Worthiness of the leadership style used by heads of schools in Kigamboni Municipality, Tanzania

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Abstract: The study was premised on the argument that leaders and their leadership styles have a significant contribution to enhancing attainment of the schools' goals and objectives. The study sought to achieve one objective intended to explore the worthiness of the leadership style used by heads of schools in Kigamboni Municipality, Tanzania. Sampling was purposive to four (4) head of schools, twenty-eight (28) teachers, four (4) academic masters and one (1) Municipal educational officer thus forming a sample of thirty-seven (37) participants from four secondary schools in Kigamboni Municipality. Data collection methods were interviews and focus group discussions. These enabled the researcher to gather multiple sources of information on the *worthiness of leadership style used by heads of schools in Kigamboni Municipality, Tanzania. Thematic analysis based on six steps used to analyse the obtained data. Findings were presented using percentages and quotations obtained from the participants. The analysis of data revealed that heads of schools used more democratic and autocratic leadership style. There are some evidence to support that some heads of schools used laissez faire leadership style which negatively or positively affected teachers' job performance and attainment of the pre-determined goals and objectives. The study recommends heads of schools to employ a mix of leadership styles in their leadership practices. The use of mixed leadership styles has the potential to enable different styles to complement each other thus enabling teachers to be productive within the schools.*

Keywords: Leadership style, school leadership, leadership practices and teachers Job performance

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1. Introduction

Leadership style is the general way a leader behaves towards her or his subordinates for attaining objectives of an institution (Nazim & Mahmood, 2016). It is the degree to which a leader entrusts her or his authority (Chandra & Priyono, 2016). Leadership styles are critical in determining the success of the school as they can foster commitment of teachers towards the school's educational goals. Therefore, for effective leadership, the head of a school should adopt a leadership style that enables followers to have satisfaction and a belief that the leader will lead them towards achieving their destination (Gorchani, 2017). The leadership styles adopted by the heads of schools are diverse and they are derived from the foundation of locally, cultural, associations and the context of school settings. In that sense, leadership styles are greatly influenced by various factors including leader personalities, socio-economic environment, and school culture; thus, styles and practices of leadership vary according to cultural and geographical differences.

From the earlier empirical research, the three basic leadership styles mostly adopted by heads of schools in developing countries are autocratic leadership style,

democratic or participative leadership style; and laissez-faire or freerein leadership style (Okoji, 2016). Mumford (2006) argues that most leaders preferably deploy participative and directive styles and they endorse the encouragement of democratic leadership style as an alternative to laissez-fair and autocratic leadership styles. The literature review highlights the use or blending of various leadership styles in certain situations, such as democratic, autocratic, task-oriented, collegial, or transformational, that enable school leadership to instigate school improvement and reform. Thus, successful school leaders are those who adopt an appropriate leadership style or a mixture of various styles to lead teachers towards the attainment of school goals. However, experience and observation show that some leadership styles (e.g autocratic) do not promote teachers' morale in working at school. While leadership styles such as democratic and laissez-faire invite and encourage the team member to play an important role in decision-making process, the ultimate decision making rests with a leader (Ahmad *et al*., 2012; Nsubuga, 2009). The leader guides the employees on what and how to perform tasks while the employees communicate to the leader their experiences and the suggestions, if any. Such type of leadership styles satisfy, motivate and encourage creativity and students' performance (John & Gerold Mkulu, 2020).

