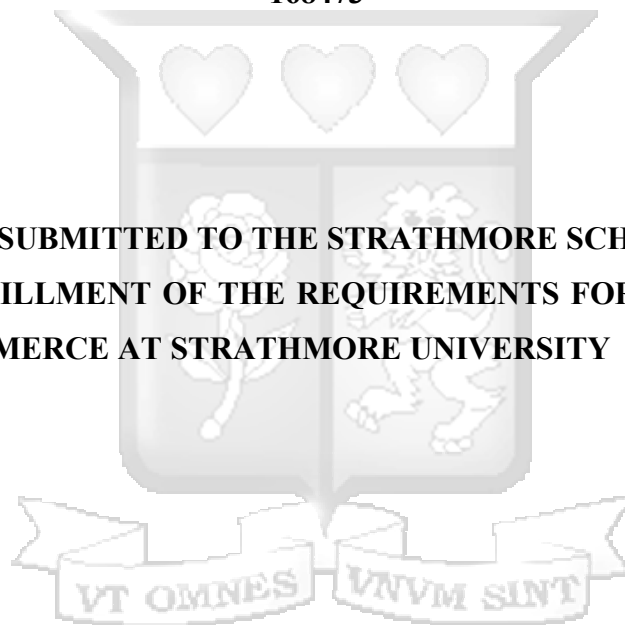


**INFLUENCE OF LEADERSHIP STYLES ON EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE IN
UNIVERSITIES IN KENYA**

KENNEDY O. OGALLO

168473

**A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE STRATHMORE SCHOOL OF BUSINESS
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF COMMERCE AT STRATHMORE UNIVERSITY**



MAY, 2025

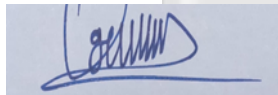
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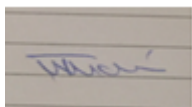
Date: ___15/05/2025_____

Approval

The proposal of **Kennedy O. Ogallo** was reviewed and approved for examination by the following:

Supervisor: Dr. Tabitha Waithaka

Signature: _____



Date: ___15.05.2025_____

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

First and foremost, I want to sincerely thank God for giving me the strength I needed since I starting my MCOM program. I am really appreciative of my supervisor, Dr. Tabitha Waithaka, who has given me excellent advice and support regarding my Dissertation. I am really grateful to my family and friends for their unwavering encouragement and support during this demanding academic program.

I would also like to appreciate librarians and lecturers at Strathmore Business School for the knowledge gained throughout this course and for the continuous valuable feedback on this dissertation.



DEDICATION

This piece is dedicated to my wife, Adrine Wanjiku, Children-Peter Peniel, Prudent Purity, Prince Paul, and Princes Pendo. Thanks to siblings and friends who have always offered me encouragement, prayers and supported me throughout the process.



ABSTRACT

University Sector is a key pillar in the realization of the essential knowledge required to advance the nation into a newly industrialized upper middle-income knowledge-based economy. The sector aims to provide quality education, training, and research for sustainable development that is globally competitive. Globally, universities have continued in being essential to social and economic development due to the supply of skilled labor and the dissemination of knowledge through research. Internationalization, role ambiguity, increased workload, limited research outputs, lack of university-industry links, employee motivation, innovation, organizational culture, hiring lecturers, rapid technological advancements, and shifting funding models are just a few of the issues that plague universities despite their crucial role. Leadership plays a key role in determining the success or failure of these institutions. This study aimed to determine the influence of leadership styles on employee performance in universities in Kenya. The specific objectives were to determine the influence of autocratic on employee performance in universities in Kenya, to determine the influence of democratic on employee performance in universities in Kenya and to determine the influence of laissez-faire on employee performance in universities in Kenya. This research was informed by situational theory and goal-setting theory, employing a positivism research philosophy. A descriptive cross-sectional approach was employed, focusing on 79 accredited universities in Kenya which had 37,290 employees. The sample size of study was 474 employees. The primary data was collected from this population through a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire consisted of close-ended questions, utilizing A 5-Point Likert Scale to measure both the independent and dependent variables and data collected was analyzed using SPSS version 28. The analysis involved the use of descriptive and inferential statistics and results presented in tables, charts, and graphs. Reliability of data collection was ascertained through Cronbach's alpha test on the questionnaire and the validity determined through a pilot test entailed 47 participants to test out the data collection tool. The findings revealed a positive and significant relationship between democratic leadership style and employee performance, a positive and significant relationship between laissez-faire leadership style and employee performance, a positive and significant relationship between autocratic leadership style with employee performance. The findings led to the conclusion that democratic, autocratic, and laissez-faire leadership style each has a positive influence on employee performance among universities in Kenya (R value=.716, p=0.000). This research recommended universities should promote democratic leadership as it has shown a strong positive impact on employee performance. Leaders should involve employees in decision-making, encourage feedback, and foster open communication to improve motivation and productivity. Suggestions for further studies could include a comparative analysis of leadership styles across different educational institutions, explore the impact of leadership styles on student performance, and examine the role of organizational culture in shaping leadership effectiveness. One of the key limitations is that the findings may not be generalizable beyond the university sector in Kenya since context was academic context in Kenya. Another limitation is the cross-sectional nature of the study. Since data was collected at a single point in time, the study does not capture how leadership styles and their influence on employee performance might have changed over time.

Keywords:

Leadership, Leadership style, Autocratic, Laissez faire, Democratic, Universities, Employee and Employee Performance.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATION AND ACRONYMS

NACOSTI- National Commission of Science Technology and Innovation

SPSS- Statistical Package for Social Sciences

SDGs-Sustainable Development Goals

CUE- Commission for University Education

SU-IERC- Strathmore University Institute of Ethics and Research Committee

CESA- Continental Education Strategy for Africa

AU-Africa Union



OPERATIONAL DEFINATIONS OF KEY TERMS

Leadership: the skill of persuading others to voluntarily work toward achieving objectives.

Leadership style: this is manner in which managers choose to interact with their staff and how they perform the duties of leadership.

Employee: An employee refers to someone employed by an employer in an organization to work under another person known as the supervisor.

Employee Performance: A component of the work which contribute to the organizational objectives.

Accreditation: denotes the process by which an organization is approved by the Commission as a university and as having met the requirements set forth for offering academic programs.

Private university: denotes a university that was not founded or is not supported by public monies

Public university: denotes a university that was founded or is supported by public monies

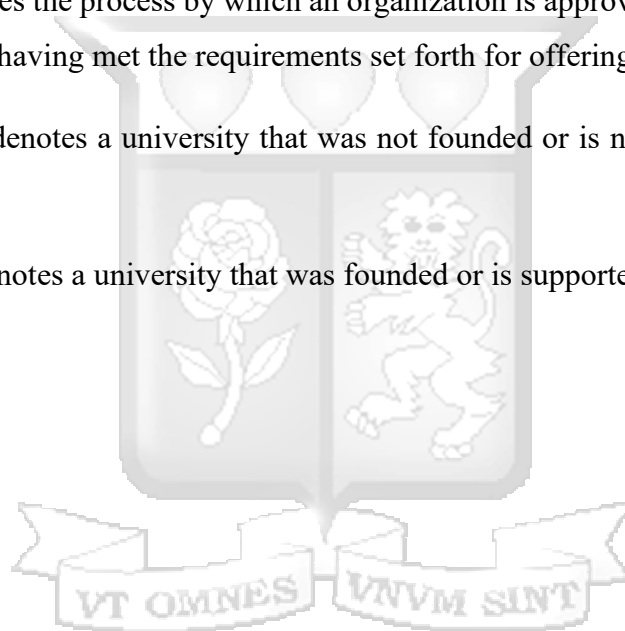
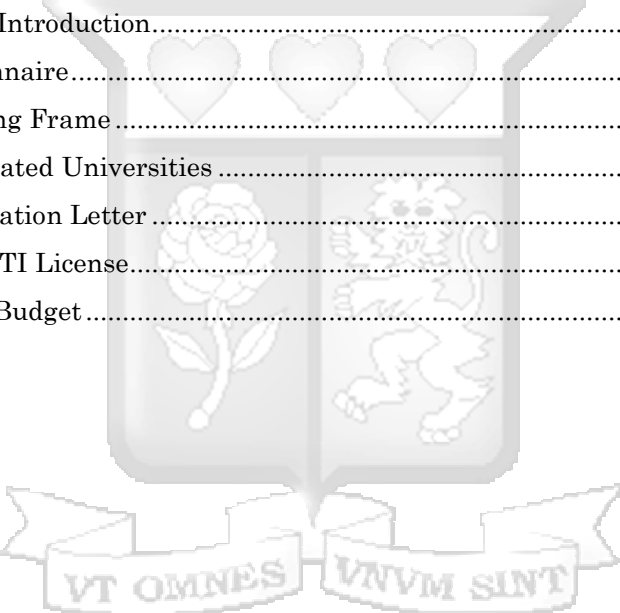


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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the study

The realization of the fundamental knowledge needed to propel the country toward a newly industrialized upper middle-income knowledge-based economy depends heavily on the education and training sector(Samad et al., 2022). Effective managers and leaders are necessary to guarantee employees' complete engagement at work. To see improvements in institutional performance, effective leadership is essential(Otieno & Njoroge, 2019). In both the developed and developing worlds, the idea of leadership has received a great deal of institutional and public attention. Basic assumptions are ingrained in the leadership environment as a crucial instrument for the sterling performance of employees. According to Hijazi et al. (2017), leadership is very critical for all organizations in realizing their set objectives. Since leadership is a key factor for improving the performance of many if not all organizations and the success or failure of an organization depends on the effectiveness of leadership at all levels.

Employees are now considered an organization's most valuable asset since they are categorized as its human capital. History demonstrates that the existence of a leader was responsible for all of the breakthroughs and noteworthy advancements and discoveries in business, the arts, and science and technology. Leadership determines the extent of successes and failures of organizations, therefore, effective leadership is key in realizing progress in institutional performance. In other words, good leadership is crucial to ensure that employees are recruited, retained, trained, and inspired to meet the organization's goals and objectives(Malcalm and Tamatey, 2017). According to Otieno and Njoroge (2019), for employees to contribute maximally towards the success and profit of any organization, there must be good leadership responsible for planning, motivating, coordinating, directing and controlling the work process. Leadership is essential to properly and efficiently manage an organization's activities. The leadership style that an organization chooses to use has a significant impact on its success or failure.

According to Malcalm and Tamatey, (2017), for any institution to survive in a dynamic and competitive business environment, it has to adopt the best and the most effective leadership styles. Employees' perception of leadership style greatly affects the performance, dedication and commitment of the employee to achieving the organizations goals and objectives. Managers' and leaders' leadership styles have the power to either inspire employees to perform

better or deter them from giving it their all. Therefore, leadership style in an organization is a major factor in maintaining the performance of the employees.

According to Alonderiene and Majauskaite, (2016), over the past few decades, there has been an increase in interest in the subject of leadership in universities. Universities are expected to create knowledge, and improve equity. Ensuring inclusive, fair, high-quality education that fosters lifelong learning is the goal of SDG 4. By providing equal opportunity to higher education, gender equality, inclusive education for sustainable development, and applicable skills for decent job, the university sector will further these objectives. A wealthy Africa with social and economic progress propelled by an educated populace with aptitude for science, technology, and innovation is the objective of Africa's Agenda 2063. The agenda includes calls for reciprocal recognition of academic and professional credentials, harmonized educational standards, and more student and academic mobility throughout the continent.

Despite the key role universities play, they are marred with many challenges ranging from greater workload, role ambiguity, internationalization, globalization, limited research outputs, insufficient university-industry linkages, global market trends, employee motivation, innovation, organizational culture, and human resource management, resources and infrastructure, hiring lecturers, rapid technological advancements, a growing need for quality, knowledge diffusion, competition, and changing funding models(Igbaekemen, 2014a). All these factors have an influence on the performance of these institutions, however the most crucial factor on an organization's performance is its leadership. Al Khajeh, (2018), study on leadership and organizational performance, argued that the role of leadership is critical for an organization to achieve a higher level of performance. Leadership is required to navigate through these complexities to deliver on the set objectives and goals of these institutions. Leadership is the catalyst that kindles the flame of an institution, either creating a shining mountain of performance or a despondent valley of ashes.

Universities nowadays require strong, capable leaders who are aware of the challenges posed by the quickly changing global educational landscape(Idowu, 2019). Leadership style used inside an organization has a significant influence on its success or failure. Since many companies' primary goal is to achieve their stated objectives, they require effective leaders to coordinate and inspire their workforce (Khan and Adnan, 2014).

The purpose of universities in Kenya is to provide a skilled labor pool of professionals with specialized knowledge. These professional frequently have the ability to advance capital

resources and production while offering national services that honor Kenya's rich cultural legacy. This research therefore was to determine the influence of leadership style on employee performance in universities in Kenya. Hence this study delved into how leadership styles influence employee performance in universities in Kenya

1.1.1 Leadership styles

According to Guterresa (2020), leadership is the skill of persuading others to voluntarily work toward achieving objectives. An organization's culture and climate are greatly influenced by its leadership. According to Emeana, (2022), Leadership is the capacity to create a social ambience of influence and momentum to drive a vision to reality through people. It is the active ingredient for inspiring and influencing teams and groups, establishing clear vision and mission for others to follow voluntarily and joyfully in order to achieve the organizations' aims and objectives.

According to Iqbal, et al (2015), Leadership is a process which a leader can guide, direct, and influence others' actions and labor in order to accomplish particular goal in a given circumstance. Leadership is a mechanism through which one person affects other person's thoughts, attitudes and behaviors. Leaders are setting a path for the rest of us; they are helping us see what lies ahead; they are helping us envision what we could do, they are empowering us and they are inspiring us.

According to Ukaidi (2016), leadership is the process of influencing people and providing an enabling environment for them to achieve team or organizational goals and objectives. The function of leaders in modern businesses has changed, and their leadership styles determine whether an organization succeeds or fails (Velu et al 2017). According to Bhargavi and Yaseen (2016), a leadership style is the method and attitude of providing, carrying out plans, direction and inspiring individuals. Leadership style can be defined as the kind of relationship that is used by an individual so as to make people work together for a common goal or objective (Al Khajeh, 2018).

Velu et al (2017), defined leadership styles as the manner in which managers choose to interact with their staff and how they perform the duties of leadership. It speaks to the way a leader engages with their followers. These are the methods that leaders employ to inspire followers. Velu et al (2017) found a number of leadership philosophies, including transactional, bureaucratic, charismatic, democratic, laissez-faire, transformational, and dictatorial.

In organizations where staff members carry out regular duties, bureaucratic methods are also beneficial (Velu et al,2017). This kind of leadership has the disadvantage of being ineffective in groups and organizations that depend on flexibility, and innovation. This leadership approach adheres to a strict set of guidelines. To guarantee precision and safety, everything is carried out in a precise, defined manner.

Transformational leadership is the practice of interacting with people and building a relationship that increases morale and motivation in both the leader and followers (Northouse, 2010). The goal of a transformational leadership style is to inspire employees to do better by demonstrating the importance of the work they do. According to (Idowu, 2019), the four components of a transformation leadership style are intellectual stimulation, idealistic influence, individual consideration, and inspirational motivation. According to Northouse, (2010), Transactional refers to the majority of leadership theories that concentrate on the exchanges that occur between leaders and their followers. The transactional leadership style places a strong emphasis on having the subordinates to complete tasks by rewarding excellent performance and punishing poor performance.

Compared to other leadership styles, charismatic leadership is recognizable but may be viewed as less tangible. This fact is probably brought about by the challenge of accurately characterizing charisma in a person by alone. A leader that practices charismatic leadership inspires and motivates followers by utilizing their charm, self-assurance, and interpersonal abilities. Instilling a sense of purpose, fostering strong emotional bonds with their team, and inspiring others to pursue seemingly impossible or ambitious goals(Velu et al., 2017)

The current study focused on three leadership styles which include autocratic, democratic and Laissez-faire. This study adopted the conceptualization of the following authors; Iqbal, et al (2015); Akor, (2014); Wang and Huynh, (2013); Basit et al., (2017), Bhargavi and Yaseen (2016); Igbaekemen, (2014);Otieno and Njoroge (2019); and Fiaz et al (2017). The reason for selecting these three leadership styles were supported by various authors as follows; According to Igbaekemen, (2014), the focus of authority, power and the manner in which managers lead their subordinates fall more neatly into one of three categories: autocratic, democratic, or laissez-faire. Moreover, the classification is supported by the study conducted by Lewin. Lewin led a group of researchers to recognize different leadership styles. This research was very successful, and it identified three main types of leadership. The three primary leadership styles

are: autocratic or authoritarian; democratic or participatory, and free reign or delegation(Bhargavi & Yaseen, 2016).

Abimbola,(2017),suggested that, future research might also look at the use of several leadership styles (autocratic, bureaucratic, and democratic) in public universities throughout many developing nations. Additionally, Carvalho, conducted a study on What we can learn from research on performance, digital transformation, and leadership styles in public higher education and proposed that there is need for more studies using leadership variables, other styles besides transformational.

Likewise, Anbazhagan and Kotur, (2014), indicated that when it comes to exercising power, the autocratic, democratic, and laissez-faire leadership styles rank highest, middle, and lowest on the leadership style spectrum. The above mentioned scholarly work support the operationalization of autocratic, democratic and laissez-faire leadership styles as the independent variables in this research.

1.1.2 Employee performance

Employees are an organization's most precious asset, and successful organizations place a great value on increasing employee performance levels(Idowu, 2019). Performance is a topic of interest for all organizations. Iqbal et al., (2015) in their work on effect of leadership style on employee performance, defined employee performance as the accomplishment of assigned tasks, meeting deadlines, employee competency, and effectiveness and efficiency in work.

Pawirosumarto et al.,(2017), defined Performance as a gauge of the success of an organization whether a business is production company or service provider. How much an employee contributes to the company is influenced by their performance, which includes their output quantity, output quality, attendance, and cooperative attitude. Employee performance is a crucial component of every organization, and the elements that provide the foundation for excellent performance need to be examined by the organizations(Abimbola, 2017). Performance is the ability of an individual to finish tasks(Latifah et al., 2024). According to Shahzadiject et al., (2014), Performance of the employee can be defined as what an employee does and what he/she doesn't do. Employee performance involves quality and quantity of output, presence at work, and timeliness of output.

Performance is defined as an efficient and effective effort made to accomplish a task or as the successful execution and completion of work. According to Maamari and Saheb, (2018),

employee performance is activities that form part of the assignments which support the objectives of the organization. Performance has two dimensions: the behavioral aspect, which is the dimension of behavior, and the performance aspect, which is the dimension of consequence. Employee performance is the building block of an organization as the success of any organization is a concerted effort of everyone within the organization.

The main primary objective of any organization is to improve employee job performance in order to thrive in this highly competitive environment. Attracting and retaining employee in this age is becoming challenging. Simultaneously, it has been observed that employee motivation serves as a stimulant for both employee performance and organizational success. Performance is the quantitative and qualitative expression of an individual's or group's ability to use their knowledge, skills, and talents to carry out and finish tasks in order to attain goals(Altındağ and Köseadağı, 2015). Performance is a multifaceted concept and a crucial factor in determining whether an organization succeeds or fails.

