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The Effect of Head Teachers' Involvement of Teachers on Pupils' Academic Performance in Primary Schools in Moiben Sub-County, Kenya

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Abstract:
The study sought to establish the influence of head teachers' leadership styles on pupils' academic performance in public primary schools in Moiben Sub-County in Uasin Gishu County of Kenya. Based on the study, this paper explores the effect of head teachers' teacher involvement on pupils' academic performance in primary schools. The study was guided by scientific management theories. The study adopted a descriptive survey design and the sample population for the study consisted of 45 head teachers and 160 teachers from the selected45 schools in Moiben Sub-County. Questionnaires and interview schedules were used as instruments for data collection. The research instruments were pre-tested to improve their validity and reliability. The reliability coefficient was 0.765. The collected data was cleaned up, coded and entered into the SPSS computer program version 20 for analysis. Descriptive statistics included percentages and other measures of central tendencies which were used to analyse the data. Based on the findings, majority of the teachers agreed on the head teachers' teacher involvement. Based on these findings, it was, therefore, concluded that involvement of teachers by the head teacher resulted in improved academic performance in public primary schools in Moiben Sub-County. It is also recommended that head teachers should be further trained in areas of management so that they can enhance administrative support to the teachers for better academic outcomes.

Keywords: Head teachers, involvement, teachers, pupils, academic performance, primary schools, Moiben, Kenya

1. Introduction
Leadership has been a crucial component of school changes over the last several decades (Murphy, 2005). In school reform, leadership may be the most important determinant of the head teachers' success and effective learning environments. As leaders, head teachers are expected to understand the procedures and processes that create the conditions necessary for improvement in primary schools. As skilled leaders, head teachers must precisely envision future school needs and empower others to share and implement that vision. Further, they must be able to assess and evaluate the impact and perceptions of their leadership styles (Kelley *et al.*, 2005).

In the current complex and rapidly changing school environment, the role of the head teacher has changed dramatically from the past as a result of legislative and educational reforms and increasingly high expectations and complex problems that pupils, teachers and parents bring to the school context (Miami-Dade County PSSUPI, 2006). The school head teacher is expected to continue building leadership capacity of the teaching staff (Fullan, 2002; Murphy, 2005). In order to meet these challenging demands and expectations from the stakeholders, the concept of a strong head teacher has shifted from the traditional one of an isolated authority focused on discipline and record-keeping to that of an instructional leader and team player with vision for reform (Janc & Appelbaum, 2004).

From mid-1980s, education stakeholders have continually increased their demand for school systems to raise standards and improve students' academic performance (Adams & Kirst, 1999). Subsequently, education scholars began to examine school leadership and the link between leadership and school effectiveness (Adams & Kirst, 1999). Leithwood, Jantzi and Steinback (2003) identify the large-scale school reform, accountability initiatives and the pressure placed on the head teachers to improve learners' achievement. A lot of accountability initiatives are based on high-stakes standardized testing, which is typically incongruent with what most educators recognize as effective ways of measuring quality teaching and learning (Adams & Kirst, 1999).

The step taken towards greater accountability is simultaneous with the increasing number of research studies attempting to measure the impact of school leadership (Hallinger, 2003). According to Leithwood (1992), the move towards transformational leadership made many school leaders to believe in creating the conditions that enable the teachers to find their own directions. Therefore, new concepts took shape in research and theory such as "shared leadership", "teacher leadership", "distributed leadership" and "transformational leadership" (Hallinger, 2003). According to Hallinger (2003), the emergence of these models was an indication of

the broader dissatisfaction with the instructional leadership model that focused too much on the head teacher as the centre of expertise, power and authority. Indeed, the new examination of the head teachers' leadership styles was the beginning of the trend towards transformational leadership in education.

School leaders and generally the education officers, being mandated to lead the education sector, have been the focus of intense scrutiny in recent years as researchers attempt to define the qualities of effective leadership and its impact on the operations of schools and pupils' achievement (Centre for Comprehensive School Reform and Improvement, 2009). Leithwood, Seashow-Louis, Anderson and Wahlstrom (2004) make two critical and very important claims that:

i) Leadership is second only to classroom instruction among all other school-related factors that contribute to what pupils learn in school.

ii) School leadership effects by the head teacher are usually largest where and when they are needed most. In the absence of a powerful leader, troubled schools may not be turned around towards greater pupils' achievement. There may be numerous other contributors to such outcomes; however, head teacher's leadership is the key substance.

