><td>**707**</td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr>
</table>

a. Dependent Variable: students' academic performance
b. Predictors: (Constant) Authoritative management style, Transformational management style and Transactional management style

Based on the ANOVA table 4.22 results, it can be concluded that there is a significant relationship between principals' management styles and students' academic performance in the Kenya Certificate of Secondary education examination. This is because the p-value for the F-statistic is less than 0.05, which is the traditional significance level. In other words, there is evidence to suggest that at least one of the variables related to Principals' Management Styles has a significant impact on students' academic performance in the KCSE examination in Mombasa County.

Coefficient of Model regression

To test for the predictive strength of the predicting variables on the dependent variable, model coefficient statistics was carried and the result is summarized in Table 4.23 below.

Table 4.26: Coefficient of Model regression

<table>
<tr><th colspan="7">Coefficients</th></tr>
<tr><th></th><th colspan="2">Unstandardized Coefficients</th><th>Standardized Coefficients</th><th rowspan="2">t</th><th rowspan="2">Sig.</th></tr>
<tr><th></th><th>B</th><th>Std. Error</th><th>Beta</th></tr>
<tr><td>(Constant)</td><td>-4.664</td><td>2.181</td><td></td><td>-2.138</td><td>0.075</td></tr>
<tr><td>Authoritative management style</td><td>0.058</td><td>0.016</td><td>0.315</td><td>3.531</td><td><.001</td></tr>
<tr><td>Transformational management style</td><td>0.002</td><td>0.003</td><td>0.065</td><td>0.627</td><td>0.532</td></tr>
<tr><td>Transactional management style</td><td>0.043</td><td>0.199</td><td>0.023</td><td>0.214</td><td>0.831</td></tr>
</table>

a. Dependent Variable: Students' academic performance

The coefficient for "Authoritative Management Style" is 0.058, and it is statistically significant (t = 3.531, p < 0.001). A positive coefficient suggests that an increase in the authoritative management style is associated with an increase in students' academic performance. This is supported by a study by Oyugi and Gogo (2018) study on Influence of principals' leadership styles on students' academic performance in secondary schools in Awendo sub-county, Kenya. Their study found out that authoritative management style had a significant positive impact on students' academic performance.

The findings of this study support the idea that authoritative leaders are able to create a structured and supportive learning environment, which can lead to improved student outcomes.

The coefficient for "Transformational Management Style" is 0.002, and it is not statistically significant (t = 0.627, p = 0.532). This suggests that the "Transformational Management Style" variable does not have a significant impact on students' academic performance. A study that supports the finding that transformational management style does not have a significant impact on students' academic performance is the study by Maru (2013) on the influence of principals 'leadership styles on students' performance at Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education in Kinangop district, which found out that there was a weak relationship between the transformational leadership and school performance in secondary schools in the district.

The coefficient for "Transactional Management Style" is 0.043, and it is not statistically significant (t = 0.214, p = 0.831). This implies that the "Transactional Management Style" variable does not have a significant impact on students' academic performance. This is supported by the study by Wangui (2017) on Influence of principals' leadership styles on students' performance in national examinations in secondary schools in Nyeri County, Kenya. The study found out that Transactional Management Style does not have a significant impact on students' academic performance.

SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS

Majority of principals in Mombasa County public schools adopt the Authoritative Management Style. Clear expectations, emphasis on rules, top-down decision-making are the characteristics of this style. This is positively associated with higher student achievement in national examinations. Teachers and students appreciate the clear expectations and organized approach. Most principals rarely engage in Transformational Management Style like

inspiring students or promoting creativity. This has limited influence on student performance due to infrequent use. Furthermore, principals rarely provide regular supervision, assess organizational effectiveness, or conduct formal evaluations as is the case in Transactional Management Style. This style is rarely practiced by principals.

CONCLUSIONS

Authoritative management style appear to have a positive influence on student performance in national examinations. The majority of principals in Mombasa County utilize an authoritative management style, characterized by clear expectations, rules, and a top-down approach. This style was associated with higher levels of student performance in national examinations. Principals actively communicate expectations, enforce rules, and provide feedback, contributing to a structured learning environment that supports achievement. Teacher and student perceptions of the authoritative style were positive, indicating its effectiveness in fostering academic success.Transformational and transactional management styles are rarely used by principals and have limited impact on student outcomes. Principals rarely employ transformational management style behaviors like inspiring students, encouraging innovation, and involving them in decision-making. This limited use of transformational management style was reflected in responses from principals, teachers, and students. The study suggests a weak connection between transformational management style and student performance in national examinations. Principals require more time and resources to effectively implement transformational management style. Principals also rarely engage in transactional management style behaviors like regular supervision, monitoring teaching staff, evaluating organizational structure, or conducting formal evaluations. This lack of transactional leadership was evident in responses from all study participants. The study indicates a minimal impact of transactional management style on student performance in national examinations.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Policy Holders

    i.   The Ministry of Education, in collaboration with Teacher Training Colleges and Universities in Kenya, should develop and implement a mandatory training program for principals on effective management styles, specifically focusing on authoritative and transformational approaches.

    ii.   The Ministry of Education should **a**llocate adequate resources to schools to support

the implementation of transformational leadership practices. This could include funding for professional development opportunities, leadership coaches, and technology tools

iii. The ministry of education should also modify performance management systems for principals to include a comprehensive assessment of their **management** styles and its impact on student outcomes.

Academia

i. As part of curriculum development, teacher training colleges and universities in the country should integrate content on management styles theory and practice into teacher training programs. This should include modules on authoritative, Transactional and transformational leadership styles, along with practical strategies for implementation of the same.

ii. Teacher training colleges and universities in the country should encourage and support principals and teachers to engage in action research projects investigating the effectiveness of different management styles in their schools.

iii. The Teachers Service commission(TSC) needs to facilitate the creation of networks and communities of practice for principals to share best practices and learn from each other's experiences with different management styles.

Other Stakeholders

i. The school boards should provide clear expectations and hold principals accountable for utilizing effective management styles that promote student achievement in schools.

ii. Parent-Teacher Associations (PTA) should actively engage with school management and participate in the development and implementation of management strategies that are effective in the schools.

iii. Students should provide constructive feedback to principals and school leadership teams about their management styles and their impact on student learning. This can be done through providing feedback through the suggestion boxes in the schools

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