EFFECTS OF PRINCIPALS’ LEADERSHIP STYLES ON STUDENTS’ PERFORMANCE IN KCSE IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN MERU CENTRAL DISTRICT, KENYA

By

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ABSTRACT

This aim of this study was to investigate the effects of leadership styles on the performance of secondary students in KCSE in Meru Central District. Three research questions were formulated to guide the study. Research questions one sought to identify the various administrative styles used by principals of public secondary schools and their effect on students' performance in national examinations. Research questions two aimed at determining the degree of awareness of the principals of their leadership and the way this awareness affected students' academic outcomes while research questions three sought to find out the shortcomings encountered by the principals in the selected styles of leadership and their effects on the students achievements. The design adapted for this study was descriptive survey. The sample comprised of 37 principals of public secondary schools and 185 teachers. Simple random sampling was used to select the respondents. Data were collected by use of questionnaires.

The findings revealed that almost half (48.6%) the number of principals were democratic in their leadership while a significant lower (37.1%) number were autocratic. It was also found that the principals encountered a number of shortcomings which included teachers failing to attend lessons, teachers reporting late to schools, and teachers failing to take instructions from the principals and lack of syllabus coverage in time. Findings further showed that majority of the teachers viewed principals as autocratic and a relatively low number were perceived as democratic. The study established a significant relationship between principals leadership style and students performance.
Based on the findings, it was concluded that most of the headteachers used the democratic leadership style while others used autocratic leadership style; that principals encountered a number of shortcomings; that in most schools principals were viewed as autocratic while a relatively low number of teachers perceived them as democratic. The study concluded that a significant relationship existed between principals' leadership style and students' performance.

The study recommended that there is need for enhancing principals' leadership styles as they had a direct relationship with students' academic performance. It was also recommended that the principals should use the most appropriate leadership style that facilitate collective responsibility and which creates a conducive teaching and learning environment in schools. It was also recommended that there is need to involve teachers and parents in matters of students' performance in schools.

It was suggested that a study on the relationship between teachers level of motivation and students' academic achievement, a study on teachers' perception of principals leadership styles and their job performance and a study on the effect of principals related factors and students' performance should be conducted.