



Leadership Behaviours and Commitment of Teachers in Secondary Schools in an Urban Setting in Uganda

Harriet Ludigo¹ Wilson Mugizi² & Rogers Barigayomwe³

¹Department of Foundations and Curriculum Studies,
College of Education and External Studies Makerere University.

²Education Planning and Management Department,
School of Education, Kyambogo University.

³History and Political Studies Department,
Faculty of Humanities, Nelson Mandela University.

Corresponding Email: hludigo@yahoo.com

Abstract

This study examined the influence of leadership behaviours on commitment of teachers in secondary schools in an urban setting in Uganda. Informed by the Path-Goal Leadership Theory, the study investigated the influence of directive, supportive and participative leadership behaviours on commitment of teachers. Basing on the positivist paradigm, the researchers adopted the survey research design. A sample of 252 teachers provided data using a self-administered questionnaire. Data were analysed using partial least square structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM) using SmartPLS. The main findings of the study revealed that directive and supportive leadership behaviours positively and significantly influenced commitment of teachers. However, participative leadership behaviours negatively and insignificantly influenced commitment of teachers. The study concluded that directive and supportive leadership behaviours play a meaningful role in promoting commitment of teachers than participative leadership. It was recommended that to promote commitment of teachers, head teachers should demonstrate directive and supportive leadership behaviours in the managing of schools. Nonetheless, head teachers should not over emphasise participative behaviours. The implication of the study is that from the fundamental behaviours of the Path-Goal Leadership Theory expected from leaders that include directive, supportive and participative leadership behaviours, the findings offer insights on the basic ones a school leader should emphasise to enhance commitment of teachers, these are directive and supportive leadership behaviours.

Keywords: Behaviours, directive, head teachers, leadership, participative, supportive, teachers.

1. Introduction

Prior the first half of the 20th century, the focus of organisations was on how to maximise employees' productivity to increase profit. This was because prominent theorists at the time such as Fredrick Taylor argued that success of organisations was dependent on employee increased work

effort. Taylor (1911) argued that employee work effort could be enhanced through supervision, incentives and enhancing their specialised skills. While productivity of employees improved, high levels of stress and excessive employee turnover became a common feature (Zaraket, 2018). The



Hawthorne experiments that followed in the early 1930s revealed that productivity of employees increased when they received personal attention (Zoller & Muldoon, 2018). Hence, organisational psychologists delved to assessing employees' behaviour leading to several theories of motivation and job satisfaction including the Needs Theory by Maslow (1943), Two Factor Theory by Herzberg's (1957) and Theory X and Theory Y propounded by McGregor in 1960 (McKnight Sr, 2017). Consequently, the behaviour of employee commitment was introduced into the field of organisational behaviour by Becker (1960) in his article "Notes on the concept of commitment." Becker claimed that before there was scanty focussed study of the notion of commitment and defined it as an attitude of stable behaviour that remains for a long time. He indicated the attitude of commitment resulted from side-bets including accumulated pension, growth, networks, work simplicity that comes with experience and family stability among others as a result of working with an organisation for a time. The fear of losing accumulated side bets constrained an employee from leaving an organisation.

By the 1970s, organisational commitment had generally become a popular concept, particularly in the US propagated by shortfalls in productivity, demoralised workforce, and extreme foreign rivalry especially from Japan where already organisational commitment was recognised as a source of competitive advantage boosting fortunes of organisations (Zaraket, 2018). Continued interest in the concept of commitment led to its conceptualisation by different scholars. Mowday et al. (1979) conceptualised commitment as the strong belief in and acceptance of the organisation's goals and values; a willingness to exert considerable effort on behalf of the organisation; and a strong desire to maintain membership in the organisation. Cook and Wall (1980) indicated that the constructs of the concept

of commitment were identification with, involvement in, and loyalty to the organisation. Nonetheless, the conceptualisation that gained acclaim was by Allen and Meyer (1990) that describes commitment in terms of three attitudes that are affective, continuance and normative commitment. Affective commitment describes workers passionate attachment to, identification with, and participation in the organisation; continuance is the continued desire to stay with the organisation because of losses associated with leaving; and normative is the obligation felt that makes an employee decide not to leave the organisation.

