

# Effect of Principals' Leadership Styles on School Discipline in Public Secondary Schools in Vihiga Sub-County, Kenya

<sup>1</sup>Velma Oyiko Mudanyi, <sup>\*2</sup>Dr. Jack Odongo Ajowi, <sup>3</sup>Dr. Benard Mwebi

<sup>1</sup>Department of Curriculum and Educational Management, Jaramogi Oginga Odinga University of Science and Technology. P. O. BOX 120- 40601 BONDO, KENYA

<sup>2</sup>Jaramogi Oginga Odinga University of Science and Technology, Department of Curriculum and Educational Management. P. O. BOX 120- 40601 BONDO, KENYA

<sup>3</sup>Department of Curriculum and Educational Management, Jaramogi Oginga Odinga University of Science and Technology. P. O. BOX 120- 40601 BONDO, KENYA

**Abstract:** Leadership style is the most important factor in the success or failure of school discipline. Despite significant roles played by Principals including instilling school discipline, learning institutions in Kenya, especially public secondary schools, have been faced with different cases of unrest emanating from students, teachers, and other staff members. The purpose of this study was to investigate the effects of transactional leadership styles on school discipline in public secondary schools in Vihiga Sub-County. The study was guided by the following research objectives: to find out the effects of Principals' transactional leadership style on school discipline. A descriptive research design was used and informed by social learning theory as well as System Theory. The target population was 27 Principals, 321 teachers, and 3083 form three students from 27 public secondary schools in Vihiga Sub-County. Saturated sampling was used to select the 27 public secondary schools. A sample size of 431 participants was sought using simple random sampling. The researcher used a sample of 24 Principals (~100%), 309 form three students (10%) and 98 teachers (30%) for the study. The study used questionnaires (teachers and students) and interviews (Principals) to collect data. Reliability of research instruments was tested using Pearson Product Moment of Correlation Coefficient giving an index of 0.820. Quantitative data was analysed using descriptive statistics which included frequencies, percentages and means, while the qualitative data was analysed using content analysis. The analysed data was presented using tables and bar charts. On findings of the study, there was statistically positive correlation between Principals' transactional leadership and school discipline ( $n=289$ ;  $r = 0.605$ ;  $p<0.05$ ). The study concluded that Principals' transactional leadership style was critical in instilling school discipline in Vihiga Sub-County. The study would assist the policy makers in the Ministry of Education to formulate viable policies on handling of school discipline. The study is useful to teachers, students, parents, and guardians in secondary schools. A study on effects of Principals' transactional leadership style on school discipline in private secondary schools in Vihiga Sub-County-Kenya would expound the understanding of the current problem.

**Keywords:** Leadership style, school discipline, public secondary schools.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

### BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Indiscipline among students in secondary schools of Kenya is of great concern to the Kenyan public. For instance, in Vihiga Sub-County, records from the Sub-County Education Office indicate that out of 27 public secondary schools, 8 schools recorded indiscipline cases such as strike among the students, teaching and non-teaching staffs in the year 2012.

Despite the fact that several commissions of inquiry into the problem were previously set up by the Government of Kenya, the problem continued. In term two of 2017 three teachers were interdicted because of gross misconduct. In 2019, another 2 teachers were interdicted for gross misconduct. Thirteen teachers are under investigation. Indiscipline cases continue to arise at school level despite the various mitigation guidelines put in place.

Despite the government's effort to curb indiscipline in schools through instituting various measures such as trainings undertaken by Kenya Education Management Institute (KEMI) on management, establishment of guidance and counselling departments in schools, peer counselling in schools, many schools are still plagued with leadership issues and a myriad of disciplinary cases in schools. These disciplinary cases include, drug and substance abuse, administrations that are not responsive to students needs and grievances, ineffective guidance and counselling systems, peer pressure, bad influence from the community and parents abandoning their responsibility which leads to gross indiscipline and acts of violence in public secondary schools in Vihiga Sub-County. Besides, the differences in students' discipline from one school to another is still a bone of contention. This study therefore seeks to investigate the effects of Principals' *transactional* leadership style on school discipline in public secondary schools in Vihiga Sub-County, Vihiga-Kenya.

The study was guided by the following objective; To find out the effects of Principals' transactional leadership style on school discipline in Vihiga Sub-County.

Research Hypothesis was; **H<sub>01</sub>**: There is no statistically significant effect of Principals' transactional leadership style on school discipline in Vihiga Sub-County.

The findings of this study may have both practical and theoretical effects on the future of Principals' leadership styles on school discipline in public secondary schools, particularly Vihiga Sub-County, and Kenya in general. It is hoped that the study will provide useful information to secondary school education stakeholders particularly in Vihiga Sub-County, and Kenya in general. These includes teachers, head teachers, parents, County education officers and Ministry of Education and Sports officials.

To the teachers, the study is likely to provide useful information on their role as supervisors and planners of the teaching and learning activities at the same time teachers would acknowledge their importance in school as students' role models. On the other hand, parents might appreciate their role as co-educators and therefore work hand in hand with the Principals and teachers to foster school discipline.

