

## **RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PRINCIPALS' LEADERSHIP STYLES AND MOTIVATION AMONG SUPPORT STAFF IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN NYAMIRA COUNTY, KENYA.**

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### ***ABSTRACT***

Secondary school support staffs are less satisfied with their posts in general, their contracts and conditions of employment, working arrangements for their post, training and development opportunities available to them are always demoralizing them. Going by the foresaid conditions of work, this study was set to determine the relationship between the principals' leadership styles and motivation among support staff in public secondary schools in Nyamira County, Kenya. The specific objective of the study was to determine leadership styles used by principals to manage support staff in public secondary schools. The study adopted a descriptive survey design. The study population consisted of 170 public secondary schools, 170 principals, 172 deputy principals and 170 BOM chairpersons with 1020 support staff, totaling to 1532. Simple random and stratified sampling techniques were used to select 16 secondary schools, out of which one principal, six support staff, one deputy principal and the BOM chairperson from each of the sampled schools were selected, making a total sample of 144 respondents for the study. The findings revealed that leadership styles were interchangeably used on support staff depending on situations and circumstances. The study recommended that principals should be trained on various leadership styles and when to apply each style when managing support staff.

### **Key words**

Leadership styles, Public Secondary School, Staff Motivation and Support Staff

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Secondary school principals are charged with the responsibility of running schools by addressing themselves to curriculum and instruction, school community relationship, finance and business administration, staff personnel, pupils and school plant tasks (Nakpodia 2006). Hoy and Miskeel (1992), maintain that at the building level, the principal is usually the key figure in fostering shared governance within the school. Principals not only have increased responsibility and authority in school programmed curriculum and personnel decisions, but also increased accountability for a student and program success, while doing this the principal should work on ways of motivating the workers to enable them to perform their jobs.

The main tasks of the school principal are to interpret national policies, execute curriculum programs, comment on students, teachers and support staffs' welfare, equipping physical facilities and finances, inducting and retaining school community relations (Mwaoria 1993). For the smooth and effective running of a school, the principal needs to gain the support and commitment of both professional and support staff (Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development, 1999). Principals should motivate and encourage all staff to feel they are part of a team with a common mission. Welch (2006) observed that money, recognition, training, worker qualification, attitude and experience are the basic tools required to motivate and retain top performance. Welch further observed that it is easier to manage the financial and material components of any organization than to manage the human component. They insinuate that "it is easier to manage even animals than to manage human beings" (Nakpodia, 2006; Peretomode, 1991; Peretomode, 2001; Ubogu, 2004; Emore, 2005; Ukoshi, 2004). Thus, in the school system, the school principal, is confronted with numerous problems posed by teaching staff, support staff and students.

In England and Wales, secondary school support staff were less satisfied with their posts in general, their contracts and conditions of employment, working arrangements for their post, training and development they had received in their role, and training and development opportunities available to them (Martin, 2008). Nakpodia (2010), revealed in his study on human resources in schools in Nigeria that conditions of work impact positively on performance of support staff.

Sagimo (2002) maintained that employees and managers have to work in harmony, better cooperation and understanding in order to increase their productivity. It is therefore worth noting that every teaching institution needs not only the teaching staff, but also a motivated support staff to assist in running other services at the school (Bakhda, 2004). Republic of Kenya (2006), asserts that to ensure staff satisfaction and effective utilization of the available human resources for increased productivity, the working environment and conditions of service must be conducive and attractive.

In Kenya employees who are skilled and semi skilled end up securing employment in secondary schools however, poor terms and conditions of service lead to poor morale (Republic of Kenya 1999).

