**Relationship between Principals’ Transactional Leadership Style and Students’ Conformity to Rules in Public Secondary Schools in Nakuru County, Kenya**

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| ***Abstract:*** *stakeholders in education in Nakuru County have expressed great concern over high levels of students’ on conformity to school rules.**Student conformity to school rules is critical to achievement of academic goals. This study sought to assess the relationship between principals’ transactional leadership style and students’ conformity to school rules in public secondary schools in Nakuru County, Kenya. The objective of the study was to determine the relationship between principals’ Transactional leadership style and students’ conformity to rules in Public Secondary Schools in Nakuru County, Kenya. The study was underpinned on the Social Control Theory by Hirschi (1969). The study adopted a correlational research design. The target population was 338 Principals, 338 Deputy Principals, 3426 teachers in 338 public secondary schools in Nakuru County. Stratified random sampling was used to select 100 schools. Purposive sampling was used to select 100 Principals, 34 Deputy Principals and 346 teachers. Questionnaires were used to collect data from Principals, teachers and students while interviews were used to collect data from Deputy Principals. Test – retest reliability returned a coefficient above 0.70 indicating that the instruments were reliable. The finding revealed that there was evidence of a positive relationship between transactional leadership style and students’ conformity to rules(r=0.410; p=0.000).This implies that when transactional leadership style was used by principals it enhances students’ conformity to school rules. It was concluded that principals’ transactional leadership style significantly related to students’ conformity to school rules. Therefore, it is important for school principals to provide rewards and recognition constantly to students who conform to school rules. The study recommends that principals should reward student who conform to the school rules and regulations. The study also recommends that the principal should be willing to use suspension and even repeated suspension where necessary as a tool for dealing with students demonstrating chronic behavior problems that disrupt the school climate. The findings of the study will help principals to be proactive in handling students’ misconduct by using transactional leadership style though use of rewards to the students who conform and withdrawal of privileges or use of punishment for those who do not conform to school rules.*  ***Key words: Transactional, leadership, style, Conformity, school, Rules*** |

**1. INTRODUCTION**

**1.1. Background of the Study**

Dubrin (2016) defines leadership style as the predominant pattern of behaviour mostly applied by the leader. Dubrin (ibid) further states that modern organizations need effective leaders who adjust to the rapidly changing environment. Paracha, Qamar, Mirza and Waqa (2012) observe that transactional leadership style deals with the exchange between the leader and the followers. The authors further state that the aim of a transactional leader is to ensure the path-goal accomplishment is clearly understood by the followers, to remove potential barriers with the organization and to achieve the predetermined goals. The followers accept the structure already established by the leader in exchange for performance rewards.

Lojdova (2016) defines non conformity to school rules as deviance to a set of norms that are accepted by a significant number of people in a community or society. This study sought to establish the relationship between and students’ conformity to rules in public secondary schools where challenges of students’ conformity to rules has been noted. A study by Hayden (2009) on the nature and development of debate about deviance and violence in schools in England established that over 68.3% of teachers had been assaulted by students at some point during their teaching career.

Bonny (2012) found that Kenyan secondary schools have rules and regulations designed to assist students conform to the expected norms of the society. However research by Bonny (2012) found that some students fail to abide by the school rules. Kuria (2012), Rianga (2013) and Mbogoria (2012) established that principals’ leadership styles have a considerable influence on students’ conformity to school rules. This means that the use of appropriate leadership style can greatly influence students’ conformity to school rules. The studies done seem not to agree on the leadership style that most predict students’ conformity to school rules.

Education Task Force (2015) formed by the County Director of Education Nakuru County to investigate challenges in education that led to poor academic performance reported high levels of students’ non conformity to school rules. Equally, the Quality Assurance and Standards Officer, Nakuru County (2018) documents alarming cases of students’ non conformity to school rules in the County. This means that there is a problem of students’ non conformity to school rules. This study therefore was carried out to investigate the relationship between Principals’ transactional leadership style and students’ conformity to rules in public secondary schools in Nakuru County, Kenya.

