

DEMOCRATIC MANAGEMENT STYLE AND STUDENTS' UNREST IN PUBLIC BOYS BOARDING SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN BUNGOMA COUNTY, KENYA

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This study sought to find out the influence of democratic management style on students' unrest in public boys boarding secondary schools in Bungoma County, Kenya. The study was guided by the style and behavior theory. The survey was descriptive in nature. The target population was made up of 9,993 persons comprising of 396 teachers, 9575 students and 22 Principals from 22 public boys boarding secondary schools in Bungoma County. Using Krejcie and Morgan (1970) table for determining sample sizes, the target population gave a sample size of 373 respondents. The study utilized two questionnaires i.e. for teachers and students, and interview schedules, for Principals, to collect data. Descriptive statistics and inferential statistics were used to analyse data, which was later presented in tables. Qualitative data from the Principals was analysed using the theme under study and presented in a narrative form. The study established that democratic management style had an effect on students' unrest in public boys' boarding schools in Bungoma County. The model coefficient was found to be positive, indicating that democratic management style had a favorable effect on student unrest. Thus the findings showed democratic management style ($\beta = .201, p < .05$) had significant effect on student unrest. Therefore principals should consider involving students in decision-making, providing opportunities for student voice and input on decisions made, and establishing clear channels of communication. Principals should foster open communication, provide opportunities for student input, and create a culture of shared decision-making.

Keywords: Management style; Democracy; Democratic management style; students' unrest

INTRODUCTION

Democracy entails providing the opportunity for people to give their ideas and opinions before a decision is made thus democratic leadership style is largely based on collaboration and cooperation of stakeholders. In America, school principals face indiscipline cases such as; insubordination, inadequate or lack of support for and from teachers, fighting, lack of respect, and disobedience to the school authority. A study in the USA asserts that 29.6 percent of students at grade 3 to 11 level had an indiscipline act reported (Hammer & Whisman, 2014). This results to disruption of the school activities to the extent that students are not able to attend to learning and teaching situations.

When a manager consults a subordinate before making a decision, this is, referred to as democratic management (Famboltz, 2019). Power and authority are, decentralized in this manner (Okumbe, 2018). The three primary tenets of democratic management are decentralization of power, inclusive planning, and mutual communication. However, as Oyetunyi (2016) notes, sharing is the main area of attention; management involves subordinates in decision-making. Regardless of the management consulting with subordinates prior to actually making a decision, the management is still in charge of making the final decision.

Bhatti et al (2012) adds to this by explaining that there is more interaction within the group as there is more focus on people which is very different to the autocratic leadership approach. The democratic leader is more part of the group themselves. As previously cited, Carter and Walker (2018), outlined that the millennial wants, not only to be part of, but to be essential to the team. Smolovic-Jones et al (2016) describes the democratic leadership style as based on the assumption that people are trustworthy and motivated and like responsibility which in turn creates teamwork and high performance and job satisfaction; this being the opposite of the autocratic leader. According to a study based on the workplace requirements of millennials, by Singh et al (2012) encouraging innovation and idea generation scored the highest, this is a trait that would be representative of a democratic leader. There appears to be key traits of this leadership style that the millennial would appreciate and thrive from.

Roth and Eyal (2014) discovered that democratic management styles are ineffective in times of crisis and when quick action is, required. According to research, democratic leadership philosophies take a long time to reach a conclusion. All decisions must be, made in accordance with the democratic leadership style, which involves involving all relevant parties. Before making any decisions affecting a student, the school principal seeks to make them feel like an integral member of the school. This creates a two-way communication channel where kids may express their opinions to the principal and receive replies from the principal in return (Bennis & Heenan, 2019). All stakeholders are, motivated by this sort of leadership because they are engaged in completely making decisions (Mba, 2014).

