

Research Article

Types of Leadership Styles by Principals and Academic Performance in Public Secondary Schools in Eldoret Municipality

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Received: June 12, 2024

Accepted: June 30, 2024

Published: July 08, 2024

Abstract

Effective leadership is essential for creating a conducive learning environment and maximizing teacher satisfaction and performance. By understanding and responding to teachers' perceptions of head teachers' leadership styles, educational institutions can foster a culture of collaboration, innovation, and continuous improvement. It was on this premise that the study sought to evaluate the effect of the types of leadership styles used by principals on academic performance. The study was anchored on participative leadership theory. Survey research design was used in operationalizing the tools of data collection. The unit of observation was the secondary schools' heads teachers, deputy heads and the teachers. The total target population was 1566 respondents. Yamane formula was used to compute a suitable sample of 318 respondents. Questionnaires were used as the primary tool of data collection. Ethical issues and consideration were observed in the process of data collection. The survey questionnaire was used to collect data and validity and reliability was ensured by use of Cronbach's scales. Data was coded and analysed both through descriptive statistics and regression. Construct validity and reliability was used to validate the tool. Before the data collection exercise, all ethical issues were handled. Quantitative data was coded and entered into SPSS for analysis. Means, standard deviations, percentages and inferential statistics were then used in interpreting the results. The findings revealed that respondents generally agree that democratic leadership fosters a sense of ownership among team members, as indicated. The types of leadership styles play a crucial role in shaping the academic outcomes of students in public secondary schools. By embracing transformational and democratic leadership approaches and mitigating autocratic and laissez-faire tendencies, educational institutions can create environments conducive to student success. Continued research and professional development efforts are essential to further understand and enhance the impact of leadership on academic performance.

Keywords: Types of Leadership Styles, Secondary School Principals, Academic Performance.

Introduction

Participatory management has long been acknowledged as essential for enhancing school effectiveness. Consequently, schools must adopt a flexible organizational structure to swiftly adapt to changing circumstances (Somech and Bogler, 2002). As a primary strategy for school improvement, participatory management was prominently highlighted in reforms emphasizing school-based management (Somech and Bogler, 2002). Experts regard participative management as the most effective management strategy. Therefore, research, policies, and implementations concerning participatory decision-making in schools remain a key focus (Smylie, 1992; Smylie *et al.*, 1996; Somech and Bogler, 2002). According to Miller and Monge (1986), participation in decision-making processes within organizations can be categorized along a spectrum that ranges from delegation to joint decision-making. Similarly, Wagner and Gooding (1987) describe participative leadership as the shared influence on decision-making between superiors and subordinates within a hierarchy. From this perspective, participative management emphasizes distributing decision-making authority and sharing power.

The effectiveness of schools is influenced by their administration and management by head teachers (Early and Weindling, 2004). Growing expectations and pressure from parents and other stakeholders have made school management and administration more challenging. Active participation by parents, teachers,

community members, and learners is essential for good school governance. This participation can be direct or through representation, ensuring that all stakeholders feel included. Strategic management is necessary, where each school determines its direction by considering its current strategic position, external influences, and stakeholder expectations. School leadership must ensure a clear and shared sense of direction (Waters *et al.*, 2003).

Objective of the Study

The objective of the study is to evaluate the effect of the types of leadership styles used by principals on academic performance in public secondary schools in Eldoret municipality.

Literature Review

The participants' views on the relationship between autocratic leadership and school performance suggest that schools practicing autocratic leadership often struggle to achieve high performance (Sashkin, 2003). In these situations, the head teachers, acting as supervisors, direct teachers on what to do, how to do it, and closely monitor them to ensure tasks are completed as required. Despite this, it is common to find staff members who know what to do but choose not to do it. However, the study primarily focuses on autocratic leadership. Harris (2003) argues that to enhance capacity in schools, all teachers must be given opportunities to maximize their potential, which is crucial for driving change and development. Their research highlights the significance of leadership quality in influencing teacher motivation and the quality of classroom teaching and learning. However, the study focused solely on the autocratic leadership style and did not explore other leadership styles of principals or their impact on academic performance in schools. In this situation, the manager delegates almost all authority and control to subordinates, resulting in an absence of a clear authority figure within the organization. O'Hanlon and Clifton (2004) found in their research that the laissez-faire leadership style positively impacts various school learning environments. Their study examined the relationship between laissez-faire leadership behaviors of principals and the learning environments in Australian public secondary schools. They found that laissez-faire leadership had a positive influence on the school learning environment and, in some cases, was more effective than other leadership styles. However, the success of this leadership style in Australian public secondary schools does not necessarily mean it would be equally successful in Kenya.

