Autocratic Leadership as a Correlate of Job Performance among Public Primary School Teachers in Wajir County, Kenya

Noor Othowa Barqatle., Priscilla Njoki Gachigi., Jackson Ndung'u

Department of Education Leadership and Management KCA University, Kenya

DOI: https://dx.doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2025.903SEDU0746

Received: 02 December 2025; Accepted: 08 December 2025; Published: 20 December 2025

ABSTRACT

Teacher job performance is a fundamental pillar in determining the quality of education in Kenya. However, evidence from Wajir County suggests a persistent decline in teacher performance. This trend is alarming, as it directly undermines student achievement and the overall effectiveness of public primary schools. The study's objective to find out the relationship between autocratic leadership and teacher's job performance among public primary schools in Wajir County. Existing literature attributes teacher job performance to factors such as workload, remuneration, and working conditions. However, there was limited research on how autocratic style influence teacher performance, particularly in rural contexts like Wajir County, Kenya. The study was guided by Bernard Bass and Bruce Avolio's Full-Range Leadership Theory (FRLT). A correlational research design was adopted, and data was collected using the Leadership Styles Questionnaire (LSQ) and the Teachers' Job Performance Questionnaire (TJPQ). The target population consistes of 436 teachers from all public primary schools in Wajir South. The study involved a sample of 205 teachers drawn from nineteen public primary schools, selected through a combination of purposive, stratified and simple random sampling. Data was analyzed using SPSS version 20, employing both descriptive and inferential statistics, including Pearson's correlation. Findings revealed a significant negative correlation, $r(202) = -.447$, $p < .01$. The findings were expected to establish the nature and strength of the relationship between autocratic leadership and teacher job performance and propose a predictive model that could inform educational leadership practices and policy development in marginalized regions. The study recommended reduction of autocratic styles.

Key Words: Autocratic, Teacher, Job Performance, Relationship, Leadership

INTRODUCTION

Teacher job performance is a crucial component of a successful education system, as it significantly influences student learning outcomes, school effectiveness, and overall educational quality. Globally, teachers who perform well tend to demonstrate higher levels of engagement, motivation, and commitment to their profession, which positively impacts student performance and institutional success. Conversely, poor job performance among teachers has been linked to high turnover rates, absenteeism, reduced instructional quality, and declining educational standards (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2017; Van Droogenbroeck et al., 2019). As such education systems strive to improve learning outcomes, ensuring that teachers perform effectively in their roles has become a significant area of concern for policymakers, researchers, and education stakeholders.

Internationally, concerns about teacher job performance have been widely documented, raising questions about the sustainability and effectiveness of the teaching profession. Large-scale studies, such as the Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) conducted by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2019), indicate that in several OECD member countries, a significant proportion of teachers report challenges in maintaining high job performance, leading to concerns about instructional quality and student achievement. Reports from the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES, 2021) in the United States highlight fluctuating levels of teacher effectiveness, with an increasing number of teachers struggling to maintain high performance due to various challenges. Similarly, in Canada, data from the Canadian Teachers' Federation indicate that teacher performance has been inconsistent, with 10 out of every 100 teachers resigning before reaching retirement age, citing challenges that impact their instructional quality and engagement.

ISSN No. 2454-6186 | DOI: 10.47772/IJRISS | Volume IX Issue XXVI November 2025| Special Issue on Education

The situation is no different in Asia, where variations in teacher job performance have been observed across different education systems. In Japan, data from the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology (MEXT) indicate that while most teachers maintain high professional standards, approximately 6% struggle to sustain consistent instructional effectiveness (MEXT, 2022). Meanwhile, in Australia, findings from the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) reveal that while many educators demonstrate high levels of effectiveness, about 9% face difficulties in maintaining quality instruction over time (AITSL, 2023).

Teacher job performance in the Philippines, Malaysia, and Thailand presents a deeply concerning picture, revealing notable inconsistencies and persistent challenges in sustaining high professional standards across these countries. In the Philippines, recent studies indicate that teacher performance varies considerably, with licensure examinations and professional evaluations highlighting substantial differences in effectiveness among educators, not only between regions but also across different types of schools (Abao, 2023; Bacus, 2024). These disparities suggest that while some teachers demonstrate high levels of professional competence and instructional skill, a significant proportion struggle to maintain consistent performance over time, leading to uneven professional standards across the education system. The patterns evident in these countries suggest that teacher job performance is not only variable but in some cases declining, highlighting the urgency for monitoring and interventions to ensure that professional standards are maintained..

