

PERCEPTION OF DISTRICT QUALITY ASSURANCE AND STANDARDS OFFICERS ON LEADERSHIP STYLES OF DISTRICT EDUCATION OFFICERS IN KENYA

Emmily Mugasia Sitati, Anne A. Ngaira, Clarice W. Mwita, Wilson Amolo, Maurice L. Akala, Willaerd Ngaira
Ministry of Education, Kenya
E-mail: emmilymugasia@yahoo.com

Abstract

Leadership in the public sector is a key variable that is expected to propel the achievement of Vision 2030. This is indeed crucial in the Education Sector which forms the basis of the social pillar of Vision 2030. The DEO and the DQASO are line managers with a primary role in policy implementation in the Ministry of Education. The purpose of the study was to investigate the perception of District Quality Assurance and Standards Officers towards the leadership styles of District Education Officers. The study established the characteristics of DQASOs, the leadership styles of the DEOs and identified the perceived challenges of DQASOs in Kenya. The study was guided by the Learning Organization theory of Peter Senge 1990 which emphasizes the need for involvement in decision making of those who carry out decisions for greater understanding and commitment.

Descriptive survey design was used and the study sample included a total of 29(10%) District Quality Assurance and Standards Officers (DQASOs) drawn from a population of 287 DQASOs from the 287 Districts in Kenya. The researchers made use of DQASOs who were attending the tenth 2011 Senior Management Course drawn from across Kenya as respondents. A questionnaire for DQASOs was designed to facilitate data collection. The study established that autocratic leadership style was dominant in most District Education offices with little consultation, teamwork and communication since the DEOs unilaterally made decisions and rarely accepted advice and criticism from members of staff. The DEOs' personal traits greatly influenced their leadership styles. The DEOs were perceived to be unsupportive and rarely provided a conducive environment that motivated the staff. Most DEOs were not committed to supporting quality assurance and standards programmes in most Districts. The study recommended that the DEOs should integrate and employ varied leadership styles in management of education and delink their personal traits from office management. Clear communication channels between DEOs and staff should be established involve senior staff members in decision making. The DEOs should support Quality Assurance and Standards Programs in the Districts and provide a conducive environment for staff motivation.

Key words: leadership styles, perception, quality assurance.

Introduction

It has been a long held belief that the major factor which distinguishes successful organizations from their less successful counterparts is the presence of dynamic and effective leadership (Yuki, 2006). Though the literature suggests that an organization's strategy is not always driven by senior managers, it is certainly the case that they are held responsible for success or failure. They are the people who are formally charged with taking decisions, directing others and creating a framework of rules, systems and expectations within which the

organization operates. Given the importance of leadership, therefore it is surprising to find that it is such an elusive concept. One of the weaknesses of the leadership literature is that it tends to concentrate on the traits of individual managers and their relations with subordinates. Yet as Burnes, (1991) and Hales (1986) argued, a manager's effectiveness may be determined as much by the nature of the organization in which he or she operates as by the qualities of the individual manager.

Leadership is a process by which a person influences others to accomplish an objective and directs the organization in a way that makes it more cohesive and coherent, Okumbe, (2008). Leaders carry out this process by applying their leadership knowledge and skills. However, we know that we have traits that can influence our actions. This is called *Trait Leadership* (Okumbe, 2008) in that it was once common to believe that leaders were born rather than made. While leadership is learned, the skills and knowledge processed by the leader can be influenced by his or hers attributes or traits, such as beliefs, values, ethics, and character. Knowledge and skills contribute directly to the process of leadership, while the other attributes give the leader certain characteristics that make him or her unique.