Organization's ability to survive in this fiercely competitive environment depends on job performance of their employees. It is true that performance is a multifaceted problem. It is also a very important characteristic that characterizes an organization's achievements or failures. Performance is the outcome of actions carried out in a certain situation with the assistance of an employee's abilities and capabilities(Otieno, et al,2019). Employee performance is viewed as the outcome of their efforts and intentions in connection to the aims and objectives of the organization. They are required to work with excitement, efficiency, and effectiveness.

Leadership behaviors directly affect employee job satisfaction, organizational loyalty, work pressure, motivation, and team cohesiveness, all of which in turn affect employee job performance(Hijazi et al., 2017).Some universities have been marred by poor performance. According to Albaroudi and Iqbal, (2024),Saudi Arabia higher education have shown no significant progress in university performance or academic quality despite large investment on education of 7.47% of its Gross Domestic Product(GDP).

Employee performance, which is influenced by a variety of circumstances, optimally contributes to the success of the organization. It might be the outcome of competitive compensation, efficient managerial oversight, and sufficient incentives. Any organization's primary goals are to promote employee retention, minimize employee turnover, and maximize productivity. Therefore, leaders must concentrate on factors that influence employee

performance at work and therefore raise productivity in order to fulfill the objectives of the organization (Mowday et al,2013).

Kuswati, (2020) still delved deeper on the subject and agrees that employee performance and the outcomes of one's job in a firm or organization are closely intertwined. The output of the task may include elements of timeliness, quantity, and quality. Performance refers to components of productivity, effectiveness, quantity, quality, and timeliness. Velu et al., (2017) conducted a study on the influence of leadership styles on employee performance in Europe and measured performance based on quality, quantity, timeliness and cost-effectiveness.

Hundie and Habtewold, (2024) investigated the effects of transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership styles on employees' performance levels and evaluated employee performance based on productivity and quality of work: The Hospital Case in Ethiopia's Oromia Region. Otieno and Njoroge, (2019), conducted a study on how leadership styles affect employee performance using the Technical University of Kenya as a case study, and evaluated employee performance based on productivity and quality of work.

A study conducted by Abimbola,(2017) on the influence of leadership styles on employees performance: A study of selected universities in Ogun state, Nigeria, measured employees' performance on financial, change in students enrolment, certification by regulatory authorities, staff turnover, and institutional growth. Additionally, Iqbal et al., (2015) provide further information about the impact of leadership styles on employee performance which performance was measured by carrying out assigned tasks, meeting deadlines, collaborating with others, and accomplishing departmental objectives. The research was carried out in Pakistan.

The current study measured employee performance on the basis of quality of work, productivity, and quantity of work based on the conceptualization of the following authors; Velu et al, (2017);Otieno and Njoroge, (2019);Kuswati, (2020); Hundie and Habtewold, (2024) Therefore, quality of work, productivity, and quantity of work are the dimensions which were adopted for this dependent variable.

Quality of work focuses on how well an employee performs their tasks in terms of accuracy, attention to detail, and the standard of work produced. High quality often means fewer errors, consistency and reliability of results, and adherence to company standards and procedures (Dhamija et al., 2019).According to Berhe et al., (2017), Productivity refers to the efficiency

with which an employee completes their tasks within a given amount of time. Every organization has used productivity as a performance indicator and measure. It is generally understood to be the ratio of input values to output values. High productivity means an employee is getting a lot done efficiently, but it does not necessarily speak to the quality of their work. According to Graso and Probst, (2012), quantity of work refers to a sheer volume or number of tasks completed within a given time period. It focuses purely on output without considering how well the tasks were done. A high quantity of work might indicate an employee is able to churn out a lot of work, but it does not guarantee that the work is of high quality or done efficiently.

Previous studies such as Dhamija et al., (2019); Berhe et al., (2017); Graso and Probst, (2012); Iqbal et al., (2015); Abimbola,(2017); Otieno and Njoroge, (2019); Hundie and Habtewold, (2024); and Kuswati, (2020) measured employee performance using quality of work, productivity, and quantity of work as measurements but in different contexts and employed different methodologies.

1.1.3 Universities in Kenya

The Education and Training Sector is a key pillar in the realization of the essential knowledge required to advance the nation into a newly industrialized upper middle-income knowledge-based economy. The sector aims to provide quality education, training, and research for sustainable development that is globally competitive. Globally, universities have continued in being essential to social and economic development due to the supply of skilled labor and the dissemination of knowledge through research(Litsulitsa et al., 2024).

Universities which provide thorough global insights, is a vital instrument for creating a contemporary, educated, and cultured society(Albaroudi & Iqbal, 2024). According to Nawaz et al., (2024),Universities have historically been viewed as knowledge-producing entities or organizations that prioritize knowledge. The main commercial operations carried out by universities are knowledge-centered and include creating, sharing, and obtaining knowledge through research, education, and exchange. Acknowledging its critical function, countries all over the world allocate significant resources to fostering academic excellence, seeing education as a pillar of societal progress.

Well-Educated Citizens and Skills revolution underpinned by Science, Technology, and Innovation is the African Union's Agenda 2063 education goal. With an emphasis on

innovation, science, and technology, the Africa Union (AU) emphasizes the necessity of making large investments to support education reform in order to grow human and social capital. The African Union's Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA) highlights important priorities for education on the continent and is in line with Agenda 2063 (report of the presidential working party on education reforms, June 2023).

Kenya's history with higher education begins in 1922, when Kenya, Uganda, and Tanganyika were the three East African nations at the time, and the then-Makerere College in Uganda was founded as a minor technical college to serve their higher education needs (Mbithi et al., 2023). The main objectives of Kenya's educational system are to improve access, retention, equity, quality, relevance, and the overall efficiency of the sector.

According to University Statistics Report, (2023), the university subsector in Kenya has expanded rapidly from a single public university (the University of Nairobi) and a single private university (the USIU), to a total of 79 universities as per the categorization below; Chartered Public universities-37; Chartered Private universities-27; Private universities with Letters of Interim-7; Public university constituent Colleges-6, and Private university constituent colleges-2 with Students enrolment as follows; 421,567; 138,489; 5,608; 5,991; and 2,121 respectively totaling to 573,776 students in universities in Kenya. Making Kenya one of the countries in Africa with the largest number of higher universities in Africa.

The quality of university education has been affected by myriad of challenges. The leading challenges are inadequate teaching and learning facilities, declining funding, inadequate and poorly trained academic staff, misalignment of skills with the job market, ineffective partnership and collaboration with each other, increasing academic fraud and poor governance, and lack of accreditation by the commission. These challenges constitute major catalysts to the decreasing quality of education which are confronting universities in Africa in general and Kenya in particular (Mulinge et al., 2017).

According to Litsulitsa et al., (2024), universities in Kenya notably play a major role in the country's economic progress by providing many people with access to higher education and employment opportunities in both the formal and informal sectors. The university sector is one of the contributors to Gross Domestic Product (GDP). In the 2nd quarter of 2024 the sector contributed Ksh118,096m (Kenya-Quarterly-Gross-Domestic-Product-Second-Quarter-2024).

The legal framework for the establishment, regulation, and administration of a university in the country is provided by the University Act, 2012. The Commission for University Education (CUE) oversees university regulation. The Universities Act, No. 42 of 2012, an Act of Parliament, established CUE as a body corporate. According to Kay, (2014), business as usual is not enough because to the current issues crossing social, economic, environmental, and government arenas, as well as the scale of recent natural disasters. Higher education institutions (HEI) have the opportunity to lead change in this climate, and what better place to start than within our own walls by exemplifying exceptional leadership. The governance structure of most universities emanates from board of trustees, chancellor, university council, vice chancellor, university senate, management board, faculty council, directors, deans, academic and non-academic staff.

Due to significance of these institutions, managers and leaders must be effective in order to guarantee that workers are fully engaged at work and to see improvements in institutional performance, effective leadership is essential. According to Idowu, (2019), today's Universities require strong, effective and influential leaders who are aware of the challenges posed by the rapidly changing global educational environment. For employees to perform at their utmost best, these institutions need leaders who can adapt to different situations and possess various leadership styles that fit in every situation and at any given point in time. The success and failure of any institution depends on the leadership style practiced by the leaders of such institutions. This study focused on the 79 universities in Kenya which had a total number of 37,290 employees as this revealed how different leadership styles adopted in various universities influenced employee performance.

1.2 Problem statement

Universities are recognized throughout the world for embodying knowledge that can be used to inform public policy and solve economic, social, and political problems. However, these same institutions face a number of challenges, such as frequent strikes, slowdowns, and high employee turnouts, which have a negative impact on employee performance. This was the problem that prompted this study. The ever-evolving nature of technologies and the expansion of globalization have changed the expectations and behaviors of individuals inside an organization, making leadership behavior, qualities, and styles of current importance in many institutions (Kariuki and Wachira, 2017). According to Ukaidi, (2016), in many organizations, the lack of good leadership is a major issue. It goes without saying that this leads to poor

employee performance, lack of motivation, and inadequate institutional growth and development.

Globally, support for financial aid, rapidly rising tuition costs, declining appropriations, altered governance relationships, and a complex and global society that requires college graduates to develop new skills and capacities are just a few of the unprecedented challenges facing higher education in the United States and overseas(Chan, 2016).

Similarly, universities have encountered shortages in the placement of graduates in suitable skill areas, limited research outputs, insufficient university-industry linkages, and inadequate capacity building of university staff. Waste and inefficient use of resources have resulted from ineffective governance and management systems in these institutions. The effectiveness of the university depends on having capable leadership in the context of scientific research and higher education(Hijazi et al., 2017).

Several studies have been carried out linking various leadership styles to employee performance within different industries and geographies. According to Dahleez et al., (2023), the significance of leadership in universities and its influence on employee and organizational results have attracted attention in recent times. Specifically, the field of higher education confronts numerous issues in maintaining the standard of education, recruiting and keeping professors, and providing adequate funding due to globalization and local complexity.

Globally, Basit et al., (2017), looked at influence of leadership styles on employee performance(A case study on private organization in Malaysia) using convenience sampling design. The study concluded that when it comes to employee performance, democratic leadership has a bigger impact than autocratic and laissez-faire leadership. Finding the proper leader with high skill at all organizational levels is advised in order to endure in the competitive business world, particularly in Malaysia's public sectors. This was a methodological and contextual gaps that the current study sought to contribute to. Globally, Jiménez (2018) assessed leadership style, organizational performance, and change through the lens of emotional intelligence. The study included 180 managers from nonprofit company in Texas, USA. The findings showed relationship between the emotional intelligence flexibility subscale and the transformational style. This was a methodological, contextual and conceptual gaps that the current study sought to contribute to.

Globally, Al Khajeh,(2018), conducted a study on impact of leadership styles on organizational performance in United Arab Emirates, focusing on transformational, transactional, autocratic, charismatic, bureaucratic and democratic. The study found a negative correlation between organizational performance and transactional, bureaucratic, and charismatic leadership styles. On the other hand, there was a positive correlation between organizational success and transformational, autocratic, and democratic leadership styles. This study employed quantitative approach to gather primary data using questionnaire as instrument. This was a methodological, contextual and conceptual gap that the current study sought to contribute to.

Globally, Anbazhagan and Kotur, (2014), conducted a study on worker productivity, leadership style relationship in India. The study employed random sampling design selecting 127 workers. The discovered that the least productive employees have more laissez-faire leadership styles, the medium productive employees have more democratic leadership styles, and the more productive employees inclined toward the autocratic leadership style. Globally, Rahman et al. (2014) looked at leadership styles and performance of public sector organizations: The case of Saudi Arabia and result showed a significant effect of leadership style on the organizational performance. Leadership styles have a critical role in improving organizational performance in Saudi Arabian public organizations. This was a methodological, contextual and conceptual gap that the current study sought to contribute to.

Globally, Latifah et al., (2024) examined elements influencing job satisfaction and employee performance: a case study in a sharia-compliant real estate company in Indonesia . The study concentrated on elements like change management, job satisfaction, organizational commitment and leadership styles on employee performance. According to the study, change management negatively affected employee performance. Employee performance was not greatly impacted by job satisfaction. while organizational commitment and leadership styles positively affected performance. This was a methodological, contextual and conceptual gap that the current study sought to contribute to.

Regionally, Akparep et al., (2019) carried out research at the TumaKavi Development Association in Tamale, Ghana's Northern Region, on the impact of leadership style on organizational performance. The methodology employed was a qualitative case study. To sample the entire sample size, purposeful sampling was used. The study concluded that the organization uses democratic leadership style in its operations, which greatly improved the performance of the organization. The study also showed that organizational performance can

be impacted by leadership styles in both positive and negative ways. This was a methodological, contextual and conceptual gap that the current study sought to contribute to.

Regionally, Puni et al. (2014) studied the effect of leadership styles on firm performance in Ghana focusing on democratic, autocratic and laissez- faire as independent variable and financial performance as dependent variable of two Ghanaian banks. Non- probability sampling that is convenience and purposive were employed. They concluded that none of the leadership styles significantly predicted financial performance of the two banks. This creating a conceptual gap hence need for a further research. This was a methodological, contextual gap that the current study sought to contribute to.

Regionally, for example in Nigeria, according to Abimbola, (2017) while it is impossible to overstate the role that high-quality education plays in fostering nation building, effective leadership and management in educational institutions are prerequisites. The leadership style that the Nigerian university system chooses will have a significant impact on its performance. Effective leadership inspires workers to contribute to the development and enhancement of their respective organizations. Brain drain, financial difficulties, and inadequate facilities for teaching, research, and learning are all examples of how university governance in Nigeria today is nothing but crises management. The biggest problem facing Nigeria's university system's administration is inadequate funding.

Locally, Omar Ga'al, (2020) examined how leadership style affects employee performance in Somalia's higher education system: Mogadishu City, Somalia . Simple random sampling was used in the study to select 100 respondents and also purposive sampling applied to select qualified respondents. The research's conclusions found that, out of all the leadership styles adopted by Somalia's higher education institutions, laissez-faire leadership was the most common. The second most adopted by Somalia's universities was transactional leadership style followed by democratic leadership. Autocratic leadership was the least preferred model used by Somalian educational institutions. The study showed a significance relationship between leadership style and employee performance in institutions of higher learning in Mogadishu. This was a methodological and contextual gap that the current study sought to contribute to.

Locally, Kariuki and Wachira (2017) carried out a study on the effect of leadership styles on the performance of microfinance institutions in Nairobi, Kenya. The study found that democratic leader was the most preferred leadership style followed by transformational then

autocratic leadership. Transactional was the least preferred. The study concluded that leadership styles have an effect on performance at microfinance institutions. This was a methodological gap that the current study sought to contribute to. Locally, universities in Kenya are plagued by a number of issues including ineffective leadership and administrative directives that have caused the country's universities to be ranked poorly globally (Otieno and Njoroge,2019).

In light of the highlighted contextual, conceptual and methodological gaps that the current study sought to determine the influence of democratic, autocratic, and laissez-faire leadership styles on employee performance in universities in Kenya. Additionally, there are mixed findings among the authors as highlighted below necessitating the call for further research. Basit et al, (2017); Otieno and Njoroge(2019); Inderiene and Majauskaite(2016);Fiaz et al(2017); Toriqul et al., (2019)found that autocratic leadership style has negative effect on performance, still other authors like Idowu, (2019);found no significant relationship between autocratic and employee performance; Velu et al (2017); Chua et al.(2018); and Bhargavi and Yaseen (2016), found that autocratic style positively impact employee performance. (Idowu, 2019); (Basit et al., 2017) Hundie and Habtewold (2024); Otieno and Njoroge (2019);Fiaz et al (2017),found that laissez-faire leadership style has significant positive impact on employee performance while Velu et al (2017);and Khan & Adnan, (2014) found laissez-faire has negative influence on employee performance. Still Toriqul et al., (2019); and Chua et al., (2018) found out that laissez-faire style does not have effect on both employee and organizational performance. Tafesse and Mohammedhussen, (2020), who examined the correlation between leadership styles and employee dedication at Madaa University suggested that more research on the subject would be important, involving non-academic staff members from the university and other higher education institutions still pushing the call for further study on leadership styles and employee performance in the university context.

1.3 General Objective

The main objective of this study was to establish the influence of leadership styles on the employee performance in universities in Kenya.

1.3.1 Specific Objectives

- i. To determine the influence of autocratic leadership styles on employee performance in universities in Kenya

- ii. To determine the influence of democratic leadership styles on employee performance in universities in Kenya.
- iii. To determine the influence of laissez-faire leadership styles on employee performance in universities in Kenya.

1.3.2 Research Questions

- i. What is the influence of autocratic leadership style on employee performance in universities in Kenya?
- ii. What is the influence of democratic leadership style on employee performance in universities in Kenya?
- iii. What is the influence of laissez-faire leadership style on employee performance in universities in Kenya?

1.4 Scope of the study

The scope of this study was to determine the influence of leadership styles, notably autocratic, democratic and laissez-faire leadership styles on employee performance in universities in Kenya. This study's target population comprised of 79 universities in Kenya which include; Institutions having a letter of interim authority, public chartered universities, private chartered universities, and private university constituent colleges focusing on teaching and non-teaching employees working at these various universities as unit of analysis. The study data collected primary data through questionnaires employed a descriptive cross-sectional research design. The study was carried out in four weeks.

1.5 Significance of the study

This study will be pertinent since it would add and educate the body of information regarding the relationship between leadership styles and university employee performance. It will also inform universities on the best leadership style to adopt to optimize employee performance which in turn affects organizational performance. Employees will find this research useful in determining which leadership style best suits their needs in terms of career achievement and job satisfaction. It might be significant for leaders to comprehend the many styles of leadership that affect worker performance and how effective leadership can inspire workers.

Policymakers and regulatory bodies involved in overseeing the university education sector can benefit from this study by gaining a deeper understanding of how leadership styles influence employee performance within the sector. The findings can inform policy development and

regulatory frameworks to create an enabling environment for employees in Universities in Kenya. Policymakers such as the Commission for University Education and Ministry of Education can use the insights to design interventions and support mechanisms that promote the success and impact of the sector.

The study will contribute to the academic and research community by filling the existing research gap on the influence of leadership styles on employee performance in Universities in Kenya. The findings will add to the body of knowledge on leadership styles and employee performance, particularly universities in Kenya. Researchers can build upon these findings to further determine related topics and expand the understanding of the factors that influence employee performance within university education sector.

The theoretical significance of this study is that it helps explain and assess leadership effectiveness based on the adaptability of leaders to the needs of their team members and the specific context of the situation and the ability of goal-setting theory to explain how setting specific and challenging goals can enhance individual and organizational performance. The result of this study will also help people in leadership and managerial positions to become conscious of the roles they play as impelling cause towards employee performance. It is also believed that the work will stimulate further interests in future researches and will add to already existing body of knowledge on leadership styles and employee performance which will serve as reference materials to scholars and researchers who may be interested in embarking on a research of this nature.

