

**HEAD TEACHERS' DEMOCRATIC LEADERSHIP STYLE: IT'S
INFLUENCE ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF INCLUSIVE
EDUCATION IN PUBLIC PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN UASIN GISHU
COUNTY, KENYA**

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ABSTRACT

Head teachers' task is crucial in inclusive education because of the central role they play in promoting participation among teachers to ensure that inclusion succeeds and to reduce underachievement particularly with children who might be perceived as having difficulties in learning. The purpose of this study therefore was to establish the influence of head teachers' democratic leadership style on the implementation of inclusive education in Uasin Gishu County, Kenya. The study was anchored on Lewin's leadership theory. The study adopted Concurrent triangulation design within the mixed method approach. The target population for the study comprised 4909 teachers in public primary schools and 464 senior teachers totaling up to 5373. The sample size comprised 491 teachers stratified sampled, 10 senior teachers systematically randomly sampled and a sample size of 501 was used. Data collection instruments were questionnaires and interview schedules. Content, construct and face validity was ensured by expert judgment. Reliability was ensured by Cronbach Alpha method and reliability coefficients were all above 0.7. Quantitative data was analyzed by descriptive statistics and inferential statistics such as Spearman Rank correlation and liner regression while Qualitative data was analyzed thematically. The results indicated that there is a statistically significant positive correlation between the head teachers' level of democratic leadership style and implementation of inclusive education ($n=368$; $\rho =.204$; $p <.05$). The study recommended that head teachers should be encouraged to employ democratic leadership styles on issues related to special needs education since democratic leadership style was revealed to be having positive correlation to implementation of inclusive education.

Keywords; implementation, inclusive, education, democratic, leadership

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

Any discussion about definition of inclusive education takes us back to the Salamanca statement and framework for Action UNESCO (1994) as a reference point. The statement re-affirms the right to education of every individual as enshrined in the (1948) Universal Declaration of Human rights and renews the pledge made by the world community at the (1990) Jomtiem World Conference on Education for All to ensure the right for all children regardless of their individual difference. United States of America being a country of diversity has had a long tradition of research and practices in special needs education in the form of inclusion (Mokter, 2014). An overview of inclusive education in the United States of America, Mokter (2014) established that inclusion strategies for students with mild to moderate disabilities have been successful.

Malaysia's move towards inclusion was given impetus by its participation in workshops and conferences set up under the auspices of the United Nations, UNESCO (1994). Inclusive education was introduced in the Education Act 1996 as part of the continuum of services available for children with special needs. Zalizan & Manisha (2014) study in Malaysia recommended that at the national and local levels, public awareness and acceptance of the ideas of equal opportunities for all children need to be strengthen through the media and websites of educational and social institutions. Louise's (2013) study in South Africa revealed that schools for the deaf do not foster inclusive education principles as many deaf learners' experience barriers to learning and development as identified in the White Paper 6 in the department of education.

In a report by the Human Network, a consortium of Non- Governmental Organizations working on human rights, it was noted that while Uganda promoted inclusive education, there were no special needs teachers and limited teaching aids which made it impossible for children with disabilities to get quality education. Kenya is a signatory to several international conventions and agreements and has ratified a number of them thus committing herself to the implementation of the recommendations there in (MOE, 2008). However, Ngesu (2012) established that there was an acute shortage of teaching and learning resources to cater for learning disability students in inclusive settings in Kenya. Lack of required training and qualifications were also reported by the study as a major challenge for inclusive education.