Olayo (2011) maintained that to maximize employees output; they need to be comfortable both at work and home so as to minimize stress and stressors. Every person has the right to fair labour practices including fair remuneration, reasonable working conditions, a right to form, join or participate in the activities and programmes of a trade union and a right to go on strike ( Republic of Kenya, 2010). Though researches on principals has been studied and proposals made, a gap still exists regarding the leadership styles and motivation of support staff that play pivotal role in making schools achieve their objectives. Support staffs in Nyamira Sub-county's public secondary schools are reluctantly playing their pivotal role compared to their counterparts in Kisii and Gucha sub-counties (Nyamira District Education office, 2012). It is therefore necessary to assess the relationship between the principals' leadership styles and motivation among support staff in public secondary schools in Nyamira County, Kenya.

In the school system, the principal is accountable for the management and motivation of the support staff within the school. However most of the workers are not motivated to work because whenever their schools performs well, it is only the teachers who are congratulated, taken for trips, given awards for good job done and being appreciated. Support staff members are minimally recognized not only by stakeholders but even by their school principals. Support staff members are faced with poor working environment such as delayed salaries especially during the third term of the school calendar as the school management claims they had run short of funds. Support staff members also suffer lack of medical cover, lack of working tools and protective gears when at work. In addition support staff also lack training opportunities, receive less sick leave than teachers although they are exposed to similar health risks at work, not sure of pay progression, not being paid during school holidays. As a result of poor working conditions most support staff are not motivated to work yet they are expected to come to work very early, be innovative at work place, they are also expected to love their jobs and to improve their school performance. This study sought to establish the influence of principals' leadership styles on support staff motivation in public secondary schools in Nyamira County, Kenya.

Effective school principals are relatively consistent in the way they attempt to influence the behavior of group members. The principal who makes all the major decisions in one situation is not likely to share decision making in another. Also, the principal who is considerate in one situation is not likely to be insensitive in another. The relatively consistent pattern of behavior of most principals is too complex to be described by a single style, and most principals modify their styles to match a situation; the concept of leadership styles is useful (Waweru, 2002).

The classical method of leadership styles arranges management behavior along a continuum of the amount of authority exerted by the manager. The continuum begins with the autocratic style, democratic style and a *laissez-faire* or free-rein style (Warrick, 1981). An autocratic manager maintains most of the authority by issuing orders and telling group members what to do without consulting them. Autocratic leaders have complete power over their people. Staff and team members have little opportunity to make suggestions, even if these would be in the team's or the organization's best interest. The leader makes decisions without consulting with others and this causes the greatest discontent. An autocratic style works best when: there is no need for input on the decision, where the decision would not change as a result of input and where the motivation of people to carry out subsequent actions would not be affected whether they were or were not involved in the decision-making. To the authoritarian, the basis for management is formal authority. Autocratic principals may have a few favorite subordinates but they are usually regard close interpersonal relationship with group members as superfluous. Many autocratic managers have been successful as high-level managers in the private and public sectors. The autocratic style of manager is generally in disfavor in modern organizations, as expressed by the consensus of several current management theorists (Waweru, 2002).

## **2. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY**

This study focused on achieving the following objective: To determine leadership styles used by principals to manage support staff in public secondary schools.

## **3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The study used descriptive survey research design. The major purpose of descriptive research was description of the state of affairs as they exist (Kombo & Tromp, 2006). Orodho (2003) defines descriptive survey as collection of information by interviewing or administering a questionnaire to a sample of individuals. It is used to gather data from a large population at a particular point in time

with the intention of describing the nature of existing situations. It can be used when collecting information about people's attitudes, opinions, habits or any of the variety of education or social issues (Orodho&Okombo, 2002).

Kothari and Garg (2014) define descriptive research studies as those studies which are concerned with describing the existing characteristics with specific predications, with narration of facts of a particular individual, or of a group or situation. Descriptive survey design was chosen for this study because it gave the opportunity to assess the relationship between the principals' leadership styles and motivation among support staff in public secondary schools in Nyamira County, Kenya.

The locale of this study was in Nyamira County, Kenya. The Latitude and Longitude Nyamira County is 0°56'S34°93'E respectively.

