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International Journal of Engineering Technology Research & Management (IJETRM)
Journal Article
https://ijetrm.com/issue/?volume=January~2026

# EXAMINING THE INFLUENCE OF EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP ON QUALITY OF PRIMARY SCHOOL EDUCATION IN TANZANIA: A CASE OF SELECTED PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN KIBAHA TOWN COUNCIL

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**ABSTRACT**
This study examined the influence of educational leadership on the quality of primary school education in selected primary schools in Kibaha Town Council in Coast Region, Tanzania. The specific objectives were to determine educational leadership style which influence students' academic performance; to assess competence and professionalism of educational leaders in the provision of quality education in primary schools, to find out strategies applied by heads of schools to enhance teaching and learning in their schools and to identify challenges and/or factors that hinder educational leadership in the provision of quality education in primary schools. The study was guided by the Transformation Leadership theory, Management Leadership theory and Democratic or Participative Leadership theory. The study adopted a qualitative approach utilizing a case study design in Kibaha Town Council, Coast region in Tanzania. Purposive sampling was employed to get a sample of 48 respondents comprising of head teachers, academic teachers, Ward Academic Officer, District Education Officer, District Academic Officer, District Assurance Officer, and members of the school committees. The methods used for data collection included interviews, Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), Observations and Documentary review. Data were collected from head teachers, academic teachers, members of school committees, ward academic officers, and district education officer, Qualitative textual was used to analyses data collected from interviews and thematic content analysis was used to analyze data collected through focus group discussions. The findings revealed that head teachers applied democratic- participatory and managerial leadership styles which had a fair influence on the academic performance of the pupils and were highly recommended to be applied in primary schools. The research findings strongly supported the notion that the leadership exhibited by head teachers was a critical factor in influencing provision of quality education in primary schools. The findings showed that instructional leadership strategy was highly applied by head teachers to enhance teaching and learning in primary schools. The findings revealed that there were factors that hindered provision of quality education which included poor infrastructure like classrooms and lack of learning materials. The study recommends head teachers should be adequately trained on education management to enable them provide professional development to teachers.

**KEYWORDS:**
educational leadership, quality of primary school education

## INTRODUCTION

Education, and quality education for that matter, is a pillar for societal development in any country. According to Culduz (2023) "Education is a fundamental pillar of society, and the quality of educational leadership plays a crucial role in shaping the learning experience for students". Educational leaders such as the principals, head of

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schools, head teachers and school administrators have the power to influence and transform environments (Culduz, 2023).

To Jongyung (2024) educational leadership consists of a diversity of activities and responsibilities all aimed at improving teaching and learning outcomes and also cultivating a positive school culture and ensuring effective resource management. The argument is that excellent schools have educational leaders who strongly influence their participants resulting in high level of students' accomplishments (Bhujel, 2021). Quality education is central in providing answers to societal problems. It is not possible to have social, health, economic and political progress in any country if there is no education. This is where leadership comes in to promote and foster quality education.

The United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) established in 2000 with the aim of improving living standards by 2015 and beyond had in essence eight international development targets including education for all and quality education. The MDGs aimed at achieving universal primary education (UPE) and at the same time promoting gender equality. Crucially MDGs aimed in ensuring all children to complete primary education and do away with disparity in gender both in primary and secondary education.

However an increase in the number of children in schools come with the challenge of slowdown in the quality of primary school education more than before. The situation was alarming; by 2005 the School Fee Abolition Initiative (SFAI), UNICEF and the World Bank (2005) took measures aimed at making a breakthrough in access to quality basic education through support to policies for removing the education cost barriers to households (UNDP, 2017). It should be noted that MDGs have ever since been replaced by the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). And the specific goal related to quality education is known as SDG 4.

In Scandinavian countries like Sweeden and Norway, the quality of education and training is considered in all member states to be a concern of the highest political priority. High levels of Competency Based Education and Training (CBET) to be the very basic conditions for active citizenship, employment and social cohesion. Lifelong learning is an important means of shaping one's future on a professional and personal level, and high-quality education at any level of schooling is essential in the light of labour market policies, and the free movement of workers within the European countries (Murora and Semana, 2022).

In Indonesia, centralized management has been less successful in terms of improving education quality, for which the policy of national education is output oriented. When carried out centrally, more focus has been placed on input than on the process of education. This caused high dependence on bureaucratic decisions and, frequently, central policy was too general and not appropriate to the situation and condition of the local school (Iswan et al., 2021)

Nigeria have explicitly declared that whatever quality of education they have in their country it is influenced by the quality management factor. If the education officers and the management members exhibit low morale, lack of integrity and commitment lead to low productivity. Other issues that are also observed on the same include teaching and learning environment and facilities, as well as adequate resources which in principle are anticipated to be provided by the management (Egbele, 2021).

In Ethiopia, the highest influence on student's performance is the practice of leadership. Leadership has significant influences on students‟ learning, quality curriculum and teachers‟ instruction. The secondary school principals, who must also be the leaders, must focus on processes related to teaching and instruction and also support the achievement of students in every other conceivable fashion, because leader is one of the role players in school leadership to improve student's student performance academically (Alemayehu, 2013).

Tanzania being a signatory of the United Nations and other international treaties and protocols was engaged in the implementation of MDGs. The commitment of Tanzania to the MDGs, among other areas in education, included Universal primary education and improving quality. Tanzania developed a program known as Primary Education Development Program (PEDP) in the implementation of MDGs and achieve its goals. In implementing PEDP effectively it required strong policies and plans, effective use of resources and improving the quality of education by training teachers and also adequacy of materials.