Leadership has a direct cause and effect relationship upon organizations' and their success. Leaders determine values culture, change, tolerance and employee's motivation (Giri & Santra, 2010). The influence leaders and managers have on the performance of their teams and ultimately their organizations cannot be understated. Leaders shape the way people think and behave. Leaders are viewed by others as role models and employees look around to see if their behavior is consistent with the organization's espoused values and philosophy (Boulter, 2010). Therefore, Head teachers' task is crucial in inclusive education because of the central role they play in promoting participation among teachers to ensure that inclusion succeeds and to reduce underachievement particularly with children who might be perceived as having difficulties in learning (Lindsay, 2011). Inclusion requires head teachers to accept the responsibility for creating schools in which all children can learn and feel they belong (Alhasan, 2014). Schools, head teachers and teachers at large therefore need to commit to the

transformation of their school community for the implementation of inclusive education to be successful (Savolainen, 2015). Its against this background that this study sought to investigate head teachers' democratic leadership style and its influence on the implementation of inclusive education in public primary schools in Kenya.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The mandate to achieve inclusive schooling implies that head teachers are expected to ensure that their schools are both excellent and equitable. Head teachers' leadership has a direct cause and effect relationship upon schools' and their success. The Kenya National Special Needs Education Policy (2009) provided a framework for the planning and implementation of special needs education devoid of all barriers that inhibit access to quality and relevant education. However, Uasin Gishu County experiences a problem of low access of children with special needs in regular public primary schools. An unpublished report by Uasin Gishu Curriculum Support Officer in charge of Special Needs Education (CSO, SNE), (2015) indicates that there are quite a number of challenged children who are out of school in Uasin Gishu County and this has derailed the achievement of EFA as enshrined in the Millennium Development Goals that was to be achieved in Kenya by 2015. It is against this background that the researcher was compelled to investigate the head teachers' democratic leadership styles and its influence on implementation of inclusive education in public primary schools in Uasin Gishu County, Kenya.

1.3 Theoretical Framework

The study was also grounded on Theory X and Theory Y of Douglas McGregor's (1950). McGregor's work was rooted in motivation theory alongside the works of Abraham Maslow, who created the hierarchy of needs. The two theories proposed by McGregor describe contrasting models of workforce motivation applied by managers in human resource management, organizational behavior, communication and organizational development.

Theory X explains the importance of heightened supervision, external rewards, and penalties, while Theory Y highlights the motivating role of job satisfaction and encourages workers to approach tasks without direct supervision. Management use of Theory X and Theory Y can affect employee motivation and productivity in different ways, and managers may choose to implement strategies from both theories into their practices. This theory can be compared with transformational and transactional leadership styles. Theory X can be compared with Transactional Leadership where managers need to rule by fear and consequences. In this style and theory, negative behavior is punished and employees are motivated through incentives. Theory Y and Transformational Leadership are found to be similar, because the theory and style supports the idea that managers work to encourage their workers. Leaders assume the best of their employees. They believe them to be trusting, respectful, and self-motivated. The leaders help to supply the followers with tool they need to excel (Odumeru & Ogbonna, 2013). Transformational leadership style works in the same manner with democratic leadership style. This theory was found relevant for this study as it captures the variables of the study. Transformational leaders raise the bar by appealing to higher ideals and values of followers. In doing so, they may model the values themselves and use charismatic methods to attract people to the values and to the leader (Ayman & Korabik 2010).

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

The notion of inclusive education was initially thought to be a concept in Nigeria educational system. However, inclusive education has since then witnessed some tremendous improvements in the last decade despite cultural, social-economic and political constraints (Eskay, 2009). A study conducted by Eskay & Angie (2013) on learners with disabilities in an inclusive education setting in Nigeria established that both the Nigerian government and school administrators have to deliberate on the implementation of the major issues in relation to identification and referral, unbiased assessment, least restrictive environment, funding and legal mandates.

Habashy (2015) in Egypt compared leadership styles among principals of governmental schools, private schools and international schools. A sample of (N=29) of 10 governmental school principals 9 private school principals and 10 international school principals comprised the participants of the study. Questionnaire was used as the main instrument in the study. The findings established that transformational leadership style was predominant style for all school principals in all three school types. The above reviewed study was conducted in Egypt not Kenya and it used questionnaire as the only data collection instrument hence it in-depth information from qualitative data. The current study bridged this gap by collecting both quantitative and qualitative data thereby adding literature to the existing body of knowledge.