In Tanzania, leadership in secondary schools plays an important role to direct teachers' efforts to achieve school goals and objectives. This is realised when the teachers' working behaviour is influenced by the head of school. According to Mofuga (2020) secondary school goals and objectives can hardly be achieved if heads of schools are not acquainted with good leadership style. Thus, the quality of leadership plays an important role in the success or failure of the school. For instance, the study by Aunga and Masare (2017), conducted in Arusha city, revealed that democratic and transformational leadership styles have increased the performance of teachers in primary schools in Arusha district. Therefore, school leadership is expected to provide a link between characteristics of the school organisation and instructional climate which in turn affects teachers and students' academic performance. The efforts to improve the heads of schools' leadership styles have been informed and guided by the Tanzania Development Vision 2025, MKUKUTA II (2012), Education and Training Policy (1995), and SEDP I, and SEDP II which emphasize on good leadership towards attainment of the schools' plan, goals and objectives. However, those efforts have been hampered by lack of or poor level of leadership integrity, competency, and inspirational outlooks of the head of secondary schools (Mirunde, 2015). This challenge is mainly due to lack of leadership skills by most heads of secondary schools and lack of basic or in-service training on their appointment as heads of secondary schools in Tanzania. Thus, the study explored the worthiness of the leadership style used by heads of schools in Kigamboni Municipality, Tanzania.

1.1 Research Question

What is the worthiness of the leadership style used by heads of schools in Kigamboni Municipality, Tanzania?

2. Literature Review

The theoretical and empirical literature was reviewed with reference to research objective. The study was anchored on Path goal theory.

2.1. Path-goal Theory

The path–goal theory (PGT) of leadership was developed by Evans and House (1970) and it was revised in the work of House in 1996. The theory originally consisted of three styles of leadership (democratic, autocratic and laissez faire leadership style). According to Northouse (2001) autocratic leaders provide task directions and instructions to their followers that incorporate what their expectations are, how to follow them, and when to complete them. The autocratic leadership style is favorable in a high-pressure work environment where followers need to achieve challenging targets and goals. Northouse (2001) describes democratic leadership as a friendly and approachable leadership. It emphasizes followers' human needs, well-being (especially the development of pleasant working conditions), equal treatment, respect, and recognition. For this, teachers may give suggestions and ideas to heads of schools to boost the effectiveness of their level of learning and teaching, or they may participate in major policymaking, decision-making, and execution processes. Northouse states that participative leadership empowers shared decision-making, where followers are consulted such that their ideas and suggestions are incorporated into policymaking. To obtain all or some of the required benefits from this leadership style, Heads of Schools need to encourage teachers' continuous improvement. Furthermore, heads of schools need to have confidence in the competencies of teachers so that they can achieve established challenging goals. Laissez fair leaders let their followers know their expectations. They regularly set clear goals with potential high-performance standards, they trust in the capabilities of their subordinates, and they encourage continued performance improvement.

Autocratic heads of schools generally provide task directions and do not involve teachers in policy-making or major administrative decision-making in schools. Therefore, democratic leadership effectively informs and strengthens directive leadership. democratic leadership develops favorable work settings that foster high morale and job integrity, feelings of dignity, and more to meet ambitious objectives and goals. The participation of teachers qualifies when they successfully perform their job based on criteria. The democratic leadership style amalgamates teachers' expertise and creativity to reach solutions to problems by integrating opinions, ideas, and

suggestions. At the same time, heads of schools must somehow provide relief for teachers regarding their slips, negligence, or acts concerned with the nonperformance of businesses or subjects.

2.2 General Overview of the Leadership Style

Leadership style in secondary schools plays an important role in directing teachers' efforts to achieve the school goals and objectives. This is realised when teachers' job performance is influenced by the head of school. According to Ogochi (2014), the secondary school goals and objectives can hardly be achieved if the leadership style applied does not fit the given environment by head of schools. In this way, the quality of leadership plays an important role in the success or failure of the school. The autocratic leadership style is a style in which the leader dictates policies and procedures, decides what goals are to be achieved, and directs and controls all activities without any meaningful participation by the subordinates. The leader has a vision in mind and must be able to effectively motivate his/her group to finish the task (Ahmad, & Zafar, 2012).The group is expected to complete the tasks under very close supervision while unlimited authority is granted to the leader. Subordinate's responses to the orders given are either punished or rewarded. The manager alone exercises decision-making and authority for determining policy, procedures for achieving goals, work tasks and relationships, control of rewards or punishment (Mullins, 2002; Singano, 2015). The Democratic leadership style is a form of leadership that occurs when leaders broaden and elevate the interests of their employees, when they generate awareness and acceptance of the purposes and the mission of the group, and when they stir their employees to look beyond their own self- interest for the good of the group (Nsubuga, 2009). The focus of power is more within the group as a whole and there is greater interaction within the group (Lai, 2017). The leadership functions are shared with members of the group and the manager is part of a team. The group members have a greater say in decision-making, determination of policy and implementation of systems and procedures. A Laissez-faire leadership style is sometimes described as a "hands off" leadership style because the leader provides little or no direction to the followers (Singano, 2015). Laissez- faire style of leadership has the following characteristics: it allows followers to have absolute freedom to make decisions concerning the completion of their work or it asks the leader questions and provides the followers with the materials they need to accomplish their goals and it answers the followers' questions (Nyangarika & Ngasa, 2020). The manager consciously makes decisions to pass the focus of power to members, to allow them freedom of action to do as they think best; and not to interfere but is readily available if help is needed (*Ibid*). The leadership style used at school level is very important in promoting the overall performance

