

**INFLUENCE OF PRINCIPALS' LEADERSHIP STYLES ON STUDENTS'
ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN KENYA CERTIFICATE OF
SECONDARY EDUCATION IN AWENDO SUB - COUNTY, KENYA**

**BY
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**A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF EDUCATION
IN EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION**

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL MANAGEMENT AND FOUNDATIONS

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DECLARATION

DECLARATION BY THE CANDIDATE:

This thesis is my original work and has not been presented for an award of a degree in any other university.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to acknowledge the Almighty God for the wisdom and strength He accorded me in the entire process of thesis writing. I am greatly indebted to my supervisors Prof. Enose M.W. Simatwa and Dr. J. O. Gogo for their technical advice and their tireless efforts in fine-tuning my work. I also thank all the Lecturers who shaped my destiny towards earning this degree. To my colleague students with whom we shared quality academic discussions, thank you! My heartfelt gratitude also goes to the SCQASO, Principals, teachers and the students of Awendo sub-county who assisted me in the data collection process. I appreciate the support given to me by my family; Jared (my husband), my children- Brillian, Adrian and Beverly, many are the times you had to do without me but all you did was encourage me. I could never be thankful enough to my boss, Mr Philip Ombura for his support during this process. Hesborn from the sub-county education office and John Odongo remains an invaluable help through the entire data collection process. My sister Colleta's support is also appreciated for when I had no nanny it would only take a phone call for you to assist. I thank Martha Wandera for her secretarial services. May the Almighty God bless the many friends, colleagues and many others who are not mentioned by name who contributed in one way or the other for the successful completion of this endeavour.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my beloved husband Jared Otieno Owuor, our children; Olivia Brillian, Adrian Richard and Audrey Beverly, my parents Charles and Caren Oyugi, my sister Mary Oyugi who raised me just like her own child, aunt Cecilia whose financial assistance helped me complete school and my late sister Pamela Oyugi.

ABSTRACT

Studies conducted in USA, Kuwait, South Africa, Nigeria, Uganda, central region of Kenya and some counties in Nyanza region have revealed that principals' leadership styles influence performance in schools, for instance, leadership style was found to contribute 32.8% to the students' performance in Uganda. Principals are known to use various leadership styles in enhancing students' academic performance, however, it was noted between 2012-2016 that students' performance in Awendo was generally unsatisfactory with an average mean of 4.9, lower than the neighbouring Uriri and Rongo sub-counties which had 6.5 and 5.8 respectively. The purpose of this study was therefore to establish the influence of the principals' leadership styles on students' KCSE performance in Awendo sub-county. The objectives of the study were to; determine the influence of principals' democratic leadership style on students' academic performance, establish the influence of principals' autocratic leadership style on the students' academic performance and to establish the influence of principals' *laissez faire* leadership styles on students' academic performance. A conceptual framework was used to show the interplay regarding the independent variable, which is leadership styles and that of the dependent variable, which is students' performance. The research employed descriptive survey design to obtain information. The study population consisted of 35 principals, 340 teachers and 1400 form four students of 2016 since the latter had stayed in school long enough to understand the principal's leadership practices. Saturated sampling method was used to obtain 30 principals as the remaining 5 were used for piloting and simple random sampling used to sample 186 teachers and 301 students. Data was collected using questionnaire, interview schedules, document analysis and focus group discussions. Face and content validity of the instruments were determined by experts in Educational Administration. Pilot study was conducted in 5(14%) schools which were excluded from the main study. The reliability was tested using test-retest method and a Pearson's r of 0.86 for Principals' questionnaire obtained. Quantitative data was analyzed using frequency count, mean, percentage, correlation and simple linear regression. Qualitative data was transcribed, analyzed and used for triangulation. Leadership styles were measured using a rating scale adopted from Don Clark Questionnaire leadership style survey for attributes of democratic, autocratic and *laissez faire* styles whilst students' performance was measured by the school mean score. The study established that democratic leadership accounted for 37.9% of variation in students' academic performance as signified by adjusted R square 0.379. Autocratic leadership accounted for 44.0% of variation in students' academic performance as signified by adjusted R square 0.440 and *Laissez faire* leadership style accounted for 16.2% of variation in students' academic performance signified by adjusted R square 0.162. It was concluded that democratic and autocratic leadership styles had a significant positive influence on students' academic performance while *laissez faire* had a significant negative influence on students' academic performance. The study recommended that the principals in Awendo sub-county be encouraged to use democratic and autocratic leadership styles for better academic performance of students. The study is significant to stakeholders in education in assisting principals to practice leadership styles that would enhance students' academic performance in secondary schools.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

DV	-	Dependent variables
FDGs	-	Focus Group Discussions
IV	-	Independent variables
K.C.P.E	-	Kenya Certificate of Primary Education
K.C.S.E	-	Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education
KEMI	-	Kenya Education management Institute
KUCCPS	-	Kenya Universities and Colleges Central Placement Services
MoE	-	Ministry of Education
RoK	-	Republic of Kenya
SCEO	-	Sub-county Education Officer
TPAD	-	Teacher Performance and Appraisal Document
UNESCO	-	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural organization

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

Principals' leadership styles influence students' academic performance because the principals are accountable for performance of students in the national examinations by regulations. In this respect, principals are implementers of government policies at school levels and by training they are empowered to use appropriate leadership styles to enhance students' academic performance.

Eissa and Brown (2013), Adeyemi and Bolarinwa (2013), Nsubuga (2009), Nyagaka (2013) are among studies that revealed that different leadership styles had varied influence in students' academic performance.

Leadership style consists of a leader's general personality, demeanour and communication patterns in guiding others toward reaching organizational or personal goals and it is believed to affect performance (Wallace, 2009). Cole (2002) also defines leadership as inspiring people to perform. He observes that even if an institution has all the financial resources to excel, it may fail dismally if the leadership does not motivate others to accomplish their tasks effectively. Thinking in a similar direction other studies also put forth that good leadership can certainly contribute to school improvement by abetting the motivation, participation, and coordination of the teachers (Harris, 2005).

Maicibi (2005) asserts that, without a proper leadership style, effective performance cannot be realized in schools. Even if the school has all the required instructional materials and financial resources, it will not be able to use them effectively if the students are not directed

in their effective use. Namirembe (2005) further argues that many secondary schools still lack the necessary performance requirements, not only because of inadequate funds or even poor facilities, but as a result of poor leadership. Reports from the Ministry of Education Science and technology (MEST) have indicated that principals' leadership styles have direct bearing on the overall effectiveness of school because both the teacher and student perform under the leadership of school principal (UNESCO, 2012).

A study in Malaysia by Wan and Jamal (2012) found that the role of principal is important in determining the high-academic performance of students in examinations and so is a study conducted in U.S and Kuwait by Eissa, Brown and Wiseman (2013) whose data analysis supported the hypothesis that the principal's leadership style was related to school outcomes.

Even though different authorities in leadership as a subject have come up with various classifications of leadership styles as Lewin (1939) identifying three leadership styles namely; Authoritarian or Autocratic, Democratic or Participative and Laissez-faire or Passive, Likert (1967) classified the Leadership styles into four, identified as Exploitive Authoritative, Benevolent Authoritative, Consultative and Participative. Burns (1978) categorized the styles into two broad classes namely; transactional and transformational leadership styles. Golemans (2000) identified six namely: pace setting, authoritative, affiliative, coaching, democratic and coercive – which are rather development from the earlier scholars' ideas. This study focused on Lewin's classification because the rest of the classifications also borrow from Lewin only that the terms are different.

Tarus(2009) and Musungu (2007) both agree that head teachers' leadership has an influence on student's performance. Tarus (2009) though mentioning transformational

leadership style as the preferred style for better results, his focus was the attitude of teachers towards headteachers' leadership, identifying methods of motivation, communication and delegation used by head teachers, methods head teachers use to improve performance. Tarus' study however does not show to what extent the identified leadership style contribute to academic performance, a gap this study has filled and in addition an impact study required some correlational design but Tarus relied entirely on descriptive survey design. This study, in attempt to reveal the influence used inferential statistics too.

Musungu (2007) mentioning leadership style used by the head teacher as influential in academic performance, focussed on the influence of variables; organizational skills of head teachers, their involvement in provision of facilities, motivational strategies for the staff and internal supervision of teachers. She analysed data in frequencies, totals averages and percentages which could not help reveal relationship, neither strength nor direction. This study on the other hand sought to establish the relationship of democratic, autocratic and laissez faire leadership styles on academic performance and statistically indicate to what extent each contributes to performance.

Odumbe and Simatwa (2015) carried out a study in Migori County that included Awendo sub-county and found students' factors, teacher factors, school factors - students' entry behavior and attitude, parental level of education and income, school type and location to have a positive association with the students' academic achievement. Ogalo (2013) also focused on the Socio-economic challenges faced by principals in the provision of quality secondary school education in Nyando and Muhoroni Districts. These factors' influence on students' academic performance having been investigated it was prudent then to investigate the influence of principals' leadership style on the students' academic

performance as leadership styles have been cited to be key in students' academic achievement, Maicibi (2005).

Democratic leadership style is consultative and participatory in nature and leaders here not only offer guidance to group members, but they also participate in the groups and allow input from other group members Bass and Bass (2008).

Eissa and Brown (2013) investigated the effect of principals' leadership styles on school environment and outcome in Kuwait and US and The principal's leadership style was found to be very different between Kuwait and USA school. In the USA schools, the integrative principal leadership style is found to encourage and create a cooperative school environment for better school outcome than schools with authoritarian principals.

Duze (2012) on Leadership Styles of Principals and Job Performance of Staff in Secondary Schools in Delta State of Nigeria revealed that job performance of staff was found to be more significantly related to democratic leadership style than either autocratic or laissez-faire leadership style.

Nyagaka (2013) researching on Leadership Styles of Headteachers and Their Impact on Students' Academic Performance in Secondary Schools, Nyamaiya Division, Nyamira District, revealed in his study that different leadership styles have varying effects on students' academic achievement. He established a strong relationship between participatory traits of the head teachers and the management structures of the schools which has impact on the students' academic performance.

Studies show that this leadership style has a positive correlation with students' performance, that is, principals who to a greater extent employ democratic leadership style register high achievement in students (Suskavcevic & Blake, 2004; Nyagaka 2013, &

Nsubuga, 2009). Kinyanjui and Orodho's (2014) major findings were that headteachers applied various leadership styles with the most frequently used being democratic and laissez fair styles, however, a majority of teachers from top performing schools reported frequent use of democratic leadership styles. It is however not clear the proportion of variance in democratic leadership style that is predictable from the students' academic performance in these studies hence the gap this study filled.

Secondly, autocratic leadership style which is also referred to as authoritarian leadership style encompasses being arbitrary, controlling, power-oriented, coercive, punitive, and close-minded. The cluster has often been described in pejorative terms. Stripped of negatives (emphasized by so many social scientists), it means taking full and sole responsibility for decision and control of followers' performance. Autocrats stress obedience, loyalty, strict adherence to rules. They make and enforce the rules. This style is influenced by McGregors's Theory X which presumes that people are naturally lazy and need close supervision.

Eissa and Brown (2013) found Kuwait schools' principals to be authoritarian in their leadership style, while their USA counterparts tended to be integrative. Interestingly, although Kuwait school principals are authoritarian in nature, data indicated that a cooperative school environment showed higher school outcomes.

Adeyemi (2013) in his study established a positive correlation between principals' autocratic leadership performance and the students' performance and Wangui (2007) and Nyagaka (2013) supports. The latter's major findings show a significant relationship between initiative structures of the head teachers towards improving leadership style which has a positive impact on school's academic performance.

Thembinkosi (2004) on the other hand attributed poor performance of schools in Phumelela and Umbululu circuits in the Umlazi districts, South Africa to the fact that their principals' leadership styles have an autocratic bias. Nsubuga (2009) also supports by noting that head teachers who are rated most autocratic had the lowest mean score while democratic head teachers had higher mean score. This disparity in finding prompted the researcher to carry out further investigations and this formed the gap for the study. Besides, the extent to which these variables relate to performance was not revealed and this study endeavoured to do so.

Lastly, *laissez faire* leadership style also referred to as delegated leadership is the style whereby little or no guidance is offered to group members and leave decision-making up to group members. While this style can be effective in situations where group members are highly qualified in an area of expertise, it often leads to poorly defined roles and a lack of motivation (Bass & Bass, 2008). The principal who applies this leadership style is influenced by McGregor's Theory Y concept which argues that people are innately motivated, that they naturally like work and are interested in doing their work and therefore need no coercing, (Wasonga, 2014, citing McGregor, 1964).

Adeyemi and Bolarina (2013) found no significant relationship between principals' *laissez-faire* leadership style and school performance. This was supported by Nyagaka(2013) Nsubuga (2009). He, however, established a very strong negative relationship of 0.65 between *laissez-faire* leadership and performance in secondary schools. He further explains that in most cases, *laissez-faire* head teachers do not prompt good academic performance because they are too liberal and flexible. This is why their overall performance is often poor. Whilst some studies established association, others refuted any sort of association between *laissez-faire* leadership practices by the principal and the academic outcome of the

students. There was need therefore, to ascertain the association specifying the extent to which *laissez faire* practices of the principals influence performance so as to fill the knowledge gap.

The school principals are expected to provide institutional leadership in addition to being entrusted with school's Financial Management, Human Resource management, planning of development activities, Discipline Management, Agents of TSC and MoE in charge of implementation and monitoring of policies Okumbe (2003). Of these roles highlighted, leadership provision is central as the type of leadership style a principal uses will ensure discipline or gross misconduct from students and staff, will see policies as spelled out by the MoE or TSC implemented or not, will ensure proper planning and a success in both infrastructural development and staff development. This explains why the MoEST is frequently conducting workshops on management for principals and deputy principals on leadership through Kenya Institute of Educational Management (KEMI), in order to help improve their leadership skills. However, despite the above, most schools in Awendo sub-county where school principals are not exempted from undertaking such courses still registered a mean below average of 4.9 for the period of study (2012 - 2016) and coincidentally this is the period that had the most cases (eight) to do with leadership wrangles handled by the sub-county office.

Awendo sub-county education office also received and investigated complaints about certain school principals whose leadership styles were blamed for the deterioration and it is also reported that certain school means were noted to be on the rise as soon as some principals took over. There were eight cases of principals who have been accused of leadership faults of whom three were refused access in two schools by locals (parents) where they were accused of not involving the community in matters to do with school

development and blamed that on the schools poor performance. Three principals were demoted and yet again there were transfers of certain principals within a period of less than one year. (Sub-County Education Office, SCEO, 2016).

It was confirmed by the sub-county office that leadership challenges exist and further revealed that in schools where they have been reported the students' results have never been impressive. This raised a concern that prompted an investigation that not only established the relationship but also revealed the influence of each leadership style on academic performance.

Quality of education may be judged by examining various aspects. One such aspect is expected outcomes (Kanishka & Sharma, 2006). In the Kenyan context, secondary school student's achievement or the expected outcome is measured by the results they attain in the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE). A student must get a mean grade of A (plain) or A-(minus) to be said to get a direct admission for medicine or 'Hot' courses in the public universities in Kenya. However, a student who scores a mean grade of D and below is viewed by the society to have added to the wastage percentage in the examination's performance and transition to a college becomes a very big challenge as most middle level colleges admit from grades D+ and above. The minimal requirement grade of transition to the university is C+ (plus) even though the Kenya Universities and Colleges Central placement Services (KUCCPS) admits from grade D+ to other tertiary colleges for diploma and certificate courses. (<https://kuccpsonline.uonbi.ac.ke>).