In the alignment of SDGs Tanzania also developed Education Sector Development Plan (ESDP) 2025/2026 - 2029/20230 aimed at enhancing access, quality and relevance of education. (Ministry of Education, URT, 2025).. Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4) is a commitment to ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all. This goal aims to provide children and young people with quality and easy access to education, as well as other learning opportunities, and supports the reduction of inequalities.

The Tanzania Development Vision 2025 calls for a improvement in a number of areas including education. According to Magoti (2016) The Development Vision 2025 calls for "a steady, forward and improved adjustment

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of people from one position or situation to another in terms of living standard, health, education, political, the entire social and economic development perspectives"

It should be noted, as pointed out earlier above, that the enrollment surge of pupils in primary schools due to the abolition of fees has brought a problem of lowering the quality of education in a number of countries and particularly so in the developing countries. It has also been recorded that in countries like Ghana and Tanzania the heads of schools have been appointed to lead many primary schools "without technical leadership, vision, professional learning and development" (Magoti, 2016). This has contributed to poor quality education schools.

**1.2 Statement of the Problem**

In the context of Tanzania's primary schools, the quality of education remains a serious concern especially in public primary schools. There are some few cases where students who have completed std. VII can't even read and write. In educational institutions such as primary schools educational leadership is a crucial factor that significantly influences the academic performance of learners (Ogweno et al, 2024). . .

In Tanzania, the connection between educational leadership and quality education is crucial in the country's efforts to forge forward in socio-political development. Tanzania has supported all international obligations in support of quality education. Tanzania has been implementing a number of policies including the Primary Education Development Plan (PEDP) to achieve universal primary education. This is the United Nations policy of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). These efforts by Tanzania have led to a significant increase in primary school enrollment.

But despite the efforts made by the Tanzanian government through the Ministry of Education Science and Technology the quality of education is still poor due to a number of factors including poor leadership of heads of schools in primary schools' inadequacy of resources including funds and lack of professional training heads of schools just to mention few. (Pendo, 2017). It can be said, however, that the extent of this has varied from place to place. Academic performance in primary schools is significantly influenced by various factors, including the quality and quantity of teachers, the availability of teaching and learning materials, the learning environment, and effective school leadership (Pendo, 2017).

Effective educational leaders are crucial for managing change and fostering improvement, whether in the classroom, within a school, or across larger educational systems. They listen to, guide, and motivate their teams, using change as a catalyst for innovative thinking and sustainable reforms (Chafa and Ncube, 2024). Effective leaders operate with integrity and hold themselves accountable to the communities they serve, while championing equity, inclusive, and fairness to ensure the well-being of all students (Chafa and Ncube, 2024). However, in Kibaha town council poor academic performance among pupils persists, raising the critical question: To what extent is the influence of educational leadership in the provision of quality education in public primary schools in Kibaha town council in particular and Tanzania in general?

The introduction of fee-free education has exacerbated existing challenges, leading to overcrowded classrooms and insufficient teaching and learning resources, such as textbooks and adequate facilities. This situation has resulted in ineffective use of available materials and inappropriate teaching practices, often compounded by conflicts between teachers and head teachers. Consequently, these factors have negatively impacted student discipline and their ability to read and write, culminating in poor performance, particularly in the Standard Seven national examinations (Pendo, 2017).

Despite significant investments in education and increased enrollment rates in primary schools in Kibaha town council, the quality of education remains a critical concern. Many students continue to struggle with foundational skills, leading to poor academic performance and inadequate preparation for future educational opportunities. This issue is often linked to ineffective educational leadership, as head teachers play a crucial role in shaping school culture, motivating teachers, and implementing educational policies. However, there is limited understanding of how different leadership styles and competencies directly impact educational outcomes in this specific context. Consequently, this study seeks to investigate the influence of educational leadership on the quality of education in Kibaha town council primary schools, identifying key challenges and opportunities for improvement.

UNESCO, (2005) and researchers' findings in developing countries confirm that there is existence of the problem of leadership in primary schools and and that its impact on quality education is higher. Various other factors such as inadequate of resources, high student-ration (as a result of free primary education) and poverty in society have been studied extensively. But, the role of educational leadership particularly in influencing quality education in primary schools have not been adequately explored. Educational leaders in primary schools play a crucial role in promoting quality education because of their role and responsibilities in supervising and coordinating teaching and learning activities. There is a gap, however, on how these educational leaders in primary school's influence

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quality education in their schools. This study seeks to fill the gap by examining the influence of educational leadership in the provision of quality education in primary schools in Kibaha Town Council.

### 1.3 Specific Objectives

1) To determine the leadership style or model applied by educational leaders in primary school which influences students' academic performance?
2) To assess competence and professionalism of primary school leadership in the provision of quality education

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 Educational leadership style on quality education in primary schools

Simbre et al., (2023) conducted a study on the effect of school heads' leadership style on learners' perception of school climate. On their study they revealed that students had a favorable perception of their school climate across all dimensions, including community relations, student interactions, learning and evaluation, physical appearance, discipline, environment, attitude, and culture. The Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) results indicated that individualized consideration (transformational leadership) was the most prevalent leadership style.

Alemayehu (2013) conducted a study titled as "instructional leadership problems of government secondary school principals in East Shewa zone of Oromia Regional State" . The findings revealed that the focus of the principals in their instructional leadership activities were not in academic activities, as much of their time was spent on administrative tasks. The results further revealed that there was a direct effect of leadership on the existence of a clear school mission, which in turn influenced student opportunity to learn and teachers' expectations for student achievement. This constellation of instructional climate variables had a positive subsequent effect on student achievement gain in reading. The results suggested that educational leadership is mediated by teacher practices and attitudes, job satisfaction, teachers' achievement orientation, and evaluation and feedback practice.