Burns (1978) described transformational leadership as a process in which leaders and followers engage in a mutual effort to elevate each other's motivation and morality. He asserted that transformational leadership could help elevate followers' needs, aligning with Maslow's (1954) hierarchy of needs. Building on Burns' theory, Bass (1985) further developed the concept by stating that a leader motivates individuals to exceed their initial expectations. This is achieved by heightening their awareness of the significance of goals and the methods to achieve them. Bass emphasized that leaders inspire followers to transcend personal interests for the benefit of the team or organization, fostering a sense of trust, admiration, loyalty, and respect towards the leader. Consequently, followers are motivated to surpass their perceived capabilities. Hellriege *et al.*, (1992) concur, noting that transformational leaders provide exceptional motivation by appealing to team members' higher ideals and moral values, encouraging innovative problem-solving approaches.

Theoretical Framework

Participative leadership theory has been discussed and developed by various scholars over the years. One key author who has significantly contributed to this field is Victor H. Vroom. Vroom, along with Philip W. Yetton, developed the Vroom-Yetton contingency model in 1973, which is a normative model that determines the extent to which leaders should involve their subordinates in decision-making. Participative leadership theory, often synonymous with participatory management, centers on the idea that involving employees in decision-making processes leads to better outcomes. This theory advocates for a leadership style where leaders share decision-making authority with their subordinates, thereby fostering a collaborative and inclusive work environment. These works are supported by Miller and Monge (1985) who have conceptualized participation as ranging from delegation to joint decision-making, with an emphasis on joint decision-making as the core of participation.

Smylie (1992) focused on the application of participative decision-making in educational settings, emphasizing its potential to improve school effectiveness and teacher motivation. While, Somech and Bogler, (2002) provided extensive research on participatory management, particularly in schools, highlighting its role in school improvement and its necessity for a flexible organizational structure. Effective implementation requires a cultural shift and strong commitment from all levels of the organization. Participative leadership theory is highly relevant to participatory management in public secondary schools, particularly in relation to

academic performance: By involving teachers, students, and other stakeholders in decision-making, schools can develop more effective strategies and policies that directly impact academic performance. Further, participation in school management decisions can lead to increased teacher motivation, job satisfaction, and retention, all of which contribute to a more positive learning environment. Diverse perspectives from teachers, administrators, and students can lead to more comprehensive and effective solutions to educational challenges. Teachers who are involved in decision-making processes are likely to experience greater professional growth, which can translate to improved teaching practices and student outcomes. A participative approach fosters a democratic and inclusive school culture, encouraging student engagement and responsibility, which can positively influence academic performance. Therefore, participative leadership theory offers a robust framework for enhancing the effectiveness of public secondary schools through inclusive decision-making processes. Its application can lead to improved academic performance by fostering a collaborative, motivated, and professionally developed teaching staff, thereby creating a more democratic and effective educational environment.

Materials and Methods

This study employed a survey method to explore the correlation between leadership styles of principals' and academic performance in schools. According to Orodho and Kombo (2002), survey designs are utilized in preliminary and exploratory studies to collect, summarize, present, and interpret information for clarification purposes. According to Borg and Gall (1989) a study population as a larger collection of all subjects from where a sample is drawn. The unit of observation therefore will be the 33 principals in secondary schools, 33 deputy principals and the 1500 teachers. Purposive sampling was used to target the all the principals and their deputies while the proportionate sampling will be used to distribute the teacher sample into their respective schools. Simple random sampling was then be used to sample the teacher in their schools to give each an equal chance to participate in the study. To determine the sample from the population, Yamane (1967) sample size determination formula to select 318 respondents from the study population. These questionnaires were designed to gather data on participants' demographic characteristics and the leadership traits of the head teacher. A pilot study therefore was undertaken in the neighbouring Kapsabet municipality which bore similar characteristics like those of Eldoret municipality with 10% of the sample size (32 respondents) being the targeted respondents (Kathuri and Pals, 1993).

