PERCEPTIONS OF TEACHERS ON THE PREVAILING SCHOOL CLIMATE IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN KENYA

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Abstract: The purpose of this study was to determine the perceptions of teachers on the prevailing school climate in public secondary schools in Kenya. A total of 645 teachers constituted the target population. Purposive sampling technique was used to select the respondents from the area of study whose schools had presented their students for KCSE examinations. At least five teachers, each from five (5) academic departments from 39 secondary schools were selected as respondents. Therefore, a total of 195 teachers constituted the sample size of the study. Data was collected using OCDQ-RS instruments on school climate. The data indices included frequencies and percentages. The study found that the principals dominated teacher-principal conferences and supervised teachers' activities too closely. The author recommends that the ministry of education should initiate and involve the principals in the climate improvement programs in schools. The OCDQ-RS research tool, among other strategies, should be utilized by the Ministry of Education to improve the existing school climate and work out plans to back up the movement.

Keywords: Perceptions, Teachers, School climate, Public secondary schools, Kenya.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Teaching and learning represent the most important dimensions of the school climate. Therefore, school principals and teachers should strive to clearly define the sets of norms, goals and values that shape the teaching and learning environment. Research has shown that a positive school climate enhances students' abilities to learn by promoting cooperative learning, group cohesion, respect and mutual trust, all of which aspects have been shown to directly improve the learning environment (Ghaith, 2003; Kerr, Ireland, Lopes, Craig & Cleaver, 2004). Taylor (2002) concurs by saying that the principal deliberately models a positive climate in the school. Taylor (2002) further explains that the existence of quality relationships between the principal and teachers, among teachers, and between the teachers and students, and among students reflect a positive school climate. The prevailing school climate in any school will likely define the type of principal leadership philosophy which goes a long way in influencing the performance of the students in their academic work (Durosaro, 1992). A sustainable positive school climate fosters students' achievement and monitors school progress and promptly reporting results to students and parents (NSCC, 2007).

According to Oyetunji (2006), the change in school climate has a great impact on the school performance; so much so that the impact of the entry of a new principal into a school can be reflected in the nature of performance recorded at the end of the academic year. This means that the principal's leadership behaviour to a great extent affects teachers' and students' teaching and learning behaviour and the subsequent academic achievement. A good principal will inspire teachers to become more active and do their best towards the achievement of school goals and performance targets. In some other situations, the opposite is true; so much so that the parents and other stakeholders who are grossly dissatisfied with the performance of the school tend to always agitate for the transfer, if not sacking or demotion, of the principal. Indeed, a study by O'Hanlon and Clifton (2004) indicates that the principals can promote or destroy schools through the climate they create. The authors observe that the school climate in various ways mirrors the personality of the principal.

O'Hanlon and Clifton (2004) further argue that a positive school climate does not exist by chance but rather by the principal's expectations, examples and values that shape the climate of the school. Therefore, the instructional and transformational leadership of the principal both have an impact on the school climate. This motivated the researcher to investigate the relationship between these types of leadership orientations and the school climate. Moreover, the researcher believes that the issue of the principal-teacher relationships, which according to Barnett and McMcormick (2004) has not been given the due attention in research, is critical to the improvement of performance in schools.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

School principals face a number of management-related problems in Kenya today, especially due to the increased indiscipline cases among students. As a result of these challenges, many secondary schools have witnessed destructive student strikes, most of which have put principals on the spotlight (Mathiu, 2008).For example according to NCET (2014), student absenteeism, drug and substance abuse, unwanted pregnancies and promiscuity, among other problems, are the major contributors to student truancy and poor academic performance in Nakuru County, Kenya.

The gravity of the problem in public secondary schools in Kenya is compounded by conflicting data on the relationships among school leadership, school climate and the student achievement (Glover & Colman, 2005; Kelley *et al.*, 2005). Therefore, this study was carried out with the aim of providing firm ground for improving conducive learning environment in schools in order to enhance academic performance of students.

1.3 Impact of Principals' Behaviour on Organizational School Climate

This dimension of a school climate deals with the manner the principal interacts with teachers and students. This, to a large extent, seems to affect the way teachers interact with one another, with students and parents. This interaction has a considerable impact on the general atmosphere of the school. Halpin (1966) identifies four characteristics of a principal's behaviour. They are: aloofness, production emphasis, consideration and thrust.

