RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SUPPORTIVE LEADERSHIP STYLE AND TEACHERS' JOB SATISFACTION IN NAKURU COUNTY, KENYA

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Abstract:

This study investigated supportive leadership style practiced by head teachers' and job satisfaction of teachers'. The study was conducted among a random sample of 348 primary school teachers from Nakuru County, Kenya. A researcher developed questionnaire was administered and interview schedule. Correlation design was used for the study. Spearman's coefficient correlation analysis was used to predict relationships between variables however; they were subjected to hypotheses test. The objective of the study was to examine the relationship between head teachers' supportive leadership style and teachers' job satisfaction in primary schools. Teacher job satisfaction is influenced by head teacher in giving support to teachers' through creating pleasant environment in school for instance when teachers show lack of confidence in ability to complete a task they need motivation to move on, creating friendly climate, and verbally recognizes teachers' achievement in a rewarding modus. Moreover, supportive persons in leadership demonstrate respect, treat everyone equally, and show concern for subordinates' well-being. Although school tasks need to be set on clear rules; guidelines and standards of performance, routine tasks need to be strengthened to break the monotony. Supportive leader should utilize the expertise to improve activities and school structures. Spearman rho correlation coefficient relationship between head teachers' supportive leadership style and teachers' job satisfaction was found to be significantly positive. The study concludes that supportive leadership style practice by head teachers' has a high positive significant correlation to job satisfaction due to head teachers' concern for well-being, friendliness and approach.

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To this end teachers' workload need to be made more challenging and interesting to eliminate routine activities. The study recommends that schools should continue focusing on leadership practices as part of their professional learning and leadership development. This development enables to maintain a continuous supply of future leaders and sustainable leadership. Institutional heads need to learn more about human behavior as it impacts on teacher performance. Head teachers' through their actions and attitudes should create environment which induces motivation on teachers.

Keywords: supportive leadership style, job satisfaction, leadership, work relationship

1. Introduction

Schools are changing in attempt to become market driven giving rise series of issues to which policy and practice on school leadership must respond (Pont *et al*., 2009). The supportive style is suitable when subordinates show lack of confidence in ability to complete a task and little motivation (Negron, 2008). Besides, Jabeen (2011) & Jacobs (2010) posits heavy workload, uncertain recruitment procedures for task deter potential candidates. Grant (2011) assert that workers can provide valuable input into the successful leadership of school when supported and empowered. Similarly, Ingersoll (2001) discussed that school organizational factors such as lack of support from administrators, and decision-making power encouraged school teachers to leave their profession.

Malik (2011) highlighted the importance of work characteristics (routine, autonomy and feedback) how the work role is defined (role conflict and role ambiguity) as well as work environment (leadership, stress, advancement, opportunities and participation) in relation to job satisfaction. This study observes that it is only fair for leaders in organizations to endow favorable work climate which support employees' aspirations. In light of this view, a study conducted on a sample of 143 employees at universities, banks and multinational companies showed that those employees who were experiencing more stress at their jobs were unable to perform to expectations (Dar *et al*., 2011). Employees serving in the medical field and finance sector confirmed these findings as their performance was also negatively affected by stress (Imtiaz & Ahmed, 2009; Wu, 2011). Lower levels of performance were also witnessed among the 144 banking professionals due to job stress (Riaz & Ramay, 2010). These findings suggest that maintaining a prominent position at the workplace is important to delivering outstanding performance. However, when employees face stress at their jobs they cannot focus on their work and face difficulty in performing tasks.

Martin (2012) argued that effective leadership contributes a lot when the nature of the work is stressful or boring. This is because a supportive style by the leader increases subordinates' satisfaction and self-confidence and reduces the negative aspects of the situation. This may lead to an increase in the intrinsic valance of the job and the expectation on performance leading to the attainment of goals. There is need for employees' present and previous output to provide feedback, identify talents,

capacities, advancements and target (Hamid, 2010; & Jabeen, 2011). The supportive leadership behaves responsively, creates a friendly climate, and verbally recognizes subordinates' achievement in a rewarding modus (Leana, 2013). Moreover, supportive persons in leadership demonstrate respect for subordinates, treat everyone equally, and show concern for subordinates' well-being (House, 1971; & Leana, 2013). On the other hand, Northouse (2010) argued supportive leadership is characterized by a leader who is friendly, approachable and treats subordinates as equals. Besides, Supportive leaders care about the well-being and human needs of subordinates and go out of their way to make the work more enjoyable for their subordinates (Jones & George, 2011; Northouse *et al.*, 2010). There is need for head teachers' to go extra mile to providing support to teachers' through interactions, creating conducive working environment to foster respect, trust, cooperation, and emotional support (Daft, 2005).