Aunga and Masare, (2017) conducted a study on effect of leadership styles on teacher's performance in primary schools in Arusha District Tanzania. In their study they found out that the more democratic leadership increases, the more teachers' performance increases. The findings further revealed that there is a significant relationship between Transformational Leadership Style and Teachers' Performance. It was further revealed that democratic leadership in primary schools highly contribute to teachers performance. . That is to say, there is an involvement of teachers in decision making concerning school matters. The study concluded that leadership styles influence teachers' performance in Primary Schools of Meru District.

Musumi and Mkulu (2020) carried out a study on Instructional Leadership Styles on Students' Academic Performance in Public Secondary Schools in Tarime Urban District, Mara-Tanzania. In their study they revealed that the instructional leadership approach had a very significant role in students' academic performance as it enhances the increase of students' performance. Heads of school performed various roles including ensuring effective communication within a school; ensure availability of teaching and learning resources, good planning and budgeting and collaborative teaching. Also, the study concluded that heads of school face challenges in the implementation of instructional leadership styles. Besides, heads of school encounter problems of shortage of teaching and learning resources, poor teaching and learning environment, truancy of teachers, students and shortage of financial resources.

### 2.2 Head teachers' Competencies and Performance on quality education in primary schools

Tefera and Colleagues (2021) in Ethiopia conducted a study on the relevance of curriculum in primary school teacher education program for pre-service mathematics teacher's knowledge and teacher educator's awareness about mathematics knowledge for teaching. In their study they revealed that a high-quality educational leader requires competencies and an ability to perform leadership tasks in the educational arena. Those professional leaders in education need to have theoretical knowledge that informs them about their work. It is important to prove that one has a sound body of theoretical knowledge to inform practice. A leader must know the elements and history of the occupation, responsibility and the philosophy that justify the field of practice. It is practical however for the educational leaders to be competent in both areas of operations in the field and its theoretical aspect.

Maldrine and Kiplangat (2020) in Kenya carried out research on workload and job satisfaction among public secondary school teachers. They revealed that management competences is the sole driving force for the development and progress of the school and is responsible for increasing the accountability for the success of students and their programs. In order for this to be achieved properly, the management needs to be empowered and acquire leadership training skills, so that it plays the roles in accordance with their duties, authorities and

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responsibilities since failure or success is determined by the management as the controller and determinant of the direction that the institution wants to take towards the goals

Tarimo, and Lekule (2014) conducted a study on the effect of instructional supervision on education quality in secondary schools in Kahama District, Tanzania. The findings showed that educational leaders and Instructors competencies are often used by various stakeholders within the education community to state how well or bad educational leaders and instructors perform their duties for the sake of improving the quality of education programs. Therefore, in order to maximize educational programme success, the competences of both administrative, support and assistance are critical, because meeting educational quality calls for educational leaders who know what to do and how to do it.

## METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a qualitative research approach supported by a case study design to explore in depth the influence of educational leadership on the provision of quality education in selected primary schools within Kibaha Town Council. The study targeted educational leaders including headteachers, academic teachers, ward academic officers, district education officers, and school committee members, from which a purposive sample of 48 respondents was drawn. Data were gathered through interviews, focus group discussions, observations, and documentary reviews, enabling the researcher to capture diverse experiences, validate findings through triangulation, and obtain both primary and secondary information. Data collection tools such as interview guides, FGD guides, observation checklists, and documentary review guides were used to ensure systematic collection of insights. To ensure the credibility and dependability of the study, validity and reliability were strengthened through methodological and data triangulation, member checking, and maintaining detailed records of the research process. Thematic content analysis was employed to analyze qualitative data, involving processes such as transcription, coding, creating and reviewing themes, and interpreting patterns that emerged from interviews, FGDs, observations, and documents. Ethical considerations—including informed consent, voluntary participation, confidentiality, and official permissions—were strictly observed throughout the study

## 4. RESEARCH FINDINGS

### To determine Leadership style (leadership model) of educational leadership which influence pupils' academic performance.

The first specific objective was intended to ferret out information about what leadership style which was applied by the headteachers to influence academic performance of the students. It aimed at identifying leadership style of educational leadership and mostly headteachers. The information was collected from the interviews and focus group discussions. The Interviews were conducted with 18 participants who were purposely selected by the researcher. The 18 participants comprised of 5 headteachers, 5 academic teachers' officers in primary schools, 5 ward academic officers, 1 District Education Officer, 1 District Academic Officer and 1 District Quality Assurance. The researcher analyzed data by scrutinizing interview transcripts which were developed into themes from the interview guide. In focus group discussions there were 30 participants from school committees.

In the interviews and focus group discussions participants focused on themes like transformational leadership style, democratic-participative leadership style, cultural leadership and managerial leadership style. Such themes can influence the quality of education through strategies like teacher support, curriculum development, shared or participatory decision making. The researcher gathered information from the interviews and focus group discussions how the leadership styles when applied are built on such approaches as teamwork, motivation, provision of resources, professional development and teaching and to which extent they enhance academic performance for pupils.

The respondents were generally asked to give their views and opinions on the leadership style which they thought and believed was the most effective in fostering quality education in primary schools in their schools. The respondents were asked to explain which style of leadership among transformational, managerial (transactional) and democratic participant leadership styles/models had an impact in fostering academic performance in primary schools.

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In answering the question, the respondents were also asked to explain which of the three models/styles of leadership was most practiced in primary schools. The researcher felt it necessary to solicit information from the respondents on this question to find out the extent to which primary schools abide to the Tanzanian government directive that in order to improve quality in education then instructional and transformational leadership should be applied. Instructional leadership put emphasis on direct involvement in teaching and learning while on the other hand transformational leadership inspires and at the same motivates fellow teachers through a shared vision. (Kayombo et al, 2025).

