

## Democratic Style of Leadership and Performance of Teachers in Uganda

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### Abstract

### Original Research Article

The study analysed the relationship between democratic style of leadership and performance of teachers in Uganda. The study employed a correlational descriptive research design with quantitative and qualitative paradigms. A sample of 72 respondents out of 155 target population was chosen using a table advanced by Morgan & Kreijcie (1970). Data was garnered utilising questionnaires and interview schedule and analyzed employing Descriptive statistics and Inferential analyses for quantitative data and systematic content analysis was utilised for analyzing qualitative information. The research study findings came up with a significant correlation between democratic style of leadership and performance of teachers, a case of primary schools in Rukungiri district in Uganda. It was therefore concluded that democratic leadership style has a potential to improve performance of teachers than other leadership styles like laissez-faire and autocratic leadership styles. The scientific research study recommended that democratic leadership style should be dominantly used by Head teachers so as to tap its benefits of participatory decision making and increased employee commitment in school organizations.

**Keywords:** Democratic style of leadership, Performance of teachers, Uganda.

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## INTRODUCTION

In the USA, performance trends have generally shown a decline. Between 1999–2000 and 2015–16, the percentage of public school teachers who had completed a post baccalaureate degree increased from 47 to 57 percent. The percentage of teachers with over 20 years of teaching experience declined from 32 percent in 1999–2000 to 22 percent in 2015–16; however, the percentage of teachers with 10 to 20 years of experience increased from 29 to 39 percent during this period (National Center for Education Statistics, 2019). In Europe, teachers are being asked to keep pace with rapidly developing knowledge areas and approaches to students' learning and assessment, to use new technologies, to personalize learning experiences to ensure that every learner has a chance to succeed, to embrace diversity with differentiated pedagogies, and to promote students' creativity (Townsend, 2022).

In Sub-Saharan Africa, only 10 percent of employees were committed to their organization (Crabtree, 2013). In Nigeria, democratic leadership style seemed to exert positive influence on performance

of teachers (Omeke and Onah, 2020). In the East African region schools, up to 12 percent of teachers were found not going to school on any given day, a possible representation of lack of organizational commitment through leadership (Uwezo, 2014). In Kenya, school principals mostly applied democratic style of leadership (Kasinga, 2010). Still in Kenya, it was found out that democratic head teachers produced higher mean score grades as compared to autocratic head teachers (Okoth, 2021).

The report by Uwezo showed that in Uganda up to 29 percent of teachers were absent at school in a given day (Uwezo, 2014). The Ministry of Education and Sports (2013) report indicates that head teachers' absenteeism in the education system was very high at 60 percent, an indication of poor leadership. Kuloba (2010) sought to investigate the effects of leadership styles on teacher performance in Nakaseke District, Uganda. The study found out that head teachers' involvement of teachers in decision making process of the school through committees and meetings enhances teacher performance. It was further discovered that teacher performance is enhanced by head teacher's

communication to their teaching staff and that head teachers' delegation of duties to teachers enhances teachers' performance.

In Rukungiri district, teachers' performance is still not impressive as reflected in deteriorating standards of professional conduct among teachers' in Ruhinda sub county government aided primary schools (Rukungiri District Education Inspection Report, 2022). The study sought to establish whether head teachers' leadership styles are related to performance of teachers, taking Ruhinda Sub County as a case study.

## METHODS AND MATERIALS

### Data Capturing

The data used for the research study was gathered using both primary and secondary sources of data. Primary data was collected by use of structured questionnaires and interview schedule to important persons in relation to the scientific research study. Secondary information was garnered with the use of documentary reviews. The scientific research study used a correlational descriptive research design including interpretivism and positivism philosophies.

Amin (2005) stated that descriptive research design is mostly used to narrate an event and its data features. The researcher got a total of 72 respondents (sample size) utilizing a table developed by Morgan & Krejcie (1970) to belong to the research study.

### Sampling methods

The researcher utilized simple random sampling and purposive sampling techniques in the research study. The parent population comprised of the target population such as categories like students, teachers, and school managers.

### Questionnaire and interviews

The researcher employed a researcher generated questionnaire to collect data from the field because it covers a wide geographical space in data gathering; it garners much information within a short time, and provides strong assurance in connection to confidentiality.

The researcher used a qualitative interview guide because it was vital to understand the participants' subjective opinion of their surroundings; unfolding the interpretation of their world, revealing their real experiences prior to systematic elaborations (Karoro, 2017).