of the school. Omar (2017) identified that autocratic leadership style has a complete command it holds over its employees; the team cannot put forward its views even if they are best for the benefit of the school interest; teachers cannot criticize or question leaders on the way of getting things done and such situation leads to teachers' absenteeism and turnover. It is believed that leadership style at school is very important for building morale, motivation, creating confidence, initiating action, providing guidance, building good working environment and coordination of activities at school. Different studies have shown that schools that consistently perform well tend to have sound and efficient leadership, and that school leadership is a crucial factor in the success of a school. From various studies reviewed forming the empirical literature as well as the theoretical framework, there seems to be no agreement on one set of head of school leadership style suitable in all circumstances (Adeyemi & Bolarinwa, 2013; Kitavi, 2014; Mullins, 2002). The available literature reveals that leadership is dynamic and various styles of leadership are required in different circumstances prevailing at different times and circumstances (Gyasi & Owusu-ampomah, 2016; Nyangarika & Ngasa, 2020; Omar, 2017).

3. Methodology

This section presents the research methodology employed in gathering data pertaining worthiness of the leadership style used by heads of schools in Kigamboni Municipality, Tanzania. The study employed a qualitative research approach because of the nature of the research problem, objective and question under the study. This type of research employed to gather data in order to gain an understanding of individuals' social reality, including understanding their attitudes towards leadership styles, beliefs, and motivation. A descriptive case study research design was adopted because it involves a thorough descriptive analysis of a single individual, group or events. The design is especially useful when the overall objective of the study is to investigate, explore and analyse a single unit such as a person, family, institution, culture group or even an entire community to represent the nation or the entire population of a certain region (Creswell, 2014). The study was conducted in Kigamboni Municipality, Tanzania. A purposive sampling technique was used to attain at sample of thirty-seven (37) participants from four secondary schools in Kigamboni Municipality. The selected sample were four (4) head of schools, twenty-eight (28) teachers, four (4) academic masters and one (1) Municipal educational officer. Purposive sampling was used for heads of school, academic masters and education officers because of the of believable expertise, experience and knowledge participants on in charge of education provision in the municipality and schools respectively. Also, purposive sampling technique used to select teachers because they were assumed to possess valuable information regarding the worthiness of the

leadership style used by heads of schools. Data collection methods were interviews and focus group discussions. Interview was use for heads of school, academic masters and municipal education officers whereas focus group discussion was used for teachers. These enabled the researcher to gather multiple sources of information for exploring worthiness of the leadership style used by heads of schools. Thematic analysis technique based on six steps used to analyse the obtained data. Findings were present using percentages on reporting response rates and quotations obtained from the participants.

4. Results and Discussion

Findings were presented and discussed with regard to the research objective.

