

# Relationship between Directive Leadership Style and Teachers' Job Satisfaction in Public Primary Schools Kenya: A Case of Nakuru County

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**Abstract:** *This study explored directive 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. Correlation design was used for the study while a researcher developed questionnaire was administered to respondents. Spearman's coefficient correlation analysis was used to predict relationships between variables. The objective of the study was to examine the relationship between head teachers' directive leadership style and teachers' job satisfaction in primary schools. Teacher job satisfaction is influenced by headteacher in directing teachers' through guiding and controlling them on how to carry out school tasks. These tasks need to be set clear with rules; guidelines, timelines and standards of performance. The expertise needed to achieve goals must come from a broader base of teachers with diverse skills and knowledge thus in experienced individuals need guidance. Directive leadership style requires leader to communicate to subordinates about the responsibilities formally in order to avoid ambiguity. Spearman rho correlation coefficient relationship between head teachers' directive leadership style and teachers' job satisfaction was found to be significantly positive. The study concludes leadership for head teachers' was not based on specific leadership roles and standards therefore, the leadership system lacked adequate framework to determine competencies required to provide effective leadership in the complex school associated with job satisfaction. The study concludes that head teachers should utilize directive style to ensure that goal and tasks allocated are realized and meet timelines however; structures should be put in place to enhance teacher autonomy. Recommendations include developing formal framework strategy that prepares teachers while schools should continue focusing on leadership practices as part of their professional learning and leadership development.*

**Keywords:** Directive leadership style, Job satisfaction, Work relationship

## 1. Introduction

Directive leadership is characterized by authoritarian and legitimate power that uses high levels of strict direction, command and close supervision to provide psychological structure and task clarity (Northouse, 2010; Clark, Hartline & Jones, 2009; Houghton & Yoho, 2005). Directive leaders set standards of performance, clear rules and regulations to subordinates on what should be done, how it should be done and the timeline when it should be completed (Jones & George, 2011; Northouse, 2010). Additionally, directive leadership tells subordinates exactly what they are supposed to do. It characterizes a leader who tells subordinates about their task, including what is expected of them, how it is to be done, and dead line for the completion of particular task. The leader also sets standards of performance and defines clear rules and regulations for subordinates (Northouse, 2013). In view of these opinions there is need for head teachers' in primary schools to initiate strategy on how to communicate well controlled directives to teachers. Directive style of leadership is appropriate when task is complex or ambiguous, formal authority is strong and the work group provides job satisfaction (Lussier & Achua, 2010).

The directive leadership clarifies expectations and gives specific guidance to accomplish the desired expectations based on performance standards and organizational rules (House, 1996; & Leana, 2013). However, Okumbe (1999) argued directive leadership subordinates are not active since the leader provides them with specific guidance, standards and work plans, including rules and regulations. The directive style is appropriate with newly hired or inexperienced subordinates and in situations that require

immediate action (Negron, 2008). Nevertheless Martin (2012) pointed directive leadership is most effective when people are unsure what tasks they have to do or when there is a lot of uncertainty within their working environment. This occurs primarily because a directive style clarifies what the subordinates need to do and therefore reduces task ambiguity. In addition, the directive leadership style makes clear the relationship between effort and reward and therefore the expectancy that effort lead to a valued outcome (Martin, 2012). To this end, directive style may be perceived as aggressive, controlling, descriptive, and structured by dictating what needs to be done and how to do it.

Research shows that directive leadership style does not often affect the employees' job satisfaction (Tsai, 2008, p.296) similarly; the directive style is negatively associated with the job satisfaction of the employees (Yun *et al.*, 2007, p.178). In a similar context, the results of the study conducted within work teams by Yun *et al.* (2007) highlighted that there is no relevant effect of directive leadership on job satisfaction. Further research studies indicates that directive style is positively related to subordinates' expectations and satisfaction for subordinates who are employed to perform ambiguous, unstructured tasks; however, it is negatively related to satisfaction and expectations of subordinates who are well-structured and receive clear tasks (Negron, 2008; & Leana, 2013).

