Principals' Management Styles and Students' Unrest in Public Secondary Schools in Nairobi County, Kenya

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Abstract

This paper is just a sample template[1*] for the prospective authors of IISTE Over the decades, the concepts of holons and holonic systems have been adopted in many research fields, but they are scarcely attempted on labour planning. A literature gap exists, thus motivating the author to come up with a holonic model that uses exponential smoothing to forecast some quantitative The nature of students' unrest in schools has taken a dramatic turn for the worse. These findings are based on a study conducted in 2009.The study sought to establish the management styles used by principals and their influence on students' unrest in public secondary schools in Nairobi County.A descriptive research design was used. A sample of 15 principles, 60 class teachers and 600 students were selected using stratified, simple random and purposive sampling methods. Data were collected using questionnaires and interview guide. Inferential and descriptive statistics were used to analyze data. The studyfindings were that, there was no clear management style that was predominant in the schools surveyed. The findings also showed that;mock exams, diet, bullying, high handedness of principals, pressure from other schools, transfer of principals, lack of communication between students and the principals, poor facilities, and drug and substance abuse were common causes of students unrest. All the respondents indicated that; principal's management style influences student's unrest in secondary schools. Head teachers' gender, qualifications, experience and age also influenced unrest in secondary schools. The study concludes that; principals use various styles in managing schools. The study recommends that school administrations need to enhance communication among various stakeholders in the school through dialogue.

Key words; Management style, Principal, Students unrest, County

1. Introduction

An education system in any country is established as a result of the determination of the broader goals of education which are inline with the aspirations of the country (Kiruma, 2004). Schools split the broader, long term aims into more specific short term goals and objectives. A school is therefore the functional unit of the education system. It is a processing device through which the education system meets the aspirations of the society (Okumbe, 1999).Silver (1983) notes that the tone, ambience or atmosphere of a school is the reciprocal effect of the teachers' behavior pattern as a group and the principal's behavior pattern as a leader.Management is a social process which constitutes planning, controlling, coordinating and motivating(Okumbe, 1999).The school principal is viewed as the primary decision maker, facilitator, problem solver or social change agent(Kim & Kim, 2005). Koech (1999) emphasizes that education management entails prudent utilization of personnel, funds and equipment to enhance efficiency in the delivery of quality education.

Simkins (2005) views management as one of the major factors and sometimes the only factor that will determine whether an educational organization, be it a school, college or university succeeds or fails. Sessional paper number 1 of (2005) emphasizes that the roleof education managers must be well defined to enhance efficiency and effectiveness in secondary schools. A management style refers to a particular behavior applied by a manager to motivate their subordinates to achieve the objectives of the organization. The styles head teachers use impact greatly on the atmosphere of the school. Management styles are best identified as points on a continuum, where a manager exercises more of one style and less of the other as one tends towards the extreme ends of the continuum.

Betts (2000) identifies four basic management styles as: One, the dictatorial style; which uses the philosophy of fear. Students tend to obey out of fear and not respect. Two, the autocratic style also known as authoritative style: the principal directs and expects compliance; this style is forceful, positive, and dogmatic, and exerts power by giving or stopping rewards and punishment. Kinyanjui (1976) explains that students confronted by this style often resort to violent protests. Three, the democratic style also called participative or consultative leadership. The leader consults, encourages participation and uses power *with* rather than power *over* employees. Principals of best performing schools tend to be democratic (Eshiwani, 1993). Four,the laissez-faire style; where the leader allows a high amount of independence. He tends to avoid power and authority and depends largely on the group

to establish goals and means for achieving progress and success.

In Kenya head teachers for public secondary schools are appointed and deployed by the Teachers Service Commission. Kamotho(2008) explains that TSC has developed a policy guideline on the identification, selection, appointment and training of head teachers in an attempt to improve the management of learning institutions. He says:

The policy seeks to streamline and rationalize the process of appointing head teachers by setting criteria, standards and clear guidelines in identifying and picking the institutional managers. This is to wade off unnecessary interference and influence by interested parties which has in the past denied schools the best managers. He explains that for one to be appointed to a headship position he or she must have undertaken at least two in-service courses in institutional management offered by KenyaEducation Management Institute (KEMI) (*Kamotho, 2008*).