Leadership and Management

The DEO's management leadership style has an effect on the quality of service delivery. A participative leader, rather than taking autocratic decisions, seeks to involve other people in the process, possibly including subordinates, peers, superiors and other stakeholders. Weber (1987) acknowledges the fact that, leadership should be shared at all cost to reduce animosity. He contends that, shared leadership responsibilities with the subordinates promotes better service. Often, however, as it is within the managers' whom to give or deny control to his or her subordinates, most participative activity is within the immediate team. The question of how much influence others are given thus may vary on the manager's preferences and beliefs. One dimension of this has to do with control and one's perception of how much control one should give to people. The *laissez faire* style implies low control, the autocratic style high control and the participative lies somewhere in between. Leadership increases the effectiveness and proficiency of management and sustainable performance (Reed, 2005) and effective management of resources. Organizations and environment have changed rapidly over the past years and as a result a new type of leadership that is less and more democratic is needed in order to ensure survival of the organization (Johnson, 1995). Maicibi, (2005) observes that proper leadership style leads to effective performance in organizations/institutions. Leadership effectiveness is most conveniently quantified by organizational outcomes (Johnson, 1995). The focus is to offer the best services to the customer who currently is the focus of any meaningful management. The office of the DEO has a vision and the DEO alone cannot achieve this vision without calling for the co-workers participation. Studies done do indicate that co-workers and stakeholders involvement in decision- making yield salutary results (Doyle & Wells 1996; Wong, 2003). It is also shown that employee satisfaction, motivation, morale and self-esteem are positively affected by involvement in decision making and implementation (Doyle & Wells, 1996). Wong (2003) argues that employee commitment and loyalty are fostered by collaborative management practice. According to Gamage (2007) and Owens (1998) collaborative management tends to create a sense of ownership of change initiatives and eventually extend stronger support to realize the goals of such efforts. Further, such leadership results to better decisions and greater efficiency since issues are discussed extensively via open communication among people having varying viewpoints involved in participative set-ups (Gamage, 2007; Owens, 1998). Lienhart and Willet (2002) argue that by implementing participative management practices co-workers are given a sense of control over their own working lives, power inequalities are balanced and additional resources become available to the organization.

Therefore participatory management leadership is an important aspect that cannot be brushed away especially in this era of technological advancement and emphasis in the attainment of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Kenya like other countries is in the race of attaining MDGs alongside the Vision 2030 where it is expected to be an industrialized nation. Therefore management of education is an important aspect towards attainment of the set national and international obligations. However, there has been criticism in the way education is managed in Kenya. This may hinder the achievement of the most spoken out educational MDGs and the set vision 2030. In fostering trust, certain aspects of participatory practices have been found essential. According to Bryk and Schneider (2002) these practices are open communication and supportive and collegial behavior of the leader. The DEO's office is composed of different departments manned by different personnel who provide abundant opportunities for the participatory education administration, leadership and management.

Lewin et al., (1939) conducted one of the first and most famous studies of leadership styles. The study cooperated three styles of leadership where individuals were put into groups within this leadership styles. In the democratic style of leadership, group decisions were by majority vote, equal participation was encouraged and criticism and punishment were minimal. In the autocratic leadership style, all decisions were made by the leader and participants were required to follow prescribed procedures under strict discipline. Lastly, in laissez-faire leadership, the actual leadership activity of the group leader was kept at a minimum, allowing the participants to work and play essentially without supervision. The results of the study show that the groups with democratic style of leadership were the most satisfied and functional in the most orderly and positive manner. The results also show that the number and degree of aggressive acts were greatest in the autocratically led groups. According to Okumbe, (2008) a combination of personality traits and leader behavior gives leadership style which contributes significantly to the prediction of performance. He holds the view that leadership training of educational managers should enable them to acquire conceptual, human relations and technical skills which are essential in organizational behavior. In leadership training, educational leaders are made through the acquisition of well set out management skills. This enables them to develop leadership talents that will facilitate effectiveness in school management in terms of general management skills, human relations, problem solving and decision making.

Goldring (2005) and Anfara et al. (2008) affirms that a good leader has a revitalized vision and a renewed sense of the group's purpose; strengthens morale among employees; infuses new ideas and recalibrates outdated structures and processes; and facilitates more authentic, dynamic, and effective communication. Various scholars have argued for or against collaborative or participative leadership in management of education. One school of thought stresses on collaborative leadership because it enhances organizational effectiveness (Anfara et al., 2008). A second school rests its case for participation on democratic principles. In this approach to leadership, authority and influence are potentially available potentially to any legitimate stakeholder in the school, based on their expert knowledge, their democratic right to choose, and their critical role in implementing decisions (Anfara et al, 2008). Research indicates that leadership has a strong relationship with the extent to which an organization has a clear mission and goals, the overall climate of the organization and the attitudes of the co-workers.