The target population comprised of the 170 secondary schools in Nyamira County, 1020 support staff, 170 principals, 172 deputy principals, 170 BOM chairpersons, making a total target population of 1532. This was the total population of support staff members, principals, deputy principals and BOM Chairpersons in the Nyamira County.

Kerlinger (1973) indicated that a sample size, 10% of the target population is large so long as it allows for reliable data analysis by cross tabulation, provides desired level of accuracy in estimates of the large population and allows for testing for significance of differences between estimates. Kothari et al (2014) observed that the size of the sample should be determined by a researcher keeping in view the nature of the universe. Universe may either be homogenous or heterogeneous in nature. If the items in the universe are homogenous a small sample can serve the purpose. This study therefore used 10% of the population because of the large number of the study population.

Stratified and simple random sampling as in table 3.1 below was used to select 16 secondary schools, of which a principal, six support staff, a deputy principal and BOM chairpersons comprised the sample. In total, there were 144 respondents for the study. The BOM chairpersons are active participants in the school culture, are currently involved in school management, they have adequate time and this research is based on the principles of positivism.

**Table 3.1: Sampling Frame**

Sub-County	Total Public Sec Schs	Samp le Size	Total H/T	Samp le Size	Total DH/T	Samp le Size	Total BOM Chair persons	Samp le Size	Total Support Staff	Samp le Size
Nyamira North	43	4	43	4	44	4	43	4	258	24
Nyamira South	44	4	44	4	44	4	44	4	264	24
Masaba North	32	3	32	3	32	3	32	3	192	18
Manga	28	3	28	3	29	3	28	3	168	18
Borabu	23	2	23	2	23	2	23	2	138	12
<b>Total</b>	<b>N=170</b>	<b>n=16</b>	<b>N=170</b>	<b>n=16</b>	<b>N=172</b>	<b>n=16</b>	<b>N=170</b>	<b>n=16</b>	<b>N=1020</b>	<b>n=96</b>

#### 4 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

According to the objective of establishing leadership styles used by principals to manage support staff in public secondary schools, the respondents were asked to rate the leadership styles according to their magnitude. The results are as summarized in table 4.1

**Table 4.1 Leadership Styles used in Secondary Schools as Reported by Principals (n= 16), Support Staff (n= 96)**

Leadership Styles	Principals		Support Staff	
	f	%	f	%
Autocratic leadership	14	88	96	100
Bureaucratic Style	13	81	96	100
Laissez-faire (Free reign) Style	13	81	92	96
Democratic Style	10	63	90	94

From table 4.5, the study established that autocratic leadership was the most commonly used leadership style by the principals in secondary schools as it was indicated by all support staff. Bureaucratic style of leadership was reported by most (81%) principals and all support staff, equally laissez-faire was reported by most (81%) principals and (96%) support staff. Democratic style though ranked last, it was equally reported by majority (63%) principals and most (94%) support staff.

During interviews with all deputy principals, the study established that there are various styles of leadership and principals apply them when need arises depending on circumstances or challenges faced. The deputy principals noted that principals were majorly applying autocratic style because it allows the leader to coordinate work thereby facilitating completion of assignments, provides for clear definition of tasks and enables faster decision making with the principals at the center of activities in the school settings. Most (87%) deputy principals noted that workers in secondary schools were lazy and reluctant to work and using autocratic styles most of the times were making the workers to perform their tasks.