Awendo Sub-county is noted to register improvement in every year's KCSE's performance albeit very negligible but registered a big drop of -2.6 in 2016 as showed in Table 1. The sub-county has an average mean of 4.9 yet the neighbouring sub-counties Rongo and Uriri

sharing a similar economic advantage of being in sugar belt, same climate and similar cultural expectations attained an average mean 5.8 and 6.5 respectively in the KCSE over five year period of performance. This time frame was chosen to give a detailed mirror and trend in the sub-county's academic performance. This time frame was chosen to give a detailed mirror and trend in the sub-county's academic performance. Moreover, there were no reports at the Sub County Education Office (SCEO) of lack of infrastructure or acute shortage in staffing in the schools as these are believed to influence performance, Principals' leadership styles then remained a puzzle and especially its influence on students' academic performance. This revelation upon comparison prompted the researcher to analyze the influence of leadership styles on students' academic performance. Table 1.1 shows the comparison of performance of Awendo, Uriri and Rongo Sub-counties for the last 5 years.

Table 1.1: Performance of Awendo, Uriri and Rongo Sub-counties for the last 5 years

YEAR	MEAN		
	AWENDO SC	URIRI SC	RONGO SC
2012	5.2	6.8	5.8
2013	5.5	6.9	6.4
2014	5.4	6.7	6.3
2015	5.7	6.9	6.1
2016	3.1	5.1	4.8
Average Mean	4.9	6.4	5.8

Source; SCEO, Awendo

Key: SC- Sub-county

Closer analysis established that on the average only 7.12% of the total students who took national examinations during the period under study (2012-2016) qualified on KUCCPS to join the public universities having attained a mean grade of C+ plus and above while

21.88% attained grades between C-(minus) and D+ (plus) who could easily secure chances in the middle colleges and the majority, that is 71% of the total students, received low grades of below D+ meaning that the quality of education is very low (KUCCPS, 2016). This is the justification for this study which aims to establish the influence of the principals' leadership styles on students' academic performance in Awendo sub-county secondary schools since Principals are mandated to provide academic leadership.

In addition, all the studies cited on school leadership and performance, did establish the strength and direction of the every identified leadership style and the students' performance yet no indication of the extent to which the leadership style influence performance, a new knowledge this study has filled.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Students' academic achievement can be explained by many variables but leadership styles of the principals have been cited to be key. Studies globally indicate that leadership styles used by secondary school principals greatly influence academic performance of students. Success and failures of students in examinations have been reported in schools where democratic leadership style is used and so is true of autocratic and *laissez faire* leadership styles. In Awendo, it was noted that performance has been below average with mean scores as follows: 5.2, 5.5, 5.4, 5.7 and 3.1 from 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015 and 2016 respectively. Even though studies reveal a relationship between principals' leadership styles and students' academic performance, the influence of these leadership styles on students' performance in Awendo sub-county was not known and that is what this study established.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to establish the influence of principals' leadership styles on students' academic performance in secondary schools in Awendo sub-county, Kenya.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study relating to Awendo sub-county are to:

- i) Determine the influence of the principals' democratic leadership style on the students' academic performance.
- ii) Establish the influence of the principals' autocratic leadership style on the students' academic performance.
- iii) Establish the influence of the principals' *Laissez Faire* leadership styles on the students' academic performance.

1.5 Research Questions

The research questions that guided the study include the following;

- i) What is the influence of the principals' democratic leadership styles on students' academic performance in Awendo-sub-county secondary schools?
- ii) What is the influence of the principals' autocratic leadership styles on students' academic performance in Awendo-sub-county secondary schools?
- iii) What is the influence of the principals' *laissez faire* leadership styles on students' academic performance in Awendo-sub-county secondary schools?

1.6 Assumptions of the Study

This study was based on the assumptions that:

- i) All students have the potential to attain quality grades since they are provided with the necessary and relevant leadership.
- ii) Principals are aware of and apply various leadership styles in school management.

1.7 Limitation of the Study

One (3.3%) of the respondents did not complete the questionnaire fully as was expected this means that some information was lost, however since the percentage of respondents was very small it did not significantly affect the results..

1.8 Delimitation of the Study

This study was confined to:

- i) Awendo sub-county secondary schools, all categories.
- ii) Studying the influence of only three main variables of principals' leadership namely democratic, autocratic and laissez faire to secondary students' academic performance in KCSE in Awendo sub-county.
- iii) Years between 2012-2016

1.9 Significance of the Study

There are three vantage points from which this study can be viewed as significant:

- i) The findings of this study are useful as they can may be used by the education stakeholders as a basis upon which quality of secondary education in Awendo sub-county is improved.
- ii) The study findings add to the body of knowledge of secondary education management and education besides, filling gaps in research.

1.10 Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework was used to help focus on the variables in the study. The framework demonstrated the interplay of various variables in the secondary education sub sector in the provision of quality education. The independent variables in the framework are the factors that are crucial contributors to the academic achievement which in this research are principals' leadership styles; democratic, autocratic and *laissez faire*. The dependent variable is the mean grade (score) of the students.

The principal acts as a bridge between all the stakeholders on students' academic performance. Their leadership styles such as democratic structure, autocratic structure and *laissez faire* structure have an impact on students' academic performance. It is expected that the behavior of the principal and teachers in a school is the result of the interaction between expectations attached to the formal roles they play and occupy in school, and the internal processes within as showed in figure 1 below.

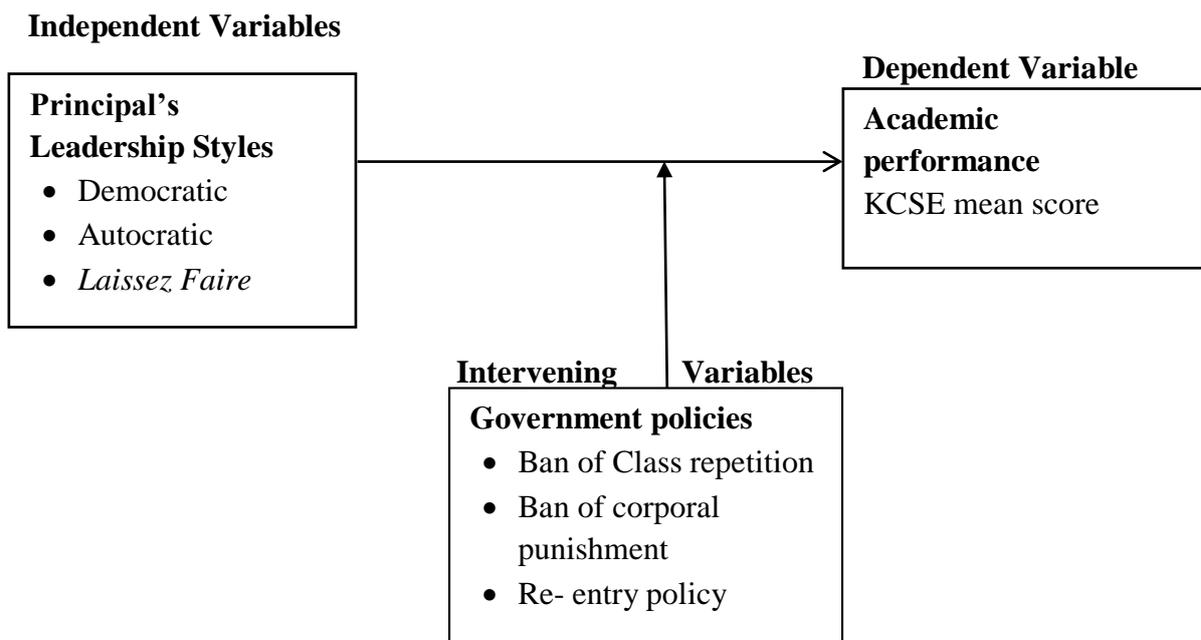


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework showing influence of principals' leadership styles on students' academic performance

Source: researcher

Principals' key role in provision of leadership in schools is objectively for ensuring good performance in their schools. The leadership style they choose to apply must create an environment where discipline which is universally accepted as a key component to success thrives and in such schools, where students are highly disciplined, cases of success have been reported as their adherence to school rules and regulations and strict management of time puts them on fore for success.

Teachers will be motivated to work under leaders who are humane and have their interest at heart; they will be striving towards academic excellence of the students under their tutelage. The leadership style the principal uses will either see him or her run a school of disciplined staff and students or run a school where the students and staff have no regard code of conduct and regulations. A disciplined student will always conform to the set rules and regulations in the school and will strive to be punctual in all she/he does, this will minimize any wastages in time as no teacher will hold them responsible for flouting rules hence spending time on counseling and guidance as corporal punishment and mental torture had since been outlawed by Legal Notice No. 56 of 2001.

The intervening variables include; the Government policies for instance, ban of corporal punishment, ban of class repetition as they influence the leadership a principal uses. This study will therefore assume that the principals are aware of such government regulations and as the implementers of policies are keen on following them and therefore their effect will not affect this research. Ban of class repetition, ban of corporal punishment and re-entry policies can either influence performance positively or negatively.

1.11 Definition of Operational Terms

Autocratic leadership style - leadership that provides clear expectations for what needs to be done, when it should be done, and how it should be done also called initiative or authoritarian leadership

Authoritarian leadership style – used interchangeably with autocratic leadership style

Authoritative –implies that the leader is extremely competent, recognized as an authority in his or her field and is someone worthy of trust-sometimes even admiration.

Democratic leadership style - a style that allows for participation of other members, also referred to as participative or egalitarian leadership.

Laissez faire leadership style - This style is also referred to as delegated leadership. Delegated leadership offer little or no guidance to group members and leave decision-making up to group members

Leadership style - Refers to patterns of behaviour of a principal in influencing members of the group which could include teachers and students among others.

Performance - academic achievement judged by mean score or grade in KCPE and KCSE

Principal – the head of a secondary school

Student - male or female learner in secondary school, sometimes referred to as pupil

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This review of literature is designed to introduce the reader to the relevant literature in the study of the influences of principals' leadership styles on students' academic performance in Awendo sub- county, Kenya. The following major areas will be covered: principals' leadership styles- democratic style, *laissez-faire* and autocratic styles' influence to performance.

2.2 Principal's Leadership Styles

Leadership style is the manner and approach of providing direction, implementing plans and motivating people. Lewin (1939) led a group of researchers to identify different styles of leadership. This early study has been very influential and established three major leadership styles which are Autocratic or Authoritarian, Democratic (participative) and Laissez faire. A good leader uses all the three styles, with one of them normally dominant while bad leaders tend to stick with one style (Oluremi, 2013). Educational institutions face unique pressures that are not present in other institutions. Schools are expected to play the socializing agent role by compensating for the changes in the society and family that affect the children; change in family structure, television and popular culture, internet and pornography commercializing, poverty, inadequate nutrition and its attendant health care, violence, child abuse and increasing social unrest. A school leader struggles to meet these demands places him/her continually on the forefront of change.

Effective educational leadership style involves multiple roles; vision and influence to set high expectations on students' academic performance, resources and being supportive of these teachers create positive learning ambience with high expectations that the students

would consequently be able to perform better academically, Boampong, Denteh, Mensah and Issaka (2016).

Principals affect school direction through policy interpretation, resource allocation, and community relations. They manage the pragmatic day-to-day school activities, from the football field to the classroom, and balance competing priorities to provide high quality educational services to students. The school performance is therefore entirely dependent on how relevant and efficient their choice of leadership style is Maru (2013).

A research by Rautiola(2009) in Michigan demonstrated that school leadership has both direct and indirect implications leading to student achievement. Albeit most leadership influences are indirect; these indirect influences lead to increased collective efficacy and improved school culture. Another study in Athens, Georgia by Susan (2011) on Teachers' Leadership Styles and Students' Academic Performance in Mathematics Courses had contrary findings to Rautiola's. The analysis did not indicate any significant results at or below a probability of .05 between the leadership styles and improved student performance. This study indicated that a connection does not appear to exist between the leadership styles indicated by these surveys and a change in student performance.

A study carried out in Dubai schools on Principal leadership style, school performance, and principal effectiveness found a positive correlation between the principal leadership style and his/her effectiveness, but found no correlation with school performance, Ali and AlTaneiji (2013), which is the concern of this research. A study in Ethiopia by Tilahun (2008) further posits that unless principals are well equipped with the knowledge and skills in management and leadership, they would not be able to improve school performance significantly.

Oyekoge's (2012) study on Principals' Leadership Style as a Catalyst to Effectiveness of Secondary School Education in Ondo State, Nigeria revealed that there was significant relationship between principal's leadership style and secondary school effectiveness. The reason for this he argues might be due to the fact that principals are the persons at the helms of the schools affairs and would always want the schools to achieve the goals for which they are established. A school where the principal provide good working facilities in the school, sees to members of staff welfare, relates very well with both the teachers, students and the community will facilitate conducive environment for teaching and learning to take place (Adeyemi, 2013).

Nsubuga (2009) argues that unless head teachers are well equipped with knowledge and skills in management and leadership, they would not be able to improve school performance significantly. He established the extent to which leadership styles contribute to school performance as weak denoting a coefficient of determination of 0.328 or 32.8%.

Tarus (2009) in his study on impact of head teachers leadership styles on secondary school academic achievement in Nandi north district using questionnaires and interview schedules as instruments of data collection, focussed on identifying leadership styles used by head teachers in administration of teachers and management of teachers, seeking the attitude of teachers towards head teachers' leadership styles and specifically looking into methods of motivation, communication and delegation used by head teachers to encourage improvement in academic achievement. Methods used by headteachers to monitor teaching were also considered. Transformational leadership style was recommended as the preferred style for better academic performance. Tarus used survey research design with a sample size of 17 schools to generate his findings.

This study is different from Tarus' study because the main variables studied are democratic, autocratic, and laissez-faire leadership styles and the researcher sought to establish not just a relationship but also to what extent each studied variable influence the students' performance. In doing so, students' opinion were sought to help triangulate as seeking the teachers', deputies' and the principals' perception may have been subjective as the administrators might not freely give information fearing sabotage. In addition, the researcher took up the challenge of having this study done in a different district (now sub-county) as suggested by Tarus. It is also important to note that there is the need to look leadership styles in cultural context and not as a simplistic assumption that leadership styles may be universally applicable, Boampong, et al (2016). In addition, the study used a more representative sample of 30 schools unlike the previous study using 17 schools and these formed the gap for this study. It is a wonder how survey design would help show impact as in Tarus' study. This study therefore used inferential statistics as well by establishing the coefficient of determination, a gap in Tarus' study.

Musungu (2007) looking into role of the head teacher in Academic achievement in secondary schools in Vihiga, Kenya, though identifying leadership style used by the head teacher as influential in academic performance, her study was confined to influence of variables; organizational skills of head teachers, their involvement in provision of facilities, motivational strategies for the staff and internal supervision of teachers. Using questionnaire, in-depth interview and document analysis guide and analysing data in frequencies, totals averages and percentages (descriptive statistics) the study only revealed a link between these identified variables.

This study is different in that influence of every identified leadership styles as the independent variables; democratic, autocratic and *laissez faire* leadership styles on the students' performance will be established through coefficient of determination and besides, students opinion will also be sought unlike in Musungu's study only using head teachers and teachers as respondents likely to give subjective responses. Even though it was in her recommendations that a study be carried out to find out which factor contributes most to academic achievement, this study chose to seek the influence of the three variables (democratic, autocratic and *laissez faire* leadership styles).

In Kenya, the government expenditure on education has been outstanding as compared to even developed countries like USA, UK, Australia whose education spending as expressed as a percentage of the total government expenditure are 17.1, 11.5 and 13.3 respectively while Kenya spends averagely 22.1%, as evidenced by 339 billion in financial year 2016/2017 (KNBS, 2016). It is therefore important that students who the government spend huge amount of money on through subsidies should give quality grade in return. Majority of the students however 71 per cent of the total average who sat for K.C.S.E. over the last five years in Awendo sub-county had grades C- and below. This is despite the schools having qualified teachers, adequate resources and facilities to enhance effective learning and good performance. Whether their failure to attain above average grades is the principals' faulty choice of leadership style and to what extent each style contribute to students' performance remains a puzzle that this study will endeavor to unravel by seeking the influence of each leadership style to the students' performance.