Leadership Dimensions

Job performance generally refers to behavior that is expected to contribute to organizational success (Campbell, 1990). Campbell identified a number of specific types of performance dimensions; leadership was one of the dimensions that he identified. There is no consistent, overall definition of leadership performance (Yuki, 2006). Many distinct conceptualizations are often lumped together under the umbrella of leadership performance, including outcomes such

as leader effectiveness, leader advancement, and leader emergence (Kaiser et al., 2008). There are four major factors in leadership (U.S. Army, 1983): As a leader, one must have an honest understanding of who you are, what you know, and what you can do. It is the followers, not the leader or someone else who determines if the leader is successful. If they do not trust or lack confidence in their leader, then they will be uninspired. To be successful you have to convince your followers, not yourself or your superiors, that you are worthy of being followed.

Followers are different people who require different styles of leadership. For example, a new hire requires more supervision than an experienced employee. A person who lacks motivation requires a different approach than one with a high degree of motivation. You must know your people! The fundamental starting point is having a good understanding of human nature, such as needs, emotions, and motivation. You must come to know your employees' be, know, and do attributes. Communication is leading through two-way communication. Much of it is nonverbal. For instance, when you "set the example," that communicates to your people that you would not ask them to perform anything that you would not be willing to do. What and how you communicate either builds or harms the relationship between you and your employees.

Finally, all situations are different. What you do in one situation will not always work in another. You must use your judgment to decide the best course of action and the leadership style needed for each situation. For example, you may need to confront an employee for inappropriate behaviour, but if the confrontation is too late or too early, too harsh or too weak, then the results may prove ineffective. The situation normally has a greater effect on a leader's action than his or her traits. This is because while traits may have an impressive stability over a period of time, they have little consistency across situations (Mischel, 1968).

One of the more recent definitions of leadership comes from Werner Erhard, Michael C. Jensen, Steve Zaffron, and Kari Granger who describe leadership as "an exercise in language that results in the realization of a future that wasn't going to happen anyway, which future fulfills (or contributes to fulfilling) the concerns of the relevant parties...". This definition ensures that leadership is talking about the future and includes the fundamental concerns of the relevant parties. This differs from relating to the relevant parties as "followers" and calling up an image of a single leader with others following. Rather, a future that fulfills on the fundamental concerns of the relevant parties indicates the future that wasn't going to happen is not the "idea of the leader", but rather is what emerges from digging deep to find the underlying concerns of those who are impacted by the leadership.

Leaders emerge from within the structure of the informal organization. Their personal qualities, the demands of the situation, or a combination of these and other factors attract followers who accept their leadership within one or several overlay structures. Instead of the authority of position held by an appointed head or chief, the emergent leader wields influence or power. Influence is the ability of a person to gain co-operation from others by means of persuasion or control over rewards. Power is a stronger form of influence because it reflects a person's ability to enforce action through the control of a means of punishment.

Leadership Styles

Leadership style refers to a leader's behavior. It is the result of the philosophy, personality, and experience of the leader. Different situations call for different leadership styles. In an emergency when there is little time to converge on an agreement and where a designated authority has significantly more experience or expertise than the rest of the team, an autocratic leadership style may be most effective; however, in a highly motivated and aligned team with a homogeneous level of expertise, a more democratic or laissez-faire style may be more effective. The style adopted should be the one that most effectively achieves the objectives of the group while balancing the interests of its individual members. In the past,

some researchers have argued that the actual influence of leaders on organizational outcomes is overrated and romanticized as a result of biased attributions about leaders (Meindl & Ehrlich, 1987). Despite these assertions, however, it is largely recognized and accepted that practitioners and researchers that leadership is important, and research supports the notion that leaders do contribute to key organizational outcomes (Day & Lord, 1988; Kaiser, Hogan, & Craig, 2008). To facilitate successful performance it is important to understand and accurately measure leadership performance.

Autocratic or authoritarian style is where decision-making powers are centralized in the leader, as with dictators. Leaders do not entertain any suggestions or initiatives from subordinates. The autocratic management has been successful as it provides strong motivation to the manager. It permits quick decision-making, as only one person decides for the whole group and keeps each decision to him/herself until he/she feels it needs to be shared with the rest of the group. In participative or democratic style, decision-making is favored by the group. Such a leader gives instructions after consulting the group. They can win the cooperation of their group and can motivate them effectively and positively. The decisions of the democratic leader are not unilateral as with the autocrat because they arise from consultation with the group members and participation by them. Laissez-faire or free rein style leader does not lead, but leaves the group entirely to itself. Such a leader allows maximum freedom to subordinates. They are given a free hand in deciding their own policies and methods.