***TABLE 4.4: PRIMARY SCHOOL LEAVING EXAMINATION (PSLE) RESULTS 2013 FOR FIVE SELECTED PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN KIBAHA TOWN COUNCIL (STD VII NATIONALEXAMINATION 2013)***

| NAME OF SCHOOL | SAT FOR EXAM | PLACE DISTRICT LEVEL OUT OF 43 | PLACE REGIONAL LEVEL OUT OF 530 | AVERAGE SCORE | PLACE NATIONAL LEVEL OUT OF 16096 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| MKOANI PRIMARY SCHOOL P1407009 | 85 | 16 | 83 | 137.7529 | 4008 |
| BOKO TIMIZA PRIMARY SCHOOL P1407001 | 40 | 42 | 391 | 91.4000 | 13552 |
| KAMBARAGE PRIMARY SCHOOL P1407025 | 91 | 13 | 59 | 145.2308 | 3035 |
| MWANALUGALI PRIMARY SCHOOL P1407030 | 17 | 34 | 236 | 109.1176 | 9817 |
| TUMBI PRIMARY SCHOOL P1407015 | 116 | 11 | 53 | 147.1724 | 2820 |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |

Source: Field data (2024)

***TABLE 4.5: PRIMARY SCHOOL LEAVING EXAMINATION (PSLE) RESULTS 2023 FOR FIVE SELECTED PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN KIBAHA TOWN COUNCIL (STD VII NATIONAL EXAMINATION 2023)***

| NAME OF SCHOOL | SAT FOR EXAM | GRADE A | GRADE B | GRADE C | GRADE D | GRADE E | SG |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| MKOANI PRIMARY SCHOOL P1407009 | 92 | 3 | 54 | 34 | 1 | 0 | B |
| BOKO TIMIZA PRIMARY SCHOOL P1407001 | 79 | 0 | 11 | 58 | 10 | 0 | C |

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| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| KAMBARAGE PRIMARY SCHOOL P1407025 | 112 | 7 | 52 | 50 | 3 | 0 | B |
| MWANALUGALI PRIMARY SCHOOL P1407030 | 64 | 1 | 23 | 39 | 1 | 0 | C |
| TUMBI PRIMARY SCHOOL P1407015 | 111 | 11 | 69 | 31 | 0 | 0 | B |

Source: Field data (2024) KEY; SG= SCHOOL GRADE

The researcher went through the documents provided by the headteachers of the five selected schools on academic performance for national examinations for Std. VII known as the Primary School Leaving Examination (PSLE). Tables 4.4 and 4.5 provide PSLE results for two purposely sampled years 2015 and 2023. The performance of Std. Leavers or graduates are fairly good although they differ from school to school.. From table 4.4 which shows results of PSLE for 2015 it is revealed that Mwanalugali primary school and Boko Timiza primary school performed poorly in the exams compared to other three primary schools (Tumbi, Kambarage and Mkoani .

In the 2015 PLSE results, for example, out of 43 primary schools in Kibaha Town Council Boko Timiza took the position of 42 according to the results. In the same year (2015) Mwanalugali primary school took the position of 34 out of 43. At regional level out of 530 primary schools Boko Timiza was in the 391 posirtion out of 530 primary schools in the region (Coast) while Mwanalugali took the position of 236 out 530 at regional level.

The PSLE results for the other three selected primary schools was fairly good for the year 2015. Tumbi primary school, for example was in the position of 11 out of 43 at district level while at regional level it was in the position of 53 out of 530 schools. Mkoani rimary school which is an English medium the PSLE results for 2015 reveal that it was in the 16$^{th}$ at district level and 83$^{rd}$ at regional level. Kambarage primary school for 2015 PSDLE results was in the 13$^{th}$ position at district level while at regional level it was in the 59$^{th}$ position.

The academic performance for these schools took the same scenario even in the 2023 PSLE results. Boko Timiza and Mwanalugali primary schools got C grades in academic performance while Tumbi, Kambarage and Mkoani primary schools were awarded B grades each each in academic performance. To what extent were the academic performances of the students in these schools influenced by educational leadership styles in leadership? This was among among the questions asked in the interviews and also discussed in focus group discussions. The findings both from the interviews and focus group discussion revealed that headteachers in primary schools mostly used democratic-participative and managerial leadership style leadership. Few participants in the focus group discussions opined that transformational leadership was better placed if applied to foster improvement in academic performance because of its characterization of visionary thinking, motivation and fostering innovation. However, they argued that in real practice it was difficult to be applied in public schools as it appeared to be ‘a one man show. Transformational leadership style is good but this is a public school. We should be democratic and involve our colleagues in decision making process”, said a headteacher from one of the schools (Interview: 23$^{rd}$ November 2024). Another interviewee added that “it is true transformational leadership encourages engagement and inspires teachers, but this is a public school and we should work as a team by involving everyone” (interview: 23$^{rd}$ November 2024).

In focus group discussions the majority of the respondents opined that although managerial (transactional) leadership style has some of the features which appear to be bureaucratic but it was recognized as a better solution because it focuses on clear laid down structures and also rewards and penalties which leads to high performance and a sense of accountability. The findings thus showed that different styles of leadership, particularly democratic-participative and managerial (transactional) were used together and enhanced performance and student success.The respondents pointed out that the choice of leadership style usually depended on the specific situations in each school.