2.3 Democratic Leadership Style and Students' Academic Performance

Lewin (2001) suggests that democratic leadership, also known as participative leadership is generally the most effective leadership style. Democratic leaders offer guidance to group members, but they also participate in the groups and allow input from other group members, (Bass & Bass, 2008). They encourage group members to participate, but retain the final say over the decision-making process. Group members feel engaged in the process and are more motivated and creative, Lewin (2001).

This style is grounded on the thesis that the organization is the responsibility of all, even though the leader has the primary role of guiding the rest of the group in arriving at the collective decisions, thus encouraging delegating, coaching, accepting responsibility and recognition of the ability and potentials of others. Leaders therefore are considered “*primus inter pares*”-first among equals Boampomg et al (2016).

The democratic or egalitarian leadership cluster reflects concern about the followers in many different ways. This Leadership is considerate, democratic, consultative and participative, employee-cantered, concerned with people, concerned with maintenance of good working relations, supportive and oriented toward facilitating interaction, relationship oriented, and oriented toward group decision making (Bass & Bass, 2008). A secondary school principal who subscribes to democratic leadership style has a positive attitude towards teachers, parents and the students whom she/he perceives as crucial partners in enforcing students' discipline thus good performance, Wasonga (2014).

Drury and Levin (1994) as cited by Nyagaka (2013) in their study revealed that participatory leadership contributes to four intermediate outcomes which in turn have the

potential to lead to better student achievement. The four outcomes are increased efficiency in use of resources and personnel, increased professionalism of teachers, implementation of curriculum reform and increased community engagement. Shared leadership is potentially more effective than head teachers acting alone. It however remains a big puzzle in Awendo sub-county whether there is efficacy in resource utilization, whether these teachers trained and selected for service in these schools exercise professionalism as provided by the basic Education Act of 2013 and TSC Code of Regulations (2012), whether principals are keen on instructional leadership and if the principals involve not only the staff but also the community on matters to do with the school's development.

A U.S.A based study by Suskavcevic and Blake (2004) on Principals' Leadership and Student Achievement: An Examination of the Timss 1999 confirmed positive correlation of principals' leadership styles and academic achievement of students. Its major purpose was to examine the relationship between principals' leadership style and student achievement in the era of standard-based instruction and the most recent systemic reform in education in the USA. Students' achievement was measured using two subjects namely science and mathematics. It expresses that Due to the stronger relationship between both instructional and non-instructional leadership and students' scores present in the set of schools that promote collaboration and cooperation among teachers, school principals may consider having a set of written policies that encourage meetings among the teaching staff on a regular basis - by grade level, by subject, and by other grouping criteria. Such an effort may represent an important contributor to a school climate that is conducive and supportive of student learning.

Suskavcevic and Blake (2004)'s use of correlation design in the study is useful in establishing the relationship, however, the influence of the studied leadership styles on students' performance was left out in the study, a gap this study intends to fill. In addition, Suskavcevic and Blake (2004) use of two subjects namely science and mathematics on rating of students performance was biased and discriminative especially to students whose interest are not science and mathematics oriented. Languages, Humanities, Technical and Applied subjects contribute almost half the percentage score of a student and for this reason the researcher considered the ranking by KNEC that considers all the best performed in seven subjects by a student or all the seven subjects taken by a student (if s/he were not taking an elective subject). This helped reveal the student's true ability in totality.

Moreover, technological changes like integration of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in most schools and changes in the constitution (Kenyan Constitution, 2010) have definitely encouraged particular leadership styles. Changing milieu of the field of education like ban of corporal punishment in 2001, ban of class repetition and re-entry policy (Basic Education Act, 2013) must have impacted too on the principals' leadership styles since these policies dictate the leadership styles the principals must use being the implementers of such policies. It was important therefore to re-examine the relationship between the two constructs in the new context that imposes higher expectations on school principals, who are contemplated to serve primarily as controller of educational programs as well as the implementer of the educational policies and this forms yet another knowledge gap.

Adeyemi and Bolarinwa (2013) researching on Principals' Leadership Styles and Student Academic Performance in Secondary Schools in Ekiti State, Nigeria reports that poor

academic performance of schools in Ekiti state has democratic leadership style to blame, that the democratic style of leadership was the prevalent leadership style used by school principals in the State. This finding not only contradicts Suscacevic and Blake's but also Nsubuga's who perceive democratic leadership style as the preferred leadership style in enhancing students' academic achievement. This contradiction in findings formed grounds for the researcher to help verify what Awendo's case would be, whether it is the predominant use of the democratic leadership style that is to explain for the sub-county's poor performance or not.

Harerimana and Toyin (2017) with a study on Investigation on the Influence of Leadership Styles on Students' Academic Performance in Selected Secondary School: A Case Study of Gesabo District, Kigali, Rwanda, established a positive relationship between democratic style and performance of students of 0.067 but not statistically significant as it was 0.550. This implied that democratic practices of the principals cannot explain the performance of the students. This finding agrees with Suskavcevic and Blake's (2004) findings that there is a positive relationship but differ on significance. A study to verify this needed to be done to help establish the significance of the relationship between democratic leadership style and students' academic performance hence this study.

A study carried out in Kenya by Nyagaka (2013) on Leadership Styles of Head teachers and their Impact on Students' Academic Performance in Secondary Schools, Nyamaiya Division, Nyamira District, Kenya, established that there was a strong relationship between participatory traits of the head teachers and the management structures of the schools which has impact on the students' academic performance. This was evidenced by high chi-square values observed. The study established that the head teachers always let staff members know what is expected of them, always assigns staff member's particular tasks and all

members understand them. This enhances a participatory environment where staff ensures success in the programs. This is also pointed out by Kouzes and Posner (2012) who argues that school heads know that no one does his/her best when feeling weak, incompetent or alienated; they know that those who are expected to produce the results must feel a sense of ownership which they possess if involved in decision making.

Nyagaka's (2013) correlational tool of measure chi-square was instrumental in confirming a significant association between the variables. His sample size of six principals however, could not have been adequate to make such a generalization. In addition, just like the USA based study discussed above, Nyagaka's study did not establish the influence of democratic leadership style to performance. The research had a more representative sample size of 30 principals and went a long way to establish not only the correlation but also identify the influence of democratic leadership styles of the principals to students' academic performance thus filling the knowledge gap. This is useful in prediction of the effectiveness of the leadership style in Kenyan secondary schools.

2.4. Autocratic Leadership Style and Students' Academic Performance

Autocratic leaders, also known as authoritarian leaders, provide clear expectations for what needs to be done, when it should be done, and how it should be done. There is also a clear division between the leader and the followers. Authoritarian leaders make decisions independently with little or no input from the rest of the group. Lewin (2001) found that it is more difficult to move from an authoritarian style to a democratic style than vice versa. Abuse of this style is usually viewed as controlling, bossy, and dictatorial. Authoritarian leadership is best applied to situations where there is little time for group decision-making or where the leader is the most knowledgeable member of the group Lewin (2001).

The autocratic-authoritarian cluster encompasses being arbitrary, controlling, power-oriented, coercive, punitive, and close-minded. The cluster has often been described in pejorative terms. Stripped of negatives (emphasized by so many social scientists), it means taking full and sole responsibility for decision and control of followers' performance. Autocrats stress obedience, loyalty, strict adherence to roles. They make and enforce the rules. They see that decisions are carried out. Powerful autocratic leaders throughout history have often been praised for their ability to develop reliable and devoted followers and to act as the principal authority figures in establishing and maintaining order (Bass & Bass, 2008). Power and authority are centralized in the leader in this leadership style (Okumbe, 2003) and such principals are not likely to bring teachers and parents on board during the formulation and the implementation of policies which directly affect the students' academic performance.

A study carried out in South Africa by Thembinkosi (2005) on An Evaluative Study of the Influence of the Principal's Leadership on Learner Academic Performance investigated the kind of Leadership that the principal has to exercise in order to contribute to the improvement of learner academic performance. A key finding was that principals do not involve learners in making decisions on matters affecting them, that their leadership style has an autocratic bias and they cannot strike a balance between democratic and autocratic leadership. This explained why the students' academic achievement was low with less than 40% of the 12th grade students registering a pass grade (Thembinkosi, 2005 citing Vally, 1999). Awendo sub-county secondary schools are not any different from this South African schools' observation, with an average of only 7.12% of the total students who took national examinations during the period under study (2012-2016) qualifying for direct public

university intake and a wastage of 71% cumulatively (SCEO, 2016), wasn't it too serious to call for an investigation?

Another key finding of Thembinkosi's study revealed that there was no single distinctive style of leadership on which principals relied to elicit excellent performance from learners, that there were also certain factors that hindered effective learning and principals seemed not to be able to address these, it however failed to express in statistical terms the proportion of the variance in autocratic leadership style that is predictable from the student' academic performance hence the gap for this study. It worked to reveal the influence of autocratic leadership style and students' academic performance.

Nsubuga (2009) in his study on Analysis of Leadership Styles and School Performance of Secondary Schools in Uganda from the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient indicated that the relationship between the autocratic leadership style and school performance from the teachers' questionnaire as -0.65 which was interpreted as a strong negative relationship. This is in agreement with Thembinkosi (2005) but is contradicted by Adeyemi (2013) which revealed a positive correlation.

Nsubuga (2009) further explains that the more autocratic one becomes, the poorer the performance of the school and the contrary is also true. School leaders who use the authoritarian leadership style lead to poor academic performance of students, because they adopt harsh leadership styles, which are highly resented by their subordinates (Nsubuga, 2009).

Nsubuga's study was very elaborate as it sought the views of all the stakeholders, that is, the principals, teachers, students, parents and education ministry officials. It also revealed that the relationship between autocratic leadership style of head teachers and school

performance in secondary schools is -0.65 meaning that there is a strong negative relationship between autocratic leadership style and school performance in secondary schools in Uganda. In other words, increasingly using autocratic practices by the principals would lead to further deterioration in academic performance in secondary schools. Nsubuga (2009) however, did not reveal the actual influence of autocratic leadership style on the students' academic performance, a gap this study sealed by running regression to establish the influence of autocratic leadership style of principals on students' performance.

Another study carried out in Nigeria by Adeyemi (2013) on Principals' Leadership Styles and Student Academic Performance in Secondary Schools in Ekiti State, Nigeria revealed that the r -calculated 0.512 was greater than the r -table 0.195 at 0.05 alpha level showing that there was a significant relationship between principals' autocratic leadership style and students' academic performance in secondary schools in Ekiti State, Nigeria. This finding suggests that the more autocratic a principal is the better the performance of students in the Senior Secondary.

Migosi, Ombuki, Mulewa and Karori (2013) reveals in their study on Effects of head teachers' leadership styles on the performance of examinations in public primary schools in Kikuyu District, Kenya that there was a significant relationship between headteachers' leadership styles and students' academic performance where poor performance in the district was blamed on head teachers' use of autocratic leadership styles. Migosi et al (2013) relied on questionnaires solely for data collection and ex-post facto design. Their study only established the effect of leadership styles in general on performance using Spearman's ρ . This study is different as it relied on descriptive survey design and used not only questionnaires but also interview schedules, FGDs and document analysis which were

useful for triangulation. Besides, the influence of autocratic leadership style on students' performance was revealed.

This finding that head teachers who are rated autocratic had higher mean score is supported by Muli (2005) and Wangui (2007) who had the same findings in their studies carried out in Kenya claiming that the autocratic leaders are keen on productivity at the expense of staff relations. It is however in contradiction with Thembinkosi's and Nsubuga's studies in South Africa and Uganda respectively. It is not clear why Adeyemi's research using correlational research design like other studies, collecting data using questionnaires and inventory would realize a different result. Differences in educational policies and their implementation strategies might have resulted into this and Kenya, being a sovereign state with its policies unique to the existing education system, a confirmatory study was handy hence an adventure to fill the regional gap.

2.5 *Laissez-Faire* Leadership Style and Students' Academic Performance

This style is also referred to as delegated leadership. Delegated leadership offer little or no guidance to group members and leave decision-making up to group members. While this style can be effective in situations where group members are highly qualified in an area of expertise, it often leads to poorly defined roles and a lack of motivation (Bass & Bass, 2008). According to UNESCO (2009), the principal who uses this style of leadership believes there should be no rules and regulations since everybody has innate sense of responsibility. This may lead to confusion as students might capitalise on the principals' laxity to joke around not fully committing themselves to academic achievement. Teachers too may relax if there is no instructional guidance as everyone will act his or her own boss. This may lead to confusion, anarchy or chaos that eventually will see the school performance remain very low.

Cherry (2006) noted that laissez-faire leadership tended to result in groups that lacked direction where members blamed each other for mistakes, refused to accept personal responsibility, and produced a lack of progress and work.

A study involving Michigan (Rautiola, 2009) had the correlation coefficient indicating that there is a negative correlation -0.66 between the laissez-faire leadership style and the school performance in secondary schools. This study established that head teachers who use the laissez faire leadership style tend to fail to follow up on those they have delegated tasks to and consequently performance declines. They leave everything to the mercy of their subordinates, some of whom may lack the necessary skills and competence to execute the work. Others may simply not like to do the work unless they are supervised (Rautiola, 2009). It is however not clear the influence of laissez faire as a leadership style on students' academic performance and that explains why this study will focus on establishing the influence of laissez leadership style on students' academic achievement in Awendo sub-county.

Laissez faire leadership is not the best leadership style to use in the school's organization because complete delegation without follow-up mechanisms may create performance problems, which are likely to affect the school's effectiveness. This is in agreement with MacDonald's (2007) study of laissez-faire leadership which shows that it is associated with the highest rates of truancy and delinquency and with the slowest modifications in performance which lead to unproductive attitudes and disempowerment of subordinates. It is not a rare occasion spotting students move about in full school uniforms outside the school compound on a school day when the instructional programs are on-going in Awendo sub-county, sometimes in the pretext of seeking medication. Sometimes, male students

especially, are seen riding motorbikes when they have “valid” excuses to be out of the school. This leaves any keen observer wondering what sort of permissiveness exists in the schools. What leadership styles are used by the men and women entrusted with leadership responsibilities – most probably *laissez faire*.

A *laissez faire* leader is also most likely to deal with indiscipline challenges in school and especially from students. Kabandize (2001) carried out a study on students control through rules and regulations set by individual schools in Uganda and observed that, rules and regulations are enforced through prefects’ bodies and councils, disciplinary committees, teachers and involvement of parents. Cotton and Savard (2012) also argued that the best results could be obtained through vigilantly reminding students about rules and regulations of the school and monitoring their compliance with them. However it has become normal in many secondary schools with *laissez faire* principals for students to break school rules and regulations with impunity, showing lack of respect to school authority, damaging of school property, beating up their teachers, rioting at any slightest opportunity and even inflicting harm on one another to the extent of using acid as a means of defence. These can be avoided sometimes when the principal is not passive in ensuring rules and regulations.

According to Adams (2003), schools rules and regulation are among the strategies designed to instil good conduct of students. This implies self-control, orderliness, good behaviour and obedience to school authority (Adams, 2003). Also on admission in schools, especially at secondary level, students are given prospectuses, which spell out some of the expectations. These rules and regulations specify in most cases what school members should do and what they should not do. Despite this expectation, in most secondary schools in Awendo sub-county, students break these rules and regulations with wide spread indiscipline acts such as participation in exam cheating that saw students from two schools

within the sub-county have their results cancelled in the 2013 KCSE (SCEO, 2014) and this leaves people wondering whether the affected schools principals have been using the appropriate leadership styles.