(a) Aloofness

Halpin (1966) describes aloofness as the extent to which some principals keep social distance from the staff, and give excessive rules and regulations. Some principals are seen as unfriendly, and they do not show human feelings as they relate to teachers. Silver (1983) states that this distance is both psychological and physical; it is psychological because these principals avoid informal discussions; they never crack jokes with staff and the staff are aware of the principal's expectations. The distance is also physical in the sense that the principals may choose to be reserved or to be open and interact freely with the staff; they may use their position to assist the staff to achieve the school goals, and they may also choose to use their voice, mannerism and behaviour to show their superiority. Both the psychological and physical distance has influence on the school climate (Oyetunji, 2006).

Some principals have the tendency to isolate themselves from other teachers and to avoid any form of intimate interaction with them. When such things happen in a school, it is referred to as aloofness (Ali & Hale, 2009). Such principals are strict in observing regulations and rules, and expect all the teachers and the rest of the subordinate staff to follow these rules to the letter (Grayson & Alvarez, 2008). Such an attitude definitely hinders the creation of a friendly and healthy academic atmosphere within the school because most teachers become opposed to autocratic leadership practices by their principals. Aloofness has a direct effect on school climate, and it is therefore a critical factor in the study of organizational school climate. The impact of principals keeping a social distance from teachers has been described by Halpin (1966) as

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being perceived as unfriendly and unable to relate to the teaching and non-teaching staff. The impersonal and informal manner in which the principal behaves paints him/her as aloof and isolated. This contributes to job dissatisfaction and disunity among teachers (Mohan & Ashok, 2011).

(b) Production emphasis

Halpin (1966) assert that production emphasis is the authoritarian and controlling behaviour of some principals. This makes them to be rigid. Therefore, they supervise the staff closely. According to Silver (1983), production emphasis ranges from very strong to no emphases. A principal who emphasizes production very strongly believes that people work best under tension and pressure. He/she also believes that when all attention is directed at work, it minimizes personal clashes that sometimes occur among teachers. He/she believes that social and psychological needs of teachers are met when they are dedicated and committed to their work. This type of principal's behaviour influences how teachers will discharge their responsibilities and it will ultimately affect the school climate.

However, Paisey (1992) argues that if there is no emphasis on production, then teachers may not be concerned about the accomplishment of the school goals. Some teachers may not take their work seriously. They may be more concerned about their personal interest at the expense of their work. In view of this, this kind of behaviour undoubtedly affects the school climate. Everybody does what he/she likes. The students' academic results and the image of the school are at stake.

The principals who believe in the principle of production base all their actions on the viewpoint that subordinates work and produce their best when they are exposed to immense tension and pressure (Mine, 2009). These principals believe that they can only avoid conflicts and clashes with the teachers if all their strength is directed towards the discharge of their duties and roles (Ali & Hale, 2009). This type of behaviour by the principals influences the way the teachers take their responsibilities and will eventually affect the organizational climate of a school. On the contrary, some researchers argue that the lack of emphasis on production may produce a group of teachers who are least concerned about the achievement of the organizational visions and goals (Brown & Medway, 2007). In fact, without pressure, some teachers and the non-teaching staff may fail to take seriously the duties given to them and consider their personal interests more superior to their official duties (Brown & Medway, 2007). This kind of behaviour, in turn, directly affects the school climate. Those principals who focus only on the rules and policies and are extremely directive in their dealings with teachers and non-teaching staff create an environment of low morale and poor job satisfaction (Mine, 2009). At the end of it all teachers will feel alienated and without a sense of involvement.

(c) Thrust

Halpin (1966) describes thrust as the way some principals act as a role model for the type of behaviour they expect from their staff. They set the standard and support the staff so as to maintain those standards. Thrust is characterized by the following: the principal works very hard; the teachers are both intrinsically and extrinsically motivated, and teachers work hard and enjoy their work. The principal's behaviour may range from showing high thrust to no thrust. The principal with high thrust positively influences the school climate; all activities are focused and directed at achieving the school goals, and both teachers and students enjoy teaching and learning. Ribbins (2001) maintains that the principal with no thrust also affects the school climate. According to Ribbins (2001), without the example of expectations and standards by the principal, teachers and non-academic staff will lack of motivation and this will affect performance on the part of teachers and students. This is because the quality of leadership by the principal is critical to the effectiveness of the school (Oyetunji, 2006).