In education, commitment of teachers is a question that continues to disturb policy makers. For instance, in the USA, there is a big challenge of low continuance and normative commitment with 29% of beginning teachers quitting teaching in the first three years and 39% after five years of service (Kharismawan & Mbato, 2020). In the European Union in countries such as Britain, Belgium, Ireland, the Netherlands, Sweden, Switzerland and Spain, low continuance commitment leads to high wastage as is between 9.1% and 10.3% leave the teaching sector which leads to continued spending to replace those who leave (Stromquist, 2018). In sub-Saharan Africa, teacher commitment is even a higher challenge. For example, in Zambia, there is low affective commitment with teacher absenteeism at 36 percent hampering effective teaching and learning in the schools. In Nigeria, many teachers record themselves in the reporting books in the morning and vanish from schools (Ugoani, 2016). In Kenya, many teachers are unable to complete the syllabus, absent from school, waste time by not being punctual for lessons and spending less time in class (Bett et al., 2020). In Tanzania, teachers' waste time part-timing in different schools which makes them miss classes and fail to complete the syllabus (Timothy & Nkwama, 2017).

In Uganda, teachers also show low commitment with 15 percent of them not showing up to conduct their classes, not being punctual for their duties and hardly carrying out their professional duties such as lesson preparations and doing weekly duty (Mugizi et al., 2019a). Many teachers have left classes for boda-bodas (commercial motorcycle riding) or merchandise business. A big number of them reach to their schools at about 8:00 am, record their names in the attendance book and leave (Mugizi, 2019). While literature search does not reveal the situation in urban schools in Uganda, in rural schools teachers spend more time in bars drinking alcohol leading to job neglect hence failing to engage learners, assess their assignments and report late for work (Amanyisa, 2021). A UNESCO survey done in Uganda reported that 16% of the teachers indicated the desire to continue in the teaching profession, 47% were dissatisfied with their job while 59% considered it a mistake to have joined the teaching profession and 37% prayed they could quit within a year (Mugizi et al., 2019b). While in their studies Achu (2021), Geda (2015), Huang (2011) with Tatlal et al. (2011) indicated that leadership behaviours relate to organisational commitment, none of these studies reported from the Uganda context. Therefore, this study from the Ugandan context examined the influence of head teachers' leadership behaviours on commitment of teachers.

2. Literature Review

This section is a literature review involving the theoretical review and related literature on leadership behaviours and organisational commitment. Specifically, related literature is on the relationship between directive, supportive and participative leadership behaviours in relation to organisational commitment.

2.1 Theoretical Review

The Path-Goal Leadership Theory advanced by Evans (1970) and further developed by House (1971) guided this study. The Path-Goal Theory suggests effective leaders through their behaviours guide subordinates to select the best option along the paths to achieve organisational goals (Jabbar & Hussin, 2019). Four fundamental leadership behaviours according to the Path-Goal Theory are directive, supportive, participative and achievement-oriented (Li et al., 2018). The directive behaviour involves making tasks clear by providing direction and arrangements for employees and tasks execution. With the supportive behaviour, it involves nurturing and supporting members to be as desired. The participative behaviour involves providing an atmosphere in which members can be active hence offering ideas, discussing strategies, making decisions and planning tasks. The achievement-oriented behaviour involves providing challenges to members and setting high expectations for them to accomplish. With these leadership behaviours, goals are clarified, work obstacles removed and support provided for accomplishing tasks. Consequently, individuals develop positive work attitudes such as commitment because obstacles are removed (Bickle, 2017). Basing on the Path-Goal Theory, this study assessed how leadership behaviours of directive, supportive and participative leadership behaviours related to organisational commitment of teachers.