Across Africa, concerns about teacher job performance continue to shape discussions on the quality of education. In South Africa, the Department of Basic Education has reported significant disparities in teacher effectiveness across provinces, with variations in student performance reflecting these inconsistencies (Department of Basic Education, 2022). In Tanzania, a systematic review of studies from 2010-2023 indicates that persistently low teacher performance is evident nationwide, with low motivation and high turnover contributing to suboptimal instructional quality and poor academic outcomes (Kambuga, 2023). Additionally, reports on secondary education examinations reveal declining teacher effectiveness, as pass rates have fallen significantly over time, from 72.5% in 2019 to 34.5% in 2022, underscoring ongoing challenges in sustaining consistent performance (HakiElimu, 2023).

In Kenya, teacher job performance remains a significant area of focus for education stakeholders. Reports from the Teachers Service Commission (TSC, 2023) indicate fluctuating performance levels, with data showing that while some teachers demonstrate high instructional effectiveness, others face challenges in maintaining consistent engagement and lesson delivery. National assessments suggest that variations in performance exist across counties, with some regions reporting more substantial teacher effectiveness than others. The Kenya National Union of Teachers (KNUT) has raised concerns about declining performance in some schools, highlighting potential impacts on student learning outcomes. Despite efforts to improve instructional quality, concerns about disparities in teacher job performance persist in education reports and policy discussions. Furthermore, the Teachers Service Commission (TSC, 2023) notes that teacher attrition is increasingly concerning, with some educators leaving the profession due to consistently low performance, failure to meet appraisal standards, and inability to maintain expected instructional quality, compounding challenges in achieving uniform learning outcomes across schools.

Research in Kenya has attempted to identify factors influencing teacher job performance, with studies focusing on various aspects of the teaching profession. Scholars such as Orodho (2014) and Wambua and Mugambi (2020) have examined performance levels among teachers, highlighting concerns over workload, professional development opportunities, and overall working conditions.

Several factors have been linked to teacher job performance, including workload, remuneration, career progression, student discipline, and working conditions (Wairimu & Njuguna, 2018; Muthoni, 2019). However, emerging research suggests that school leadership plays a pivotal role in shaping teacher job performance (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2020). Studies in various educational contexts suggest that the leadership styles adopted by school heads have a significant impact on teachers' motivation, engagement, and overall job performance (Bass, 2019; Eyal & Roth, 2020).

Leadership styles refer to the approaches and strategies that school administrators use to guide, support, and manage teachers and staff. Different leadership styles have been identified in educational research, each with distinct implications for teacher motivation, engagement, and overall effectiveness (Northouse, 2021). These include autocratic leadership.

Autocratic leadership is characterized by centralized decision-making, strict directives, and a top-down approach where teachers have little input in school policies, instructional planning, or administrative decisions. Despite the growing recognition of the importance of leadership in teacher job performance, research in Kenya has primarily focused on other factors, with limited studies specifically examining the relationship between autocratic leadership style and teacher effectiveness. Moreover, while some studies have explored this issue in urban areas such as Nairobi and Kiambu (Wara et al., 2018), there remains a dearth of research focusing on how autocratic leadership styles impact teacher job performance in rural and semi-rural areas, particularly in Wajir County. Given the unique educational challenges faced in this region, understanding how school leadership influences teacher performance is crucial for developing targeted interventions that aim to improve instructional quality and overall school effectiveness.

In light of this gap, the present study seeks to investigate the relationship between autocratic leadership style and teacher job performance in Wajir County, focusing on how different leadership approaches influence teacher motivation, instructional effectiveness, and overall job performance. By addressing this issue, the study aims to provide insights that can inform policy and practice, ultimately contributing to improved teacher effectiveness and educational outcomes in the region.

Statement of Problem

Teacher job performance is a critical determinant of educational quality and student success. However, there are increasing concerns about declining teacher effectiveness, characterized by absenteeism, lack of motivation, poor instructional delivery, and low commitment to professional duties. Many teachers struggle to meet expected performance standards, which directly affects learning outcomes. Despite ongoing efforts to improve education, persistent challenges in teacher performance continue to undermine the achievement of quality education, especially in Wajir South Constituency.

Empirical research highlights the significant impact of school leadership on teacher performance. For example, Nguni, Sleegers, and Denessen (2021) found that transformational leadership practices significantly improved teacher motivation, commitment, and instructional quality in Tanzanian secondary schools. Similarly, Olayiwola (2022) reported that effective leadership styles in Nigerian public schools have a positive impact on teacher punctuality, classroom engagement, and teaching innovation. These studies demonstrate that school leadership style is a significant predictor of teacher job performance, particularly in developing countries where teachers often work under challenging conditions.

