

## **Analysis of Motivational Strategies Used by Principals to Solve the Challenges in Management of Support Staff in Public Secondary Schools, Nyamira County, Kenya**

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### **Abstract**

Secondary school support staffs are less satisfied with their posts in general, their contracts and conditions of employment, working arrangements for their post, training and development opportunities available to them are always demoralizing them. Going by the foresaid conditions of work, this study was set to determine motivational strategies used by principals to solve the challenges in management of support staff in public secondary schools in Nyamira County, Kenya. The study adopted a descriptive survey design. The specific objective of the study was to: determine motivational strategies used by principals to solve the challenges in management of support staff in public secondary schools. The study population consisted of 170 public secondary schools, 170 principals, 172 deputy principals and 170 BOM chairpersons with 1020 support staff, totaling to 1532. Simple random and stratified sampling techniques were used to select 16 secondary schools, out of which one principal, six support staff, one deputy principal and one BOM chairperson making a total sample of 144 respondents for the study. The main motivational coping strategies was to engage in small scale businesses, carrying tools from home, renting houses at nearby market centers, taking loans and principals partly offering financial assistance to the support staff.

**Key words:** Public Secondary School, Staff Motivation and Support Staff

## 1. INTRODUCTION

To improve supervision in support staff affairs, Winston and Creamer (2001), recommend that supervision be dealt with in an open and explicit manner and be systematic and ongoing. Bakhda (2004) suggests that members of support staff should be given further training adding that they should be sent for in-service training to improve their skills and knowledge. Schools should create a working environment that stimulates productivity by constantly giving proper recognition to the support staff for accomplishments (Rush, 2002). Recognition demonstrates that one needs and appreciates people's contribution. Recognition motivates people to volunteer their services. Giving recognition stimulates people to use their creativity to achieve the groups or organization's goals and objectives. When people are recognized publicly for their contributions and achievements, others are more willing to work at the same job because they also can expect recognition (Rush, 2004).

Republic of Kenya (2006), recommended that public universities should strategize on how to improve the working conditions of staff through provision of the necessary infrastructure such as computers, office space and furniture. To attract the best brains into the teaching profession better terms of service need to be provided as well as removing any element that will harm the status and lower the morale of teachers (Simatwa, 2010). A study carried by Atieno et al (2012), on the challenges faced by newly appointed principals in the management of public secondary schools in Bondo District, it was noted that support-staff had poor morale and are demotivated at work. Here they looked only the challenges faced by newly appointed principals. Hence there was a gap here. The current study on the other hand determined motivational strategies used by

principals to solve the challenges in management of support staff in public secondary schools in Nyamira County, Kenya.

## **2. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY**

This study focused on achieving the following objective: to determine motivational strategies used by principals to solve the challenges in management of support staff in public secondary schools.

## **3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The study used descriptive survey research design. The major purpose of descriptive research was description of the state of affairs as they exist (Kombo & Tromp, 2006). Orodho(2003) defines descriptive survey as collection of information by interviewing or administering a questionnaire to a sample of individuals. It is used to gather data from a large population at a particular point in time with the intention of describing the nature of existing situations. It can be used when collecting information about people's attitudes, opinions, habits or any of the variety of education or social issues (Orodho&Kombo, 2002).

Kothari and Garg (2014) define descriptive research studies as those studies which are concerned with describing the existing characteristics with specific predications, with narration of facts of a particular individual, or of a group or situation. Descriptive survey design was chosen for this study because it gave the opportunity to assess the relationship between the principals' leadership styles and motivation among support staff in public secondary schools in Nyamira County, Kenya.

The locale of this study was in Nyamira County. The Latitude and Longitude of Nyamira County is 0°56'S34°93'E respectively.

The target population comprised of the 170 secondary schools in Nyamira County, 1020 support staff, 170 principals, 172 deputy principals, 170 BOM chairpersons, making a total target population of 1532.

A sample is a small portion of a study population. Sampling means selecting a given number of subjects from a defined population as representative of that population. Any statements made about the sample should also be true of the population (Orodho, 2004). Nwana (1982), commenting on sample size observed that there are certain non-definite practices among social workers that the beginner can adopt. One such practice suggest that if the population is a few hundreds, a 40 percent or more sample will do, if many hundreds a 20 percent will do, if a few thousands a 10 percent sample will do and if several thousands a 5 percent or less will do.

Kerlinger (1973) indicated that a sample size, 10% of the target population is large so long as it allows for reliable data analysis by cross tabulation, provides desired level of accuracy in estimates of the large population and allows for testing for significance of differences between estimates. Kothari et al (2014) observed that the size of the sample should be determined by a researcher keeping in view the nature of the universe. Universe may either be homogenous or heterogeneous in nature. If the items in the universe are homogenous a small sample can serve the purpose. This study therefore used 10% of the population because of the large number of the study population.