Sourav (2013) examined teachers' perceptions of the impact of inclusion of learners with special educational needs on their classes and the practice of inclusive education in Botswana. Thirty-six teachers from six primary schools of the South -Central Region of Botswana were engaged in six focus group discussions. Focus group discussions were triangulated with document analysis, classroom observations and access-audit to get an insight about the school and classroom practices. Findings revealed that majority of the general education teachers was not familiar with the concept of inclusive education and did not fully support it. Teachers preferred to include learners with mild disabling conditions compared to learners with severe disabling conditions. Teachers primary concerns were inadequate training, lack of resources, and high student-teacher ratio as barriers to the successful implementation of inclusive education in Botswana. The above reviewed study adopted qualitative approach hence it lacked inferential statistics which could allow generalization. The current study bridged this gap in literature.

Omar and Kavale (2016) conducted a study to investigate the effect of leadership styles on school performance of the secondary schools in Somalia. The study utilized quantitative approach based on descriptive nature. 10 schools were targeted with a sample size comprising 10 school leaders and 79 teachers using Sloven's formula. The results indicated that principles who are using democratic leadership styles have their students and staff perform better than those who are using other styles. The reviewed study was conducted in secondary schools where students are all adolescents unlike the current study where majority of the learners are young primary school children.

In Tanzania, Machumu & Mafwimbo (2014) conducted a study to investigate the influence of leadership styles on teachers' job satisfaction. The study employed cross sectional research design with samples of 200 teachers from 20 selected primary schools. Interview, document analysis and questionnaires were used to collect data. The data was analyzed both qualitatively

and quantitatively using tables, frequencies and percentages. The above reviewed study employed cross sectional design hence it lacked in-depth information from qualitative data. The current study bridged this gap by employing a mixed method design to capture both quantitative and qualitative aspect of the study thereby adding literature to the existing body of knowledge.

Muriel, Ogoti, Jepkoech and Momanyi (2015) investigated the influence of head teachers' democratic leadership style on academic performance in public secondary schools in Marakwet, Kenya. The study adopted a descriptive survey design and targeted all secondary schools, head teachers, teachers and students in Marakwet County. The study adopted simple random sampling technique to get the sample size. Questionnaires, structured interviews and document analysis were the main instruments for data collection. Results indicated that head teachers who employ democratic leadership style had their schools perform much better in national examination (KCSE). The above reviewed study was conducted in secondary schools where students are a bit mature unlike the current study where majority of the learners are majorly young children.

Maina (2014) conducted a study in Kenya to investigate the influence of head teachers' leadership development on implementation of inclusive education in primary schools. The target population was 475 head teachers 7472 class teachers and 30 quality assurance standards officers. The sample size constituted 125 head teachers and 240 class teachers randomly selected from 5 districts in Thika municipality. It also included 12 quality assurance and standards officers and 8 KEMI trainers who were purposively sampled. The research utilized a mixed method approach and the convergent parallel design was adopted. The study concluded that head teachers' leadership development programs were not comprehensive and not well integrated to effectively facilitate the implementation of inclusive education. The above reviewed study was conducted in Thika but not Uasin Gishu. The current study bridged this gap in literature.

Onyuka, (2014) investigated school-based factors influencing implementation of inclusive education in Kenya. The study adopted a descriptive survey design to help in obtaining variables of the study. The study targeted 11 schools offering inclusive education and purposively sampled 10 head teachers and 80 class teachers. The study instruments included questionnaires and observation schedule. The findings established that teaching and learning materials needed for the implementation of inclusive education were quite inadequate and totally lacking in some instances. The above reviewed study only analyzed data in terms of tables, pie-charts and frequencies hence it lacked inferential findings which could allow for generalization. The study also lacked in-depth information from qualitative data. The current study bridged these gaps by collecting both quantitative data and qualitative data for analysis thereby adding literature to the existing body of knowledge.