Before data was collected from the respondents, an introduction letter was sought from the Moi University Post Graduate School to allow for data collection. The introduction letter was used to seek for a research permit from National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation to allow for data collection from schools. After permission was granted by National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation, questionnaires were be personally administered by the researcher by making arrangements by the various school principals. Quantitative data collected was coded, entered into the statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) then analysed using both descriptively, through frequencies, percentages, means and standard deviations, and through regression analysis.

Descriptive Statistics

Before delving into inferential statistics, the initial step involved descriptive analysis of the data. It was crucial to elucidate the interpretation of mean values throughout the study. Respondents utilized a 5-point Likert scale, with ranges for interpretation as follows: 4.3-5=Strongly Disagree; 3.5-4.2=Disagree; 2.6-3.4=Undecided; 1.9-2.6=Agree; and 1-1.8=Strongly Agree (Nemoto and Beglar, 2014; Joshi *et al.*, 2015). Additionally, alongside mean values, the standard deviation for each item was reported to assess the level of variation, indicating the extent of agreement or disagreement among respondents regarding each variable.

Types of Leadership Styles Used on Academic Performance

The study sought to establish the effect of types of leadership styles used by principals' and their effect on academic performance and the findings were mentioned in Table 1.

Table 1 observes that on average, respondents perceive that their principal encourages active participation in decision-making, as indicated by a mean score of 3.95. The relatively low standard deviation (1.146) suggests that responses are clustered closely around the mean, indicating a moderate to high level of agreement among respondents. Respondents perceive that their leader places importance on shared responsibility and decision-making, though slightly lower than the encouragement from principals. The higher standard deviation (1.299) indicates more variability in responses compared to the first statement. This statement also suggests that leaders value input and aim for collective agreement in decision-making, with a mean score of 3.71. The standard deviation (1.201) indicates moderate variability in responses.

Respondents generally agree that participatory leadership enhances team morale, although with a slightly lower mean score of 3.69 compared to previous statements. The higher standard deviation (1.347) suggests more variability in how team morale is perceived to be affected by participatory leadership. There is a perception that collective leadership is effective for making quick decisions during crises, with a mean score of 3.61. The relatively low standard deviation (1.111) indicates more agreement among respondents on this statement compared to others. Respondents generally agree that democratic leadership fosters a sense of ownership among team members, as indicated by a mean score of 3.59. The standard deviation (1.269) suggests moderate variability in how strongly this effect is perceived. The data generally indicate that respondents value leadership styles that involve participatory and democratic decision-making processes. There is moderate variability in responses across all statements, suggesting that while there is generally agreement, individual perceptions and experiences vary. The mean scores range from 3.59 to 3.95, indicating a moderately positive perception of leadership styles that encourage participation and shared decision-making.

Table 1. Types of leadership styles used by principals’.

Statements	N	Min	Max	Mean	SD
My principal encourages team members to actively participate in decision-making processes.	318	1	5	3.95	1.146
My leader emphasizes shared responsibility and decision-making among team members.	318	1	5	3.78	1.299
My leader values input from team members and makes decisions based on collective agreement.	318	1	5	3.71	1.201
In my experience, participatory leadership enhances team morale.	318	1	5	3.69	1.347
In a crisis situation, collective leadership is effective for making quick decisions.	318	1	5	3.61	1.111
Democratic leadership style fosters a sense of ownership among team members.	318	1	5	3.59	1.269

Linear Regression

The study ran the model fitting summary to establish how well the data set fits into the model before adapting the parameter estimates as shown in Table 2, 3 and 4.

Linear Regression for Leadership Styles Used on Academic Performance

Before linear regression analysis inferential statics were generated, tests of assumptions were computed ensure that the linear regression model was valid and the results were reliable as shown in Figure 1 and 2.