2.2 Leadership Behaviours and Organisational Commitment

Leadership behaviours define the conduct of leaders in clarifying direction and goals to be followed by subordinates. Thus, leadership behaviours describe the characteristics of leaders in providing direction to subordinates. The Path-Goal Theory identifies leadership behaviours, namely directive, supportive, and

achievement-oriented (Li et al., 2018). Different scholars (Ab Rahman & Jantan, 2020; Banjarnahor et al., 2018; Banji, 2020; Golabdost & Rezaei, 2017; Islam et al., 2018; Mutmainnah et al., 2022; Mukherjee & Mulla, 2022; Pahi et al., 2022) have investigated the influence of directive leadership and employee commitment. Nonetheless, empirical gaps emerge from these studies. While all the other studies concurred that directive leadership positively and highly influenced employee commitment, Banji (2020); Mukherjee and Mulla (2022) and Pahi et al., 2022 reported that the influence was negative. This pointed to lack of a common position on the association between the variables hence the need for further investigations in different contexts. This attracted this study to be carried out in secondary schools in Kampala, Uganda.

Scholars (Ab Rahman & Jantan, 2020; Astuty & Udin, 2020; Bahkia et al., 2020; Cilek, 2019; Ibukun & Abisuga, 2016; Rana et al., 2019; Tremblay et al., 2018) have also examined the influence of supportive leadership and commitment of employees. However, the studies raised contextual and empirical gaps. Contextually, all the studies did not capture

2.3 Research Hypotheses

Drawing from the Path Goal Theory and review of related literature, the follow hypotheses that were tested by this study were developed;

H1: Directive leadership behaviours have a significant influence on commitment of teachers.

H2: Supportive leadership behaviours have a significant influence on commitment of teachers.

H3: Participative leadership behaviours have a significant influence on commitment of teachers.

the context of schools in Uganda. For the empirical gap, while all the other studies reported that supportive leadership influenced commitment of employees, Ibukun and Abisuga (2016) reported that supportive leadership style influenced only the affective aspect of commitment of employees suggesting lack of a consistent position on the connection between the variables. These gaps made it necessary to further investigate the link between the variables. Further, different scholars (Adigüzel et al., 2020; Arief & Sulastrri, 2021; Bakare & Ojeleye, 2020; Banjarnahor et al., 2018; Bhatti et al., 2019; Ibukun & Abisuga, 2016; Mutiu & Ojeleye, 2022; Odoardi et al., 2019; Pahi et al., 2022) studied the influence of participative leadership on employee commitment. Conversely, the studies also raised contextual and empirical gaps. At contextual level, the studies were outside Ugandan schools while empirical level, contrary to other studies Ibukun and Abisuga (2016) indicated that participative leadership only influenced the continuance commitment aspect. This suggested lack of an agreed position on the link between the study variables. This thus attracted further investigations by this study.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design and Sample

Basing on the positivist paradigm that involves establishing objective reality through quantitative methods, quantitative data were collected. The study was based on the survey research design because it helps to test for association or relationships between variables (Creswell & Creswell, 2018) between the determinant (leadership behaviours) and outcome variables (commitment of teachers). Thence, the link between leadership behaviours and commitment of teachers was explored. The sample was made of 252 teachers from a population of 903 teachers in the 12 secondary schools of Kampala Central Division. The sample was determined using

the Table for determining sample size for a population of a given size by Krejcie and Morgan (1970). The sample was obtained using simple random sampling because it would enable generalisation of the findings.