If this issue remains unresolved, the consequences could be severe. Poor teacher performance leads to ineffective learning, resulting in students failing to acquire the essential knowledge and skills they need. This may contribute to declining academic achievement, higher dropout rates, and reduced opportunities for further education and employment. Additionally, underperforming teachers weaken the credibility of the education sector, making it challenging to attract and retain competent professionals. In the long run, a poorly educated workforce can hinder national development, lead to increased unemployment, and strain government resources. Addressing teacher job performance is, therefore, essential to ensuring a strong education system and sustainable national progress. Thus, the gap to be filled by the current study is in the form of the question: What is the relationship between autocratic leadership styles and teacher job performance in the context of a developing country?

Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

Theoretical Framework

Full-Range Leadership Theory (FRLT) by Bernard Bass and Bruce Avolio (1994).

ISSN No. 2454-6186 | DOI: 10.47772/IJRISS | Volume IX Issue XXVI November 2025| Special Issue on Education

This study was grounded in the Full-Range Leadership Theory (FRLT) developed by Bass and Avolio (1994). FRLT offers a comprehensive perspective on leadership by positioning it along a continuum that captures a range of behaviors from effective to ineffective. The theory is widely used in educational leadership research to explain how principals' leadership practices can influence various school outcomes, including teacher motivation, job satisfaction, and performance.

According to the theory, leaders apply a blend of behaviors that can either foster or hinder the performance of their subordinates. In the school context, the leadership style adopted by a headteacher significantly shapes the school climate, influences teacher morale, and determines the level of professional support and accountability that teachers experience. FRLT supports the premise that leadership is a critical determinant of teacher performance, particularly in dynamic and demanding educational environments.

FRLT identifies three primary leadership styles. Democratic leadership involves leaders encouraging participation, consultation, and collaboration with staff. Decisions are often made collectively, and teachers have opportunities to contribute to school planning and problem-solving. Autocratic leadership is characterized by leaders making decisions unilaterally, maintaining strict control over school activities, and closely supervising staff, with limited teacher input in decision-making. Laissez-faire leadership, on the other hand, reflects a hands-off approach, where leaders provide minimal guidance or direction, leaving teachers greater autonomy in managing classroom activities and responsibilities.

Anchoring this study in FRLT is essential because it provides a framework for examining how these distinct leadership styles are manifested in public primary schools in Wajir County, Kenya. While theory suggests that leadership behaviors can influence teacher performance, empirical investigation is necessary to determine how democratic, autocratic, and laissez-faire leadership practices relate to teacher job performance in this specific context. Studying these leadership styles will provide insights into the dynamics of school leadership locally and inform strategies for enhancing teacher effectiveness, accountability, and professional development.

Conceptual Framework

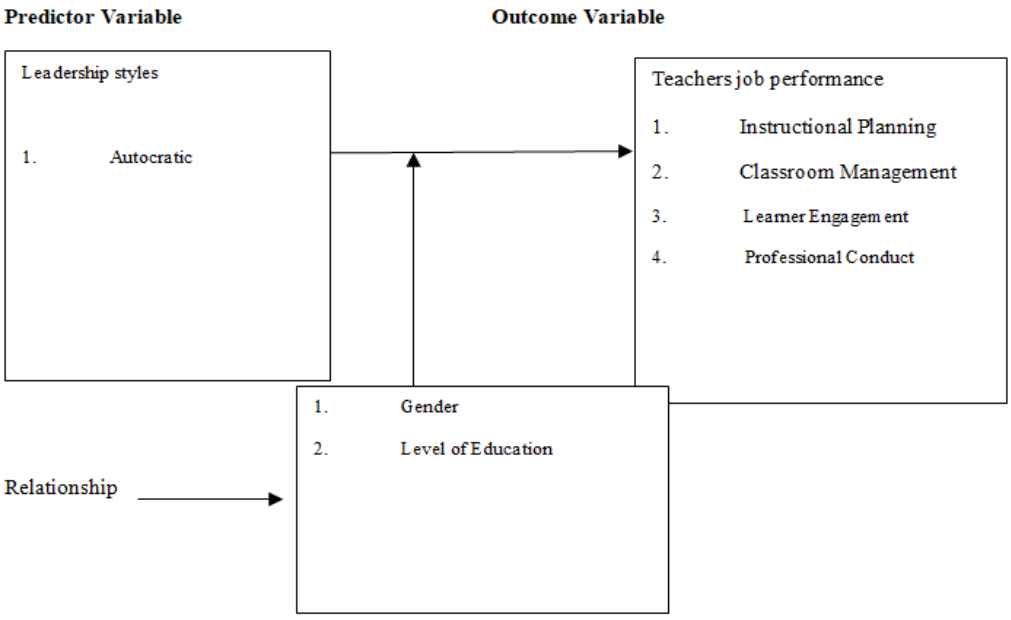

Figure 1.1 Conceptual Framework

Source: Author, 2025.