In contrast to individual leadership, some organizations have adopted group leadership. In this situation, more than one person provides direction to the group as a whole. Some organizations have taken this approach in hopes of increasing creativity, reducing costs, or downsizing. Others may see the traditional leadership of a boss as costing too much in team performance. In some situations, the team members best able to handle any given phase of the project become the temporary leaders. Additionally, as each team member has the opportunity to experience the elevated level of empowerment, it energizes staff and feeds the cycle of success. Leaders who demonstrate persistence, tenacity, determination, and synergistic communication skills will bring out the same qualities in their groups. Good leaders use their own inner mentors to energize their team and organizations and lead a team to achieve success.

Context of the Study

The study was based on the office of the District Education Officer (DEO), who is the overall supervisor of the Ministry of Education at the District level. He/She coordinates all education activities in the district, Teacher management functions, AIE holder, and custodian of education policy in the district. The District Quality Assurance and Standards Officer (DQASO), is in-charge of Standards Assessment of all Educational Institutions and assuring quality and educational standards in the District. The DQASO's activities are largely facilitated by the DEO who has the Authority to Incur Expenditure (AIE holder) and control all other resources in the District. The two offices are expected to work harmoniously for effective service delivery.

Organizational structure of the DEO's Office

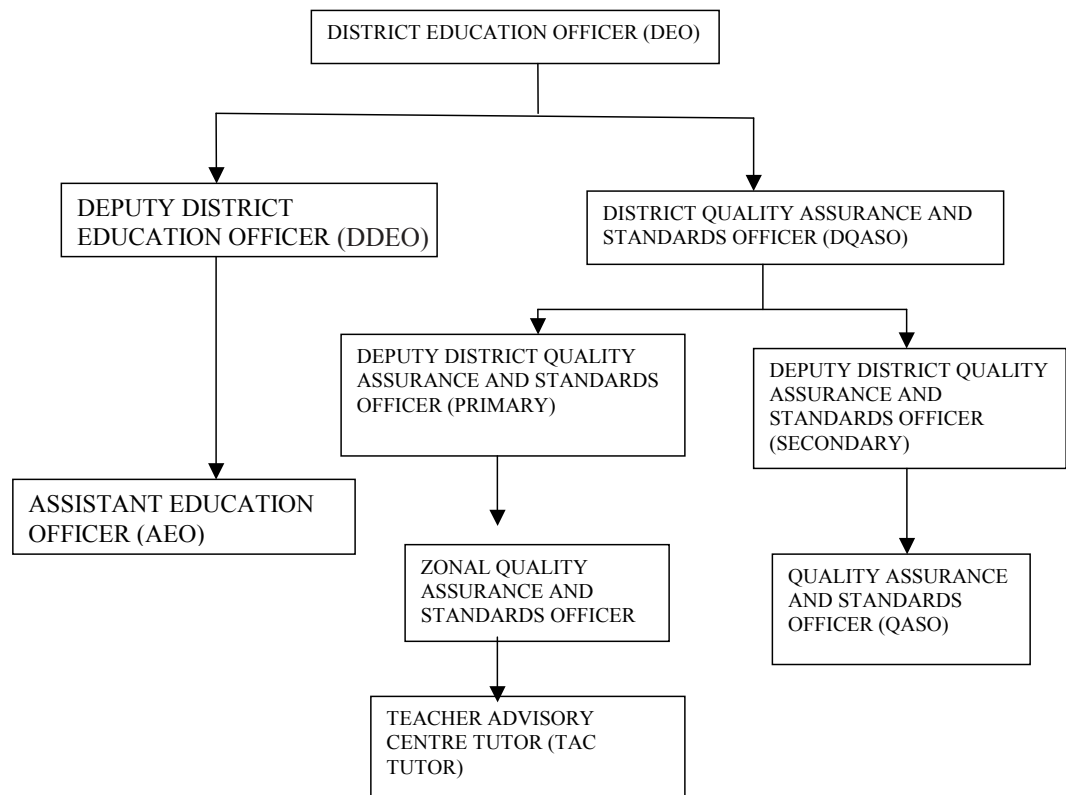


Figure 1: Organizational structure of the district education officer's office.