Principals act as role models for the demeanour they wish to see in the teaching and non-teaching members, and indeed the entire school (Ali & Hale, 2009). The principal establishes the set standard and offers support to all the teachers and non-teaching staff in an attempt to maintain the set standard (Ali & Hale, 2009). Both the school principals and the teachers ought to genuinely believe that their students can pass and proceed to work effectively to that end (Krovetz, 2004). Studies have shown that when the principal is committed to duty and is hard working, the teachers and the subordinate staff get both extrinsically and intrinsically motivated, and they tend to enjoy their work (Ali &Hale, 2009).

According to Raza (2010), principals who acquire a high thrust tend to positively influence the subordinate staff. This is due to the fact that they are able to inspire the school community to work in accordance with the organization's vision and mission. As a result, when teachers, who represent one of the school communities, enjoy their work, they tend to improve

in their teaching and learning pedagogy and the students will also improve in their academic achievement. A high thrust in a principal positively influences the organizational school climate, and all employees direct their energy to the achievement and accomplishment of the organizational goals. Both the teachers and students enjoy the process of learning and teaching respectively. On the other hand, when the principals are less enthusiastic about their work, the school climate is negatively affected and the performance of both the students and teachers is debilitated. The effectiveness of an organization and the organizational school climate perceptions of teachers are directly affected by the principal (Ali & Hale, 2009). This type of principals may not be able to motivate the teaching and non-teaching staff, and definitely this will lead to poor academic performance among learners in secondary school.

(d) Consideration

Halpin (1966) states that consideration has to do with how the principal relates and responds to teachers and their needs; having personal interest in things that concern his teachers, students and parents even if it means sacrificing some time to do this, he/she shows sympathy when the need arises and celebrates teachers, students and parents' achievements. Therefore, for the principal to be effective, he/she must relate to stakeholders in the way that demonstrates his/her concern for them. Rooney (2003) and Heller (2002) opine that students and teachers function effectively when their basic needs are met and this contributes to a caring environment in which everybody cares for one another and invariably seek to foster excellent teaching and learning. Principals differ in this aspect; they range from being highly considerate to not being considerate at all. Hoy and Sabo (1998) observe that lack of consideration may contribute to teacher frustration and apathy, and, therefore, negative climate will prevail.

In some schools, the principal is immensely considerate and responsive to the needs of teachers, and takes personal interests in the students, parents, teachers and non-teaching staff; showing them great sympathy and interest (Mine, 2009). Azzara (2001) says that in order to demonstrate true leadership the principals must relate to all the stakeholders in the school in the way that depicts a concern for them. Azzara also notes that principals who are most considerate are the most successful because the process of developing a positive interpersonal relationship with the stakeholders is the epitome of good leadership. These behaviours by the principal positively influence the organizational school climate (Azzara, 2001). In essence, principals can encourage effective performance of their teachers and non-teaching staff by identifying their needs and trying to meet them (Adeyemi, 2010).

A positive organizational school climate will prevail if the principals show concern for their teachers and non-teaching staff (Azzara, 2001; Mine, 2009); and are able to maintain the open climate (Garcia, 2005). Hoyle et al. (1985) recognize the importance and difficulty of creating a positive, open school climate. They state that school principals can have a valuable impact on school climate by setting the tone for their teachers and non-teaching staff; but they are not solely responsible for the school climate. The principals must create positive morale and work motivation for teachers, staff and students. This tone translates into a climate that promotes higher achievement by teachers and students (Hoyle et al., 1985; Robinson, 2010). The school administration should strive to keep the professional working relationships among teachers open and positive so that the organizational climate is open and, in turn, teachers are more willing to take part in school and decision-making (Smylie, 1992). All of these pressures could be overwhelming on the school and the leadership, but it is necessary for the school principals to sustain the climate (Patterson, 2007).

