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**RESEARCH ARTICLE**

**EFFECTS OF LEADERSHIP STYLE ON JOB SATISFACTION OF TEACHERS: A SURVEY OF  
SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN DUNDORI ZONE, NAKURU NORTH DISTRICT, KENYA**

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**ABSTRACT**

The leadership style adopted by head teachers influence various aspects of the school effectiveness including teacher job satisfaction. However, there is still lack of clear understanding of the best and most effective leadership style or a mix of them that positively influence job satisfaction among teachers, especially in developing countries. This study was conducted between May and November, 2010, and sought to assess the effects of leadership style on job satisfaction of teachers among secondary schools. The population included 274 teachers in the 17 secondary schools with a student population of 4557 including 2956 girls and 1601 boys. A random sample of 115 teachers and 11 head teachers was drawn from 12 selected schools. Data was collected using a self-structured questionnaire and in-depth interview schedule administered to teachers and head teachers, respectively. The questionnaires were pilot-tested to validate and determine its reliability. The collected data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 11.5 for Windows. The study findings indicate that the dynamic situations in the school environment required head teachers to adopt different leadership styles.

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**INTRODUCTION**

Globally, educating a nation remains the most vital strategy for the economic and social development of any country (Aikaman & Unterhalter, 2005). The principal institutional mechanism for developing human capital is the formal education system of primary, secondary and tertiary training (Nsubuga, 2003). Since education is an investment, there is a significant positive correlation between education and socio-economic productivity. The role of education therefore, is not just to impart knowledge and skills that enable the beneficiaries to function as economies and social change agents, but also to impart values, ideas, attitudes and aspirations important for natural development (Betoret, 2006). Schools, especially secondary schools, have been given the unenviable task of laying the foundation stones in the process of creating knowledgeable and skilled manpower. The role and importance of secondary education in national development is of utmost importance (World Bank Report, 1995). Teachers teach and work in schools that are usually administered by head teachers. The conditions of teachers' working life are influenced by the administration and leadership provided by head teachers. It is widely assumed that school leadership directly influences the effectiveness of teachers and their job satisfaction. The constant demands that are made of teachers to produce better results require investigations into their experiences in respect of their work situation (Pont, Nusche and Moorman, 2008). This expected responsibilities of head teachers, has made the management and administration of schools a much more challenging endeavour (Early & Weindling, 2004; Harris, 2005). Schools not only need to be managed, but led. Leadership gives an organization its vision and

ability to translate the vision into reality. Effective leadership is essential in ensuring that schools and other learning institutions continue to play an effective, meaningful and productive role in the national agenda. The ever-increasing expectations and pressure from parents, the community and other stakeholders have made the head teacher's job infinitely more challenging (Betoret, 2006; Hansson & Gamage, 2005). School leadership is considered to be a key element in effective schools and has attracted researchers around the globe. There is a widespread belief that leadership matters (Bass, 1990), and that school leadership influence the effectiveness of schools (Early & Weindling, 2004; Huber, 2004; Harris, 2005). There is also a common understanding that school leadership can be learned (Fauske, 2002; Su, Gamage, & Mininberg, 2003; Hansson & Gamage, 2005). Barker (2001) studied poor performers and effective head teachers and suggests that effective leaders motivate teachers and students. McGinn (2005) suggests the need for social and political acumen in school leadership.

**Purpose of the Study**

This study sought to identify the dominant leadership style adopted by head teachers as perceived by teachers in secondary schools in Dundori zone, Nakuru North district, Kenya.

**Methods**

This study adopted a survey research design. A survey research design involves the selection of a sample of respondents and administering questionnaires or conducting interviews to gather information on variables of interest (McMillan & Schumacher, 1993). Information is collected from respondents about their experiences and opinions in order to generalize the findings to the population that the

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sample is intended to represent (Gall, Borg & Gall, 1996). This design was the most appropriate for obtaining factual and attitudinal information or for research questions about self-reported beliefs, opinion, characteristics and present or past behaviours (David & Sutton, 2004; Gray, 2004; Neuman, 2000). Since this study sought to obtain descriptive and self-reported information from teachers, the survey design was the most appropriate. The survey allowed the researcher to expose the respondents to a set of questions that allowed comparison. It assumed that all the respondents had information or experience that bore on the problem being investigated (leadership styles).

