

# **Influence of Principals' Leadership Styles on Teachers' Job Satisfaction in Public Secondary Schools in Meru South Sub-County, Tharaka Nithi County, Kenya**

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## **Abstract**

*In spite of intensive guidance and counseling programs, remedial teaching and availing learning materials, high quality education in Kenya has not been achieved. Other factors have contributed either directly or indirectly to the students' academic achievement. However, the principals' leadership styles become one of the central elements to consider because they play a crucial role. This study sought to investigate the influence of principals' leadership styles on teachers' job satisfaction in public secondary schools in Meru South Sub-County with view of enhancing quality education. The study used a descriptive survey design. The target population consisted of all principals of 53 public secondary schools in Meru South Sub- county and 500 teachers totaling to 553. Questionnaires were used to collect data from the participants. The study found that there was transformational leadership style adopted by principals in connection to the indicators exhibited by teachers. Therefore, it was recommended that principals should attend to teachers' personalized needs, encourage team building amongst the staff, and motivate teachers by being role models and offer teachers with personalized attention.*

**Key Words:** Leadership styles, Job satisfaction, Transformational

## **1. Introduction**

Education Cabinet Secretary while releasing 2015 Kenya Certificate of Secondary Examination results blamed the continued poor performance in public schools on teachers' absenteeism and disruption of learning by strikes. He said the independent survey by World Bank, have shown that cases of teachers missing from schools were up to 70% in some counties. Reports by County Directors of Education (C.D.E) (2015) indicated the highest number of applications for teacher transfers and absenteeism. For example, from single sub county 25 teachers were able to transfer between April and December 2015 to schools within the same sub county, to other sub counties and other counties. Departures to pursue other careers, teacher absenteeism, transfer, truancy, lateness are signs of job dissatisfaction among teachers (Urwick &

Nkhobothi, 2005). When teachers are not satisfied with the job, students are the ones who suffer because their academic is likely to deteriorate.

Employee job satisfaction depends upon the leadership style of managers (Rad & Yarmohammadian, 2006). Leadership is the process of influencing others to understand and agree about what needs to be done and how it can be done effectively and the process of facilitating individual and collective efforts to accomplish shared objectives (Yukl, 2002). Leadership style refers to the underlying need structure of the principal that motivates his/her behavior in various leadership situation (Okumbe, 2007). A study in Tanzania by Haruni and Mafwimbo (2014) supported that school leaders are supposed to possess ability of influencing their staffs, parents and other stakeholders of education to make sure their schools successfully attain its pre-intended objectives by making sure their teachers perform their responsibilities well and learners perform well in their academic as anticipated. Mpokosa and Ndaruhutse (2008) found that lack of job dissatisfaction results in absenteeism, poor utilization of class time, professional misconduct, traditional teaching methods, poor preparation and secondary income generating activities that distract teaching duties. In Kenya, a study in Nandi South District by Kiboss and Sirma (2014) found that leadership style influence teachers' job satisfaction. For example, they found that democratic leadership has positive correlation with teachers' job satisfaction.

A lot of resources from the government and Non-Governmental Organizations have been put in place to enhance quality education in Kenya. For example, the government provides bursaries, staffing, Smasse programmes and seminars for teachers to name but a few. Despite the above efforts, the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Examination performance in many sub counties remains below average with majority getting a mean of below 5.0(C-). Other factors have contributed either directly or indirectly to the students' academic achievement. However the principals' leadership styles become one of the central elements to consider. Mbiti (2007) supports this by saying that although there are other factors that contribute to a success of a school, principals play a crucial role. Therefore, it is very important for educational leaders to be aware of how leadership styles affect teachers' job satisfaction because they may affect students' performance. This prompted the investigation on how leadership styles used by principals influence teachers' job satisfaction in public secondary schools in Meru South Sub- County.

## **2. Objectives of the study**

The main objective of this study was to establish how transformational leadership style by principals influences teachers' job satisfaction in public secondary schools in Meru South Sub- County.

## **3. Research methodology**

The study was conducted using descriptive survey design. The study population consisted of all principals of 53 public secondary schools in Meru South Sub County and 500 teachers totaling to 553. A sample size of 100 teachers and 33 principals from 53 secondary schools in Meru South District was selected using proportional and simple random sampling techniques. A questionnaire was used as the instrument of data collection. The principals' questionnaire contained three sections; demographic variables, capacity

building and leadership styles while that of teachers contained two sections; demographic variables and teachers' job satisfaction and leadership information. A research permit was granted by National Commission for Science and Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI) and letter of authorization from Meru South Sub-County director of education. Both quantitative and qualitative data was entered into and analyzed by the Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS) version 17.0. Pearson moment correlation coefficient was used to determine the relationships between principals' leadership styles, transformational and teachers' job satisfaction. Quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive statistics. Qualitative data was categorized according to themes from the objectives and where applicable presented in the form of frequency tables.