In view of the foregoing, head teachers need to use directive style cautiously because at the core level and trust their ability to use other styles. Moreover, they worry over loss of control that results in undesired outcomes of the tasks allocated to their teachers. Leithwood and Mascall (2008) conceptualized leadership in terms of functions, providing

direction and exercising influence to accomplish the goals however, in their transformational leadership model, Leithwood *et al.*, articulate main category of leadership practice as setting directions which comprise of building a shared vision, fostering the acceptance of group goals, creating high performance expectations, and communicating the direction; (Leithwood, Harris & Hopkins, 2008; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2008; Leithwood & Louis, 2012). Studies have researched on teachers' job satisfaction however, new and increasing demands on head teachers' contribute to emergence of distributed leadership practice in schools (Jacobs, 2010). According to Spillane (2006) distributed leadership is practice of spreading and directing leadership roles over people however, autonomy in exercising the powers on roles is limited to primary school teachers. Leadership is discussed as not being centered on the supremacy of one person, but leaders and followers engaging in shared leadership responsibilities (Grant, 2011; Hoy & Miskel, 2008). Nevertheless, Jacobs (2010); Bolden, Petrov & Gosling (2009) describes shared leadership in terms of the ways in which roles are stretched and devolved over people. Serrell (2011) view this in the context of interactions between leaders, followers and the situation. Robinson (2008) asserts shared leadership as framed performance of particular tasks allocated to more than one person.

Pont, *et al.*, (2009) indicated that where roles and responsibilities are shared with other school members, head teacher's position remains strong. To this end, incorporation of specialization is not addressed hence a gap. In view of these opinion incorporating leadership between individuals is indication of collective, group-centered, participatory, inclusive and supportive (Gronn, 2008; Leithwood & Mascall, 2008; Street, 2011). To this end, directing leadership is a platform for head teachers to share tasks depending on responsibility and expertise to improve school effectiveness, capacity for continuous succession and development (Gronn, 2009; Pont *et al.*, 2009). The study by Hulpia & Devos (2009) revealed the amount of formal distribution of leadership roles to teachers did not have a significant influence on school leaders' job satisfaction, the nature of job; determines satisfaction however this study contends that school managers need to delegate responsibilities to teachers with equal authority and autonomy. Path-goal theory dimension initiate structure furthermore, leadership style high on initiation of structure is conducive with an orientation of efficiency and stringent cost control (Chaganti, Cook, & Smeltz 2002).

## 2. Methodology

To determine the degree of relationship between directive leadership style and teacher job satisfaction the study adopted a correlational research design. 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 the 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) to determine the sample size. Statistical Package of Social Sciences program was used to assist in data entry and presentation of scores. Spearman's rho correlation statistics analysis was carried out to establish relationship between directive 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).

## 3. Results and Discussion

The findings for directive leadership style and Job satisfaction obtained indicate Spearman Rank correlation coefficient was significant. The results are summarized in table 1.

**Table 1:** Relationship between Directive leadership Style and Teachers Job Satisfaction

|                |                         |                  |           |
|----------------|-------------------------|------------------|-----------|
|                |                         |                  | Directive |
| Spearman's rho | Correlation Coefficient | Job Satisfaction | 0.592**   |
|                | N                       | 305              |           |

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

Spearman *rho* correlation coefficient of 0.592\*\* was obtained for the analysis relationship between the head teachers' directive leadership style and teachers' job satisfaction. A total of 305 questionnaire responses from teachers were analyzed to derive Spearman *rho* correlation coefficient. Positive correlation was found ( $rho(305) = 0.592, p < 0.05$ ). This indicates significant relationship between the two variables. As head teachers' demonstrate directive leadership style, teachers who work in schools tend to have higher job satisfaction in the organization indicating there is consideration on task allocation. Malik (2013) revelations' demonstrated that directive leader behaviors have significant relationship with supervision and job in general however; correlation coefficient of expectancy and leader behavior could be simultaneously insignificant.