The study was conducted in public secondary schools in Vihiga Sub-County excluding private secondary schools in the Sub-County. This is because there exists only one private secondary school in Vihiga Sub-County, hence could not provide adequate study population. More so, public schools are directly managed by the government and are fully open to public utility unlike private schools. The study specifically examined effects of Principals' leadership styles on discipline in public secondary schools, and revolved around transactional, transformational, laissez-faire leadership and strategies used by Principals when instilling discipline in school. Descriptive study design was employed, informed by leadership style theory as proposed by Bass (1990).

Limitation of a study refers to constraints a researcher has little or no control over. The study was limited to 27 public secondary schools. The closed-ended questionnaire used to collect data had a ceiling effect, limiting amount of information collected. The researcher addressed this limitation by triangulation method of involving use of interview schedule to beef up responses from the questionnaire. Time limitation, especially on interview schedule with the Principals was experienced; some were too busy to create ample time for the interview. The researcher countered this by rescheduling appointment with such Principals. Some respondents tended to shy-off from participating in the study for fear of being victimized or wondered whether the study would benefit them in anyway. However, the researcher assured them of confidentiality of their information and that their identities would not be exposed throughout the study. The researcher also explained to respondents that the study was purely for academic purposes. Lastly, since the research study targeted students, teachers and Principals from public secondary schools in Vihiga Sub-County, generalization of the findings to other counties could be done with a lot of caution.

The study was conducted with an assumption that Principals' transactional leadership style has effect on school discipline

### Theoretical Framework

This study was based on Systems theory and Social learning theory by Bandura's (1997). Systems theory was proposed in the 1940's by the biologist (Ashby, 1956). Von Bertalanffy was both reacting against reductionism and attempting to revive the unity of science. The system theory was adopted for this study to explain the relationship existing between Principals' leadership styles and school discipline (Mullins, 1999). This theory was adopted for this study because a school has various components working together to achieve its goals and objectives. The theories further talked of self-systems which existed for self-regulation of behaviour determined by the leadership styles of Principals as they pursued school goals (Bandura, 1997). Thus, one of the most important concepts of this theory was self-efficacy which is the belief that one can execute a specific course of action to achieve a goal. Self-efficacy, leadership style and discipline mutually influenced one another and led to improved school performance.

The independent variable which is leadership styles interacts with self-efficacy to produce a disciplined school environment which eventually results into improved performance within the school systems. The systems approach attempted to reconcile the earlier approaches by focusing attention on the total work organization and the interrelationships of structure and behaviour, and the range of variables within the organization. The current study benefited from this approach since the approach encouraged managers to view the organization both as a whole, and as part of a larger environment. It is suggested that different types of behaviour can be practiced by the same person at different times in varying situations. In leadership it is considered a factor that has a major influence on the performance of organizations, managers and employees (Wang et al., 2005).

Leadership is a process of giving purpose to collective effort and causing others to willingly exert effort in order to achieve a specific purpose (Jacobs & Jacques, 1990). Effective leaders can drive these collective efforts towards the achievement of organizational goals. Drucker (1993) indicated that the quality and performance of managers is the key criteria in deciding organizational success. An enterprise without a manager's leadership is not able to transmute input resources into competitive advantage. Therefore, it is certain that the Leadership Style of a manager is closely linked to the development of organization. Early theories tried to define effective Leadership Styles (democratic or autocratic, socially oriented or target oriented etc.) and to relate them with various aspects of organizational outcomes (e.g. Blake and Mouton, 1964; Lewin et al., 1939). More recently, researchers have focused on the Leadership Styles by Bass. Bass (1990) has described three well-known styles of Leadership: Transformational, Transactional, and Laissez-faire leadership. Transactional leaders identify and clarify job tasks for their subordinates and communicate how successful execution of those tasks leads to receipt of desirable job rewards.

## 2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study made use of the descriptive research design to help collect information about peoples' attitudes, opinions, habits or any other characteristics of an individual or group, summarize it, present and interpret the data collected for clarification (Orodho, 2009a). This design is suitable because the study sought to explore cause and effect relationship between the Principals' leadership styles as an independent variable and school discipline as a dependent variable. This design was used to analyse both the quantitative and qualitative data since the researcher used both semi structured questionnaire and interview schedules to collect data.

The study was carried out in public secondary schools in Vihiga Sub-County in Vihiga County. This area was chosen because there are disciplinary cases which includes; drug and substance abuse. The Sub-County also has administrations that are not responsive to students needs and grievances, ineffective guidance and counselling systems, peer pressure, bad effects from the community and parents abandoning their responsibility which leads to gross indiscipline and acts of violence in secondary schools. Besides, why there are differences in students' discipline from one school to another is still a bone of contention.