3.2 Measures of the Variables

The measures of leadership practices (determinant variable) were directive, supportive and participative leadership behaviours while those of commitment (outcome variable) were affective, continuance and normative. The indicators of the different constructs were adapted from earlier measures by previous scholars as follows: commitment of teachers (Mugizi et al., 2016), directive (Goswami et al. (2014), supportive (Goswami et al., 2014; McGilton, 2010) and participative leadership behaviours (Arnold et al., 2000; Goswami et al., 2014; Mugizi and Bakkabulindi, 2018). The level of agreement Likert- Scale response anchor where one was the lowest and 5 the highest (1 = strongly disagree 2 = disagree 3 = not sure 4 = agree 5 = strongly agree) was used. Data quality was ensured through validity measurements models that average variance extracted (AVE), convergent and discriminant validity assessments, and reliability tests in terms of Cronbach's alpha (α) and composite reliability (Tables 2 and 3). The measurement models described paths between the different variables.

3.3 Data Analysis

Partial least square structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM) done using SmartPLS 4 was used to analyse the data. PLS-SEM was the basis for establishing links between the variables under study. SmartPLS was the best suited tool for data analysis because of its efficacy to generate higher-order measures and determine complex models with several latent variables. SmartPLS was the basis for identifying predictive relationships among the study variables by revealing causal

links. Using SmartPLS it was possible to carry out PLS-SEM to establish relationships conjectured since the sample was large 100 ($n = 252$) (Hair Jr et al., 2021). SmartPLS helped in constructing models displaying the linkages between leadership behaviours and commitment of teachers.

4. Results and Discussions

This section presents the analysis and interpretation of the results. The results are on demographic attributes of the study participants, measurement models, structural model of leadership behaviours and commitment of teachers, and path analysis structural equation estimates.

4.1 Participants Demographic Attributes

The results revealed that females were the larger percentage (53.6%) and the males were 46.4%. Most teachers were up to 30 years (46.4%), followed by those between 30-39 years (21.4%) and the remaining who were 40-49 years and 50 years and above were each 16.7% respectively. Majority held bachelor's degrees (81.0%), 11.9% had master degrees, 6.0% had postgraduate diplomas and 1.2% had grade five diplomas. The majority of teachers had experience of less than five years (67.9%), followed by 17.9% who had taught for more than 10 years and the remaining 14.3% had taught for 5-10 years. Further, 48.8% of the teachers were subject teachers, 27.4% class teachers, 17.9% were heads of departments and 6.0% held other responsibilities. The results indicate that teachers of various demographic profiles participated in the study.

4.2 Measurement Models

This section covers measurement models that include descriptive statistics in terms of means and Heterotrait Monotrait (HTMT) Discriminant Validity assessment in Table 1, and reliability, convergent validity average variance extracted (AVE), and collinearity in Table 2.

4.2.1 Descriptive Statistics and Heterotrait Monotrait (HTMT) Discriminant Validity Assessment. Table 1 presents descriptive statistics and Heterotrait Monotrait (HTMT) Discriminant Validity assessment values. Descriptive statistics show how the

respondents rated their level of commitment and leadership behaviours of head teachers. Heterotrait Monotrait (HTMT) Discriminant Validity assessment indicates the independence between the variables studied.

Table 1: Descriptive statistics and Heterotrait Monotrait (HTMT) Discriminant Validity assessment

Measures	Means	Affective	Continuance	Normative	Teacher Commitment
Affective	3.86				
Continuance	2.90	0.324			
Normative	3.12	0.363	0.462		
Teacher Commitment	3.29	0.749	0.842	0.796	

Measures	Means	Directive	Supportive	Participative	Leadership Behaviours
Directive	3.92				
Supportive	3.65	0.674			
Participative	3.28	0.648	0.853		
Leadership Behaviours	3.62	0.806	0.872	0.832	

The means in Table 1 indicate that affective commitment of the teachers (mean = 3.86) was high because the mean was close to code 4 corresponding to agree which implied high on the scale used rate the study indicators. The mean (mean = 2.90) for continuance commitment suggested that it was fairly low while normative commitment was fair (3.12). Overall commitment of teachers was fair (mean = 3.29). With respect to head teachers' leadership behaviours, teachers rated the use of directive and supportive behaviours to be high (mean = 3.92) and (mean = 3.65) respectively while participative behaviour was fair (mean = 3.28). The Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratio of correlations in Table 1 about discriminant validity show that all the constructs were independent of each other because the values for all the constructs were lower than the highest limit

of 0.90 (Purwanto & Sudargini, 2021). Therefore, the leadership behaviours (independent variables) independently predicted organisational commitment (dependent variable).