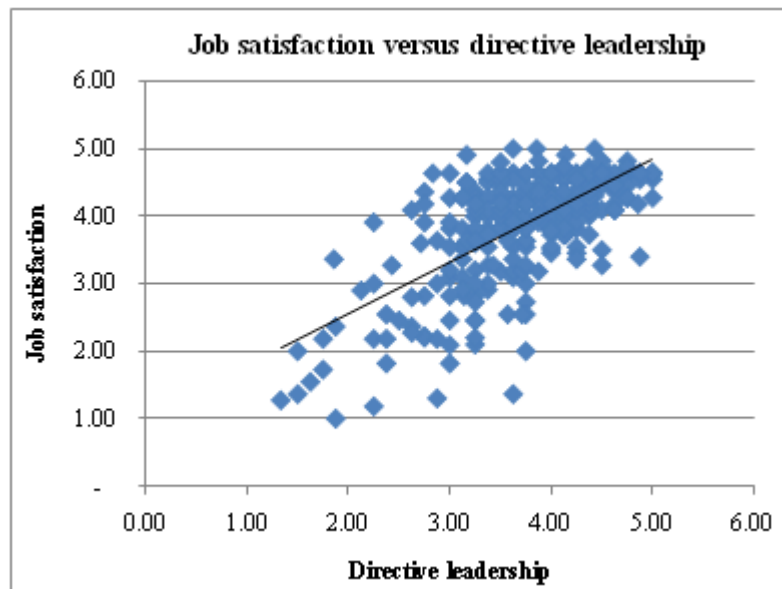


Figure 1: Directive Leadership versus Job Satisfaction

The scatter in figure 1 depicts concentration of respondents' agreement with job satisfaction as head teachers increases their directive style, teachers become satisfied. The coefficient of determination is  $(0.592^2)$  translating to 35.04 per cent of teachers' job satisfaction is explained by the head teachers' demonstration of directive leadership style.

The Teacher's Service Commission Act (2012) section 69, outlines the responsibilities of head teacher is: to assign teaching and other official duties to teachers, providing direction for effective teaching and conducive learning environment, supervision and evaluation of curriculum delivery, being responsible for education policy and professional practice at institutional level. Headteachers being employees of the TSC seemed to have complied with the provisions of this section therefore; positive correlation rho 0.592 was significant.

The directive leadership clarifies expectations and gives specific guidance to accomplish the desired expectations based on performance standards and organizational rules House & Mitchell (cited in Malik 2012). The directive style is appropriate with newly hired or inexperienced subordinates and in situations that require immediate action (Negron, 2008). This is consistent with the findings of study results which indicate a positive correlation of 0.592. However, there are indications that youthful teachers 40.3% joining teaching profession seemed to be satisfied with their job may be due to their great yearning for the job. Sari (2004) concluded that more working experience is associated with less job satisfaction, younger and less experienced teachers have higher levels of job satisfaction clearly corroborates with this study. Head teachers experience play important role as regards to leadership in school. Earlier results in this study points negatively skewed on experience meaning that majority of head teachers had 20 years in teaching profession. Dereli (2003) affirms that due to the long period spent in a particular job with no hope for further promotion and change feeling ready for retirement and getting fossilized day by day both individually and institutionally as well.