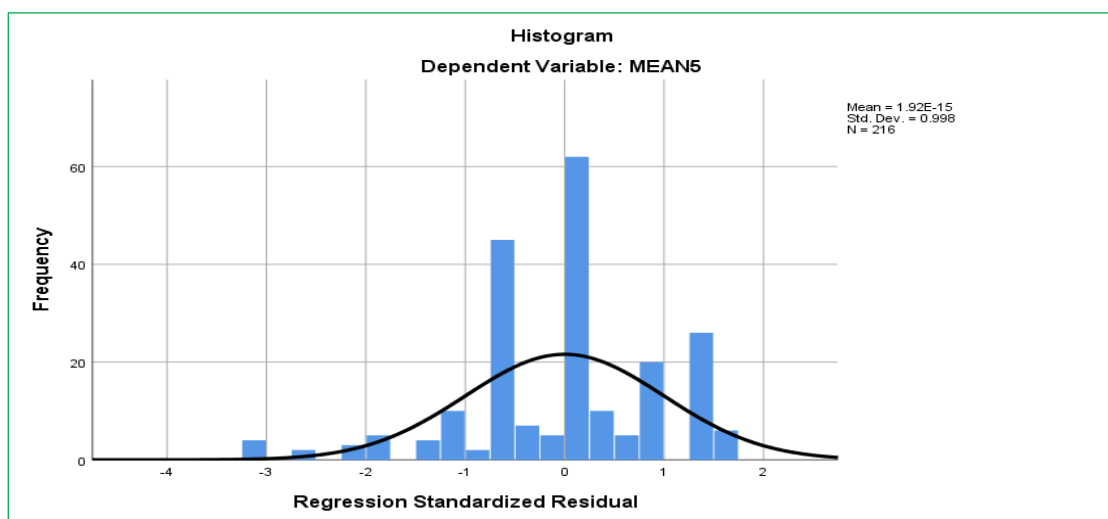


Figure 1. Histogram test for leadership styles and academic performance.

Figure 1 for assessing assumptions through histograms involves examining whether the distribution of data appears approximately normal or symmetric without significant skewness or distortion. The histogram of residuals displaying a normal distribution shape confirms that the assumption is satisfied, as depicted in Figure 2.

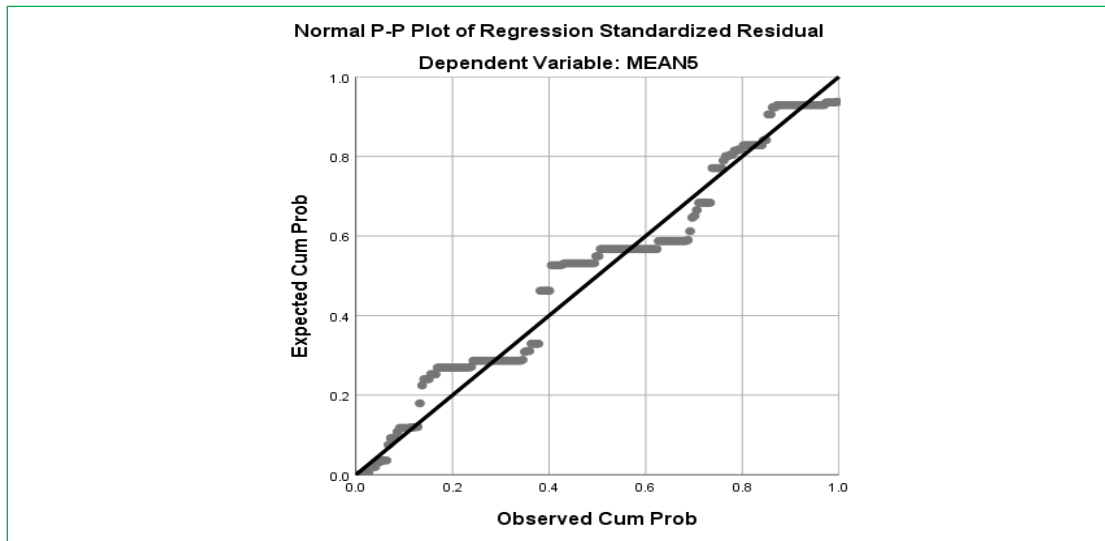


Figure 2. P-P test for leadership styles and academic performance.

A P-P plot offers a broad visual depiction of the correlation between two variables. A relationship is considered linear when one variable increases at a rate that is roughly equivalent to the change of one unit in the other variable. A general rule of thumb for assessing linearity in a P-P plot line should run at almost 45 degrees from left to right. This criterion was achieved as shown in the P-P plot results. Since the normality assumption tests were met, the linear regression computations were done as shown in Tables 2, 3 and 4.

Table 2. Collinearity diagnostics for leadership styles.

