

The Relationship Between Principals' Leadership Styles and Teacher Performance in Secondary Schools in Kenya

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ABSTRACT

The Kenyan education system has for some time experienced low academic performance of students in its primary, and secondary schools. As a result, many stakeholders have expressed grave concern over this very unfortunate situation. Poor academic performances of some of these students are laid at the feet of the classroom teachers with unlimited amount of blame which in many cases cannot be rationally justified. The principals' leadership styles may have a tremendous effect on teachers' performance and consequently students' academic performance. The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between principals' leadership styles and teachers' job performance in secondary schools in Hamisi Sub-County, Kenya. The study focused on autocratic, democratic and laissez faire leadership styles. The study used descriptive survey design and the target population consisted of teachers and principals in 30 secondary schools in Hamisi Sub-County. A sample of 130 secondary school teachers and 10 principals was selected using cluster sampling and random sampling. The data was collected using questionnaires and interviews. Data was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The study found out that there is a significant relationship between principals' leadership styles and teachers' job performance in secondary schools.

Keywords: principals, performance, leadership styles, secondary, teacher.

INTRODUCTION

Schools and institutes of learning are also organizations with objectives to be achieved. The principal as the manager of the institution is charged with the responsibility of organizing the human resource to achieve the objectives. The hue and cry has always been the students' academic performance; with poor performance prompting demonstrations by parents and instigating the transfer of teachers. Ehsan Hashemi (2005) believes the success of any organization in achieving predetermined goals depends on how the school principals pursue management practices and effective management styles. In fact, management and leadership style are facilitating and motivating factors that directly and indirectly has considerable impact on the staff's job satisfaction and improve their efficiency. At the individual level, leaders who are able to influence, motivate and direct employees will often be rewarded by loyalty and performance of their employees (Mosadegh & Armohammadian, 2006).

Cole (2002) defines leadership as the ability of inspiring people to listen and follow a vision. Even if an institution has all the financial resources to excel, it may fail dismally if the leadership does not motivate others to accomplish their tasks effectively. The principals should be able to inspire the teachers to perform and consequently achieve good results. Leadership is the process of influencing the activities of a group of people by a leader in efforts towards goal achievement (Nworgu, 1991). It is involving a force that initiates action in people and the leader (Nwadiani, 1998). It could be described as the ability to get things done with the assistance and cooperation of other people within the school system (Omolayo, 2000; Aghenta, 2001).

Armstrong (2004) defines leadership as influence, power and legitimate authority acquired by a leader to be able to effectively

transform the organization through the direction of the human resources that are the most important organizational asset, leading to the achievement of desired purpose. This can be done through the articulation of the vision and mission of the organization at every moment, and influence the staff to define their power to share the vision. Thus principals by through their leadership styles communicate the vision and mission of the school; lead to good performance of the teachers and students.

Leadership style is the manner and approach of providing direction, implementing plans and motivating people. As seen by the employees, it includes the total pattern of explicit and implicit action of their leaders (Newstrom, Davis, 1993). In 1939 Kurt Lewin led a group of researchers to identify different styles of leadership (Lewin, Lippitt, White, 1939). This early study has been very influential and established three major leadership styles: (U.S. Army, 1973): authoritarian or autocratic, participative or democratic and delegative or laissez faire.

Authoritarian style is used when leaders tell their employees what they want done and how they want it accomplished, without getting the advice of their followers. Autocratic leaders do not delegate authority nor permit subordinates to participate in policy making (Smylie and Jack, 1990, Hoy and Miskel, 1992). Participative (democratic) style involves the leader including one or more employees in the decision-making process (determining what to do, and how to do it). There is exchange of ideas between employee and employer (Heenan and Bennis, 1999) and leads to a high degree of staff morale (Mba, 2004). However, the leader maintains the final decision-making authority. Delegative (laissez faire) style, the leader allows the employees to make the decisions. A leader does not interfere with or participate in the course of events determined by the group (Talbert, 1994). Other leadership styles include: transformational, transactional, bureaucratic, charismatic servant and visionary, this study focused only on authoritative, autocratic and democratic leadership styles.

A good leader uses all three styles, depending on what forces are involved in the followers, the leaders, and the situation. For example, a leader can use an authoritarian style on a new employee who is just learning the job. The leader is competent and a good coach. The employee is motivated to learn a new skill. The situation is a new environment to the employee. While can use participative styles with a team of workers who know their job. The leader knows the problem, but does not have all the information. The employees know their jobs and want to become part of the team. Laissez faire style can be used with a worker who knows more about the job than you. All styles can be employed e.g., telling your employees that a procedure is not working correctly and a new one must be established (authoritarian); asking for their ideas and input on creating a new procedure (participative); and delegating tasks in order to implement the new procedure (laissez faire)

Relationship between leadership styles and organizational performance has been discussed often. Most research results show that the leadership styles has a significant relation with the organizational performance, and different leadership styles may have a positive correlation or negative correlation with the organizational performance, depending on the variables used by researchers. Sun (2002) compared the leadership style with the leadership performance in schools and enterprises, and showed that the leadership style has a significantly positive correlation with the organizational performance in both schools and enterprises.