Figure 1.1 highlights the predictor variable, autocratic. The outcome variable of the study is the teacher's performance. Gender and level of education are the intervening variables of the study. Teacher's job performance is hypothesized to be influenced by school leadership style. School leadership style is also hypothesized to interact with intervening variables to influence teacher's job performance.

METHOD

Research Design

This study adopted a correlational study design. The choice of this design was informed by the need to establish whether a statistically significant association exists between autocratic leadership styles and teachers' performance. According to Kothari (2021), a correlational design is suitable when the goal is to examine the relationship between two or more variables without attempting to manipulate them. Therefore, this design was appropriate as the study aimed to establish how autocratic leadership style relate to teachers' performance.

Research Setting

This study took place in Wajir County. Wajir County is located in northeastern Kenya, spans an area of 56,000 square kilometers, and has a population of approximately 781,263 people (Census, 2019). The County faces significant challenges in its education sector, particularly in relation to teacher performance. One of the critical issues impacting the quality of teaching in Wajir County is teacher turnover. According to the Teachers Service Commission (TSC, 2021), Wajir County experiences a higher-than-average teacher transfer rate compared to other counties. This frequent turnover disrupts continuity in teaching, creating instability in the educational environment, particularly in the more remote areas of the county. The Wajir County Education Office (2021) reported that about 25% of teachers leave or transfer annually, a trend attributed to factors such as inadequate school leadership, poor working conditions, and a lack of professional growth opportunities. This instability has a direct impact on the quality of instruction and affects teachers' ability to build lasting relationships with students, which ultimately influences the students' academic performance.

Teacher absenteeism also contributes to the challenges faced in the county's education system, with absenteeism rates higher than the national average. The TSC (2021) reported that approximately 20% of teachers in Wajir are absent on any given school day, further contributing to the gaps in students' learning. Absenteeism, particularly in schools located in more remote areas, disrupts students' learning continuity, making it difficult for them to engage fully with the curriculum. Additionally, many teachers in Wajir report feeling demotivated due to the lack of professional development opportunities, with the Wajir County Education Office (2021) noting that 40% of teachers feel inadequately supported in their professional growth. This lack of support, combined with high turnover and absenteeism, leads to a decline in teacher performance as teachers struggle to maintain high standards in the classroom.

The impact of teacher performance on student achievement is evident in the consistently low academic outcomes in Wajir County. For example, in the 2020 K.C.S.E. results, the county recorded a mean score of 2.8, significantly below the national average of 4.3. This disparity is closely linked to the challenges teachers face, including inadequate leadership within schools. Teachers who are frequently absent, poorly supported, and demotivated are less likely to provide the high-quality instruction that students need to succeed. High turnover disrupts the continuity of instruction, leading to gaps in students' learning and reduced student engagement. As a result, students in Wajir County struggle to perform well in national examinations, which limits their opportunities for further education and hinders their socio-economic mobility.

If these issues are not addressed, Wajir County would continue to face challenges in its education system. The lack of consistent, motivated, and qualified teachers would limit students' opportunities to pursue higher education, further contributing to social and economic inequalities. Therefore, it was crucial to address the root causes of poor teacher performance, with a particular focus on the role of school leadership. The leadership styles adopted by school administrators can significantly influence teacher morale, motivation, and overall performance. This study aimed to investigate the impact of autocratic leadership style on teacher performance in Wajir County, with the goal of providing insights that can inform improvements in both teacher effectiveness and student outcomes. By examining the impact of leadership practices on teacher performance, the study would contribute to efforts aimed at enhancing educational standards and promoting sustainable development in the region.

Participants

This study targeted all headteachers and 436 teachers working in public primary schools in Wajir South Constituency. The population comprises educators employed by the Teachers Service Commission (TSC) and stationed in government-sponsored primary schools across the county. This group was selected because they are directly involved in the day-to-day implementation of teaching and learning processes, and their experiences provide critical insight into the dynamics of leadership and Teacher job performance.

Teachers form the core of the school workforce, and their roles are central to the success of any educational institution. Headteachers act as instructional leaders and organizational managers, making decisions that shape the professional culture and instructional direction of their schools. Teachers, on the other hand, are responsible for delivering the curriculum, managing classrooms, and assessing learner outcomes. As such, both groups are critical stakeholders whose performance can be directly influenced by school leadership approaches. Focusing on public primary schools ensured the study captures the realities of mainstream education in Kenya, where the majority of learners are enrolled and where government policies and leadership structures are most visible.

Data Gathering Procedure

The primary data collection technique for this study was the use of structured questionnaires. These questionnaires were administered directly to teachers in selected public primary schools. The researcher personally distributed and collected the questionnaires to ensure clarity of instructions, answer any immediate questions from respondents, and enhance the response rate.