In the Kenyan setting, it is required of the school administrator to effectively uphold appropriate discipline, both within and outside of the classroom. A school Principal's job is to inspire pupils to work toward predetermined goals and to become contributing members of society. Unqualified Principals may be the cause of management issues that have an impact on student performance in the classroom (Ndiku, 2014). Bungoma County has also had its fair share of low levels of student discipline, most especially in the years between 2016 -2019. For example, in 2016 waves of strikes related to student misbehavior occurred within Bungoma County making the Ministry of Education to close some schools and causing financial losses to others (The Standard Newspaper, 2016). In 2019, five students were arrested by police in one of the schools in the county after they were caught with a bottle of petrol planning to burn the school. They all claimed of unfair treatment by the school administration hence causing student unrest (Bungoma County Education Office Report, 2020). The report further shows increasing cases of petty theft, fighting among students, drug and substance abuse, as use of slang language, lateness to school, absenteeism and carrying of mobile phones to school, defiance to authority, disregarding school dress code among other vices exhibited by the students in public boys boarding secondary schools. It is for this reason that the study aimed at establishing the influence of democratic management style on students' unrest in public boys boarding secondary schools in Bungoma County, Kenya.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

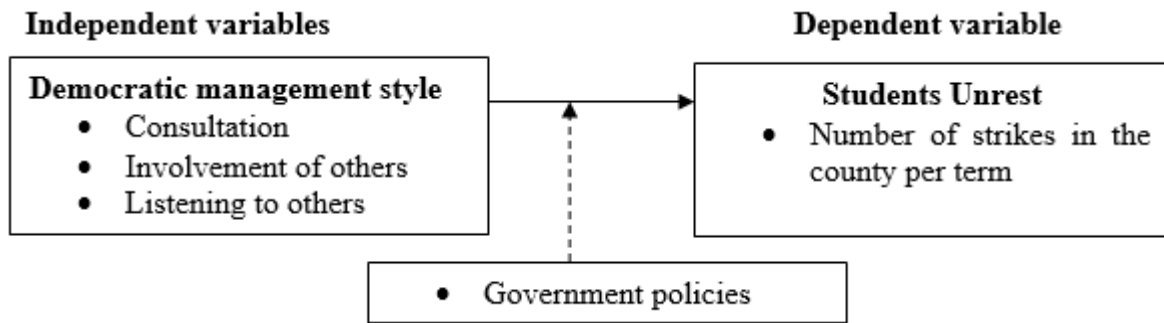
This study will be, steered by Style and behaviour theory, which assumes that each individual has a unique leadership style that suits them, recognizing the importance of certain key leadership qualities that enable leaders to perform. It also compares this behaviour to the leader's past talents. Just as one size does not fit all situations, one style does not fit all situations. Yukl (1989) proposed three distinct leadership philosophies. . Workers under a democratic leader produced more with and without a leader and were, related to their leader. They also showed higher levels of satisfaction, motivation and innovative thinking. Nevertheless, workers under authoritarian leadership tend to produce more output. Only intelligent, energetic, and skilful people deemed worthy laissez-faire leadership of leadership.

Feidler and House (1994) identified two different leadership themes that focused on leadership effectiveness. According to these researchers, core structure (focus on efficiency in work behaviours) and caring (focus on interpersonal and relational behaviours) were the most important characteristics. How much followers trust the leader and like him is, taken into account. Structural motivation, on the other hand, refers to leaders designing, supervising, and shaping tasks for themselves and their followers to support organizational success, financial success, and goal achievement. Researchers have identified three types of leaders: authoritarian, democratic, and laissez-faire. Unlike authoritarian leaders who formulate judgments exclusive of consulting their followers, democratic leaders discuss with their followers

before formulating judgments. Laissez-faire leaders leave decision-making to their followers, but do not exercise true leadership except to hold office. He also believed that every leader could fit into one of these three categories.