### **Study Site and Study Population**

The study was conducted between May and November, 2010, in Dundori division of Nakuru district, Rift Valley province, Kenya. Secondary schools in Dundori division, like others in the country, were chosen as a research site because of their unenviable task of laying the foundation stones in the process of creating knowledgeable and skilled manpower for socio-economic development. The role of head teachers' leadership styles in influencing work performance in these schools could not be overstated. The target population for this study comprised of all teachers and head teachers in secondary schools in the study area. The area had 17 secondary schools categorized into three groups: 1, boys only, 5 girls only and 11 mixed schools. The 17 schools had a student population of 4557 including 2956 girls and 1601 boys. The schools also had 274 teachers. (Ministry of education Nakuru North District secondary schools district returns data 2009). In this study, 274 teachers and their head teachers were targeted and involved in the study.

### **Sampling Procedure and Sample Size**

In order to determine a representative sample size of teachers to be drawn from the 274, this study adopted a formula by Nassiuma (2009) for estimating a sample size, n, from a known population size, N and a coefficient of variation (V.C) of 30%.

$$n = \frac{NC^2}{C^2 + (N-1)e^2}$$

Where

n = sample size;

N = population size;

C = coefficient of variation and e is error margin.

Substituting these values in the equation, estimated sample size (n) was:

$$\text{Sample size for teachers } n = \frac{274(0.3)^2}{0.3^2 + (274-1)0.02^2} \\ n = 124 \text{ teachers}$$

A sample of 124 teachers was used in this study.

### **Data Analysis**

Data collected were processed, coded and analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) to facilitate addressing the research objective. This was done using both descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics (percentages, frequencies, and means) presented in tables and charts (pie charts, tables and bar graph) were used to summarize and organize data and to describe the characteristics of the sample.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The objective of this study sought to identify the dominant leadership styles adopted by head teachers as perceived by teachers in the secondary schools. The objective was based on the fact that the most

important factor in an organization is how to recognize the human resource in workplace relations and operations. Human resources are the most valuable asset in any organization. Directing and keeping them engaged and motivated in the objectives of the organization is the key to a successful, highly productive and performing workforce. When human resources are handled effectively, the result can be higher performance, and increased employee morale. Therefore, managers or leaders of organizations must find ways to understand how to drive employees within the context of their respective roles in the workplace. Because leadership styles vary based on the situation under which one operates, a leader rarely has one particular leadership style. Dynamic changing situations in the work environment require different leadership styles to be adopted. In this study, the respondents were presented with several statements depicting various leadership styles and asked to pick on one that they perceived to correctly describe how their head teachers manage the school. The identified leadership styles were summarized (Table 1).

**Table 1. Leadership style adopted head teachers as perceived by teachers**

| Leadership style                         | Frequency | Percent |
|--|-----------|---------|
| Bureaucratic                             | 23        | 20.0    |
| Participative (Democratic)               | 20        | 17.4    |
| Delegative (Free Reign or Laissez-Faire) | 18        | 15.7    |
| Situational                              | 15        | 13.0    |
| Authoritarian or Autocratic              | 14        | 12.2    |
| Transformational                         | 9         | 7.8     |
| Transactional                            | 6         | 5.2     |
| Servant                                  | 6         | 5.2     |
| Charismatic                              | 4         | 3.5     |
| Total                                    | 115       | 100.0   |

Table 1 indicates that the head teachers adopted various leadership styles as perceived by their teachers in secondary schools. The most common styles adopted included bureaucratic, participative (democratic), delegative (free reign or laissez-faire), situational and authoritarian or autocratic. The prominent bureaucratic style is very structured and follows the procedures or policies as they have been established. That is, manages "by the book". If not covered by the procedures or policies, then everything is referred to the next level above. It has no space to explore new ways to solve problems and is usually slow paced to ensure adherence to the ladders stated by the company. Leaders ensure that all the steps have been followed prior to sending it to the next level of authority. Schools usually require this type of leader in their organizations to ensure quality, increase security and decrease corruption. It is preferred in schools since staff performs routine tasks over and over. The head teacher ensures that teachers in the school follow the official rules. He/she see his/her role as being significantly involved in dealing with problems in the scheduling of teachers and courses and in ensuring adequate administrative procedures and reporting to higher authorities. These head teachers also focus on creating an orderly and task-oriented atmosphere in the school.

