Influence Of Teacher Leadership Roles On Learners 
Academic Performance In Public Primary School In 
Kaloleni Sub-County, Kilifi, Kenya

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Abstract: In Kenya, many teachers have been 
elevated to leadership positions without much 
training leading to mismanagement of schools, 
therefore, poor students’ performance and 
disappointing results. The kind of leadership 
styles adopted by a leader greatly determines 
the nature of performance in national 
examinations. Good leadership initiates and 
sustains a slow but steady upwards spiral, 
while ineffective leadership only succeeds in 
making academic standards plummet. The study 
aimed at examining the impact of teachers 
leadership styles on the performance of learners 
in the public primary schools. A survey approach 
method based on a descriptive analysis design 
to establish opinions and knowledge about the 
impact of teachers leadership roles on learners 
academic performance in Kaloleni sub-county, 
Kilifi County was used. Both purposive and 
simple random sampling techniques were used 
to select a sample of 30 head teachers and 100 
teachers respectively. Primary data was 
collected from the teachers and head teachers 
using self-administered questionnaires, interview 
guides and observation check list were used as 
research instruments based on the profiles of 
leadership behaviors and own behaviors. Both 
inferential and descriptive statistics was used to 
analyze the data. ANOVA was used to establish 
the perception of teachers and their head 
teachers on leadership styles exhibited by the 
head teachers. Correlation analysis was used to 
show relationship between head teachers’ 
leadership roles and learners’ performance in 
national examinations. The findings revealed that 
the role of monitoring by head teachers impact the 
academic performance of the learners to the 
schools.

Key words: Influence, Leadership, performance, 
learners, roles.

1. Introduction
The effectiveness of learners monitoring by 
teachers is significantly correlated to the school 
performance. That is where teachers are well 
monitored and maintaining learners discipline, 
performance will be enhanced. Kate Millete 
(2012) state that the quality of leadership 
offered by the teachers in schools makes the 
difference between the success and failure of a 
school. That is attributed to the fact that 
students depend on the teachers as role models 
and agents of knowledge transfer. 

Other factors which attributed the same includes 
unpreparedness among teachers, rampant 
absenteeism and drunkenness. Other than the 
inability to timely cover the syllabus and allow 
students to timely prepare for exams, the quality of 
work covered too is also of great importance. As 
Nsubua (2003) noted, “improved efficiency in 
teaching is necessary for enhanced students’ 
performance.”

Failing of students in public primary schools has 
prevailed over the years. This has been attributed to 
the competitive nature of examinations taken at the 
end of primary education cycle which has been 
used as a sieve to transit to acquiring secondary 
education given the limited places in secondary 
schools in the country.

For many years, most public primary schools in 
Kaloleni sub-county in Kilifi County have not 
been performing well. In 2015 for instance, 
Kaloleni sub-county recorded a negative mean 
of 158.3 out of a total of 2662 candidates, only 
9 candidates joined national schools and 461 
candidates managed to obtain 250 marks and 
above (DEO’S records, 2015). Having observed 
the deteriorating students’ academic 
performance the researcher was motivated to 
find out the causes of this poor examination 
outcomes.
Role is a prescribed or expected behavior associated with a particular position or status in a group or a school. A school head teacher or teacher is expected to show patterns of behaviors and responsibilities associated with a headship position within a school. A school head that is in charge of a school has a lot of responsibilities to accomplish. For example, developing strategic vision and direction of the school development, management of staff, students and finances, supervision of the implementation of school curriculum and developing the relationship with the wider community (Business Dictionary, 2013).

According to Meador (2013), a good school head is the one who always leads by example, is positive, enthusiastic, has high energy, initiative, tolerance for ambiguity, sense of humour, analytical ability and common sense, and have a hand in the day to day activities of the school, and listens to what their constituents are saying. An effective leader is available to teachers, staff, members, parents, students and community members. Good leaders remain composed even in difficult situations, think before they act, and put the needs of the school before themselves. An effective leader steps up to fill in gaps as needed even if it isn’t part of their daily routine. In spite of the complexity of problems surrounding the majority of school heads, very little attention has been taken to address issues relating to their appointment, training and support. Most countries continue to appoint heads from within the ranks of senior classroom teachers with little or no preparation for the onerous and complex task of school headship. Despite all these, most researches insist that, the school head must be the main change agent in the school by promoting the increase of capability of the teaching through administering all school activities to secure best outcomes. According to a UNESCO Report (2011), Personal personality of a school head teacher or a teacher may be a determinant for achieving success in school performance as well as in securing collaboration and commitment among staff.