Conceptual Framework

The following was the conceptual framework for the study



Research methodology

The study utilized a descriptive survey research design. According to Gall and Borg (2007), a descriptive survey research strategy is appropriate for gathering information about a phenomena and drawing inferences from the data gathered. Even with a small sample size, this study strategy was to be able to gather a lot of information (Kombo & Tromp, 2009). The goal of this study was to examine the connection between democratic management style and students unrest in boys boarding public secondary schools in Bungoma County. The study was conducted in Kenya's Bungoma County. The target population for this study consisted of 9,575 students, 396 teachers, 22 principals, from 22 public boarding secondary schools in Bungoma County, Kenya, which gave a total target population of 9,993 persons. The study used Krejcie and Morgan (1970) Table to determine the sample size. According to the chart a target population of 9,993 equals a sample size of 373 persons. Since Principals were purposefully chosen, the sample consisted of 22 principals, along with 14 instructors, 337 students, giving out 373 responders.

Table 1: Sample size

Category	Target Population	Sample size
Head teachers	22	22
Teachers	396	14
Students	9,575	337
Total	9,993	373

The study used questionnaires on teachers and students, and interview schedules on Principals to collect data. In order to ensure that the instrument had both content validity and face validity, their validity was done with the assistance of experts in the field of Educational management. Their comments were applied to enhance the research tools. The study employed the test-retest reliability test to determine the reliability of the instruments. The instruments were administered within a span of two weeks. The two questionnaires gave a reliability coefficient of 0.87 and 0.76 for teachers and student questionnaires respectively.

The researcher collected data on the scheduled days and while doing so guaranteed anonymity of the research subjects. The researcher distributed and collected questionnaires using the Drop-Off and Pick-Up (DOPU) approach. Interviews were conducted by the researcher after consulting with the Principals on the appropriate time to do it. The statistical program for social sciences (SPSS) was to be used to code and analyse the field data. Data was then analysed by use of both descriptive and inferential statistics. For descriptive statistics, frequencies, means, and standard deviation were used while for inferential statistics Pearson correlation and regression analysis were used. The findings were reported in tables.

Results

The researcher distributed a total of 351 questionnaires to teachers and students from 22 boys boarding secondary schools in Bungoma County, Kenya. The findings on the response rate are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Response rate

Categories of Respondents	Sample	Response	Response Rate
Head teachers	22	20	90.9%
Teachers	14	11	78.6%
Students	337	320	95.0%
Total	373	351	94.1%

An overall response rate of 94.1% was achieved. From the findings it is therefore clear that the threshold for analysis was reached and therefore robust information would be obtained.

The effect of democratic management style on student’s unrest in public boys boarding secondary schools in Bungoma County was measured using three elements rating on a five-point Likert scale. These included the view on: how my Principal uses orders which contribute to students’ unrest, my principal does not consult when taking decisions, and our principal likes enforcing rules which annoy me. The results are presented using frequency counts, percentages, averages and standard deviation.

Table 4: Democratic management style

Rating of my Principal	1	2	3	4	5	M	STD
Our principal consult us when developing rules (X ₁)	154(60.2)	79(30.9)	7(2.7)	5(2)	11(4.3)	1.59	0.97
Our principal involves us in decision making (X ₂)	151(59)	92(35.9)	3(1.2)	5(2)	5(2)	1.52	0.79
Our School principal listens to our views (X ₃)	3(1.2)	91(35.5)	154(60.2)	4(1.6)	4(1.6)	1.49	0.75
Overall Mean And Standard Deviation						1.53	0.83

Key; 1= strongly disagree, 2= Disagree, 3= Undecided, 4= Agree and 5= strongly agree, M=Mean, STD=Standard Deviation.

From the findings it can be seen clearly that a vast majority of the respondents, 150(60.2%), (M=1.59, STD=0.97) strongly disagree that their principal consults them when developing rules. Also 151(59%) of the respondents, strongly disagreed that their principal involves them in making decisions. This is evidenced in their rating (M=1.52, STD=0.79). Finally from the finding a majority of the respondents, 154(60.2), (M=1.49, STD=0.75), are undecided on whether the principal listens to their views. The overall mean and standard deviation (M=1.53, STD=0.83) hence below average evaluated which means that Principal actions in democratic management style has some effect on the schools’ unrest in boarding schools. This finding was supported by one of the teachers who had the following to say:

One of the head teachers noted

“.....Additionally, in some cases, democratic management style can be interpreted as a lack of leadership or direction from school authorities, which can create a power vacuum that students may attempt to fill. This can lead to a breakdown in authority and an increase in student-led unrest....”