Students' unrest is any form of disruptive behavior that interferes with the smooth running of an educational institution (Simkins, 2005). Such behavior may arise frominterpersonal conflicts between head teachers, teachers and students due to opposition or antagonistic interactions. Two systems or persons are in conflicts when they interact indirectly in such a way that the actions of one tend to prevent or compel some outcome against the resistance of the other(Katz & Kahn, 1978). This is a common phenomenon in schools as principals and teachers authoritatively enforce school rules against the resistance of some students.

Students' unrest in secondary schools is experienced world wide. Students have in the past protested against political regimes, conditions in schools, school administration or some form of discrimination in the school or society as a whole. In the United Kingdom for example, student politics has existed since 1880s. In Iran, students protested against the pre-1979 secular monarchy and later against the theocratic Islamic republic. In the United States, student activism is often understood as oriented toward change in the American educational system. (http://www.freehugger.com/files/2008/11). In Uganda, research shows that "striking of secondary school students as a means of seeking attention or protest had become rampant. Hardly a term passes without a school striking and the pattern was becoming bizarre with school property being destroyed by students (Fiona, 2005).

A study conducted by the Ministry of Education Science and Technology MOEST (2001) revealed that secondary schools strikes in Kenya were not a new phenomenon and dated back to 20th century when the first case was reported in Maseno school. The trend continued and the strikes have been changing in nature and characteristics as the number of schools involved also increases. In August 1974, a presidential decree was issued banning strikes by students and workers but students still went on strike in defiance of this decree(Kinyanjui, 1976). One major feature of these strikes was that the head teachers were the primary targets of student's attacks and confrontations (Kinyanjui, 1976). The causes of the strikes as indicated by students were; poor diet, inadequate learning resources, poor teaching methods, high handedness of head teachers and harsh school rules.

A report by the Kenya Secondary School Heads Association in 1999 revealed that strikes in schools were on the increase and blamed it on the print and electronic media. In August 2001, the Ministry of Education formed a Task force to look into the discipline in secondary schools. The task force established that lack of learning resources, food, high handedness,peer influence and lack of communication between the administration and the students, were some of the causes of the strikes (Republic of Kenya, 2001). Kiruma (2004) explained that student strikes were a symptom of inability of the schools to cultivate relevant moral values among the youth and that this situation was threatening the socio-economic development of the nation.
Between June and July 2008, approximately 300 secondary schools in Kenya went on strike (Juma, 2008) and the strikes were declared the worst ever to be witnessed in Kenya. In Nairobi Province nine schools went on strike and many more schools experienced varied forms of unrest that were successively contained. In Upper Hill secondary school, a dormitory was burnt and one student died in the inferno.Jamhuri High School also went on strike. Other schools like Moi Nairobi girls, Lenana School, Nairobi School, and Dagoretti High School were among the schools that experienced varied degrees of students' unrest. The schools cited high handedness of the head teacher, harsh punishments and lack of communication channels as some of the causes of the strikes (Republic of Kenya, 2009).
Reacting to the situation at, the Minister of Education Prof. Sam Ongeri blamed the students and said:
we will not show mercy to those who were involved in the recent strikes in our secondary schools, the affected schools should screen, identify and give their names to the police a copy should be taken to the ministry headquarters for follow-up.(The People Daily, 23rd *July 2008).*

The government and stake holders blamed this situation on poor parenting, post-election violence that affected the country in January and February 2008, drug abuse, weak school management systems, lack of security, peer influence and the insurgence and use of mobile phones by students(Republic of Kenya, 2009). The secretary general of NCCK blamed it on moral decadence, cumbersome education system and breakdown of social order.A parliamentary committee on education was commissioned by the government in July 2008 to investigate the causes of school unrest. Students interviewed called for scrapping of mock examinations saying that they were too difficult. They also blamed school administrators for what they said was a failure to give them an avenue of expressing their grievances(Republic of Kenya,2009).

