

Abstract

The Kenya Government has invested resources on Free Primary Education in improving academic performance of primary schools. Despite the high investment by government through Kenya Education Management Institute in training school heads, the performance in Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE) in many schools is still low especially in Tindiret Sub-County. This may be attributed to influence of headteachers leadership styles among other factors. This study investigated the influence of selected headteachers' leadership styles and academic performance of public primary schools. The study was grounded in four leadership styles, namely; autocratic, democratic, laissez faire and transformational leadership. The specific objectives of the study were to determine the influence of selected headteacher's leadership styles; autocratic, laissez faire, democratic and transformational and academic performance of public primary schools in Tindiret Sub-County and to establish the relationship between leadership styles and academic performance of pupils in primary schools in Tindiret Sub-County. The study adopted descriptive research design. The target population comprised of 76 headteachers and 532 teachers in Tindiret Sub-County. A sample size of 84 teachers (30% of the accessible population) and 40 head teachers was randomly selected in the 2 school categories of public day and public boarding primary schools. Stratified random sampling was used to select respondents based on the school category. Two-self-administered questionnaires (for teachers and head teachers) were used to obtain data on leadership styles in relation to academic performance of schools. Document analysis of KCPE results gathered information about Tindiret Sub-county KCPE performance from 2013 to 2017. The reliability index value of 0.731 was obtained for teachers and 0.74 for headteachers questionnaire respectively which were above the threshold of 0.7. The instruments were also validated by experts from the Department of CIEM, Egerton University. Data collected was coded, entered in SPSS and analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics; chi square at 0.05 significant level to test hypothesis. In line with the study findings, it was found out that when head teacher utilised laissez and autocratic leadership styles, the academic performance of schools decreased. When transformational and democratic leadership styles were used, academic performance increased significantly. To improve academic performance in schools, there is need for headteachers to involve other stakeholders in decision-making as part of leadership practice, school administrations need also to involve teachers and pupils in setting school targets; school administration need to hold regular meetings with stakeholders and apply transformational leadership ideals for the

purpose of improving school academic performance. This study provides information that may help Ministry of Education in improving in-service programmes on leadership for headteachers that would improve academic performance of schools.

Keywords

Leadership styles -- Academic performance