### Validity and reliability of scientific research instruments

Validity of the researcher structured questionnaire was determined by utilizing content validity Index. After testing of the validity of the research study instruments, the researcher got content validity index (CVI) of 0.79 which was generally above 0.75 implying that the research instrument was valid to elicit information required for the plausible research study (Amin, 2005). Nonetheless, the validity of the interview schedule was reached at by talking to key participants to prove the answered questions or items (Gibbs, 2007).

Reliability of the researcher generated questionnaire was calculated using Cronbach's alpha coefficient formula looking at the research study variables that obtained an alpha coefficient of value more than 0.70. Since the reliability figure got by the researcher talked of 0.78 alpha value, it meant that the research data collection method was reliable to avail data vital for the study. Nevertheless, the reliability of the study interviews was reached at by relying on peer review mechanisms (Gibbs, 2007).

## DATA ANALYSIS

Research statistical instruments which were employed to analyze data for this scientific research study included; descriptive statistics such as pie charts, bar graphs, tables, frequencies, percentages, and inferential statistics like Pearson Linear Correlation Coefficient (PLCC) for summarizing or analyzing quantitative data. Besides, Qualitative data were analyzed by scientifically organizing information into logical themes or sub themes for quick Interpretation along a storyline manner (Gibbs, 2007).

## RESULTS

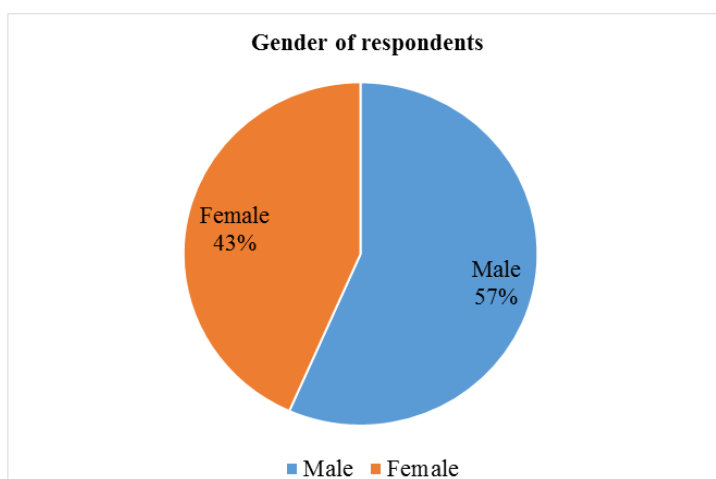
### Presentation of the Background information

The researcher sought to investigate on age, gender, marital status, academic qualifications, time spent in the school, teaching experience and time spent as a head teacher in relation to performance of teachers in government aided primary schools in Rukungiri District.

### Gender of Respondents

#### Figure 1 Gender of respondents

The respondents were requested to indicate their gender in order to determine how they were differently influenced by leadership styles and the results are shown below in figure 1.



**Fig-1: Showing gender distribution of respondents**  
Source: Primary Data

Results from figure 1 showed that the majority of the respondents 46 (57%) were males while their female counterparts constituted 34 (43%). The biggest number of respondents was male by gender meaning that more male respondents were engaged in the study. This literary implied that most males were available to take part in the study and shared their views on leadership styles affecting performance of teachers having experienced some of the practices that take place within their respective schools.

### The relationship between democratic leadership style and Performance of teachers in Uganda

Respondents were posed with statements on the relationship between democratic style of leadership and performance of teachers in government aided primary schools in Ruhinda Sub-County, Rukungiri District. They were to rate various parameters on democratic style of leadership and how they related to performance of teachers and the results are shown as below in table 1.

**Table-1: Respondents' views on Democratic style of leadership used by head teachers in government aided primary schools in Ruhinda Sub County**