Population includes all the subjects that have similar characteristics that the researcher wants to investigate. The target population of this study was Principals, teachers, and form three students from the 27 public secondary schools in Vihiga Sub-County. According to Vihiga SCEO Report (2019) there were 27 Principals of public secondary schools in Vihiga Sub-County, 321 teachers and 3083 form three students as of 2019. A sample is a small portion of a target population. The population being a smaller one for this study, saturated sampling was used to select all the 27 public secondary

schools. Kerlinger (1970) suggests that 30% of a sample population is appropriate for the purpose of research. Simple random sampling technique was used to sample 309 students. Therefore, the sample population for the study was 24 Principals, 98 teachers and 309 students. The total study sample was 431 respondents.

The study used questionnaire as well as interview schedules as the instruments of data collection. These instruments were suitable for descriptive design (Orodho, 2003). The questionnaire consisted of questions to collect data from selected teachers and selected Form three students from all public secondary schools. The secondary schools Principals were interviewed.

“Validity is the extent to which the study instruments capture what they purport to measure”, (Cooper and Schindler, 2006). “Validity of instruments is critical in all forms of researches and the acceptable level is dependent on logical reasoning, experience and professionalism of the researcher. To check on face and content validity of the instruments, the researcher sought expert assistance from the supervisors. This was aimed at getting rid of ambiguity, unclear laid down instructions or poorly structured test-items in the instruments before conclusions and generalizations were made to uphold content validity. The questions in the instruments were also analysed with respect to the study objectives and hypothesis of the study.

Reliability refers to how consistent a research procedure or instrument is (Bryman, 2008). It therefore means the degree of consistency demonstrated in a study. To maintain high level of reliability a pilot test was carried out in three schools from Vihiga Sub-County. The piloting test was to ensure that the research instruments were relevant, clearly understandable, well-structured, and open to necessary amendments by the researcher to meet the requirements of the study objectives. The questionnaire was piloted on 43 respondents; 10 teachers and 30 students while the interview schedule was applicable to 3 Principals drawn from the three public secondary schools in Vihiga Sub-County.

Questionnaires and interview schedules were self-administered to the respondents and interpretation of the response alternatives that bore the same meaning but were not identical. Order of response alternatives was similarly changed for questions with normal scale to assess the reliability. Meanwhile, respondents’ choices were evaluated for appropriateness. The researcher also verified if the questions were comprehended the same way by the respondents. In addition, average time taken to complete the questionnaires was noted and the overall pilot test results was discussed with the supervisors and adjustments made according to the results of the instruments review and pilot test prior to the production of the final instruments.

The scores of test-retest techniques used in collection of data were correlated to get the coefficient of instruments reliability using Pearson’s product moment correlation coefficient formula i.e.

$$r_{xy} = \frac{N \sum xy - (\sum x)(\sum y)}{\sqrt{\{N \sum x^2 - (\sum x)^2\} \{N \sum y^2 - (\sum y)^2\}}}$$

where

N – Number of respondents

x – Scores from the first test

y – Scores from the second test

The reliability coefficient (r) of the study was found to be 0.820, Orodho (2004) indicates that when the ‘r’ lies between +1 and -1, the closer the value to +1 the stronger the congruence, indicating that there is a high degree of reliability. The researcher found that the instruments were reliable enough to be used in the study.

### Data Analysis

The primary data collected from the field was first edited to remove glaring errors and isolate incomplete questionnaires, and then reported through the use of descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages, means, and modes. Coding was done and entered into Statistical Package for Social Science Computer Programme version 22.0 assisted in the analysis of the data (Orodho, 2009b). Pearson Correlation Coefficient was used to determine the relationship between

Principals' leadership styles, discipline and students' behaviour. The analysed data was presented using tables, bar graphs and pie charts.

Qualitative data was analysed using content analysis techniques such as narratives, explanations and discussions based on research objectives. Qualitative data from in-depth interviews and documentary analysis was analysed thematically in line with the research objectives and reported in narrative and direct quotations of respondents. Creswell (2012) and Braun and Clarke (2006) indicate that thematic analysis is a method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data. Thereafter, the data was interpreted as per the themes that emerged.

While undertaking the study, the researcher considered such ethical issues as keeping the confidentiality of all the information from the respondents, protection of the respondents' identities, and their rights to exercise their freedom of thought. The researcher also maintained high moral decorum and intellectual integrity and ensured that any attempts that would jeopardize the security and confidentiality of data were eliminated during and after the study.

### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the findings and interpretation of the study as indicated in the research methodology. It is subdivided into sections and sub-sections. The research findings are presented on the basis of the study objectives and hypothesis. The results presented both qualitative and quantitative findings. The quantitative data was been analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics was used to describe the views of the respondents on each sub-scale, while the inferential statistics aided to make inferences and draw conclusions. Statistical tests, Pearson Product-Moment of Correlation analysis and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to investigate the relationship between the variables. All tests of significance were computed at  $\alpha = 0.05$ . The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 22.0 was used to analyses the quantitative data. For the qualitative data, a thematic analysis approach was used.

#### Questionnaire Return Rate

The table below, shows the summary of return rate of questionnaires from both teacher and student respondents, reveals that the questionnaires were adequate for the study.