For democratic leadership style, the leader encourages employees to take part in the decision making process (determining what to do and how to do it). However, the leader maintains the final decision making authority. In other words, the democratic head teacher makes decisions by consulting his/her teachers, whilst still maintaining control of the group. It recognizes and encourages achievement. Keeps staff informed about everything that affects their work and shares decision making and problem solving responsibilities. Head teachers use this style to build trust, respect and commitment by allowing people to have a say in decisions that affect their goals and how they do their work. Teachers need to be involved in the school's administration and in the implementation of decisions because these affect them directly. The prominence of this style was due to the fact that teachers are intelligent people whose ideas are crucial in the day-to-day running of the same schools. Teachers have the capacity to advise effectively on academic matters in the school. Their ideas and contributions cannot be ignored.

In delegative (free reign or laissez-faire) style, the leader allows the employees to make the decisions. The leader exercises little control or direction over his/her group, leaving them with as much freedom as possible to determine goals, make decisions, and resolve problems on their own, without participating in this process himself. However, the leader is still responsible for the decisions that are made. It is effective to use when staff is highly skilled, motivated experienced (who have produced excellent work in the past), and educated, and staff have pride in their work and the drive to do it successfully on their own. By handing over ownership, a leader can empower his group to achieve their goals. However, previous studies (MacDonald, 2007) show that head teachers who use the laissez faire leadership style tend to fail to follow up on those they have delegated tasks to and consequently performance declines. They leave everything to the mercy of their subordinates, some of whom may lack the necessary skills and competence to execute the work. Others may simply not like to do the work unless they are supervised. Though prominent, this style is not the best leadership style to use in the school's organization because complete delegation without follow-up mechanisms may create performance problems, which are likely to affect the school's effectiveness. For situational leadership style, the leader switches between different leadership styles depending on the context requirements, that is, the situation under which one is operating. This kind of leadership style depends on the task, the team or individual's capabilities and knowledge, the time and tools available and the results desired. Such a leader recognizes that there is no one best leadership style; one must adjust their leadership style to the situation as well as to the people being led. The prominence of situational leadership was based on the fact that head teachers have, through experience, come to terms with the fact that the adoption of a particularly relevant style in a specific situation leads to school effectiveness, rather than relying on a single style of one's choice. Previous studies such as Mullins (2002) indicate that leadership is dictated by environmental changes within and outside the school. Carmazzi (2005) add that the head teacher analyzes the needs of the situation one is dealing with, and then adopts the most appropriate leadership style. A good situational leader should however, communicate this switch and time limit for the switch to the team members.