Stratified and simple random sampling as in table 3.1 below was used to select 16 secondary schools, of which a principal, six support staff, a deputy principal and BOM chairpersons comprised the sample. In total, there were 144 respondents for the study. The BOM chairpersons are active participants in the school culture, are currently involved in school management.

**Table 3.1: Sampling Frame**

Sub-County	Total Public Sec Schs	Sample Size	Total H/T	Sample Size	Total DH/T	Sample Size	Total BOM Chair persons	Sample Size	Total Support Staff	Sample Size
Nyamira North	43	4	43	4	44	4	43	4	258	24
Nyamira South	44	4	44	4	44	4	44	4	264	24
Masaba North	32	3	32	3	32	3	32	3	192	18
Manga	28	3	28	3	29	3	28	3	168	18
Borabu	23	2	23	2	23	2	23	2	138	12
<b>Total</b>	<b>N=170</b>	<b>n=16</b>	<b>N=170</b>	<b>n=16</b>	<b>N=172</b>	<b>n=16</b>	<b>N=170</b>	<b>n=16</b>	<b>N=1020</b>	<b>n=96</b>

#### 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The objective was to establish motivational strategies used by principals to solve the challenges in management of support staff in public secondary schools. The research question responded to was: how do the principals motivate the support staff to help solve the challenges in management of support staff in public secondary schools? The respondents were asked to rate the

contributions of the stakeholders to quality leadership, their responses were as shown in Table 4.1.

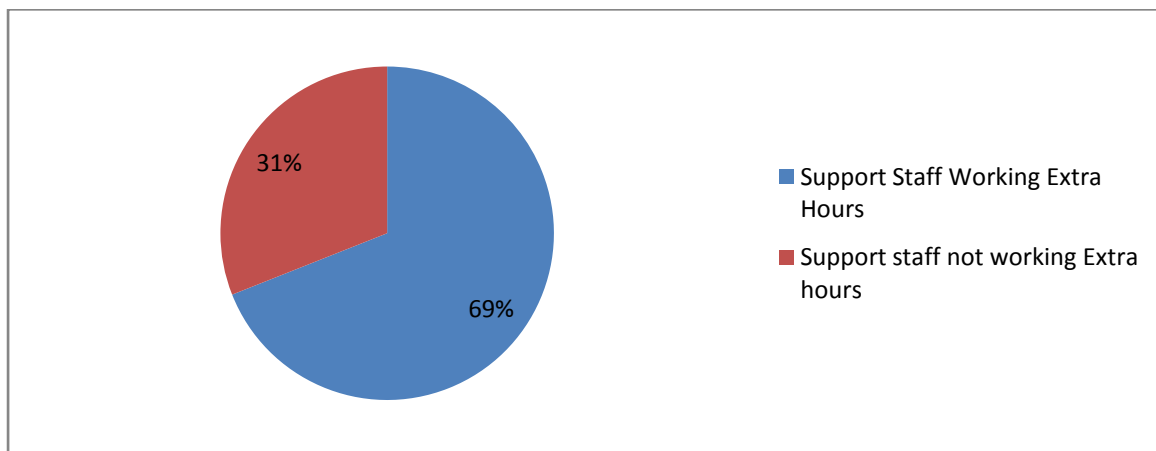
**Table 4.1: Strategies used to Cope with the Challenges**

Strategies	Principals		Support Staff	
	f	%	f	%
Working extra hours	16	100	96	100
Engage in small businesses	16	100	96	100
Staying in the Village	16	100	96	100
Rent house at market	15	94	96	100
Procure/advancing loans	14	88	90	94
Engage in manual works after work	12	75	86	90
Waking up earlier	11	69	84	88
Bicycles for going to work	10	63	80	83
Working in shifts	9	56	68	71
Carry tools from home	4	25	46	48

Working extra hours as a coping strategy was widely used as was established from all principals and all support staff who filled the questionnaires. Support staffs also engage in small businesses as was established from all principals and all support staff. Support staffs also do stay in the village as a coping strategy as was reported by (100%) principals and most (100%) support staff. Renting house at market as a coping strategy employed by support staff was mentioned by (94%) principals and (100%) support staff.