**1.2****. Statement of the Problem**

The background of this study has revealed that students’ non conformity to school rules is manifest in public secondary schools in Nakuru County. Stakeholders in education in Nakuru County have expressed great concern over high levels of students’ non conformity to school rules (Education task force, 2015). The Quality Assurance and Standards Officer Nakuru County (2018) confirmed that there have been several reported cases of students’ non conformity to school rules linked to teenage pregnancies, absenteeism, truancy, destruction of school property, cheating in examinations, mass walk out from schools, drug and substance abuse, stealing, fights, bullying, coming to school late among others. Efforts have been made by various task forces and subsequent implementation of their recommendations. Nevertheless, students’ non conformity to school rules continues to occur. It can be seen that if the problem persists will lead to high indiscipline levels among students and thereby continue to cause poor academic performance. This study was undertaken to establish the relationship between principals’ transactional leadership style and students’ conformity to rules in public secondary schools in Nakuru County, Kenya.

**1.3. Research Objective**

1. To assess the relationship between Principals’ transactional leadership style and students’ conformity to rules in public secondary schools in Nakuru County, Kenya.

**1.4. Research Hypothesis**

**H01** There is no statistically significant relationship between Principals’ transactional leadership style and students’ conformity to rules in public secondary schools in Nakuru County, Kenya.

**2.0. LITERATURE REVIEW**

**2.1 Principals’ transactional Leadership Style and Students’ Conformity to School Rules**

Transactional leader holds the “Carrot and the stick” where rewards are given for successful completion of set tasks and punishment for failure (Owiti, 2016). Paracha *et al* (2012) note that transactional leadership style deal with the exchange between the leader and the followers. Olayemi (2015) states that leaders using the transactional leadership style give certain duties to be performed by the team members and the leader provides rewards or punishment based on performance results. This implies that the relationship between the leader and the follower is based on bargaining exchange or reward system. This study sought to assess the relationship between principals’ transactional leadership style and students’ conformity to school rules.

Flanigan (2012) found that transactional leadership style is effective when rewarding hard working people. This implies that in a school setting, the principal can use transational leadership style to control students’ behaviour through a system of rewards and punishment.The Principal would therefore give rewards for good behaviour in terms of tokens, field trips, and recognition of praise. While bad behaviour is punished through condemning or withdrawal of physical rewards.

Transactional leadership is usually characterized by contingency rewards, active management by exception where leaders take take punitive action if deviation occur and passive management by exception whereby leaders fail to intervene until problems become serious. Seblewongel (2016) opines that transactional leadership style exhibits subordinates’ commitment to their assigned duties because it is a matter of performing duties as directed. Kashu (2013) carried a study on the influence of principals leadership styles on students KCSE performance in Kajiado North District, Kajiado County Kenya. Sampled 15 Principals and 82 teachers, findings showed that 6 out of 15 principals used transactional leadership style. In the same study it was established that attendance, completion of syllabus, short term goals achievement were emphasized and there was minimum focus on the long term targets.It was concluded that principals used transactional leadership style to reward teachers for the work well done.The study concluded that the use of transactional, democratic and autocratic leadership style did not improve performance. This means that principals leadership does not impact performance.

Ongeri, Bii,Sulo, Keter,Maiyo and Koskey (2012) on the other hand found different results in terms of the use of transactional leadership style.The study established a negative linear relationship between transactional leadership style and absenteeism among teachers.It was concluded from this study that leadership styles influence absenteeism.There seems to be inconsistency in findings in the use of transactional leadership style and influence by principals on either discipline or academic performance.

**2.2 Students’ Conformity to School Rules**

It is generally recognized that students’ conformity to school rules depends on the management leadership styles. Robers, Kemp and Truman (2013), Theriot and Dupper (2010) confirm that students non conformity to school rules tend to rise at the middle secondary school level. The researchers further state that students’ misbehaviour in secondary school has far reaching consequences and hence worries the stakeholders in education and therefore needs to be addressed. According to the data from the National Center for Statistics, 41% of public secondary school teachers reported that students’ misbehaviour interferes with their teaching. Lannie and Mccurdy (2007) found a correlation between classroom non conformity to learning and low achievement for students. This study explored the relationship between Principals’ leadership styles and students’ conformity to learning rules.