A study in Nigeria, Osun State by Yusuf (2012) on Influence of Principals' Leadership styles on Students' Academic Achievement in Secondary Schools revealed that there is no significant influence of laissez-faire leadership styles on students' academic achievement. Principals who use this style tend to fail to follow up on those they have delegated tasks to and consequently performance declines. They leave everything to the mercy of their teachers or partners, some of who may lack the necessary skills and competence to execute the work. Others may simply not like to work unless they are supervised. Yusuf (2012) further quoting Frischer, (2007) adds that the groups were unproductive if their supervisors avoided exercising control over their subordinates. This indicates that laissez-faire leadership style allows neglect and lack of follow up on activities, which may water down concerns towards effective academic achievements.

Yusuf's study relied on questionnaires of the principals only to gather data used for the analysis. This study on the other hand, will use interviews for teachers and the SCQASO as well as FGDs for students that will be useful for triangulation. In addition, data generated was analysed using Pearson chi-square statistical analysis which could only reveal the association between the laissez faire leadership style of the principals and the students' academic performance. This study, however, used Pearsons' correlation and regression to establish the exact influence of laissez faire leadership style on students' academic performance.

In Uganda, the correlation coefficient indicated that there is a negative correlation between the laissez faire leadership style and the school performance in secondary schools. This study established that head teachers who use the laissez faire leadership style tend to fail to follow up on those they have delegated tasks to and consequently performance declines. They leave everything to the mercy of their subordinates, some of whom may lack the necessary skills and competence to execute the work. Others may simply not like to do the work unless they are supervised (Nsubuga, 2009).

Maru (2013) researching on the Influence of Principals 'Leadership Styles On Students' Performance At Kenya Certificate Of Secondary Education In Kinangop, Kenya established that there is also a strong negative correlation between the laissez-faire leadership style and school performance in secondary schools (-0.66). The more laissez faire the principal is the poorer the performance of their schools. Even though these studies seem to have a common finding of a negative correlation, none however attempted to establish to what extent a principals' use of laissez faire leadership style affect students' academic performance, a gap this study filled.

Another study in Kakamega County by Budohi (2014) revealed that an institution where laissez-faire leadership style is practiced, students' performance has some implications that may be negative as it affects the school working environment. She states in her findings that that most principals in Kakamega county exercised laissez-faire leadership where they avoided responsibilities and allowed teachers to work as they choose and with minimum interference. Budohi (2013) succeeded in establishing a relationship between Laissez faire leadership styles and school performance even though with no clear show of the relationship strength and no clarity on statistical procedure that led to the conclusion of an

existing negative relationship. Her study, just like other reviewed previous studies, failed to establish to what extent the *laissez faire* leadership style contribute to performance.

Budohi (2014)'s study exclusively relied on questionnaires for teachers and principals which might have chanced biasness in the study as there is no way of validating the respondents' views if entirely relying on one instrument for data collection. She would easily tell when a respondent gives false information by observation of the non-verbal in an interview, through document analysis or even mere observation. Triangulation therefore, becomes a useful way of overcoming the methodological limitation. This study, complementing questionnaires with interviews and focussed group discussions as the instruments for data collection and seeking students' opinions too, established the influence of *laissez faire* leadership style of principals and students' performance in Awendo sub-county public secondary schools.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This section consists of research design, description of the area of study, study population, sample and sampling technique, instruments of data collection, reliability and validity of research instruments and data collection and analysis procedures.

3.2 Research Design

This study employed a descriptive survey research design and correlational design. Descriptive survey research design is used in preliminary and exploratory studies to allow researchers to gather information, summarize, present and interpret for the purpose of clarification (Borg & Gall, 2007). They give the purpose of descriptive research as determining and reporting the way things are. The study fit within the provisions of descriptive survey research designs because the researcher intended to collect data and report the way things are while establishing a relationship between the independent and the dependent variables. Correlational design was also useful in establishing the influence of each leadership style to students' performance. The designs helped to reduce both time wastage and increased representation of respondents. It was preferred because helped gather information on the administrative factors contributing to students' academic performance in Awendo sub-county.

3.3 Area of Study

Awendo Sub-county is one of the sub-counties that make up Migori County. It was carved out of Rongo Sub-county in 2009. Awendo sub-county borders Kilgoris Sub County to the South, Rongo and Ndhiwa sub counties to the North, South Mugirango Sub-county to the East, Uriri sub-county to the West. It lies within latitudes $0^{\circ} 45' 57.72''S$ and $1^{\circ} 1' 04.73''S$ and longitude $34^{\circ} 27' 36.25''E$ and $34^{\circ} 38' 07.55''E$. The sub county covers approximately 262 square kilometers and has a total population of 108,913 (Census, 2009). Awendo sub-County has two administrative divisions namely Awendo and Dede and five education zones namely: Awendo, Sare, Mariwa, Ranen and Dede zones, refer to the map, appendix 5 on page 59. The main economic activity in the Sub-county is sugar –cane farming which the populace do in considerably small pieces of land and supply South Nyanza sugar factory, Trans-Mara and Riat, at the farmers' convenience. The banking institutions in

Awendo Sub-county include Equity Bank, the National Bank, Kenya Women Finance Trust (KWFT), Faulu Kenya and several Savings and Co-operative Societies. The high number of teachers, small-scale traders, South Nyanza Sugar Factory (SONY) employees and employees of public service help to sustain the economy of Awendo Sub-county. Find Awendo sub-county map attached in Appendix 8.

3.4 Target Population

Target population is defined as all the members of a real or hypothetical set of people, events or objects to which a researcher wishes to generalize the results of the research study (Borg & Gall, 2007). The target population for this study consisted of 35 principals, 340 TSC employed teachers. Teachers engaged by the school's Board of Management (B.O.M.) were avoided for fear of high turnover hence might not have a true experience of the principals' leadership style. 1400 students in form four (year 2016) were chosen for they had stayed in school long enough to understand the leadership styles used by their principals and 1 sub-county quality assurance officer (SCQASO, Awendo Sub-county, 2016) Therefore, the total population for the study was 1775 subjects.

3.5 Sample and Sampling Procedure

Sampling means selecting a given number of subjects from a defined population as a representative of that population. Any statements made about the sample should also be true of the population Orodho, (2012). This research used saturated random sampling technique to arrive at 1 SCQASO and 30 principals. The remaining 5 principals from the five remaining schools were used for the pilot study. The sample size was determined through Krejcie and Morgan's table (1970), Appendix 7, giving a total of 186 teachers and 301 students. Simple random sampling was used to select 186 teachers and 301 form four

students because they have stayed in the school long enough to understand the principals' leadership trend.

To arrive at the sample using this formula, the researcher listed all the schools on foolscap and wrote corresponding numbers. Names and numbers of schools were then listed on pieces of papers, folded them tightly, put them in a container and then had them shuffled. Then a piece was picked from the schools container and another from the number then the name of the school recorded against the number on a prepared list of numbers. In this way, 30 schools from which 30 principals, 186 teachers and 301 students were identified. The first 26 schools availed 6 teachers to participate and the last 3 schools availing 8 teachers. 10 students came from the first 29 schools, and 11 students from the last school giving a total of 301 students. Table 3.1 summarizes the sample size.

Table 3.1: Sample Frame

Respondent	Target population	Sampled population
Principals	35	30
Teachers	340	186
Students (form 4-2015)	1400	301
SCQASO	1	1

3.6 Research Instruments

A sets of questionnaires namely Principal's Questionnaires (PQ) were used, Interview Schedules for the principals and the SCQASO and focused group discussions for the students were used to gather information on the influence of principals' leadership styles on secondary students' academic performance. The study used three types of interview schedules namely; the Principals', teachers', SCQASO and students' as per the objectives of the study. Questionnaires were appropriate because the respondents were literate and also it allowed the researcher to reach the population under study within limited time. It also ensured confidentiality and thus it helped in gathering more candid and objective responses. An interview schedule was used to elicit more from the principals over the same as for it is possible for the interviewer to clarify questions that are not clear in the interview schedule Mugenda and Mugenda (2008).

3.6.1 Questionnaires

This was used to obtain information from principals on various leadership practices. The elements used were sourced from Don Clark's Leadership Style Survey but modified a little to suit the objectives of the study. It contained 30 leadership practices – of which every 10 practices reflected democratic, autocratic and laissez faire leadership styles. They were mixed up to safeguard against any biasness from the respondents.

A rating scale was used to establish the level of principals' leadership practices and this was the rating scale used for the questionnaire

- 1- Never)
- 2- Rarely
- 3- Occasionally
- 4- Frequently

5- Always

3.6.2 Interview Schedule

This was used to collect in-depth information about the influence of leadership styles on students' performance. There were four main items seeking information on decision making, communication, ownership, conflict resolution, professional growth and empowerment, that guided the researcher to gather more information on the influence of principals' leadership styles on students' academic performance. Each interview session took about 30 minutes and so is the focused group discussion.

3.7 Reliability and Validity of Research Instruments

3.7.1 Validity

According to Kerlinger (2003), validity of an instrument is dependent on how an instrument fulfills the function it is supposed to perform. The data collected should be a true reflection of the variables. The inferences which are made, based on such data, should be accurate and of meaning. Mugenda and Mugenda (2008) further adds that validity is the degree with which results obtained from analysis of the data critically represent the phenomenon under study. According to Cooper and Schindler (2003), content and face validity is determined by experts' judgment. To achieve this, the instruments were prepared and forwarded to the experts in Educational Administration in the School of Education at Maseno University who are authorities in this area, for scrutiny. Their comments were then used to improve the final draft of the research instruments.

3.7.2 Reliability

According to Kothari (2004) reliability is the ability of an instrument to produce consistent data after repeated trials. It ensures that the instrument generates similar data when used by an independent researcher. 5(14%) principals from 5 schools and (19)10% of the teachers were used for piloting. The reliability was tested using test-retest method and a Pearson's r of 0.86 for Principals' questionnaire obtained. This ensured the suitability and clarity of questions on the instruments, the relevance of the information being sought, and the language used. A pilot study was used to refine the questionnaire design, to identify the errors which could only be identified by the population under study.

3.8 Data Collection Procedure

The researcher obtained an introduction letter from Maseno University, School of Graduate Studies (SGS) which was used to obtain authority to carry out the study from National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI). After this, the researcher obtained authorization from the Sub-County Education Officer, Awendo Sub-County to operate in his area. The researcher then proceeded to the field to collect data. Letters notifying the various institutions of the intended study were dispatched two weeks before the researcher visited the institutions. The respondents were then visited on agreed dates and correct instruments were used to collect data. The questionnaires were given to the respondents who were required to fill them as the researcher waited and sometimes assisted them in clarifying elements that were not clear to them. They were assured that strict confidentiality would be maintained in dealing with the responses to encourage them to give honest responses. Interviews were also administered and focused group discussions carried out with each participant or group taking approximately 30 minutes.

3.9 Data Analysis

After all data had been collected, the researcher conducted data cleaning, which involved identification of incomplete or inaccurate responses after which the data was coded and entered in the computer for analysis using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20. This package is preferred because it is able to handle large amount of data, and given its wide spectrum of statistical procedures purposefully designed for social sciences, it is also quite efficient (Martin & Acuna, 2002).

The research analysis was hoped to reveal the influence of principals' leadership styles on students' academic performance. Since the research is expected to yield both qualitative and quantitative data, qualitative data were analyzed using content analysis based on analysis of emerging themes meanings and implications emanating from respondents information. As observed by Gray (2004) qualitative data provides rich descriptions and explanations that demonstrate the chronological flow of events as well as often leading to serendipitous findings. Descriptive and inferential statistics were employed in analyzing the level each variable in the respondents' ratings such as means, percentages, correlation and simple linear regression. Pearson's correlation was carried out to measure the strength and direction of linear relationship between the independent and the dependent variables. The absolute value of r was interpreted in agreement with Dancey and Reidy (2007), as:

- (i) no correlation, if $|r| \leq 0.1$;
- (ii) mild/modest correlation, if $0.1 < |r| \leq 0.3$;
- (iii) moderate correlation, if $0.3 < |r| \leq 0.6$;
- (iv) strong correlation, if $0.6 < |r| < 1$; and, finally,
- (v) Perfect correlation, if $|r| = 1$.

The qualitative data on the other hand were transcribed, analyzed and used for triangulation.

The independent variables (leadership styles practices), items in the questionnaire, were filtered as per the objectives then total rating per respondent divided by aggregate value 10 to get the level of every principal's leadership practice. Rating scale was used to quantify leadership styles is as below;

1.00-1.44= Not Democratic 1.45-2.44= Partially Democratic 2.45-3.44= Democratic
3.45-4.44= Highly Democratic 4.45-5.00= Very Highly Democratic

Similarly to obtain the index for the dependent variable, the school means for KCSE (2012-2016) were captured. The Pearson's correlation and simple linear regression were then used to investigate the relationship between the variables. The figures used for regression are showed in Appendix 9.

3.9 Ethical Considerations

The study utilized appropriate procedures to ensure appropriate ethical standards:

- i) Obtained an authorization from NACOSTI to conduct the study
- ii) All participants in the study were treated with necessary respect and dignity they deserve.
- iii) The identities of the participants were protected throughout the study.
- iv) All opinions and information investigated, obtained or reported were treated with confidentiality.
- v) All interview respondents were furnished with copies of interview schedule prior to the commencement of the interviews.
- vi) Each interviewer was free to withdraw or choose not to answers specific questions.
- vii) All transcripts, tapes and supporting documents relating to the study will be destroyed upon completion of the study.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the results, explanation and discussion of data collected from 30 principals, 175 teachers and 301 students from secondary schools in Awendo sub-county and the SCQASO. The response rate was perfect (100%) with all the 30 principals sampled filling and returning the questionnaires. Out of the 186 teachers selected for the study, 175 were available to respond to the predesigned interview schedules, which represent 94.07%. The students and the SCQASO's response rate were at 100%. The response rate is showed in the Table 4.1.

Table 4.1: Response Rate

Respondents	F	%
Principals	30	100

Teachers	175	94.08
Students	301	100
SCQASO	1	100
Totals	507	97.88

The study was guided by three main objectives:

- i) Determine the influence of the principals’ democratic leadership style on students’ academic performance.
- ii) Establish the influence of the principals’ autocratic leadership style on students’ academic performance.
- iii) Establish the influence of the principals’ *Laissez Faire* leadership styles on students’ academic performance

4.2 Analysis of the Principal Respondents’ Bio-Data

The study demographic information of the respondents is given in terms of gender, age, highest academic qualification, years they had been principals, years they had been in their current schools. Their gender was intended to reveal both sex inclusion in the school leadership hence safeguard against any biasness. Their age was intended to evaluate their leadership capabilities in terms of handling technical leadership issues. Information on their highest academic qualification was intended to establish their expertise in the leadership issues. The years they had been principals intended to determine their level of roles experience. Information on the number of years they had been in their current schools was intended to establish if they are well conversant with the school leadership roles.

4.2.1 Experience of the respondent

Table 4.2 reveals the experience of the principals by years. With regard to the administrative experience of principals, the principals that had between 6 to 10 years of administrative experience were 29 (96.67%) and one (3.33%) with 11 and above years' experience as showed in the Table 4.2. It was however noted that no principal had less than five years' experience.

Table 4.2: Principals' years of experience

Respondents	1-5		6-10		11 and above	
	F	%	F	%	F	%
1. Principals	0	00.00	29	96.67	1	3.33

This means that principals in Awendo sub-county have had enough experience to understand a working leadership style hence using the most appropriate leadership styles.

4.2.2 Experience of the principals in the current school

From table 4.3 will show the experience of the principals in their current stations. It is observable that most principals expressed by 18(60.00%) have served in their current stations for a period of between 1-5 years, 10 principals(33.33%) have stayed in their stations for a period of between 6-10 and 2(6.67%) have served 11 and above years.