As such, Ibukun (1997) argued that the main task of the principal is to create a conducive atmosphere for the teachers to be able to achieve desired changes. The way the principal relates with his or her staff could contribute immensely to their effectiveness or otherwise. Performance could be described in various ways. It could be an act of accomplishing or executing a given task (Okunola, 1990). It could also be described as the ability to combine skillfully the right behavior towards the achievement of organizational goals and objectives (Olaniyan, 1999). It could also be described as the ability of teachers to combine relevant inputs for the enhancement of teaching and learning processes (Akinyemi, 1993; Okeniyi, 1995).

However, Peretemode (1996) argued that job performance is determined by workers level of participation in the day to day running of the organization. It is noted that employees behave differently under different

situations. Principals' can therefore encourage effective performance of their teachers by identifying their needs and trying to satisfying or meeting them. Owoye (1999) asserted that variables of job performance such as effective teaching, lesson note preparation, effective use of scheme work, effective supervision, monitoring of students' work and disciplinary ability are virtues which teachers should uphold effectively in the school system. In this regard, teachers' performance can be measured through annual report of his/her activities in terms of performance in teaching, lesson preparation, lesson presentation, mastery of subject matter, competence, teachers' commitment to job and co-curricular activities. Other areas of assessment include effective leadership, effective supervision, effective monitoring of students' work, motivation, class control and disciplinary ability of teachers.

Education in Kenya forms the foundation on which national development agenda is built and nurtured. Incognizance of its role, education is a social pillar of government vision 2030. One of the objectives of education and training is to enhance access, equity, and quality at all levels of education and training (sessional paper no. 1, 2005). Towards this end, the National Policy on Education set up certain aims and objectives which were to facilitate educational development in the country. In fostering these aims and objectives, the school principal has important roles to play. Among these roles include providing effective leadership in secondary schools, thereby enhancing better job performance among teachers. How effective the principal is in performing these roles has been a matter of concern to many educationalists (Aghenta, 2000; Ige, 2001) and the researcher. It seems many principals have not considered their styles of leadership as determinants of teachers' job performance in their schools. Hence, some of them seem to find it difficult to effectively administer their schools (Oyededeji, 1998; Adeyemi, 2004).

The decline in academic performance in the last 5yrs as decried by the Hamisi District Educational Officer (Hamisi District Educational Report, 2010) is a reflection of the teachers' performance. For example, none of the schools that the research was conducted had students attaining a mean grade of A. Three schools had a few students (10%) attaining a mean grade of B and seven schools had majority of their students (70%) getting a mean grade C. this implies that very few students qualify for university government sponsored programs. The Kenyan education system has for some time experienced low academic performance of students in its primary, and secondary schools. Whereas there might be other factors that may contribute to this, the principals cannot absolve themselves since the buck stops with them. Realizing the role education plays in the development of a nation there is need to critically examine the leadership styles of principals.

Research results have shown that the leadership style has significant relation with the organizational performance, and different leadership styles may have a positive correlation or negative correlation with the organizational performance, depending on the variables used by researchers. There is a significant and positive relation between leadership styles and job performance, stress, and employees' job satisfaction (Chiok Foong Loke, 2001; Dunham- Taylor, 2000; Goleman, 2000; Mosadegrad, 2003; Morrisson et al., 1997; Seo, Ko, & Price 2004; Stordeur et al., 2000; Vance & Larson, 2002). Maiciby (2005) contends that without proper leadership style effective performance cannot be realized in school. This prompted the researcher to establish whether principal's leadership style could affect teachers' job performance. It is against this background that this study sought to examine critically the relationship between principals' leadership styles and teachers' job performance in secondary schools.

THEORETICAL REVIEW

The study was conducted in secondary schools in Hamisi District, Vihiga County. This study was based on the path goal theory by Martin Evans and Robert House (1974). The theory emphasizes how leaders can facilitate task performance can be instrumental in achieving desired goals. The theory argues that people are satisfied with their work and will work hard if they believe that their work will lead to things that are highly valued (Okumbe, 1999). The theory emphasizes that managerial behavior should be motivating or satisfying to the extent that it increases goal attainment by subordinates and clarifies paths to this goals (Steers, 1991). The school principal who assumes the managerial position should take the motivator and satisfier role to help teachers recognize the importance of effective planning and teaching to better their job performance and consequently who is the final product.