4.1 Worthiness of the leadership style used by heads of schools in Kigamboni Municipality, Tanzania

4.1.1 Heads of schools' use of democratic leadership style

Democratic leadership style is regarded as one of the ideal and useful styles, which has the potential to promote high job performance among employees. The analysis of the data indicated that democratic leadership style was employed by two (2) out of four heads of schools that allowed teachers to actively participate in planning and implementing the intended goals and objectives of the school. In doing so, there was motivating environment, which enabled teachers to feel recognised and satisfied. When teachers are psychologically motivated, they work hard, hence the attainment of organisation objectives or goals is possible. An interview with the teachers showed that 11(55%) teachers said that there was dignity; employees are respected within the school. There was an existence of employees' recognition especially by those who performed better in teaching and there was an effective participation in decision making. These features are related to democratic leadership style exercised by heads of schools.

In addition, out of four academic masters interviewed, one academic master stated that in their school, all teachers were actively involved in the day-to-day activities, each teacher had a privilege of weekly supervision to develop his/her leadership skills and communication skills, there was encouragement of gender balance at all levels and each teacher was treated with respect and care. Rules and regulations were made based on unified efforts through the school meetings conducted monthly.

In the same vein, an interview with the municipal education officers revealed that heads of school were chosen specifically basing on their academic qualification, their experience in the management field and their ability to impact and influence teachers and people under them to make positive impact in the lives of the students. There was a further periodic supervision on the progress made by the head teachers.

For example, teacher (T1) from school B expressed that:

> *I get involved in making school plans and decisions for the betterment of the school* (Interview, H1 at school B: 14th February, 2023).

Participation in plan making, implementation and decision making are some of the main features of democratic leadership, which appear to be given emphasis in the above excerpt. Although the school leader invites contributions from subordinates before making a decision, the leader retains the final authority to make decisions. The heads of schools may also seek discussion and consensus with teachers over an issue before a decision is made. He/she may allow teachers to take a vote on an issue before a decision is made. He/she directs the teachers and negotiates their demands.

In addition, teacher (TI) from school A had a similar view regarding heads of schools' use of leadership style on teachers' job performance. She said that:

> *To foster shared decisions among staff, our head of school utilises a leadership style which enables teachers to contribute their points of views and contribute ideas together. In addition, most of the school activities done in the school are the result of the collegial meetings that are organised by the head of school aimed at making collective decisions on how we can improve students and teachers' performance in academic endeavour* (FGD, T1 at school A: 7th February, 2023).

Teachers argued that this type of leadership is seen as an important tool for motivation, teamwork and collaboration. It was revealed that the school was more effective in teaching when teachers were involved in the decision-making process. It was noted that heads of schools applied a leadership style that was flexible to create a climate in which all stakeholders were able to express themselves freely and hence felt that they were part of the decision-making process. Both teaching and non-teaching staff needed to feel that they had an influence over what should or should not happen at school rather than to be imposed with decisions from the

heads of schools as expressed in the verbatim quote below:

> *We usually conduct meetings every month involving both teaching and non-teaching staff. We usually discuss challenges and way forward in those meetings and actions are taken basing on agreed decisions made by all members. Therefore, I alone cannot dictate what is to be done but it is a collective process* (Interview, A1 at school C: 20th February, 2023).

From the quote above, it appears that democratic leadership style was practiced by the headmasters in schools to provide quality education. Those who have been empowered to lead the transformation of the schools and to address the contemporary challenges of teaching and learning should carefully nurture democratic leadership. Participative/democratic leadership can be effectively utilised to extract the best from people and the most effective and efficient educational climate can be created in a school when democracy is employed. Democratic leadership practices in secondary schools' outline procedures to develop and use the potential of all stakeholders of a school to create and foster quality education.

Teachers' job performance has always been empirically proven to be related to leaders' behaviours and their leadership styles. Different studies support this argument. For example, Younas *et al.* (2022) argue that principal leadership styles and teacher job performance are considerably tangled to each other. Teacher performance exerts a constructive and optimistic effect on students. Therefore, heads of schools greatly affect the instructional and non-instructional functioning of teachers, which in turn directly contributes to student attainment of desired results (Leithwood *et al.*, 2010). In most instances, setting directions, counseling services, mentoring and coaching by school leadership are frequently listed at the top of interventions for boosting up teacher job performance and assisting teachers in addressing school challenges. In addition, effective leadership styles practiced by the heads of schools build up their teachers for the upcoming challenges and visions.