1.4 Impact of Teachers' Behaviour on Organizational School Climate

Teachers play a critical role in determining the school climate. The school as a system of social interactions allows interpersonal relationships among its stakeholders; teachers interact with one another, with the principal, students and parents. The way teachers interact among themselves and uphold their duties and obligations affect the organizational school climate (Ali & Hale, 2009). Halpin (1966) identifies four characteristics of teachers' behaviour and how they influence the school climate. These characteristics are: disengagement, hindrance, esprit and intimacy, as discussed below.

(a) Disengagement

According to Halpin (1966), disengagement is used to describe teachers' lack of commitment to the school. According to Hoy and Miskel (2001), in a disengaged school, some teachers complain a lot; they are unproductive and engage themselves in trivial matters. These teachers dislike and criticize the principal. Their negative attitude is reflected in the

manner in which they relate to one another; they negatively criticize and disrespect one another. Hoy and Sabo (1998) classify this set of teachers as individuals who are just 'putting in their time'. The situation may be so serious that they sabotage the principal's leadership attempts. In effect, a negative climate pervades the school. In such school climates, teachers indulge in petty and worthless matters such as showing direct dislike of principals and criticizing their every decision, despite the efforts made by the principal to improve the performance and quality of work life within the schools. This negative attitude is mirrored in the way these teachers relate to the stakeholders of the school and even to themselves (Dimitri & Mieke, 2012). Their main aim is to derail the school principals and the schools from achieving the goals of the organizations and thus create an unpleasant climate within the schools. When teachers exhibit high levels of disengagement, their attitude towards their job is poor (Mohan & Ashok, 2011).

In contrast, in a school characterized by low disengagement or highly engaged climate, most teachers work as a team and are committed to their work. They respect one another and conduct themselves as professionals. The principal's negative behaviour does not prevent the teachers from doing and enjoying their work. Thus, these teachers are productive regardless of the principal's weak autocratic leadership. In this situation, it may be difficult for a positive climate to thrive because the principal's autocratic behaviour does not promote a positive climate (Oyetunji, *2006*). In schools with low rates of disengagement and high levels of engagement, teachers are committed to their duties and work together as a unit (Grayson & Alvarez, 2008). There exist both mutual respect and professionalism in the way they handle one another and everything at large. A negative demeanour of the principal does not derail the staff from enjoying their work and carrying out their duties (Hoy et al., 1991). Therefore, a highly engaged team of teachers is productive regardless of the poor leadership offered by the school principals.

(b) Hindrance

Halpin (1966) states that hindrance is a concept used to describe some teachers' attitude towards paper work and non-instructional school activities: teachers see routine duties and committee requirements as hindrance to their teaching responsibilities. Owens (1981) asserts that these teachers are only concerned with teaching and consider rules, paper work and other administrative work quite unnecessary. Such teachers do not enjoy writing their daily preparation notes, keeping class attendance records, recording test marks and communicating and corresponding with parents. However, other teachers, according to Silver (1983), consider administrative duties not only necessary but also useful in facilitating the achievement of the school goals. For example, if no teacher keeps attendance records, it implies that regular attendance/punctuality is not important. As a result, some students who have the tendency to run away from school may become truants and late-coming may be taken as normal. This may eventually lead to poor performance and increase drop-out rates. Moreover, if no records of test scores are kept to monitor students' progress, those students who are struggling academically may not receive needed assistance since the teachers have no records that could assist him/her to track such students, let alone giving remedial lessons. If a teacher is not interested in corresponding with parents, he/she is limited to phone calls whenever he/she wants to communicate with parents and where this facility is not easily available, the teacher would not be able to communicate regularly with parents. Thus, the needed cooperation may not be received from home when the situation arises (Oyetunji, 2006).

Hoy and Sabo (1998) opine that it is possible to have situations where teachers are burdened with paper work and other administrative duties. This means that some principals overemphasize paper work so much so that it becomes an end in itself rather than a means to an end. In such a situation, teachers reluctantly carry out their task in order to avoid confrontation with the principal. Halpin (1966) observes that this kind of situation disturbs a climate characterized with a goal-oriented mission, for teachers spend too much time on activities from which students may not benefit. Since some principals overemphasize paper work, it could be assumed that some other principals may not bother teachers at all on keeping the necessary records. For instance, if a principal does not demand for accountability with regard to writing lesson plans, keeping attendance records, monitoring students' progress and communicating with parents when need arises, it may create a laissez-faire climate where teachers are given room to do what they like even with their teaching responsibility (Oyetunji, 2006).