Materials

With minor modifications, two structured, closed-ended research instruments were used in this study: the Leadership Styles Questionnaire (LSQ) and the Teachers' Job Performance Questionnaire (TJPQ). The LSQ is adapted from the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) developed by Bass and Avolio (1995), which measures various leadership styles based on the Full Range Leadership Theory. The TJPQ was adapted from the Teacher Job Performance Scale developed by Darling-Hammond (2001), which assesses key aspects of teacher effectiveness, including instructional delivery, professionalism, and classroom management. Both tools were designed using a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from *"Strongly Disagree" (1)* to *"Strongly Agree" (5)* for LSQ and *(1) Not at all true*, to *Always true (5)* for TJPQ.

Leadership Styles Questionnaire (Bass & Avolio, 1995)

The Leadership Styles Questionnaire (LSQ) was used to assess head teachers' leadership styles as perceived by teachers. The instrument focused on three major leadership styles: democratic, autocratic, and laissez-faire. It contained approximately 5 items adapted from previously validated leadership measurement tools available in open educational resources. As such, no special permission was required to use the instrument. In the original validation studies, these instruments demonstrated acceptable internal consistency reliability. The LSQ subscales have reported Cronbach's alpha coefficients ranging from 0.78 to 0.92. Each item in the questionnaire was designed to capture key traits of a specific leadership style. In contrast, authoritative leadership was reflected in items like *"My head teacher makes decisions without consulting staff*. Where necessary, items from the original instruments were paraphrased to suit the local educational context in Wajir County. For example, the item *"The principal allows teacher input in school planning"* may be reworded to *"My head teacher involves teachers in school planning decisions*. "This instrument has been widely used in leadership studies and has demonstrated acceptable levels of reliability and validity.

The Teachers' Job Performance Questionnaire (Darling-Hammond, 2001)

TJPQ was used to measure teacher job performance across four key dimensions: instructional planning, classroom management, learner engagement, and professional conduct. The original instrument demonstrated high internal consistency, with Cronbach's alpha coefficients ranging from 0.82 to 0.91 across subscales.

Respondents were required to indicate the extent to which each statement is true for them, using a five-point Likert scale. The scale will be structured as follows: 1 – Not at all true, 2 – Rarely true, 3 – Sometimes true, 4 – Often true, and 5 – Always true.

Each domain featured sample items that reflect practical teaching behaviors. For instance, the Instructional Planning section included statements such as *"I plan lessons with the expectation that not all learners will grasp the concept right away."* The Classroom Management section included items like *"I have developed ways to prevent problems before they escalate in class."* The Learner Engagement section featured statements such as *"I intentionally include activities that encourage peer learning and the exchange of ideas."* In the Professional Conduct section, one of the statements read, *"I actively seek feedback from others about my teaching performance."*

Responses to the items were scored numerically, with values ranging from 1 to 5. The total job performance score for each teacher was calculated by summing all responses across the sixteen items. The minimum possible score was 16, while the maximum was 80. The interpretation of scores was categorized as follows:16–31 indicated Very Low Job Performance and 75–80 indicated Very High Job Performance.

Ethical Considerations

The researcher began by seeking approval from KCA University Scientific and Research Ethics Committee to guarantee that the study meets all ethical standards. Upon approval, a research permit was obtained from the National Commission for Science, Technology, and Innovation (NACOSTI). Additionally, the researcher sought clearance from the Wajir County Director of Education and the head teachers at the selected public primary schools.

An official letter of introduction from the university accompanied the researcher to help gain access to the schools and build trust with the respondents. Before administering any data collection tools, the researcher explained the purpose of the study to all participants and obtain their informed consent. Participation in the study was voluntary, and participants were informed of their right to decline participation or withdraw at any point without any negative consequences.

Participants were assured that the information provided was to be used solely for academic purposes and that no names or identifying information would be disclosed in any part of the report. All collected data was securely stored and only accessible to the researcher and academic supervisors. Ethical principles, including anonymity, confidentiality, voluntary participation, and non-maleficence, were upheld at all stages of the research.

Validity and Reliability of the Research Instruments

Pilot Study

Before the actual data collection, a pilot study was conducted in Wajir East Constituency, which is geographically and administratively distinct from Wajir South Constituency, where the main study was conducted. The purpose of the pilot study was to pre-test the research instruments, that is, LSQ and TJPQ, to evaluate their clarity, consistency, and overall suitability for the intended research context.

The pilot study involved 10% of the total sample size, including teachers from public primary schools within Wajir East. These participants were excluded from the main study to avoid any bias or overlap. Data from the pilot helped identify ambiguous items, assess the time taken to complete the instruments and determine the reliability of the scales.