Problem Statement

District Education offices in Kenya continue to face pressure to attain set national and international goals among them the educational MDG's, the Kenya vision 2030 and ISO 9001:2008. Worldwide there is increasing efforts to improve management of education at all levels. Currently the emphasis is on customer satisfaction as reflected in the ISO 9001:2008. The permanent secretary, ministry of education signs a performance contract which is cascaded to the district level where most of the implementation of the targets is done. This requires leadership styles that will enable managers at the district level to achieve the set targets. There is perceived dissatisfaction among education managers on leadership styles exhibited by some of the managers at the district level. This may impact negatively on quality service delivery and attainment of set targets thus the need for the proposed study. It is therefore imperative to move forward with ascertained understanding of which management styles are practiced by district education officers in Kenya and to what extent their co-workers are involved in management of education at district level.

Research Objectives

The study was guided by the following objectives:

1. To establish the characteristics of District Quality Assurance and Standards Officers (DQASO) engaged in management of education at District level in Kenya.
2. To identify leadership styles of District Education Officers (DEO) in management of education in Districts in Kenya.

3. To establish the perception of District Quality Assurance and Standards Officers on leadership styles employed by the District Education Officers in management of education in Kenya.

Theoretical Framework

This study was based on the theory of learning organization as propounded by Peter Senge in 1990. The theory is based on the concept that organizations in this era of globalization need to enable people to continually expand their capacity to create the results they truly desire. This implies that learning organizations nurture new and expansive patterns of thinking where people are continuously learning to see the whole together. The theory asserts that involvement in decision-making improves the understanding of the issues involved by those who must carry out the decisions. Further when people make decisions together, the social commitment to one another is greater and thus increases their commitment to the decision. As social institutions it is increasingly important that the District Education Offices deliver the expectations of the community in terms of quality service delivery. This can be achieved based on the management leadership styles of District Education Officers (DEO).

Methodology of Research

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. Surveys are used to systematically gather factual information necessary for decision-making. Cohen & Manion, (1980) assert that the intention of a survey research is to gather data at a particular point in time and use it to describe the nature of existing conditions. Orodho (2002) observes that descriptive survey is used in preliminary and exploratory studies to gather information, summarize, present and interpret for the purpose of clarification. The study was carried out in Kenya using respondents drawn from various District Education Offices who had turned up for Senior Management Course (SMC) during the month of December 2011 at the Government Training Institute- Matuga. The target population included all the 287 District Quality Assurance and Standards Officers. They had all been in the Ministry of Education for at least three years and given that they constituted part of the line managers who are key in policy implementation at District level. A sample of 29 DQASOs representing 10% of the total DQASOs in Kenya was selected. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003), the main factor considered in determining the sample size is the need to keep it manageable enough.

Questionnaires were used to collect data from the respondents. Borg and Gall, (1983) identified a questionnaire as a convenient tool especially where the sample size is large. The questionnaires were organized in three sections in order to capture data related to respondents' biodata, leadership styles and perceptions on various leadership styles. Closed-ended questions comprising of structured and likert-type questions was used. Piloting was done to test validity and reliability of the instruments on an identical sample but not including the group to be surveyed, to check if the questions were measuring what they were supposed to, the wording, the interpretation of the questions, and if the researcher was biased. It also revealed vague questions and anticipated analytical techniques appropriate. Feedback by the test responded helped in refining the testing instruments. Data was analyzed using descriptive statistics and tabulated and findings presented in frequency tables and percentages. Gay, (2003) observes that frequencies and percentages easily communicate the research findings to majority of readers.

Results of Research

1. Characteristics of DQASOs

The first objective was to establish the characteristics of District Quality Assurance and Standards Officers (DQASO) engaged in management of education at District level in Kenya. To address this objective data on gender, academic qualification and work experience was gathered and presented in table 1 below.

Table 1. Characteristics of DQASOs.