In schools where committee roles and paper work are emphasized over learning, the climate is also adversely affected (Ali & Hale, 2009). If the principal puts extra weight on the completion of documentation and data, the teachers turn to pleasing the principal to evade confrontation rather than to create positive results. This situation highly destabilizes the

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organizational climate and thus the perception of the stakeholders in the school (Ali & Hale, 2009). Teachers who feel this hindrance are burdened by routine, management, and administrative duties that they view as unnecessary (Mohan & Ashok, 2011). The weight of these extraneous assignments creates a negative attitude in the teachers and diminishes their job satisfaction (Mohan & Ashok, 2011).

(c) Esprit

Halpin (1966) uses this term to describe teachers' satisfaction with their social and professional needs. In a school characterized by high *esprit* and accomplishments, teachers help, support and work with each other. **As** a team, they like and respect one another. They enjoy one another's company and are committed to their work and school. A school that has high rates of accomplishment and spirit has teaching and non-teaching staff that work together as a team. They also help and support one another in all the endeavours within and outside the school (Mine, 2009). Teachers who demonstrate high *esprit* are innovative, enthusiastic and are always willing to provide assistance in a mutual way if one of them directly needs help (Jainabee & Jamelaa, 2011). On the contrary, schools with low *esprit* have an unmotivated staff that are not devoted to duty and draw little satisfaction, if any, from their careers (Cross & Ji, 2012). In a school where a positive, open organizational school climate prevails, the psychological and emotional needs of the teachers are sufficiently met (Ali & Hale, 2009).

(d) Intimacy

Intimacy is a term used to picture the kind of relationship that exists among teachers in a school (Halpin, 1966). The degree of relationships that exist among teachers varies from school to school. Teachers who share the intimate relation tend to know one another more and share more personal information (Elena & Anit, 2010). Intimate behaviour also extends outside the school, so that teachers relate closely with intense socialization within and outside the school. These teachers strongly support one another in times of difficulties in their families. Halpin (1966) uses the term intimacy to refer to the mutual relationship that exists amongst people. When intimacy exists among teachers, they work with drive and vitality (Mohan & Ashok 2011). The morale of the teachers is high and their attitude towards their profession is positive. This intimacy also creates increases job satisfaction (Mohan & Ashok, 2011). Teachers are often motivated by mutuality and the happiness they derive from intimacy and thus a positive organizational climate is nurtured (Ali & Hale, 2009).

Hoy and Miskel (2001) observe that high intimacy reflects a close relationship among teachers. Teachers in a school characterized by high intimacy know one another well and share personal issues. This kind of relationship does not end at school; they socialize on a regular basis in school and outside school. They provide strong support for one another, that is, they exchange visits, know one another's family members, are always there for one another, even in difficult situations. They find their closest friends among their colleagues. High intimacy among teachers may either have positive or negative impact on the school climate. If burdens are lifted, sorrow gives way to joy and a smile is brought to a one's face when teachers share their personal matters with one another. In this kind of situation, teachers' emotional and psychological needs are met. They get the encouragement needed to function effectively, everybody is happy and positive climate prevails. Nonetheless, high intimacy, if not applied cautiously, may lead to negative climate. Situations where teachers do not limit sharing of personal matters but indulge in gossiping about matters affecting other colleagues, may lead to confusion, mistrust, strive, suspicion and even quarrels (Oyetunji, 2006).

Teachers in a school characterized by low intimacy have positive attitude towards one another. They are friendly, but not very intimate. Thus, the friendship does not go beyond the school compound. Sharing of private matters is not common; they have their closest friends in other groups of people outside the school. If and when private matters are shared with colleagues who are not disciplined enough to keep secrets, the friendship becomes sore and this may negatively affect the school climate. As a result, some of the teachers, being unable to share their hurts or sorrows with their colleagues because the atmosphere does not encourage sharing, may leave the school to resolve their personal issues, which could have been resolved, by either their colleagues or the principal (Hoy *et al.* 1991).