Controlled extrinsic motivation in target setting is a means for information sharing between employees and superiors (Wong, Guo, & Lui, 2010). Nevertheless, expectations of leadership is to achieve change and influence motivation of teachers hence, supporting them is indispensable (Pont, *et al.*, 2009; Akuoko, 2012; & Leana, 2013). Sonia (2010) argued that when employees' judge organization to be providing good support, positive feelings of well-being are stimulated. Riaz and Ramay (2010) conducted study to find out the antecedents of job satisfaction and identified 221 respondents showed great significant association of open communication. This indicates that leaders can engage in behaviors that help subordinates facilitate goal attainment by providing information and other resources necessary to obtain goals and improved work conditions (Martin, 2012).

Sonia (2010) notes other factors which affect job satisfaction as unfavorable social life, nature of job, prestige, status in society and workplace. This study notes that teaching has routine work thus lower status and source of dissatisfaction. According to Sababu (2010), Job content depends on skills, degree of responsibility, challenge and growth it offers. Murage and Kimani (2014); Sababu (2010) discussed school organizational factors such as lack of support from administrators and teaching experience predict higher attrition. Leadership is a paradigm shift departure from one person to a more complex notion of developing broad based leadership capacity (Spillane, 2006). Furthermore, Jacobs (2010) cited National Education Association in Washington reported Principals have begun transition from operational managers to instructional leaders and reformers. The leadership reforms ought to be in line with the devolved structure of governance viable to supporting good climate.

Previous education reforms in Kenya have been anchored on a political setup of Task Force Reports, Commissions, Committees and Working Parties, MoEST (2010) however, achievement of expected goals, have not been substantial. Walstrom and Louis (2008) assert that schools with structures allowing levels of supported and shared leadership impact on work climate. Reform efforts, organizational change, motivation, working relationships, interactions and expertise contribute on working climate (Leithwood & Mascall, 2008; Hulpia, & Devos, 2009; Leithwood, Wallace & Anderson 2010; & Jacobs, 2010). There is need to support recognized leadership structures in

school that attracts work climate and job satisfaction of teachers. Leithwood, Jantzi & Pattern (2010) observe that it is worthwhile to test effect of leadership in organization through work place conditions. Leadership commitment of supervisor is often assessed as satisfaction (Leana, 2013). Studies reveal that teachers have different views concerning their perceptions of relationships at the workplace which relate to job satisfaction. In one such study 46% of the respondents believed that teachers supported one another in the realization of educational outcomes; and 42% that collegial support raised motivation. 41 percent of respondents believed that teachers enjoyed positive working relations. However, only 32% of the teachers viewed their principals as fair leaders (Dehaloo, 2011).

In the study conducted by Weberge; Hussain; & Riaz (2010); Tejeda; Scandura; & Pillai (2001) revealed that top executive need to consider personal feelings of employees before acting, see the interests of employees are given consideration, facilitate consensus building in group sessions and behave in a thoughtful manner towards employee personal needs. They asserted supportive leadership had a positive and significant impact on job satisfaction. According to the suggested views, supportive leadership play role that increases teachers' job satisfaction. Additionally, there is need to recognize that supportive leadership style is more of relationship-oriented style. It requires the leader to be approachable and friendly. Leaders need to display concern for the well-being and personal needs of the subordinates. Similarly, they need to create an emotionally supportive climate. This style is effective when subordinates lack self-confidence, work on dissatisfying or stressful tasks and work that do not provide job satisfaction (Hoy & Miskel 2001: 408).

House's (cited in Yukl, 2010) path-goal theory focuses on the way leaders' behaviors can influence subordinate performance and satisfaction. For instance, the theory proposes that supportive leadership style as most effective in situations that involve completion of tasks that are monotonous, tedious or dangerous, as this leadership style help increase subordinates' self-confidence and decrease anxiety. To this end, supportive leadership style is not going to be as effective for tasks that are interesting and enjoyable or intrinsically motivating (Yukl, 2010). Drawing from this suggestion, conclusion is that primary school teachers' work, although, important is perceived as routine type hence supportive leadership style is most effective when the task is relatively routine and simple. This is corroborated by Sonia (2010) that unfavorable social life, nature of job, prestige, status in society and workplace are factors affecting job satisfaction.

Job satisfaction is determined by how well outcomes exceed expectations; for instance if teachers feel that they are working much harder than others with similar or comparable qualifications, in other sectors of economy but are receiving fewer rewards they most likely feel dissatisfied with their job (Okumbe, 2001). Based on the forgoing opinion, this study suggests teacher's employer need to fasten strategies that promote teacher job satisfaction in order to support and increase productivity of their performance. Similarly, expanding hierarchical structure in school contributes to rise in

opportunities for teacher promotion. However, this may cause adverse implications on the economy.