1.1. Head Teachers' Teacher Involvement and Pupils' Performance
Leadership, especially head-teachers' leadership, has been the object of many studies since the late 1960s. No consensus has ever been reached over the actual role and relevance of leadership within the school environment (Fullan, 2001; Sergiovanni, 2001; Harris, 2005). Good leadership can certainly contribute to schools' improved performance. Adept head teachers motivate their staff and students to do more. They foster an environment proactive thinking and ensure educational activities are properly coordinated. Research works have expanded the scope of school management discourse. Most of them currently involve other shareholders in education such as the school boards of management, heads of various departments, directors of various units, instructors, student leaders, among others (Goldhaber, 2002; Harris, 2004).

Ramsey (2010) believes that leadership styles are as many as people's character traits. Some approaches are either flexible while others are unyielding. Certain leaders employ manipulation while others encourage participation. Considering the major role and influence that head teachers' have in schools, they must involve teachers in their pursuit of better performance. This is because teacher-student relationships define most what encompasses quality education. Therefore, enlisting the commitment of teachers to the achievement of school goals and objectives and in defining culture of the school should be high in the leadership priorities of teachers. Involvement of teachers in school leadership can help head teachers to initiate and maintain the kind the atmosphere that will foster effective teaching and learning in schools (Parsons, 2005).

Dinham (2005) and Townsend (2007) have found that school leadership plays an important role in the success of a school. Efficient and productive educational heads nurture and rely on meaningful interactions (Crum & Sherman, 2008).They motivate teachers to exert extra efforts in their work, which in turn translates to improved teaching and learning (Eyal & Roth, 2011; Leithwood & Mascall, 2008). Effective school leaders are particularly keen to ensure that there are different mechanisms for teachers to communicate and work collectively (Murphy *et al*., 2007).

Quinn (2002) has conducted a study on the relationship between head teachers' leadership behaviour and the instructional practices. The study findings support the view that leadership impacts the involvement of other parties in the decision-making process (Quinn, 2002). Quinn (2002) further argues that school leadership is important in developing a system that appreciates and constantly endeavours for excellence. Quinn's (2002) study further indicates that an effective head teacher can transform a school that lacks direction and purpose to a happy, goal oriented and productive one. Therefore, it may be argued that an effective leadership is crucial in increasing productivity and in transforming a school for better academic performance.

Education is a worthy venture. It equips people with the capacity to take part in social transformation (Republic of Kenya, 2001). In the current fast-changing world, no single individual can hold monopoly over information, vision or ability to succeed (Muthondu, 2007). The old form of leadership that vested all power and titles in the hands of one or a few individuals, in most cases the males, is rapidly becoming dysfunctional. It has become more difficult to lead people who are better educated and more informed. Therefore, leaders in current contexts must be trained to adapt to rapidly changing society and make every effort to teach and model the most effective styles of leadership.

There are many determinants and indicators of learners' academic achievements. These include provision of physical facilities, optimal classroom sizes, effective school discipline policies, administrative support and effective leadership. Other studies conducted in Botswana, Nigeria and Papua New Guinea concurs with this (Muli, 2005). Good leadership provides the necessary guidance, clear direction and rewards for effective performance in an organization. Okumbe (2001) averts that human resources are the most important assets in any organization and, therefore, the success of an organization depends entirely on how effectively workers are managed. This means that continuous effort is needed to achieve integration where all the members are involved and work together with a sense of common purpose to achieve common objectives.

School exist as communities in themselves. This means a considerate head encourages participation of all in this community. At the same time, such a leader does not feel obliged to unquestioningly accept the group's thinking. A good leader seeks consensus before making decisions. Newstrom and Keith (2002) posit that a laissez-faire leader turns over almost all authority to group members and does as little leading as possible. In contexts where the responsibilities of each subordinate are well-stated, such heads may not bother following up on the staff. They make few attempts to increase productivity of their employees.