Kituyii, Musao and Thunguri (2015) conducted a study in Kenya to investigate the influence of decolonizing leadership practices on students' performance in schools. The study involved 20 teachers including the principals and deputy principals as well as 50 students and 6 support staff bringing the sample size to be 76 participants purposively sampled. The study was qualitative in nature and adopted the case study research design. Data was collected by the use of structured and semi structured interviews and observations as well as document analysis.

The findings indicated that a hybrid of transformative and participative leadership styles is the ideal option to enhance students' performance. The above reviewed study was conducted in secondary schools leaving a literature gap in primary. The current study bridged this gap by conducting a study in primary schools thereby filling gap in literature.

From the reviewed studies, it is evident that most of them were carried out in contexts that were different from the primary school level contexts. Moreover, in majority of studies, the approaches used were either qualitative or quantitative. The present study filled in these gaps in literature by focusing on head teachers' democratic leadership style and its influence on implementation of inclusive education in primary schools in Kenya.

3.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A research design is the arrangement of conditions for collection and analysis of data in a manner that aims to combine relevance to the research purpose with economy in procedure (Kothari, 2011). It is a plan, structure and strategy of investigation conceived so as to obtain answers to research questions. The study adopted concurrent triangulation design within the mixed method approach. The design converges or merges quantitative and qualitative data in order to provide a comprehensive analysis of the research problem. In this design, the investigator typically collects both forms of data at roughly the same time and then integrates the information in the interpretation of the overall results (Creswell, 2014). Contradictions or incongruent findings are explained or further probed in this design. The purpose of this design is to obtain different but complementary data on the same topic. The intent in using this design is to bring together the differing strengths and non-overlapping weaknesses of quantitative methods with those of qualitative methods (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). The design was found appropriate for this study because the study directly compared and contrasted quantitative statistical results with qualitative findings. The design is presented in Figure 3.0

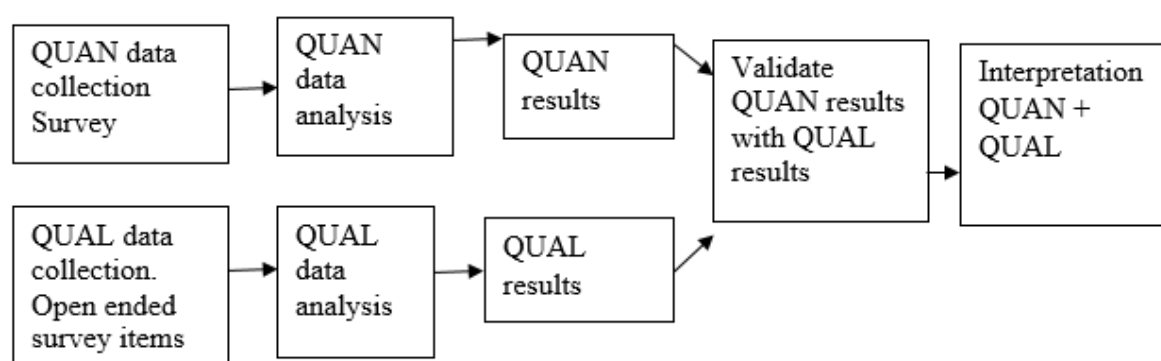


Figure 3.0 Concurrent Triangulation Design: Source; Creswell, 2014)

3.1 Study Participants

Population means all objects and people who share one or some common quality in a special geographical scale, Cooper and Schindler (2009). It is a complete set of individuals, cases or objects with some common characteristics that differentiate it from other population, while target population is the population to which the researcher wants to generalize the results of the study (Orodho, 2005). The target population for the study was 5373 teachers consisting of

491 primary school teachers and 464 senior teachers in primary schools in Uasin Gishu County, Kenya.