***TABLE 4.6 Leadership style influence in academic performance:***

(Results from the interviews)

| THEME | RESPONDENT RESPONSES (FREQUENCY) | PERCENTAGE (%) |
|---|---|---|
| Transformation Leadership style | 1 | 5.6 |

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| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Management (Transactional) leadership style | 6 | 33.3 |
| Democratic-participative leadership style | 8 | 44.4 |
| Instructional leadership style | 3 | 16.7 |
| Laissez-faire leadership style | - | |
| Cultural leadership style | - | |
| total | 18 | 100 |

Source: Field Data (2024)

From the findings the implication is that there is no one leadership style (Table 4.6) which is used or applied by headteachers in primary schools. The findings concur with those of Akaro (2017) who asserted that "different styles are needed for different situations and each leader needed to know when to exhibit a particular approach". Participants in focus group discussions pointed out that headteachers who prioritize a supportive, collaborative, and innovative approach created an environment where both pupils and teachers thrive, ultimately leading to a higher standard of education. The findings concurs to those of Thomson (2020) who asserted that leadership of Scottish heads of schools made sense of, and practiced, leadership focused on learning and teaching in similar ways. Improving learning and teaching was their priority, particularly meeting the needs of each and every pupil. On the question of which leadership style was most practiced and applied for inspiring and motivating teachers the results from the interviews indicated that democratic participant leadership style (44.4%) was most applied. Most interesting from the results showed that the bureaucratic (managerial) style was also in practice (33.3%) which was at the same par with the transformational leadership (5.6%). These results collaborated those from the Focus Group Discussion (FGDs) (Table 4.7) in which the majority (66.7%) were of the opinion that democratic participant leadership style was the most applied style in most of the primary schools. The respondents in focus group opined that democratic participant leadership style brought fairly excellent results in academic performance for students. In an interview one headteacher said that:

> *There is a big problem in using transformational leadership in our schools because we lack training and most teachers are not ready to accommodate initiatives attitude… we resort to democratic participant leadership style because it is democratic and it allows participation from our fellow teachers. In my school applying democratic leadership style has brought good results for academic performance among our pupils. (Head teacher - 23rd October 2024)*

The majority of the respondents both in the interviews and focus group discussion pointed out that democratic-participative leadership style was most favoured because it positively influenced headteachers in providing quality education by increasing teacher performance and job satisfaction and collaboration. They said this in turn improved student outcomes. It was agreed by participants both in focus group discussions and interviews that headteachers who applied democratic-participative leadership style were better placed in empowering teachers by involving them in decision making which led to better instructional planning, student assessment and also teacher-parent collaboration. Through collaboration approach in leadership, it was pointed out, fosters a sense of ownership and recognition which at the end promotes overall academic performance for students.

The opinions of the respondents from the interviews were that headteachers worked hard to improve the conditions in their primary schools to support learning and teaching, attending to issue of developing capacity and capability. The headteachers supported academic teachers to work to improve learning and teaching in the subjects.

An interviewee had the following to say; -

> *Head teachers who adopt participative leadership can significantly enhance the involvement of parents, teachers, and pupils in the decision-making process. Here's how this leadership approach benefits all stakeholders (Headteacher- 24th October 2025).*

The democratic leadership style in primary education is about fostering a collaborative environment where all members of the school community contribute to decision-making. This leadership style enhances teacher engagement, improves school climate, and leads to better educational outcomes by ensuring that decisions are well-rounded and reflective of the needs and insights of the entire school community. The findings concur to those of Bouwmans et al., (2017) and Odama et al (2025) that participatory decision-making was positively associated with the team-oriented attitudes of teachers in terms of affective team commitment and perceived task interdependence, whether these team-oriented attitudes were positively associated with higher team member proactive and whether team member proactive was positively associated with more engagement in team learning.

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Participative decision-making was positively associated with both affective team commitment and the perceived task interdependence of teachers.

***TABLE 4.7 Leadership style influence on academic performance:***

(Results from the focus group discussion)

| THEME | RESPONDENT RESPONSES (FREQUENCY) | PERCENTAGE (%) |
|---|---|---|
| Transformation Leadership style | 1 | 3.3 |
| Management (Transactional) leadership style | 5 | 16.7 |
| Democratic-participative leadership style | 19 | 63.3 |
| Instructional leadership style | 2 | 6.7 |
| Laissez-faire leadership style | 1 | 3.3 |
| Cultural leadership style | 2 | 6.7 |
| total | 30 | 100 |

Source: Field Data (2024)

**4.4 Specific Objective 2: To assess competencies and professionalism of primary school leadership in the provision of quality education**

This specific objective was i9nformed by the research question: "How competent and professional are educational leaders in their duties and responsibilities in the provision of quality education in primary schools?". The objective was to assess the level of competencies and professionalism of head teachers and academic teachers in the provision of quality education and particularly on teaching and learning. The indicators for competencies encompasses a broad range of skills and qualities including, but not limited to setting expectations and/or objectives, developing teaching and learning, promoting collaboration, supporting staff development and adherence to ethical principles of the profession. Data were collected through interviews, focus group discussions, observations and documentary records.

Leadership competence in educational settings, particularly at the primary school level, plays a crucial role in shaping the quality of education students receive. In primary schools, the head teacher's leadership directly influences not only academic performance but also the broader school environment, including discipline, resource allocation, and teacher motivation. Effective head teachers possess the skills and competencies required to create a positive and supportive learning environment that fosters both academic and personal growth among students (Ogweno et al , 2024).

Ogweno et al (2024) further assert the importance of leadership in educational institutions by emphasizing that educational leadership influence the academic performance of learners. Ogweno et al (2024) further point out that The decisions made by headteachers, particularly so in areas such as resource allocation, curriculum implementation, teacher motivation and the overall learning environment are essential in determining the success of students".