	Gender		Qualification			Work Experience (Years)		
	Freq.	%	Professional Qualification	Freq.	%	Range in years	Freq.	%
Male	22	75.9	Diploma	5	17.2	0 - 2	10	34.5
Female	7	24.1	Degree	13	44.9	3 - 5	13	44.8
			M. Ed	11	37.9	6 - 8	1	3.5
						9 - 12	0	0
						Above 12	5	17.2
Total	29	100		29	100		29	100

This information was meant to ascertain the ability, reliability and eligibility of respondents to respond to items in the questionnaire and to draw background information that may impact on the variables of the study. The results indicated that majority of participants were male, i.e. 75.9 % .Only 24.1% were female. Data on professional qualification revealed that majority of respondents had a first degree and postgraduate qualification at 13(44.9%) and 11(37.9%) respectively. Only 5(17.2%) had reached diploma level. They all had a working experience as DQASOs of 3 year and above. This indicated that they all had the capacity to hold their respective positions and were experienced and knowledgeable enough to adequately handle the challenges of their duties and responsibilities.

2. Leadership styles used by DEO's in management of education in Districts in Kenya

Participants were asked whether the DEO gave a free hand to officers to plan and carry out their daily activities with minimal supervision, 4(13.8%) disagreed and 20(69%) strongly disagreed. They were further asked to indicate whether officers were self directed and reported for duty and left at their own pleasure having satisfactorily completed their daily workload. A total 7(24.15%) and 15(51.75%) disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively. Regarding democratic leadership, a total of 12(41.4%) and 4(13.8%) respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed that DEOs emphasized power through people rather than power over people. On implementation of resolutions agreed on in staff meetings, 11(37.9%) and 9(31%) disagreed and strongly disagreed meaning that staff meeting resolutions were rarely supported nor implemented. Most of the respondents also indicated that the DEO rarely consulted subordinates to get their opinions on various issues. This was evident by 8(27.6%) and 15(51.75%) who disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively. A total of 12(41.4%) and 5(17.25%) disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively that the DEO encouraged use of teams to plan and implement strategies for improvement. This showed that teamwork was an elusive component in most District Education Offices.

The next set of questionnaire items captured elements of autocratic leadership. Respondents were asked to indicate whether the DEO unilaterally made decisions without consulting

concerned officers. On this, 8(27.6%) and 14(48.3%) strongly agreed and agreed respectively. It was also noted that 9(31%) and 10(34.5%) strongly agreed and agreed respectively that the DEOs rarely accepted advice and criticism from members. The respondents were also of the opinion that the DEO tended to dictate the work methods and processes in the departments irrespective of the departmental work plans. This was evidenced by 10(34.5%) and 8(27.6%) who strongly agreed and agreed respectively. This revealed that autocratic leadership style was dominant in most District Education offices since the DEOs unilaterally made decisions and rarely accepted advice and criticism from members of staff. However, there was little room for other leadership approaches as earlier outlined. The findings on leadership styles of DEOs are presented in the table below.

Table 2. Leadership styles of DEOs.

S/No.	Leadership styles	Frequencies & percentages	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	The DEO gives a free hand to officers to plan and carry out their daily activities with minimal supervision.	Freq. %	2 6.9	3 10.35	4 13.8	20 69
2	Officers are self directed and report for duty and leave at their own pleasure having satisfactorily completed their daily workload.	Freq. %	2 6.9	5 17.25	7 24.15	15 51.75
3	DEO emphasizes power through people rather than power over people	Freq. %	5 17.5	8 27.6	12 41.4	4 13.8
4	Resolutions agreed on in the staff meetings /briefs are fully supported and implemented	Freq. %	3 10.35	6 20.7	11 37.95	9 31
5	The DEO widely consults subordinates and goes by the opinion of the majority	Freq. %	2 6.9	4 13.8	8 27.6	15 51.75
6	The DEO encourages use of teams to plan and implement strategies for improvement	Freq. %	3 10.35	9 31	12 41.4	5 17.25
7	The DEO unilaterally makes decisions and rarely consults concerned officers.	Freq. %	8 27.6	14 48.3	2 6.9	5 17.25
8	The DEO rarely accepts advice and criticism from members.	Freq. %	9 31	10 34.5	4 13.8	6 20.7
9	The DEO dictates the work methods and processes in departments.	Freq. %	10 34.5	8 27.6	5 17.25	6 20.7