reported transformation leadership observed that their head teachers motivated them to be effective and efficient. The head teacher was highly visible and used chain of command to get the job done. Transactional head teachers were reported to have power to perform certain tasks and reward or punish for the team's performance. The leader emphasizes getting things done within the umbrella of the status quo. Those who favoured servant leadership reported that they head teachers facilitated goal accomplishment by giving teachers what they needed in order to be productive. The head teacher was like an instrument that teachers use to reach the goal rather than a commanding voice that moves to change. He/she is a "servant first" with the object of making sure that teachers' highest priority needs are being served. The head teacher puts the needs of their followers first. In this study, job satisfaction was regarded as the feelings or state of mind of the teachers regarding the nature of their work in the schools. In order to assess it, both intrinsic (internal) and extrinsic (external) dimensions/attributes of job satisfaction at the place of work were considered. This was done so as to reflect and capture the full complexity of job satisfaction at the place of work. The two dimensions determined the overall level of job satisfaction of the sampled teachers. Job satisfaction was therefore assessed from a series of 17 statements seeking respondents' satisfaction or dissatisfaction with various extrinsic and intrinsic attributes of their job as teachers in schools. Responses to these statements were measured on a five-point scale ranging from 1 to 5 (where, 1 = extremely dissatisfied, 2 = dissatisfied, 3 = undecided, 4 = satisfied and 5 = extremely satisfied). The average mean score of each attribute was computed so as to assess the variation in the respondents' feeling. Table 2 depicts the distribution of their responses. Table 2 indicates that out of the nine extrinsic indicators of job satisfaction, the respondents were generally satisfied with the first three by rating them above the average (3.00), with mean scores ranging from  $M = 3.09$  and  $M = 3.69$ . This suggests that the respondents were satisfied with their fellow teachers, the physical work conditions of the schools and their immediate boss. However, the respondents were less satisfied in the remaining six extrinsic indicators by rating them below average with mean scores ranging from  $M = 1.78$  and  $M = 2.99$ . The six indicators included the hours of work, industrial relations (union relations) between employer and teachers, channels

**Table 2. Indicators of Job Satisfaction**

| Statement  | Response (%) |      |      |      |     | Mean |
|--|--------------|------|------|------|-----|------|
|  | 1            | 2    | 3    | 4    | 5   |      |
| <b>Extrinsic factors</b>   |              |      |      |      |     |      |
| My fellow teachers in the school                                     | 4.3          | 8.7  | 7.0  | 73.9 | 6.1 | 3.69 |
| The physical work conditions   | 7.8          | 15.7 | 37.4 | 34.8 | 4.3 | 3.12 |
| My immediate boss  | 7.8          | 27.8 | 20.9 | 34.8 | 8.7 | 3.09 |
| My hours of work   | 8.7          | 33.0 | 17.4 | 32.2 | 8.7 | 2.99 |
| Industrial relations (union relations) between employer and teachers | 7.0          | 17.4 | 50.4 | 21.7 | 3.5 | 2.97 |
| Channels of communication and information flow in the school         | 11.3         | 26.1 | 20.0 | 39.1 | 3.5 | 2.97 |
| My job security  | 26.1         | 19.1 | 13.9 | 31.3 | 9.6 | 2.79 |
| The policies of the employer and the way it is managed               | 8.7          | 35.7 | 27.0 | 25.2 | 3.5 | 2.79 |
| My rate of pay   | 50.0         | 31.3 | 8.7  | 8.7  | 0.9 | 1.78 |
| <b>Intrinsic factors</b>   |              |      |      |      |     |      |
| The opportunity to use my abilities                                  | 9.6          | 17.4 | 22.6 | 43.5 | 7.0 | 3.21 |
| The amount of variety in my job                                      | 8.7          | 17.4 | 36.5 | 33.0 | 4.3 | 3.07 |
| The recognition I get for good work                                  | 10.4         | 28.7 | 13.9 | 38.3 | 8.7 | 3.06 |
| The attention paid to suggestions I make at work                     | 11.3         | 19.1 | 27.0 | 38.3 | 4.3 | 3.05 |
| The freedom to choose my own method of working                       | 14.8         | 22.6 | 28.7 | 24.3 | 9.6 | 2.91 |
| The amount of responsibility (workload) I am given                   | 21.7         | 24.3 | 13.9 | 35.7 | 4.3 | 2.77 |
| Opportunities for further training and career development            | 32.2         | 27.8 | 17.4 | 16.5 | 6.1 | 2.37 |
| My prospects (chances) of promotion                                  | 49.6         | 17.4 | 17.4 | 12.2 | 3.5 | 2.03 |