The 2023 Headteachers' Guidebook and the 2009 Guidelines for School Supervisors define several roles and responsibilities for headteachers in the United Republic of Tanzania. The documents have set Leadership standards and roles. Apart from that they have also set competencies standards and leadership frameworks and guidelines. These competencies standards for headteachers are in the form of roles for headteachers which include setting expectations and objectives of the schools, developing teaching and learning in schools, promoting collaboration and team work, supporting staff development, and adherence to ethical principles according to the profession (URT, 2009, URT, 2023).

The focus on this specific objective was on Headteachers Leadership Competencies and Performance in promoting and enhancing quality education in Primary Schools in Kibaha Town Council. The aim was to to evaluate the ways in which leadership skills and decision-making by head teachers' impact educational quality in Kibaha Town Council primary schools. By examining specific leadership practices and their effects on academic and operational outcomes the study provided insights into the direct link between headteacher competencies and the overall educational standards in Kibaha Town Council's primary schools.

The findings from the interviews revealed that headteachers effectively communicated the school's goals and expectations to the teaching staff. This means that the teaching staff is well guided on what to teach and follow

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during the teaching process. This is indicated on Table 4.8 which reveals a percentage of 88.9 % by adding those respondents who pointed out that the communication aspect was very good (55.5%) and those who said it was good (33.4%).

On training and leadership skills 16.7% of the interviewees said that it was very good but 55.5 agreed that it was just good. Those who disapproved on the the issue of training and leadership skills for headteachers was 27.7%. The findings here indicate that issues on training need to be looked into. There was also a concern on the role of headteachers on supporting staff development. Findings from the focus group discussions concurred with those of the interviews. The majority of the participants in focus group discussions opined that training was not properly provided because of inadequacy of financial resources. It was pointed out that headteachers lacked training on management education.

On teamwork and knowledge sharing the findings from the focus group discussions showed that headteachers encouraged teamwork and sharing of knowledge among teachers. In the followup questions participants in the focus group discussions said presence of teamwork implied that tasks and curriculum were easily accomplished within the schools leading to better performance among the pupils. A good number of participants in focus group discussions agreed that headteachers also promoted a sense of unity and in the process sharing the vision and goals among the teaching staff. This boosted the teaching morale. The results from the focus group discussions collaborated with those from the interviews in which all the respondents agreed that teamwork and knowledge were emphasized and implemented in their schools. .

The findings from the interviews collaborated with those of the focus group discussions by pointing out that head teachers delegated tasks and responsibilities (94.4%) among the teaching staff. It was also agreed by the respondents (94.4%) that Head teachers had integrity and had a high rate of accountability in their duties and responsibilities.

In an interview with respondents an official from the district in Kibaha Town Council said: :

> *Head teachers are heads of schools and have many responsibilities and tasks of the schools they lead. It means head teachers should have a high level of leadership competencies. We as senior officials in the council we monitor and evaluate competencies and capabilities to lead in regards to our heads of schools. We usually take action when we see there are problems of leadership in our schools (Interview: 24th October 2024)*

During the interviews about the level of the leadership competencies it was also pointed out that head teachers had no problems in dealing with the behaviour of individual teachers because the school hierarchy makes it easier and quicker for them to lend guidance and support.

Results from the FGDs collaborated with those of the interviews in some of the aspects. It was agreed during the focus group discussions that efficient management of school resources directly impacted the quality of teaching and learning. The participants in the discussions pointed out that scarcity of resources and lack of essential learning materials like text books and teaching aids could affect teaching and learning in primary schools. This was the case in Kibaha Town Council. Schools with poor resources in terms of poor infrastructure and inadequacy learning materials lagged behind in academic performance for students as revealed in table 4.4 and 4.5.

***TABLE 4.8 Competence and professionalism of Headteachers and Academic teachers in the provision of quality education***

(Results from the Interviews)

| THEME | Very good | % | Good | % | Not good | % |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Training and leadership skills of Headteachers | 3 | 16.7 | 10 | 55.5 | 5 | 27.7 |
| Head teachers capacity on assessing and evaluating Including classrooms visit during teaching learning process | 5 | 27.7 | 9 | 50 | 4 | 22.2 |
| The head teachers encourage and support teamwork and | 10 | 55.5 | 8 | 44.5 | 0 | 0 |

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| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| knowledge sharing among teachers | | | | | | |
| Head teachers effective communication on schools, vision and and goals to teaching staff | 10 | 55.5 | 6 | 33.4 | 2 | 11.1 |
| Ability to motivate teachers and pupils | 9 | 50 | 7 | 38.9 | 2 | 11.1 |
| Ability to foster a positive school environment | 6 | 33.4 | 10 | 55.5 | 2 | 11.1 |
| Head teachers ability to effectively manage resources | 10 | 55.5 | 6 | 33.4 | 2 | 11.1 |
| Headteachers focus on integrity and accountability | 10 | 55.5 | 7 | 38.9 | -1 | 5.6 |
| Head teachers delegate tasks and responsibilities among the teaching staff | 1 | 5.6 | 16 | 88.8 | 1 | 5.6 |
| Headteachers Setting expectations/objectives | 10 | 55.5 | 6 | 33.4 | 2 | 11.1 |
| Headteachers Developing teaching and learning | 2 | 11.1 | 14 | 77.8 | 2 | 11.1 |
| Headteachers Promoting collaboration | 6 | 33.3 | 9 | 50 | 3 | 16.7 |
| Headteachers Supporting staff development | 1 | 5.6 | 7 | 38.9 | 10 | 55.5 |
| Headteachers Adherence to ethical principles | 10 | 55.5 | 7 | 38.9 | | 5.6 |
| Ensuring inclusive and diverse education | 1 | 5.6 | 9 | 50 | 8 | 44.4 |

Source: Field data (2024)