#### Questionnaire Return Rate

Respondents	Questionnaires administered	Questionnaires returned	Return rate (%)
Teachers	98	89	90.8
Students	309	289	93.5
Overall	407	378	92.9

**Source: Survey data (2019)**

The study targeted a total of 407 respondents, on whom the questionnaires were administered, comprising of 98 teachers and 309 form three students. 89 of the teachers and 289 of the students returned their questionnaires, having been appropriately filled, translating to an overall response rate of 92.9%. Several authors including Kummar (2005), Orodho (2013), Oso and Onen (2009) and Creswell (2014) among others recommend that a response rate of 50% is adequate, 60% is good and 70% and above is excellent for analysis and reporting on a survey. Based on this assertion, the current study's response rate of 92.9% is therefore excellent. It was an excellent representation of the target population. The recorded high response rate was attributed to the fact that the questionnaires were personally administered by the researcher to the respondents, who were pre-notified of the intention of the study.

#### Reliability Analysis

The study sought to establish internal reliability index of students' questionnaire because the data collected from it was used in inferential statistics. This was done by measuring the internal consistence of the items in each variable. Creswell (2014) asserts that internal consistence is the degree to which an instrument is error free, reliable and consistent across time and across the various items in the scale. Cronbach's alpha coefficient analysis was used to measure the internal consistency of the instruments, because it is the most consistent test of inter-item consistency reliability for Likert scaled



# International Journal of Novel Research in Education and Learning

Vol. 9, Issue 2, pp: (1-18), Month: March - April 2022, Available at: [www.noveltyjournals.com](http://www.noveltyjournals.com)

or rating scaled questionnaire. The reliability for multi-item opinion items were computed separately for all the sub scales in the students' questionnaires and the coefficient alpha of this variable was reported in the table below.

## Internal Consistency: Cronbach's Alpha Results for the Questionnaire

Scale	No. of items	Cronbach's alpha	Conclusion (Reliable/Unreliable)
Transactional leadership style	5	0.637	Reliable

Source: Author (2019), SPSS Analysis.

The table reveals that all the sub-scales met the required level of internal consistency of reliability, with the Cronbach's alpha values ranging from a low of 0.637. These findings were in line with the recommendation by Oso and Onen (2009) that a coefficient of 0.60 is of adequate reliability while coefficient of 0.70 and above indicates that the instrument has a high inter-item consistency reliability standard. Although, Cronbach's alpha for all the sub-scales reveal that the instruments had adequate reliability for the study, items 1 and 8 had to be deleted first in the sub- scale of school discipline questionnaire. These deleted items did not appropriately hang out well with others. Their deletion resulted to increase in Cronbach's alpha in this scale and all items were now correlated with the total scale to a good degree. Therefore, the questionnaires were suitable for data collection because they adequately measured the constructs for which they were intended to measure.

## Level of School Discipline

The study sought to establish the level of school discipline in public secondary schools in Vihiga Sub-County as the dependent variable. School discipline was measured by using the latent indicators of school discipline. The students' respondents were asked to rate the frequency in which the various aspects of student discipline are witnessed. The statements were measured on a five-point Likert Scale of 1 to 5 where; 1= Never(N), 2= Rarely(R), 3 = Sometimes(S) 4 = Usually(U) and 5 = Always(A). The student's' responses are shown in the table below.

## Frequencies for Student Discipline

Indicators of Discipline	1	2	3	4	5
1. There is no keeping of unwanted materials during examination.	44 (15.2%)	42 (14.5%)	54 (18.7%)	32 (11.1%)	110 (38.1%)
2. Most students show honesty during examinations.	14 (4.8%)	14 (4.8%)	42 (14.5%)	52 (18.0%)	160 (55.4%)
3. Fighting and bullying are very rare among students.	22 (7.6%)	28 (9.7%)	40 (13.8%)	54 (18.7%)	138 (47.8%)
4. No teasing and/or provoking fellow students.	45 (15.6%)	44 (15.2%)	50 (17.3%)	39 (13.5%)	104 (36.0%)
5. No threat/intimidation/bullying of students and teachers.	147 (50.9%)	59 (20.4%)	27 (9.3%)	14 (4.8%)	35 (12.1%)
6. No sneaking out of class/school.	52 (18.0%)	41 (14.2%)	99 (34.3%)	38 (13.1%)	52 (18.0%)
7. Student display general obedience to student leadership.	77 (26.6%)	43 (14.9%)	52 (18.0%)	29 (10.0%)	81 (28.0%)
8. Proper care of school property such as furniture and windows.	46 (15.9%)	33 (11.4%)	46 (15.9%)	41 (14.2%)	116 (40.1%)
9. No stealing/theft among students.	130 (45.0%)	75 (26.0%)	31 (10.7%)	21 (7.3%)	25 (8.7%)
10. Learners are always in time and present on school programmes.	67 (23.2%)	41 (14.2%)	49 (17.0%)	45 (15.6%)	80 (27.7%)
11. Most student display positive attitude to learning.	31 (10.7%)	32 (11.1%)	44 (15.2%)	47 (16.3%)	128 (44.3%)
12. Most students show respectable behavioural tendency towards the teachers.	45 (15.6%)	44 (15.2%)	50 (17.3%)	39 (13.5%)	104 (36.0%)

Source: (Survey data, 2019)

From the table above, the results of the survey indicates low level of discipline in most of the secondary schools in Vihiga Sub-County. This was reflected by fairly high prevalence of indiscipline cases, as confirmed by the students. For instance, when the students were asked on the level of examination cheating, it came out that 142 (49.2%) of them agreed that there is keeping of unwanted materials during examination by some students, which reflect an element of indiscipline. Although 212 (73.4%) of the students alluded that most students show honesty during examinations, 28 (9.6%) of them accepted that there is no honesty during examinations in their schools, but 42 (14.5%) others remained non-committal on their matter.