Model	Dimension	Eigenvalue	Condition index	Variance proportions	
				(Constant)	SI
1	1	1.948	1.000	.03	.03
	2	0.052	6.111	.97	.97

a. Dependent variable: PP

Table 2 observes that the first dimension has a high eigenvalue (1.948) and a low condition index (1.000), suggesting it captures most of the variance and does not indicate collinearity. The second dimension has a very low eigenvalue (0.052) and a high condition index (6.111), indicating it captures very little variance but might indicate collinearity problems if the condition index were higher. The variance proportions for both dimensions are distributed as 3% in dimension 1 and 97% in dimension 2. This means nearly all the variance for the constant and leadership styles is captured in the second dimension. The collinearity diagnostics therefore suggests that there is potential for collinearity in the model since most of the variance is captured by the second dimension, which has a higher condition index (though not excessively high). In practice, you would look for condition indices greater than 15-30 and high variance proportions in those dimensions to flag serious collinearity issues. Here, while the condition index of 6.111 is not extreme, the distribution of variance should still be noted.

The study conducted a linear regression analysis to help make inferences from the descriptive analysis between leadership styles influence academic performance in Eldoret municipality. The following statistics were produced as shown in tables 3, 4 and 5.

Table 3. ANOVA for leadership styles.

Model		Sum of squares	Df	Mean square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	345.180	1	345.180	8584.911	.000 ^b
	Residual	8.604	214	.040		
	Total	353.785	215			

a. Dependent variable: academic performance

b. Predictors: (constant), leadership styles

Table 3 indicates that the ANOVA (the F-statistics) measures the overall significance of the model. It provides information levels of variability within the regression model and hence forms a basis for tests of significance. The results confirm that the regression model is significant for the data as captured by the ANOVA (F-

statistic) value of 8584.911 and is associated probability value of 0.000(F= 8584.911, p<0.05) that was found to be significant at 5% significant level.

Table 4. Model summary for leadership styles.

Model	R	R square	Adjusted R square	Std. Error of the estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.988 ^a	.976	.976	.20052	1.129
a. Predictors: (constant), leadership styles					
b. Dependent variable: academic performance					

Table 4 shows that R (correlation coefficient) value was found to be 0.988, indicating a very strong positive correlation between leadership styles and academic performance. This suggests that as leadership styles improve, academic performance tends to improve as well. R square (coefficient of determination) value was found to be 0.976, meaning that 97.6% of the variance in academic performance can be explained by leadership styles. This indicates a very high level of explanatory power of the model.

Adjusted R square value is 0.976, which is almost identical to the R square value. This adjusted value accounts for the number of predictors in the model, and since there's only one predictor, it remains very close to the R square value. This confirms that the model is a good fit for the data. Std. error of the estimate value is 0.20052. This statistic measures the average distance that the observed values fall from the regression line. A smaller value indicates a better fit of the model to the data. Given the high R square value, this standard error is relatively low, which supports the goodness of fit of the model. Durbin-Watson = 1.129: This value is between 1 to 2, indicating no significant autocorrelation in the residuals. It suggests that the residuals are independent.

Overall, the model using leadership styles to predict academic performance seems to be very effective, explaining a large proportion of the variance in academic performance hence, showing a model with a good fit at 97.6% (Cohen, 1988) with no significant issues of autocorrelation in the residuals. This suggests that leadership styles is a strong predictor of academic performance in this analysis.

Table 5. Coefficients of regression for leadership styles.

Model		Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	.048	.043		1.120	.264	1.000	1.000
	SI	1.032	.011	.988	92.655	.000		
a. Dependent variable: academic performance								

Table 5 represents the coefficient of regression where interpretation is made at the unassimilated coefficients that depicts the estimated coefficients which show the size or the magnitude of the change and the t-statistics which tests the statistical significance of the individual regression coefficient as compared to the p-value. The unstandardized coefficient for the predictor variable (leadership styles) is 1.032. This means that for each unit increase in leadership styles, academic performance increases by 1.032 units. The standard error for the unstandardized coefficient is 0.011. This indicates the level of accuracy of the coefficient estimate. The standardized coefficient is 0.988. This standardized value allows for comparison between different variables. A beta of 0.988 indicates a very strong positive relationship between leadership styles and academic performance.