1.6 Chapter Summary

The chapter presents the study's background, including the industry background and the conceptualization of the study variables. The part next examines the problem statement, which explains why the study is necessary. It draws attention to the study topics, general objectives, and specific objectives. Additionally, the chapter describes the study's significance and scope.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This section of the study laid out the theoretical review as well as empirical literature studies that have been done relative to the objectives of this study. Finally, it pointed out the summary of the research gaps and conceptual framework of the study.

2.2 Theoretical Review

According to Creswell et al., (2018), a theory is a collection of interconnected variables, definitions, and propositions that presents a systematic view of phenomena by specifying relations among variables. In quantitative research, theories offer a suggested explanation for the link between variables the researcher is testing, and the theoretical framework presents and explains the ideas that will serve as the foundation for the current study. Theories that anchored this current study are; situational leadership theory, and goal-setting theory.

2.2.1 Situational leadership theory

According to Northouse, (2010), Hersey and Blanchard developed this theory in 1969. The theory has been refined and revised severally by Blanchard, Zigarmi and Nelson,1993; Blanchard, Zigarmi and Zigarmi,1985; Hersey and Blanchard,1977,1988. Situational theory proposes that leaders choose the best course of action based upon situational circumstances. Different styles of leadership may be more appropriate for different types of decision-making. For example, in a situation where the leader is expected to be the most knowledgeable and experienced member of a group, an autocratic style of leadership might be most appropriate. In other instances, where group members are skilled experts and expect to be treated as such, a democratic style may be more effective and still where employees are expected to self-manage their work without constant guidance and involvement by their supervisor, laissez-faire leadership style will be more effective(Amanchukwu et al., 2015)

According to Northouse, (2010), situational leadership focuses on leadership in situations. It depends on context. This theory states that leaders should be able to diagnose and identify the problem first, then determine the best leadership style for the circumstance, and finally put that style into practice. According to situational theory, there is no one perfect way to lead; rather, all leadership philosophies are appropriate for different circumstances, and a leader's success

is determined by his capacity to modify his approach accordingly. The theory's underlying assumption is that various circumstances call for various styles of leadership.

Successful leaders are able to identify the demands of their workforce and modify their approach accordingly. Among its numerous advantages are its practicality, emphasis on leader adaptability, durability in the marketplace, and, lastly, its prescriptive value. Despite extensive strengths of situational theory, it has some criticisms which include; only a few research studies have been conducted to justify the assumptions and propositions set forth by the theory; and it fails to account for how certain demographic characteristics influence the leader-subordinate prescriptions of the model(Northouse, 2010). Additionally, McCleskey, (2014) still pointed out some flaws to this theory. He described three weaknesses which are lack of internal consistency, conceptual contradictions, and ambiguities.

In this study, the situational leadership supported independent variable that is leadership styles. Effective leaders act in ways that are appropriate for the circumstances. There is no just one ideal leadership approach that works in every circumstance. Therefore, in order to achieve continuous increased productivity and the accomplishment of overall corporate objectives, as well as improvements in employee motivation, job satisfaction, career advancement, and organizational responsiveness to stakeholders' expectations, leaders should exhibit the behavior that will have the greatest positive impact on employees' performance(Mohammed et al., 2014) This theory was useful to this study because the leader must carefully study the current situation of the organization before deciding on the style of leadership to adopt and implement.

2.2.2 Goal-Setting Theory

This theory was first proposed by Edwin Locke and Gary Latham in 1970. The theory has gone through several revisions in 1984 and 1990. According to Miner, (2015), Goal-setting theory improves organizational effectiveness and performance. The theory posits that setting specific, clear, and challenging goals significantly improves performance and motivation, especially when individuals receive feedback and are committed to the goals. The theory emphasizes the important relationship between goals and performance. Goals have a pervasive influence on employee behavior and performance in organizations and management practice. Leaders play important roles when it comes to setting these goals. According to Locke & Latham, (2019), goals tend to guide leaders and employees in a company toward predetermined performance targets. Organizational goals also establish performance standards; therefore, performance standards are evaluated to see whether the goals have been met. Goal-Setting theory posits a

positive linear relationship between goal difficulty and performance. When an individual had specific goals of performance to meet, the performance effect would be more pronounced than when specific goals were lacking.

In order to provide workers with motivation and meaning, leaders of organizations should establish clear, difficult goals. Organizational leaders can improve organizational performance by using more difficult targets to motivate staff to perform better in a variety of areas, including personal duties. Goals energize performance by motivating people to exert effort in line with the demands of the goal, motivate people to persist in activities over time, and direct people's attention away from non-goal-relevant activities and toward relevant outcomes. According to the goal setting theory, leaders tend to increase their employees' commitment to performance by setting challenging goals (Otieno & Njoroge, 2019), which in turn enhance quality of work, productivity and quantity of work achieved. Despite its wide use, this theory has been critiqued on how a narrow focus on specific goals could lead to cognitive overload and neglect of other important but unmeasured aspects of performance. overly specific goals could cause individuals to overlook important ethical considerations or broader organizational objectives (Lunenburg, 2011).

In this study, the goal-setting theory anchored dependent variable that is employee performance. The theory highlighted the crucial relationship between performance and goals. It underscores the importance of aligning goals with individual and organizational capabilities to maximize performance outcomes. The performance outcomes which are quality of work, productivity and quantity of work that this study used to measure the dependent variable that is employee performance. Studies back up the idea that the best performance appears to occur when objectives and goals are clear and difficult, when they are utilized to assess performance and connected to feedback on outcomes, and when they foster acceptance and commitment. In organizations, goals have a profound impact on management practices as well as employee behavior and performance. In addition, Lunenburg, (2011) indicated that managers widely accept goal setting as a means to improve and sustain performance. The main conclusion of goal-setting, which has been the subject of hundreds of research, is that people who are given clear, challenging, but achievable goals outperform those who are given vague, easy, or no goals at all.

2.3. Empirical Review

This section reviews the existing literature on the leadership styles and employee performance which the current study will be based on. The review will focus on democratic, autocratic and laissez-faire leadership styles as guided by the specific research objectives of this study.

2.3.1 Democratic Leadership Style and Employee Performance

Democratic leadership is a type of leadership style where a leader encourages group decision making, fostering improved morale through participation, involvement and consensus however the final decision remains with the leader (Uzoyare and Adio, 2022). In democratic style of leadership, subordinates participate in the decision-making process and conclusions are reached by consensus. The boss listens to subordinates, and meetings are regularly planned. The goal of this leadership approach is to foster accountability, adaptability, and positive morale. Because they participate in both the planning and decision-making processes, staff members have a propensity to be more realistic about what is and is not feasible. This approach includes the participant in the decision-making process with workers determining what to do and how to do so. Nevertheless, the chief holds the responsibility for final decision-making (Khuong and Hoang, 2015).

The democratic leader takes in one or more employees when decision making is necessary, yet the leader typically makes all the decisions and retains the final decision, which establishes the leader's authority (Bhargavi and Yaseen 2016). A leader that practices democratic leadership fosters better morale through collaborative decision-making and consensus-building, but ultimately retains control over the outcome. Members of the group actively participate in decision-making under democratic leadership, also known as participatory leadership. This type of style focuses on people and success (Uzoyare and Adio, 2022).

Globally, Basit, et al (2017) conducted a research on Impact of leadership style on employee performance (a Case study on a private organization in Malaysia) and the findings were that democratic leadership style has a significant positive impact on employee performance. This suggests that employee performance would increase with the application of a democratic style.

Globally, an quantitative study by Agarwal (2019) on leadership styles and performance of employees in 5 banking institutions in United Arab Emirates focusing on democratic and transformational leadership revealed that democratic and transformational leadership have a

positive relationship with the performance of employees. This positive relationship helps banking sector to achieve its objectives and promotes the performance of employees.

Globally, A study conducted by Dastane, (2020) in Malaysia on impact of leadership styles on employee: a moderating role of gender found out that democratic leadership style has a positive and significant relationship toward employee performance. Globally, Toriqul et al., (2019) did a study on the impact of autocratic, democratic, laissez-faire leadership styles on the success of the organization: A study on the different popular restaurants of Mymensingh, Bangladesh and the study found out that democratic leadership style a strong affirmative impact on the organizational performance.

Globally, Chua et al., (2018) also conducted a study in Malaysia from services sector around Klang Valley adopting non-probability convenient sampling method on leadership styles and its impact on employee performance and the results showed that democratic leadership style positive and significant impact on the employee performance. This implies that highly distinctive leaders have a greater impact on worker performance since it is more noticeable in their interactions with the direct supervisor. Therefore, in order to get the highest degree of work performance and long-term success, leaders could implement creative ideas while utilizing an appropriate leadership style.

Additionally, Bhargavi and Yaseen (2016) examined the impact of democratic leadership on organizational performance in the United Arab Emirates. Their research demonstrates that democratic leadership improves organizational performance by enabling staff members to share and act upon their original concepts and participate in the decision-making process. Since not much has been done in this area, this research calls for a review of the impact of democratic leadership style on employee performance in universities in Kenya.

Globally, Hikmat and Ghorbandi, (2024) investigated the effect of democratic leadership styles on corporate performance Afghanistan focusing on private sector. Findings indicated that democratic leadership style positively affects employee performance, business development, skills enhancement, productivity, and morale. This style also allows employees to contribute to daily operations, supports work-life balance, and improves employee retention rates. This was a contextual gap since the study was conducted in Afghanistan but the current study focused in academic sector in Kenya.

Globally, Mughal et al., (2023), examined the impact of leadership styles on employees' performance at the Board of Revenue Sindh in Pakistan. The quantitative research design was adopted by conducting a survey using a questionnaire. The purposive random sampling, a non-probability sampling, was employed for data collection. The findings suggested democratic leadership style significantly positively impact employees' performance at the Board of Revenue Sindh. This is a conceptual gap since the current study adopted stratified sampling methodology and the context is Kenya creating contextual gap.

Regionally, Igbaekemen, (2014) conducted a study on impact of leadership style on organization performance in Nigeria and according to the results, the best leadership styles are democratic or participative ones because of the advantages that employees would experience and the overall impact they will have on the organization. A study led by Khuong and Hoang, (2015) centered on influence of leadership on organizational success majoring on insurance plc in Lagos and found out leadership style focus on democratic approach facilitates standard work performance among employees.

Regionally, Asare and Korang, (2024) took a study on democratic leadership style and performance of administrative staff in selected universities in the Bono Region of Ghana. Random sampling was used to select respondents. The findings of the research revealed that democratic leadership style has a significant positive impact on the performance of administrative staff members at selected universities. the study highlighted that democratic leadership fosters strong employee synergy through participation in decision-making, teamwork, and cooperation, all of which contribute to enhanced performance.

2.3.2 Autocratic Leadership Style and Employee Performance

Veliu et al., (2017) defined autocratic leader is someone who is acutely aware of his position and lacks faith in their subordinates. He thinks that compensation is a fair prize for labor and that motivation comes exclusively from the reward itself. They provide clear expectations for what needs to be done, when it should be done, and how it should be done. They make decisions independently with little or no input from the rest of the group. According to Fiaz et al. (2017), autocratic leadership style prioritizes performance over people. All group interactions are directed toward the leader, who is the center of authority.

According to Amini et al. (2019), the autocratic leadership style is also known as authoritative leadership style. Autocratic leaders are classic, commanding and bossy in nature; they want

their employees to work according to their orders. Autocratic leadership limits the workplace socialization and communication which is necessary for effective employee performance. This approach is used when leaders say what they want to do to their staff and how they want it to be done without their followers' guidance. According to Bhargavi and Yaseen (2016), autocratic leaders order their followers on what they have to do and how it should be done without receiving any feedback or advice. This could affect the productivity of the employees.

Iqbal N at el (2015) described this type of leaders as those who give orders and expect instant obedient without argument. Plans and policies are made in isolation from the group. Orders are given without explanation for the reasons or of future intentions. The autocratic leaders do not become part of them at all, but merely direct it. In this style, the leader gives order and insists they must be carried out.

Globally, Mughal et al., (2023), examined the impact of leadership styles on employees' performance at the Board of Revenue Sindh in Pakistan. The quantitative research design was adopted by conducting a survey using a questionnaire. The purposive random sampling, a non-probability sampling, was employed for data collection. The findings suggested autocratic leadership style significantly positively impact employees' performance at the Board of Revenue Sindh. This is a conceptual gap since the current study adopted stratified sampling methodology and the context is Kenya creating contextual gap.

Fiaz et al. (2017), conducted a research titled leadership styles and employee motivation; perspective from an emerging economy in Pakistan. This study focused on autocratic, democratic and laissez-faire. The study used stratified sampling technique to gather data from 110 middle and high level managers. The findings showed that autocratic leadership style was found to be more prevalent in organizations in Pakistan and style has a negative relationship with employee motivation which in turn may adversely affect performance. Bhargavi and Yaseen,(2016) conducted an investigation on the relationship between leadership styles and organizational performance and found that an autocratic style of leadership improves organizational performance and is better suited for projects that must be finished by specified dates.

Iqbal et al., (2015) conducted a research on the effect of leadership style on employee performance, and concluded that autocratic leadership style enhances organizational conflicts which negatively impact the overall performance of the organization. Autocratic leadership is

useful only in the short term. Igbaekemen, (2015) According to a study on how leadership style affects an organization's performance, autocratic leadership is also referred to as authoritarian leadership. Autocratic leaders are less innovative and only encourage one-sided dialogue, which negatively impacts employee motivation and satisfaction. Autocratic leadership hinders friendly workplace interactions and communication, which are essential for effective organizational performance.

Basit et al, (2017) conducted a research on Impact of leadership style on employee performance (a Case study on a private organization in Malaysia) and the findings were that autocratic leadership style has a significant negative impact on employee performance. This indicates the performance of employees will be adversely affected when autocratic leadership style is applied. A study conducted by Dastane, (2020) in Malaysia on impact of leadership styles on employee: a moderating role of gender found out that autocratic leadership style has insignificant relationship toward employee performance. In contrast, Kotur and Anbazhagan, (2014) study on influence of leadership styles on self-performance in India revealed that workers with autocratic leadership styles give more performance than other leadership styles like democratic and laissez- faire.

Alonderiene and Majauskaite,(2016), conducted a study on the relationship between leadership style and job satisfaction in European public and private universities in Lithuania. The results showed that the autocratic style had the least effect on job satisfaction. Furthermore, Idowu, (2019) conducted a study on impact of leadership styles' work performance in some selected South-Western Nigeria private universities and findings revealed that autocratic style has no significant relationship with employees' work performance. Toriqul et al., (2019) did a study on the impact of autocratic ,democratic,laissez-faire leadership styles on the success of the organization: A study on the different popular restaurants of Mymensingh, Bangladesh and the study found out that autocratic leadership style has a significant negative impact on the organizational performance. Conversely, Chua et al., (2018) who conducted a study in Malaysia from services sector around Klang Valley adopting non-probability convenient sampling method on leadership styles and its impact on employee performance and the results showed that autocratic leadership style positive and significant impact on the employee performance.

2.3.3 Laissez-Faire Leadership and Employee Performance

Laissez-faire leadership, which is defined as passive leadership, gives employees the highest degree of freedom and autonomy while limiting the leaders' involvement and intervention in their work(Uzoyare and Adio, 2022). Laissez faire, which translates to let it be in French, is also known as "hands off style(Uzoyare and Adio, 2022). It describes leaders who let their team members work independently. This is can be employed when it is necessary for employees to assess and determine the situation and to decide what needs to be done and in which manner.

Laissez-faire leadership style entails giving employees the freedom and responsibility to set their own objectives, with the manager giving them little or no guidance(Veliu et al., 2017). A leader practicing laissez-faire leadership participates little in the process of making a decision. This style involves giving staff members significant decision-making responsibilities, but the leader nonetheless bears the blame in the event that an employee makes a mistake. Laissez faire leadership style is neither on performance nor people(Fiaz et al., 2017).

According to Idowu, (2019), Laissez-faire leadership, or non-leadership, is a term used to characterize leaders who refrain from being involved when significant problems emerge. This leader will set an objective for the followers, leave it up to them to use their abilities to accomplish it; the leader's only responsibility will be to provide the means. Laissez-faire leaders also evade accountability, neglect followers' needs, fail to give feedback, and postpone making decisions.

Globally, Mughal et al., (2023), examined the impact of leadership styles on employees' performance at the Board of Revenue Sindh in Pakistan. The quantitative research design was adopted by conducting a survey using a questionnaire. The purposive random sampling, a non-probability sampling, was employed for data collection. The findings suggested laissez-faire leadership style significantly positively impact employees' performance at the Board of Revenue Sindh. This is a conceptual gap since the current study adopted stratified sampling methodology and the context is Kenya creating contextual gap.

According to (Koech and Namusonge, 2012), The study on the impact of leadership styles on organizational performance at Kenyan state corporations found no meaningful correlations between performance and laissez-faire style. Idowu, (2019) conducted a study on impact of leadership styles on workers' productivity at a few South-Western Nigeria private universities

and findings revealed that laissez-faire leadership style has significant positive relationship with employees' work performance.

Khan and Adnan, (2014), carried out a study on how leadership styles affect organizational performance in Pakistan, focusing on service and manufacturing companies. The study, which concentrated on transactional, transformational, and laissez-faire leadership styles, found that laissez-faire has a negative impact on organizational performance. In certain situations, a laissez-faire approach could be necessary, however brief and limited. The leader may therefore need to use a hybrid style of leadership. The leadership style has a significant influence on the organization's performance.

Basit et al., (2017) conducted a research on Impact of leadership style on employee performance (a Case study on a private organization in Malaysia) and the results showed that a laissez-faire leadership style has a positive impact employee performance. This indicates that when this leadership style is used, employee performance will rise. A moderate approach to leadership is thought to be the laissez-faire style. A study conducted by Dastane, (2020) in Malaysia on impact of leadership styles on employee: a moderating role of gender found out that laissez-faire leadership style has a positive and significant relationship toward employee performance.

Regionally, Malcalm and Tamatey, (2017), using a case study of Ghana atomic energy commission, conducted a research on examining leadership styles on employee performance in the public sector of Ghana concentrated on the transformational, transactional and laissez-faire styles. This study used both qualitative and quantitative methodology. The research used simple random sampling and, purposive and convenience sampling techniques. The results showed that laissez-faire leadership style has effect on employee performance.

Equally, Hundie and Habtewold, (2024) carried research on the effect of transformational, transactional, and Laissez-Faire Leadership Styles on employees' level of performance: The Case of Hospital in Oromia Region, Ethiopia and findings showed the performance of employees and a laissez-faire leadership style are significantly correlated. In contrast, Toriquel et al., (2019) did a study on the impact of autocratic, democratic, laissez-faire leadership styles on the success of the organization: A study on the different popular restaurants of Mymensingh, Bangladesh and the study found out that laissez-faire leadership style does not affect the organization outcomes. Additionally, Chua et al., (2018) also conducted a study in Malaysia

from services sector around Klang Valley adopting non-probability convenient sampling method on leadership styles and its impact on employee performance and the results showed that laissez-faire leadership style has no significant influence on the employee performance.