Table 4.3: Experience of the principals in the current school

Respondents	1-5		6-10		11 and above	
	F	%	F	%	F	%
1. Principals	18	60.00	10	33.33	2	6.67

4.2.3 Gender of principals

Table 4.4 shows the gender of the principals. Male principals were the majority being represented by 23 out of the 30 principals representing 76.67% while their female counterparts were 7 representing 23.33%.

Table 4.4 Gender of the Respondents

	F	%
Males	23	76.67
Females	07	23.33

Table 4.4 reveals that Awendo sub-county secondary schools are managed with both male and female principals. This means that the study involved both male and females and therefore was not gender-biased. It is however clear that that male principals dominate Awendo sub-county leadership.

4.2.4 Age of the principals

The age bracket of the principals was ascertained and results indicated in Table 4.5 and judging from the table, almost equal number 14, (46.67%) were between 36-45 and 13,(43.33%) 46-55 years of age respectively. These were followed by 3 principals between 55 and 65 years of age who represented (10.00%). None however fell below 36 years of age.

Better results were thus expected since these people are still young and enthusiastic to guide boys and girls to academic excellence.

Table 4.5: Age of the Respondents

	25-	36-	46-	55-
Respondents	35	45	55	65

	F	%	F	%	F	%	F
Principals	0	0	14	46.67	13	43.33	3

The significance of this is that the MoES and the school foundation bodies deploy older people with the appropriate experience and maturity to manage schools and their complex problems.

It should be noted, however, that while the policy of appointment of head teachers favoured those with long years of service and experience, it locked out the young inexperienced but energetic teachers. Some of those with energy and fresh enthusiasm could have performed better if accorded an opportunity to do so.

4.2.5 Academic qualification of the principals

Table 4.6 gives a summary of the academic qualification of the respondents.

Table 4.6: Academic qualification of the respondents

Academic qualification	DIP/ED		BED		MED	
	F	%	F	%	F	%
Principal	2	6.67	22	73.33	6	20.00

In this study, 2 principals (6.67%) have Diploma level of education, 22(73.33%) have Bachelor of education degree, while 6 (20.00%) have Degree of Masters. Even though most of them confirmed having started their degree of Master with some only awaiting graduation for the same, only 6 serving principals had been issued with certificates.

From these findings, it showed that majority of the respondents were qualified principals and a deduction can therefore made that the information received from these respondents was credible to help the researcher establish the influence of the principals' leadership styles on the students' academic performance in secondary schools in Awendo sub-county.

4.3 Influence of the Principals' Democratic Leadership Style on Students' Academic Performance

The research question responded to here was: What is the influence of the principals' democratic leadership styles on students' academic performance in secondary schools in Awendo sub-county? In order to respond to the research question, principals were asked in the questionnaire to score how strongly they felt about the statements. Their responses were as presented in Table 4.7. This was to reveal the level of democratic practices by the principals. The data used for correlation and regression analysis is in Appendix 8.

Table 4.7: Level of Principals' Democratic leadership**(n= 30)**

Democratic practices	N	R	O	F	A	M
Decision making						
I try to include teachers in determining what to do and how to do it. However, maintain the final decision making authority	0	0	7	14	9	4.07
Communication						
I ask for staff ideas and input on upcoming plans and projects	0	0	8	15	7	3.97
When things go wrong and I need to create a strategy to keep a project or process running on schedule, I call a meeting to get my staff advice	0	1	13	8	8	3.77
Ownership						
I want to create an environment where the staffs take ownership of the project.	0	0	10	12	8	3.93
The staff will exercise self-direction if they are committed to the objectives	0	0	9	12	9	4.00
Professional growth and empowerment						
I ask the staff their vision and use where appropriate	0	0	14	11	5	3.70
I allow my staff to set priorities with my guidance	0	0	10	14	6	3.87
I like to use my leadership power to help subordinates	0	0	9	14	7	3.93
Conflict resolution and management						
When there are differences in role expectations, I work with them to resolve the differences	0	1	9	16	4	3.77
The staff know how to use creativity and ingenuity to solve school problems	0	1	14	8	7	3.70
Overall Mean	0	3	103	124	70	3.87
KEY: N=Never						
A=Always						
R=Rarely						
M=Mean Rating						
O=Occasionally						
F=Frequently						

Interpretation of Mean Rating:

1.00-1.44= Not Democratic 1.45-2.44= Partially Democratic 2.45-3.44= Democratic
3.45-4.44= Highly Democratic 4.45-5.00= Very Highly Democratic

4.3.1 Decision Making

Table 4.7 shows that the principals frequently try to include the staff in determining what to do and how to do it, however, retains the final decision making authority. The mean rating of 4.07 meant that the principals' involvement of the staff in decision making was highly democratic. Some principals interviewed actually felt that teachers' need be involved because they are informed of the relevant materials necessary for the students' success in various subjects. One principal had this to say:

How on earth will I know whether a class is incapacitated in a particular paper, say in physics if the teacher does not raise such a concern? I allow departmental heads to draw a budget for the whole year for proper planning and relevance in acquisition of items especially revision books.

This finding concur with (Bass & Bass, 2008) describing democratic leaders as allowing input from other group members for efficiency in performance.

Cherry (2006) observed that where democratic leadership is practiced the results are bound to be good for these leaders encourage group members to participate but retain the final say in the decision-making process. Group members as a result feel engaged in the process and are more motivated and creative

Kinyanjui and Orodho (2014) also established that in schools where performance were found to be above average headteachers did not dominate the assemblies, neither did they dominate the staff meetings, nor dominated the procurement of books. Rather the headteachers shared the assembly platforms with the other teachers and especially the teacher on duty; they gave teachers turns to discuss and air their opinions on issues at hand

during staff meetings and consulted teachers whenever the issue of procurement of books arose.

4.3.2 Communication

Secondly, Table 4.7 indicates that the principals' sought for ideas and input from the staff frequently on upcoming plans and projects at a mean rating of 3.97; they however sought for staff advice occasionally when things go wrong and there was need to create a strategy to keep a project or process running on schedule at a mean rating of 3.77. This revealed openness in communication where the principals valued the advice from the staff as vital in smooth running and excellence of academic programs in the schools at an average mean rating of 3.87. This implied that principals are highly democratic in their dealings with communication.

Managing communications effectively is a key dimension of leadership. This is stressed in *Kiwi Leadership for Principals* (Ministry of Education, New Zealand, 2008). Effective communication underpins the knowledge, skills and dispositions principals require to have a direct and indirect influence on student outcomes, as identified in the *Best Evidence Synthesis on leadership*.

Dubrin (2010) further says that for a democratic oriented head teacher to perform better there must be a collaborative arrangement in decision-making across all levels in the school which should be made available. This is also possible through open channel communication.

4.3.3 Ownership

Similarly, Table 4.7 shows that the principals frequently created an environment where the staff took ownership of projects and frequently exercised self-direction with commitment to the objectives at mean ratings of 3.93 and 4.00 respectively. These implied that the principals' confirmed frequently creating an environment where the students and staff would experience a sense of belonging with an average mean rating of 3.97. This average mean rating of 3.97 reveal that the principals confirmed that they are highly democratic in their leadership practices.

When teachers, support staff and students are all included in the school operation, they feel in control of their own destiny, and motivated to work hard by more than just a financial reward, Nsubuga (2009).

The principals when interviewed admitted that they are on the know that both teaching and support staff work best when feeling trusted and party to the programmes. They said:

The staff does the best when they feel appreciated and trusted, Seeking their opinion when making decisions builds that trust and confidence. It is very important to let the staff take part in decision making in some of the programs we have. They will go out of the way to make sure that the things they voted for work and that make management simpler because people are goal oriented. Those who are expected to produce the results must feel a sense of ownership. In order for a school to provide quality education, those who have been empowered to lead the transformation of the schools to address the challenges of the new millennium should carefully nurture democratic leadership

The students also confirmed that their inclusion in setting of targets or academic expectations creates in them a sense of ownership which they are compelled to fulfill. They said:

It is motivating to work for a mean that you can attain rather than some targets imposed on you by the teachers. When you know you will be answerable if you fail to attain it, you might be even compelled to stay overnight in order to get the points right. It is ownership of that set goal that will make you strive that far.

4.3.4 Professional growth and empowerment

Equally, Table 4.7 shows that the principals frequently considered the vision of members of staff and integrated into the school vision where appropriate with a mean rating of 3.70; frequently allowed members of staff to set priorities with guidance at a mean rating of 3.87; and frequently employed leadership power to help subordinates with a mean rating of 3.93. Therefore, the average mean rating of 3.83 suggest that principals' frequently invest on staff professional growth and empowerment programs with the hope to better the schools' academic achievement thus highly democratic.

Sparks (2005) on professional development observed that effective professional development is an essential element in promoting significant change in school leaders' practices, teachers' instructional practice sand student learning. In order to create conditions that promote the growth and development of teachers within a school and subsequently lead to improvement in student performance, leaders must promote a climate of professional growth through professional development activities that are analytical and reflective of school's vision and mission

Moore, Kochan, Kraska and Reames (2011) who carried out a study on Professional Development and Student Achievement in High Poverty Schools: Auburn further reveals that principals in Torch bearer Schools perceived higher levels of the implementation of National Staff Development Council standards (content, process and context) in their schools than their counterparts in non-Torchbearer Schools. The academic excellence in what Moore et al (2011) refers to as 'torchbearer schools' was chanced by the professional development of teachers.

4.3.5 Conflict resolution and management

Moreover, Table 4.7 indicates that principals worked frequently with the staff in resolving differences whenever there were differences in role expectations at mean ratings of 3.77 and frequently at a mean rating of 3.70 for applying creativity and ingenuity to solve school problems respectively. Thus, the average mean rating of 3.74 implied that the principals frequently took part in conflict resolution and management in the schools featuring them as highly democratic.

Many principals interviewed acknowledged that differences among the staff were inevitable and how they were handled would impact both directly and indirectly to the academic processes.

If teachers of the same subject are not in good terms for reasons of which some can be personal, I delegate the departmental head to see to it that the two reconcile their differences for the common good of the students. My intervention is a must if the reconciliation process steered by the HOD fails.

Ramani and Zhimin (2010) on Conflict Resolution Mechanisms in Secondary schools revealed that the causes of conflicts in public secondary schools are varied. Resolution of various forms of conflicts would therefore, require specific strategies since the root causes may be unique. The study recommended that school administrators and teachers should seek to embrace open systems where everyone is set free to air their views and the areas of conflict. They further stress that if principals fails to manage minor differences among the staff, they could grow into irreconcilable differences that eventually impact negatively on school performance.

Altogether, Table 4.7 indicates that principals in Awendo sub-county secondary schools highly involved democratic practices in their leadership at an overall mean rate of 3.87.

In order to establish the relationship between the democratic leadership and students' academic performance, a correlation analysis was conducted and the results presented in Table 4.8

Table 4.8: Relationship between Democratic leadership and student academic performance (n=30)

		Democratic leadership	Student academic performance
Democratic leadership	Pearson Correlation	1	.631
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	30	30
Student academic performance	Pearson Correlation	.631	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	30	30

Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Table 4.8 indicates that the correlation between democratic leadership by principals and students' academic performance had a moderate positive and significant relationship ($r=0.631$, $n=30$, $p< 0.05$). This showed that democratic leadership style had moderate and positive relationship with the students' academic performance in Awendo sub-county school.

Supporting the need for democratic practices, the SCQASO had this to add:

Democratic leadership can be effectively utilized to extract the best from people and the most effective and efficient educational climate can be created in a school when democracy is employed. The democratic leadership practices in schools outline procedures to develop and use the potential of all the stakeholders of a school in order to create and foster quality education. The principles of democratic leadership are flexibly applied in order to create a climate in which all stakeholders are able to express themselves freely and hence feel that they are part of the democratic decision making process. This however must be done cautiously lest it lead to a drop in performance when the parties involved choose to abuse their mandate.

The SCQASO though drumming support for democratic practices, cautioned against its overly use that might chance into its abuse by the stakeholders.

Further, regression analysis was carried out to estimate the influence of democratic leadership on students’ academic performance and the results of the analysis were as presented in Tables 4.9

Table 4.9: Regression of Democratic Leadership and Students’ Academic Performance

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.633	.401	.379	1.00737	.401	18.717	1	28	.000

Predictors: (Constant), Democratic leadership

Dependent Variable: Student academic performance

It can be observed in Table 4.9 that democratic leadership accounted for 37.9% of the variation in the students’ academic performance as signified by the coefficient adjusted R square 0.379. However, the other 62.1% of the variation in the students’ academic performance was due to other factors that were not subject of this study. These factors could be students’ attitude, teachers’ factor, family factors, location of school among others. This finding was supported by interview findings in which respondents asserted that factors like students’ entry behavior, type of school, parental level income of income and students’ attitude together with democratic leadership styles influence students’ academic performance. In this respect, the respondents emphasized; “when students are admitted with very low marks in form one, it becomes very difficult to have them get quality grades.

Bigger schools have better facilities, adequate staffing and these factors give them advantage resulting into good performance.’’ Indeed democratic leadership styles coupled with other factors influence students’ academic performance. This is because there cannot be any single factor that can influence students’ performance as students are presented to a myriad of factors as they learn, meaning that, each of those factors to some extent influence the performance. These findings are consistent with Ogalo, Simatwa and Okwach (2013), who in their studies in Nyando and Muhoroni Districts, Odumbe and Simatwa (2015) in Migori districts who also found out that other than democratic leadership styles other factors do influence students’ academic performance. The new knowledge is that this study established the contribution of democratic leadership style on students’ academic performance unlike other studies.

The study further sought to establish whether democratic leadership was a significant predictor of students’ academic performance. ANOVA was computed and the results were shown in Table 4.10.

Table 4.10: ANOVA of democratic leadership and students’ academic performance

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	16.452	1	16.452	16.503	.000
	Residual	24.923	28	.997		
	Total	41.376	29			

Predictors: (Constant), Democratic leadership

Dependent Variable: Student academic performance

Table 4.10 indicates that the regression model significantly ($F(1, 28) = 16.503, p < 0.05$) predicts the students’ academic performance. This means that democratic leadership can be relied upon to influence students’ academic performance. Therefore, principals of

schools be encouraged to use democratic leadership style to the benefit of students in the implementation of the school curriculum.

Principals of Awendo sub-county secondary schools in their interview response contended that democracy was the best leadership strategy for school environments because schools are systems with parts that are interrelated. They expressed; ‘We, for example, have to motivate the teachers to participate in decision making because academic progress depends on the quality of teaching exhibited which is chanced by the teachers’ attitude among other school and student related factors.’

The students too in their FGDs, were of the opinion that if democratic leadership style was enhanced where they would be allowed to express their views without being victimised then performance will be better. They, however, were careful to note that a democratic society is not necessarily lawless but where their views and interest would be sought in taking certain decision. This, they say, would give them a sense of ownership hence strives to actualize the set standards.

We also value and look forward to good performance. We feel valued when our interest like election of our governing council is left to us; when we are allowed to have *Kamukunjis* (an open forum where students can freely air their sentiments freely) where we can address our concerns without fear - we also have a right to report when some teachers give us raw deal even though prompt in lesson attendance; when the school sponsor symposiums among other activities.

Teachers when asked in what ways democratic leadership style influence performance, they expressed that when their interests are taken into account work becomes joy. In this respect, they added:

When your differences as staff are resolved, your focus remains work and what does that translate to? Good performance for sure. If the school facilitates a teacher’s training say as KNEC examiner, the benefit is not just on the certificate issued but the value added on the teacher that is further

transferred to the student which definitely translates into good performance because the teacher is informed of the examiners' expectations hence able to guide students accordingly. When you go benchmarking in another school, you have an opportunity to compare and improve as a teacher.

They further added:

You will value and sacrifice your all for what is yours. If involved in implementation and running of programmes in the school, why on earth would you even dream of them failing, you must give it your best and its success becomes your number one dream.