3.2 Research Instruments

Both Questionnaire and Interviews were used to collect data. A Questionnaire was used to collect quantitative data. The questionnaires were administered to the primary school teachers since they are directly involved in the implementation of inclusive education in classroom. Likert's scale was used where the respondents were asked to make a choice based on their opinion whether they Strongly Agreed, Agree, Neutral Disagree or Strongly Disagree based on the question asked. The questionnaires had two parts; the first with closed questions which sought to gather demographic information, and the second with closed questions which sought to establish opinions from respondents and gather more of the quantitative data about head teachers' democratic leadership style and its influence on implementation of inclusive education in primary schools.

In addition, semi structured interviews were used to collect qualitative data from some senior teachers. This was because the number that was sampled under this group was manageable. The interview schedule was appropriate for the study as it provided in-depth information and a detailed understanding of the issue under research. The information on the interview schedule was tape recorded for validity purposes. The researcher ensured validity of questionnaires through expert judgment that is with the help of experts from Masinde Muliro University. Moreover, the items in the questionnaire were made clearer and also arranged from simple to complex. Reliability of the questionnaire was tested using Cronbach's alpha. In the interpretation of the reliability results, the closer Cronbach's alpha coefficient is to 1.0, the greater the internal consistency of the items in the scale. According to (Oso and Onen, 2014), a questionnaire has good internal consistency if the Cronbach's alpha coefficient of a scale is above 0.6 but not more than .9. All the subscales reached a threshold and were within the range and therefore considered reliable.

4.0 FINDINGS

The study examined head teachers' democratic leadership style and its influence on implementation of inclusive education. A Likert scaled of democratic leadership indicators questionnaire was used to seek opinions of the teacher respondents on leadership style of their head teacher. Spearman rank order correlation coefficient was computed to test null hypotheses that, "there is no significant influence of head teachers' level of democratic leadership style on the level of implementation of inclusive education in public primary schools". The level of the head teacher's democratic leadership orientation is the independent variables and the level of inclusive education implementation is dependent variable. Both democratic leadership scale was measured in ordinal scale computed from the teachers' ratings on the level of democratic leadership orientation. The SPSS output Table 4.8 shows the correlation results.

Table 4.0: Correlation between the Level of Democratic Leadership Orientation and the Level of Implementation.

			Democratic Leadership	Implementation of Inclusive Education
Spearman's rho	Democratic Leadership	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.204**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	368	368
	Implementation of Inclusive Education	Correlation Coefficient	.204**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	368	368

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

It is evident from the correlation results output that there is a statistically significant positive correlation between the head teachers’ level of democratic leadership style and implementation of inclusive education (n=368; rho =.204; p <.05). Since the p-value was less than .05, the null hypothesis which stated that “There is no statistically significant relationship between the level of democratic leadership style and implementation of inclusive education” was rejected. It is therefore concluded that there is significant positive relationship between the level of democratic leadership style and the level of implementation of inclusive education, with increased level of democratic leadership associated with higher level of implementation of inclusive education in primary schools and vice versa. This means that schools whose head teachers apply more democracy in leadership are likely to have higher implementation of inclusive education than the schools whose head teachers practice less democratic leadership style. From qualitative data it emerged that the senior teachers believed democratic head teachers encourages the implementation of inclusive education in primary schools. This was reiterated by one study informant who reported that;

“Our head teacher is blessed with communication skills, he knows what to employ and where to employ it, that way he can achieve what he wants from teachers and learners as well. When everyone is brought on board, it will be very easy to implement inclusive education..... (SNR TR. 2)

This means that schools whose head teachers apply more democracy in leadership are likely to have higher implementation of inclusive education than the schools whose head teachers practice less democratic leadership style. This finding agrees with Itunga (2010) in Kenya whose findings revealed a significant relationship between principals’ leadership style and students’ academic performance. However, to further illustrate this relationship, a scatter plot was generated as shown in Figure 4.3.