Locally, Lale and Kebede, (2022) conducted a study in Ethiopia on the influence of leadership styles on Micro and Small Enterprises' Performance: The Case of Worabie Town, Siltie Zone. The research employed both quantitative and qualitative data, which is a mixed approach. Simple random sampling was employed for respondents' selection. Findings indicated that Laissez-fair leadership style showed a significant and negative influence on MSEs' performance.

2.4 Summary of Knowledge Gaps

The existing literature revealed several notable research gaps that are both contextual, conceptual, and methodological in nature, indicating the need for further investigation. Numerous studies have been conducted to determine the influence of leadership styles on employee performance; however, these studies presented varied findings. For example, Velu et al (2017), Fiaz et al (2017), Igbaekemen, (2014), Bhargavi and Yaseen (2016); (2019), Chua et al., (2018) found that democratic leadership style has positive influence on performance, Iqbal et al. (2015), Basit et al, (2017), Fiaz et al(2017); Toriqul et al., (2019) found that autocratic leadership style has negative effect on performance, still other authors like Idowu, (2019), found no significant relationship between autocratic and employee performance; Velu et al (2017), Chua et al., (2018) and found that autocratic style positively impact employee performance; (Idowu, 2019), (Basit et al., 2017) Hundie and Habtewold, (2024), , Fiaz et al (2017), found that laissez-faire leadership style has significant positive impact on employee performance while Velu et al (2017), and Khan and Adnan, (2014) found laissez-faire has negative influence on employee performance.

Table 2. 1 Summary Research Gap Table

Author	Focus of study	Findings	Research Gap	Focus of current Study
Veliu et al (2017)	Influence of leadership on employee performance	Democratic, autocratic and transformational positively impacted level of performance. Charismatic, bureaucratic, laissez-faire and transaction have negative impact.	The context of this study is at Kosovo in Europe. Focused on small and large medium enterprises	Contextually, current study focused on universities in Kenya.
Otieno and Njoroge(2019)	Leadership styles' effects on employee performance: Technical University of Kenya case study	Transformational and transactional positively affect performance. Autocratic has negative effect on performance while laissez-faire is insignificantly and positively affect employee performance	The study focused on one public university in Kenya	Current study focused on both public and private universities. Study also focused on democratic which was not studied in previous study.
Odunlami et al(2017)	A study of a few private universities in Ogun State, Nigeria, examining the impact of leadership styles on employee performance	Employee performance is negatively and negligibly impacted by transactional style, but it is positively and significantly impacted by transformational and charismatic styles.	The context of this study was Nigeria focusing on only selected private universities.	Contextually, the current research concentrated on both private and public universities in Kenya. Conceptually, the study focused on autocratic, democratic and laissez-faire.

Hijazi et al (2017)	Leadership styles & their relationship with the private employees' job satisfaction	Employee and transformational job satisfaction was significant and positive. Employees and transactional were negative and substantial.	The context of this study was United Arab Emirates. Focused on private university. Only focused on transformational and transactional	Contextually, this research concentrated on both private and public universities in Kenya. Conceptually, the current focused on autocratic, democratic and laissez-faire.
Alonderiene and Majauskaitė(2015)	Leadership styles and work fulfillment in universities	Autocratic leadership has the least beneficial effect on job satisfaction, whereas servant leadership has the greatest positive impact on job fulfillment.	The context in Lithuania in Europe.	Contextually, current stud covered both private and public universities in Kenya. Conceptually, the current focused on autocratic, democratic and laissez-faire on employee performance.
Fiaz et al (2017)	Leadership styles and employees motivation from emerging economy	Autocratic results in lack motivation. Laissez-faire and democratic enhance productivity	The context in Pakistan and employee's motivation as dependent variable	Contextually, current study focused on universities in Kenya. Conceptually, employee performance was the dependent variable.
Idowu(2019)	Leadership styles' impact on employee performance at some private institutions in South-Western Nigeria	Transformational, transactional and laissez-faire have significant positive impact on employee performance. There is no positive correlation between employee work performance and an autocratic style.	Context was selected Nigerian private universities adopting purposive sampling technique.	Methodologically, the current adopted stratified method. Contextually, the current study focused on private and public universities in Kenya.
Iqbal et al (2015)	Effect of leadership styles on employee performance	Autocratic is useful in short term. Democratic leadership is useful in all time horizon.	Context was Pakistan focused on tractor factory. Method used was qualitative	Methodologically, current study adopted quantitative method. Contextually, study focused on universities in Kenya.

Dastane (2020)	Impact of leadership styles on employee performance: a moderating role of gender	Democratic and Laissez-faire have a positive relationship with employee performance while autocratic has insignificant relationship	The context of this was in Malaysia using Convenience sampling.	Contextually and methodologically, study focused in Kenya using quantitative approach.
Toriqul (2019)	The impact of autocratic, democratic, and laissez-faire leadership styles on the success of the organization:	Democratic leadership style has a strong affirmative impact on the organizational performance. Autocratic has a significant negative impact on the organizational success. Laissez-faire does not affect organizations outcomes.	The context of this study was Bangladesh focusing organizational performance in restaurants	Contextually and conceptually, the study focused in universities in Kenya focusing in employee performance.
Chua et al., (2018)	Leadership styles and its impact on employee performance	Democratic and autocratic leadership styles have positive and significant impact on employee performance.	The context was Malaysia service sector using convenience sampling method.	Contextually and methodologically, this study focused on universities in Kenya and adopted quantitative sampling method.

(Source: Researcher 2025)

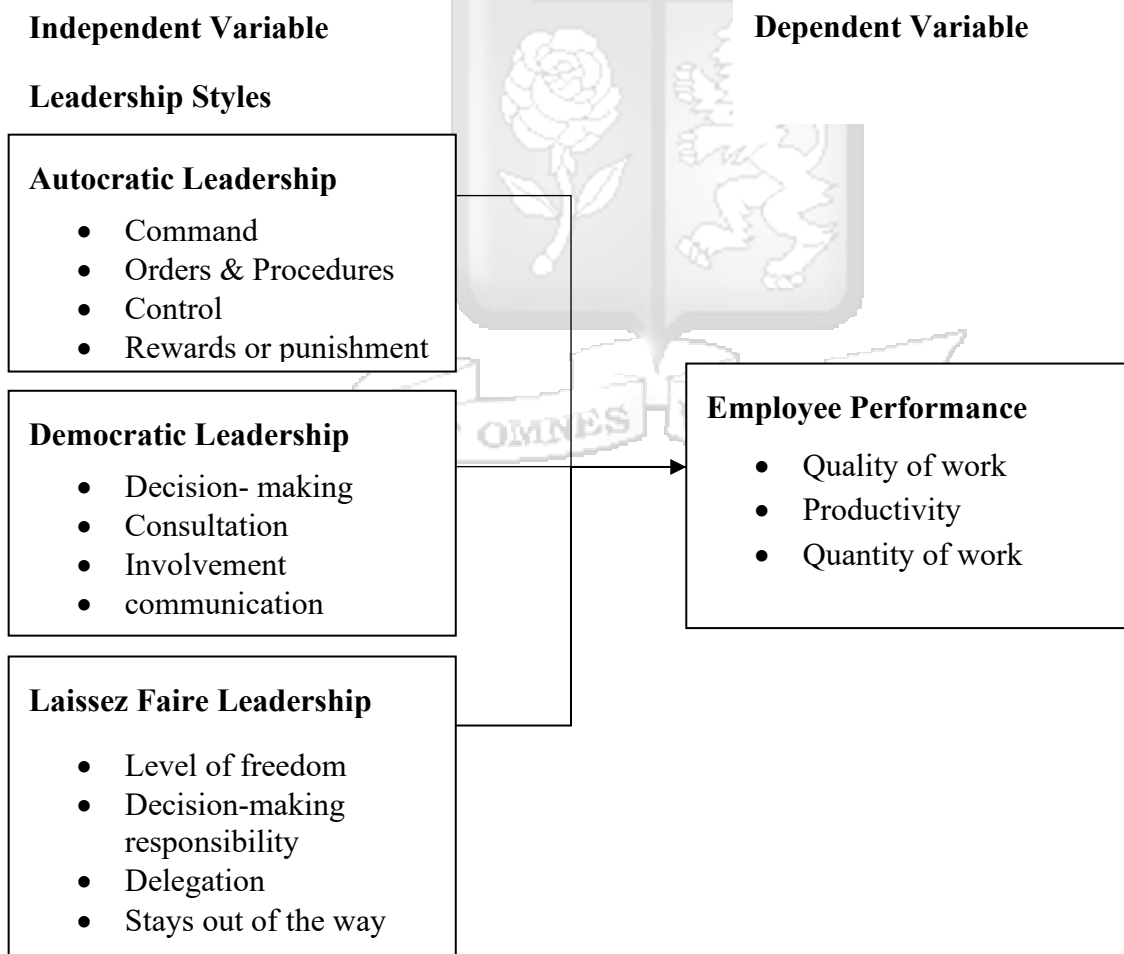


2.5 Conceptual Framework

This section diagrammatically represents the independent and dependent variables namely leadership styles which were autocratic, democratic and laissez-faire as the independent variables while employee performance as the dependent variable. The figure below highlighted the relationship between the different variables of this study based on the three research objectives.

This study's selection of variables to gauge employee performance was made in light of previous studies conducted. According to Iqbal, et al (2015), democratic leadership has been accepted as an independent variable. Another variable that was adopted as an independent one was autocratic leadership (Akor, 2014; Iqbal, et al, 2015). Another independent variable that was included was laissez-faire leadership (Wang and Huynh, 2013). The measures in Figure 2.1 were determined by previous scholarly work done.

Figure 2. 1 Conceptual framework



(Source: Researcher 2025)

2.6 Operationalization of study variables

This section will operationalize the independent and the dependent variable narrating how each will be measured as well as mentioning the sources of these variables based on the literature that are reviewed.

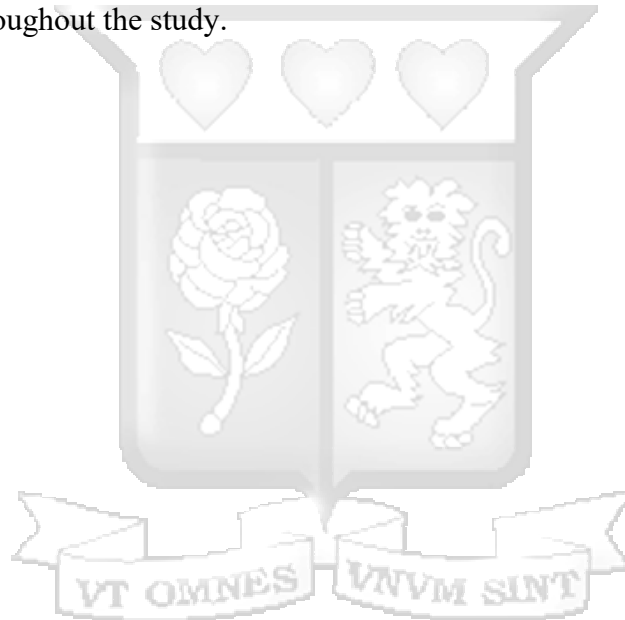
Table 2. 2 Operationalization of the study variables

Variable	Type of Variable	Indicator	Measurements	Supporting Literature
Autocratic Leadership	Independent	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Commanding 2. Orders and procedures 3. Control 4. Reward or punishment 	A 5 Likert Scale	Al Khajeh, (2018); Otieno and Njoroge (2019); Toriqul (2019);Anbazhagan and Kotur (2014);Bhargavi and Yaseen (2016)
Democratic Leadership	Independent	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Decision-making 3. Consultation 4. Involvement 5. communication 	A 5 Likert Scale	Al Khajeh, (2018); Iqbal, at el. (2015); Otieno Njoroge (2019); Toriqul (2019); Anbazhagan and Kotur (2014); Bhargavi and Yaseen (2016)
Laissez Faire Leadership	Independent	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Level of freedom 2. Decision-making responsibility 3. Delegation 4. Stay out of the way 	A 5 Likert Scale	Kiiragura, (2016);Khan et al (2014);Idowu (2019);Toriqul (2019);Fiaz et al (2017);Basit et al (2017)
Employee Performance	Dependent	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Quality of work 2. Quantity of work 3. Productivity 	A 5 Likert Scale	Iqbal, at el. (2015); Ali et al (2020); Khan et al (2014); Kuswati (2020); Veliu et al (2017); Hundie and Habtewold (2024); Otieno and Njoroge (2019).

(Source: Researcher 2025)

2.7 Chapter Summary

The theories anchoring the study, the empirical findings on independent and dependent variables, research gaps, conceptual framework supporting the proposed research, the operationalization of research variables, and a thorough review of the relevant literature are all included in this chapter. Three theories that are relevant to the study's research topic are described in brief in the theoretical review section, along with how they relate to the subject of the study. The empirical research done in the study's area of interest is summarized in the empirical review section. Additionally, this part points out gaps in the body of literature and argues for the necessity of more study in the field. The conceptual framework wraps off by offering a graphic depiction of the key ideas and relationships that will be looked at throughout the study.



CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The research methodology outlined the framework that was used by the researcher to gather and process data. This chapter included research philosophy, research design, population of the study, sampling design, data collection tools, operationalization of study variables, the data collection process that was used, the data analysis and the ethical issues.

3.2 Research Philosophy

According to Saunders et al (2009), Research Philosophy is the over-arching term that relates to the development of knowledge and the nature of that knowledge. Ontology, Epistemology, and Axiology are the three main tenets of research philosophy. While epistemology investigates knowledge, what constitutes acceptable, true, and legitimate knowledge, and how we might communicate information to others, ontology deals with the nature of reality, and axiology studies judgments about value.

According to Kothari, (2004), Research have several philosophical standpoints and these include Positivism, Critical Realism, Pragmatism and interpretivism. An epistemological stance known as positivism promotes the use of natural science techniques to investigate social reality and other topics. It is always referred as scientific method, quantitative research, or empirical science. This philosophy advocates for quantitative research methodology. Interpretivism holds that all access to reality is socially created. Interpretive researchers try to explain events through meanings that people attribute to individuals rather than seeking an objective, bias-free reality. Interpretivism highlights how meaning-making distinguishes people from physical phenomena. Consequently, the interpretivism approach gives actors' meanings and behaviors top priority. This school of thought uses a qualitative research methodology. Explaining what we see and feel in terms of the fundamental reality structures that influence the observable events is the main goal of critical realism. Philosophy employs a qualitative research methodology. The pragmatic viewpoint emphasizes how crucial it is to solve problems practically and apply research to make advances in the actual world. Abstract distinctions are less important to pragmatics than real-world results. This method promotes the use of both qualitative and quantitative techniques.

This research adopted positivism as a philosophy that emphasized the objective reality of the external world and sought to discover relationships through empirical observation and measurement.

Positivism is an epistemic stance that supports the use of natural science techniques to investigate social reality and other topics (Bryman and Bell, 2011). Positivism emphasizes on quantifiable observation that lend themselves to statistical analysis. Therefore, this study quantified the influence of leadership styles on employee performance using measurable indicators and this was the justification for the study using positivism.

3.3 Research Design

Creswell et al., (2018) described research designs as forms of investigation that offer direction for study methods within qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methodology approaches. According to Bryman and Bell, (2011), a research design provides a framework for the collection and analysis of data. Kothari, (2004) defines a research design as the setup of parameters for data collection and analysis with the goal of balancing procedural economy with relevance to the study's goal. It serves as the guide for gathering, measuring, and analysing data. This study adopted a descriptive cross-sectional research design which aligned with the study's objective of determining the relationships between leadership styles and employee performance in universities in Kenya. The aim of descriptive research is to describe a phenomenon and its characteristics(Nassaji, 2015).

Nassaji, (2015) highlights how the cross-sectional survey approach preserves the integrity of observations while enabling thorough definition and description of observed occurrences and features. Without changing the independent variable, this design is appropriate for the study's goal of examining these relationships at a particular time horizon. This study design has effectively addressed the research topic and allowed for a thorough analysis of the connection between employee performance and leadership styles in universities in Kenya.

3.4 Population of the Study

According to Andrade, (2021), a population is the complete group being studied by the researcher, from which the sample is taken. The population of a study is the sum total of the elements of the target area the researcher intends to investigate. It is the universe in which a researcher is interested, and it represents the entire elements in a specified boundary at a particular period of time(Majid, 2018).

This study's target population comprised universities in Kenya which include; Institutions having a letter of interim authority, public chartered universities, private chartered universities, and private university constituent colleges. Universities in Kenya are registered and regulated by Commission

for University Education(CUE). According to CUE, there are 79 universities as of June 2024 report. This study focused on the 79 universities in Kenya which had a total number of 37,290 employees.

Table 3. 1 Target Population

No.	Category	Total Number
1.	Public Chartered Universities	37
2.	Public University Constituent Colleges	6
3.	Private Chartered Universities	27
4.	Private University Constituent Colleges	2
5.	Institutions with Letters of Interim Authority	7
	Total	79

(CUE June 2024 Report)

3.5 Sampling Design

Sampling is the process of choosing a statistically representative sample of individuals from the population of interest. Because the community of interest typically comprises numerous individuals for any study effort to involve as participants, sampling is a crucial tool for investigations(Majid, 2018). According to Kothari, (2004) a sampling design is an established method for choosing a sample from a given population. It describes the approach or procedure the researcher would adopt in selecting items for the sample.

Stratified sampling, also referred to as proportionate random sampling was adopted as the sampling design in this investigation. Using a probability sample technique, the individuals are first categorized according to factors like gender, age, and socioeconomic position. A variation of random sampling known as stratified random sampling divides the population into two or more substantial and pertinent strata according to one or more characteristics. The sampling frame is divided into several subsets(Bryana and Bell, 2011).According to Kothari, (2004) the advantage of stratified sampling is that results are more reliable and comprehensive data. Additionally, it is also preferred over the simple random sampling because it warrants more precise statistical outcomes.

The target population is divided into five strata, and a sample from each stratum must be taken in order to create the intended study sample. The sample size was determined using the Slovin's formula below;

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N * e^2}$$

Where N: population size, n:sample size: significance level,5%

$$n = \frac{37290}{1 + 37290 * 0.05 * 0.05}$$

n=396

According to Bujang, (2021), following the determination of the minimum sample size needed, further provisions must be made to account for possible non-response subjects. The bare minimum of subjects a study needs after recruitment is finished is known as the minimum necessary sample size. As a result, researchers should ideally be able to enlist at least more participants than the bare minimum needed for the study. Researchers must foresee the issue of non-response and then compensate for it by recruiting more participants on top of the minimal sample size, typically by 20% to 30%, in order to prevent underestimating the sample size. Therefore, assuming a non-response rate of 20% $(0.2 \times 396) = 78$. Sample size adopted was $=78 + 396 = 474$

Table 3. 2 Sample size determination

No	Category	Teaching staff	Non-teaching staff	Total	Sample	Teaching staff Sample	Non-Teaching Sample
1.	Public Chartered Universities	10502	17228	27730	352	133	219
2.	Public University Constituent Colleges	128	294	422	5	2	3
3.	Private Chartered Universities	3692	4380	8072	103	47	56
4.	Private University Constituent Colleges	116	151	267	3	1	2
5.	Institutions with Letters of Interim Authority	452	347	799	10	6	4
	Total	14890	22400	37290	474	189	285

CUE (University Statistics Report 2023/2024)

3.6 Data Collection Methods

The study collected primary data using structured questionnaires to gather quantitative data. A structured questionnaire was ideal for this research as it was designed to gather specific, quantifiable data that could be easily analysed. The questionnaire consisted of close-ended questions, utilizing a 5-Point Likert Scale to measure both the independent and dependent variables. Finding reliable mathematical representations of empirical phenomena is the goal of quantitative science. Quantitative research applies statistical tests to confirm or detect trends. Typically, this method relied on collecting and analysing numerical data to explain, describe, control, or predict variables or

phenomena of interest. In this study, a deductive approach was applied, where the relationship between the independent and dependent variables is hypothesized and tested.