Table 4.1 also reveals that support staff does procure loans as a coping strategy as established from (88) principals and (94%) support staff. Engage in manual works after work was also mentioned by (75%) principals and (90%) support staff. The study equally established that support staffs do wake up earlier to start work earlier as mentioned by (69%) principals and by some (83%) support staff. Using bicycles for going to work as a coping strategy was established by the study from (63%) principals and from (83%) support staff. The study also established that support staffs were working in shift as was indicated by some (56%) principals and (71%) support staff. Carrying of tools from home was also mentioned by some (25%) principals and (48%) support staff respectively.

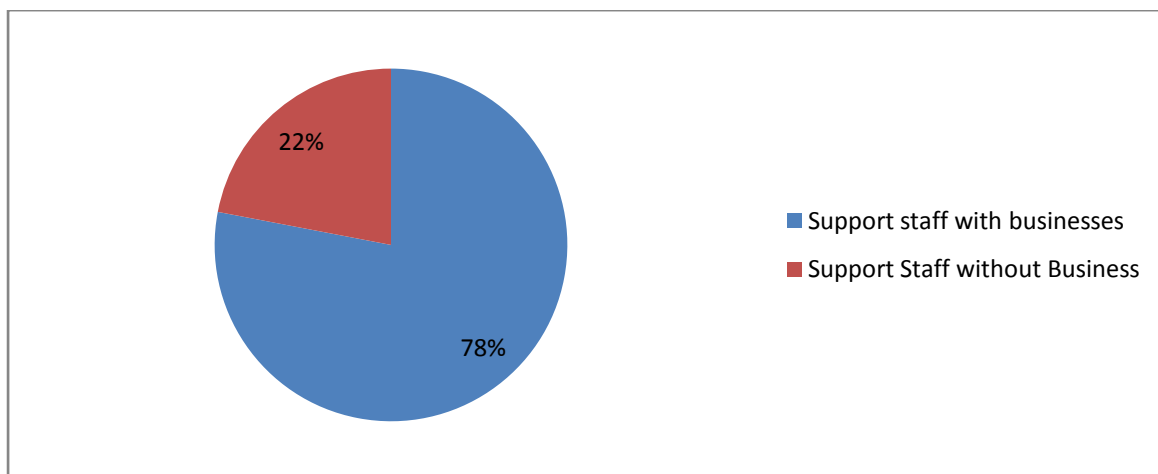
During interviews all principals acknowledged that support staffs were working extra hours to help cope with too much work load. The principals also maintained that support staffs were working extra hours only when there was too much work backlog and this was only for a short period that does not warrant compensation. Some (64%) principals also maintained that they were giving support staff some days off whenever they work for extra hours. However they maintained that support staffs were never interested on the off days but wanted financial gains.



**Figure 4.1: Support Staffs' Response on Working Extra Hours (n =96)**

On their part, all support staff pointed that they were made to work extra hours which were never compensated as the principals were citing lack of finances. This the support staff noted was leading to low morale and low work performance. Most (69%) support staff maintained that they were always being made to work extra hours forcefully by their schools' administration as none of them were willing to do extra job. They added that their morale was low as much as they were seen to be using the extra work as a coping strategy. Some (37%) support staff blamed inefficiency at work place due to forceful overtime. This they noted was making them more tired before the following day's work.

The fact that some support staff engage in small businesses was pointed out by all principals who noted that this was a way of coping with low salaries. The principals also noted that they were however cautioning the support staff not to neglect their duties as they were conducting their business after work. Some (25%) principals revealed that they advanced soft loans to their support staff so as to open small businesses.



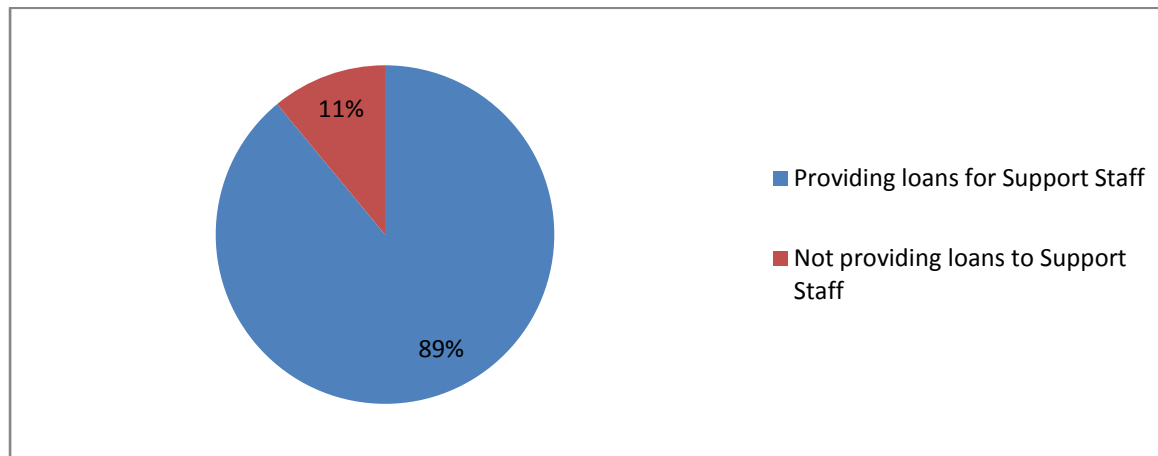
**Figure 4.2: Principal's Response on Advancing Loans to Support Staff to Start Business (n=16)**