During interviews with the principals, it emerged that most schools were facing indiscipline when it comes to examination cheating, however a few principals maintained that they had weeded out exam cheating in their schools. Some of the principals who admitted exam cheating noted thus;

*The examination cheating, we face in our schools emanates from primary schools, as students join form one, they carry with them the cheating tendencies which was encouraged by their primary teachers who were encouraging this vice to get higher mean scores in their subject area (P 16).*

Another Principal maintained that:

*The problem of exam cheating is being encouraged by lazy teachers who are not able to teach and complete the syllabus. Such teachers are giving the learners notes and leaking to the students the areas they had set in examinations. This is why in some subjects' students are doing well in the internal examinations but when it comes to KCSE, the subject mean is always lower than other subjects (p7).*

Another principal while noting the existence of examination cheating in secondary schools explain thus:

*The exam cheating, we face in schools is due to poor students who join secondary with low entry points and are unable to understand the concepts taught by teachers. Some students are also lazy and do not take notes or do assignments and when examinations comes, they tend to cheat in order to be at par with other students (p20).*

The findings hence reveal that there are several causes of examination cheating in secondary schools which requires good leadership styles to eradicate.

The few principals who noted that they were not having examination cheating in their schools had this to say:

*In our school we have a set policy on examination cheating and all students when joining form, one must assent that they will abide by the rules and regulations in place. Such measures have enabled us to minimize the exam cheating and a few who try to cheat are always suspended which discourage other students from cheating (p1).*

Another principal maintained that:

*Our school culture which was set earlier by teachers and students does not give room for anyone to attempt cheating. Each teacher is responsible for his subject exams and any leakage is blamed on the teacher. Equally each student is watching on fellow students who attempt to cheat. Such mechanism has helped us to eradicate examination cheating in our school (p20).*

From the above testimonies, examination indiscipline requires good leadership style in order to be wiped out from schools.

Equally, the results of the survey indicate that although fighting and bullying is fairly low among most of the secondary school, it is still prevalent in some schools as indicated by 50 (17.3%) of the sampled students. However, more than three out of every ten 89 (30.8%) of the students who took part in the survey cited that there is some element of teasing and/or provoking of fellow students in some of the secondary schools in Vihiga Sub-County, which is an indication of a form of indiscipline among the students.

In addition, the results of survey show that threat/intimidation/bullying of students and teachers continue to exist in some secondary schools in the Sub-County, as affirmed by 49 (16.9%) of sampled students who agreed students

bully/intimidate others in their school. Equally, 90 (31.1%) of the students accepted that sneaking out of class or school by fellow students and teachers in their school was common.

During interviews with the principals, all maintained that fighting among the students was not existing in their schools. They however concurred with the students and teachers that some elements of provocation was existing among the students' body as one principal explained:

*School being a host of students from various home background with varied characters, we have some students who usually tend to bully their fellow colleagues, however when such characters are noticed, we do give them severe punishments to discourage the behaviour. Others have tendency of taking food from weaker students and in such cases, we do send them to call their parents and this makes the bullying to be minimal in our schools. (p 50)*

The findings on bullying requires hands on leadership style among the principals in secondary schools since this is a vice that are within various learners from certain social background.

During interviews some principals agreed with the students and teachers that sneaking as indiscipline was existing in some boarding schools. They explained that some students were stubborn and would always want to go home without any good reason. One principal maintained that the vice was discouraged by proper leadership style in their school thus:

*A student who sneaks out of our school must buy a role of chain link fencing wire. Also, that child is suspended for two weeks and must come back to school with the whole terms' fee balance before being allowed back. Such conditions have helped to minimize the sneaking tendencies in boarding schools. (p 19)*

On general deviance to authority, the results of the study established that some secondary schools in Vihiga Sub-County suffer disobedience by the students. This emanated from the response of the sampled students, where 110 (38.0%) of them said students in their school sometimes display general obedience to student leadership. On the same note, although close to a half 143 (49.5%) of sampled students were in agreement that most students in their school always show respect to the teachers, 89 (30.8%) of them insisted that some others display poor behavioural tendency towards the teachers.