Indeed, the effectiveness of staff monitoring by the headteacher is significantly correlated to the school performance. This is where teachers who are well monitored enhance their performance. Maicibi (2005) contends that, without a proper leadership style, effective performance cannot be realized in schools. Monitoring is observed as one of the crucial tools in enhanced school performance. A study by Concordia University (2013) claims that an effective leader (headteacher) is able to manage curriculum, monitoring lesson plans, allocating resources and evaluating teachers regularly to promote student’s learning and growth.

Various researchers such as Lewin, Tennebaum and Schmitt among others have come up with different leadership style models. However, each of these models focused at a range of styles, ranging from one where a leader makes all the decisions to the ones in which the followers are allowed to make decisions as their own. A key element in each of these models is to determine which style is the most appropriate at a given situation.

Lewin's studies had a group of researchers to identify different leadership styles. The study established three major leadership styles. They are; autocrat, democratic and laissez-faire leadership styles. Leadership style is the manner and approach of providing direction, implementing plans and motivating people. Lewin led a group of researchers to identify different styles of leadership. This early study has been very influential and established three major leadership styles. The three major styles of leadership are Autocratic or Authoritarian, Democratic (participative) and Laissez faire. A good leader uses all three styles, with one of them normally dominant while bad leaders tend to stick with one style (Oluremi, 2013).

In his study, Lewin found out that it was more difficult to move from an authoritarian to a democratic style, than vice versa. Abuse of authoritarian style is viewed as controlling, bossy and dictatorial. Lewin's study found out that Democratic leadership was generally the most effective. In his study, children in this group were less productive than the members of the autocratic group, but their contributions were of much higher quality. Children under the Laissez-faire leadership were the least productive of all the three groups, Waters, Marzano, and Mcnutt (2003), described that the caliber of leadership in a school could have a dramatic effect on student achievement. Furthermore, there was a strong relationship between effective leadership style and student achievement.

2. Research Gap

In spite of the various roles of school, head teachers and teachers as synthesized in the reviewed literature, there is still deficit in the literature regarding the roles of leaders in public primary schools in Kaloleni sub-county, Kilifi County. Different issues like the obstacle in fulfilling the roles of school heads, the success or failure in fulfilling the roles of school heads and the consequences of the success or failure on students’ academic performance and other socio-cultural aspects of the students and the general community among many other issues are, also not addressed in the literature. Having observed the deteriorating students’ academic performance, the researcher was motivated to find out the causes of
students not performing well in the national examinations.

3. Methodology

The description – survey design was adopted to determine the impact of leadership roles in the academic performance of learners in the Public Primary schools of Kaloleni sub-county, Kilifi County. Description study design is characterized by its ability to facilitate sourcing for information without manipulating the variables. This design is relevant because it enables the researcher to collect data from a sample of information that will be used to determine the effects of leadership roles on pupils’ academic performance. According to Orodho (2009), survey design, is the most frequently used method for collecting information about people’s attitudes, opinions, habits or any of the variety of education or social issues.

1. Target Population

Kaloleni Sub-county has two zones namely; Kaloleni and Mariakani. The sub-county has a total of 74 Public Primary schools, 300 teachers and 74 head teachers. The research targeted 30 schools and 100 teachers from Mariakani Zone as sample size because most schools in this Zone performed poorly during the Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE), according to the District Education Officer’s Report (D.EO’s Office, 2010-2015). In 2013’s results only 3 public primary schools got a mean score of 250 and above out of 33 schools. In 2014, 5 schools got a mean score of 250 and above out of 33 schools. In 2015, only 4 public primary schools achieved a mean score of 250 and above out of 36 public primary schools. The same number (4) out of 36 public primary schools in 2016 (DEO’s Office, 2013-2016).

2. Research Instruments

Questionnaires, interviews guides and observation checklists were used as research instruments. Qualitative interviews were conducted with key informants who included the curriculum supervision officer, the county officer, director of education, and head teachers. Each interview was conducted by the researcher while data collected was recorded by note-taking.

The study utilized research questionnaires to collect data from class teachers and head teachers. 30 and 100 questionnaires were used for head teachers and teachers respectively.

3. Data collection and Analysis

The researcher sought authority to carry out research from the National commission for science and technology and innovation (NACOSTI); a clearance certificate was also sought from both the deputy county commissioner (DCC) and the sub county Director of Education Kaloleni Sub-county.

The data collected was analyzed depending on the type of data collected. First the pre-test and post-test was analyzed to test whether the environment which the pupils learnt had an impact on the performance outcomes.

Pupils’ grades were analyzed to verify the validity of whether motivation for both teachers and learners enhanced the academic performance of the learners.