Despite the government's efforts to unearth causes of student's unrest and contain them, their very nature has been dramatically changing for the worse (Republic of Kenya, 2001). This forms the basis for conducting this study to determine whether principal's management styles influence the persistent unrest in schools.

Statement of the problem

In spite of the government establishing guidance and counseling in schools, banning corporal punishment, and issuing a decree that outlawed students strikes, the nature of the unrests have taken a dramatic turn for the worse. They are not only violent and destructive but premeditated and planned to cause maximum harm to human life. Between June and July 2008, approximately 300 secondary schools in Kenya went on strike (Republic of Kenya, 2009).The strikes were declared the worst ever witnessed in the history of Kenya. Many more schools experienced varied forms of unrest that were successively contained.

A study conducted by Ministry of Education in July 2008 to investigate school unrest found the following causes. Overloaded curriculum, autocratic school administration, drug and substance abuse, poor living conditions in schools; excessive use of corporal punishment, lack of an effective school guidance and counselling service, pressure for excellent academic performance, abdication of parental responsibility, incompetent board of governors, culture of impunity in the society, adolescence identity crisis, highhandedness of school principals, mass media campaigns, moral decadence and the prefect system (Republic of Kenya, 2009).Studies byGithiari (2002),Huka (2003), Kiruma (2004), Sichei (2005), and Obiero (2006) explored students' strikes but did not explore the influence of principals' management styles on students' unrest.

Objectives of the study

This study was guided by the following objectives: Toidentify the management styles used by principals of public secondary schools in Nairobi County, determine the causes of students' unrest in public secondary schools, determine the best style for managing public secondary schools, establish if principal's characteristics such as age, gender, qualifications, and experience influence students' unrest, establish whether principals management style influences students unrest.in Nairobi County.

Research methodology

This study adopted a descriptive survey design. Such studies describe the characteristics of a particular individual, or a group (Kothari, 2004). In this case, this study has described the principals' management styles such asdemocratic andautocratic management styles and their influence on student's unrests in public secondary schools in Nairobi, County. Quantitative and qualitative data was collected using questionnaires and interview schedule and analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The descriptive survey implies the process of gaining insight into the general picture of a situation, without utilizing the entire population (Borg and Gall, 1996).The population of the study was 60 public secondary schools in Nairobi County.The study sample was 15 schools. Public secondary schools in Nairobi County with similar characteristics were categorized in stratus as; Boys, Girls and Mixed schools and stratified sampling was used to select samples from each stratum. The method of proportional allocation as recommended by (Kothari, 2004) was used to select the categories of schools. Hence five schools were selected from each category (Boys, Girls and Mixed schools) using simple random sampling. Purposive sampling was used to select class teachers from the rest of the teachers because most class teachers are staff managers who deal closely with the principal and students hence may have the desired data.

The number of teachers sampled was 60. Purposive sampling was used to select form three students used for the study because this was the most appropriate group for this study given that form fours were busy preparing for their examinations and form ones and twos had not been in the school long enough and may not have

experienced unrest. One form three class per school was identified through simple random sampling giving a total of 15 form three classes with an average student enrolment of 40 per class. The sample size for this study comprised of 15 principals, 60 class teachers, 600 students and 6 education officers in the six education zones.

Theoretical Framework

The study is based on McGregor's theory X and theory Y. Theory X includes two assumptions: The average human being has an inherent dislike of work and will avoid it if he can. Because of this human characteristic of dislike of work, most people must be coerced, controlled, directed, and threatened with punishment to get them to put forth adequate effort towards the achievement of organizational objectives.A principal who ascribes to this approach is high on performance and low in the sociological and psychological aspects of the subjects.Theory Y is characterized by the belief that expenditure of physical and mental effort in work is as a natural as play or rest.Theory X forms the rationale for the autocratic or authoritarian management style while theory Y forms the basis for democratic management style.