Truancy among students was also revealed by principals during interviews. All principals indicated that this vice was rising in both boarding and day schools. The principals blamed this vice on the absentee parents, poor parenting, education for all and misconception of the child's rights as some principals noted:

*Most learners in schools do not want to be corrected and they tend to believe teachers are infringing into their rights when being corrected. Some students want to be left to do what they want without following school rules. Some students are quick to tell teachers that even if they fail or pass that should not be the teacher's problem. Others tell teachers that they don't feel like attending classes (p22).*

The findings on the truant behaviour among the students requires good leadership style that embrace guidance and counselling in order to understand the students and the root cause of their behaviour.

It was also discovered that some schools suffer disruptive behaviours of their students. This came to light when 79 (27.3%) of the students who took part in the survey cited that there is no proper care of school property such as furniture and windows by the students. This implies that most of the students in these schools are destructive. In fact, a significant majority 205 (71.0%) of the students alluded that stealing/theft is frequent among students in their school.

Although all principals concur that destruction of school property was realized in their schools, they maintained that their schools had put measures to curb the tendency as one principal states:

*On admission at form one each student is given a desk and a locker which are numbered and identified with the student. It remains the responsibility of the student to maintain the furniture until when leaving the school since they have to hand over before being cleared from school. Concerning those found destroying other properties, they are always made to pay twice the cost of the property destroyed. Despite such measures however the problem is still with our schools (p11).*



Lastly, the study established that management of time is poor among students, which is a sign of indiscipline. A respectable proportion 108 (37.4%) of students confirmed that some students in their school are occasionally late and some of them altogether keep off from attending school programmes. This concurred with the finding that many of the students displayed negative attitude towards learning. More than a fifth 63 (21.8%) of the students denied the assertion that most students display of positive attitude towards learning, an indication, indicating that there is considerable level of indiscipline among secondary school students in Vihiga Sub-County.

During interviews with principals, it emerged that lateness to school was a problem in day secondary schools, however poor time management was reported in most schools as students were being forced to be swift in changing from one program to another, as one principal puts it:

*Students nowadays are never in a hurry and unless they are pushed by teachers on duty and subject teachers, they do take too long to move from one class to another. We do punish poor time management among our students. Some are never serious during morning and night preps. A few students are serious with their studies, but most students must be pushed in order to make use of their time in school (p3).*

The findings above indicate that good leadership styles are required in order to manage students both socially and academically in order to make them pass examinations. The indiscipline cases reported are indications that some schools do not have good leadership styles to guide their operations.

### **The Effects of Principals' Transactional Leadership Style On School Discipline In Vihiga Sub-County**

The first objective of the study sought to establish the effect of Principals' transactional leadership style on school discipline in Vihiga County. This objective was addressed by, first, exploring the views of the teacher and student respondents on their Principal's transactional leadership style orientation and, second, by establishing the relationship between the two variables.

#### **Level of Principals' Transactional Leadership Style Orientation**

The respondents were presented with Likert scaled questionnaire with indicators of transactional leadership style. Using the scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5), the respondents indicated the degree of their agreement that their Principal practice the indicators of the leadership style. Their responses were summarized in percentage frequencies, as shown in the table below

#### **Responses on Transactional Leadership Style**

Indicators	Respondent	SA	A	N	D	SD
Our Principal displays inspirational motivation	ST	149 (51.6%)	109 (37.7%)	23 (8.0%)	4 (1.4%)	4 (1.4%)
	TR	26 (29.2%)	48 (53.9%)	11 (12.4%)	4 (4.5%)	0 (0.0%)
Our Principal incorporates idealized behavior	ST	88 (30.4%)	107 (37.0%)	59 (20.4%)	17 (5.9%)	18 (6.2%)
	TR	25 (28.1%)	38 (42.7%)	21 (23.6%)	5 (5.6%)	0 (0.0%)
Our Principal displays idealized attributes	ST	107 (37.0%)	103 (35.6%)	52 (18.0%)	11 (3.8%)	16 (5.5%)
	TR	20 (22.5%)	39 (43.8%)	24 (27.0%)	5 (5.6%)	1 (1.1%)
	ST	114 (39.4%)	100 (34.6%)	42 (14.5%)	16 (5.5%)	17 (5.9%)
Our Principal gives us intellectual stimulation	TR	22 (24.7%)	52 (58.4%)	10 (11.2%)	4 (4.5%)	1 (1.1%)
Our Principal practices individualized consideration	ST	72 (24.9%)	107 (37.0%)	45 (15.6%)	13 (4.5%)	52 (18.0%)
	TR	23 (25.8%)	41 (46.1%)	15 (16.9%)	6 (6.7%)	4 (4.5%)

**Source: Survey data (2019)**

Key: SA-Strongly Agree, A-Agree, N-Neutral, D-Disagree, SD- Strongly Disagree, ST-Students and TR- Teacher

## International Journal of Novel Research in Education and Learning

Vol. 9, Issue 2, pp: (1-18), Month: March - April 2022, Available at: [www.noveltyjournals.com](http://www.noveltyjournals.com)

The findings of the study show that a good number of both the teachers and students in secondary schools in Vihiga Sub-County have general belief that their Principals possess fair level of transactional leadership style. This was reflected by the fact that many of the respondents indicated that their Principals largely focus on their role of supervision, organization and group performance, and lay emphasis on achievement of specific tasks while they use rewards and punishments to motivate both students and teachers. For instance, 258 (89.3%) of the students and 74 (83.1%) of teachers who took part in the survey alluded that their Principals usually display inspirational motivation, which is an indicator of transactional leadership style.