The key themes in the focus group discussion dwelt on training and leadership skills of headteachers and academic teachers; their ability in communication and whether they communicated to their fellow teachers on issues to do with vision and strategic planning in their schools. Other key themes included competencies in management of resources in schools and how that impacted on academic performance to pupils. The participants also dwelt on the issues of creativity and innovative aspects of heads of schools and the extent to which they were capable of motivating their fellow teachers. The issues on integrity and accountability of the headteachers was also discussed in the focus group discussions. The extent to which educational leaders improve instructional practices through professional development and how they delegate responsibilities was also discussed.. Themes on engagement on decision making process and on issues to with curriculum were also part of the discussion. Other themes included headteachers role in setting expectations and objectives; supporting staff development, developing teaching and lea

The results from the focus group discussions revealed that there were scarcity of resources and late delivery of-government funds affected the ability of headteachers to effectively manage the schools in terms of resources. It was pointed out that the head teacher is responsible for ensuring that the resources, whether financial, material, or human are used in ways that directly improve the quality of education. A failure in this area can reduce the overall

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effectiveness of the school, hinder student outcomes, and contribute to low staff morale and poor community relations. In the long run, this inefficiency can perpetuate cycles of underachievement and limit the school's ability to meet its educational goals. The findings in this aspect concur to those of Chilima (2018) who asserted that failure of the headteacher in the management of procurement and distribution of learning materials effectively teachers may not have the necessary resources to implement their lesson plans.

On the theme of communication the participants in focus group discussion were of the opinion that there was no problem in this aspect. It was pointed out that Head teachers in the selected primary schools were working hard to communicate effectively to their fellow teachers on issues of importance in the management of schools for quality education. The participants opined that head teacher's inability to effectively communicate the school's vision and goals had wide-reaching consequences for the entire school community. The participants said such inability to communicate effectively creates confusion, misalignment, and disengagement among staff, leading to fragmented efforts, inconsistent implementation of policies, and diminished motivation.

The majority of the participants in FGDs said that a clear and well-communicated vision from the head teacher was essential for fostering a sense of shared purpose, driving school improvement, and ensuring that staff, students, and the broader community was working together toward common goals. They acknowledged that the majority of of headteachers in the selected primary schools had that in mind which worked well for the betterment of schools in terms of academic performance. It was pointed out that without such attitude and practice from the head teachers a school may struggle to achieve its full potential. The findings concur to those of Kaso et al., (2021) in Uganda who asserted that school leadership policies play an important role in school management to reach the education goal. Quality of education is a systemic and integrated activity by academic units or programs, administrators of academic units or programs, local governments, central government, and the community to increase the intelligence level of the nation's life through education.

***Classroom observations***

The researcher also conducted classroom observations to examine competencies of Headteachers and academic teachers on the extent whether or not they enhance teacher's classroom teaching and student's learning. Before the observation exercise the Headteachers and academic teachers were asked on whether they were informally conducting visits in classrooms during teaching and learning process. Eight out of ten answered in the affirmative claiming that they regularly conducted classrooms visits during teaching and learning process. However, a researcher's visits to schools revealed that headteachers and academic teachers not all entered the classrooms but (the majority) rather walked around outside the classrooms.

The findings from the observation exercise by the researcher collaborated with some of the findings from the informants who said that headteachers and academic teachers do not enter classrooms to observe how teachers are teaching because by doing so would discourage teachers who may think they are not trusted.. In an interview one of the headteachers said::

> *It does not matter whether or not I enter the class during the teaching process. What matters is just to let the teacher know that we are making a follow up. When a teacher sees me outside the classroom that is a way to alert him that we are making a follow up of his/her performance. There is no need for me to enter the classroom.(interview- 24th September 2024)*

The majority of the interviewees acknowledged that there were irregular monitoring, observation and evaluation of the staff performance which had a detrimental impact on the overall performance and effectiveness of the schools. An interviewee pointed out that "when headteachers fail to observe and assess teachers issues such as ineffective teaching methods and gaps in student learning or lack of professional development for staff may go unnoticed" (Interview: September 23rd 2024)

In an interview with one of the school Head teachers about headteachers' leadership competencies in primary schools in Kibaha Town Counci, this is what he had to say:

> *Irregular monitoring and evaluation by head teachers on teachers' performance can have a detrimental impact on the teaching and learning process and the overall quality education in schools. Regular monitoring is crucial and a necessity for providing feedback, identifying areas for improvement, and ensuring that teaching practices align with the school's curriculum and academic goals. When head teachers fail to consistently observe and assess teachers, issues such as ineffective teaching methods, gaps in student learning, or a lack of professional development may go unnoticed (Interview: 23rd September 2024).*

In FGDs participants opined that irregular monitoring and evaluation of teacher performance by some of the head teacher can have significant negative effects on both the individual teachers and the broader school environment. They said this limited in some cases the opportunities for feedback, growth, and accountability, leading to

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inconsistent teaching standards, diminished teacher motivation, and a decline in the quality of education delivered to students. Regular, consistent monitoring is crucial for fostering a culture of continuous improvement, supporting professional development, and ensuring that teachers are working towards the school's vision and goals. The findings concur to those of Gamala & Marpa (2022) who asserted that irregular monitoring, observations and evaluation of teachers by a head teachers could lead to inconsistent teaching quality, decreased teacher morale, and negative impacts on student outcomes.

The participants in FGDs said that to address the problem there was a need for headteachers in all primary schools to make sure monitoring, observations and evaluations of the teaching staff was conducted regularly as per regulations. The participants observed that it was important and necessary to follow the Tanzanian government guidelines and regulations on the issue of teachers evaluation and monitoring. The participants in FGDs said that in primary schools headteachers serve as chief administrators as well who are tasked with ensuring educational objectives are met and that schools run efficiently.