Study findings

General information

The study found that 78% of the principals had experienced students' unrest in their schools while 22% had not. This indicates that students' unrest were a common phenomenon in secondary schools in Nairobi County. The teachers were asked whether they had experienced any form of student's unrest in the school for the past five years. The results indicated that 75% agreed while 25% disagreed. Thus, most of the teachers had experienced unrest in their schools. The 25% are part of the 35% that had been in the schools for less than 5 years. For those who had experienced unrest in their schools, the analysis presented in figure 2 reveals that 47% had experienced it once, 33% twice while the remaining 20% three times. In terms of the frequency with which the strikes had been observed by the principals, the study found that 22% had experienced it once, 33% had experienced it twice and 45% had experienced it three times.

Management style used byPrincipals'

A list of management styles was provided in part B, item 6 of the principals' questionnaire for the principals to rank the extent to which they used them in the schools. The results indicates that dictatorial style was often used in 18% of the schools, less used in 65% of the schools while never used in 18% of the schools surveyed. Authoritarian style was often used in 22% of the schools, 50% of the schools use it less often while the remaining 28% of the school principals never use it. Further, the study revealed that 67% of principals often use democratic style while 11% never use it. 22% use it less often as a management style. Lastly, the study revealed that 11% of the principals often use Laissez-faire style of management, 39% less often use it while the remaining 50% never use it. This implies that majority of the principals used democratic style of management. This agrees with Sichei(2005)where 90% of the principals surveyed believed they weredemocratic.

A list of management styles was provided for teachers to rank the extent to which they were used by their principals. The results indicates that dictatorial style was often used in 17.6% of the schools, less often used in 64.7% of the schools while principals in 17.6% of the schools surveyed never used it. Authoritarian style was often used in 22.2% of the schools, 50% of the schools use it less often while the remaining 27.8% of the schools never use it. Further, the study revealed that 66.7% of the schools often use democratic style while 11.1% never use it. 22.2% use it less often as a management style. Lastly, the study revealed that 11.1% of the principals often use Laissez-faire style of management, 38.9% less often use it while the remaining 50% never use it. These findings concur withHuka(2003) that 87.79% of theteachers perceived their principals as democratic.

Among the student's responses, 46.1% indicated that the most predominant style was dictatorial, 27.8% indicated that it was the authoritarian, 24.6% claimed it was democratic while the remaining 1.4% indicated that it was laissez faire. This confirms that the most predominant management style as viewed by students was dictatorial cum authoritarian. These views differ with the principals and teachers views implying that either students were negative about corrective actions used by principals or the principals used stringent methods to correct learners.

Causes of student's unrest

School principals revealed that school diet, fear of mock exams, insufficient learning resources, incitement by some teachers, high handedness were the causes of students' unrest. The findings were in tandem with those of the parliamentary committee on Education that found the fear of mock examinations as the cause of the series of

unrestthat rocked the country between June and July 2008 (Republic of Kenya, 2009).

The teachers indicated that the causes of students' unrest in their schools stemmed from reasons such as student's refusal to take their mocks examinations. This was the major reason cited by most teachers. Other reasons included refusal to take meals by students citing that they were either inadequate or not well cooked. Further, bullying also caused unrest in some schools while high handedness was the reason for some students striking. Pressure from other schools taking part in strikes countrywide also made some students go on strike while other students went on strike because their principal had been transferred.

The students on the other hand revealed that students' unrest was caused by inadequate or poorly cooked food, fear of mock exams, pressure from outside the school, and drug and substance abuse. Some students blamed high handedness of teachers and the principal, lack of entertainment in other schools, lack of communication between students and the principal, poor facilities like laboratories and libraries, and poor management. This study concurs withSichei (2005) that parental rearing, lack of teachers; drug abuse, peer group pressure, head teacher management styles and environmental influence were the main causes of indiscipline in secondary schools in Mount Elgon District.