METHODOLOGY

The study used descriptive research design. This is used to collect data in order to test or answer questions concerning the current status of the subjects in the study. This also is in conformity with Saunders et al (2003), who has indicated that the objective of using descriptive study is to prove accurate information on the phenomenon being investigated. The target population was principals and teachers in 30 secondary schools in Hamisi District. A sample size of 140, constituting 130 teachers and 10 principals was used. Ten secondary schools were selected using simple random sampling. The secondary schools formed the clusters and all the secondary school teachers and principals in the clusters were included in the study sample. The data was collected using questionnaires and interviews. The reliability was determined using test and retest method. To determine the content validity of research instrument, the researcher identified the different types of leadership styles and their influence on performance of employees from review of literature. Data was analyzed by use of frequency distribution tables and Chi-square.

RESULTS

The study was to establish the relationship between principals' leadership styles and teachers' job performance in secondary schools. Study examined which among the three leadership styles is frequently used and the findings are shown in table 1

Table 1: leadership styles used by respondents' principals

Rating	Lesson Planning	Use of Schemes of Work	Use of Teaching Aids	Supervision of Students	Meeting Targets	Lesson Attendance
Poor	7.69%	-	5.38%	-	-	-
Average	54%	46%	34.60%	61.50%	63.80%	63.80%
Good	30.70%	46%	46%	30.80%	30.80%	30.80%
Very Good	-	7.69%	13.80%	7.69%	5.38%	5.38%
Excellent	7.69%	7.69%	-	-	-	-
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

The leadership styles were measured by the level of democracy (involvement of workers in decision making) and control (supervision of workers). The study showed that autocratic leadership was found to be the most commonly used leadership style among principals of secondary schools in Hamisi District. 80 respondents (61.5%) indicated that their principals used autocratic leadership style while 28 (21.5%) respondents' democratic leadership styles, and 22 (17%) respondents stated that laissez fair leadership style was used by principals in their secondary schools. This finding disagrees with findings of earlier researchers (Ajibade, 1990; Obilade 1999) who found out that democratic leadership was the commonly used style.

Authoritarian (autocratic) style is used when leaders tell their employees what they want done and how they want it accomplished, without getting the advice of their followers. Autocratic leaders do not delegate authority nor permit subordinates to participate in policy making (Smylie and Jack, 1990, Hoy and Miskel, 1992). Participative (democratic) style involves the leader including one or more employees in decision making process (determining what to do and how to do it). The researcher established that 61.5% of the principals use autocratic style as shown in table 2.

Table 2; leadership styles used by principals

Leadership style	Frequency	Percentage
Autocratic	6	61.5%
Democratic	2	21.5%
Laissez faire	2	17.0%

Table 2 indicates that most principals (61.5%) use autocratic style, very few use democratic style and none of them used laissez faire. This is a conformation of what the respondents had that indicated autocratic leadership is the commonly used style (table 2).

The teachers' job performance was measured by their level of lesson plan preparation, use of scheme of work, use of teaching aids, supervision of students' work, meeting targets and attendance of lessons. The responses were summarized and presented in table 3.

Table 3: summary- Evaluation of the respondents'

Rating	Lesson planning	Use of scheme of work	Use of teaching aids	Supervision of students work	Meeting targets	Lesson attendance
Poor	7.69%	-	5.38%	-	-	-
Average	54%	46%	34.6%	61.5%	63.8%	63.8%
Good	30.7%	46%	46%	30.8%	30.8%	30.8%
Very good	-	7.69%	13.8%	7.69%	5.38%	5.38%
excellent	7.69%	7.69%	-	-	-	-
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Table 3 shows very clearly most of the teachers were average in lesson planning, supervision of students' work, meeting subject targets and lesson planning and good in the use of schemes of work and teaching aids. A situation whereby the level of teachers' job performance in the schools was just on the average does not augur well for effective teaching and learning in the schools. The reason for this could not be connected with the findings made in the previous studies (Adepoju 1996; Bolarinwa, 2002). This was revealed by investigating the challenges facing the teachers are summarized in table 4.

Table 4: Main challenge affecting respondents' performance

Challenges	Frequency	Percentage
Lack of learning resources	20	15.4%
Lack of motivation	86	66%
Un co-operative	13	10%

Large class	11	8.64%
Total	130	100%

Table 4 reveals that lack of motivation was the main challenge experienced by teachers. 20 (15.4%) teachers indicated lack of resources, 86 (66%) teachers lack motivation, 13 (10%) teachers' uncooperative principal, and 11 (8.64%) teachers large class size as the challenge. The most commonly used leadership style by principals in Hamisi District is autocratic. This does not involve workers in decision making and this lowers their morale and motivation, hence concurring with their findings of the study.