This study finding indicates directive leadership style is preferred by most teachers'. This demonstrates that teachers desire directive leaders. Consequently, teachers' have liking of being controlled, having descriptive and structured task before them. However, there is positive significance in relation to teachers' expectations and satisfaction to perform tasks. This could translate to ambiguous and unstructured tasks are negatively related to satisfaction and expectations of teachers' receive clear tasks. The path of this consistency is revealed by a positive correlation of  $(rho(305) = 0.592, p < 0.05)$ . Although there have been changes in teacher training towards specialization, the bulk of primary teachers are trained to teach all the subjects offered at primary school curriculum (Sessional Paper No. 14, 2012). The results indicate that head teachers' allocate some tasks to teachers' based on experience and expertise observed. The absence of policy framework on specialization of subject for primary teachers limits performance. This indicates completion of particular task lack to meet timeline. Head teacher is overwhelmed with workload hence providing direction by telling teachers' what exactly is expected of them is limited moreover, the head teacher sets standards of performance. This corresponds with the findings indicating most teachers preferred directive leadership where head teachers' schedules work for every teacher. This translates to mean behaviors by leaders are appropriate and they have strong formal authority to provide job satisfaction (Lussier & Achua, 2010).

Studies have researched on teachers' job satisfaction however, new and increasing demands on head teachers' contribute to emergence of distributed leadership practice in schools (Jacobs, 2010). However, autonomy in exercising the powers on roles is limited to primary school teachers due to absence of policy on leadership roles for teachers. This indicates leadership is being centered on the direction and supremacy of one person and not engaging followers in sharing leadership responsibilities. In this context, clear policy needs to be enacted to allow leadership in terms of the ways in which roles are stretched and devolved over teachers'. The Constitution of Kenya (2010), clarifies on devolved system thus leadership roles need re-alignment to

meet the constitutional threshold. Serrell (2011) views leadership sharing in the context of interactions between leaders, followers and the situation.

Robinson (2008) asserts leadership is framed as performance of particular tasks allocated to more than one person. Distributed leadership is a critical link to school leadership effectiveness (Hallinger & Heck, 2010; Harris, 2014). This collective leadership, as opposed to that of the head teacher alone, provides expanded and sustainable avenues for reshaping the conditions that directly impact leadership styles (Hallinger & Heck, 2010). This study found out most respondents agreed on tasks being allocated to expertise of the individual; nevertheless, this was limited by absence of clear policy on specialization of teaching subjects and leadership roles in primary schools. The implication of these findings is that teachers desired tasks where they are led or directed. This could further mean that teachers lack capacity of being independent towards task performance.

#### Partial correlation between directive leadership and job satisfaction

The partial correlation for directive leadership indicates that majority of teachers' preferred being under control of the head teacher. This shows that head teachers' exhibited well defined rules with proper guidance. The results are depicted in Table 2

**Table 2:** Partial Correlation for Job Satisfaction versus Directive Leadership Style

| Control variables                       |                  | Directive               |      |
|---|------------------|-------------------------|------|
| Achievement, Supportive & Participative | Job satisfaction | Correlation             | .245 |
|   |                  | Significance (2-tailed) | .000 |
|   |                  | Df                      | 300  |

Table 2 shows directive leadership style in relationship to control variables, achievement style, supportive style, participative style and job satisfaction held constant. The results indicate that a partial correlation coefficient of 0.245 and df. 300 on directive leadership thus most teachers favoured being controlled implying that they lacked self-drive and autonomy towards performance of tasks.

#### 4. Conclusion

Directive leadership style has a positive significant relationship to job satisfaction of teachers. Majority of teachers' favored directive style because they needed guidance and control by head teacher meaning there is lack of self-drive and active participation among teachers on roles. From the study findings, leadership for head teachers' was not based on specific leadership roles and standards. Therefore, the leadership system lacked an adequate framework to determine competencies required to provide effective leadership in the complex school associated with job satisfaction. The study concludes that head teachers should utilize directive style to ensure that goal and tasks allocated are realized and meet timelines however; structures should be put in place to enhance teacher autonomy.

#### 5. Recommendation

The study recommends that schools should continue focusing on leadership practices as part of their professional learning and leadership development. Teachers Service Commission and Ministry of Education Science and Technology need to spearhead training head teachers with effective job-embedded support structures, such as internships, mentorship programs with trained experienced mentors and expert group, proficiency coaching, and performance evaluation. These ensure effective professional competence for novice head teachers during their formative years. Head teachers can be informed difference between leadership and management.

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