To establish the actual influence of democratic leadership on students' academic performance, linear regression analysis was computed and the results were shown in Table 4.11.

Table 4.11: Linear Regression analysis of democratic leadership style and students' academic performance

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	-1.406	1.293		-1.087	.286
	Democratic leadership	1.468	.339	.633	4.326	.000

Table 4.11 shows that one unit increase in democratic leadership practice improved students' academic performance by 1.468 units as signified by the coefficient 1.468.

Since the coefficient of democratic leadership style was statistically significant ($p < 0.05$), it means that with increase in democratic practices there is bound to be an improvement in students' performance and therefore the following regression equation can be used to predict students' academic performance. $Y = -1.406 + 1.468X_1$. This further suggests that the principals need to improve on their democratic leadership practices if they have to promote the educational goal of improved learners' academic performance.

These findings are consistent with Suskavcevic and Blake (2004) that democratic leadership styles positively affect students' academic achievement and general school performance because they motivate teachers to work with principals to achieve school objectives, Dubrin (2010) also noted that head teachers who employ this leadership style allow teachers to take initiatives so as to improve student academic achievement. Democratic leadership supports and encourages team work, good cooperation, good remuneration of all staff, motivation of staff and students. Maru (2013), Migosi et al (2013) also agree that democratic practices by the school principals contribute positively to students' academic performance. The findings supports Harerimana and Toyin's (2017) findings that democratic leadership practices by the principals have a positive relationship with the students' academic performance but disagree on significance of this relationship. This study, just like Suskavcevic and Blake's (2004) found a significant moderate positive relationship.

In summary of objective one, the school principal needs to use the democratic leadership style to build trust, respect and commitment because the style allows people to have a say in decisions that affect their goals and how they do their work. Students in schools need to be involved in the school's administration and in the implementation of decisions because these affect them directly. While studies by Suskavcevic and Blake (2004), Maru (2013), Migosi et al (2013), Harerimana and Toyin's (2017) only determined the strength and direction of the relationship between democratic leadership practices of the principals and the students' academic performance, this study has succeeded in establishing the extent to which democratic leadership style influence students' academic performance, that is, democratic practices of the principals accounting for 37.9% of the variation of students' academic performance. The study further established that democratic practices by the

principals is a significant predictor of the students' academic performance, that one unit increase in democratic practice improved students' academic performance by 1.468 units as signified by coefficient 1.468. These are the new knowledge the study has thus generated.

4.4 Influence of the principals' autocratic leadership style on students' academic performance

The research question responded to here was: What is the influence of the principals' autocratic leadership styles on students' academic performance in secondary schools in Awendo sub-county? In order to respond to the research question, principals were asked in the questionnaire to score how strongly they felt about the statements. Their responses, used to gauge their level of democracy, were as presented in Table 4.12

Table 4.12: Level of principals autocratic leadership (n=30)

Autocratic practices	N	R	O	F	A	M
Decision making						
I retain the final decision making authority within my department or team	0	0	18	11	1	3.43
Communication						
I do not consider suggestions made by my staff as i do not have the time for them	9	18	3	0	0	1.80
I tell my staff what has to be done and how to do it	8	10	9	3	0	2.23
When something goes wrong, I tell my staff that a procedure is not working correctly and i establish a new one	10	6	9	5	0	2.30
Staff management						
When my staff makes a mistake, I tell them not to ever do that again and make a record of it	11	12	5	0	2	2.00

New staff members are not allowed to make any decisions unless it is approved by me first	3	11	14	0	2	2.57
I closely monitor my staff to ensure they are performing correctly	2	1	7	13	7	3.73
I like the power that my leadership position holds over subordinates	9	15	5	1	0	1.93
Conflict Resolution						
The staff must be directed or threatened with punishment in order to get them achieve the school objectives	8	12	6	4	0	2.20
The staff seeks mainly security	7	9	12	2	0	2.30
Overall Mean	67	94	88	39	12	2.45

KEY: N=Never R=Rarely O=Occasionally F=Frequently A=Always

M=Mean Rating

Interpretation of Mean Rating:

1.00-1.44= Not Autocratic 1.45-2.44= Partially Autocratic 2.45-3.44= Autocratic
3.45-4.44= Highly Autocratic 4.45-5.00= Very Highly Autocratic

4.4.1 Decision Making

Table 4.12 indicates that the principals occasionally retained the final decision making authority within the schools with a mean rating of 3.43. The rating suggests that the principals' leadership was autocratic in decision making.

Moore et al (2011) observed that authoritative decision style calls for an Autocratic leadership approach where members will not be given an opportunity to water down the plans that might result into discrepancies between policy as stated and policy in use.

Teachers, however, pointed out that an overall participative climate enhances satisfaction more than occasional participation on specific decisions or goal setting.

It is amusing how these principals will only involve other people on issues not to do with money. You can imagine a school principal going to buy oranges at Awendo for practical lessons or tests but remember he does not even know what is to be done with the orange, funny? When going on tours, you are booked for hotels and your meals paid for, you are reduced to a level of a student taken to academic tour. You hence lose the will to go out of your way to make a difference.

The principals on their side expressed the need to save time in taking some decision.

They said:

You must never wait for everyone to be on board to take some decisions, that will take forever and your projects might stall. And again on matters to do with policy implementation I am bound by no law to consult on their implementation because the guidelines are clearly spelled out in the policy document.

4.4.2 Communication

Equally, Table 4.12 indicates that the principals' rarely did not consider suggestions made by the staff at a mean rating of 1.80; rarely directed the staff on what should be done and how it should be done with a mean rating of 2.23, and when something went wrong the staff was rarely informed and a new workable procedure established at a mean rating of 2.30. The average mean rating of 2.11 suggest that principals' leadership was partially autocratic on communication practices.

Autocratic leaders give orders in a certain manner, which shows directness and straight forwardness (Haswiny & Yazdanifard, 2015) and orders come from the top to the bottom. The staff receive information specific to their tasks. However, this also means that they will be given no room for protest or even questioning for that matter. In this autocratic communication style, leaders are the only ones who initiate a conversation and the response of subordinates to the matter is hardly taken into account. All in all, leaders make the presentation of their information in a close manner where employees have to comply with the instruction exactly without having any say or input towards the matter. This in most

instances ensures efficiency of the staff and productivity.

The principals observed:

A principal should know what to share out and how to share it as careless and loose speeches from the man or woman at the helm may result to disaster that might end up interfering with the academic standards in school.

Thembinkosi (2005) indicated in his study that principals should keep communication channels open so that they are informed about the feelings, needs and problems learners encounter in schools. The students of one school were utterly disgusted the channels of communication flow were not students' friendly. They said:

We almost went into a rampage, can you imagine being given a two days' notice that you are sitting a joint exams, and that means full papers? Communication is one big problem here, you criticize anything in the school, you are traced by handwriting for public humiliation, I though suggestion boxes were meant for people who have no guts to face the teachers and principals.

The teachers added that extreme top-down decision-making approach employed by the autocratic principals stifles the staff and students' ideas and creativity. Their sense of initiative and ownership plummets, so they have little accountability for improved school performance.

4.4.3 Staff Management

Table 4.12 also showed that when a staff member made a mistake, the principals rarely told them not to ever do that again but made note of it with a mean rating of 2.00; new staff members were occasionally not allowed to make decisions unless approved by the principals at mean rating of 2.57; principals frequently closely monitored their staff to ensure they were performing effectively with a mean rating of 3.73; and that principals rarely liked the power they held by virtue of their leadership position over subordinates with a mean rating of 1.93. The average mean rating of 2.56 implied that the principals' leadership in staff development and management was autocratic.

Bunmi (2007) states that since autocratic leaders have absolute power over their employees, and the latter have little opportunity to make suggestions, even if it would be in the organization's best interest, this leadership style often leads to high levels of absenteeism and employee turnover. However, it could remain effective for some routine and unskilled jobs, as the advantages of control may outweigh the disadvantages.

The principal added that use of autocracy can be very productive especially when dealing with new staff and those who are naturally lazy.

The principals supported that by asserting:

How on earth will you trust a new staff to promptly and effectively execute responsibilities if no work order is issued? How do you even let them make decisions when still new? They must first go through the induction properly before having any serious delegation to them. Teachers do not appreciate the follow-up on the Teacher Performance Appraisal Document (TPAD) and can only take autocracy to have them done for teacher appraisal process is not a choice but a must do exercise. Both direct and indirect supervision must be employed to ensure the expected results are met.

4.4.4 Conflict Resolution

Finally, Table 4.12 showed that principals rarely believed that the staff must be directed or threatened with punishment in order to get them achieve the school objectives at a mean rating of 2.20 and that the staff rarely sought mainly security with the mean rating of 2.30. The findings meant the principals' leadership was partially autocratic on conflict resolution and management with an average mean rate of 2.38.

Mulder (2015) refers to McGregor's Theory X which starts from the assumption that people are naturally lazy, want to avoid work as much as possible, do not wish to take responsibility, have no ambition and prefer to be supervised. The authoritarian leadership style is therefore the most appropriate leadership style in Theory X. According to this theory, people want to avoid work and they must be continually coerced and controlled.

Therefore, the system executed must be laid down in detail. This justifies use of autocratic practices

Therefore, Table 4.12 indicates that principals in Awendo sub-county secondary schools openly revealed to be using autocratic practices in their leadership with an overall mean rate of 2.45. Having established the autocratic level of the principals, it was necessary to investigate relationship between autocratic practices and leadership of the styles of principals. Table 4.13 therefore, presents the results of a correlation analysis performed to establish the relationship between autocratic leadership and students' academic performance.

Table 4.13: Relationship between Autocratic leadership and student academic performance (n=30)

		Autocratic leadership	Student academic performance
Autocratic leadership	Pearson Correlation	1	.677
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	30	30
Student academic performance	Pearson Correlation	.677	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	30	30

Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

The results indicate a strong, positive and significant relationship ($r= 0.677$, $n=30$ $p< 0.05$) between autocratic leadership and students' academic performance in Awendo sub-county secondary schools.

This concurs with the SCQASO sentiments, the SCQASO couldn't agree more that principals needed to balance between autocratic and democratic practises but was also keen

to indicate that the schools that are reportedly excelling in the sub-county use more of autocratic leadership style. He said;

Autocratic leadership style not only ensure establishment of the system but also discipline, efficient time management, high respect of the authority and conformity to standards which are integral components of success in any learning institution. There is no doubt things will move pretty good in this system blended just a little with democratic practises.

Furthermore, regression analysis was conducted to estimate the influence of autocratic leadership and students' academic performance and the results presented in Tables 4.14

Table 4.14: Regression of Autocratic Leadership and Students' Academic

Performance

Model	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics					
				R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change	
1	.677	.459	.440	.95708	.459	23.756	1	28	.000

Predictors: (Constant), Autocratic leadership

Dependent Variable: Student academic performance

In Table 4.14, it was observed that autocratic leadership accounted for 44.0% of the variation in the students' academic performance as signified by the coefficient adjusted R square 0.440. However, the other 56.0% of the variation in the students' academic performance was due to other factors that were not subject of this study.

The study further sought to establish whether autocratic leadership was a significant predictor of students' academic performance. ANOVA was computed and the results were shown in Table 4.15

Table 4.15: ANOVA of autocratic leadership and students' academic performance

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	19.000	1	19.000	21.228	.000
	Residual	22.376	28	.895		
	Total	41.376	29			

Predictors: (Constant), Autocratic leadership

Dependent Variable: Student academic performance

Table 4.15 indicates that the regression model significantly predicts the students' academic performance ($F(1, 28) = 21.228, p < 0.05$). This means that autocratic leadership can be relied upon to influence students' academic performance. Therefore, principals of secondary schools in Awendo be encouraged to improve on autocratic leadership practices to help improve the students' academic performance.

Teachers on the other hand, expressed their fears when extreme autocratic practices were put in place. They said:

There is no doubt performance will go down if the principals in their autocratic practices reduce us to a fiddle. If you are working in a tensed environment for example, where the principal can even humiliate in the assembly, before students and your colleagues, for not accomplishing tasks or improper dressing, who will respect? What will be your drive in service? Absolutely nothing and you will not care one bit even if the whole class scored E in all the subjects. Use of autocratic practices will be helpful if applied in the right measure.

The teachers opinion differ with the findings that the more autocratic a principal is the better the performance, but advocates for moderate use of the practices. Since autocratic practices are mostly applied when the principal is keen on a particular result, students, teaching and support staff should accept work towards achievement of set goals and objectives. When morality is upheld, moral decadence admonished from all quarters and tasks are accomplished, the principals' work is also made easy and that leaves all the energy channeled to the sole objective of improving the learners' academic achievement.

Having confirmed that autocratic leadership practices is a predictor of students' academic performance, establishing the actual influence of autocratic leadership on students' academic performance was called for and therefore linear regression analysis was computed and the results were shown in Table 4.16

Table 4.16: Linear Regression Analysis of Autocratic Leadership Style and Students' Academic Performance.

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	-.001	.866		-.002	.999
	Autocratic leadership	1.633	.335	.677	4.874	.000

Dependent Variable: Student academic performance

Table 4.16 shows that one unit increase in autocratic leadership practice improved students' academic performance by 1.633 units as signified by the coefficient 1.633.

Since the coefficient of autocratic leadership style was statistically significant ($p < 0.05$), it means that with increase in democratic practices there is bound to be an improvement in students' performance and therefore the following regression equation can be used to predict students' academic performance. $Y = -.001 + 1.633X_1$. This further suggests that the principals need to improve on their autocratic leadership practices if they have to promote the educational goal of improved learners' academic performance.

Students from a particular school in the FGD agreeing with findings pointed out the glaring differences in streams and attributed that to the difference in leadership styles. Identity of the streams concealed for confidentiality, they said;

Stream A is kind of some prison but surprisingly, they are always in the lead in any exam. The principal jokingly refer to them as a difference school because the mean difference between steam A and the second stream in any exams is always more than 2. They are the icons of discipline in the school.

They further pointed out; “Even though stream D has the best class teacher, an envy of all streams, the class is always last in any exam. But even if the class is always rated last in any exam, they are the best in Mathematics, why? Their mathematics teacher is no nonsense man. This implied that the more autocratic the leadership, the better the academic performance, a fact established from the questionnaire analysis.

This study’s findings are supported by Adeyemi and Bolarinwa’s (2013) findings that are in agreement that the autocratic leadership style was found to be significantly related with students’ academic performance with the r -calculated 0.512 greater than the r -table 0.195 at 0.05 alpha level. This shows that there was a significant relationship between principals’ autocratic leadership style and students’ academic performance in secondary schools in Ekiti State, Nigeria. The findings suggested that the more autocratic a principal is the better the performance of students in the Senior Secondary Certificate examinations. Muli (2005) and Wangui(2007) findings are also consistent with this study’s.

Nsubuga on the other hand maintains that this leadership style is least effective in most situations in the schools and has a negative impact on the school’s climate. That the relationship between the autocratic leadership style and school performance from the teachers’ questionnaire as -0.65. This was interpreted as a strong negative relationship. This simply means that the more autocratic one becomes, the poorer the performance of the school and the contrary is also true.

In conclusion of objective two, this study, unlike other Adeyemi and Bolarinwa’s (2013), Nsubuga’s (2009) studies which only revealed the relationship between autocratic leadership styles and students’ academic performance, has generated a new knowledge by giving the

regression equation telling what autocratic practices account for, 44.0% variation in the students' academic performance.

It has also gone ahead to reveal that autocratic leadership is a significant predictor of students' academic performance and that one unit increase in autocratic leadership practice improved students' academic performance by 1.633 units.

4.5 Influence of the Principals' *Laissez Faire* Leadership Style on Students' Academic Performance

The research question responded to here was: What is the influence of the principals' *laissez faire* leadership styles on students' academic performance in secondary schools in Awendo sub-county? In order to respond to the research question, principals were asked in the questionnaire to score how strongly they felt about the statements. Their responses, used to discuss their level use laisses faire practices were as presented in Table 4.17.

