

ABSTRACT

Staff motivation is a significant factor in enhancing organizational commitment and productivity. In a school system, two types of staff perform their duties in a complimentary manner, namely the teaching staff and the support staff. The school principal is expected to play an administrative role, which includes motivational. However, the principals' motivation to support staff has been an issue of concern in the management of schools in Kenya. In the recent past, there has been a widespread support staff's turnover in secondary school in Nyamira County in spite of it is fairly developed and productive area. The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between principals' leadership styles and motivation of support staff in public secondary schools in Nyamira County, Kenya. The specific objectives of the study were to: find out the relationship between principals' autocratic leadership style and motivation of support staff, examine the relationship between principals' laissez-faire leadership style and motivation of support staff, establish the relationship between principals' laissez-faire leadership style and motivation of support staff and determine the relationship between principals' bureaucratic leadership style and motivation of support staff. Descriptive correlation and exploratory designs were used. The conceptual framework was based on the McGregor theory X and theory Y and supported by Herzberg's Motivation and Hygiene Factors theory. The study population consisted of 170 principals, 172 deputy principals and 170 Board of Managers chairpersons with 1020 support staff members, a total target population of 1532. Stratified, random and purposive sampling techniques were used to select 51 principals, 51 deputy principals, 51 BOM chairpersons and 306 support staff members, making a total sample of 459 respondents for the study which translates to 30% (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2005). The instruments for data collection were questionnaires, interview schedules and document analysis. The study used descriptive statistics of frequencies, percentages, mean and standard deviations, which were used concurrently with inferential statistics of chi-square, Pearson's Product Moment Correlation and simple linear regression analysis. Qualitative data were analyzed by organizing the content into themes and sub-themes as they emerged, then tallied and reported as excerpts. Validity of the instruments was determined through examination of the items using JOOST experts. A pilot study was carried out with 10 independent principals and 10 independent supportive staff to establish the reliability of the instruments. To compute for instrument's reliability the study employed Cronbach alpha coefficient analysis of which a minimum of 0.709 and 0.84 were obtained for each of the items whose reliability was tested. The study established that there was statistically significant negative relationship between principals' autocratic ($r = -.231, n=306, p<.05$) and bureaucratic ($r = -.412, n=306, p<.05$) leadership styles and support staff motivation. However, a statistically positive relationship was established between democratic ($r = .315, n=306, p<.05$) and laissez-faire ($r = .316, n=306, p<.05$) with motivation among the support staff. The study established that principals' autocratic leadership orientation accounted for 5.3%, democratic leadership orientation explained 9.9%, laissez-faire leadership orientation explained 10% and principals' bureaucratic leadership style orientation explained 17.8% of the variation in motivation among support staff workers. The study recommends that Ministry of Education should design relevant and regular in-service courses for support staff members and principals to maximize motivation. Such training should emphasize on human resource management and interpersonal relations at work place and accountability of the workers on their responsibilities. The findings from the study will be important to the principals will be able to evaluate their leadership styles and the level of motivation of the support staff based on empirical findings.