3. Perception of the DQASOs on leadership styles employed by the DEOs in management of Education in Kenya

The perception of DQASOs on leadership styles of DEOs was captured through a set of items on the questionnaire. It was noted that most respondents disagreed with the fact that departments were fully functional and autonomous in decision making. A total of 10(34.5%) and 8(27.6%) disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively as compared to 2(6.9%) and 9(31.05%) who strongly agreed and agreed respectively. This meant that the DEO manipulated and determined decision making and activities in various departments and therefore there was no room for involvement of other staff members

On whether communication in various DEO's offices was open and fluid, the majority of respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed as indicated by 10(34.5%) and 8(27.6%) respondents respectively. Asked whether the DEO had created an environment that was safe, supportive and conducive to working, 7(24.15%) and 13(44.85%) disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively with a minority agreeing. This meant that the DEOs were perceived to be unsupportive and never provided a conducive and safe environment that motivated the staff. Majority of the respondents indicated that the DEO did not utilize the AIE budget to facilitate quality assurance and standards programmes in the District, 9(31.05%) and 10(34.5%) respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively. No respondent strongly agreed with the statement thus a clear indicator that the DEOs were not committed to supporting quality assurance and standards programmes in most Districts. The study established that the DEO's personal traits greatly influenced their leadership styles. This was shown by 14(48.3%) and 9(31.05%) who strongly agreed and agreed respectively. Only 3(10.35%) disagreed with the same proportion strongly disagreeing. This meant that there was need to train the DEOs on prudent management approaches and principles as opposed to personal tendencies and traits. Findings on perception of the DQASOs on leadership styles employed by the DEOs in management of Education in Kenya are summarized in table 3.1 below.

Table 3. Perceptions of DQASOs on DEO'S leadership styles.

S/No.	Perceptions	Frequencies & percentages	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	Departments are fully functional and autonomous in decision making	Freq. %	2 6.9	9 31.05	10 34.5	8 27.6
2	Communication in your office is open and fluid	Freq. %	5 17.25	6 20.7	10 34.5	8 27.6
3	The DEO has created an environment that is safe, supportive and conducive to working	Freq. %	3 10.35	6 20.7	7 24.15	13 44.85
4	The DEO utilizes the AIE budget to facilitate Quality Assurance and Standards programmes in the district	Freq. %	0 0	10 34.5	9 31.05	10 34.5
5	The DEO's personal traits greatly influenced their leadership styles	Freq. %	14 48.3	9 31.05	3 10.35	3 10.35

Discussions

The purpose of this study was to establish the perception of District Quality Assurance and Standards Officers on leadership styles of District Education Officers in Kenya. In addressing the research objective, the study revealed that there was low participation by female officers accounted for by the fact that there were fewer female officers in this cadre and the nature of the job limited them as many women prefer working close to their homes and families. There are varied reasons for this disparity in management. This may be attributed to the disproportional academic achievement of males and females where boys tend to outshine girls at primary and secondary school levels as evident in the national exams. This minimizes the female chances in higher training and by extension in the management of institutions. Another reason could be that females fear responsibilities due to the nature of their roles at home as mothers and where they could prefer to spend little time at work and more time at home. Lastly the disparity could

be attributed to the biasness of the appointing authority. However, the female officers who participated formed a representative sample.

The established that Laizzes faire and democratic types of leadership styles were least practiced in most District Education offices. Resolutions made during staff meetings were rarely supported nor implemented. The DEO rarely consulted subordinates to get their opinion on various issues and teamwork was never embraced as a strategy for improvement. Doyle and Wells, (1996) retaliates that employee satisfaction, motivation, morale and self-esteem are positively affected by involvement in decision making and implementation. Autocratic leadership has been shown to be detrimental in attainment of institutional culture and collective responsibility hence creating disharmony, suspicion and mistrust. Democratic leadership style is probably the most popular leadership style in the 21st century management arena. It's a style that remains popular due to the positive reaction employees have towards it as observes Oate, (2010).