Best management style
The principals were asked to state the best style of managing public secondary schools in Nairobi province. Data revealed that 67% of themnamed democratic style as the best, 22% indicated that a combination of various styles especially authoritarian and democratic were the best, while 11% preferred the dictatorial style. The reasons given by most principals for using democratic style of management were that it allowed freedom of expression where all patties in the school felt part and parcel of school programs. Those who selected authoritarian or dictatorial leadership thought that the authority of the principal needs to be exerted if discipline is to be instilled in schools. Some even said that students are naturally unruly hence the best method is authoritarian. But this underscores the choice for a combination of styles. Those who called for a combination of styles were of the opinion that situations in schools vary and call for different management methods to deal with them.

The teachers were asked to state the best style of managing public secondary schools in Nairobi Province. Their responses revealed that 75% of teachers were of the opinion that democratic style was the best, 20% went for a combination of various styles especially authoritarian and democratic, while 5% went for the dictatorial management style.

Influence of management style on students' unrest
The findings revealed that principal's style of management influences students unrest with 72.5% of principals strongly agreeing, 17.6% agreed, 9.5% disagreed while the remaining 0.4% strongly disagreed. This shows that majority agreed that indeed the principals' style of management influences student's unrest in public secondary schools. The reasons given included the fact that the head teacher controls all resources in the entire school and his style influences their distribution and utilization and therefore affects the overall behavior of students, teachers and support staff. When the principal is dictatorial, he may not listen to students and for this reason, the students may end up rioting.
Majority of the teachers were also in agreement that a principal's management style influences student's unrest in secondary schools with 45% agreeing while the remaining 55% strongly agreed. The reasons for stating that principal's style of management influences unrest were given. The authoritarian style of management was taunted as breeding hatred between the administration and the students as the later feel that no one can listen to their grievances. They suggested that the kind of management style used in the school translates in the performance of the school and the level of discipline instilled among students. Others pointed out that when the head teachers are democratic, the students can air their views freely hence they feel part of the school. When there is no communication between the administration and the students, conflicts build up and students' unrest become inevitable.

Relationship between principal, teachers and studentsresponses on communication in the school
These results are presented in Table 1. In order to interpret the mean scores, the following guide is used. A mean score of 1.0-1.49 indicates that the respondents disagree. A mean score of 1.5-1.99 indicates that the respondents are neutral while a mean score of 2-2.49 indicates that the respondents agreed.

Table 1: Relationship between principal, teachers and students on communication in the school

	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Mean	Std. Deviation
	%	%	%		
School believes in open and honest communication	15.8	26.3	57.9	2.4211	0.76853
There is adequate and quick communication in the school	15.8	42.1	42.1	2.2632	0.73349
Students always receive feedback	26.3	47.4	26.3	2	0.74536
Teachers freely give views and get feedback	15.8	52.6	31.6	2.1579	0.68825
I learn more about the happenings in the school through rumours	42.1	21.1	36.8	1.9474	0.91127
The administration communicates to us only when there is a problem	36.8	31.6	31.6	1.9474	0.84811
We frequently hold student's barazas	42.1	26.3	31.6	1.8947	0.87526

When asked whether the school believes in open and honest communication, the mean score was 2.0 indicating that that the respondents were neutral on the mater. On whether teachers freely give views and get feedback the study posted a mean score of 1.94 indicating that the respondents were neutral on this. The study also showed that they were neutral on whether the administration only communicates to teachers and students when there is a problem. The mean score was 1.89.