Relationship between leadership styles and teachers job performance was determined by computing a correlation co efficiency between the leadership styles and teachers' performance as shown in table 5 below

Table 5: correlation co efficiency between leadership styles and teachers job performance

leadership styles	Teachers job performance
Autocratic	0.69
Democratic	0.42
Laissez faire	0.12

The table 5 indicated that correlation coefficients between leadership styles and teachers' job performance in Hamisi District at 0.05 level of significance. For the three styles of leadership. The study found a strong positive correlation between principals' leadership style and teachers' job performance. Autocratic leadership style has the highest correlation coefficient (0.69), followed by democratic leadership style (0.42) and laissez faire leadership style (0.12) has the least correlation coefficient. Since larger the correlation coefficient the stronger the relationship between two variables, this implies autocratic leadership style which has correlation coefficient of 0.69 has the strongest relationship with teachers' job performance, followed by democratic leadership style which has a correlation coefficient of 0.42. Laissez faire leadership style that has the lowest correlation coefficient indicates that it has a less strong relationship with teachers' job performance than democratic and autocratic leadership styles.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study showed that autocratic leadership has a stronger relationship on teachers' job performance than democratic leadership style. It has been argued that there is a significant and positive relationship between leadership styles and teachers job performance, stress, and employees' job satisfaction (Chiok Foong Loke, 2001; Dunham- Taylor, 2000; Goleman, 2000; Mosadeghrad, 2003; Morrison et al., 1997; Seo, Ko, & Price 2004; Stordeur et al., 2000; Vancee & Larson, 2002). Goleman (2000) further stresses that an effective leader should not only depend on a single leadership style but also on the contrary he should be able to use a number of different styles. The results of this study don't concur with Bass (1985). Bass found high correlation between the leader's transformational style and the organizational performance level. Transformational style is close to democratic leadership while transactional to autocratic.

According to Bass (1985), employees choose to perform tasks out of identification with the leader or with the organization. This relationship results in the employees' basic agreement with the norms to which they are required to perform. Bass suggests that transformational leadership can create identification with and internalization of desirable values, as opposed to the limited goal of transactional leadership to create a compliant workforce. Wang et al., (2005) suggests that subordinates have a role expectation off their leaders and that they are not passive role recipients, as they may reject, embrace, or renegotiate roles prescribed by

their leaders. As reciprocal process is based on fairness and equality of exchange and expectations, and is developed over time.

The autocratic leader (Lewin, Lippitt, & White, 1939) is given the power to make decisions alone, having total authority. This leadership style is good for employees that need close supervision to perform certain task. It can be argued that autocratic principals by close supervision of teachers by telling the teachers what, when and how to do it ensures that teachers, thus there is need to use democratic leadership style and also. The democratic style of leadership emphasizes group and leader participation in the making of policies. Communication is multidirectional where ideas are exchanged between employees and leader (Heenan and Bennis 1999). In this style of leadership, a high degree of staff morale is always enhanced (Mba, 2004).

CONCLUSION

The study found out that the autocratic leadership style was the most common style of leadership used by principals in secondary schools in Hamisi Sub-County. This was followed by democratic style and the least was laissez faire. The study indicated a moderate level of teachers' job performance with a majority of teachers being average in lesson planning, supervision of students' work, meeting subjects' targets and good in the use of schemes of work and teaching aids. The research also revealed that main challenges facing teachers were: lack of motivation, lack of learning resources, large class size and uncooperative principals. Most teachers (66%) indicated lack of motivation as the main challenge.

Results of study found out that there is a strong positive relationship between principals' leadership style found out that there and teachers' job performance. The research findings showed that autocratic leadership style has strongest relationship with teachers' job performance in the schools with a correlation coefficient of 0.69 followed by the democratic leadership style which has a correlation coefficient of 0.42 with teachers' job performance. The low correlation coefficient of 0.12 between the laissez faire leadership style and teachers job performance indicate that there is low relationship between the two variables. The results of this study indicate that autocratic leadership style does enhance job performance among teachers. This results do not concur with the findings made by previous researchers (Evan, 1998, Ijaiya, 2000). From the results of this study it can thus be concluded that the autocratic leadership style therefore is the best style of leadership to use to enhance job performance among teachers in secondary. However, a good leader should use a variety of styles depending on the situation for example use of democratic style to motivate teachers.

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