2. Objective

To establish the relationship between head teachers' supportive leadership style and teachers' job satisfaction in primary schools, Nakuru County.

3. Theoretical framework

The study used theory of leadership to investigate relationship of head teachers' supportive leadership style and job satisfaction therefore, the study employed path-goal leadership theory developed by House (cited in Martin, 2012) and argued the theory is based on how leaders facilitate task performance to subordinates which help achieve rewards because employees are motivated, recognized, and satisfied hence; its relevant to the study. Robbins (2005) believes that path-goal theory is the most influential contingency approach to leadership. However, Richard *et al.,* 2012 (cited in Malik 2013) believes path-goal theory as the most sophisticated and comprehensive contingency theory. According to Path-Goal theory, leader provides necessary direction and support to subordinates to achieve individual as well as organizational goals (Silverthorne, 2001).

4. Methodology

To determine the degree of relationship between supportive leadership style and teacher job satisfaction the study adopted a correlational research design. Cresswell (2012); Gall and Borg (2007) described correlational study as appropriate design to discover relationship between variables by using correlational statistics. Questionnaires were used to collect data from the population in order to determine current conditions with respect to one or more variables. The study targeted 600 head teachers' and 7000 teachers in Nakuru County. However, the study population was 240 and 3700 for head teachers' and teachers' respectively from 4 sub counties. Cluster random sampling was used to select sub counties. The Sub Counties had similar settings of rural and urban representation. Researcher employed proportionate sampling to select 148 schools from sampled sub counties. Head teachers' were automatically drawn from sampled schools. Sample size for teachers were selected through stratified sampling thus 148 males and 200 females from upper primary made a sample of 348. However, simple random sampling was adopted to select teachers in the individual schools. Curriculum Support Officers from sampled sub counties were purposively selected and interviewed to shed more light. The study used formula recommended by Krejcie and Morgan (cited in Gall and Borg, 2007 Saowanee, Wallapha & Tang 2014) to determine the sample size. Statistical Package of Social Sciences program was used to manage in data entry and presentation of scores. Spearman's rho correlation statistics analysis was carried out to

establish relationship between supportive leadership style and job satisfaction. To achieve correlation positive *rho* meant that higher ranks on one variable were associated with higher ranks on the other variable and larger absolute values of *rho* indicated a stronger relationship between the variables (Harris, 1998).

5. Results and discussion

Partial correlation for supportive leadership indicated that it was most likely method of leadership style used in schools by head teachers'. The results are summarised in Table 1.

Table 1: Partial Correlation for Job Satisfaction versus Supportive Leadership Style

Control variables			Supportive
Achievement, Directive & Participative	Job Satisfaction	Correlation	**.643**
		Significance (2-tailed)	.000
		Df	300

The results indicated in table 1 signify correlation coefficient of 0.643. This is a high positive correlation translating that majority of teachers desired being supported as they perform tasks. This could be in terms of incentives offered through leadership. Supportive leadership therefore contributed a lot to job satisfaction of teachers. All other variables achievement, directive, participative and job satisfaction were held constant.

Spearman's rho of supportive leadership style and Job satisfaction was obtained from the average of each teacher responses in all the questions pertaining on supportive leadership style and job satisfaction. The responses were analyzed to derive the results of Spearman Rank correlation coefficient computed at 0.708**. This was significant therefore; analysis for the relationship between the head teachers' supportive leadership style and teachers' job satisfaction in primary school was satisfying. This may have been caused by the open approach coupled with concern and recognition of teachers by head teacher that induced the pattern positively. Table 2 summarizes the findings.

Table 2: Relationship between Supportive Leadership and Job Satisfaction

			Supportive
Spearman's rho	**Correlation Coefficient**	**Job Satisfaction**	0.708**
	N	305	

** Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 2 depicts Spearman *rho* correlation coefficient calculated for the relationship between head teachers' supportive leadership style practice and job satisfaction of teachers. A positive correlation was found (*rho* (305) = 0.708, p < .0.05) which is highly significant. As head teacher demonstrate supportive leadership style, teachers become more satisfied. This suggests that task is relatively routine and simple in primary

schools therefore, supportive leadership is effective as leader offers a wide range of rewards to subordinate such as encouragement, pats on the back, and respect. The high predictive value of rho 0.708 further demonstrate that leader generated interest by creating a friendly and open work environment, where teachers were motivated to work harder and achieve their goals hence feeling of satisfaction.