All students must be in school in all school days. Romero and Lee (2008) established that chronic absenteeism was highest among children living in poor families in USA. The authors further state that absenteeism has harmful consequences not only for students but also for schools and communities. Absenteeism or truancy affects academic achievement of students, Heibrunn (2007). The author found that non truant students have higher grades compared to truant ones. This shows that there is a problem of nonconformity to school rules requiring students to attend school without fail. The studies above have not established the influence of principals’ leadership styles on students’ conformity to school attendance.

Adeyemi (2010) established that examinations irregularities are widely reported in both internal and external examination in many educational institutions. Kupchick (2010) observes that in most schools across USA conformity to safety rules had been violated by students. This led to the formulation of zero tolerance policies which require punishment for any violation of any rules, regardless of any severity of the violation. This means there is gross non conformity to rules in high schools in the USA. This study sought to assess the relationship between principals’ leadership styles and students’ conformity to school rules related to safety and security.

There are many reported cases of non-conformity to rules related to bullying and fighting. Omoteso (2010) reported that 88.1 % of participants had been bullied, 33.1% were bullies and 64.7% had been involved in relational bullying while retaliation for bullying in the past was 51.1%.This shows a great majority of students have not conformed to the rule of not bullying others. This means that the principal should use an appropriate leadership style to enhance conformity to school rules. The studies above have not looked at the relationship between the principals’ leadership styles and students’ conformity to rules related to drugs and alcohol abuse which this study intended to establish.

Cheloti, Obae and Kanori (2014) note that Principals and Deputy Principals have been blamed on lack of adequate relational skills in dealing with students issues. Cheloti, Obae, and Kanari (2014) further established that arson attacks in Itierio, Endarasha and Kisii High school were due to lack of participation by students in decision making process regarding rules made by the administration. This study sought to establish the influence of principals’ leadership styles on students’ conformity to safety and security rules in public secondary schools. It is therefore apparent that students’ conformity to rules in schools have been violated. The causes of such violations are not clear hence need to establish the relationship between principals’ leadership styles and students’ conformity to rules related to their welfare.

**2.3 Theoretical Framework**

The Theory by Travis Hirschi (1969) will form the foundation of this study. The theory advances that people follow rules and regulations because of the social bond. Jenkins (1997) and Stewart (2003) assert that social bond is a sense of belonging or social ties that make one conform to rules and regulations in the organization. The authors further observe that if the bond is not strong enough it results to non-commitment to rules and regulations. The authors opine that some students may perceive rules and regulations as infringement on their freedom while others may see them as liberating.

Kwayu (2014) states that school rules represent important control mechanism to which the students conform to. The author establishes that there are four social bonds in the convectional society; attachment to others, commitment to conformity, involvement in conventional activities and belief in the value of legitimacy of convention. These four elements may determine how students behave in school (Stewart, 2003). In a school setting the principal should seek to strengthen the social bond of students through involving them in the formulation of rules. Jenkins (1997) looks at a school as an important mechanism of social control. The school principal has the ability to control students’ behaviour regardless of other significant background factors.

Despite researches that support the tenets of social control theory some scholars like Gibbon (1994) have questioned whether the notions of self-control as proposed by Hirschi (1969) can explain more serious offending behaviour. Critics of the Theory contend that the theory may be better able to explain minor offences but does not adequately account for more serious offences. The theory was preferred for this study because the principal by virtue of being a leader in a secondary school is the foundation around which many aspects of the school revolve. It is the responsibility of the principal to create strong social bonds among students to ensure their conformity to school rules.

**2.4. Conceptual Framework**

**Principals’ Leadership Style**

* transactional

**Students’ Conformity to School Rules**

* Related to learning
* General school rule
* Related to co curricula activities
* Rules related to their welfare
* Ministry of Education and school policies
* Parental upbringing
* Influence of mass media
* Negative peer pressure

Figure 1: **Conceptual Framework**

**Source: Author (2020)**

**3.0. METHODOLOGY**

**3.1. Research Design**

This study adopted a correlational research design. This design enabled the researcher to assess the degree of relationship that exists between two or more variables.