Furthermore, the Municipal Education Officer (MEO) seems to play an important role in encouraging heads of schools to employ leadership styles that have the potential to motivate teachers. This is captured in this quotation:

> *I always encourage heads of schools to employ the leadership style that provides an opportunity for teachers and other stakeholders to share their ideas and thoughts that are useful for the development of the school. In addition, I encourage them to have the capacity of interpreting what others have shared with them and make plausible decision basing on such viewpoint, mainly for the purpose of raising academic performance of the students and teachers' job performance* (Interview, MEO: 5th February, 2023).

From the features of the leadership styles practiced by the heads of schools in selected secondary schools, it was evident that most heads of schools practiced democratic leadership style. Heads of schools encouraged participation in decision making, upward and downward communication, equal treatment, respect and feeling of dignity thus teachers were contented with the kind of leadership that was being applied by their heads of schools. Therefore, democratic leadership style had a positive effect on the teachers' job performance.

This finding is in conjunction with the finding of Aunga and Masare (2017) who revealed that, democratic leadership grows in schools that boost instructors' output and it boosts students' academic performance. According to Aunga and Masare, teachers' performance rises together with democratic leadership, indicating that democratic leadership benefits teachers' performance. The performance of teachers would further improve the performance of students. In addition, Abwalla's (2014) ideas seem to support the finding in this study by stating that decision-making, delegation, and communication that secondary school head teachers use to improve the work performance of teachers are significantly impacted by their leadership styles. Depending on how well heads of schools implement the democratic leadership style, teachers' performance in terms of teaching, attendance, and turn-up would increase and finally lead to positive academic progress of students. When a programme is implemented well, it motivates teachers and other stakeholders and it develops a sense of belonging to the school organisation that encourages more participation in the teaching and learning process. It also enhances academic performance.

Moreover, teacher (T3) from school D said that:

> *In our school, we usually discuss our school issues as a team before making our policies. One person cannot dictate what is to be done without consultation from other teachers since such decisions guide the entire school. School rules and regulations cannot be made by one person but there must be respect and dignity for others and respect for their ideas. That is how we do it* (FGD, T3 at school D: 21st February, 2023).

From the above quotation, democratic leadership style is viewed as an important aspect that can bring about motivation, teamwork and collaboration. It was revealed that a school is more effective when those who are affected by the organization's decisions are fully involved in the decision-making process.

Similarly, the academic master (A4) from school C added the following:

> *Heads of schools use leadership style that give chances to teachers to provide some explanations with reasoning whenever it is required before taking further disciplinary action. To ensure that teaching and learning process goes well, heads of schools oversee the process and the reports are given out to teachers to discuss issues concerning teaching and learning process to reach into conclusion* (Interview, A4 at school C: 4th February, 2023).

From the above verbatim quote, it is evident that majority of school activities are being organized democratically where teachers and school heads work collectively in matters related to discipline and analysis of examination results. Teachers usually meet in staff meetings and the decisions reached in such meetings are sent to school boards for consideration and appropriate actions. In that regard, an effective head of school will find himself/herself switching instinctively between styles according to staff and according to the work they are doing. This is because the curriculum of a school includes not just the planned academic programmes but also all co-curricular activities and other events that students learn through the nature and quality of the school ethos.

One of the heads of schools stated as follows:

> *We usually conduct meetings monthly so as to address our challenges, success and way forward and all this involves togetherness and every one's idea* (Interview, A1 at school C: 20th February, 2023).

It was revealed that there were frequent staff meetings where teachers and heads of schools sit and discuss issues concerning the school organisation. Mullins (2005) contends that democratic leadership style is the style in which the focus of managing power comes from subordinates and there is greater interaction within that group where a leader is a part of the group. The leadership duties are shared by group members. All group members are given a chance to participate in decision making process, determination of policy, and implementation of the policy.