Most (100%) support staff also mentioned during interviews that they were running small scale businesses to help subsidize the low salary they were earning. They further pointed that their businesses were helping them to solve their financial problems whenever there were delayence of salaries. They also maintained that their businesses were helping from the problem of going for imprest from their principals. This coping strategy was also helping them to settle on their jobs and do improve their work performance.

The study also established during interviews that support staffs were staying in the village. All principals pointed that majority of the support staffs in schools were from the schools' neighboring communities. This they noted was saving on the transport cost as support staff come to work. This was also helping schools not to build houses for support staff. Most principals also noted that this was helping to bring good relations between secondary schools and the surrounding communities.

Most (100%) support staff were in agreement that their stay in the village was helping them not to pay rent, reduced transport cost and also helped them to be at their work station at the right time. Most (100%) support staff maintained that they were coming from the communities around the schools as such staying in the village was also a coping strategy for support staff in addressing the challenge of inadequate housing. Most schools in the county lack funds to put up houses for support staff. Most (94%) principals also pointed that some of support staff in their schools were renting houses at market near the school compound. They also attributed this as a way of coping with inadequate staff houses in secondary schools. The principals were however quick to note that most of those who rented houses were from other communities or were coming from regions far from their working stations.



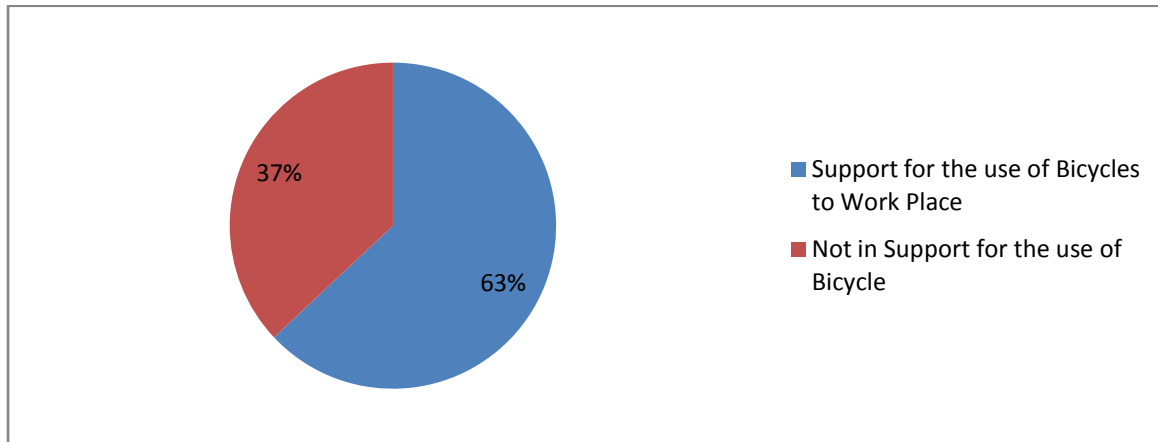
**Figure 4.3: Principal's Response on Loans (n =16)**

According to most (88%) principals, support staffs were taking loans from the schools and banks to help them cope with poor remuneration and delay in salaries from the government. The principals also noted that support staffs were trying to improve their financial status which in turn was helping to improve work performance. Most (94%) support staffs were in support with the views of principals that loans were enabling them to solve their financial problems and were making them to work without stress.

Most support staffs were engaging in manual work after official working hours was established by the study from some (75%) principals. They further noted that this was also meant to help solve the challenge of low salaries earned by support staff. The principals also maintained that financial stability was making the support staff to improve their work performance. Most (90%) support staff agreed that they were engaged in manual work after official working hours. This they noted was making them to be economically stable and was enabling them to improve their work performance. They however pointed out that this strategy was making them tired as they were already exhausted after working for the official eight hours.