4.2.2 Reliability, Convergent Validity and Collinearity. To establish the internal consistency of the indicators for the different constructs, reliability in terms of Cronbach's alpha (α) and composite reliability (CR) were tested. Average Variance Extracted (EVA) for convergent validity and Value Inflation Factor (VIF) for collinearity were also tested to confirm convergence (the degree of confidence the indicators measured the constructs), and correlation between the measures respectively. The reliability, convergent validity (AVE) and collinearity values obtained are indicated in Table 2.



Table 2: Reliability, AVE and Collinearity Results

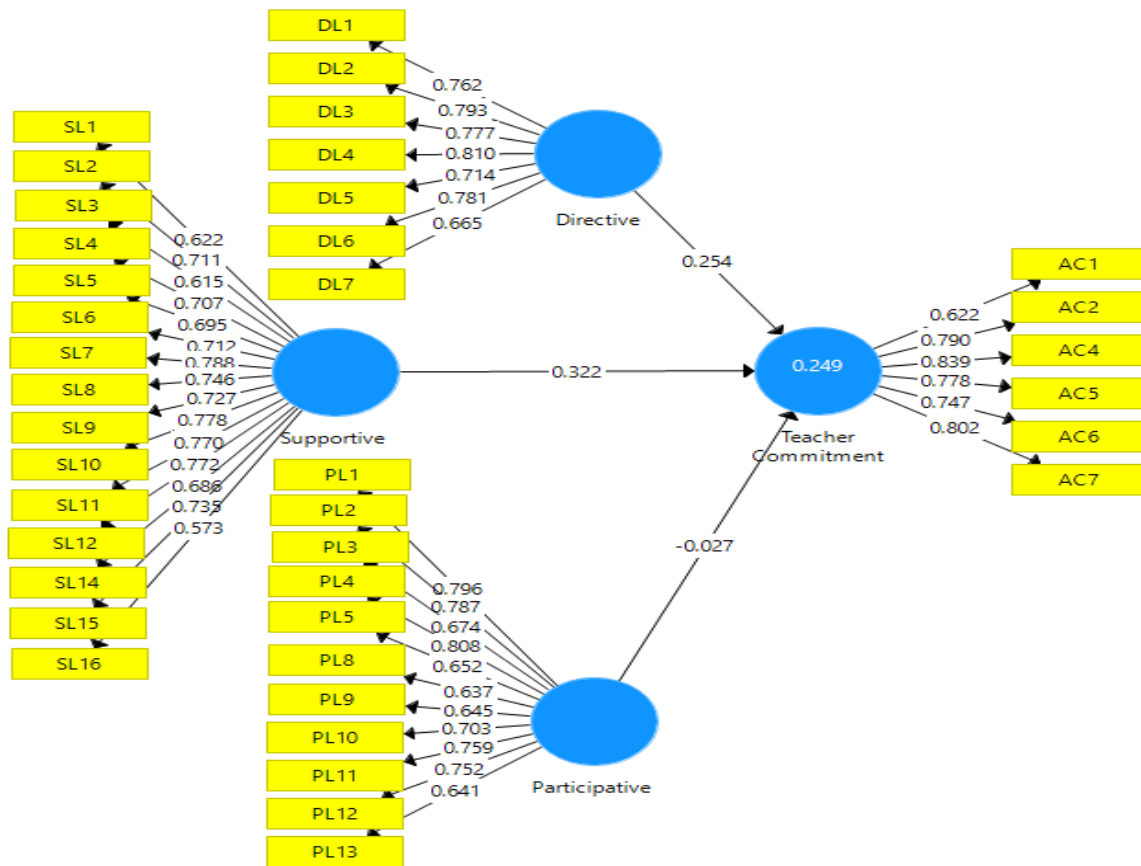
Measures	A	CR	AVE	VIF
Affective	0.857	0.894	0.588	1.116
Continuance	0.835	0.883	0.608	1.203
Normative	0.688	0.813	0.528	1.185
Directive	0.879	0.906	0.581	1.671
Participative	0.905	0.921	0.508	2.639
Supportive	0.930	0.939	0.516	2.766