The results of the pilot study were also used to compute Cronbach's Alpha coefficients for each section of the LSQ and TJPQ to assess internal consistency. A Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.70 or above was considered acceptable, confirming that the instruments are reliable for the main study (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011). Necessary revisions to the questionnaires were made based on the outcomes of the pilot test to enhance the validity and reliability of the tools.

Validity of the Research Instruments

Content and face validity was established through expert review and consultation. LSQ and the TJPQ, both adapted with minor modifications, was submitted to educational experts, including university supervisors and experienced researchers in the Department of Leadership and Management. The experts evaluated the instruments for clarity, relevance, comprehensiveness, and alignment with the research objectives.

Furthermore, feedback from the pilot was used to revise ambiguous or misleading items and to confirm the appropriateness of the items to the context of public primary schools in Wajir County.

Reliability of the Research Instrument

To assess the internal consistency of the instruments, Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was computed using the pilot study data. A Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.70 or above was considered acceptable, indicating a satisfactory level of reliability for each subscale of the LSQ and TJPQ.

A pilot study was carried out, and the reliability results of the questionnaires are presented in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1 Reliability Analysis for Research Instruments

	Original Scale		Pilot Study	
Scale	Items	α	Items	α
SLS	5	.77	5	.78
TJP	16	.71	16	.72

As indicated in Table 3.2, the school leadership adapted questionnaire recorded a higher internal consistency (.78) than the original instrument. It had the highest reliability followed by TJP (.72).

Limitations of the Study

The study focused on Wajir County. Schools and teachers in Kenya have different experiences. Therefore, the generalization of results from this study may be done with caution. Furthermore, this study relied on self-report questionnaires, which may introduce some level of subjectivity. Moreover, the study was entirely correlational. Thus, causal inferences about school leadership styles could not be drawn. Additionally, the study was delimited to only one variable. Although other variables relate to teachers' performance, the study focused solely on school leadership styles. This is because there is a dearth of studies on how school leadership styles relate to teachers' performance.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The autocratic leadership scores of the respondents were examined to determine their range, mean, and standard deviation. The outcomes of this analysis are presented in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1 Descriptive Analysis for Autocratic Leadership

Variable	N	Range	Min	Max	M	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
Total Autocratic Style Scores	204	19.00	5.00	24.00	14.35	4.50	0.05	-0.51

Note. n = Number of respondents; M = Mean; SD = Standard Deviation; Min = Minimum score; Max = Maximum score

The descriptive statistics presented in Table 4.1 indicate that teachers' perceptions of autocratic leadership in their schools varied, with scores ranging from a minimum of 5.00 to a maximum of 24.00. The mean score of 14.35 (*SD* = 4.50) suggests a moderate perception of autocratic leadership among the respondents. The skewness value of 0.05, which is very close to zero, indicates that the distribution of responses was approximately symmetrical, implying that perceptions of autocratic leadership were fairly evenly spread across low, moderate, and high levels. Similarly, the kurtosis value of –0.51 indicates a relatively flat distribution compared to a normal distribution, suggesting that extreme perceptions (very low or very high) were less common.

Overall, these findings reflect that while some teachers perceived autocratic leadership as prominent, many reported moderate levels of such leadership in their schools. This provides a foundation for further inferential analysis to determine how autocratic leadership relates to teachers' job performance.

Additionally, teachers' perceptions of autocratic leadership were examined across gender, age groups, and academic qualifications, with the findings summarized in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2 Descriptive of Autocratic Leadership across Gender, Age and Academic Qualifications

Category	n	Min	Max	Mean	SD	Skewness
Male	116	29.00	78.00	53.90	10.30	0.63
Female	88	22.00	74.00	48.59	8.97	-0.08
Age Categories						
20–26	57	22.00	78.00	53.02	12.94	0.22
27–33	101	29.00	78.00	51.31	9.22	0.49
34–40	33	28.00	69.00	50.15	7.40	-0.21
41 and above	13	44.00	71.00	51.46	8.04	1.46
Academic Qualification						
Certificate	57	26.00	74.00	49.96	8.14	0.28
Diploma	101	22.00	78.00	50.53	10.31	0.49
Degree	46	32.00	77.00	56.00	10.66	0.25

Note. n = Number of respondents; M = Mean; SD = Standard Deviation; Min = Minimum score; Max = Maximum score

As shown in Table 4.2 (Grouped Demographic Descriptive Format), the descriptive analysis of teachers' self-reported job performance indicates variations across gender, age, and academic qualification. Male teachers reported a mean score of 53.90 (*SD* = 10.30), slightly higher than female teachers, who had a mean of 48.59 (*SD* = 8.97). The skewness values suggest that male teachers' scores were moderately positively skewed (0.63), while female teachers' scores were approximately symmetric (-0.08), indicating a more even distribution among female teachers.