The relationship between supportive leadership style and teacher job satisfaction is further represented in figure 1.

Figure 1: Linear Relationship between Supportive Leadership and Job Satisfaction

The pattern of scatter points indicated in figure 1 reveals a high positive correlation 0.708. This suggests a significant positive relationship. It also implies that as head teacher increased practicing supportive leadership style, there was a corresponding increase in teachers' job satisfaction. The results further indicated co-efficient of determination as 50.13 % (0.708^2) accounting for teachers' job satisfaction been explained by the head teachers' demonstration of supportive leadership style. To this extent, implications are that head teachers' portrayed supportive values of concern, recognition, responsiveness, friendliness, respect and rewarding to dilute routine program associated with teachers in schools. However, Malik (2013) found out that in situations where task is relatively a routine and simple, supportive leadership is effective as leader offers a wide range of rewards to subordinate such as encouragement and respect. In this context the correlation coefficient 0.708 is a clear demonstration that head teachers' created a friendly and open work environment, where teachers' were motivated to work harder and achieve their goals translating to feeling of job satisfaction.

The Teachers Service Commission TSC Act, (2012), section 69, outlines some of the responsibilities of head teacher is: to provide space for effective teaching and conducive learning environment, supervise and evaluate curriculum delivery, ensure adequate teaching and learning materials approved by Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development are available for the implementation of the curriculum. These legislation measures on supportive leadership corroborate in this study results. The head teachers' supportive leadership behaviors implies there is; responsive manner of behavior, friendly climate, verbal recognition of teachers' achievement in a rewarding modus. Besides, head teachers' demonstrated respect for teachers, treated everyone equally, and showing concern for their well-being. This significantly made teachers' to carry out assigned duties. Northhouse (2013) suggested that supportive leadership consists of being friendly and approachable as a leader, attending to the well-being and human needs of subordinates however, when teachers show lack of confidence in ability to complete a task they need motivation (Negron, 2008).

Jabeen (2011) and Jacobs (2010) posits heavy workload, uncertain recruitment procedures for task deter potential support of candidates. Grant, (2011) assert that workers can provide valuable input into the successful leadership of school when supported and empowered. Martin (2012) contends that leadership should be effective when the nature of the work is stressful or boring. This is because a supportive leadership style by the leader increase subordinates' satisfaction and self-confidence while it reduce the negative aspects of the situation. This study finding contends that supportive leadership lead to an increase in the intrinsic valance of teachers' job and the expectation of well performed roles leading to the attainment of goals and consistently contributing to high positive significant level in job satisfaction. Moreover, supporting teachers present and previous output provides feedback; identifies talents, capacities and advancements. Similarly, supportive leadership demonstrates respect, equal treatment and show concern for teachers' well-being thus achieving change and influencing motivation and open communication. This is significantly revealed in the findings of this study.

5.1 Hypotheses test on supportive leadership and job satisfaction

The correlation was subjected to hypothesis test using the matched-pairs with t-test procedure. The analysis was done to see whether there was a statistically significant true difference value of supportive leadership and job satisfaction.

H_{03}: There is statistically significance relationship between supportive leadership and teacher job satisfaction.

H_{13}: There is no statistically significance relationship between supportive leadership style and teacher job satisfaction.

The calculated value of t was − 5.947 at significance level of 95% (2 tailed) with 304 degree of freedom. The p-value was 0.000 and since it was less than 0.05 the null hypothesis was rejected. From this it can be concluded that there was no relationship between supportive leadership style and job satisfaction.

6. Conclusions

Supportive leadership style practice by head teachers' had the highest positive significance correlation. The strong positive correlation which is significant was due to head teachers' concern for well-being, friendliness and approach. Teachers seemed to like support from the leader and ultimately attaining job satisfaction in their working environment. This could also entrench that teachers may not achieve intended goals without motivation. The study concludes that teachers workload be made more challenging and interesting too to eliminate routine. Furthermore, teachers should be encouraged all manner of method that is readily available but sustainable too in order to reach maximum excellence of the teaching goal prescribed by the employer and schools.

6.1 Recommendations

The Teachers employer in collaboration with the Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology should avail policy on radical reforms in developing leadership framework that prepare teachers for leadership ranks from head of department, deputy head teacher to head teacher. Departments broaden leadership, increase participation, support promotion avenues, and reward overall effort to achieving school goals. Policy should be collaborated with teacher training institutions, universities and Curriculum Development institutions. The policy framework need to incorporate professional association for teachers with responsibility of ensuring practicing teachers are well prepared, regularly monitored, inducted through internships, evaluated and examined before practicing. This would improve teacher-leadership skills, enhance performance and job satisfaction.

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