In addition, Kavale and Omar (2015) add on the same idea that principals of secondary schools who had already adopted the democratic leadership style have students and staff that perform better than other schools where the heads of schools practice other types of leadership style. The practice of democratic leadership style was by inviting contributions from subordinates before making decisions. The leaders allow subordinates to vote over a presented issue, thereafter the decisions are made. Heads of schools coach subordinates and negotiate their demands. They added that leaders of schools should use the most appropriate leadership style to facilitate collective responsibility and consultative decision making of all education stakeholders. Heads of schools should respect the opinions from teachers which should be considered in arriving at the final say in terms of conclusion. By doing this, teachers will be satisfied in their job hence performing their tasks well. This implies that democratic leadership style, if applied in school organisation, it can motivate teachers in doing their work well resulting into good students' academic performance.

4.1.2 Head of Schools' Use of Laissez-faire Leadership Style

The analysis of the data indicated that out of twenty teachers, five (5) teachers or 25% of the teachers stated that their heads of schools allowed teachers to have freedom to make decisions concerning the completion of their work and they provide the followers with the materials they need to accomplish their goals with minimum supervision. In addition, one (1) head of school also stated that in their school there is already a well stipulated policy, rules and regulations that guide teachers on what to do and not to do therefore teachers do not need supervision. Teachers can make their own decisions that guide their daily routine activities. Teachers are encouraged to make their departmental meetings to tackle the challenges facing them. Furthermore, an academic master revealed that there was not any problem with giving freedom to teachers to exercise their freedom in teaching and learning process since there were clear rules and regulations guiding the schools. It was revealed from academic master that heads of schools give teachers freedom to manage their overall teaching process, however they should be in line with school rules and regulations. Teachers have education and experience to supervise their own activities and they are happier and more satisfied with their job when they are left on their own to handle their official school activities.

It was further revealed from the municipal education officer that teachers should not always be supervised. There are cases when they are left to handle their own academic activities and duties in order to motivate them and provide job satisfaction. At certain cases, heads of schools are chosen and supervised not basing on how they impact their teachers with their leadership but how

they enable teachers to follow the given school policies and regulations and execute their activities on their own.

Data analysis revealed that one head of school leaves the teachers to be free to do what is worth to them without any directives or reminders. The heads of schools believe that teachers are mature and they have knowledge and skills hence they can lead themselves as individuals. Heads of schools and subordinates were free to do whatever they like. People who have trust in their organisations believe that management has good intentions and they think positively on all behaviours and decisions issued by management. One of the head of school's roles in this regard is to create a climate of trust in an organisation. This will in turn improve teachers' attitudes towards work hence better students' academic performance.

This study revealed that heads of schools make necessary actions whenever the situation at hand allows them to do so. In some cases, heads of schools may decide to leave decision to be made by teachers since they are more knowledgeable. For example, teacher (T1) from school A said the following:

> It has been a norm for the heads of schools to leave the school meeting decision on hands of academic master without considering that in some cases he needs to act as the head of school and execute duties as per the given standards. This in turn results to teachers' absenteeism and students' poor academic performance (FGD, T1 at school C: 28ᵗʰ February, 2023).

From the quote above, there are elements that there is low influence of laissez-faire leadership style on teachers' job satisfaction since laissez-faire leaders do not bother to tell teachers their wrongs or weaknesses as they give them freedom to undertake tasks independently or with minimal supervision.

In laissez-faire type of leadership, delegation of power is a dominant characteristic feature. The study revealed that heads of schools' delegate power to teachers because they want teachers to develop knowledge and skills on their own instead of being stagnant. For example, teacher T4 from school D said the following:

> The head of our school delegates power extremely. He gives us freedom to make our decisions because he does not want to be accountable although sometimes, he supervises what we do. He usually provides what we need as teachers such as textbooks and marker pens and then we do our responsibilities on our own. Sometimes our head of school chooses

> among us to lead ourselves (FGD, T2 at school A: 25ᵗʰ February, 2023).