Table 4.17: Level of Principals' Laissez-faire leadership (n= 30)

Laissez-faire practices	N	R	O	F	A	M
Decision making						

My staff and I vote whenever a major decision has to be made 0 2 12 13 3 **3.57**

For a major decision to pass in my department, it must have the approval of each individual or the majority 3 18 7 2 0 **2.27**

Communication

To get information out, I send it by email, memos, or voicemails; very rarely is a meeting called 4 17 6 1 2 **2.33**

I delegate tasks in order to implement a new procedure or process 4 12 11 1 2 **2.50**

Staff management

I allow my staff to determine what needs to be done and how to do it 8 9 6 6 1 **2.43**

My staff know more about their jobs than me, so I allow them to carry out the decisions to do their jobs 1 1 5 13 10 **4.00**

I like to share my leadership power with subordinates 1 3 11 8 7 **3.57**

Each staff member is responsible for defining his or her job 1 9 17 2 1 **2.77**

Conflict management

The staff have the right to determine their own school objectives 0 2 16 12 0 **3.33**

My staff can lead themselves just as well as I can 0 2 10 17 1 **3.57**

Overall Mean 22 75 101 75 27 **3.03**

KEY: N=Never R=Rarely O=Occasionally F=Frequently
 A=Always M=Mean Rating

Interpretation of Mean Rating:

- 1.00-1.44= Not Laissez-faire
- 1.45-2.44= Partially Laissez-faire
- 2.45-3.44= Laissez-faire
- 3.45-4.44= Highly Laissez-faire
- 4.45-5.00= Very Highly Laissez-faire

4.5.1 Decision Making

Table 4.17 shows that the principals frequently advocate for voting whenever a major decision has to be made with a mean rating of 3.57 and that rarely must it have the approval of each individual or the majority with a mean rating of 2.27. The average mean rating of 2.92 suggested that the principals practiced Laissez-faire leadership style.

Chaudhry and Javed (2012) simply stated, with laissez-faire leadership there is no interface between the leaders and followers, and delay decision-making. Laissez-faire leaders usually allow their subordinate the power to make decisions about their work.

The SCQASO asserted:

Some principals cannot honestly draw a line between a democratic practise and laissez-faire. Some imagine they are democratic yet they are laissez-faire. It will be impractical and impossible meeting your objective if you have to solicit for everyone's input.

4.5.2 Communication

Table 4.17 also indicates that the principals' rarely send information through email, memos or voicemails compared to meetings with a mean rating of 2.33 and that they occasionally delegated tasks in order to implement new procedure or process at 2.50. These finding suggests that principals' rarely communicated to their staff through informal channels and thus applied partially Laissez- faire leadership practices with an average mean rating of 2.42.

Ololube (2013) observed that Laissez-faire leadership could be effective if the leader monitors what is being achieved and communicates this back to the team regularly, something that most leaders ignore. He adds that such leaders avoid responsibilities, do not take care of the needs of the followers, and do not provide feedback

4.5.3 Staff Management

Similarly, Table 4.17 shows principals' rarely allowed the staff to determine what needs to be done and how to do it at 2.43; frequently allowed the staff to carry out the decisions to do their jobs at 4.00; frequently share leadership power with subordinates at 3.57 and that occasionally staff members were responsible for defining their jobs with a mean rating of 2.77. This meant that principals' were moderately Laissez- faire in taking interest in staff development and empowerment with an average mean rating of 3.19.

Frischer (2007) found out that the groups were unproductive if their supervisors avoided exercising control over their subordinates. This indicates that laissez-faire leadership style allows neglect and lack of follow up on activities, which may water down concerns towards effective academic achievements.

4.5.4 Conflict management

Finally, Table 4.17 showed that principals occasionally believed the staff has the right to determine their own school objectives with a rating of 3.33 and could lead themselves frequently just as well as the principals at a mean rating of 3.57. The average mean rating of 3.45 meant the principals handled issues to do with staff conflict resolution and management when they were highly Laissez-faire.

On the whole, Table 4.17 indicates that the principals in Awendo sub-county secondary schools integrated moderate Laissez Faire leadership at an overall mean rating of 3.03.

The study also sought to measure the correlation between Laissez Faire leadership and the students' academic performance. To establish this, a Pearson's correlation analysis of Laissez Faire leadership and students' academic performance was conducted. The result obtained was presented in Table 4.18

Table 4.18: Relationship between laissez-faire leadership and student academic performance (n=30)

		Laissez-Faire leadership	Student academic performance
Laissez-Faire leadership	Pearson Correlation	1	-0.437
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.016
	N	30	30
Student academic performance	Pearson Correlation	-0.437	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.016	
	N	30	30

Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Table 4.18 shows that a moderate negative and statistically significant ($r = -0.437$, $n=30$, $p < 0.05$) relationship exist between Laissez-faire leadership and students' academic performance. This suggests that a positive change in Laissez-faire leadership inversely influences the students' academic performance.

The SCQASO pointed out that the principals who use laissez faire leadership style should not expect any good results for no pain is said to bring no gain. He further noted:

There are structures clearly spelt out that define the roles of the principals and when they fail to observe such they are not only guilty for the students' sub-standard outcome in academics but also breach a contract they sign with the TSC upon engagement in such a calibre.

This is support of the correlation finding that when a principal uses more of autocratic practices, the academic performance of the students go down.

To further estimate the influence of Laissez-faire leadership and students' academic performance, regression analysis was done and the results presented in Tables 4.19

Table 4.19: Regression of laissez faire leadership style and students' academic performance

Model	R	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics		
				R Square Change	F Change	Sig. F Change
1	.437	.191	1.17064	.191	6.595	.016

Predictors: (Constant), Laissez-faire leadership

Dependent Variable: Student academic performance

In Table 4.19, it can be observed that laissez faire leadership accounted for 16.2% of the variation in the students' academic performance as signified by the coefficient adjusted R square 0.162. However, the other 83.8% of the variation in the students' academic performance was due to other factors that were not subject of this study.

The study further sought to establish whether laissez faire leadership was a significant predictor of students' academic performance. ANOVA was computed and the results were shown in Table 4.20.

Table 4.20: ANOVA of Laissez faire leadership practices and students' academic performance.

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	9.037	1	9.037	6.595	.016
	Residual	38.371	28	1.370		
	Total	47.409	29			

Predictors: (Constant), Laissez-faire leadership

Dependent Variable: Student academic performance

Table 4.20 indicates that the regression model significantly predicts the students' academic performance ($F(1, 28) = 6.595, n=30, p < 0.05$). This means that laissez faire leadership practices can be relied upon to influence students' academic performance.

The interviewed teacher from a poorly performing school expressed that an absent principal could not blame anybody when there is failure in the system. They said;

Why would he expect anybody to care about the results when he is never there? The poor results are his own making, we only do the little we can and keep our peace. When you take time to monitor the progress of programmes in the school as a principal, you must realize some reasonable results as reward. The lawlessness that his ‘most off-time’ brings here is sickening. The cooks bring food when they want any you know what that implies, going to class late or missing all together. That must explain to you the poor results you are holding there.

The interview findings concur with the questionnaires’ that laissez faire leadership practices by some principals explain the poor academic performance their students register in Awendo sub-county secondary schools. Therefore, principals of secondary schools in Awendo are here discouraged from use of laissez faire leadership practices to help improve the students’ academic performance.

Having revealed the relationship and significance of laissez faire leadership practices and the students’ academic performance, there was need to also reveal the actual influence of laissez faire leadership practices and the students’ academic performance and therefore Linear Regression was run and the results presented in Table 4.21.

Table 4.21: Linear Regression Analysis of Laissez faire Leadership Style and Students’ Academic Performance

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta			
1	(Constant)	7.256	1.235			5.874	.000
	Laissez-Faire leadership	-1.131	.440	-.437		-2.568	.016

Dependent Variable: Student academic performance

Table 4.21 shows that one unit increase in laissez faire leadership practice explained a decrease by 1.131 units in the students' academic performance as signified by the coefficient -1.131. The predictive model implied Laissez-faire leadership by principals in Awendo Sub-County did influence inversely students' academic performance.

Since the coefficient of laissez faire leadership style was statistically significant ($p < 0.05$), it means that with increase in laissez faire practices, there is bound to be a drop in students' performance and therefore the following regression equation can be used to predict students' academic performance. $Y = 7.256 - 1.131X_1$. This further suggests that the principals need to stop or diminish their laissez faire leadership practices if they have to promote the academic excellence in their schools.

This finding confirmed the principals' opinion that laissez faire contributed lowly to the students' academic performance and should actually be administered to a small extent to minimize its negative influence on the academic performance of the students'. The laissez-faire principal gives away his powers and does not follow up progress; they also do not prompt good academic performance because they are too liberal and flexible. This is why their overall performance is often poor.

Laissez-faire leadership style is not suited for use by principals because complete delegation without follow-up mechanisms creates performance problems. Ensuring affective academic performance requires the involvement of both the superiors and subordinates through collective participation and monitoring of performance for delegation of duties does not imply failure to monitor and follow up progress. (Suskevcevic & Blake, 2005)

Students in the FGD revealed they are motivated when they are afforded opportunities to make their own decisions. The acceptance of their opinions and ideas, together with the monitoring of their performance by principals is a healthy way of enhancing academic performance in secondary schools. They however pointed out that excess of that freedom might get them involved in things not useful to their success story. They said:

It good to have a principal who allows your freedom of speech but that should be with very clear guidance or you could just have a school where students can stand in their assembly and insult teachers left right and centre in the name of freedom of speech. We have seen a school in this county register low school mean year in year out because their students are indiscipline, you wonder if they have school rules and regulations in their school.

Teachers adding their voice to this said:

A *laissez faire* leadership cannot provide sufficient and convincing environment to learning for students some us lack commitment for lack of supervision

As much as a principal might think of using this leadership style, he or she must understand that if overly used, it might not be in the academic interest of the students who are expected to pass their exams for efficient and effective transition to the other levels of education.

Therefore, avoiding the *laissez-faire* leadership style which permits total delegation of responsibility to teachers and students is likely to result into positive performance. Principals need to monitor activities so as to ensure compliance and results. The problem with *laissez-faire* leaders is that they neglect their duty of overseeing things and seem to over trust subordinates but this should only be in situations where subordinates like work, are trustworthy and are professionals.

Adeyemi and Bolarinwa (2013), Nsubuga (2009) Nyaboga (2012), Migosi et al (2013) all agree that *laissez faire* leadership style should be avoided in a school set-up if academic excellence of the students is a priority. Their conclusion was arrived at upon establishing a

negative relationship between laissez faire leadership styles and students' academic performance. This study however, has created a new knowledge by revealing what laissez faire practices account for, 16.2% variation in the students' academic performance.

It has also gone ahead to reveal that laissez faire leadership is a significant predictor of students' academic performance and that one unit increase in laissez faire leadership practice reduced students' academic performance by 1.131 units hence an inverse relationship.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter gives the summary, conclusions and recommendations of the study based on the findings.

5.2 Summary of Findings

The findings of the study were summarized as follows.

5.2.1 Influence of the principals' democratic leadership style on students' academic performance

The study established that;

The principals were highly democratic in; involving the staff in decision making with a mean rating of 4.07; promoting effective communication at an average mean rating of 3.87; creating an environment where the students and staff would experience a sense of belonging and ownership with an average mean rating of 3.97; motivating and supporting staff professional growth and empowerment programs at an average mean rate of 3.83, and enhancing conflict resolution and management in the schools with an average mean rating of 3.74. Altogether, the principals in Awendo sub-county secondary schools were highly democratic in their operations as administrators of the schools at an overall mean rate of 3.87.

Democratic practices of the principals accounted for 37.9% of the variation of students' academic performance and that democratic practices by the principals was a significant predictor of the students' academic performance, that one unit increase in democratic practice improved students' academic performance by 1.468 units.

The interview findings revealed that principals used democratic leadership to influence students' academic performance and other factors that were indicated to be contributors but were not subject to study, like students factors, teacher factor parental level of education among others

5.2.2 Influence of the Principals' Autocratic Leadership Style on Students' Academic Performance

The study established that:

The principals were moderately autocratic in decision making with a mean rating of 3.43 and moderately autocratic in promoting and supporting staff development and management at an average mean rating of 2.56. However, the principals were partially autocratic in promoting effective communication with an average mean rating of 2.11 and partially autocratic in conflict management and resolution at an average mean rating of 2.38. On the whole, the principals in Awendo sub-county secondary schools were found moderately autocratic in their leadership practices with an overall mean rating of 2.45.

Autocratic practices accounted for 44.0% variation in the students' academic performance and that autocratic leadership is a significant predictor of students' academic performance where one unit increase in autocratic leadership practice improved students' academic performance by 1.633 units.

Interview findings also revealed that principals used laissez faire leadership styles to influence performance. A principal who uses more of autocratic practices realized better results in KCSE.

5.2.3 Influence of the Principals' Laissez-faire leadership style on students' academic performance

The study established that;

The principals moderately applied Laissez-faire leadership in decision making at an average mean rating of 2.92 and in staff management and development with an average

mean rating of 3.19. However, the principals integrated Laissez-faire leadership practices partially in promoting effective communication with an average mean rating of 2.42 and highly in managing staff conflicts and resolution at an average mean rating of 3.45. Overall, the principals in Awendo sub-county secondary schools integrated moderate Laissez Faire leadership style at an overall mean rating of 3.03.

Laissez faire practices accounted for 16.2% variation in the students' academic performance and a significant predictor of students' academic performance and that one unit increase in laissez faire leadership practice reduced students' academic performance by 1.131 units.

The interviews findings showed that principals in Awendo sub –county secondary schools integrated use of laissez faire leadership styles to influence students' academic performance. The more laissez faire practices a principal used, the poorer the academic performance of the students.

5.3 Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study the following conclusions were made;

The study found out that Democratic practices of the principals accounted for 37.9% of the variation of students' academic performance; Autocratic practices of the principals accounted for 44.0% of the variation of students' academic performance; and Laissez-faire practices of the principals accounted for 16.2% of the variation of students' academic performance

5.4 Recommendations

The study recommended that;

- i) From the study's findings, laissez- faire leadership style of school principals was found to have a negative influence on school performance in secondary schools in Awendo sub -county. It is hence recommended that principals avoid their use of laissez faire leadership style in their management of schools to boost performance.

- ii) This study has established that students' academic performance and autocratic leadership style have a strong positive correlation which is also significant but the principals in Awendo confirmed to only apply it moderately. It was therefore recommended that the principals of secondary schools in particular be encouraged to increase use of autocratic style of leadership but moderately apply democratic leadership style in the management of secondary schools to improve their academic attainment.
- iii) The directorate of quality assurance standards and Kenya Education Management Institute KEMI can use the findings to formulate training programmes for principals of the public secondary schools. These programmes should be focused to use of autocratic to a level slightly higher than democratic and laissez-faire leadership styles on the least to improve KCSE performance in Awendo sub-county. It is recommended that principals need to establish fair administrative policies well understood by staff members. The policies should be applied with fairness and openness to individuals and the staff in general in relation to assignment of duties and promotions. A reputation of fairness should be fostered by the principals as this would motivate a spirit of loyalty and love in the people under him, leading to a high productivity and improved students' performance in particular.

5.5 Suggestions for Further Research

The study exposed the following areas that require further research in Awendo Sub-County;

The following areas were suggested for further study:

- i) Since it was established that various studied leadership styles only influence students' academic performance to some extent, a study on factors other than leadership styles on students' academic performance be studied in Awendo sub-county.