Interviews with BOM Chairpersons revealed that autocratic style used by principals on support staff was necessary because the style allows the principal have total power (authority) over the subordinates and uses force to issue very strict and rigid orders which must be obeyed without questioning, commenting or discussion. The BOM chairpersons argued that when support staffs were given free atmosphere, they would not deliver their services adequately to the schools. One BOM chairperson stated;

*We do encourage the principal to use authoritarian leadership so that the workers can perform and whenever they show good work, we do encourage the principal to show appreciation or acknowledge the performance in any way he chooses.*

Interviews with the principals further revealed that bureaucratic style of leadership was also applied by principals in secondary schools. All principals maintained that this style was enabling them to make support staffs adhere to rules and regulations in handling problems and issues at work place. One principal remarked that;

*We do use this leadership style to make our staff conform to work ethics. This is because we draw them from the surrounding community and would want to do things their way if not watched. I believe our staff performance would not be the way it is if we would not have embraced this leadership style*

Most (81%) principals noted that the use of bureaucratic style on support staff is vital because it makes them to focus on their work objectives as such little attention is directed to relations in the work situation. Some (65%) deputy principals and BOM chairpersons underscore the importance of using bureaucracy because it insist on observation of protocol and all communication must be put in writing. This they noted does not give room for excuse of not performing duties.

The study also established that Laissez-faire style was also being applied in secondary school on support staff. Most (81%) principals maintained that this leadership style was necessary when workers show compliance to the school policies, rules and regulations and when they are performing their duties diligently. Principals also noted that they allow subordinates in their schools to perform their tasks as they wish with nil or least interference from the leader. According to the BOM chairpersons who participated in the study, they do give their support staff authority to make decisions and determine course of action. The BOM chairpersons were however quick to maintain that this style of leadership was only applied on mature and experienced employees like the school bursars, matron and cateress. According to some (81%) deputy principals, Laissez-faire style was applied because individual workers have to think for themselves and their initiative would lead to higher production in the schools. As one deputy principal maintained;

*I believe that these are adults who know the importance of their job to their families. If they decide to be irresponsible, then the school rules and regulations will catch up with them. I believe they are motivated to work with this leadership style when no leader is putting pressure in them to work.*

This revealed that support staffs were granted enough freedom of expression. This finding reveals that some principals acknowledged the importance of communication in school organization and there was a reflection of good communication in public schools during the research period. This finding also showed that some principals know to what extent cooperation with the support staff aids productivity and teachers performance.

The study also established that democratic style was partly applied on support staff in secondary schools. According to most (63%) principals, subordinates in their schools are consulted when decisions are to be addressed and their opinions are considered before arriving at decisions. The principals added that they improve employees' morale by involving them in planning and decision making process. The BOM chairpersons also added that using democratic style helps the schools to tap the subordinates specialized knowledge and skills in achieving their schools objectives. Some (65%) BOM chairpersons, maintained that democratic leadership style do ensure that only reasonable targets are set because the people who would attain them are involved in their formulation. One BOM chairperson also stated that;

*We do encourage our principal to apply as many styles of leadership as possible to help in improving work performance of the support staff. We feel they should be motivated to work and this is only possible when mixed leadership styles are enforced*

## **5 SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

This chapter presents a summary of the research findings, conclusions and recommendations. The study was necessitated by the need to examine the relationship between principals' leadership styles and motivation among support staff in public secondary schools in Nyamira County, Kenya. The following summary of the findings, conclusions and recommendations were made: The summary of the findings of the study are as follows: The study established that several leadership styles were being used on support staff in public secondary schools in Nyamira County. The findings revealed

that leadership styles such as autocratic, bureaucracy, laissez- faire, and democratic styles were interchangeably used on support staff depending on situations and circumstances.

Based on the findings of the study the following conclusions were made.

Leadership styles used on support staff affects their performance in one way or the other. The principals however were not aware of the effect of their leadership styles on the work performance of the support staff.

Based on the findings and the conclusions of the study, the following recommendations were made: Principals should be trained on various leadership styles and when to apply each style when managing support staff. This would help the principals to understand how to deal with individual support staff of their own way.

Ministry of Education should design relevant in-service courses for support staffs and principals. Such training should emphasize on human resource management and interpersonal relations at work place.

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## **TABLES**

### **Table 3.1 Sampling Frame**

### **Table 4.1 Leadership Styles used in Secondary Schools as Reported by Principals (n= 16), Support Staff (n= 96)**