In addition, aacademic master (A1) from school B had a similar view regarding the leadership style used by the heads of schools:

> Our head of school delegates responsibilities to the school management team and gives them freedom to supervise themselves and follow up on the feedback of the responsibilities provided to the delegates. (Interview, A1 at school B: 3ʳᵈ February, 2023).

Majority of teachers responded to the reason as to why their heads of schools employ laissez- faire leadership style. Some mentioned that perhaps it is because they have little or no leadership knowledge and experience. One of the teachers stated that:

> Our head of school is a degree holder. I think that is why he uses laissez- faire leadership style. If he could have undergone leadership courses, I am sure that he could be able to use different leadership styles whenever the situation needs him to do so. In our school, you find teachers doing whatever they see it is right to them. For example, a teacher may decide to dodge his or her classes and the head of school does not take any measure on them (FGD, A6 at school D: 8ᵗʰ February, 2023).

Furthermore, Head of school (H1) from school C added that:

> There are situations in schools where laissez- faire leadership style should be applied. I believe that, there are some areas where I can notice that some subordinates are more knowledgeable than me but I cannot expose it to them rather than giving them a chance to practice their talents. In turn, this makes them satisfied with their job that can enhance academic performance of students (Interview, H1 at school C: 17ᵗʰ February, 2023).

Highlighting the important elements of laissez- faire leadership style, the teacher (T9) from school B expressed that:

> Laissez-faire leadership style is very important to be used in secondary schools because it rises the morale of teachers and teachers feel that they are identified and their potentials are respected. This leads to good students'

academic performance because teachers will be working very hard, completing syllabuses and making revisions to attain school pre-determined goals (FGD, T9 at school B: 22nd February, 2023).

From the extracts above, there is evidence to support that heads of schools use laissez- faire leadership style and avoid expressing their views or taking actions on important issues. This leadership style ignores responsibility, provides no feedback and allows the authority to remain dormant.

The issues that are emerging in the above extracts are in line with Nthakyo, Mungai and Malela (2016) who contend that heads of schools should adopt leadership skills and mechanisms which are aimed at instilling discipline in students as well as teachers. Schools should organise workshops and seminars, especially for students' leaders so that they acquire skills for discipline to be applied to their fellow students at school. Also, schools should acquire a collaborative approach with stakeholders which in turn will help in addressing students' indiscipline at school. In addition, Boke, Nyakundi and Namoki (2017) have an idea that where the head of school applies a laissez-faire leadership style, the academic performance of students become relatively low. They added that the type of leadership style employed by the head of school could be one of the factors that lead to poor academic performance of students. Also using a laissez-faire leadership style could result in lack of teachers as well as students' discipline due to non-enforcement of rules and regulations in a school leading to poor performance in examinations. Furthermore, Achimugu and Obaka (2019) contend that, institutions where laissez-faire leadership is practiced, it is feared that teachers and students may become lazy of fulfilling their responsibilities. This will affect teaching and learning and, in turn, it will negatively affect students' achievement. Therefore, laissez-faire leadership can be considered as an absence of leadership since every individual in an organisation does what is good or right according to him or her without any directive. Moreover, the key issues highlighted in the quotations support Isundwa (2015) idea that delegation is an integral component of laissez-faire. Nevertheless, it has the potential to result in poor students' academic achievement. As such, laissez faire leadership might not be a good leadership style to be used by heads of schools because full delegation without follow-up may create performance problems.

4.1.3 Autocratic Leadership Style

The analysis of data indicates that one head of school uses autocratic leadership style in order to make school activities run smoothly and on time for better attainment of desired goals and objectives. It was noted that some teachers are reluctant when they are given a task to do

and when they are involved in decision making; it takes time to reach a desirable conclusion. In such cases, the autocratic leadership style is used. However, in this section, respondents differed in the views with regard to the use of autocratic leadership style in enhancing students' and teachers' job satisfaction. For example, teacher (T3) from school D explained that:

> *Our head of school mostly prefers using a leadership style in the sense that all decision-making is on her hands. This does not only affect the academic achievement of the school but also the teachers' job performance* (FGD, T3 at school D: 26th February, 2023).