The t-statistic for leadership styles is 92.655. This measures how many standard deviations the coefficient is away from 0. A high t-value indicates that the coefficient is significantly different from 0. Since the p-value <0.05 at 5% level of significance, the study concludes that leadership styles practices have a significant positive effect on academic performance in Eldoret municipality. Hence, the null hypothesis, there is no significant effect between the leadership styles practices and academic performance in Eldoret municipality, was rejected since $p < 0.05$. And the alternative hypothesis, leadership styles practices has a significant positive effect on academic performance in Eldoret Municipality adopted.

The regression equation for predicting academic performance in Eldoret municipality from leadership styles practices was $Y = 0.048 + 1.032X$ implying that leadership styles practices have significant positive effect on academic performance in Eldoret municipality ($B = 0.583, p < 0.05$). The collinearity statistics indicate that the tolerance value is 1.000. Tolerance values range from 0 to 1, where a value close to 1 suggests that there is

little multicollinearity between the predictor variables while VIF values above 10 may indicate high multicollinearity. Therefore, the collinearity statistics (Tolerance = 1.000, VIF = 1.000) suggest there are no multicollinearity issues in this model.

Conclusion

Based on the study objective, the study concludes that the various types of leadership styles used in schools in Eldoret municipality are significant positive predictors of academic performance in public secondary schools in Eldoret municipality.

Recommendations

The type of leadership styles adopted by principals play a crucial role in shaping the academic outcomes of students in public secondary schools. By embracing transformational and democratic leadership approaches and mitigating autocratic and laissez-faire tendencies, educational institutions can create environments conducive to student success. Continued research and professional development efforts are essential to further understand and enhance the impact of leadership on academic performance.

Transformational leadership focuses on inspiring and motivating followers to achieve common goals through charisma, vision, and intellectual stimulation. Studies suggest that transformational leadership positively correlates with academic performance due to its emphasis on innovation, creativity, and high expectations. Leaders who exhibit transformational traits tend to foster a supportive and intellectually stimulating environment conducive to learning. Hence, the study recommends that principals embrace transformational leadership styles if they have to inspire academic performance. Educational institutions should encourage and develop transformational leadership among academic leaders to enhance student engagement, motivation, and academic achievement.

Transactional leadership operates on a system of rewards and punishments to ensure compliance and performance. While transactional leadership can maintain order and discipline within academic settings, its effects on academic performance may vary. Research indicates that transactional leadership alone may not significantly influence academic outcomes but can complement other leadership styles, particularly in situations requiring clear directives and accountability. The study recommends that academic leaders should integrate elements of transactional leadership with other styles to provide structure and incentives while fostering a culture of academic excellence.

Adaptive leadership emphasizes flexibility, problem-solving, and resilience in navigating complex challenges and uncertainties. In academia, adaptive leaders effectively respond to evolving educational trends, technological advancements, and student needs. Research suggests that adaptive leadership fosters innovation, agility, and continuous improvement, thereby enhancing academic performance and organizational effectiveness. The study therefore recommends that academic leaders should embrace adaptive leadership practices to navigate the dynamic landscape of education, address emerging challenges, and drive sustainable improvements in academic performance.

Declarations

Acknowledgments: I am highly indebted to a number of people who assisted me to come up with this research project. I owe profound gratitude to my supervisor Prof. Jotham Ombisi Olembo and Dr. Joseph M. Malusu for their sacrifice of time and convenience to guide me throughout from the start to the end of the process and notwithstanding his tight schedules.

Author Contributions: Both authors contributed to the conception and design of the work, drafted the manuscript, revised it critically for important intellectual content, gave final approval to the version to be published and agreed to be accountable for all aspects of the work.

Conflict of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Consent to Publish: The authors agree to publish the paper in International Journal of Recent Innovations in Academic Research.

Data Availability Statement: The datasets used or analyzed during the current study are available from the corresponding author on reasonable request.

Funding: This research received no external funding.

Institutional Review Board Statement: This study does not include any access to identifiable private information.

Informed Consent Statement: Informed consent was obtained from all subjects involved in this study.

Research Content: The research content of manuscript is original and has not been published elsewhere.

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Citation: Cherobon Julia Kichwen and Otwerer Ombaso Ezekiel. 2024. Types of Leadership Styles by Principals and Academic Performance in Public Secondary Schools in Eldoret Municipality. *International Journal of Recent Innovations in Academic Research*, 8(7): 19-26.

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