However, if caution is not taken in the application of intimacy, it may result in a negative organizational school climate (Abu-Saad & Vernon, 1995). Schools where teachers fail to control what they share personally and involve in gossip about issues affecting other members of the staff contribute to confusion, suspicion and mistrust in the school

environment. Some schools also witness low levels of intimacy while others experience no intimacy. This quarrelsome behaviour detracts from the overall climate and, consequently, the success of the school (Abu-Saad & Vernon, 1995). A lack of intimacy creates a closed organizational climate where teachers have a poor attitude towards their jobs and are not experiencing satisfaction in their career (Mohan & Ashok, 2011).

2. METHODOLOGY

A cross-sectional survey was employed in this study as a strategy of inquiry. Strategies of inquiry are types of quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods designs or models that provide specific directions for procedure in a research design (Creswell, 2011). Basically, quantitative research uses the survey method in order to collect data at a particular point in time and thus the researcher used a cross-sectional survey to collect data from teachers in selected public secondary schools. The Organizational Climate Descriptive Questionnaire- Rutgers Secondary (OCDQ-RS).

The OCDQ-RS instrument which was specifically designed to measure organizational climate in secondary schools was considered apt for the assessment of the climate of secondary schools in this study. Hoy, Hoffman, Sabo and Bliss (1996) assert that the validity and reliability of the revised versions of the OCDQ-RS instruments have proven to be strong.

Limitations of the study

The use of cross-sectional survey as a strategy of inquiry in this study limits the inferences of causation from observed empirical relationships (Johnson & Christensen, 2007). Nonetheless, the research findings from this study augment other related research findings on the importance of improving the prevailing school climate which is critical in enhancing students' academic achievement.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The Prevailing School Climate in Public Secondary Schools

Each of the selected public secondary school teachers who participated in the study responded to an OCDQ-RS adapted for data collection in this study. The OCDQ-RS has thirty-four items which are divided into five (5) dimensions that describe the behaviour of secondary school teachers and principals. Two (2) dimensions were used to measure the principals' behaviour and the other three (3) dimensions measured teachers' behaviour. The respondents described the extent to which each specific behaviour patterns occurred in their schools by responding to the statements on the questionnaire. The responses varied along a four-point scale defined by the categories: Rarely Occurs (RO), Sometimes Occurs (SO), Often Occurs (O) and Very Frequently Occurs (VFO). The respondents were asked to put a tick in the appropriate category. This was finally analyzed using descriptive statistics in the form of frequencies and percentages as discussed below 93(49.2%) teachers stated that their principals very frequently set an example by working hard themselves. It is the principal who sets standards in school. When the principal has a high regard for moral virtue, beauty, goodness and hard work, he can expect the teachers and students to follow suit. Further, 22(11.6%) teachers opined that sometimes the principals looked out for the personal welfare of staff in their schools. These findings show that the school principals were attempting to create a working environment in schools where they positively engage teachers in a mutual relationship. By so doing, a positive school climate conducive for learning will be realized. This is in line with what Adeyemi (2010) asserts, that principals can encourage effective performance of their teachers by identifying their needs and trying to meet them.

The findings in shows that 45(23.7%) teachers who believed teacher-principal conferences were dominated by the principals, only sometimes. Further, 47(24.7%) teachers believed that principals were often autocratic.

Those principals who are autocratic demand compliance with others without explaining the reason behind them. They use threats and punishment to instil fear in the employees, set goals for the school and their decisions are accepted without questioning. Such principals do not have confidence in their subordinates. As a result, the subordinates are monitored at all times, and the principals focus on the followers' mistakes rather than what they did well. The principal-teacher interaction is hinted and it is characterized with fear and mistrust, and the principal rarely praises but rather criticizes a lot; and this often makes teachers lose confidence in their principal and they become less committed to their work (Goleman, Boyatzis & Mckee, 2002). Similarly, DuFour and Eaker (1998) state that the top-down coercive method of running a school results in lack of commitment on the part of the teachers.