## **4.0 Results and Discussion**

The section he provides the data analysis results and discussions categorized under the sub headings: Demographic characteristics of the respondents and how transformational leadership style by principals influences teachers' job satisfaction in public secondary schools.

### **4.1 Demographic Characteristics**

The demographic information sought from the participants included: gender, age, professional qualifications, years one has worked as a teacher or principal and responsibilities being held in the present school. Data depicted that 63.9% of the teachers were male and 36.1% were female. In addition, 77.8% of the principals were male and 22.2% were female. There is a male dominance among the teachers and principals within Meru South Sub County. Majority of the teachers (66.3%) were below 35 years of age compared to 33.7% who were above 36 years. Most of the teachers are youthful, inexperienced and experimental in their approach and required guidance for them to be effective and realize job satisfaction at their work place. majority of the principals (77.8%) are above 40 years of age followed by 22.2% who are below 40 years. The age of majority of principals being above 40 years and working with teachers who were below 35 years of age coupled by a substantial number of teachers (33.7%) above 35 years represented a delicate balance to principals on leadership styles they were likely to adopt in order to create job satisfaction among teachers from both age extremes. On professional qualifications, 74.7% of the teachers were graduates, 19.3% were diploma holders while a mere 6% were master holders in comparison to 59.3% of the principals who were masters holders while 16% were graduates respectively. Regarding years of service in teaching profession, majority of the teachers (57.8%) had served as teachers for between 1 – 5 years compared to 33.3% of principals who had served for between 21 – 25 years. In addition, 92.6% of principals had served as teachers for over 11 years compared to 22.8% of teachers within a similar duration. Majority of the teachers were still fresh in the teaching profession and enthusiastic to work in an environment that was conducive in order to uplift the teaching standards in the schools. Further, on responsibilities of teachers in their present school, majority of the teachers (47%) were class teachers, 9.6% senior teachers, 8.4% games teachers, while others doubled up as class teachers and Heads of Departments (7.2%), class teacher and coaches (3.6%), teacher (3.6%), dormitory mistresses and masters (3.6%), dormitory mistress and Head of Department (3.6%), class teacher and club patron (2.4%), class teacher and

head of subject (2.4%), Head of Departments (2.4%), while 1.2% of teachers were class teachers and games master. From these results teachers had varied responsibilities and quite a number of them were doubling up in various responsibilities in school.

#### 4.2 How Transformational Leadership Style by Principals Influences Teachers' Job Satisfaction

Transformational leadership transcends the need for direct tangible rewards and appeals instead to the followers' higher order needs, inspiring them to act in the best interest of the organization rather than according to their own self interests. Transformational leadership leaders provide accommodating leadership and offer guidance to followers in order to help them adopt to the ever-changing world of education. The researcher was also interested in determining how transformational leadership style influences teachers' satisfaction. Statements with a scale ranging from 1 to 5 were provided with 1 indicating strongly disagree, 2 – disagree, 3 – undecided, 4 - agree, while 5 indicating disagree. For ease of analysis strongly disagree and disagree have been merged to disagree while strongly agree and agree have been merged to agree. The Table 1 and 2 represents a summary of the results obtained:

**Table 1. Teachers' Response on Transformational Leadership Style on Job Satisfaction**

Leadership style	Disagree f (%)	undecided f (%)	Agree f (%)	No response f (%)	Total f (%)
My principal behaves in ways that brings the best in teachers	25 (30.1)	5 (6)	51 (61.4)	2 (2.4)	<b>83 (100)</b>
The principal displays conviction and appeal teachers on emotional level	17 (20.4)	14 (16.9)	48 (57.8)	4 (4.8)	<b>83 (100)</b>
My principal articulates a vision that is appealing and inspiring to teachers	19 (22.9)	3 (3.6)	60 (72.3)	1 (1.2)	<b>83 (100)</b>
My principal communicate optimism about future goals	13 (15.7)	5 (6)	64 (77.1)	1 (1.2)	<b>83 (100)</b>
My principal provides meaning for the task at hand	19 (22.9)	3 (3.6)	61 (73.5)	-	<b>83 (100)</b>
Principal challenges assumptions by teachers, takes risks and solicits teachers ideas	28 (33.8)	11 (13.3)	44 (63)	5 (6)	<b>83 (100)</b>
My principal encourages creativity among teachers	12 (14.4)	4 (4.8)	66 (79.5)	1 (1.2)	<b>83 (100)</b>
My principal attends to each teachers' needs	24 (28.9)	9 (10.8)	49 (59.1)	1 (1.2)	<b>83 (100)</b>
My principal act as a mentor to teachers and listen to their concerns	22 (26.5)	3 (3.6)	55 (66.3)	3 (3.6)	<b>83 (100)</b>