The learners’ results were coded to check for factors like whether monitoring of teachers and learners, whether keeping professional records and maintaining discipline had an influence on learners academy performance. Both qualitative and quantitative approaches were used and this brings in the use of description statistics in presenting the collected data. The data presentation involved the use of frequency tables, pie charts and bar graphs. Inferential statistical analysis was used to infer qualitative data during the interviews. The statistical package for social science (SPSS) version 21 for windows was used in tabulation, coding and analysis. ANOVA was used to establish the perception of teachers and their headteachers on leadership styles exhibited by the head teachers. Correlation analysis was used to show the relationship between headteachers’ roles and learners performance in national examinations.

4. Results and Discussion

Figure 4.2: Impact of monitoring teachers and learners
From figure 4.2 with a mean of (1.30), majority of the teachers 101 (82.1%) indicated that monitoring of teachers and learners impact on learners performance in the schools. 11(8.9%) of the teachers disagreed that monitoring of teachers and learners impacts on the learners performance in the schools. 11(8.9%) of the teachers disagreed that monitoring of teachers and learners impact on the learners performance in the schools. 9 (7.3%) partially indicated that monitoring of teachers and learners did not affect the learners performance in the schools, while 2(1.6%) partially indicated that monitoring of teachers and learners did not impact on the learners academic performance in the schools.

This was interpreted to mean that monitoring of teachers and learners in most schools has an effect on the performance of the learners.

As noted earlier in the background to the study the core business of the school is teaching and learning in order to give students quality education. As an affirmation of the above, it is stated that one of the indicators of quality education being provided is cognitive achievement of learners (Kimani et al, 2013). It has been said earlier that school leaders and parents have a critical role in providing quality education for the learners. But it can be argued that for quality education to prevail, all education stakeholders should take part in the translation, interpretation and implementation of policies regarding achievements of high standards of education.

However, there is evidence from research carried out by Tela (2007) that students can play critical role in improving academic performance. Indeed, there are several ways students can have an impact on their academic achievements, among them being, when the students help low achievers upgrade their grades and enhance their confidence.

Several factors have been attributed as contributing to student’s poor academic performance. They include; the language barrier. Many students enter the classrooms when they are not fluent in the language of interaction, and yet the same languages are used for testing student’s mastery of subject’s content as well as used in the examinations. The students may understand the concept in their mother tongue but fail to express them in the examinable language. As Pinnock in Eiworth (2013) says, “At the end the student is rated a low achiever because of the language problems.”

### Table 4.10: Impact of maintaining learner’s discipline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>93.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partially agree</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

![Impact of monitoring of teachers and learners](image-url)
Disagree                                  2                                        1.6  
Partially disagree          1                                 0.8  
Total                             123                               100                                  1.10

From table 4.10 with a mean of (1.10), 115(93.5%) of the teachers indicated that maintaining the learners discipline enhances their academic performance in the schools. 5(4.1%) of the teachers partially agreed that maintaining learners discipline in the schools has an impact on their academic performance. 2(1.6%) of the teachers disagreed that maintaining of the learners discipline enhances their academic performance in school. However, 1(0.8%) of the teachers partially disagreed that maintaining of the teachers learners discipline enhances their academic performance in the schools. This was therefore interpreted to mean that, maintaining of learners discipline in the schools enhances their academic performance.

Figure 4.8: Impact of keeping professional records on the academic performance of the learners

Impact of keeping of professional records by teachers

![Bar chart showing frequency of teachers' responses](chart)

Observation from figure 4.8 with a mean of (1.41), indicates that 94(76.4%) of the teachers agreed that keeping of professional records has an impact on the academic performance of the learners in the schools. However, 18(14.6%) of the teachers disagreed that keeping of the professional records by the teachers enhances academic performance of the learners in the schools, while 2(1.6%) of the teachers partially disagreed that keeping of professional performance of the learners in the school.9(7.3%) of the head teachers partially indicated that the keeping of professional records by teachers enhances their academic performance in the schools. This was therefore interpreted to mean that the practice of keeping professional records by the teachers influences the learner’s academic performance in the schools.
Impact of school environment on learner’s academic performance in their schools

According to figure 4.11, 114(92.7%) of the teachers agreed that the school environment influences the academic performance of the learners in the schools. 5(4.1%) partially agreed that the school environment impacts on the academic performance of the learners in the school. 3(2.4%) of the respondents disagreed that the school environment has an impact on the academic performance of the learners in the schools while 1 (0.8%) of the teachers partially disagreed that the school environment has an influence on the academic performance of the learners in the schools. This was therefore interpreted to mean that the school environment has an impact on the academic performance of the learners in the schools.