Ways to minimize students' unrest in schools
The teachers suggested various ways that could be used to minimize students' unrest in secondary schools. These included: Enhancing communication among the students, teachers and the management in the school through dialogue, organizing frequent barazas between school administration and students so that they can air their grievances for appropriate action to be taken, having an effective guidance and counseling unit in schools to help students tone down their anger and deviance. Others suggested that parents should be more involved in the school administration so that students' behavior can be checked and others suggested that corporal punishment should be reintroduced in schools to control students' behavior. High handedness should be discouraged among the teaching staff and principals and fair rules be set up as opposed to authoritarian rules. Some teachers called for divine intervention through prayers and employment of school chaplains. The students were asked to suggest possible ways through which unrest in secondary schools would be minimized in public secondary schools.

The students indicated that the students should be allowed to give their opinions through honest and open communication between the administration and the students. Other students also indicated that corporal punishment needs to be reintroduced to curb unrest in secondary schools. These studycontradict findings ofSichei (2005) whoexonerated head teachers with66.4% of his respondents disagreeingthat head teachers' management style causes indisciplinein schools.

Principals' characteristics and influence on unrest

The principals' were asked how personal characteristics such as age, gender, qualifications and experience influence the discipline of students. Most of the principals agreed that age was a contributing factor to student unrest. The explanation offered was that the more a head teacher is aged, the wider the generation gap. This generation gap means that there is a wide difference in tastes and preferences. The head teacher may stick to the norm yet the students may want some changes. If their grievances are not heard, they may resort to violence.

Principal's qualifications were also taunted as influencing students' unrest in secondary schools. The principals said that the higher their qualifications, the more respectful they look in the eyes of their students and the teachers alike. Thus, this respect translates to less unrest in secondary schools. This study disagrees with Obiero(2006)who found that principals' age and qualifications have no influence on their administrative practices with 71% of the respondents disagreeing.

As regards the gender, majority of the principals were also in agreement that gender contributes to students' unrest in secondary schools. Their explanations were that female head teachers usually experience higher resistance from male students. For that reason, gender plays a role in deviance among students in secondary schools.

As regards the relationship between the principals' experience and students' unrest, the study revealed that indeed there was such an influence. The study found that most of the principals explained that the experience helps in dealing with the various challenges that students bring to the administration.

Conclusions

Management style used: Most of the principals and teachers indicated that the most predominant management style in their schools was the democratic.The students on the other hand indicated that the most predominant style was dictatorial and authoritarian styles of management. It is not therefore clear to state what management style is predominant in the schools surveyed given that the administration and the students have differing views of what style is used in their schools.

Best management style: The study concludes that democratic style was voted the best, followed by a combination of authoritarian and democratic style of management.

Causes of unrest: External factors likePressure from other schools taking part in strikesand drug and substance abuse caused unrest in schools. Similarly internal factors such as mocks exams transfer of school principals, lack of communication between students and the principal andpoor facilities ignited students unrest.

Whether management style influences unrest:Authoritarian managementstyle breeds hatred between the administration and the students causing unrestwhile democratic style allows free participation in decision making and helps diffuse conflicts in the school.

Effect of Principal characteristics on student's unrest: Principal's personal characteristics of age, gender, qualifications and experience influence students unrest in schools.

Recommendations

The study recommends that;

i.   School administratorsshould enhance communication with teachers and students; they should communicate school rules clearly during admission of students and consequences for breaking them, usestudents' *barazas*to allow students to air their grievances, and providesuggestion boxes in schools where students and teachers can place their complaints.

ii. Students should be allowed to elect their prefects democratically after they have been vetted by their teachers and management and found to pass the test of fitness.

iii. Given that mock examinations are another contributing factor to unrest, the study suggests that internal tests

could be used to prepare students for the main exams instead of mocks. These will relieve students of stress and pressures associated with such exams hence tone done deviance.

iv.   The study recommends that school heads should make a deliberate effort to attend in-service courses on emerging trends in school management, conflict resolution and human and organizational behavior, to increase their competence in dealing with problems specific to their schools.

v.   The study further recommends that the schools should use guidance and counseling units in schools to help students tone down their anger and deviance. The Ministry of Education could also reintroduce corporal punishment to help in controlling students' behavior.

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