Waking up earlier was established during interviews with principals to be another coping strategy employed by support staff. Most (69%) principals noted that support staff were waking up early to cope with the heavy workload that are existing due to lack of enough personnel among support staff in secondary schools. The principals also maintained that the duties of support staff required that they work longer hours to enable the schools run their activities smoothly during the day. According to most (88%) support staff, they were waking up earlier because they were having too much workload during the day. They also pointed out that they were using the coping strategy to improve their work performance as starting to work earlier do enable them to do a lot of work during the day.

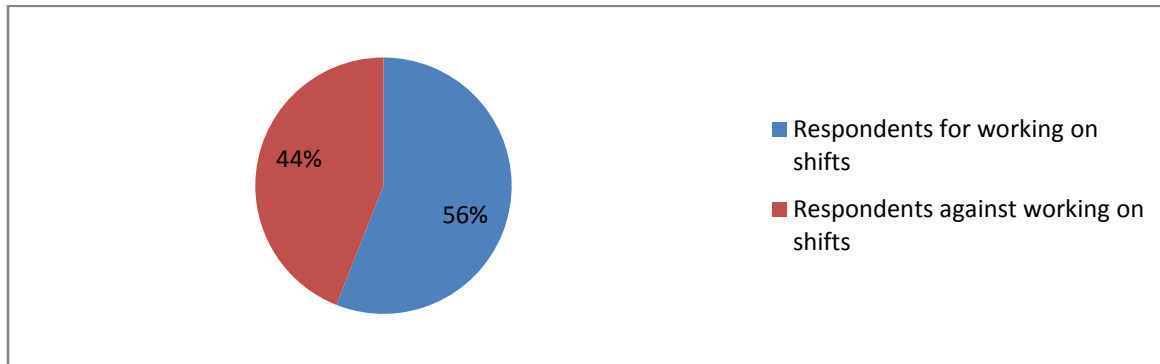
Using bicycles for going to work was established by the study to help solve the problem of lack of commuter allowances as was explained by some (63%) principals. The principals also noted that using bicycles was helping support staff to be efficient as it was making them reach their work place in time and when not exhausted. The principals further explained that this coping strategy was also helping the schools to solve the problems of lack of housing for support staff. According to some (83%) support staff, the strategy of using bicycle was introduced by support staffs to enable them reach their working stations in time and to enable them go back home faster after work. Some (83%) support staff also explained that using bicycle was helping them to solve the challenge of lack of commuter allowances. Some (83%) support staff also explained that using bicycle was helping to solving the challenge of working past normal working hours during which other means could not be found.



**Figure 4.4: Principals' on use of Bicycles to Work Place (n =16)**

Most (63%) principals also agreed with the sentiments of support staff that using bicycle was helping to solve various challenges which support staff were facing at their working place. They further revealed that bicycle helped to reduce lateness among most support staff they were reporting on time and were able to be more efficient at work. The principals also got relieved of the need for commuter allowances which they were demanding when they were using other means for coming to their workplace.

Working in shift was established during interviews with most (56%) principals to be existing among the support staff who were performing essential duties that required 24-hour services. The principals also noted that the shift system was also used where workers were fewer than the number required. Some (56%) principals also noted that working on shifts was making the support staff not to feel tired and be inefficient. According to all support staff, working on shift was meant to help solving too much work load and working for longer hours. They also noted that working on shift was helping to solve the challenge of working past normal working hours.



**Figure 4.5: Principal's Response on the Effects of Support Staff Working on Shifts**

**(n =16)**

Carrying tools from home was established from some (25%) principals that it was helping to solve the challenge of lack of working tools. They added that support staffs were only coming with tools occasionally when there was need but not that they were bringing tools constantly for their routine duties. According to some (48%) support staff, they were bringing tools as their schools were not keen in purchasing the tools they needed for them to perform their duties. Support staff also added that their school administrations were not bothered on how they were going to get tools once they were assigned duties.

## **5. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

This chapter presents a summary of the research findings, conclusions and recommendations. The study was necessitated by the need to analyze motivational strategies used by principals to solve the challenges in management of support staff in public secondary schools in Nyamira County, Kenya. The following summary of the findings, conclusions and recommendations were made:

The study established that principals and support staff employs a number of strategies that enable them to cope with the challenges they face, such motivational strategies are as follows;

Support staffs were encouraged to own the schools and were asked to assist the school by carrying tools from home.

Staff members were being motivated to wake up very early to go work by being offered all the meals in school starting with break-fast.

Support staffs stayed in their villages and helping their schools in addressing the problem of housing.

Support staffs were being requested to double up duties because staff shortage in the schools.

The main coping strategy that were motivating the support staff were: engaging in small scale businesses; carrying tools from home, renting houses at nearby market centers and taking loans. The principals were partly offering financial assistance to the support staff.

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