The unit of analysis for this study was teaching and non-teaching employees working at various universities. Respondents were selected based on their roles within the universities, including titles that cut across all departments and units, such as administrators, faculty members, and staff involved in decision-making or leadership roles.

The questionnaire had three sections: Section A with demographic data, Section B with leadership styles, and C with employee performance. The questionnaires were administered to the respondents via a link that they accessed on their mobile phone or laptop. The questionnaires were sent together with the letter of introduction that indicated the purpose of data collection and assurance of confidentiality of data collected from the respondents.

The researcher engaged researcher assistant who helped with contacting the help desk of the universities to gain permission for the respondents who took part in this research. After consent was given, the researcher with the aid of the research assistant requested for contact details from the help desk that were used to send out the questionnaires. The questionnaires were issued to employees working in the various universities. Once the respondents received the link, they responded to the questions and submitted the responses when they got to the end of the questions. The respondents were only able to submit their responses once to enhance reliability and validity of the data received.

3.7 Research Quality

According to Creswell et al., (2018) quality research encompasses scientific process that includes all aspects of study design; in particular, it involves the assessment of how well the methods and questions match, subject selection, outcome measurement, and safety measures against systematic bias, nonsystematic bias, and inferential error. Reliability, validity, confirmability, and transferability are the four often used criteria to evaluate a research tool's credibility. Establishing validity and reliability in research basically serves to guarantee that the data are reliable, reproducible, and that the findings are accurate. To ensure the integrity and quality of a measurement tool, validity and reliability evidence are necessary. This study evaluated the research quality using reliability and validity testing.

3.7.1 Research Reliability

According to Mohajan, (2017) reliability is a measurement that consistently yields results with the same values. It assesses a study's, accuracy, reproducibility, and consistency. It shows how bias-free (error-free) the measurement is, which guarantees consistent measurement throughout time and among the different instruments' items. Reliability in quantitative research is described as the capacity to generate consistent, stable, and repeatable results; in other words, a researcher's findings are deemed trustworthy if they can be replicated under similar but distinct conditions. Reliability is referred to the stability of findings.

There are two types of reliability; stability and internal consistency(Mohajan, 2017). In this current study, reliability was determined by measuring the internal consistency of the questionnaire. Internal consistency is the extent to which the questionnaire's items measure the desired concept and are consistent with each other in terms of the information they measure. The reliability coefficient is a number between 0 and 1, where 1 represents perfect reliability and 0 represents no reliability. As highlighted by Creswell et al., (2018) a reliability coefficient value of 0.7 or above is generally considered acceptable for social science research. Thus, for the purposes of this study, a cut-off points of 0.7 was used to determine the acceptable level of internal consistency for the questionnaire. This table below shows the reliability results that were depicted from the Cronbach's Alpha conducted on the items in the questionnaire.

Table 3.1: Reliability Analysis

Scale	Cronbach's Alpha	Number of Items	Comments
Democratic leadership style	.830	6	Accepted
Autocratic leadership style	.766	6	Accepted
Laissez Faire Leadership Style	.845	6	Accepted
Employee performance in Democratic leadership style	.866	6	Accepted
Employee performance in Autocratic leadership style	.730	6	Accepted
Employee performance in Laissez faire leadership Style	.807	6	Accepted

Source: Author (2025)

3.7.2 Research Validity

Mohajan, (2017) defines validity as the degree to which an instrument measures what it is intended to measure. It is the extent to which a research tool captures the data it is designed to capture. It is the extent to which the outcomes are accurate. A questionnaire is a necessary research tool for

precisely measuring the study's topics. Validity refers to the degree to which the data gathered measures what it is supposed to measure (Creswell et al., 2018). According to Thatcher, (2010), validity is the extent to which a measuring equipment measures what it is intended to measure. Stated differently, validity pertains to the connection between the object of measurement and the type and purpose of its application.

In quantitative research, validity refers to how well any measuring tool captures the intended data(Thatcher, 2010). Content validity, face validity, criterion-related validity, and construct validity are the four categories of validity. The current research guaranteed both face validity and content validity. The content validity is the degree to which the questions and ratings on the instrument accurately represent all possible queries about the subject. It guarantees that there is a sufficient number of items in the questionnaire that touch on the idea. On the other hand, face validity refers to the extent to which a test seems to measure what it purports to measure. The researcher had a face-validation of the questionnaire to ascertain that it is readable. Additionally, the questionnaire was reviewed by the supervisor being an expert to ascertain construct validity.

A pilot test was conducted to identify any inefficiencies with data collection instrument and to improve the construct validity of the study before data collection was conducted for the actual study. In this study, a total of 47 participants were engaged who constituted 10% of the sample size were selected for piloting. According to Kothari, (2004), a pilot sample of 10% of the sample size is the most preferred. The pilot test revealed that the questionnaire was generally well-structured, clear, and reliable. The results gave the researcher confidence to proceed with the main study using the existing instrument.

3.8 Data Analysis

The study administered questionnaires which after being duly filled, the researcher with the aid of a research assistant cleaned the data to ensure errors, incompleteness and irrelevancies were addressed before embarking on data analysis. Data was then analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS).

Descriptive statistics was used to analyze responses from the demographic section of the questionnaire. Descriptive statistics is a type of data analysis that describes the relationships between research variables to display data in an orderly manner(Amrhein et al., 2019). The descriptive statistics was represented visually in percentages, frequencies, graphs and charts following measures of central tendency such as mean and measures of variability such as range and standard deviation.

Inferential statistics was used to measure the relationship between variables in objectives that were leadership styles as the independent variables and employee performance as the dependent variable. This includes correlation analysis represented by the equation below which will help to establish the influence of leadership styles on employee performance.

The findings will be presented using tables. The regression model used was: $Y = B_0 + b_1X_1 + b_2X_2 + b_3X_3 + \epsilon$ is the multiple linear regression model that was applied in this investigation.

where Y is the performance of the employees.

B_0 = the regression intercept

X_1 = Autocratic leadership

X_2 = Democratic leadership

X_3 = Laissez-faire leadership

b_1, \dots, b_3 = coefficients for each independent variable

ϵ – representing the error term

The model's constant term is denoted by β_0 , and the dependent variable (Y)'s sensitivity to a unit change in the predictor variables X_1 , X_2 , and X_3 was measured by the coefficient $\beta_i = 1 \dots 3$. The model's unexplained variances are captured by the error (ϵ) term. The multiple linear regression model assumptions were considered to ensure results produced are valid and reliable.

3.9 Ethical Considerations

In this study, the researcher aimed at upholding the ethical requirements of research. The researcher applied for clearance from the Strathmore University Institutional Ethics Review Committee (SUIERC) and the National Commission of Science Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI) to conduct this study. The researcher also observed consent, confidentiality, and anonymity (Babbie, 2021). This study ensured confidentiality and anonymity of all participants. The researcher obtained consent from participants before administering questionnaires.

Consent was realized through sharing full information with participants about the nature and the purpose of the research. This helped the participants with the decision on whether they want to participate or not. Confidentiality means that any personal information shared by the participants in the data collection tool was shared to third parties, neither would the information be misused in the form of threats. Anonymity meant that participants remained anonymous as well as personal details will be independent and untraceable to the owner. Additionally, the researcher strived to maintain

the integrity of the data findings during analysis and presentation, providing the results as they are in accordance with the guidelines suggested by (Creswell et al., 2018).

3.10 Chapter Summary

This chapter covered the research philosophy, research design, population of the study, sampling design, data collection tools, the data collection process that was be used, the data analysis and the finally, the chapter outlined the ethical considerations that was taken in conducting the study.



CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presented the research findings obtained from the study. The objective of the study was to determine the influence of leadership styles on employee performance in universities in Kenya. Both descriptive and inferential statistics were applied to present the results from the field.

4.2 Response rate

The research targeted 79 universities, of which two declined to participate, and 13 did not respond, leaving 64 universities that participated in the study. This translated to a response rate of 81% among universities in Kenya. Additionally, the study aimed to collect responses from at least 474 individual respondents and successfully obtained 476 completed responses. Data was collected through 499 submissions. However, 23 responses were removed due to incompleteness, resulting in a final valid sample of 476 responses, representing a 95.4% response rate among employees which is very high completion rate for a survey study. Mwende et al., (2019) considered that 50% to 75% is sufficient for data analysis. Based on this assumption, the response rate of 81% in this study was therefore very good and was considered useful to make conclusions for the study. The response was as shown in table 4.1

Table 0.1: Response rate

Questionnaires	Frequency	Percentage
Completed	476	95.4%
Non-response	23	4.6%
Total	499	100%

Source: Primary Data (2025)

4.3 Demographic

This section presents the demographic characteristics of the respondents, including gender, age, years of experience, and staff category.

4.3.1 Gender

Figure 4.1 presents the distribution of respondents by gender. The results indicate that the majority of the respondents were male (53.4%), while female respondents accounted for 46.6%. This suggests a relatively balanced gender representation among the respondents.

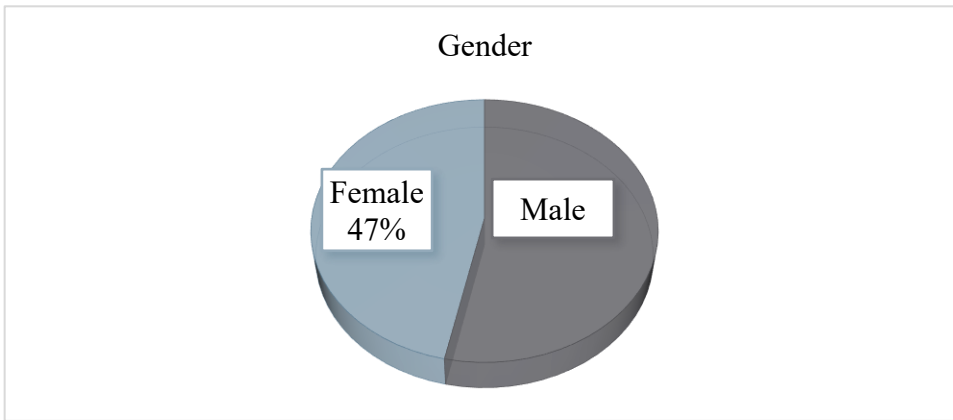


Figure 0.1: Gender
Source: Primary Data (2025)

4.3.2 Age

Figure 4.2 summarizes the age distribution of the respondents. The majority of respondents (37.8%) were aged 36-45 years, followed by those in the 25-35 years' age group (30.5%). The 45-55 years' category comprised 20.6%, while the 18-24 years' group accounted for 8.6%. This indicates that most respondents were middle-aged.

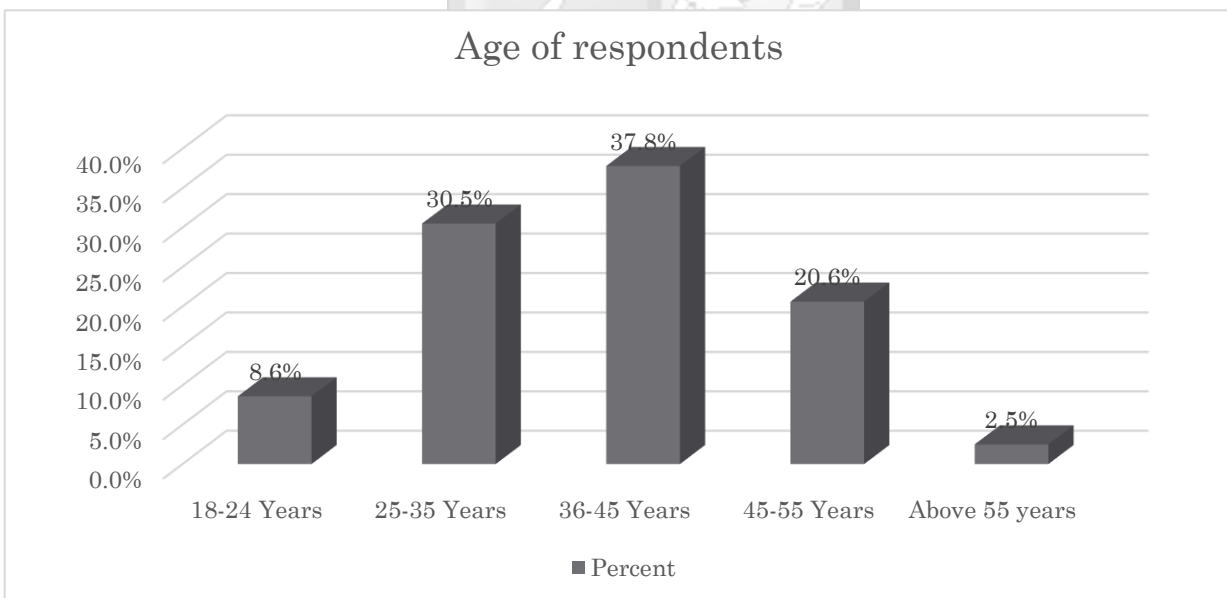


Figure 0.2: Age of respondents
Source: Primary Data (2025)

4.3.3 Experience

Figure 4.3 presents the years of experience of respondents at the university. The majority (58.0%) had 6-15 years of experience, while 29.0% had less than 5 years. Only 12.0% had 16-20 years of experience. This suggests that most respondents had a significant level of experience at the university.

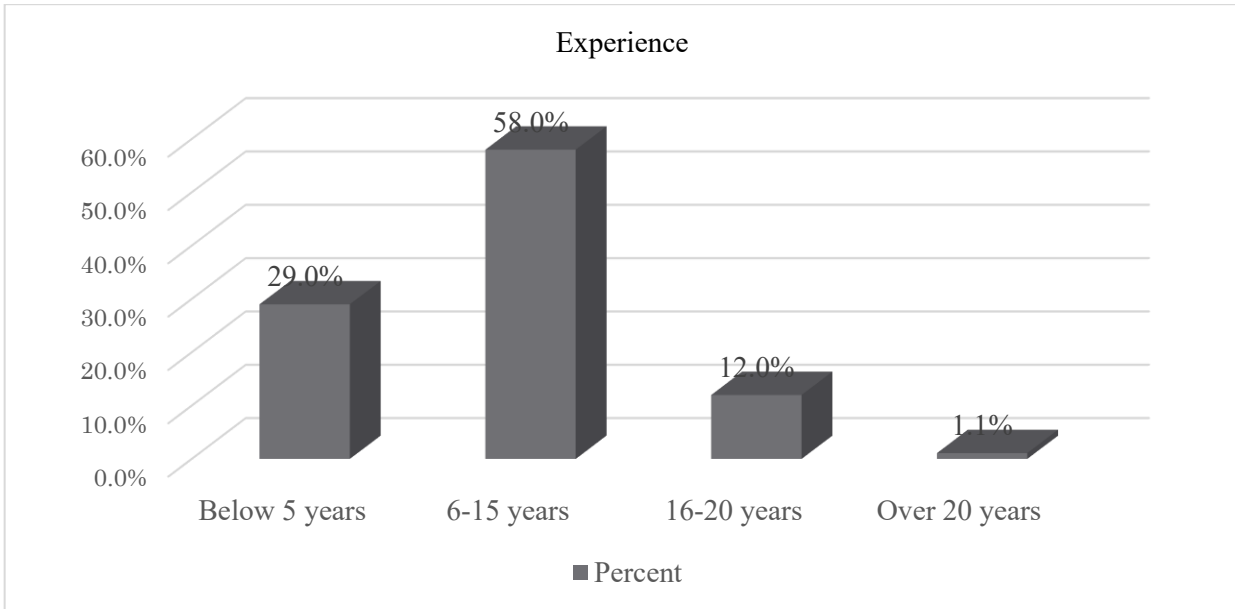


Figure 0.3: Experience
Source: Primary Data (2025)

4.3.4 Category of staff

Table 4.4 categorizes respondents into teaching and non-teaching staff. The findings indicate that 62.0% of respondents were non-teaching staff, while 38.0% were teaching staff. This suggests that non-teaching staff formed the majority in the surveyed population.

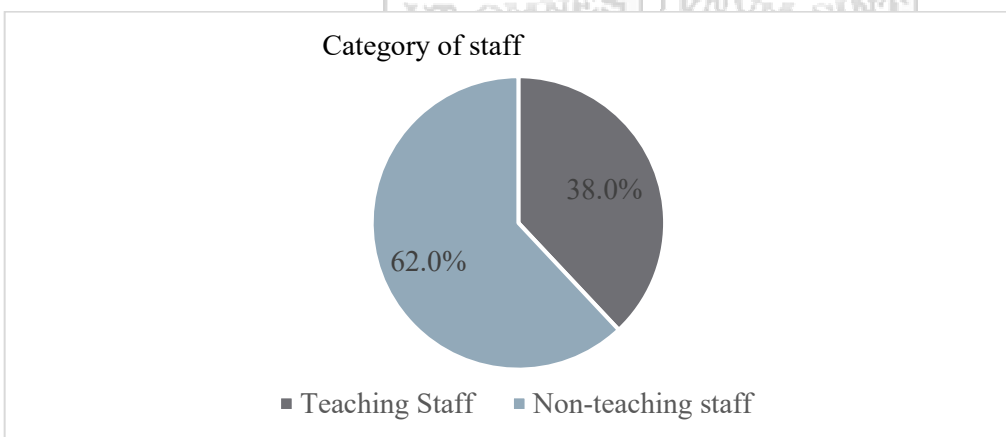


Figure 0.4: Category of staff
Source: Primary Data (2025)

4.4 Descriptive Analysis

This study evaluated the extent to which employee agreed or disagreed with how various leadership styles influence employee performance in universities in Kenya. Responses were recorded using a 5-point Likert scale where; 1= strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3= neither agree nor disagree, 4= agree, 5= strongly agree. Mean (M) values of 1.0-1.49 were interpreted as strongly disagree, 1.5- 2.49 as disagree, 2.5-3.49 neither agree nor disagree, 3.5 to 4.49 as agree and 4.5-5 as strongly agree. With reference to Kaur (2018), disagree and strongly disagree denoted negative disconfirmation, agree denoted confirmation while strongly agree denoted positive disconfirmation. A standard deviation (SD) less than two (2) was considered as low variability hence similarity in opinions, while SD value greater than two (2) was considered as high variability, thus divergent opinions.

4.4.1 Democratic Leadership Style

The first objective of the study was to determine whether the democratic leadership style influences Employee performance. The respondents were asked to indicate the degree to which they agree or disagree with the statements on democratic leadership style, and their responses were shown in the table below.