To determine the magnitude of the influence of democratic management style on students’ unrest in boys boarding public secondary schools in Bungoma County, the researcher ran a regression analysis on the two main variables under study. The results of the regression were as shown in Table 5.

Table 5: Summary of effect of Democratic management style on student unrest

Model Summary										
“Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics					
					R Change	Square Change	F	df1	df2	Sig. F Change”
1	.628 ^a	.394	.393	.50617	.394	235.013	1	361	.000	
a. Predictors: (Constant), Democratic management										
Model Coefficients										
Model	Unstandardized Coefficients			Standardized Coefficients		t	Sig.			
		B	Std. Error	Beta						
	(Constant)	1.535	.096			16.065	.000			
1	Democratic management	.465	.030	.628		15.330	.000			
a. Dependent Variable: Student unrest										

According to the results, democratic management style has a positive significant effect on students unrest in school and accounted for 39.4% variation change in student unrest in Bungoma county schools, (R square=.394, p<.05). A large F value indicated that the model was significant and not due to chance, F (1, 361) =303.913, p<.05. It is also evident from the findings that Democratic management style had a beneficial impact on student’s unrest in Bungoma County schools. This indicates that a one-unit change in Democratic management style results in a 0.628-unit rise students unrest. A review of the usual multiple regression model (β=.188, p<.05). The shrinkage between R²=0.394 and adjusted R²=0.393 is 0.001 which shows that the suggested model generalizes quite well as the adjusted R² is too close to R². It should be noted that a shrinkage of less than 0.5 depict that the validity of the model is very good (Field, 2005). Therefore,

Democratic management style has an effect on student’s unrest. It was therefore concluded that democratic management style affects significantly student’s unrest in boy’s boarding schools.

Table 6: Summary model

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	1.041	.109		9.535	.000
	X ₁	.192	.037	.257	5.240	.000
	X ₂	.106	.034	.160	3.124	.002
	X ₃	.201	.040	.271	5.002	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Student Unrest

Key: X₁=Laissez-faire, X₂ =Autocratic, X₃ =Democratic management

It is evident from the results that all model coefficients were significant at the 0.05 level. This suggests that the selected determinant Democratic management style had an effect on student’s unrest in boys’ boarding schools, as supported by substantial evidence. In addition, all model coefficients were found to be positive, indicating that they had a favorable effect on performance. The results can be presented in the model below;

$$Y=1.041 + 0.192X_1 + 0.106X_2 + 0.20X_3$$

The findings also shows all the three variables, which include: how my Principal uses orders which contribute to students’ unrest ($\beta = 0.192, p <.05$); my principal does not consult when taking decisions ($\beta = 0.106, p <.05$) and our principal likes enforcing rules which annoy me ($\beta = .201, p <.05$) had significant effect on student unrest. The unstandardized β coefficient of autocratic management style shows that unit change in the level of Democratic management style causes 0.257 units increment on student unrest level and the change is significant as shown by the p-value

These are in line the current study and previous study that were done. Begley and Zaretsky's (2018) investigation revealed that the democratic style of leadership takes into account both the social structure of the community around the school and the manner in which leadership is, conducted there. These are also in line with the current study. Roth and Eyal (2014) discovered that democratic management styles are ineffective in times of crisis and when quick action is, required

Conclusion

The study concluded that democratic management style significantly affects the school unrest. Democratic management can create a positive school culture where students feel engaged and valued. Thus to promote a positive school environment and mitigate student unrest, Principals should therefore consider involving students in decision-making, providing clear expectations and accountability, fostering open communication, and creating a culture of shared decision-making. By adopting these strategies, Principals can create a conducive learning environment where students can thrive, reducing the likelihood of student unrest and other negative outcomes.

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