In schools where teamwork does not exist, teachers get frustrated and may not achieve the set goals. In essence, they have no say in how they should perform their work and they are expected to work hard to achieve the goals set by the school management. Even though teachers overtly accept their responsibilities because of fear, they resist covertly. As a result, employees disregard the process in a subtle way by giving excuses when they have to carry out their duties. Indeed, teachers are dissatisfied with their work and this leads to informal grouping for the purpose of opposing the goals of the school (Hersey & Blanchard, 1996). Paisey (1992) warns against this type of leadership behaviour as managers of successful organizations emphasize consultation, teamwork and participation.

The findings indicate that a total of 47(24.7%) HODs were of the view that sometimes the students solved their own problems through logical reasoning. This meant that students always needed a lot of assistance from the teachers to solve their issues, especially those that had a bearing on academic performance in schools. Therefore, there was need for the teachers to build a close and positive relationship with students so that they feel free to consult teachers in areas of academic difficulty in their work assignments. Further, 41(21.6%) teachers reported that they rarely spend time after school with students who have individual problems. This fact is indeed a proof that learners may not be getting the much needed attention from teachers to solve their social problems which is detrimental to their academic performance in schools.

As shown, 43 (22.6%) teachers indicated that they sometimes have too many committee requirements. Further they claim that routine duties sometimes interfere with the job of teaching. This is a clear indication of lack of morale among teachers. According to Oyetunji (2006), the morale of teachers could be low because they lack promotion opportunities and have to teach under unsatisfactory conditions. Further, the relationship between teachers and students is often upside-down because students come to school because they are required to and teachers teach because the government pays them to do exactly that. Nonetheless, teachers still complain that they are inadequately paid for the duties they are required to do in schools. Such perceptions by teachers are a recipe for a negative school climate in schools which may not go well for students in their academic performance.

The findings show teachers' intimate behaviour items. The table shows that 43(22.6%) teachers' closest friends were sometimes other staff members in their schools. Teachers claimed that they often knew the family background of other staff members. Knowing about one another's family background helps to enhance healthy working relationships among teachers in schools. Further, 70 (37.8%) teachers stated that they rarely socialize with each other on a regular basis. Teachers' failure to socialize among themselves may engender poor working relationships in school which may impede the effectiveness of work performance.

According to Farrant (2004), the principal needs to break down barriers that separate teachers so much so that a school should work like a healthy family. This is because such barriers contribute to the creation of a closed climate in school. An open climate enables teachers to work together, share and participate in common tasks, or enjoy a social occasions together. Teacher interactions can be enhanced through exhibitions, school matches and organising visits to their families back home among other things. It

is through such activities that experiences, responsibilities and successes are shared and teachers get to bond. These exchanges encourage intimate group feelings. In this way, teachers will have a collective responsibility to face common challenges in their school and rectify failure. This will bring about a sense of pride in the group which is a significant force towards the ultimate goal of building a strong school spirit.

4. CONCLUSIONS

The manner in which the principals carry out their duties affects the way the teachers discharge their duties as well. Moreover, how teachers relate to the school authority and one another creates a corresponding type of climate in school. Hence teachers perceive their principals based on the behaviours and practices they (principals) employ and how such practices affect them (teachers).

While creating a positive school climate is the collective effort of both the principals and the teachers, the principal carries the vision and is, therefore, tasked with ensuring that the whole school fraternity and stakeholders are committed to excellence. The teachers' involvement, commitment and participation, therefore, rest on the leadership of their principals. Therefore, a positive school climate is the cumulative effect of reciprocal relationships between the principals and teachers, among teachers, and between the entire school and parents, among other stakeholders.

5. RECOMMENDATION

The principals in public secondary schools need to know why and how their leadership behaviours and practices can bring into existence a particular type of school climate. It is, therefore, recommended that the Ministry of Education should initiate and involve the principals in the climate improvement programmes in school. The programmes may include a research in which each school will carry out a study to identify the type of climate that exists in the school with the intention of improving it. The OCDQ-RS research tool will be effective in achieving this assignment. It is assumed that if this kind of programme is introduced it will help the principals in evaluating their leadership practices. Further, it will help them to take the necessary steps to improve the climate in their schools. Indeed, school climate improvement should not be a one-time exercise; rather it should be an ongoing exercise for the sustenance of a positive climate in schools.

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