Table 0.2: Democratic leadership style

	Mean	Std Dev
Team members are encouraged to share ideas or suggestions.	4.3046	1.0186
Decision- making processes in my department are inclusive of all team members	3.9055	1.0942
There is open communication between supervisors and employee in my department.	3.8676	1.0941
Supervisor encourages team collaboration to achieve departmental goals	4.1155	0.9045
Constructive feedback is provided that helps me improve my performance	4.1155	0.9740
Employee performance improves when they are involved in decision-making processes	4.2479	0.9139
Overall Score	4.0928	0.9999

Source: Primary Data (2025)

The findings from Table 4.2 indicated an overall mean of 4.0928 and overall standard deviation of 0.999. With an overall mean of 4.0928, the findings on democratic leadership style indicated that respondents agreed democratic leadership style affect employee performance in universities in

Kenya. The highest-rated aspect was the encouragement of idea sharing, with a mean of 4.30 (SD = 1.018), suggesting that most employees feel empowered to contribute their thoughts and suggestions.

4.4.2 Autocratic Leadership Style

The second objective of the study was to determine whether the autocratic leadership style influences employee performance. The respondents were asked to indicate the degree to which they agree or disagree with the statements on autocratic leadership style, and their responses were shown in the table below.

Table 0.3: Autocratic leadership style

	Mean	Std Dev
There is little room for creativity or autonomy in my role	3.3508	1.3783
Orders and procedures are strictly enforced in my department with little room for flexibility	3.3340	1.1876
Mistakes or poor performance are met with strict consequences	3.4055	1.1848
My supervisor uses authority and control to ensure compliance	3.3824	1.2126
As a rule, my supervisor believes that employees must be given a reward or punishment to motivate them to achieve organizational objectives	3.1597	1.2430
My supervisor rarely involves team members in decision making and prefers issuing commands.	3.0651	1.2320
Overall Score	3.2829	1.2397

Source: Primary Data (2025)

The findings from Table 4.3 indicated an overall mean of 3.2829 and overall standard deviation of 1.2397. With an overall mean of 3.2829, the findings on autocratic leadership style among employees in universities in Kenya showed that showed respondents were neutral on influence of autocratic leadership style on employee performance. The highest-rated aspect was the strict enforcement of consequences for mistakes or poor performance, with a mean of 3.41 (SD = 1.185), suggesting that many employees perceive a structured and disciplined approach in university management.

4.4.3 Laissez Faire Leadership Style

The third objective of the study was to determine whether the laissez- faire leadership style influences employee performance. The respondents were asked to indicate the degree to which they agree or disagree with the statements on laissez-faire leadership style, and their responses were shown in the table below

Table 0.4: Laissez Faire Leadership

	Std	
	Mean	Dev
Employees are expected to self- manage their work without constant guidance	4.0336	1.0316
There is minimal involvement by supervisor in daily activities	3.8151	1.0990
Decision-making responsibilities are clearly assigned to employees	3.7290	1.1012
My supervisor gives employees complete freedom to make decisions	3.5840	1.2309
Employees have autonomy in deciding how to perform their tasks	3.7521	1.1171
Employees are left to solve problem independently	3.5882	1.1853
Overall	3.7503	1.1275

Source: Primary Data (2025)

The findings from Table 4.4 indicated an overall mean of 3.7503 and overall standard deviation of 1.1275. With an overall mean of 3.7503, the findings suggested that generally respondents agreed that laissez-faire leadership style influences employee performance in universities in Kenya. The highest-rated aspect was that employees are expected to self-manage their work without constant guidance, with a mean of 4.03 (SD = 1.032), indicating a strong perception of independence.

4.5 Employee Performance**4.5.1 Democratic leadership style and employee performance**

The first objective of the study was to determine whether the democratic leadership style influences Employee performance. The respondents were asked to indicate the degree to which they agree or disagree with the statements on democratic leadership style on employee performance, and their responses were shown in the table below.

Table 0.5: Employee performance under democratic leadership

	Mean	Std Dev
Democratic leadership enhances quality as employees feel valued and responsible for their work	4.2920	0.8996
Quality improves with democratic leadership, as it encourages creativity and input from employees	4.1933	0.8107
Productivity is higher when employees are involved in decision-making processes	4.1954	0.8978
Democratic leadership fosters teamwork, which boosts overall productivity	4.1807	0.8589

The democratic style allows employees to achieve output goals effectively	4.1618	0.9044
Quantity of work is optimized when employees are encouraged to contribute to goal-setting.	4.1429	0.8389
Overall Score	4.1944	0.8684

Source: Primary Data (2025)

The findings from Table 4.5 indicated an overall mean of 4.1944 and overall standard deviation of 0.8684. The findings presented suggested that respondents agreed that democratic leadership style influences employee performance in universities in Kenya by fostering a sense of responsibility, creativity, and collaboration. The highest-rated aspect was that democratic leadership enhances quality, as employees feel valued and responsible for their work, with a mean of 4.29 (SD = 0.900). This strong agreement indicated that when employees are involved in decision-making, they take greater ownership of their tasks.

Overall, these findings indicate that democratic leadership creates an engaging work environment where employees feel empowered, leading to higher productivity, improved work quality, and enhanced output. Universities that adopt this leadership approach may benefit from greater employee satisfaction and organizational effectiveness.

4.5.2 Autocratic Leadership style and employee performance

The second objective of the study was to determine whether the autocratic leadership style influences employee performance. The respondents were asked to indicate the degree to which they agree or disagree with the statements on autocratic leadership style on employee performance, and their responses were shown in the table below.

Table 0.6: Employee performance under autocratic Leadership

	Mean	Std Dev
The autocratic leadership style results in high-quality work outputs due to clear directives	3.6155	1.2076
Quality suffers under autocratic leadership due to lack of employee input	3.6345	1.0666
Autocratic leadership style enhances productivity through structured workflows	3.4748	1.1152
Productivity declines when decisions are imposed without employee involvement	3.8256	1.0265

The strict nature of autocratic leadership helps meet output targets consistently	3.3718	1.2202
Employee output decreases as autocratic leadership restricts autonomy	3.542	1.0801
Overall Score	3.5774	1.1194

Source: Primary Data (2025)

The findings from Table 4.6 indicated an overall mean of 3.5774 and overall standard deviation of 1.1194. The findings revealed that respondents somewhat neutral or agreed that autocratic leadership style impacted employee performance in universities in Kenya. A key advantage of autocratic leadership is its structured approach, which some respondents believed enhances quality and productivity. The view that productivity declines when decisions are imposed without employee involvement had the highest mean of 3.83 (SD = 1.027), indicating that a lack of participation negatively affects motivation and output. Findings of this study suggested that while autocratic leadership provides structure and clear directives, its rigid nature may hinder employee performance by reducing participation and motivation. Universities that rely on this leadership style should consider balancing control with opportunities for employee input to optimize productivity and quality.

4.5.3 Laissez leadership style and employee performance

The third objective of the study was to determine whether the laissez-faire leadership style influences employee performance. The respondents were asked to indicate the degree to which they agree or disagree with the statements on laissez-faire leadership style on employee performance, and their responses were shown in the table below.

Table 0.7: Employee performance under Laissez-faire leadership style

	Mean	Std Dev
Laissez-faire leadership leads to high-quality work when employees are self-motivated	4.1597	1.0442
Lack of guidance in laissez-faire leadership can reduce the quality of work produced	3.8130	0.9845
Productivity is high under laissez-faire leadership when employees work independently	3.7668	1.0230
Limited supervision in a laissez-faire environment may lead to lower productivity levels	3.6597	1.0532

Laissez-faire leadership allows employees to manage their workload and achieve output targets autonomously	3.8971	1.0094
The absence of regular supervision under laissez-faire leadership can reduce the amount of work completed	3.8067	1.0684
Overall Score	3.8505	1.0304

Source: Primary Data (2025)

The findings from Table 4.7 indicated an overall mean of 3.8505 and overall standard deviation of 1.0304. The findings presented suggested laissez-faire leadership influences employee performance in universities in Kenya. A key strength of laissez-faire leadership is its ability to enhance work quality and productivity among self-motivated employees. The highest-rated statement, with a mean of 4.16 (SD = 1.044), indicated strong agreement that when employees are proactive, they produce high-quality work. The results suggested that laissez-faire leadership style can be effective in fostering employee performance when individuals are highly motivated and capable of self-management. Therefore, universities that adopt a laissez-faire approach should ensure that sufficient guidance and support mechanisms are in place to maintain optimal performance levels

4.6 Inferential Analysis

This section presented the influence of leadership styles on employee performance in universities in Kenya by examining relationships and predictive patterns within the data. The survey employed correlational and regression analysis to assess how various leadership styles impact employee performance. The findings from this analysis provide deeper insights into the strength and significance of these relationships.

4.6.1 Correlation Analysis

The correlation analysis presented in Table 4.8 explores the relationships between democratic leadership, autocratic leadership, laissez-faire leadership styles, and employee performance using Pearson’s correlation coefficient. This analysis provides insights into how different leadership styles influence employee performance and the interrelationships among the leadership approaches.

The results indicate a moderately strong positive correlation between democratic leadership style and employee performance ($r = .624, p < .01$). This suggests that organizations that adopt a democratic leadership style are likely to experience significant improvements in employee performance. The participatory nature of democratic leadership, where employees are involved in decision-making, appears to foster a more productive work environment. Similarly, laissez-faire leadership also

demonstrates a moderately strong positive correlation with employee performance ($r = .617, p < .01$). This finding indicates that allowing employees greater autonomy and independence in their roles is associated with higher levels of performance. Employees who have the freedom to make decisions and manage their tasks without excessive supervision may feel more empowered and motivated, leading to better outcomes. In contrast, autocratic leadership shows weak positive correlation with employee performance ($r = .331, p < .01$). While this suggests that authoritative decision-making and control can have a positive impact, the relationship is notably weaker compared to the other two leadership styles. This may imply that while a structured and directive approach can be effective in certain situations, excessive control may limit employee engagement and innovation.

Table 0.8: Correlation matrix

Correlations					
		Democratic leadership style	Autocratic leadership style	Laissez Faire leadership style	Employee Performance
Democratic Leadership Style	Pearson Correlation	1	.161**	.598**	.624**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000
	N	476	476	476	476
Autocratic leadership style	Pearson Correlation	.161**	1	.263**	.331**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000
	N	476	476	476	476
Laissez Faire leadership style	Pearson Correlation	.598**	.263**	1	.617**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000
	N	476	476	476	476
Employee Performance	Pearson Correlation	.624**	.331**	.617**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	
	N	476	476	476	476

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

Source: Primary Data (2025)

4.6.2 Multiple Linear Regression

Regression analysis was done to examine the influence of democratic, autocratic, and laissez-faire leadership styles on employee performance. The results provided insights into the extent to which these leadership styles individually and collectively predict employee performance.

4.6.2.1 Democratic Leadership Style and Employee Performance

The model summary presented in table 4.9 shows that the that the R-value is 0.624, indicating a strong positive correlation between democratic leadership style and employee performance. The R-squared (R^2) value is 0.389, meaning that 38.9% of the variation in employee performance is explained by the democratic leadership style. The adjusted R^2 is 0.388, which suggests minimal shrinkage when generalizing the model to other data.

Table 0.9: Multiple Linear Regression Analysis Model Summary

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.624 ^a	.389	.388	.46096
a. Predictors: (Constant), Democratic leadership style				

Source: Primary Data (2025)

The ANOVA test presented in table 4.10 examined the overall significance of the regression model. The F-statistic is 302.076, with a p-value of 0.000, which is highly significant ($p < 0.05$). This confirms that the regression model is a good fit and that democratic leadership style significantly influences employee performance.

Table 0.10: Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)

ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	64.187	1	64.187	302.076	.000 ^b
	Residual	100.718	474	.212		

	Total	164.905	475			
a. Dependent Variable: Employee Performance						
b. Predictors: (Constant), Democratic Leadership style						

Source: Primary Data (2025)

From table 4.11, the constant ($\beta_0 = 1.833$, $p = 0.000$) represents the predicted employee performance when the democratic leadership style is zero. The coefficient for democratic leadership style ($\beta_1 = 0.499$, $p = 0.000$) indicates that for every one-unit increase in democratic leadership style, employee performance increases by 0.499 units. The Beta (standardized coefficient) value is 0.624, suggesting a strong positive effect of democratic leadership on employee performance. The t-statistic for the democratic leadership style is 17.380 ($p = 0.000$), confirming the statistical significance of this variable.

Table 0.11: Regression Coefficients results

Coefficients						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.833	.119		15.369	.000
	Democratic	.499	.029	.624	17.380	.000
a. Dependent Variable: Employee Performance						

Source: Primary Data (2025)

4.6.2.2 Autocratic Leadership Style and Employee Performance

As indicated in table 4.12, the regression model shows that the R-value is 0.331, indicating a weak positive correlation between autocratic leadership style and employee performance. The R-squared (R^2) value is 0.110, meaning that 11.0% of the variation in employee performance is explained by autocratic leadership style. The adjusted R^2 (0.108) suggests a slight reduction when adjusting for the number of predictors in the model. This implies that other factors not included in this model play a more significant role in influencing employee performance.

Table 0.12: Multiple Linear Regression Analysis Model Summary

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.331 ^a	.110	.108	.55658
a. Predictors: (Constant), Autocratic leadership style				

Source: Primary Data (2025)

The results presented in table 4.13 show that the F-statistic is 58.317, and the p-value is 0.000, indicating that the regression model is statistically significant ($p < 0.05$). This confirms that autocratic leadership style has a significant but weak influence on employee performance.

Table 0.13: Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)

ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	18.066	1	18.066	58.317	.000 ^b
	Residual	146.839	474	.310		
	Total	164.905	475			
a. Dependent Variable: Employee Performance						
b. Predictors: (Constant), Autocratic leadership style						

Source: Primary Data (2025)

The beta coefficients presented in table 4.14 show that the constant ($\beta_0 = 3.114$, $p = 0.000$) represents the predicted employee performance when the autocratic leadership style is zero. The coefficient for autocratic leadership style ($\beta_1 = 0.231$, $p = 0.000$) indicates that for every one-unit increase in autocratic leadership style, employee performance increases by 0.231 units. The Beta (standardized coefficient) is 0.331, suggesting that autocratic leadership style has a weak positive effect on employee performance. The t-statistic for autocratic leadership style is 7.637 ($p = 0.000$), which means that the relationship is statistically significant.

Table 0.14: Regression Coefficients results

Coefficients				
Model	Unstandardized Coefficients	Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.

		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	3.114	.103		30.330	.000
	Autocratic leadership style	.231	.030	.331	7.637	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Employee Performance

Source: Primary Data (2025)

4.6.2.3 Laissez leadership style and Employee Performance

As presented in table 4.15, the regression model shows that the R-value is 0.617, indicating a moderately strong positive correlation between laissez-faire leadership style and employee performance. The R-squared (R^2) value is 0.381, meaning that 38.1% of the variation in employee performance is explained by the laissez-faire leadership style. The adjusted R^2 (0.380) confirms that this explanatory power remains stable even after accounting for potential overfitting.

Table 0.15: Multiple Linear Regression Analysis Model Summary

Model Summary					
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	
1	.617 ^a	.381	.380	.46405	

a. Predictors: (Constant), Laissez Faire Leadership style

Source: Primary Data (2025)

The results presented in table 4.16 has the F-statistic is 291.786, and the p-value is 0.000, indicating that the regression model is statistically significant ($p < 0.05$). This confirms that laissez-faire leadership style has a significant effect on employee performance.

Table 0.16: Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)

ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	62.833	1	62.833	291.786	.000 ^b
	Residual	102.071	474	.215		
	Total	164.905	475			

a. Dependent Variable: Employee Performance
b. Predictors: (Constant), Laissez Faire

Source: Primary Data (2025)

The regression coefficients presented in table 4.17 highlight that the constant ($\beta_0 = 2.265$, $p = 0.000$) represents the predicted employee performance when the laissez-faire leadership style is zero. The

coefficient for laissez-faire leadership style ($\beta_1 = 0.429$, $p = 0.000$) indicates that for every one-unit increase in laissez-faire leadership style, employee performance increases by 0.429 units. The Beta (standardized coefficient) is 0.617, suggesting a Moderate positive effect of laissez-faire leadership on employee performance. The t-statistic for laissez-faire leadership style is 17.082 ($p = 0.000$), meaning that the relationship is statistically significant.

Table 0.17: Regression Coefficients results

Coefficients						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.265	.097		23.453	.000
	Laissez Faire	.429	.025	.617	17.082	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Employee Performance

Source: Primary Data (2025)

4.6.2.4 Multiple Regression Analysis

The model summary, table 4.18, indicates that the R value (0.716) signifying a strong positive relationship between the predictor variables (leadership styles) and the dependent variable (employee performance). From the table R Square value (0.512) suggests that 51.2% of the variance in employee performance can be explained by the combined effect of democratic, autocratic, and laissez-faire leadership styles. The Adjusted R Square (0.509) accounts for the number of predictors in the model and confirms that approximately 50.9% of the variation in employee performance is explained by these leadership styles. The standard error of the estimate (0.41285) represents the average deviation of observed employee performance from the predicted values, indicating a reasonable level of accuracy.

Table 0.18: Multiple Linear Regression Analysis Model Summary

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.716 ^a	.512	.509	.41285

a. Predictors: (Constant), Laissez Faire, Autocratic, Democratic

Source: Primary Data (2025)

The ANOVA table presented in table 4.19 assesses the overall significance of the regression model. The F-statistic (165.166) is highly significant ($p = 0.000$), confirming that the model is a good fit and

that at least one of the leadership styles significantly predicts employee performance. The low residual sum of squares (80.450) compared to the total sum of squares (164.905) suggests that the model explains a substantial proportion of the variation in employee performance.

Table 0.19: Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)

ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	84.455	3	28.152	165.166	.000 ^b
	Residual	80.450	472	.170		
	Total	164.905	475			
a. Dependent Variable: Employee Performance						
b. Predictors: (Constant), Laissez Faire, Autocratic, Democratic						

Source: Primary Data (2025)

The regression analysis results presented in 4.20 indicate that democratic leadership has the strongest positive influence on employee performance. The unstandardized coefficient ($B = 0.316$, $p < 0.01$) suggests that for every unit increase in democratic leadership, employee performance improves by 0.316 units. Additionally, the standardized coefficient ($\beta = 0.396$) reinforces its substantial impact, and the high t-value (9.861, $p = 0.000$) confirms that this relationship is statistically significant.

Similarly, laissez-faire leadership also has a significant positive effect on employee performance, though to a slightly lesser extent than democratic leadership. With an unstandardized coefficient of $B = 0.232$ ($p < 0.01$) and a standardized coefficient of $\beta = 0.333$, this leadership style demonstrates a meaningful contribution to employee performance. The t-value (8.124, $p = 0.000$) further validates its significance in the model.

On the other hand, autocratic leadership exhibits a weaker yet significant positive impact on employee performance. The coefficient $B = 0.126$ ($p < 0.01$) indicates that while autocratic leadership does contribute to performance, its effect is noticeably lower compared to the other leadership styles. The standardized coefficient ($\beta = 0.180$) and the t-value (5.398, $p = 0.000$) suggest that although autocratic leadership is a predictor of employee performance, it is not as influential as democratic or laissez-faire leadership.