Authoritarian or autocratic was used when the head teacher tell teachers what they want done and how they want it accomplished, without getting the advice of their followers. The head teacher dominates team-members, using unilateralism to achieve a singular objective. He/she relies on threats and punishment to influence staff, and do not trust staff. Most appropriate when new, untrained staff does not know which tasks to perform or which procedures to follow. School head teachers may lead to low job satisfaction due to teachers resentment. The other less common leadership styles included transformational, transactional, servant and charismatic. Those who

of communication and information flow, job security, the policies of the employer and the way it is managed, and the rate of pay. Table 2 also revealed that that the respondents were generally satisfied with four out of eight intrinsic attributes of their job in the schools by rating them above average with mean scores ranging from  $M = 3.21$  and  $M = 3.05$ . This suggests that the respondents were also satisfied with the opportunity to use their abilities, amount of variety in their job, recognition they got for good work, and attention paid to suggestions they made at work. However, they were less satisfied with the last four intrinsic indicators including the freedom to choose

their method of working, amount of responsibility (workload), opportunities for further training and career development and prospects (chances) of promotion. On the overall, teachers seem to have higher intrinsic job satisfaction than extrinsic satisfaction. This was in line with earlier observations by Herzberg (1959) that one may experience intrinsic satisfaction that is distinct and different than extrinsic satisfaction. One's intrinsic satisfaction may be high, while their extrinsic satisfaction is low. The reverse may also be true.

In any organization, the above nine extrinsic and eight intrinsic indicators interact and cumulatively influence the overall level of job satisfaction of a teacher in a school. Thus, the responses to each constituent indicator were scored on a scale of 1, indicating least level of job satisfaction, to 5, indicating highest level of job satisfaction. The individual indicator scores were summed up to form a job satisfaction index score for each respondent. The index score varied between 17, indicating the least level of job satisfaction, and 85, indicating the highest level of job satisfaction among the teachers. The higher the score, the higher was the overall level of job satisfaction of a teacher, and vice versa. The index score was later collapsed into three ordinal categories in order to differentiate between the levels of job satisfaction among the teachers. This included a score of 17-39 indicating low job satisfaction, a score of 40-62 meaning average/moderate job satisfaction and a score of 63-85 denoting high job satisfaction. Table 3 depicts the levels of job satisfaction among the teachers.

**Table 3. Level of Job Satisfaction**

| Level of job satisfaction | Frequency | Percent |
|---------------------------|-----------|---------|
| Low                       | 34        | 29.6    |
| Average                   | 66        | 57.4    |
| High                      | 15        | 13.0    |
| Total                     | 115       | 100.0   |

Table 3 indicates that 57.4% of the teachers were averagely satisfied with their job as teachers in their various schools. The remaining 29.6 % had low job satisfaction while 13.0% recorded high job satisfaction. This suggests that majority of the respondents had either low or average job satisfaction with their employment as teachers in their school. This was attributed to the way they had rated the individual extrinsic and intrinsic dimensions of their job satisfaction. Given the generally moderate level of job satisfaction, the teachers were then asked about what should be done to motivate them and improve their job satisfaction. Table 4 summarizes their suggestions.

**Table 4. Suggestions to improve job satisfaction**

| Suggestions  | Frequency | Percent |
|--|-----------|---------|
| Improve terms of services                              | 58        | 50.4    |
| Give teachers freedom to work independently and freely | 20        | 17.4    |
| Fairness and regular promotion of qualified teachers   | 17        | 14.8    |
| Recognition and reward for good work                   | 11        | 9.6     |
| Manageable workload                                    | 9         | 7.8     |
| Total  | 115       | 100.0   |

Table 4 indicates that majority of the teachers were of the opinion that there was need to review and improve their terms of services so as to motivate them to work. Most of them were from private schools who complained of the harsh economic times compared to their terms of services. Others wanted to be allowed to work independently and freely without too much control and supervision. They complained of the head teacher micro-management every aspect of their work which denied them independency. Some teachers also wanted fairness and regular promotion, recognition and reward for good work, and manageable work load.

## Conclusion

The study investigated the of leadership style of head teachers using a case study of secondary schools in Dundori zone, Nakuru North

district, Kenya. The concerned agencies including the Ministry of Education, school management, teachers and students could use such information to assess the potentials and challenges posed by the leadership styles adopted by head teachers on various aspects of teaching and learning in schools. This may enable them to develop effective strategies that will encourage more participatory leadership styles in schools.

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