5.2.1 Summary

The first objectives of the study was to establish the role of the monitoring on the learners academic performance in the primary schools of Kaloleni Sub – County, Kilifi – County. The study established that there is growing concern about the type of students schools produce. The industry is now questioning the integrity of the present day head teachers and teachers, BOM / PA members, policy makers, educators and the parents. In this article, critical theory is going to be used to understand the nature of problems attributed to the student’s low performance. Critical theory is based on facts that the respondents are human beings who need to be given freedom from circumstances which seem to enslave them, and prescribe the type of behaviour a democratic society is expected to entail. The approach is in agreement with the idea that critical theory “provides the descriptive and normative bases for social inquiry aimed at decreasing domination and increasing freedom in all their forms”. This means that with critical theory the disempowered individual are empowered. In this sense head teachers and teachers have been criticized for the poor students academic performance because they are duty bound to make students go through all forms of testing.

On the frequencies of the poor performance, it was established that most of the learners are performing poorly due to inadequate supervision and proper role modeling by Head teachers.

5.2.2 Role of teacher’s leadership styles

The second research objective of the study was to assess the role of leadership style on the academic performance of the learners in the primary schools of Kaloleni Sub – County as shown in figure (4.3). This has been attributed to poor leadership styles. According to the findings most of the learners have been posting low or poor results due to the poor leadership styles.

It was also evident that other factors that impact on the learner’s performance in the schools included;
5.2.3 Impact of staff supervision on learner’s academic performance

The third objective was to establish the impact of staff supervision on the academic performance of the learners in the primary school of Kaloleni Sub – County, Kilifi County – Kenya. According to the findings as discussed in table (4.6) of chapter four, respondents majorly agreed that staff supervision impacts negatively on learners academic performance in the primary schools of Kaloleni Sub – County, Kilifi – County, Kenya. Hence, therefore, Head teachers, BOM / PA members and teachers should embrace proper methods of supervision of the staff to enhance the learner’s performance in the schools.

5.2.4 Determining the role of BOM / PA

The fourth objective of the study was to determine the role of BOM / PA on the learner’s academic performance in the primary schools of Kaloleni Sub – County, Kilifi County, Kenya. The study established that parents have a role in the school administration and are expected not to sit and watch as headteachers run down the institutions. Head teachers who used teamwork by involving parents, teachers and learners in the running of the institutions enhanced performance of their schools. Management was identified as the utilization of physical and human resources through cooperation efforts in order to realize the established areas.

It was also established that BOM / PA members should be actively involved in school matters through promoting infrastructure, motivating teachers and learners so as to enhance high learners academic performance as discussed in table (4.5).

5.3 Conclusion

The findings revealed that the role of monitoring by headteachers impact the academic performance of the learners to the schools. This is the agreement with (Henry and Blanchard, 1988) was agree that leadership is a dynamic process varying from situation to situation with changes in learners followers and the situation.

it was also concluded that low academic performance of the learners was attributable to leadership style. This was in the agreement with (Cole, 2004, Orodho, 2015) who contend that, for a school to perform well in academics and in co-curricular activities, effective leadership is needed.

The findings further revealed that staff supervision has an impact on the academic performance of the learners in the schools. Effective instructional leadership and behavior of the school leader has been shown to be the most crucial role to improve teachers performance and learner’s academic achievement (Strauss, 2013)

It was also concluded that the BOM / PA roles have an impact on the learners academic performance in the schools. This is in agreement with (Ibrahim, 2011) management of a school is entrusted to the school BOM / PA management committees.

5.4 Recommendations of the study

In view of the findings and conclusions of the study, it was recommended that the following measures should be taken to enhance and uphold high academic performance in the school:-

(i) The government through the Ministry of Education should ensure that proper policies are drawn for proper monitoring in schools by the headteachers for enhance high academic standards in the schools.

(ii) The school leadership and in particular the head teachers should embrace leadership styles that promote high learners academic performance and more so the instructional leadership style.

(iii) The Ministry of Education should enhance proper staff supervision through effective instructional leadership so as to improve teachers performance and learner’s academic achievement.

(iv) The government through the Ministry of Education should clearly redefine the roles and duties of the BOM / PA management committees for they impact on the learner’s academic outcomes.

5.5 Suggestion for further research

- This study was in only one sub-county and therefore the findings cannot be generalized to other Sub-counties in the county. Further study should be conducted to enhance generalizability of the findings to validates them. This search was only done to public primary schools in the sub-county, therefore further & researcher should be extended to the
privates school on the impact of leadership roles in the academic performance of the learners.

- Further researcher should be conducted to examine the roles of parents on the academic performance of the learners in the school. Further study should also be conducted to investigate the challenges faced by most currents education managers, where changes is act rapid pace, scope and range.

REFERENCES


[3] County Director Kilifi Office (2015) A Survey of Public Primary Schools in KILIFI County ...agreed and according to appropriate rules, and that reports are .... In 2015 only 4 public primary schools achieved a mean score of 250 and above out of 36 public primary school in Kaloleni Sub-County Kilifi County.