Items	Responses in %					Mean	SD
	SA	A	NS	D	SD		
The head teacher expresses with a few simple words what we could and should do	41 (56.9%)	7 (9.7%)	0	24 (33.3%)	0	3.90	1.386
He/she provides appealing images about what we can do	9 (12.5%)	41 (56.9%)	4 (5.6%)	15 (20.8%)	3 (4.2%)	3.53	1.087
Helps others us as teachers find meaning in their work.	10 (13.9%)	15 (20.8%)	14 (19.4%)	18 (25%)	15 (20.8%)	2.54	1.047
He/she discusses priorities rather than enforcing them on teachers	2 (2.8%)	13 (18.1%)	13 (18.1%)	31 (43.1%)	13 (18.1%)	2.44	1.073
He/she informs employees well	9 (12.5%)	17 (23.6%)	0	21 (29.2%)	25 (34.7%)	2.50	1.482
Works well together with teachers	0	24 (33.3%)	1 (1.4%)	41 (56.9%)	6 (8.3%)	2.60	1.044
He/she calls teachers into order, if necessary	0	17 (23.6%)	7 (9.7%)	20 (27.8%)	28 (38.9%)	2.18	1.191
Delegates enough tasks to the employees	4 (5.6%)	27 (37.5%)	14 (19.4%)	24 (33.3%)	3 (4.2%)	3.07	1.053
He/she is an attentive listener	27 (37.5%)	21 (29.2%)	7 (9.7%)	13 (18.1%)	4 (5.6%)	3.75	1.286
Encourages employees in a positive way	17 (23.6%)	36 (50%)	7 (9.7%)	12 (16.7%)	0	3.94	.767
Asks for ideas and opinions of teachers	9 (12.5%)	22 (30.6%)	11 (15.3%)	14 (19.4%)	16 (22.2%)	2.89	1.369

Key: SA=Strongly Agree A= Agree NS= Not Sure, D=Disagree SD=Strongly Disagree

Source: Primary Data

The respondents were asked whether the head teacher expresses with a few simple words what we could and should do. In response, 66.6% of the respondents were in agreement with the statement, while 33.3% of the respondents disagreed. The mean response of 4.90 was close to 5 which indicated strong agreement although standard deviation of 1.386 indicated divergence of views. This indicated that majority were in support of the fact that the head teacher expresses with a few simple words what we could and should do. This implied that head teachers in most primary schools were using polite means to mobilize teachers to deal with upcoming challenges, which also encouraged the teachers to fulfill their tasks. The other statement stated that he/she provides appealing images about what we can do. In response, 69.4% of the respondents agreed with the statement, 25% disagreed while 5.6% were not sure. There was a mean response of 3.53 that was close to four which indicated agreement and standard deviation of 1.087 which indicated divergence of views. This indicated that the head teacher provided appealing images about what could be done, a factor that had shaped teachers' behavior and contributed towards their improved performance.

Furthermore, a statement was posed as to whether the head teacher helps us as teachers find meaning in their work. The findings established that 45.8% of the respondents disagreed, 34.7% agreed while 19.4% were not sure. There was a mean response of 2.54 was close to 3 which indicated moderate view and standard deviation of 1.047, indicating non divergence of views. The findings indicated that by and large, the head teacher did not help teachers find meaning in their work. This implied that in most government aided primary schools there were limited attempts by head teachers to provide conducive teaching environment, a factor that negatively impacted on teacher' performance. Another statement was about the view that he/she discusses priorities rather than enforcing them on teachers. The responses were that 61.2% of the respondents were in disagreement with the statement, 20.9% were in agreement while 18.1% of the respondents were not sure. The mean response of 2.44 was close to 2 implying disagreement and standard deviation of 1.073 which implied divergence of views. This showed that to a large extent, the head teacher endeavored to discuss priorities rather than enforcing them on teachers. The implication was that teachers in turn felt a sense of belonging and were valued which boosted their readiness to perform their roles.

On the statement that he/she informs employee's well, majority response of 63.9% disagreed, while 36.1% agreed that he/she informs employees well. The mean response of 2.5 was close to 3 implying neutral view and standard deviation of 1.482 which indicated non-divergence of views. This indicated that to a large extent, the head teacher did not inform

employees well. The implication was that democratic style of leadership was compromised which adversely affected performance of teachers. Another statement was that the head teacher works well together with teachers. In response, 65.2% of the respondents were in disagreement with the statement, 33.3% o agreed 4.9% while 1.4% was not sure. There was a mean response of 2.60 which was close to 3 indicating neutral views and standard deviation of 1.044 which indicated non-divergence of views. The findings indicated that to a large extent, the head teacher worked well together with teachers. This confirmed the fact that head teachers shared a good working relationship with teachers, an indicator of democratic style of leadership. The other statement stated that he/she calls teachers into order, if necessary. In response, 66.7% of the respondents disagreed with the statement, 23.6% agreed with the statement while 9.7% of the respondents were not sure. The mean response of 2.18 was close to 2 which indicated disagreement and standard deviation of 1.191 which indicated divergence of views. The findings indicated that to majority respondents, the head teacher rarely called teachers into order, if necessary. This implied that the head teachers' democratic style of leadership had compromised their capacity to discipline teachers where necessary.