Table 0.20: Beta coefficients

Coefficients ^a						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.298	.122		10.621	.000
	Democratic	.316	.032	.396	9.861	.000
	Autocratic	.126	.023	.180	5.398	.000
	Laissez Faire	.232	.029	.333	8.124	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Employee Performance

Source: Primary Data (2025)

From the regression analysis, democratic leadership emerges as the most effective in enhancing employee performance, followed by laissez-faire leadership, while autocratic leadership has the least impact. The overall regression model is statistically significant, explaining 51.2% of the variation in employee performance. Given these findings, organizations should prioritize democratic leadership to maximize employee performance while integrating laissez-faire leadership where appropriate. Although autocratic leadership has a positive effect, its influence is relatively weaker and should be used with caution.

The regression model for this research was as follows: $Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1X_1 + \beta_2X_2 + \beta_3X_3 + \epsilon$ is

where Y was the dependent variable (performance of the employees), β_0 was the regression constant (coefficient of intercept) and $\beta_1, \beta_2, \beta_3$, were coefficients of the independent variables which were; democratic leadership, autocratic leadership, Laissez-faire leadership where X_1, X_2, X_3 represented the independent variables namely Democratic leadership, Laissez-faire leadership, Autocratic leadership styles.

The regression model was fitted as follows.

$$Y = 1.298 + .316X_1 + .126X_2 + .232X_3 + \epsilon$$

The regression analysis indicates that when democratic, autocratic, and laissez-faire leadership styles are at a zero constant, employee performance remains at a baseline value of 1.298. Each beta coefficient represents the expected change in employee performance resulting from a one-unit increase in the respective leadership style, while holding all other variables constant. The results

establish that all three leadership styles have statistically significant p-values, each below the 0.05 threshold, confirming their significant influence on employee performance.

These findings suggest that an increase in any of the leadership styles leads to an improvement in employee performance, while a decrease results in a decline. However, the extent of their impact varies. Democratic leadership emerges as the most effective style, with a beta coefficient of 0.316. This means that increasing democratic leadership practices such as involving employees in decision-making and encouraging participation enhances performance by 0.316 units. Laissez-faire leadership follows with a beta coefficient of 0.232, indicating that providing employees with greater autonomy contributes positively to performance, though its impact is slightly lower than that of democratic leadership. Autocratic leadership has the weakest influence, with a beta coefficient of 0.126, suggesting that while a directive leadership approach can have some positive effects, it is significantly less effective than the other two styles.

Given these results, university management should prioritize democratic leadership as the most effective style for enhancing employee performance. Laissez-faire leadership can be applied selectively to foster independence where appropriate, while autocratic leadership should be used cautiously, as its impact on performance is relatively weaker.

4.7 Chapter Summary

The chapter summarized the study findings. Findings included the response rate, the reliability test results, and demographics information, correlation and multiple regression. Data analysis was done using descriptive statistics including mean and standard deviations. Inferential statistics included correlation and multiple regression analysis. Data was summarized and presented using graphs, charts and tables for ease of interpretation and discussions.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSIONS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter provided the summary of the findings, discussions, conclusions, and recommendations drawn from the study in relation to the research objectives. The chapter also compared the current study findings with findings from other scholarly studies. Research study's recommendations, limitations, and suggestions for further research were also highlighted.

5.2 Summary of Key Findings

The democratic leadership style was generally well received, with employees appreciating the encouragement of idea sharing and involvement in decision-making. Employees felt empowered to contribute their thoughts and valued the inclusive nature of this leadership approach. These findings suggested that democratic leadership fosters a collaborative and supportive work environment, leading to higher levels of job satisfaction and productivity. Autocratic leadership received mixed responses. Strict enforcement of consequences for mistakes or poor performance was perceived as a defining characteristic of this style, creating a structured and disciplined management approach. These findings implied that while autocratic leadership can ensure order and compliance, increasing employee involvement and flexibility could improve overall job satisfaction. Laissez-faire leadership characteristics were also evident in the university setting. Employees reported that they were expected to self-manage their work without constant supervision, fostering a sense of independence. Minimal involvement from supervisors and autonomy in task execution were also highlighted as key aspects of this leadership style.

Democratic leadership was found to positively impact employee performance by fostering a sense of responsibility, creativity, and collaboration. Employees reported feeling valued and taking greater ownership of their tasks when involved in decision-making. The study suggested that participatory leadership enhances productivity and job satisfaction, making it an effective approach in university settings. Autocratic leadership produced mixed reactions, with structured discipline perceived as beneficial by some employees but restrictive by others. While it ensured order and compliance, the lack of flexibility and limited employee involvement in decision-making posed challenges. Laissez-faire leadership allowed for significant autonomy, which was appreciated by employees who preferred independence. However, the variability in responses indicated that a purely hands-off

approach may not be effective for all employees, and occasional supervisory support could improve overall performance.

5.3 Discussion of Key Findings

This section presented an in-depth analysis of the study's main findings. It provided useful insights into how leadership styles influence employee performance in universities in Kenya. Overall, the study found democratic, autocratic and laissez-faire leadership styles influence employee performance in universities in Kenya. The findings indicated that democratic leadership (β 0.316, $P < 0.001$), autocratic leadership (β 0.126, $P < 0.001$), and laissez-faire (β 0.232, $P < 0.001$) are positive and statistically significant predictors of employee performance in universities in Kenya. The discussion of findings is based on the specific objectives of the study.

5.3.1 Democratic leadership style and employee performance

The study found a significant positive correlation between democratic leadership and employee performance. The research findings showed that democratic leadership is an effective technique for increasing staff productivity and employee performance in universities in Kenya. The results of this study corroborated earlier research, demonstrating that democratic leadership substantially improves employee performance. Previous research, like those of Bhargavi and Yaseen (2016), Uzoyare and Adio (2022), and Basit et al. (2017), demonstrated that democratic leadership enhances employee involvement in decision-making, subsequently leading to improved performance. The current study demonstrated elevated mean scores for employee participation in decision-making and inclusiveness substantiating the assertion that employees who perceive inclusion exhibit greater engagement and productivity.

Moreover, the current literature emphasized that democratic leadership promotes the exchange of ideas, hence stimulating innovation and improving organizational performance (Khuong & Hoang, 2015; Dastane, 2020; Bhargavi & Yaseen, 2016). The results of this study supported these viewpoints, as employees regarded the promotion of idea-sharing favorably and associated creativity with quality enhancement. The findings indicated that democratic leadership cultivates an atmosphere in which employees are certain in sharing their ideas, hence promoting creativity and enhancing performance.

One of the key results of democratic leadership is team cooperation. Chua et al. (2018) and Toriquil et al. (2019) found that democratic leadership strategies improve team cooperation, resulting in improved organizational outcomes. Employee evaluations of team cooperation were good and they

identified democratic leadership as a critical aspect in accomplishing departmental goals. The study's strong collaborative atmosphere lends credence to the thesis that participatory leadership leads to organizational success. Igbaekemen (2014) and Basit et al. (2017) found that democratic leadership increases staff morale, motivation, and engagement, resulting in increased performance. This study backs up the assertion with employee feedback, which reveals that democratic leadership fosters emotions of value, as accountability and productivity. People who get empowerment and worth are more motivated to make positive contributions at work. Many instances have identified democratic leadership as a critical component for organizational development, Igbaekemen (2014) in Nigeria, and Agarwal (2019) in Malaysia found that democratic leadership styles improve performance results. Goal-Setting Theory contributed to this study in that since theory posits that to attain optimal employee performance, clear targets need to be set while involving employees in decision making.

5.3.2 Autocratic leadership style and employee performance

The current study findings indicated a slight positive correlation between autocratic leadership and employee performance. This research demonstrated that autocratic leadership enhances short-term production through structure and discipline, which are essential for long-term organizational performance in universities in Kenya. Prior studies have demonstrated that autocratic leadership exerts a variable influence on employee performance. Research done by Fiaz et al. (2017), Basit et al. (2017), and Iqbal et al. (2015) indicated that although this leadership style promotes control and discipline, it frequently leads to diminished employee motivation and engagement. The current study revealed that university staff in Kenya see authoritarian leadership as constrictive, resulting in diminished morale. The results revealed that decision-making autonomy received a poor rating indicating unhappiness with the absence of involvement and supporting the notion that excessive control may impede motivation.

Moreover, prior research indicates that authoritarian leadership offers structure and discipline, hence improving efficiency in job execution (Bhargavi & Yaseen, 2016; Chua et al., 2018; Kotur & Anbazhagan, 2014). The current study corroborated this viewpoint, as employees recognized that autocratic leadership establishes explicit expectations and delineated roles, perhaps resulting in increased short-term productivity. The study revealed that although employees valued regulated processes, they perceived that excessive rigidity inhibited creativity and innovation. This supported the conclusions of Alonderiene and Majauskaite (2016), who contended that authoritarian leadership constrains idea exchange and adaptation within academic organizations.

Additionally, previous research has indicated that authoritarian leadership correlates with heightened organizational disputes and diminished work satisfaction (Iqbal et al., 2015; Toriqul et al., 2019). The current study partially corroborates this claim, since participants indicated moderate dissatisfaction levels stemming from restricted involvement in decision-making. The study did not uncover much evidence of direct disputes, indicating that although employees may perceive restrictions, they may not actively exhibit open opposition. These findings contradict the studies conducted by Dastane (2020) and Idowu (2019), which revealed no significant correlation between autocratic leadership and employee performance. The influence of autocratic leadership on organizational performance differs across various circumstances. Research in Malaysia (Chua et al., 2018), Nigeria (Idowu, 2019), and India (Kotur & Anbazhagan, 2014) has shown that autocratic leadership may either improve efficiency or induce unhappiness, contingent upon the organizational context. More importantly, this study's findings supported the premise of the Goal-Setting theory which posited that in order to provide workers motivation and meaning, leaders of organizations should establish clear, difficult goals however productivity under this leadership style declines since decisions are imposed without employee involvement.

5.3.3 Laissez-faire leadership style and employee performance

Laissez-faire leadership has a significant positive effect on employee performance. This leadership style demonstrated a meaningful contribution to employee performance. Regression model showed a strong positive correlation between laissez-faire leadership style and employee performance. The findings from previous literature on laissez-faire leadership and its impact on employee performance present mixed perspectives, with studies showing both positive and negative effects. Several studies (Basit et al., 2017; Dastane, 2020; Idowu, 2019) indicated that laissez-faire leadership has a positive and significant impact on employee performance, particularly when employees are self-driven and capable of independent decision-making. This aligned with the current study, which found that employees in universities in Kenya generally experience autonomy in their roles, with minimal supervision, and that this can enhance productivity and work quality for proactive employees. However, other studies, such as those by Khan and Adnan (2014) and Chua et al. (2018), argued that laissez-faire leadership can have a negative or negligible effect on employee performance, particularly due to the lack of guidance and accountability. This was also reflected in the current study, where concerns were raised about the potential drawbacks of excessive autonomy, including decreased productivity and work quality due to limited supervision. While some employees thrive under a hands-off approach, others may struggle with the lack of direction, reinforcing the need for a balanced leadership style that combines autonomy with periodic managerial input.

Regionally, research by Malcarm and Tamatey (2017) and Hundie and Habtewold (2024) confirmed that laissez-faire leadership significantly influences employee performance in Ghana and Ethiopia, which is consistent with the findings in universities in Kenya. However, Toriqul et al. (2019) found that laissez-faire leadership had no effect on organizational outcomes, contradicting the current study's findings that it plays a role in shaping employee performance. The findings from the literature and the current study suggested that laissez-faire leadership can be effective in certain contexts, particularly when employees are self-motivated and capable of independent work. However, excessive reliance on this leadership style without appropriate support structures can lead to reduced performance, underscoring the need for a hybrid approach that balances autonomy with managerial oversight. This study's findings supported the premise of the Situational Leadership Theory that there is no one perfect way to lead; rather, all leadership philosophies are appropriate for different circumstances and the theory's underlying assumption that various circumstances call for various styles of leadership.

5.4 Recommendations of the Study

This section aimed to suggest recommendations for policy, practice and theory following the findings from the data collected.

5.4.1 Recommendations for Policymakers

The findings of this study highlight the importance of adopting appropriate leadership styles to enhance employee performance in universities in Kenya. Based on the results, several recommendations are made for policymakers and practitioners. First, universities should prioritize democratic leadership practices by fostering an inclusive decision-making culture. Leaders should be equipped with participatory skills through training programs that encourage employee involvement, ultimately enhancing performance. While autocratic leadership plays a crucial role in ensuring efficiency and maintaining order, it should be applied selectively. University administrators should adopt a flexible approach that allows structured decision-making while also incorporating employee input in areas that require collaboration. Over-reliance on autocratic leadership may discourage creativity and lower employee morale, negatively impacting performance.

Similarly, laissez-faire leadership should be implemented with caution. Although it encourages autonomy and innovation, it can lead to inefficiencies if not properly managed. Universities should establish clear guidelines and performance expectations while ensuring that leaders provide periodic support and feedback. This approach allows employees to enjoy the benefits of autonomy while

remaining accountable for their performance. Additionally, universities should invest in continuous leadership development programs to equip managers with adaptive leadership skills. Such programs should highlight the benefits and limitations of different leadership styles, guiding leaders on when and how to apply them effectively. To reinforce these efforts, policymakers in the education sector should develop leadership policies that promote a balance between control and employee autonomy. These policies should align with best practices to create a work environment that fosters high performance, innovation, and job satisfaction among university employees.

5.4.2 Recommendations for Practice

Universities should promote democratic leadership as it has shown a strong positive impact on employee performance. Leaders should involve employees in decision-making, encourage feedback, and foster open communication to improve motivation and productivity. While laissez-faire leadership can be effective, it should be applied selectively, especially for experienced and self-driven employees. Universities management, should establish accountability measures to ensure that employees remain productive under this leadership style. Given its weak positive impact on employee performance, universities should minimize the use of autocratic leadership style, except in situations where this style is needed. Additionally, universities should invest in leadership training programs to develop managers who can effectively apply democratic and laissez-faire leadership styles due to their significant influence on employee performance.

5.4.3 Recommendations to Theory

The study examined leadership styles against employee performance through theory of Situational leadership theory and Goal-Setting Theory. The study articulated how theory of situational leadership is related to the independent variable while goal-setting theory is related to the dependent variable. This study contributed to Situational Leadership Theory and Goal-Setting Theory and confirmed assumptions of the theory by providing empirical evidence and adding knowledge on the influence of leadership style on employee performance.

5.5 Limitations of the Study

Despite its contributions, this study faced several limitations. One of the key limitations is that the findings may not be generalizable beyond the university sector in Kenya. Since the study was conducted within a specific academic context, the results may not fully apply to other industries or

institutions in different geographical regions. Additionally, the study relied on self-reported data from employees, which introduces the possibility of response bias. Employees may have provided responses based on personal perceptions or social desirability rather than objective assessments of their leaders. This could have affected the accuracy of the findings. Another limitation is the cross-sectional nature of the study. Since data was collected at a single point in time, the study does not capture how leadership styles and their influence on employee performance may change over time. A longitudinal approach would provide a more dynamic understanding of this relationship.

Moreover, the study primarily focused on leadership styles and their direct influence on employee performance, without extensively considering external factors such as government policies, economic conditions, and technological advancements. These external elements could also play a significant role in shaping employee performance within universities. Lastly, the study acknowledges that different employees may perceive the same leadership style differently based on their roles, experiences, or expectations. This variability in interpretation may have influenced the findings, making it important for future research to explore individual differences in leadership perception.

Despite these limitations, the study provides critical insights into how leadership styles influence employee performance in universities in Kenya. The findings serve as a foundation for future research and policy development, contributing to the ongoing discourse on effective leadership in academic institutions.

5.6 Suggestions for Further Studies

While this study has provided valuable insights into the influence of leadership styles on employee performance in universities in Kenya, further research is necessary to explore additional dimensions of the subject. One potential area for further study is a comparative analysis of leadership styles across different educational institutions. Investigating how leadership influences employee performance in primary and secondary schools would offer a broader understanding of its impact at various levels of education. Additionally, future studies could explore the impact of leadership styles on student performance. Since university leadership indirectly affects students, understanding how leadership approaches influence academic outcomes and student satisfaction would be valuable for educational institutions.

A longitudinal study on leadership transitions would also offer deeper insights into how different leadership styles evolve and impact employee performance over time. Such research would help in understanding whether shifts in leadership approaches result in long-term improvements or

challenges within universities. Finally, further research could examine the role of organizational culture in shaping leadership effectiveness. Investigating how institutional culture interacts with leadership styles to influence employee motivation and productivity would provide a more comprehensive understanding of the leadership-performance relationship.

5.7 Conclusion

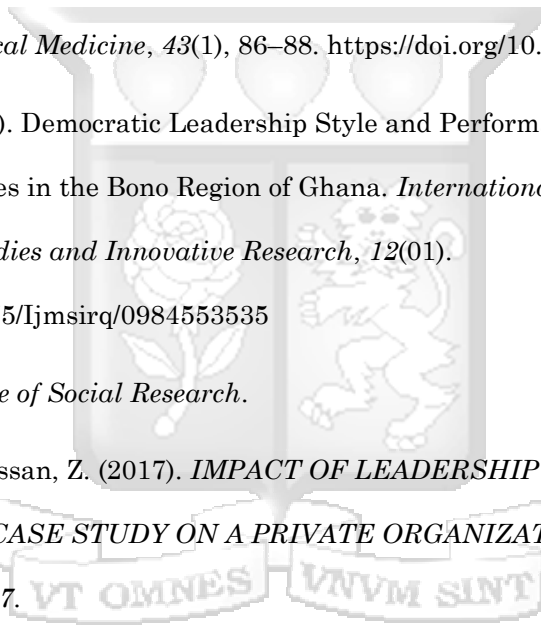
This study aimed to determine the influence of various leadership styles on employee performance in universities in Kenya. From the observations, the subsequent conclusions may be inferred: First, democratic leadership demonstrated a positive influence on employee performance. Leaders that involve workers in decision-making, promote collaboration, and appreciate employee contributions often cultivate a productive and engaged staff. The research demonstrated that universities employing democratic leadership methods achieve more work satisfaction and enhanced performance, since employees perceive themselves as respected and empowered. Secondly, autocratic leadership significantly influences employee performance. Although it guarantees rigorous compliance with regulations and efficiency in job execution, it may also result in diminished employee motivation and engagement owing to restricted involvement in decision-making. Universities that mostly utilize autocratic leadership style may encounter diminished creativity and innovation among staff. Ultimately, laissez-faire leadership had varied outcomes regarding its influence on employee performance. Granting staff liberty can enhance creativity and self-motivation; but, insufficient guidance and oversight may result in diminished accountability and variable performance levels. Universities using laissez-faire leadership devoid of explicit frameworks and support mechanisms may jeopardize efficiency and overall success.