Table 1 show that 61.4% of teachers noted that principals behave in ways that brings the best in teachers compared to 30.1% who noted otherwise; principals display conviction and appeal to teachers on emotional

level (57.8%) compared to 20.4% who felt differently. From these findings one can conclude that principals have an idealized influence on their teachers. Further, principals articulated a vision that was appealing and inspiring to teachers (72.3%); principals communicated optimism about future goals (77.2%) and provided meaning for the task at hand (73.5%). According to these findings, it is apparent that principals were a source of inspiration to their teachers and thus cultivated a positive working environment that resulted to teachers' job satisfaction. The study also noted that principals challenged assumptions by teachers, took risks and solicited teachers ideas (63%) compared to 33.8% who felt differently and encouraged creativity among teachers (79.5%) thus acting as a source of intellectual stimulation. With regards to individualized attention according to the teachers, principals attended to each teacher' needs (59.1%) compared to 28.9% who stated otherwise. Principals also acted as mentors to teachers and listened to their concerns (66.3%). These findings are in line with the findings by Masood (2006) who found substantial evidence of a positive correlation with regard to principal influence and the job satisfaction of teachers, their willingness to follow the principal and positive perceptions of their principals' effectiveness.

**Table 2. Principals' Response on Transformational Leadership Style on Job Satisfaction**

<b>Leadership style</b>	<b>Never f (%)</b>	<b>Rarely f (%)</b>	<b>Always f (%)</b>	<b>No response f (%)</b>	<b>Total f (%)</b>
Communicate optimism about future goals to teachers		2 (7.4)	23 (85.2)	-	<b>27 (100)</b>
Urge teachers to beat previous target		1 (3.7)	26 (96.3)	-	<b>27 (100)</b>
Organize for my staff to attend workshop and seminars		4 (14.8)	23 (85.2)		<b>27 (100)</b>
Enthusiastically inspire for a project		6 (22.2)	21 (77.8)	-	<b>27 (100)</b>
Challenges assumptions by teachers and encourage creativity		2 (7.4)	25 (92.6)		<b>27 (100)</b>
Behaves in ways that brings the best in individuals and teams(teachers)		-	27 (100)	-	<b>27 (100)</b>
Attends to each teachers' needs		7 (25.9)	20 (74.1)	-	<b>27 (100)</b>
Displays conviction, take stands and appeal teachers on emotional level		8 (29.6)	19 (70.4)	-	<b>27 (100)</b>

From Table 2, 85.2% of principals communicated optimism about future goals to teachers; 96.3% urge teachers to beat previous target; 85.2% organize for their staff to attend workshop and seminars; 77.8% enthusiastically inspire teachers to start projects; 92.6% challenges assumptions by teachers and encourage creativity; all principals (100%) behaved in ways that brings the best in individuals and teams(teachers); 74.1% attended to each teachers' needs; and 70.4% displayed conviction, took stands and appealed to

teachers at emotional level. These finding confirm the kind of transformational leaders principals have adopted in trying to influence teachers ideally, acts as a source of inspiration, stimulate them spiritually and create individual attention to teachers at the places of work. The findings also contradict with Kibue (2008) on transformational leadership style on public secondary schools in Kirinyaga County which revealed that majority of principals and teachers did not understand nor use the transformational leadership style in schools since this kind of leadership was present in public secondary schools in the sub county.

#### **4. Recommendations**

Based on findings, the following recommendations were made:

- i. The government through its respective institutions such as Kenya Education Management Institute (KEMI), Kenya Institute of Special Education (KISE), Teachers Service Commission (TSC), Kenya National Examination Council (KNEC) and Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD) should offer further training of principals in areas such as leadership skills, emerging issues in education, administration skills, public relations, guidance and counseling and human resource management.
- ii. Teachers should improve their personal character and discipline to minimize antagonizing their principals or employer who is TSC. Teachers should also devise modalities of tackling their family issues at home instead of stretching them to school.
- iii. The school through Board of Management, PTA and the principal should seek the cooperation of parents in developing schools infrastructure and motivating teachers in order to provide a conducive working place.
- iv. Principals should attend to teachers' personalized needs, encourage team building amongst the staff, and motivate teachers by being role models and offer teachers with personalized attention.

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