**3.2. Location of Study**

The study was conducted in public secondary schools in Nakuru County, Kenya. The County is divided into eleven administrative Sub- Counties namely; Nakuru East, Nakuru West,Naivasha, Rongai, Subukia, Njoro, Molo, Nakuru North, Kuresoi South, Kuresoi North and Gilgil.

**3.3. Population of Study**

The study population comprised 338 Principals, 338 Deputy Principals, 3426 teachers and 116374 students (County Education office Ministry and TSC, 2018).

**3.4. Sampling Procedure and Sample Size**

This section covers the various sampling techniques and sample size for the study**.**

**3.4.1 Sampling Procedure**

The study adopted a stratified random sampling procedure. In Nakuru County there are 11 sub Counties which formed various strata of the study. The sample for schools was obtained through the formula given by Nassiuma (2000). This gave 100 schools which were randomly selected.

The researcher used 10% formula given by Mugenda and Mugenda (2013) to sample Deputy Principals. Thus a sample of 34 Deputy Principals was selected. The Principals, teachers and students were sampled using the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) formula. Thus 346 teachers and 383 students were sampled. To obtain the sample for each school from each sub county, proportionate sampling was computed. The adoption of various sampling techniques was suitable since they catered for the collection of data from various segments of the target population (Kerlinger 2000).

**Table 1: Sample Frame for Public schools and Teachers**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Sub county** | **Number of schools** | **Sample size for schools** | **Number of teachers** | **Sample size for teachers** | **Number. of teachers sampled** |
| Njoro | 43 | 13 | 325 | 33 | 3 |
| Nakuru East | 18 | 6 | 480 | 48 | 8 |
| Nakuru West | 9 | 3 | 240 | 24 | 6 |
| Naivasha | 35 | 10 | 360 | 36 | 7 |
| Rongai | 43 | 13 | 375 | 38 | 3 |
| Nakuru North | 34 | 10 | 548 | 55 | 6 |
| Subukia | 22 | 7 | 180 | 18 | 3 |
| Gilgil | 35 | 10 | 302 | 31 | 3 |
| Molo | 33 | 9 | 310 | 32 | 4 |
| Kuresoi North | 32 | 9 | 150 | 15 | 2 |
| Kuresoi South | 34 | 10 | 156 | 16 | 2 |
| **TOTAL** | **338** | **100** | **3426** | **346** |  |

**Source: Author (2020)**

Table 2: Sample Frame for public schools and Students in Nakuru County, Kenya.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Sub County** | **Number of Public Schools** | **Number of sampled schools** | **Number of students in Each sub County** | **Sample of students** | **Number of students sampled in each school** |
| Njoro | 43 | 13 | 8816 | 29 | 3 |
| Nakuru East | 18 | 6 | 11351 | 37 | 9 |
| Nakuru West | 9 | 3 | 5520 | 18 | 9 |
| Naivasha | 35 | 10 | 12876 | 42 | 5 |
| Rongai | 43 | 13 | 13539 | 45 | 6 |
| Nakuru North | 34 | 10 | 15357 | 51 | 6 |
| Subukia | 22 | 7 | 7143 | 24 | 5 |
| Gilgil | 35 | 10 | 13016 | 43 | 5 |
| Kuresoi South | 34 | 9 | 7193 | 24 | 3 |
| Kuresoi North | 32 | 9 | 9446 | 31 | 4 |
| Molo | 33 | 9 | 12117 | 39 | 6 |
| **Totals** | **338** | **100** | **116374** | **383** |  |

**Source: The author (2020)**

**3.5. Instrumentation**

Questionnaires were used to collect data from Principals, teachers and students while interviews were used to collect data from Deputy Principals.

**3.5.1 Validity of the Research Instrument.**

Factor analysis was computed to ensure construct validity. It was observed that all items were valid as they were retained after factor loading above 0.30.

**3.5.2. Reliability of Research Instruments**

The researcher used test- retest reliability method to test the instruments. A correlation coefficient of the two sets was computed using the Pearson’s correlation coefficient. The correlation of 0.70 was obtained and was acceptable as reliable (Stephanie, 2016).

**4.0. RESULTS**

## 4.1. Descriptive Analysis

The objective of the study was to determine the relationship between Principals’ transactional leadership style and students’ conformity to rules in public secondary schools in Nakuru County, Kenya. The objective was analyzed using percentages and correlation analysis.