During interviews with the principals, the study established that all principals were employing transactional leadership to manage their schools as was expressed by one principal that:

*We always bring motivational speakers to talk to our students, teachers and board of management in order to change their attitudes and way of operations. This is also meant to make the teachers have new pedagogical skills for their subject areas. We send our teachers and students for benchmarking in schools that are of our status but are performing better than our schools. Occasionally we do bring articles and other reading materials to boost the teachers and learners' performance, we do usually use all that we can access to improve performance in our schools (p5)*

Equally, the results of the survey show that although 42 (14.5%) and 10 (11.2%) of the students and teachers, respectively, remained neutral, many of them agreed that their Principal usually reward them appropriately when they achieve a predetermined goal. This was reflected by 214 (74.0%) of students and 74 (83.1%) of the teachers who confirmed that their Principal usually give them intellectual stimulation. Only 33 (11.4%) of the students and 5 (5.6%) of the teachers said their Principals hardly give them intellectual stimulation. On interviewing one of the Principal respondents said that:

*When students show some slight improvement in their exams, we reward them with items such as geometrical sets, pens, and writing material. We also punish students who break school rules by engaging them in general cleaning of school premises (p11).*

On whether the Principals incorporate idealized behaviour, the results of the survey show that some of the respondents remained non-committal on this issue. For example, whereas 88 (30.4%) of the students and 25 (28.1%) of the teachers held a strong opinion that their Principal incorporates idealized behaviour, 59 (20.4%) and 21 (23.6%) others remained neutral on the matter. Equally, 107 (37.0%) of the students and 20 (22.5%) of the teachers strongly believed that their Principals always display idealized attributes. Further interviews with principals' reveals that principals were using various ideologies when managing their institutions as one stated that:

*We always use various ideologies while managing our institutions, such ideologies do help to shape the direction of school culture which in the end leads to persistent better performance in our institutions. We are always working on the students and teachers' attitudes to embrace our various ideologies that leads to the better operations in our schools (p9).*

In addition, it came out that although 52 (18.0%) of the students strongly rejected the assertion that their Principal always practices individualized consideration, a respectable majority 64 (71.9%) of the teachers and some 181 (61.9%) of the students held a general belief that their Principals mostly exercise individualized consideration, which is an indicator of transactional leadership style. During interviews with the principals reveals that principals were putting more emphasis on individualized considerations as one principal said:

*Individualize consideration is mandatory to any organizational management. Each teacher or student is important to the performance of our school and attention must be given to each member. We always try to be in touch with each teacher daily and each class and dormitory reports about the students. This makes us understand what each is going through and we do try to help them whenever we notice any problem. This has led to cordial relations with the members hence improving on performance, (p27)*

The research hypothesis was to investigate whether there was any significant effect of Principals' transactional leadership style on school discipline in Vihiga Sub-County, the null hypothesis was tested as follows:

**H<sub>01</sub>**. There is no statistically significant effects of Principals' transactional leadership style on school discipline in Vihiga Sub-County.

In order to test the null hypothesis, a Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient was computed with scores on Principals' transactional leadership style as independent variable and school discipline as dependent variable. The scores of independent variables (Principals' transactional leadership style) were computed from frequencies of responses by computing mean responses per respondents. Mean response across a set of questions of Likert scale responses in each item was computed to create an approximately continuous variable, within an open interval of 1 to 5, which is suitable for the use parametric methods, where high scale ratings implied high perceived Principals' transactional leadership style. Equally, school discipline was computed from student respondents' scores from the school discipline questionnaire.

The significant level (p-value) was set at 0.05, where, if the p-value is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis would be rejected, and conclusion reached that a significant difference exists. However, if the p-value is larger than 0.05, it would be concluded that a significant difference does not exist. The table below shows the SPSS output correlation analysis results.

#### Relationship between Principals' Transactional Leadership Style and School Discipline

	Principals' transactional Leadership	School Discipline
Principals' transactional leadership	Pearson Correlation 1	0.605**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000
	N 289	289
School Discipline	Pearson Correlation 0.605**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed) 0.000	
	N 289	289

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

From the table above, the finding of the study shows that there was statistically positive correlation between Principals' transactional leadership and school discipline ( $n=289$ ;  $r = 0.605$ ;  $p<0.05$ ). Since  $p\text{-value}=0.000<0.05$ , there was enough evidence to conclude that there is statistically significant relationship between Principals' transactional leadership style and school discipline, with high level Principals' transactional leadership style and associated to improved school discipline and vice-versa. However, to estimate the level of effect of principals' transactional leadership style on school discipline, a coefficient of determination was computed using of regression analysis and the result was as shown below.