Through heads of schools using the autocratic leadership style in all spheres of the schools, some teachers feel that they are not valued and they are less engaged in the schools. This affects the accomplishment of the desired end. For example, Teacher (T1) from school B added that:

> *Because the head of school has the tendency of using authority in decision making, some group members end up feeling that they have no input or say on how things are done, and this can be problematic when skilled and capable members of a team are left feeling that their knowledge and contributions are undermined* (FGD, T1 School B: 24th February, 2023).

It was found that autocratic style can be beneficial in some settings, but also has its pitfalls. It is not appropriate for every setting and with every group. Autocratic leadership can be beneficial in some instances such as when decisions need to be made quickly without consulting a large group of people. For example, the Municipal Education Officer commented that:

> *Some schools require sending a leader who is tough and is ready to stand by the school rules and regulations. A head teacher to whom teachers will listen to and make positive changes is necessary to some cases. Some schools that are not performing well require straight forward heads that make quick decisions and stand by them* (Interview, MEO: 29th February, 2023).

From the above quotation, it is evident that autocratic leadership is the most effective style to complete a lot of tasks in a short period of time. But, on the other side, his/her decisions may be opposed or questioned, which in turn increases the likeliness of conflict or refusal to

cooperate. It was noted that autocratic leaders underestimate the extent to which they depend on others. School rules that are imposed without discussion are disobeyed more frequently. Such rules might be counterproductive in dealing with misconduct and bullying as explained by one of the academic masters of school C during interview. She said that:

> Personally, I prefer a style of leadership that gives chances to everyone to participate in idea generation, participate in decision making, but at times I am forced to use different styles of leadership depending on the situation. Where people fail to meet the deadlines or where the school policy is compromised, I may force them or dictate some decisions to teachers (Interview, H2 at school B: 8th February, 2023).

From the above quotation it can be deduced that the environment of the school at a particular time may dictate the kind of leadership used by heads of schools. The teachers' perception was negative when heads of schools used autocratic leadership style. This is because the heads of schools have been using a top-down approach in managing the school affairs in dictating policies and procedures, deciding what goals are to be achieved, and directing as well as controlling all activities without any meaningful participation by the teachers.

The analysis of the participants' views revealed that in some schools there is a top- down leadership behaviour based on heads of schools only that exemplify authoritative leadership style. This is consistent with the previous study by Nsubuga (2008) who contends that teachers do not want commanding authority. This authority makes them lose morale and neglect their duty. In the same vein, majority of teachers have been affected by the type of leadership style applied by their heads of schools. This style has led to low working morale in teachers. The findings seemed consistent with the existing studies. For instance, Steyn *et al*. (2002) did a study on leadership style and job satisfaction and learned that teachers want to feel good and proud about what they are doing. They feel more valuable if they are meaningfully involved in real decisions that affect them.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusion

The study concludes that heads of schools used more democratic and autocratic leadership style in fostering the attainment of schools' goals. However, some participants stated that heads of schools used laissez faire leadership style which to a larger extent, affected

students and teachers' job performance. Schools that consistently perform well tend to have sound and efficient leadership, and that school leadership is a crucial factor in the success of a school. There seems to be no agreement on one set of head of school leadership style suitable in all circumstances rather leadership is dynamic and various styles of leadership are required in different circumstances prevailing at different times and circumstances.

5.2 Recommendations

1. The study recommends heads of school to use a mix of leadership style within the schools so that the weakness of one leadership style offset with strength of another leadership style depending on the situation.
2. The government through its organs which are the ministry of education and the President's Office, Regional Administration and local Government Office (PO- RALG) should make sure that it appoints heads of schools that have already under gone leadership training courses so that they could be competent leaders at school levels.
3. The Ministry of Education should strategically organise regular inspections of schools to monitor the styles of leadership used by heads of schools and their impact to teachers' job performance. This would ensure that only constructive leadership styles are practiced in schools.

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