- ii) A study on influence of principals' and teachers' demographics on students' performance in KCSE in Awendo sub-county be done.
- iii) This being a sugar belt region, a study on socio-economic impact on academic performance of the students in the region be carried out.
- iv) A similar study be undertaken in the other sub-counties in the county so that a total feel of overall performance in the county can be highlighted.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PRINCIPALS

This research is meant for academic purpose. Its purpose is to find out the influence of principals' leadership styles on students' academic performance in secondary schools in Awendo sub-county. The information you give will be treated with confidentiality. This questionnaire consists of three sections A B and C.

SECTION A: PERSONAL DATA

Indicate your choice by a tick (✓) where appropriate.

1. i) Your experience as a principal in years 1-5() 6-10() 11 and above ()
ii) Your experience in the current schools as a principal 1-5() 6-10() 11 and above ()
2. Gender: male () female ()
3. Academic qualification PHD() MED () BED () Dip/Ed()
4. What is your age in years? 25- 35 () 36-45() 46-55() 55-65()

SECTION B:

This section contains statements about leadership style practices. Based on your experience and knowledge, circle the number that best describes the practice in real life of school management by using the following scoring system:

Always — 5; Frequently — 4; Occasionally — 3; Rarely — 2; Never — 1

	Leadership style beliefs	Always	Frequently	Occasionally	Seldom	Never
1.	I retain the final decision making authority within my department or team	5	4	3	2	1
2.	I try to include one or more staff in departmental budgeting, however, I maintain the final decision making authority.	5	4	3	2	1
3.	My staff and I always vote whenever a major decision has to be made.	5	4	3	2	1
4.	I do not consider suggestions made by my staff, as I do not have the time for them.	5	4	3	2	1
5.	I ask for the staff's ideas and input on upcoming plans and projects.	5	4	3	2	1
6.	For a major decision to pass in my department, it must have the approval of each	5	4	3	2	1

	individual or the majority.					
7.	I tell my staff what has to be done and how to do it.	5	4	3	2	1
8.	When things go wrong and I need to create a strategy to keep a project or process running on schedule, I call a meeting to get my employee's advice.	5	4	3	2	1
9.	To get information out, I send it by email, memos, or voice mail; very rarely is a meeting called. My employees are then expected to act upon the information.	5	4	3	2	1
10.	When someone makes a mistake, I tell them not to ever do that again and make a note of it.	5	4	3	2	1
11.	I want to create an environment where the employees take ownership of the project. I allow them to participate in the decision making process.	5	4	3	2	1
12.	I allow my staff to determine what needs to be done and how to do it.	5	4	3	2	1
13.	Newly employed staff are not allowed to make any decisions unless it is approved by me first.	5	4	3	2	1
14.	I ask the staff for their vision of where they see their jobs going and then	5	4	3	2	1

	use their vision where appropriate.					
15.	My staff knows more about their jobs than me, so I allow them to carry out the decisions to do their job.	5	4	3	2	1
16.	When something goes wrong, I tell my staff that a procedure is not working correctly and I establish a new one.	5	4	3	2	1
17.	I allow my staff to set priorities with my guidance.	5	4	3	2	1
18.	I delegate tasks in order to implement a new procedure or process.	5	4	3	2	1
19.	I closely monitor my staff to ensure they are performing correctly.	5	4	3	2	1
20.	When there are differences in role expectations, I work with the staff to resolve the differences.	5	4	3	2	1
21.	Each individual is responsible for defining his or her job.	5	4	3	2	1
22.	I like the power that my leadership position holds over the support staff.	5	4	3	2	1
23.	I like to use my leadership power to help my staff grow.	5	4	3	2	1
24.	I like to share my leadership power with my subordinates.	5	4	3	2	1
25.	I threaten the staff with punishment in order to	5	4	3	2	1

	get them to achieve the school objectives.					
26.	The staff will exercise self-direction if they are committed to the objectives.	5	4	3	2	1
27.	The staff have the right to determine their own school objectives.	5	4	3	2	1
28.	The staff seek mainly security.	5	4	3	2	1
29.	The staff know how to use creativity and ingenuity to solve school problems.	5	4	3	2	1
30.	My staff can lead themselves just as well as I can.	5	4	3	2	1

Source: DonClark's Leadership Style Survey

SECTION C

Please fill in the table below on your schools performance for the last 5 years.

YEAR	A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D+	D	D-	E	Mean Grade
2012													
2013													
2014													
2015													
2016													

End

Thanks for your cooperation

APPENDIX 2: THE PRINCIPAL'S INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

This research is meant for academic purpose. Its objective is to find out the influence of principals' leadership styles on students' academic performance in secondary schools in Awendo sub-county. The information you give will be treated with confidentiality

1. In what ways does the democratic leadership style influence the performance of the students in exams? Explain in reference to: decision making, communication, ownership, professional growth and empowerment and conflict resolution.
2. To what extent does the autocratic leadership style influence students' performance? Explain in reference to: decision making, communication, ownership, professional growth and empowerment and conflict resolution
3. In what ways does the laissez-faire leadership style influence the performance of the students in exams? Explain in reference to: decision making, communication, ownership, professional growth and empowerment and conflict resolution

4. Of the three leadership styles, democratic, autocratic and laissez faire, which one do you think would yield better results and why?

APPENDIX 3: THE TEACHER'S INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

This research is meant for academic purpose. Its objective is to find out the influence of principals' leadership styles on students' academic performance in secondary schools in Awendo sub-county. The information you give will be treated with confidentiality

1. In what ways does the democratic leadership style influence performance of the students in exams? Explain in reference to: decision making, communication, ownership, professional growth and empowerment and conflict resolution.
2. To what extent does the autocratic leadership style influence the students' performance? Explain in reference to: decision making, communication, ownership, professional growth and empowerment and conflict resolution.
3. In what ways does the democratic leadership influence performance of the students in exams? Explain in reference to: decision making, communication, ownership, professional growth and empowerment and conflict resolution.

4. Of the three leadership styles, democratic, autocratic and laissez faire, which one do you think would yield better results and why?

APPENDIX 4: THE FOCUSED GROUP DISCUSSION SCHEDULE FOR STUDENTS

This research is meant for academic purpose. Its objective is to find out the influence of principals' leadership styles on students' academic performance in secondary schools in Awendo sub-county. The information you give will be treated with confidentiality

1. Does a principal who allow you time to give your opinion on some internal policies, communicate freely, take part in your disciplinary issues and conflict resolution in a school influence the students' performance in exams? How?
2. A principal who is very strict and emphasizes disciplinary process for work to be done influences academic performance of the students. Explain.
3. A principal who does not show concern to the staff and the students, leaving everyone to work at will, can too influence performance. How?
4. Of the above three described principals, where does your principal fall? Explain

APPENDIX 5: THE SUB-COUNTY EDUCATION OFFICER'S INTERVIEW

SCHEDULE

This research is meant for academic purpose. Its objective is to find out the influence of principals' leadership styles on students' academic performance in secondary schools in Awendo sub-county. The information you give will be treated with confidentiality.

- 1 In what ways does the democratic leadership style influence the performance of the students in exams? Explain in reference to: decision making, communication, ownership, professional growth and empowerment and conflict resolution.
2. To what extent does the autocratic leadership style influence students' performance? Explain in reference to: decision making, communication, ownership, professional growth and empowerment and conflict resolution.
- 3 In what ways does the democratic leadership style influence the performance of the students in exams? Explain in reference to: decision making, communication, ownership, professional growth and empowerment and conflict resolution.
4. Of the three leadership styles, democratic, autocratic and laissez faire, which one do you think would yield better results and why?

APPENDIX 6
RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION LETTERS



MASENO UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES

Office of the Dean

Our Ref: PG/MED/028/2012

Private Bag, MASENO, KENYA
Tel:(057)351 22/351008/351011
FAX: 254-057-351153/351221
Email: sgs@maseno.ac.ke

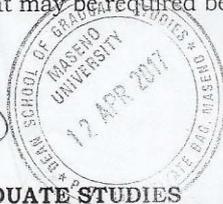
Date: 6th April, 2017

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

RE: PROPOSAL APPROVAL FOR MILLICENT OYUGI —PG/MED/028/2012

The above named is registered in the Master of Education in the School of Education, Maseno University. This is to confirm that her research proposal titled **"Influence of Principals' Leadership Styles on Students' Academic Performance in Secondary Schools in Awendo Sub-County, Kenya."** has been approved for conduct of research subject to obtaining all other permissions/clearances that may be required beforehand.


Prof. J.O. Agure
DEAN, SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES



RESEARCH PERMIT

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT:
MISS. MILLICENT ACHIENG OYUGI
of MASENO UNIVERSITY, 440-40405
AWENDO, has been permitted to conduct
research in Migori County

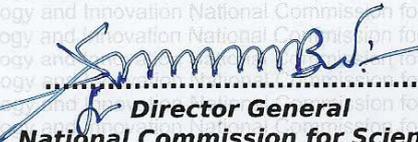
Permit No : NACOSTI/P/18/34262/21704
Date Of Issue : 14th March, 2018
Fee Received :Ksh 1000

on the topic: INFLUENCE OF
PRINCIPALS' LEADERSHIP STYLES ON
STUDENTS' ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE
IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN AWENDO
SUB - COUNTY, KENYA

for the period ending:
14th March, 2019



.....
Applicant's
Signature


.....
Director General
National Commission for Science,
Technology & Innovation

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REPUBLIC OF KENYA



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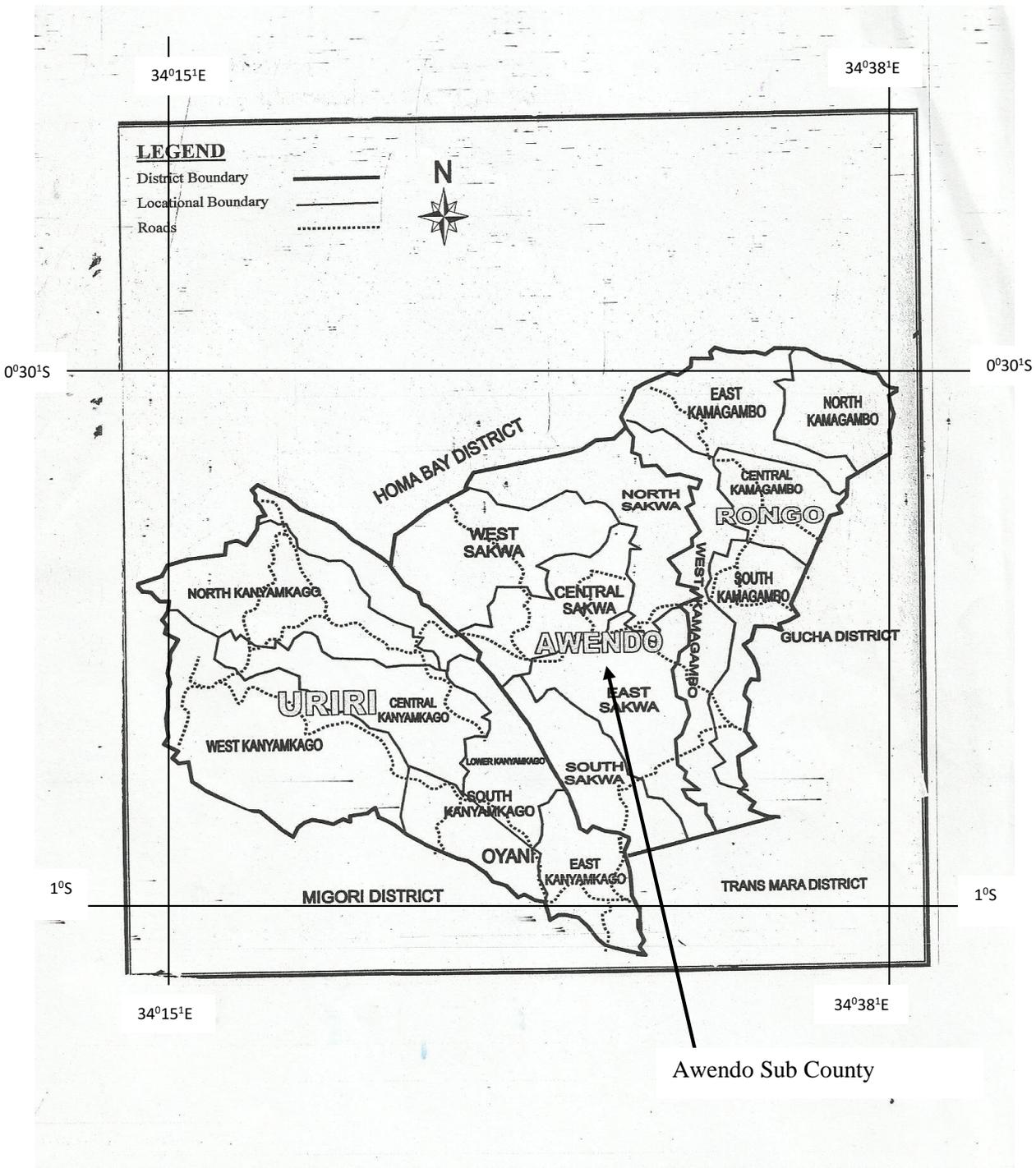
Serial No.A 17895

CONDITIONS: see back page

APPENDIX 7: Table for Determining Sample Size from a Given Population

<i>N</i>	<i>S</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>S</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>S</i>
10	10	220	140	1200	291
15	14	230	144	1300	297
20	19	240	148	1400	302
25	24	250	152	1500	306
30	28	260	155	1600	310
35	32	270	159	1700	313
40	36	280	162	1800	317
45	40	290	165	1900	320
50	44	300	186	2000	322
55	48	320	175	2200	327
60	52	340	181	2400	331
65	56			2600	335
70	59	380	191	2800	338
75	63	400	196	3000	341
80	66	420	201	3500	346
85	70	440	205	4000	351
90	73	460	210	4500	354
95	76	480	214	5000	357
100	80	500	217	6000	361
110	86	550	226	7000	364
120	92	600	234	8000	367
130	97	650	242	9000	368
140	103	700	248	10000	370
150	108	750	254	15000	375
160	113	800	260	20000	377
170	118	850	265	30000	379
180	123	900	269	40000	380
190	127	950	274	50000	381
200	132	1000	278	75000	382
210	136	1100	285	100000	384

Note. -*N* is population size.
S is the sample size



APPENDIX 9: CORRELATION AND REGRESSION ANALYSIS DATA

S/ No	Democratic Mean Rating	Autocratic Mean Rating	Laissez Faire Mean Rating	School average Mean
1	4.50	3.50	2.70	5.94
2	4.40	3.10	2.90	6.41
3	4.50	3.00	3.00	5.62
4	4.00	2.90	3.00	4.84
5	2.40	2.50	2.10	3.71
6	4.20	2.70	3.10	4.44
7	3.70	2.80	2.90	4.53
8	3.20	3.83	2.30	3.83
9	3.40	2.60	2.60	4.19
10	3.50	2.10	2.70	3.32
11	3.80	2.50	2.90	3.96
12	4.20	2.00	3.30	3.35
13	3.20	2.30	3.10	3.94
14	3.40	2.00	2.40	4.24
15	3.70	2.40	2.30	4.40
16	3.50	2.00	3.10	3.97
17	3.70	2.20	2.80	3.32
18	3.70	2.00	3.20	3.49
19	4.60	3.50	1.50	8.06
20	3.90	2.10	2.30	4.26
21	3.30	2.20	3.10	2.61
22	3.70	1.90	3.00	2.98
23	3.50	2.00	3.30	2.85
24	4.20	2.80	2.90	3.30
25	4.10	2.60	4.20	2.67
26	2.80	2.30	2.60	2.29
27	4.50	2.70	2.40	4.55
28	3.20	1.80	2.20	2.34
29	3.70	2.30	2.70	4.91
30	4.70	3.30	2.30	5.63

Source: Respondents raw data (Questionnaire data)