INFLUENCE OF SECONDARY SCHOOLS PRINCIPALS’ LEADERSHIP STYLES ON STUDENTS’ UNREST IN KIGUMO DISTRICT, KENYA.

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ABSTRACT
Despite the tough measures imposed by the government such as arresting, suing and imprisonment of students suspected to have organized or participated in riots, the numbers of schools experiencing unrests have kept rising. The nature of unrests has also taken different turn. The strikes are violent and involve destruction of property, arson and at times they are planned and premeditated to cause maximum harm to human life. Students from the rioting schools have always cited administrative issues such as high handedness of the principal and the teachers are the major cause of unrest. Influence of leadership styles on incidences of students’ unrest have not been adequately investigated in Kenya. To this end, the purpose of this study was to establish the influence of secondary school principals’ leadership styles on students’ unrest in Kigumo District. Using a descriptive survey design, the study adopted Krejcie and Morgan (1970) table in Mulusa (1998) to determine the survey size. Twenty eight out of 30 schools constituted
the sample. Two schools were used for pilot study. The study used 28 school principals, 28 discipline teachers and 28 school captains as the sample. Data was collected using questionnaires for the principals, discipline teachers and the school captains. Data collected was analyzed using statistical package for social science (SPSS). The major finding was that though corporal punishment was banned, 12 percent head teachers indicated that they use it to a very large extent, 64 percent to a large extent, 24 percent uses it to some extent. The test results showed that there is a positive relationship between corporal punishment and students’ unrest. This means that when corporal punishment is used to instill discipline in students, it results to students’ unrest.

The test results also revealed that democratic leadership influenced stability in schools. However, too much democracy may result to students’ unrest. The test results also showed that transformational leaders influence stability in their schools by availing supportive programmes which make students positive about academic and life in general. Lack of guidance and counseling can predict unrest in schools. Based on these findings, it was recommended that, schools should establish efficient and effective guidance and
counseling programmes and ensure that the guidance and counseling teachers are properly empowered and capacity building for principals on management skills be given a first priority by Ministry of Education (MoE).

Principals leadership styles greatly influence student’s unrest. Autocratic leadership style which involves corporal punishment among others is highly detested by the students and often leads to students’ unrest. Dialogue and involvement of students in decision making on matters that affect them makes the students to own the school policies. They are self directed and always support the school administration. Laissez faire leadership style may lead to students’ indiscipline since the students know that infraction of school rules do not attract any penalty. Transformational leadership style, which involves Guidance and counseling, helps to raise self esteem of the students. Such students appreciate themselves and the problems they face in school. They become problem solvers other than problem multipliers. However many principal do not understand or apply the transformational leadership styles. Therefore there is need for capacity building for the principals.