The Tanzanian government views monitoring and evaluation of teachers as crucial for improving school effectiveness. The Education Sector Development Plan (ESDP) of 2025/26 to 2029/30 provides framework for evaluation and monitoring with oversight involving local government authorities, the Ministry responsible for education alongside promoting internal school self-evaluation. The participants in focus group discussions noted that implementation on evaluation and monitoring encountered a number of challenges which included poor infrastructure in schools and poor salary schemes and motivation.

Documentary records in the majority of the selected primary schools revealed that headteachers and academic teachers were not adequately trained on supervision practices through seminars and workshops which led to negative impacts to their fellow teachers in teaching practices.

In interviews it was also noted that addressing the issue of monitoring and evaluation should involve the implementation of regular evaluation schedules, providing effective training, and creating clear evaluation criteria to support teachers and improve overall educational quality.

One of interviewee said; -

> *When a head teacher fails to encourage and maintain discipline among both staff and pupils, the school's environment can become challenging and chaotic. This lack of discipline may lead to frequent disruptions in classrooms, diminished respect for school rules, and low morale among staff and students. Additionally, without a clear framework for behavioral expectations, students might struggle with academic performance, and teachers may feel unsupported, which could contribute to high turnover and disengagement. A head teacher's role in enforcing discipline is crucial, as it sets the tone for a positive, structured, and productive school culture (Interview: 25th September 2024).*

The observations from the interviewees showed that head teacher's failure to encourage and maintain discipline among both staff and pupils leads to a breakdown in the very structures that support effective teaching and learning. It causes confusion, disrespect, and chaos, which undermines the school's mission and negatively affects staff morale, pupils' behavior, and academic performance. Discipline is more than just enforcing rules; it's about creating a positive, safe, and supportive environment where students can learn and grow, and teachers can perform their duties professionally. A head teacher who does not uphold discipline fails to provide the leadership and guidance necessary for the school to thrive. This observation concurs to that of Betweli (2020) who asserted that, head teachers' effort to curb teacher misconduct encountered challenges such as lack of cooperation from education officers, overwhelming responsibilities, lack of power to sanction teachers, and lack of commitment among teachers. Consequently, head teachers consulted their higher authorities and delegated some of their responsibilities, as their strategies to overcome or cope with the encountered challenges.

## 5. SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

### 5.1 Summary

The study revealed that, with regard to the first objective, headteachers in the selected primary schools predominantly applied democratic–participative and management (transactional) leadership styles, both of which were found to have a positive influence on pupils' academic performance by promoting shared decision-making, motivating staff, and ensuring effective allocation of school resources; however, the study also noted that although transformational leadership had strong potential to enhance performance, it was rarely practiced due to perceptions of it being a "one-man show" and thus unsuitable for the context . Concerning the second objective, the findings showed that headteachers and academic teachers in Kibaha Town Council were generally fairly competent and

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professional, able to communicate effectively, encourage teamwork, and delegate responsibilities to enhance school management, yet their performance and professional growth were constrained by limited managerial training and persistent shortages of essential school resources, both of which hindered their ability to fully provide quality education.

**5.2 Conclusions**

The purpose of this study was to examine the influence of educational leadership in the provision of quality educationa in elected primary schools in Kibaha Town Council. Based on the discussion of the findings the following conclusions are drawn. Democratic-participative leadership style together with management (transactional) leadership style have critical roles in influencing educational leadership in primary schools for quality education in primary schools in Kibaha Town Council.

The study also identified several strategies employed by head teachers to enhance teacher's performance in the provision of quality education in primary schools. In this aspect instructional leadership strategy was seen as vital for head teachers to exercise such responsibilities as fostering a collaborative and supportive environment, establishing clear goal, vision and expectations for teachers, and motivating their fellow teachers by recognizing and acknowledging their efforts .and providing guidance on the implementation of curriculum

The study showed that quality education is not just about teaching and learning but is comprised of quality staff, availability of teaching and learning materials and adequacy of infrastructure. In essence the study revealed that the application of Democratic-participative, managerial instructional leadership styles could lead to positive influence of educational leadership on quality education this align to (. It was also revealed in this study that collaboration and shared decision-making were also crucial for influencing quality education.

The study found that heads of schools (head teachers) encountered various challenges and/or factors in their efforts to enhance teacher's performance and quality education. These challenges included limited resources poor infrastructure and late disbursement of government funds. The results showed that lack of training on managerial education made it difficult for head teachers to provide professional development for fellow teachers.

**5.3 Recommendations**

The study proposes the following recommendations:

Firstly, the Ministry of Education Science and Technology together with the local government authorities should provide vigorous training on education management to heads of primary schools enable them proficiently discharge their duties and responsibilities including that of providing professional development for their fellow teachers. This will lead to effective teaching and learning in primary schools.

Secondly, head teachers and academic teachers should be adequately trained on supervision practices through seminars and workshops which may include classroom observation that may lead to positive impact to their fellow teachers in teaching activities.

Thirdly, the government through the Ministry of Education Science and Technology should make sure there is timely provision of teaching and learning resources, that is, making sure that capitation funding is timely provided to enable teachers to comfortably exercise their duties and responsibilities in teaching activities.

Fourthly, it is crucial for the government to make sure physical facilities in public primary schools are in good order as is the case in private primary schools. Such physical facilities include buildings, desks, classrooms, and offices for teachers, toilets, libraries and other facilities necessary for teaching activities.

Fifth, Primary schools have to devise new measures and strategies of resource mobilization to fill the gap of inadequacy of resources provided by the government

Sixth, there should be a way of involving parents through school committees to support the schools financially particularly in procurement and purchase of school facilities such as desks and other teaching and learning materials.

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