The study revealed major communication breakdown between the DEO and the staff in most education offices. Effective organizational communication is critical to actively engage employees, foster trust and respect, and promote productivity'. SHRM's 2008 job Satisfaction survey report noted that communication between employees and senior management is among the top five very important aspects of employee job satisfaction. From the findings above the study indicated clearly that resources are not utilization does not add value to the organization. Prince, (2005) observed that a leader needs to utilize resources to add value to the organization. Research shows that a leader's financial style has a greater effect on an organization's success or failure than other corporate or external factors. The finding of the study shows that personal traits had an influence on leadership styles of DEOs. Charan, (2007) noted that integrity and character were personal traits that can affect leadership. Wehrich & Koontz, (1994) reteriates that most of the leadership traits are patterns of behavior which may not have any relationship with the actual instances of leadership. However, Okumbe, (2008) advocates for a combination of personality traits and leader behavior which gives leadership style that contributes significantly to the prediction of performance. This implies that a blend of personal traits and leader's behavior can result to better performance in management.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to establish the perceptions of DQASOs on the leadership styles of DEOs in Kenya in management of Education. This was systematically carried out and data presented and analyzed accordingly. The summary of the findings are stated below:

1. The DQASOs had adequate work experience and academic qualifications to provide credible information required for the study.
2. Laizzes faire type of leadership style was least practiced in most District Education offices.
3. Democratic leadership style was least practiced in the District Education offices since resolutions made during staff meetings were rarely supported nor implemented. The DEO rarely consulted subordinates to get their opinion on various issues and teamwork was rarely embraced as a strategy for improvement.
4. Autocratic leadership style was dominant in most District Education offices since the DEOs unilaterally made decisions and rarely accepted advice and criticism from members of staff. There was little room for other leadership approaches.
5. The DEO manipulated and determined decision making and activities in various departments and therefore there was no room for involvement of other staff members.

6. There was major communication breakdown between the DEO and the staff in most education offices.
7. The DEOs were perceived to be unsupportive and rarely provided a conducive environment that motivated the staff.
8. The DEOs were not committed to supporting quality assurance and standards programmes in most Districts.
9. The DEOs' personal traits greatly influenced their leadership styles.

Conclusions

Performance of the academic institutions in meeting the goals and objectives of education in Kenya relies heavily on the type of leadership that prevails in the institutions. This therefore means the top management must lead by example and so the leadership of the DEO is important. The challenges of the 21st century call for consulted efforts by both the leader and the subordinates through consultation and involvement in decision making so as to meet the goals of education and to drive the sector towards meeting the vision 2030 and the Millennium Development Goals. A shift from the traditional leadership styles is a prerequisite remedy to leadership challenges facing managers today.

From the above findings, the following recommendations were made:

- The DEOs' should integrate and employ varied leadership styles in management of education.
- The DEOs' should involve other staff members in decision making in various departments.
- Clear communication channels between DEOs and staff should be established;
- The DEOs' should be supportive and provide a conducive environment for staff motivation.
- The DEOs' should support Quality Assurance and Standards Programmes in the Districts.
- The DEOs' should delink their personal traits from office management.

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Advised by Laima Railienė, University of Šiauliai, Lithuania

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<i>Emmily Mugasia Sitati</i>	Senior Quality Assurance and Standards Officer, Ministry of Education, P.O. Box, 2490-50100, Kakamega, 137 -50100 Kakamega, Kenya. E-mail: emmilymugasia@yahoo.com
<i>Anne A. Ngaira</i>	Senior Quality Assurance and Standards Officer, Ministry of Education, P.O. Box, 2490-50100, Kakamega, 137 -50100 Kakamega, Kenya.
<i>Clarice W. Mwita</i>	Senior Quality Assurance and Standards Officer, Ministry of Education, P.O. Box, 2490-50100, Kakamega, 137 -50100 Kakamega, Kenya.
<i>Wilson Amolo</i>	Senior Quality Assurance and Standards Officer, Ministry of Education, P.O. Box, 2490-50100, Kakamega, 137 -50100 Kakamega, Kenya.
<i>Maurice L. Akala</i>	Senior Quality Assurance and Standards Officer, Ministry of Education, P.O. Box, 2490-50100, Kakamega, 137 -50100 Kakamega, Kenya. E-mail: akalamoris@yahoo.com
<i>Willaerd Ngaira</i>	Senior Quality Assurance and Standards Officer, Ministry of Education, P.O. Box, 2490-50100, Kakamega, 137 -50100 Kakamega, Kenya.