**4.1.1. Principals’ transactional Leadership Style (According to teachers Responses)**

The following analysis was computed according to teachers regarding principals’ transactional leadership style.

Table 2: Principals ‘transactional Leadership Style (According to teachers’ Data)

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Statement** | **N** | **SD** | **D** | **N** | **A** | **SA** |
| The principal calls attention to what students can get for they have accomplished | 282 | 8.2% | 16.3% | 35.1% | 22.3% | 18.1% |
| The principal provides rewards or recognition when students reach their goals | 282 | 7.8% | 13.5% | 13.1% | 30.5% | 35.1% |
| The principal tells students what to do if they want to be rewarded | 282 | 11.0% | 14.2% | 16.3% | 32.6% | 25.9% |

The findings in Table 2 indicate that 40.4% of the respondents revealed that principals brings to attention to what students can get for tasks they have accomplished. This means that students’ behavior is motivated by rewards for good behaviour and punishment for noncompliance to expected set standards. This view is affirmed by 65.6% of the respondents who stated that principals provides rewards or recognition when students reach their goals. The study indicates that principals are using this style to manage students’ behaviour. Gill (2016) that the leaders who used this style strictly controlled workers through the application of rules and regulations. This study therefore has shown that principals in public schools in Nakuru County use Transactional leadership style to control students’ conformity to school rules.

**4.2.3 Principals’ transactional Leadership Style (According to Principals’ Data)**

Table 3: Principals’ Transactional Leadership Style (According to Principals’ Data)

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Statement** | **N** | **SD** | **D** | **N** | **A** | **SA** |
| The principal calls attention to what students can get for they have accomplished | 82 | 4.9% | 17.1% | 36.6% | 20.7% | 20.7% |
| The principal provides rewards or recognition when students reach their goals | 82 | 6.1% | 13.4% | 12.2% | 31.7% | 36.6% |
| The principal tells students what to do if they want to be rewarded | 82 | 7.3% | 15.9% | 11.0% | 36.6% | 29.3% |

The findings in Table 3 indicate that 68.3% of the respondents stated that a principal provides rewards or recognition when students reach their goals. This implies that more than half the respondents indicated that principals used transactional leadership style to control students’ behavior. The results also showed that 65.9% of the respondents stated that principals tell students what to do if they wanted to be rewarded. This means that the principals came up with set standards and expected behavior, which is a principal of transactional leadership style. The teachers and principals therefore have agreed that most principals use transactional leadership style to control students’ behaviours. In conclusion this study established that principals used transactional leadership style to ensure students conform to the school rules in public secondary schools in Nakuru County.

**4.5 Correlation Analysis**

In testing the nature of relationship between democratic Leadership Style and students’ conformity to rules, Pearson correlation test was run. The following are the finding of the analysis

**Table 4: Relationship between transactional Leadership Style and Students’ Conformity to Rules Overall (Teachers and Principals)**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | | **Transactional Leadership Style** |
| **Students’ Conformity to Rules** | Pearson Correlation | .410\*\* |
| Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 |
| N | 364 |
| \*\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). | | |

The findings showed that there was evidence of a positive relationship between transactional leadership style and students’ conformity to rules(r=0.410; p=0.000).This implies that when this type of leadership style could improve students’ conformity to rules.

**4.6 Hypothesis Testing**

**H01: There is no statistically significant relationship between Principals’ transactional leadership style and students’ conformity to rules in public secondary schools in Nakuru County, Kenya.**

Since the p value is less than 0.05 alpha, the null hypothesis was rejected and concluded that principals’ transactional leadership style significantly relate to students’ conformity to rules.

**4.7. Conclusion**

It was concluded that principals’ transactional leadership style significantly relate to students’ conformity to school rules. Therefore, it is important for school principals to provide rewards and recognition constantly to students who conform to school rules. This could help in resolving students’ non-conformity to school rules.

**4.8. Recommendations**

1. The study recommends that principals should provide rewards and recognition constantly to student who conform to school rules.
2. The study also recommends that principals should be willing to use suspension and even repeated suspension as a tool for dealing with students demonstrating chronic behavior problems that disrupt the school climate.

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