The laissez-faire leader is tantamount to become distanced from the operations of a system. This style of leadership may result in indiscipline due to poor enforcement of rules and regulations in a school resulting further in poor academic performance. Effective management and administration can elevate a school to new heights. Incompetent head teachers are a big problem to the overall

administration and management of education in any country (Sifuna& Otiende, 1994). Luthan (2002) asserts that efficiency is valid only to the extent to which it contributes to achievement of goals of organizational goals and the extent to which it enables optimal conditions for the environment for the survival of the organization.

Bell (1993) argue that effective leadership provides a school with a vision, explicit philosophy formulated through consultation and team work, all of which lead to best outcomes. Mwalala (2008) cites lack of management skills by head teachers as a major factor contributing to poor performance in national examinations. The school head teacher must engage the teaching staffs through the use of appropriate leadership styles. This is the only way the head teacher will succeed in directing staff efforts and in creating a conducive climate for students to improve performance in academics. Bersy (1995) advise that the leadership style adopted by a leader should assist in linking the situations at hand with an appropriate style.

Two dimensions of leadership behaviour have been identified, labelled as consideration and initiating structure (Judge, Piccolo & Llies, 2004). The first dimension is concerned with defining the link between the leaders and subjects. It also explores defined networks of a system, avenues of interaction and processes. Consideration includes leader behaviour that indicates friendship, trust, warmth, interest and respect in the relationship between the leader and members of the work group. Good leaders are defined as those who integrate the two dimensions (Judge *et al.*, 2004). Superiors and subordinates tend to evaluate the contributions of the leaders' behaviour and dimension which positively assess the effectiveness. Only a slight relationship exists between how leaders say they should behave and how subordinates say that they do behave (Wayne, 2008). Luthan (2002), in support of this research, cites effective leadership as being a process of consideration and initiating structure.

Sheilds (2005) and Day, Harris, Hadfield, Tolley and Beresford (2000) agree that the duties of a head teacher are not only limited to carrying out functional duties like organizing, coordinating and evaluating but they also need to be a role model and source of inspiration to all the teachers. Apart from these, the school head is also required to practice leadership styles that emphasize on humanistic values such as building a harmonious relationship with the teachers, being transparent, approachable, motivating and guiding the teachers (Bush, 2003). On the other hand, Fook (2000) opines that the nation's educational aspirations will not reach its objectives if the school leadership focuses only on administrative chores when the school leadership field today is much more dynamic, complex and demanding (Speck, 1999; Herbert, 2006) and requires head teachers who are capable of enhancing dedication among teachers.

2. Materials and Methods

This study was conducted in Moiben Sub-County in Uasin Gishu County. Uasin Gishu County is located in the former Rift Valley Province. It borders Trans Nzoia to the North, Nandi to the southwest and Bungoma to the west, Kericho to the south, Baringo to the southeast, Elgeyo Marakwet County to the East. The main economic activity in Moiben Sub-County is farming. The Sub-County is surrounded by Soy Sub-County in its west, Ainabkoi Sub-County in its east and Kesses Sub-County in its south. The study used descriptive survey research design. Cohen and Manion (1992) state that descriptive survey are vital when collecting information in the context of time, interpreting existing conditions, identifying standards against which they can be compared, and determining the relationships that exist between specific events. This research design was appropriate for the study because it involved gathering data from a large area.

The study targeted a total of 90 primary schools. This number was obtained from the records in the Sub-County's Education Office as of 2015. The target population therefore for this study consisted of 90 primary schools, 90 head teachers, and 500 teachers of primary schools in Moiben Sub-County. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003), 30% or above of the total population is good for study therefore the researcher took 50% of 90 public primary schools in Moiben Sub-County making a sample of 45 schools. By use of purposive sampling all head teachers (45) participated in the study. Finally, by use simple random sampling 3 teachers of each school though in some schools there were few teachers (4-5 teachers) thus making the researcher to pick all of them. This brought the sample size for teachers to 160 teachers.