Across age categories, teachers aged 20–26 years had the highest mean score of 53.02 (*SD* = 12.94), with those aged 41 years and above reporting 51.46 (*SD* = 8.04). Teachers in the mid-age ranges of 27–33 and 34–40 years reported slightly lower mean scores of 51.31 (*SD* = 9.22) and 50.15 (*SD* = 7.40), respectively. Skewness was generally low, except for the 41 years and above group (1.46), indicating some clustering of lower scores.

Regarding academic qualifications, teachers with degrees had the highest mean job performance score (M = 56.00, SD = 10.66), compared to certificate holders (M = 49.96, SD = 8.14) and degree holders (M = 50.53, SD = 10.31). The skewness values were relatively small across these groups, reflecting near-symmetrical distribution.

Hypothesis Testing

In line with the second objective, the following null hypothesis was proposed:

H_{01}: There is no significant relationship between autocratic leadership style and teachers' job performance.

To test this hypothesis, a bivariate analysis was conducted, and the results are presented in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3 Correlation between Autocratic Leadership and Teacher's Job Performance

Variable	TASS	TJPS
Total Autocratic Style Scores	—	-.447**
Total Job Performance Scores	-.447**	—

The results in the Table 4.3 indicate a significant negative correlation between autocratic leadership style and teachers' job performance, r(202) = –.447, p < .01. This suggests that as the level of autocratic leadership in schools increases, teachers' job performance tends to decrease. The correlation coefficient of –.447 reflects a moderate inverse relationship, implying that highly controlling or directive leadership practices may hinder teachers' effectiveness in performing their duties.

Since the relationship is statistically significant at the 0.01 level, the null hypothesis stating that there is no significant relationship between autocratic leadership style and teachers' job performance was rejected.

DISCUSSION

The analysis revealed a significant negative relationship between autocratic leadership and teachers' job performance, r(202) = –.447, p < .01. This indicates that schools where head teachers adopt rigid, top-down decision-making practices tend to have teachers who perform less effectively. Such leadership, characterized by limited teacher involvement, strict supervision, and centralized control, appears to restrict professional autonomy and diminish motivation.

These findings are consistent with previous studies that have examined similar leadership contexts. For instance, Martínez and López (2022) observed that autocratic leadership negatively affected teacher morale and creativity in secondary schools in Spain, even though it ensured adherence to schedules and curriculum standards. Likewise, Mutinda and Kimani (2023) found that secondary school teachers in Nakuru County, Kenya, felt excluded from decision-making and demotivated when school heads employed overly controlling leadership practices. Similarly, Asiedu and Boateng (2020) reported in Ghanaian basic schools that autocratic leadership created a culture of compliance rather than engagement, limiting teachers' initiative and professional growth.

However, some studies suggest that autocratic leadership can have positive outcomes in certain contexts. Rahman and Ismail (2021) in Malaysia found that clear directives, structured supervision, and centralized decision-making sometimes enhanced classroom management and timely task completion, suggesting that some teachers respond well to highly structured environments.

However, it is important to note that most of the existing studies on autocratic leadership have focused on secondary schools or contexts outside Kenya. The present study, in contrast, targeted primary school teachers in Wajir County, who operate under distinct socio-cultural and educational conditions. Just as differences in context and participants have been shown to produce variations in outcomes in previous research, such as in the study

by Asiedu and Boateng (2020), the current findings highlight the need to understand how autocratic leadership specifically affects primary school teachers' job performance within this unique setting.

CONCLUSION

Results indicated a significant negative correlation, implying that rigid, top-down leadership reduces teacher motivation and engagement, ultimately lowering performance. Teachers under autocratic principals were less likely to feel valued or included in school decisions, which negatively affected their effectiveness.

RECOMMENDATIONS

i. Reduce autocratic practices: Policies should discourage rigid, top-down leadership by requiring school leaders to create structures for teacher feedback, suggestion mechanisms, and participatory committees, thereby empowering teachers and increasing accountability.

ii. Strengthening Teacher Service Commission (TSC) policy frameworks on leadership. TSC should integrate leadership style indicators into performance appraisal systems (TPAD) to promote leadership behaviors that support teacher motivation and effective performance. Policies can further emphasize the importance of relational leadership, teacher engagement, and professional autonomy within school management.

iii. Ministry of Education (MoE) support for leadership capacity-building.The MoE should design and support leadership development programs tailored to diverse school contexts, especially in low-resource and hard-to-reach counties such as Wajir. Such programs should focus on communication skills, emotional intelligence, distributed leadership, and conflict management to enable school leaders to adopt supportive leadership styles.

iv. Conduct comparative regional studies. Future studies should examine whether the relationships between leadership styles and teacher job performance observed in this study hold across different counties or regions of Kenya. Such comparative research will help establish whether the findings are context-specific or nationally generalizable.

v. Use mixed methods approaches that combine surveys with interviews or observations to provide deeper insight into how leadership styles influence teacher outcomes.

vi. Employ longitudinal and experimental research designs. Longitudinal studies that follow teachers and school leaders over time would help clarify how leadership styles influence job performance across different career stages. Experimental or intervention-based designs would also help establish causal relationships between leadership practices and teacher performance.

vii. Develop leadership training tailored to low-resource counties. Counties such as Wajir face unique challenges, including teacher shortages, high turnover, and resource constraints. Leadership training tailored to these contexts should emphasize adaptability, community engagement, culturally responsive leadership, and strategies for motivating teachers in challenging environments.