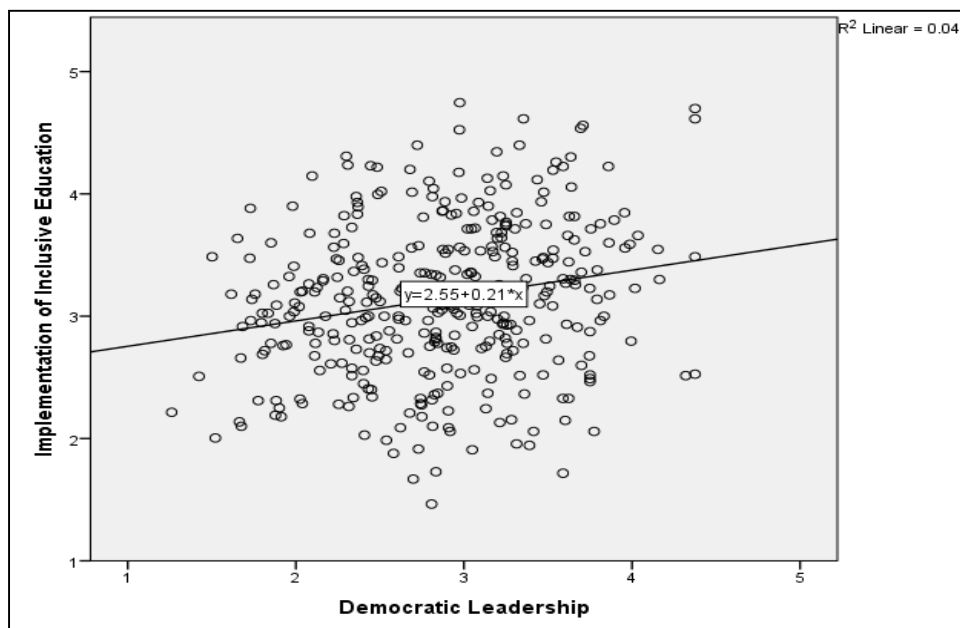


Figure 4.0: Scatter plot graph: Relationship between the level of democratic leadership style and implementation of inclusive education.

The scatter plot shows that there was some positive correlation between the levels of democratic leadership’ style and implementation of inclusive education. The pattern of the dots seems to have some slope indicating a positive correlation between the two variables. Equally, the line of best fit slopes from lower left to upper right signifying positive relationship between the two variables. This finding is contrary to Maina (2014) in Kenya whose study indicated that head teachers’ leadership development programs were not statistically significant to effective facilitation of the implementation of inclusive education.

However, to estimate the level of influence of the level of democratic leadership style on implementation of inclusive education, a coefficient of determination was computed. This was done using of a regression analysis and the results were as shown in Table 4.21.

Table 4.1: Model Summary on Regression Analysis-Level of Democratic Leadership Style and Implementation of Inclusive Education

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.279 ^a	.078	.066	.58927

a. Predictors: (Constant), Leadership Score

The model shows that the Level of Democratic Leadership Style of the head teacher accounted for 7.8% of the variation in the level of implementation of inclusive education, as signified by R Square of .078. This was a fairly sizeable effect of one predictor on the dependent variable

5.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study examined head teachers' democratic leadership style and its influence on implementation of inclusive education in Uasin Gishu County, Kenya. The study concluded that most of the primary school head teachers in Uasin Gishu County have considerable degree of democratic leadership style. Hence teachers feel more encouraged to implement inclusive education as they are allowed to share ideas and opinions about inclusive education. There is also a statistically significant positive correlation between the head teachers' level of democratic leadership style and implementation of inclusive education. The study recommended that head teachers should be encouraged to employ democratic leadership styles on issues related to special needs of education since democratic leadership style was revealed to be having positive correlation to implementation of inclusive education. Secondly,

The Kenya Education Management Institute should sensitize head teachers on better leadership practices for primary schools that can enhance the implementation of inclusive education.

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