This study used questionnaires and interviews as tools for data collection. Questionnaires administered to the teachers and interview schedule to the head teachers. The questionnaire items were both closed-ended and open-ended. The respondents were required to respond to closed-ended questions by ticking the responses that were applicable on the basis of information sought. This gave them an opportunity to freely express their opinions on leadership styles. The study used the structured interview method where there was a set of pre-determined questions to which respondents were expected to respond. After data collection the information was collated with those of questionnaires so as to rule out inaccurate information due to lack of understanding of questions on questionnaires by the respondents as advised by Peters (1996).

The data collected was cleaned and coded immediately the questionnaires were received from the field on the basis of the objectives of the study. The editing helped check on the completeness and logic of the answers, consistency and relevance of the responses to the items of the objectives set. Errors or omissions in the filled up items of the questionnaires were corrected. The responses from the interview schedules were coded by allocating them to categories and themes of similar items in the questionnaires according to the strength of the reference. The responses were then interpreted based on the consistency of the facts and logical themes adduced to them. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used during data analysis on every objective set using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) computer program.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Head Teachers' Involvement of Teachers
The study sought to find out how aspects of head teachers' involvement of teachers influenced academic performance in their schools. The findings on this objective were as presented in Table 1 below.

Statement	SA	A	N	SD	D
	F(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
Head teacher inspires teachers to participate in developing school programmes which contribute to improved performance.	35(23.3)	106(70.7)	5(3.3)	0(0)	0(0)
Head teacher involves teachers in procurement of instructional materials and this has influenced pupils' performance.	28(18.7)	110(73.3)	2(1.3)	2(1.3)	4(2.7)
Head teacher involves teachers in subject allocation and this improves teaching.	38(25.3)	104(69.3)	4(2.7)	0(0)	0(0)
The head teacher respects teachers' opinion regarding pupil's discipline and academic improvement.	26(17.3)	113(75.3)	5(3.3)	2(1.3)	0(0)
Head teacher calls for meetings for both teachers and pupils to discuss issues affecting the school.	23(15.3)	113(75.3)	3(2.0)	1(0.7)	6(4.0)
Head teacher involves teachers and pupils in school administration.	24(16.0)	116(77.3)	6(4.0)	0(0)	0(0)

Table 1: Head Teachers' Involvement of Teachers

The findings in Table 1 above show that 106(70.7%) teachers who responded agreed that their head teacher involved them in school programme development with 35(23.3%) strongly agreeing. Besides these responses, others, 5(3.3%), were neutral and 4(2.7%) did not give any response. From the analysis, it can be substantiated that majority of the teachers' working in selected schools in Moiben Sub-County asserted that the head teachers in their schools involved them in school programme development while minority were neutral. This implies that there is teacher participation in school programme development in most of the schools which is in line with current school of thought that schools can no longer be managed by a lone figure at the top of the administrative hierarchy. This, therefore, shows that head teachers in the selected schools in Moiben Sub-County ensured that their teachers were involved in the affairs of schools and this had enhanced effective running of instructional processes.

The study further sought to find out if head teachers involved teachers in their schools' procurement process. The findings revealed that 110(73.3%) agreed, 28(18.7%) strongly agreed, 4(2.7%) disagreed, 2(1.3%) were neutral and 4(2.7%) did not give any response on this issue. This implied that majority of the teachers said that their head teachers involved them in the procurement of materials while a few disagreed with the statement. Involvement of teachers in procurement is very important as teachers get to have the opportunity to identify the exact quantities and quality of materials they need to support effective and efficient delivery of services and result in pupils' academic performance.

The research also sought to ascertain whether or not head teachers' involved teachers in subject allocation. The findings showed that most, 104(69.3%), of the teachers agreed that they were involved in subject allocation. This score was followed by 38(25.3%) who strongly agreed. Few, 4(2.7%), others remained neutral and another small, 4(2.7%), sample did not give any response. The conclusion on this issue is that most of the head teachers in the sampled schools involved their staff in subject allocation, which is a vital factor towards realization of good performance for both teachers and pupils as well as recording of high performance index for the schools. This shows that head teachers are able to identify the areas of specialization of the teachers which this ensures that teachers are given an opportunity to explore their expertise in their subjects.