Respondents further reacted to the statement that the head teacher delegates enough tasks to the employees. The responses were that 43.1% of the respondents agreed with the statement, 37.5% disagreed while 19.4% of the respondents were not sure. The mean response of 3.07 was close to 3 which was interpreted as neutral view and 1.053 which indicated divergence of respondents' views. This indicated that majority were in agreement that the head teacher delegates enough tasks to the employees. This implied that the head teacher was encouraging teachers to own the school and work towards academic excellence by performing their roles as expected. On the statement that he/she is an attentive listener, 66.7% agreed with the statement, 23.7% disagreed while 9.7% were not sure. The mean response of 3.75 was close to 4 which indicated agreement while standard deviation of 1.286 indicated divergence of views. The findings showed that the head teacher to a large extent was an attentive listener under democratic style of leadership. This further implied that the head teacher was able to understand clearly the teachers' problems and interests and work with them to deal with them, a factor that promoted performance of teachers in government aided primary schools.

The respondents were further asked to explain whether the head teacher encourages employees in a positive way. In response, 73.6% were in agreement with the statement 16.7% disagreed while 9.7% were not sure. There was a mean response of 3.94 that was close to 4 which implied agreement on the likert scale with a standard deviation of 0.767 which also indicated non-divergence of views towards the statement. This

showed that to a large extent, the head teacher did encourage teachers in a positive way, a factor that implied motivation to perform better rather than forcing them to perform. Respondents then reacted to the statement that the head teacher asks for ideas and opinions of teachers whereby 43.1% agreed with the statement, 41.6% disagreed as 15.3% were not sure. There was a mean response of 2.89 that was close to 3 which implied neutral view and standard deviation of 1.369 which signified divergence of views. This indicated that to a large extent, the head teacher asked for ideas and opinions of teachers before taking a decision.

According to the interview responses, democratic leadership style has been promoted by head teachers in their respective primary schools through participatory decision making, delegation of tasks to teachers, brainstorming on how performance in the school can be promoted and listening to teachers' problems and working towards dealing with them. Effective communication has also been promoted between head teacher and his or her teachers.

The relationship between head teachers' use of democratic leadership style and performance of teachers was also mentioned through interview responses whereby it was revealed that the leadership style has encouraged teachers towards performing their teaching

work committedly. Other ways in which democratic leadership style has enhanced teachers performance were mentioned as high motivation of teachers to work, teachers working under minimum supervision and generation of new ideas for the benefit of the schools. In relation to the above, one head teacher had this to say.

*"With the use of democratic style of leadership by head teachers, teachers have been easily mobilized to use the few available resources to perform their teaching duties in their respective schools. The teachers under this leadership style have been encouraged to forward their opinions on what they think should best be done to improve teaching and pupils' academic performance (Kyabakama, 2022).*

This meant that the teachers have turned out to be creative at their workplaces leading to high productivity in school organizations. There is a high degree of responsiveness since the ownership of school programs or activities to be done is collective.

Correlation Results for democratic style of leadership and performance of teachers. A Pearson correlation technique was run and results got were used by the researcher to assess the relation between democratic style of leadership and performance of teachers in government aided primary schools in Ruhinda Sub County, Rukungiri district.

**Table-2: Correlation on democratic style of leadership and performance of teachers in government aided primary schools**

		Democratic style of leadership	Performance of teachers
Democratic style of leadership	Pearson Correlation	1	0.651**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.005
	N	72	72
Performance of teachers	Pearson Correlation	0.651**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.005	
	N	72	72

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

**Source:** Primary data

Table 2 above, shows correlations results between democratic style of leadership and performance of teachers in government aided primary schools. Democratic style of leadership indicated a positive and statistically significant correlation with performance of teachers in government aided primary schools ( $r = 0.651$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). This implied that reliance on democratic style of leadership positively and significantly influenced performance of teachers in government aided primary schools in Ruhinda Sub County, Rukungiri district.

## CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

Democratic style of leadership is the way to go for all the government aided primary schools as evidenced from the findings. This style of leadership

should be dominantly used by head teachers so as to tap its advantages of participatory decision making, increased commitment, motivation and generation of new and constructive ideas all of which will promote better performance of teachers in the government aided primary schools in Uganda.

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