The study underscores that leadership style significantly influences employee performance in universities in Kenya. Democratic leadership is the most successful in improving performance, although autocratic and laissez-faire approaches require careful application to maintain a balance of control, incentive, and efficiency. Universities ought to use leadership strategies that promote involvement, accountability, and innovation to improve institutional performance.

This chapter summarized the research findings, the discussion of findings and recommendations for enhancing employee performance. The chapter also provides the limitations and recommendations for further research.

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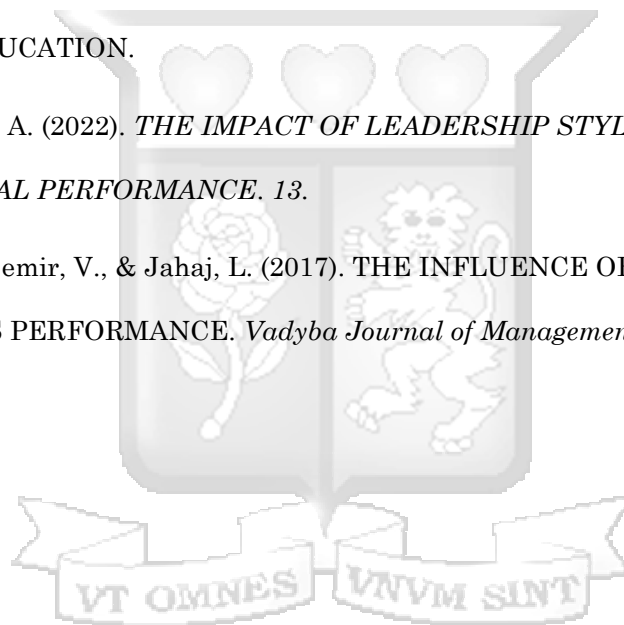
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APPENDICES

Appendix I: Letter of Introduction

Ole Sangale Rd, Madaraka Estate,
P.O. Box 59857 00200, Nairobi, Kenya,
Cell: +254 703 414/6/7, Twitter: @595Kenya
Email: info@sbs.ac.ke or visit www.sbs.strathmore.edu



28th November 2024

To Whom It May Concern,

RE: FACILITATION OF RESEARCH – OGALLO, KENNEDY

This is to introduce Ogallo, Kennedy who is a Master of Commerce (MCOM) Student at Strathmore University Business School, admission number MCOM/ 168473. As part of our MCOM Programme, Kennedy is expected to do applied research and undertake a project. This is in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the MCOM course. To this effect, Kennedy would like to request appropriate data from your organization.

Kennedy is undertaking a research paper on “**INFLUENCE OF LEADERSHIP STYLES ON EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE IN KENYAN UNIVERSITIES.**” The information obtained shall be treated confidentially and shall be used for academic purposes only.

Our MCOM Programme seeks to establish links with industry, and one of these ways is by directing our research to areas that would be of direct use to industry. We would be glad to share our findings with you after the research, and we trust that you will find them of great interest and of practical value to your organization.

We appreciate your support and shall be willing to provide any further information if required.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Njoki Kiagiri".

Njoki Kiagiri
Manager – Graduate Programmes
Strathmore University Business School.

Appendix II: Questionnaire

INFLUENCE OF LEADERSHIP STYLES ON EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE IN UNIVERSITIES IN KENYA

I am a Master student at Strathmore University. Kindly help in filling the attached questionnaire for the completion of my study. Your submitted information will be kept extremely private and used exclusively for academic purposes.

SECTION A: Demographic Information

1. Name of the institution-----
2. Gender: Male [] Female []
3. Age: 25 years and below [] 25-35 years [] 36-45 years [] 46 years and above []
4. How long have you worked with this university? Below 5 Years [] 6-15 Years [] 16-20 Years [] Over 20 []
5. What category of staff do you belong to?
Teaching staff [] Non-Teaching staff []

SECTION B: Leadership Styles

Democratic Leadership style

In the following sections, please indicate the extent to which you are agree with the statements described in each part. Scale: 1=SD=Strongly disagree, 2=D=Disagree, 3=N= Neutral, 4=A=Agree, and 5=SA= Strongly Agree.

	SD 1	D 2	N 3	A 4	SA 5
1. Team members are encouraged to share ideas or suggestions.					
2. Decision- making processes in my department are inclusive of all team members					
3. There is open communication between supervisors and employee in my department.					
4. Supervisor encourages team collaboration to achieve departmental goals					
5. Constructive feedback are provided that helps me improve my performance					
6. Employee performance improves when they are involved in decision-making processes					

Autocratic Leadership style

	SD 1	D 2	N 3	A 4	SA 5
1. There is little room for creativity or autonomy in my role					
2. Orders and procedures are strictly enforced in my department with little room for flexibility					
3. Mistakes or poor performance are met with strict consequences					
4. My supervisor uses authority and control to ensure compliance					
5. As a rule, my supervisor believes that employees must be given a reward or punishment to motivate them to achieve organizational objectives					
6. My supervisor rarely involves team members in decision making and prefers issuing commands.					

Laissez Faire Leadership style

	SD 1	D 2	N 3	A 4	SA 5
1. Employees are expected to self- manage their work without constant guidance					
2. There is minimal involvement by supervisor in daily activities					
3. Decision-making responsibilities are clearly assigned to employees					
4. My supervisor gives employees complete freedom to make decisions					
5. Employees have autonomy in deciding how to perform their tasks					
6. Employees are left to solve problem independently					

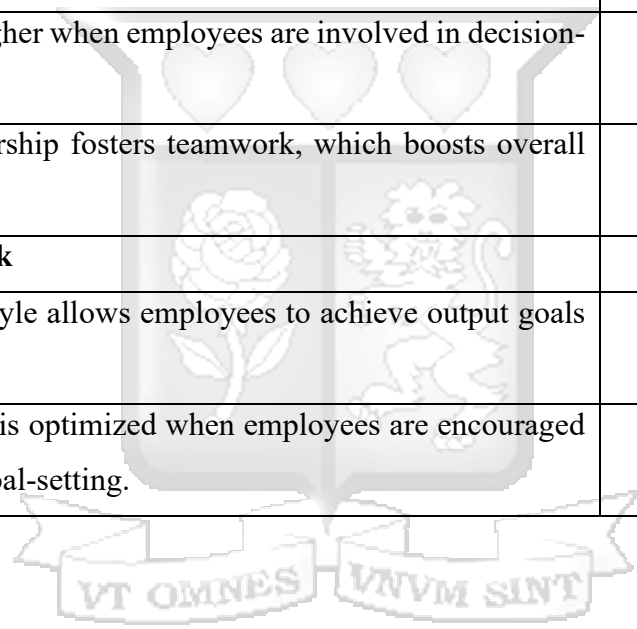
SECTION C: Employee Performance

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements about with the following ratings;

1=SD=Strongly disagree, 2=D=Disagree, 3=N= Neutral, 4=A=Agree, and 5=SA= Strongly Agree.

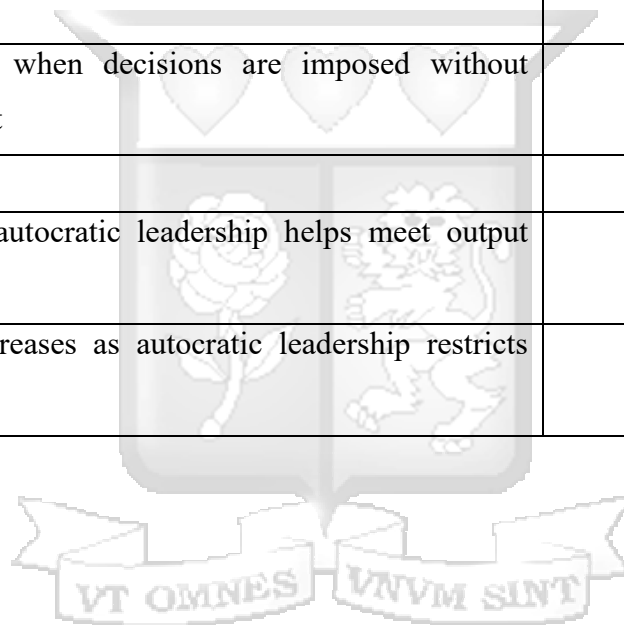
i. Influence of Democratic Leadership Style on Employee Performance

	SD 1	D 2	N 3	A 4	SA 5
Quality of Work					
1. Democratic leadership enhances quality as employees feel valued and responsible for their work					
2. Quality improves with democratic leadership, as it encourages creativity and input from employees					
Productivity					
3. Productivity is higher when employees are involved in decision-making processes					
4. Democratic leadership fosters teamwork, which boosts overall productivity					
Quantity of Work					
5. The democratic style allows employees to achieve output goals effectively					
6. Quantity of work is optimized when employees are encouraged to contribute to goal-setting.					



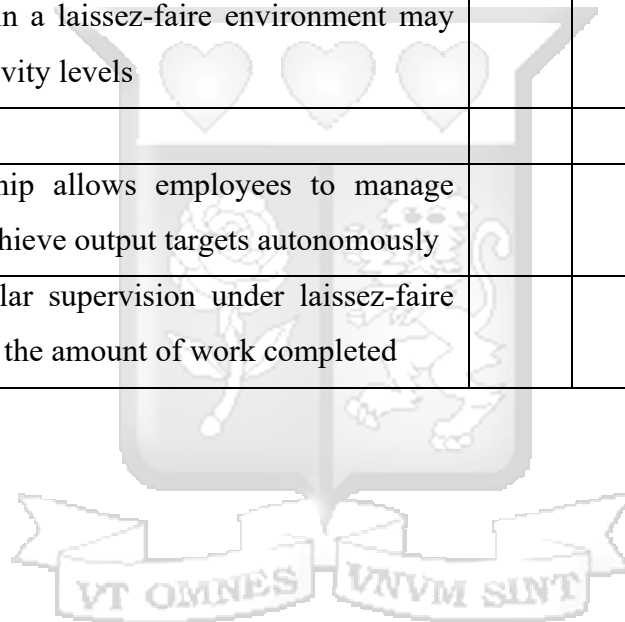
ii. **Influence of Autocratic Leadership Style on Employee Performance**

	SD 1	D 2	N 3	A 4	SA 5
Quality of Work					
1. The autocratic leadership style results in high-quality work outputs due to clear directives					
2. Quality suffers under autocratic leadership due to lack of employee input					
Productivity					
3. Autocratic leadership style enhances productivity through structured workflows					
4. Productivity declines when decisions are imposed without employee involvement					
Quantity of Work					
5. The strict nature of autocratic leadership helps meet output targets consistently					
6. Employee output decreases as autocratic leadership restricts autonomy					



iii. **Influence of Laissez-Faire Leadership Style on Employee Performance**

	SD 1	D 2	N 3	A 4	SA 5
Quality of Work					
1. Laissez-faire leadership leads to high-quality work when employees are self-motivated					
2. Lack of guidance in laissez-faire leadership can reduce the quality of work produced					
Productivity					
3. Productivity is high under laissez-faire leadership when employees work independently					
4. Limited supervision in a laissez-faire environment may lead to lower productivity levels					
Quantity of Work					
5. Laissez-faire leadership allows employees to manage their workload and achieve output targets autonomously					
6. The absence of regular supervision under laissez-faire leadership can reduce the amount of work completed					



Appendix III: Sampling Frame

Public Chartered Universities

1. University of Nairobi
2. Moi University
3. Kenyatta University
4. Egerton University
5. Jomo Kenya University of Agriculture and Technology
6. Maseno University
7. Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology
8. Dedan Kimathi University of Technology
9. Chukka university
10. Technical University of Kenya
11. Technical University of Mombasa
12. Pwani University
13. Kisii University
14. University of Eldoret
15. Masaaai Mara University
16. Jaramogi Oginga Odinga University of Science and Technology
17. Laikipia University
18. South Eastern Kenya University
19. Meru University of Science and Technology
20. Multimedia University of Kenya
21. University of Kabianga
22. Karatina University
23. Kibabii University
24. Rongo University
25. The Co-operative University of Kenya
26. Taita Taveta University
27. Murang'a University of Technology
28. University of Embu
29. Machakos University
30. Kirinyaga University
31. Garissa University
32. Alupe University
33. Kaimosi Friends University
34. Tom Mboya University
35. Tharaka University
36. National Defence University-Kenya
37. Open University of Kenya

Public University Constituent Colleges

1. Turkana University College

2. Bomet University College
3. Koitaleel Samoei University College
4. National Intelligence Research University College
5. Mama Ngina University College
6. Kenya Advanced Institute of Science and Technology

Private Chartered Universities

1. University of Eastern Africa, Baraton
2. Catholic University of Eastern Africa
3. Daystar University
4. Scott Christian University
5. United States International University
6. Africa Nazarene University
7. Kenya Methodist University
8. St. Paul's University
9. Pan Africa Christian University
10. Strathmore University
11. Kabarak University
12. Mount Kenya University
13. Africa International University
14. Kenya Highlands Evangelical University
15. Great Lakes University of Kisumu
16. KCA University
17. Adventist University of Africa
18. KAG East University
19. Umma University
20. Presbyterian University of East Africa
21. Aga Khan University
22. Kiriri Women's University of Science and Technology
23. The East African University
24. Zetech University
25. Lukenya University
26. Management University of Africa
27. Tangaza University



Private University Constituent Colleges

1. Hekima University College
2. Marist International University College

Institutions with Letters of Interim Authority

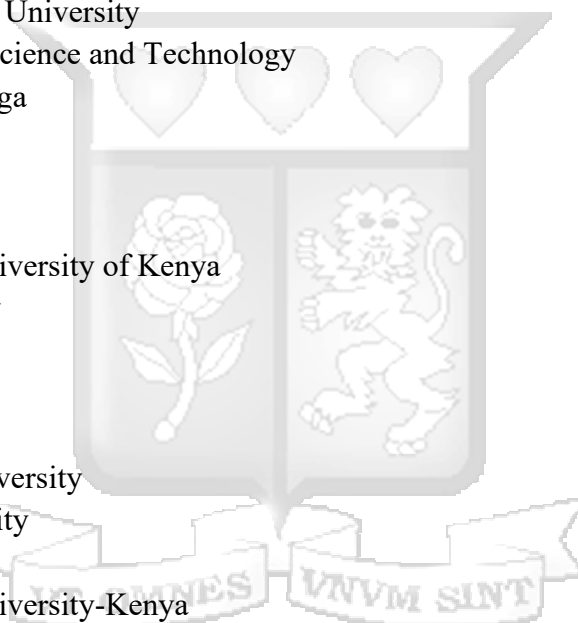
1. GRETSA University
2. Riara University
3. Pioneer International University

4. International Leadership University
5. Islamic University of Kenya
6. AMREF International University
7. Uzima University



Appendix IV: Participated Universities

1. University of Nairobi
2. Moi University
3. Kenyatta University
4. Jomo Kenya University of Agriculture and Technology
5. Dedan Kimathi University of Technology
6. Chukka university
7. Technical University of Kenya
8. Pwani University
9. Kisii University
10. Masaai Mara University
11. Jaramogi Oginga Odinga University of Science and Technology
12. Laikipia University
13. South Eastern Kenya University
14. Meru University of Science and Technology
15. University of Kabianga
16. Karatina University
17. Kibabii University
18. Rongo University
19. The Co-operative University of Kenya
20. Machakos University
21. Kirinyaga University
22. Garissa University
23. Alupe University
24. Kaimosi Friends University
25. Tom Mboya University
26. Tharaka University
27. National Defence University-Kenya
28. Open University of Kenya
29. Koitaleel Samoei University College
30. National Intelligence Research University College
31. University of Eastern Africa,Baraton
32. Catholic University of Eastern Africa
33. Daystar University
34. Scott Christian University
35. Africa Nazarene University
36. Kenya Methodist University
37. St. Paul's University
38. Pan Africa Christian University
39. Strathmore University
40. Kabarak University
41. Mount Kenya University
42. Africa International University



43. Kenya Highlands Evangelical University
44. Great Lakes University of Kisumu
45. KCA University
46. Adventist University of Africa
47. KAG East University
48. Umma University
49. Presbyterian University of East Africa
50. Aga Khan University
51. Kiriri Women's University of Science and Technology
52. The East African University
53. Zetech University
54. Lukenya University
55. Management University of Africa
56. Tangaza University
57. Hekima University College
58. Marist International University College
59. Riara University
60. Pioneer International University
61. International Leadership University
62. Islamic University of Kenya
63. AMREF International University
64. Uzima University



Appendix V: Authorization Letter



21st January 2025

Mr Ogallo Kennedy,
kennedy.ogallo@strathmore.edu

Dear Mr Ogallo,

RE: Influence of Leadership Styles on Employee Performance: A Case of Universities in Kenya

This is to inform you that SU-ISERC has reviewed and **approved** your above SU-masters proposal. Your application reference number is SU-ISERC2526/24. The approval period is from 21st January 2025 to 20th January 2026.

This approval is subject to compliance with the following requirements:

- i. Only approved documents including (informed consents, study instruments, MTA) will be used.
- ii. All changes including (amendments, deviations, and violations) are submitted for review and approval by SU-ISERC.
- iii. Death and life-threatening problems and serious adverse events or unexpected adverse events whether related or unrelated to the study must be reported to SU-ISERC within 72 hours of notification.
- iv. Any changes anticipated or otherwise that may increase the risks or affected safety or welfare of study participants and others or affect the integrity of the research must be reported to SU-ISERC within 72 hours.
- v. Clearance for the export of biological specimens must be obtained from relevant institutions.
- vi. Submission of a request for renewal of approval at least 60 days prior to the expiry of the approval period. Attach a comprehensive progress report to support the renewal.
- vii. Submission of an executive summary report within 90 days of completion of the study to SU-ISERC.

Before commencing your study, you will be expected to obtain a research license from National Commission for Science, Technology, and Innovation (NACOSTI) <https://research-portal.nacosti.go.ke/> and obtain other clearances needed.






Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ambrose Rachier".

**Mr Ambrose Rachier,
Chairperson; SU-ISERC**

Ole Sangale Rd, Madaraka Estate, PO Box 59857-00200, Nairobi, Kenya. Tel +254 (0)703 034000
Email admissions@strathmore.edu www.strathmore.edu

Appendix VI: NACOSTI License

 REPUBLIC OF KENYA	 NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION
RefNo: 100168	Date of Issue: 29/January/2025
RESEARCH LICENSE	
	
This is to Certify that Mr. Kennedy Otieno Ogallo of Strathmore University, has been licensed to conduct research as per the provision of the Science, Technology and Innovation Act, 2013 (Rev.2014) in Nairobi on the topic: Influence of Leadership Styles on Employee Performance: A Case of Universities in Kenya for the period ending : 29/January/2026.	
License No: NACOSTI/P/25/415531	
100168 Applicant Identification Number	 Director General NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION
	Verification QR Code 
NOTE: This is a computer generated License. To verify the authenticity of this document, Scan the QR Code using QR scanner application.	
See overleaf for conditions	

Appendix VII: Study Budget

Items	Amount (Ksh)
Proposal binding	3,000
Data Collection	30,000
Data Analysis	20,000
Research Assistant	20,000
Internet	5,000
Printing	5,000
Binding	2,500
Miscellaneous	4,000
Total	89,500