In addition, the study sought to determine whether or not head teachers' from the sampled schools in Moiben Sub-County respected the opinions of their teachers and how this influenced pupils' academic performance. The findings indicated that majority, 113(75.3%), of the teachers agreed that the heads of their schools respected their opinions on pupils' performance and were also backed up by those who strongly agreed, 26(17.3%). However, 5(3.3%) were neutral, 2(2.7%) strongly disagreed and 4(2.7%) never responded to the question. These findings echo the view by Okumbe (2001) that human resources are the most important assets in any organization and, therefore, the success of an organization depends entirely on how effectively workers are managed.

The study further sought to establish whether or not head teachers of selected schools in Moiben Sub-County held meetings for both staff and pupils. The findings elicited varying views with the larger number, 113(75.3%), being those who agreed, followed by 23(15.3%) who strongly agreed while a few, 6(4%), disagreed, 1(0.7%) strongly disagreed, 3(2.0%) were neutral and 4(2.7%) never gave any response. It is clear that a larger number of head teachers in this region held meetings for both teachers and pupils to discuss academic performance. Such meetings are important tools of management since they provide a lee way for identifying areas that need more attention. They also help to identify issues relating to availability and use of instructional resources and to establish whether or not teachers and pupils' needs are met.

On whether or not head teachers from selected schools in Moiben Sub-County involved their teaching staff and pupils in school administration, the research results showed that majority, 116(77.3%), of the respondents agreed, 24(16.0%) strongly agreed, 6(4.0%) were neutral and 4(2.7%) did not give any response to the question. The involvement of teachers and pupils in school administration brings about teamwork which is a necessity in order to attain set educational goals. This helps to ensure that teachers and pupils feel a part of the school system.

Participatory or shared leadership can certainly contribute to schools' improved performance. Therefore, adept head teachers motivate their staff and students to do more. They foster an environment proactive thinking and ensure educational activities are properly coordinated. Research works have expanded the scope of school management discourse. Most of them currently involve other shareholders in education such as the school boards of management, heads of various departments, directors of various units, instructors, student leaders, among others (Goldhaber, 2002; Harris, 2004).

3.2. Improvement of Head Teacher Interactions/Relationships in School

Another issue examined by the researcher was the views of the head teachers in relation to how their interactions/relationships in school could be improved. Of the head teachers, 22(48.8%) identified teamwork, 6(13.3%) said respect, 3(0.06%) mentioned good environment, 4(0.08%) indicated listening to everyone, 8(17.8%) said sharing ideas and decisions, 1(0.02%) picked obtaining the support of the BOM and 1(0.02%) head teacher made no response. Teamwork stood out as the most considered way of improving head teacher interactions/relationships with support of the frequencies indicated. Teamwork is cooperation among all stakeholders, staff, pupils and the community at large, which plays a major role in the advancement of institutions as well as the public in general. Support enables staff to achieve exemplary results; therefore, head teachers who receive administrational support will tend to achieve their goals with greater ease than those who feel unsupported.

Efficient and productive educational heads nurture and rely on meaningful interactions (Crum & Sherman, 2008). Sheilds (2005) and Day*et al.* (2000) agree that the duties of a head teacher are not only limited to carrying out functional duties like organizing, coordinating and evaluating but they also need to be a role model and source of inspiration to all the teachers. Apart from these, the school head is also required to practice leadership styles that emphasize on humanistic values such as building a harmonious relationship with the teachers, being transparent, approachable, motivating and guiding the teachers (Bush, 2003). On the other hand, Fook (2009) opines that the nation's educational aspirations will not reach its objectives if the school leadership focuses only on administrative chores when the school leadership field today is much more dynamic, complex and demanding (Speck, 1999; Herbert, 2006) and requires head teachers who are capable of enhancing dedication among teachers.

4. Conclusion and Recommendations

The findings on whether or not head teachers involved teachers in subject allocation had most respondents agreeing. In addition, responses on whether or not head teachers respected teachers' opinions about pupils' discipline and academic improvement had most teachers agreeing. On the issue of head teachers calling for meetings for both teachers and pupils to discuss school related agendas, majority agreed. Further, on whether or not head teachers involved both teachers and pupils in school administration, most of the teacher respondents agreed. Based on these findings, it is recommended that there is need to support head teachers' leadership styles as they have a direct bearing on students' academic performance. All parties in the school have to be involved in the activities of the school for better academic performance.

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