REFERENCES

1. Asiedu, M., & Boateng, F. (2020). Leadership styles and teacher performance in basic schools: A study of public schools in Accra, Ghana. International Journal of Educational Management, 34(2), 112–127. https://doi.org/10.1108/IJEM-03-2019-0112
2. Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership. (2021). Annual report 2020–2021. https://www.aitsl.edu.au
3. Bass, B. M. (2019). Two decades of research and development in transformational leadership. European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology, 8(1), 9–32. https://doi.org/10.1080/135943299398410

4. Bush, T., & Glover, D. (2020). Leadership styles and teacher motivation: A study of public schools in the United States. Journal of Educational Administration, 58(3), 345–364. https://doi.org/10.1108/JEA-11-2019-0197
5. European Commission. (2020). Education and training monitor 2020. https://ec.europa.eu/education/policy/strategic-framework/et-monitor_en
6. Eyal, O., & Roth, G. (2020). Principals' leadership and teachers' motivation: Self-determination theory analysis. Journal of Educational Administration, 49(3), 256–275. https://doi.org/10.1108/09578231111129055
7. Kenya National Union of Teachers. (2021). State of Teacher Welfare and Performance in Kenya. KNUT. https://www.knut.or.ke/
8. Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology–Japan. (2020). White paper on education, culture, sports, science and technology. https://www.mext.go.jp/en/
9. Muthoni, G. (2019). Influence of teacher remuneration on the performance of public primary schools in Nakuru County, Kenya [Master's thesis, Kenyatta University]. Kenyatta University Institutional Repository.
10. Mutua, J. K., Ndambuki, P. W., & Kimani, D. N. (2019). Determinants of teacher performance in public secondary schools in Kitui County, Kenya. African Journal of Educational Management, 7(1), 78–91. Kenya [Master's thesis, Kenyatta University]. Kenyatta University Institutional Repository.
11. National Center for Education Statistics. (2021). The condition of education 2021. U.S. Department of Education. https://nces.ed.gov/pubs2021/2021144.pdf
12. National Council of Educational Research and Training. (2020). Annual report 2019–2020. https://ncert.nic.in
13. Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development. (2019). TALIS 2018 results (Volume I): Teachers and school leaders as lifelong learners. https://doi.org/10.1787/1d0bc92a-en
14. Orodho, J. A. (2014). Policies on free primary and secondary education in East Africa: Are Kenya and Tanzania on course to attain Education For All (EFA) goals by 2015? International Organization of Scientific Research Journal of Humanities and Social Science, 19(1), 11–20.
15. Skaalvik, E. M., & Skaalvik, S. (2017). Still motivated to teach? A study of school context variables, stress and job satisfaction among teachers in senior high school. Social Psychology of Education, 20, 15–37. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11218-016-9363-9
16. Teachers Service Commission. (2021). Teacher performance appraisal and development report. TSC. TSC – TPAD Evaluation Report (2021)
17. Universal Basic Education Commission. (2020). UBEC annual report 2019/2020. https://www.ubec.gov.ng
18. Van Droogenbroeck, F., Spruyt, B., & Vanroelen, C. (2014). Burnout among senior teachers: Investigating the role of workload and interpersonal relationships at work. Teaching and Teacher Education, 43, 99–109. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2014.07.005
19. Wambua, M. N., & Mugambi, M. M. (2020). Teachers' workload and its influence on their performance in public secondary schools in Machakos County, Kenya. Journal of Education and Practice, 11(18), 42–50. DOI: 10.14738/assrj.63.6128
20. Wara, H. K., Otieno, D. J., & Mwanda, S. (2018). Influence of leadership styles on teacher job performance in public secondary schools in Nairobi County, Kenya. Journal of Education and Practice, 9(16), 53–59. Kenya [Master's thesis, Kenyatta University]. Kenyatta University Institutional Repository.
21. Zhang, L., & Zhang, X. (2023). The effects of autocratic leadership on teacher motivation and performance in China. Asia Pacific Education Review, 24(3), 233–246. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12564-023-09909-2