#### Model Summary on Regression Analysis of Principals' Transactional Leadership Style on School Discipline

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.605 <sup>a</sup>	0.366	0.364	0.25940

a. Predictors: (Constant), Principals' transactional leadership

The model summary reveals that variation in the level of principal's transactional leadership style accounted for 36.4%, as signified by Adjusted  $R^2 = 0.364$ , of the variation in students' discipline among secondary schools. This finding implies that variation in the degree of principal's transactional leadership style explains about 36% of the variability in school discipline. This is a fairly sizeable effect on a dependent variable by one predictor variable. However, to investigate whether principals' transactional leadership style was really a significant predictor to school discipline, Analysis of Variance was conducted, as shown below.

#### ANOVA- Effect of Principals' Transactional Leadership Style on School Discipline

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	11.172	1	11.172	166.025	0.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	19.312	287	0.067		
	Total	30.484	288			

a. Dependent Variable: School Discipline

b. Predictors: (Constant), Principals' transactional leadership style

From the ANOVA output, there exists enough evidence to conclude that the slope of the population regression line is not zero, meaning principals transactional leadership style is a significant predictor of school discipline,  $F(1, 287) = 166.025$ ,  $p = 0.000 < 0.05$ . Therefore, it was concluded that there is statistically significant effect of principals' leadership transactional style on school discipline. Table 4.9 shows the coefficients values of regression model of the effect of principal's transactional leadership style on school discipline.

**Coefficients- Effect of Principals' Transactional Leadership Style on School Discipline**

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B	
	B	Std. Error	$\beta$			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
(Constant)	2.232	0.091		24.394	0.000	2.052	2.412
1 Principals' transactional leadership	0.297	0.023	0.605	12.885	0.00	0.252	0.343

a. Dependent Variable: School Discipline

$$Y = \alpha + \beta x + \varepsilon$$

$$\text{School Discipline} = 2.232 + 0.297x + \text{error term.}$$

From the model it is evident that the slope coefficient for principal's transactional leadership style was 0.297, implying that school discipline improves by 0.297 units CI (0.252, 0.343) for each one-unit improvement in principals' level of transactional leadership style. Similarly, an improvement in principals' level of transactional leadership style by one standard deviation results to improvement of school discipline by 0.605 standard deviations. It is evident that there is a significant p-value ( $t = 12.885$ ;  $p = 0.000 < 0.05$ ) of the explanatory variable, level of principal's transactional leadership style, implying that there is sufficient evidence to reject the null hypothesis that  $\beta_1 = 0$ . Hence, the null hypothesis that "there is no statistically significant effect of principals' transactional leadership style and school discipline" was rejected. Subsequently, it was concluded that there is statistically significant effect of principals' transactional leadership style on school discipline  $F(1, 287) = 166.025$ ,  $p = 0.000 < 0.05$ ; Adjusted  $R^2 = 0.364$ . This implies that schools whose principals exhibit high transactional leadership style are likely to enjoy relative higher school discipline compared to schools whose principals employ lower transactional leadership style.

Qualitatively, it was noted that transactional leadership style remained one of the most leadership style applied by Principals on school discipline. This style is guided by the assumptions that employees are motivated by reward and punishment; the subordinates are not self-motivated and have to obey the orders of the superior. This, in line with Burns (1978), describes transactional leadership, a convenient type of managing by setting objectives, using rewards and punishment as well as appealing to the self-interest of subordinates. Whereas transformational leadership in the study attained 50% utility, transactional leadership came second with 32% utility. Reward and punishment components were the main elements of transactional leadership style applied by majority of the Principals. Minority made use of mentorship programs, motivational speakers as well as role models as a way of instilling school discipline.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

From the findings of the study, the researcher came up with the following conclusions; that a school as a system is led by a Principal who socially interacts with various components working together to achieve its goals and objectives. The study was based on System and Social Theories, the study talks of self-systems which exist for self-regulation of behaviour, determined by the leadership styles of Principals as they pursue school goals. Transactional style of leadership, accounted for minimal discipline instances in schools as the Principal took a proactive approach as opposed to a reactive one where rewards and punishment system were crucial in improving and maintaining discipline among teachers, staff and students.

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From the findings of the study, the researcher came up with the following recommendations, meant to address specific entities to whom may find them relevant for adoption:

- i. Education policy makers should ensure that pre-service teacher training in training Colleges and Universities impart knowledge, skills and desired attitude in teacher trainees for their ease on handling school discipline in public secondary schools.
- ii. Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development should incorporate the findings of the study in developing required teaching and learning materials as well as reference materials on school discipline.
- iii. School administrations should ensure their school guidance and counselling department is fully operational and equal to the task of handling school discipline in school.
- iv. The Ministry of Education should organize and sponsor Principals and teachers for capacity building courses on how to handle and sustain school discipline in both public and private schools in Kenya.

Based on the findings of this study, the researcher suggests further related research in the following areas:

- i. The study's locale was in Vihiga Sub-County which might have unique characteristics, the researcher suggests similar study be undertaken in other public secondary schools across the country.
- ii. The study targeted Principals, teachers, and students. A similar study should be carried out focusing on effects of parents, B.O.M, non-teaching staff members role on school discipline.

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