The reliability results (Table 2) reveal that the indicators for the different constructs were internally consistent. This is because for all the constructs, composite reliability (CR) values were above the minimum which is 0.70 (Hair Jr et al., 2020). Composite reliability values were considered because it is liberal as it considers outer traits leading to a higher number of indicators becoming reliable unlike Chronbach’s alpha which is very sensitive because assumes that the indicators have same traits across the population which lowers reliability (Hair et al., 2019). With respect to convergent validity, all the EVE values were higher than 0.5 which is the minimum level of AVE (Shrestha, 2021). Therefore, the different constructs exhibited convergent validity hence the constructs were good

measures of organisational commitment and leadership behaviours. Concerning VIF, the values obtained were below 5 which is the standard metric for measuring collinearity (Hair Jr et al., 2021). This meant that the measures (constructs) were independent of one another and thus the independent variables could independently predict the dependent variable.

4.3 Structural model for Leadership Behaviours and Commitment of Teachers

To ascertain the relationship between leadership behaviours and teachers’ commitment, a structural equation model was developed. The structural equation model (Figure 1) describes the relationship between leadership behaviours and teachers’ commitment.



The structural equation model (Figures 1) for leadership behaviours and teachers' commitment reveals that commitment of teachers was reduced only to the concept of affective commitment. Constructs namely continuance and normative commitment did not load in the model hence excluded from the model. The model results (Table 4) include beta coefficients (β s), coefficients of determination (R^2 and adjusted R^2), t statistics and the p-values.

The coefficients of determination reveal the predictive power of head teachers' leadership behaviours on commitment of teachers. Three hypotheses to the effect that directive (H1), supportive (H2), and participative (H3) leadership behaviours have a significant influence on teacher commitment were tested. The structural equation model estimates are presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Path Analysis Structural Equation Estimates

	B	Mean	STD	T	p
Directive → Commitment of Teachers	0.254	0.253	0.072	3.556	0.000
Supportive → Commitment of Teachers	0.322	0.329	0.088	3.645	0.000
Participative → Commitment of Teachers	-0.027	-0.016	0.092	0.296	0.767

$R^2 = 0.249$

Adjusted $R^2 = 0.239$

The structural equation model estimates (Table 4) indicate that directive ($\beta = 0.254$, $t = 3.556$, $p = 0.000 > 0.05$) and supportive ($\beta = 0.322$, $t = 3.645$, $p = 0.000 < 0.05$) leadership behaviours positively and significantly influenced commitment of teachers. However, participative ($\beta = -0.027$, $t = 0.296$, $p = 0.767 > 0.05$) negatively and insignificantly influenced commitment of teachers. R^2 suggested that the three leadership behaviours explained 24.9% ($R^2 = 0.249$) of the variation in commitment of teachers. Adjusted R^2 showed that the two significant behaviours namely; directive and supportive, explained 23.9% (adjusted $R^2 = 0.239$). Therefore, the coefficient of determination (R^2) implied that 75.1% of the variation in commitment of teachers was accounted for by factors other than head teachers' leadership behaviours. While Hypotheses One and Two (H1-H2) were supported, Hypotheses Three (H3) was rejected.

Discussion of Findings

The investigations of the study revealed that directive leadership had a significant influence on commitment of teachers. This finding was consistent with the findings of scholars such as Ab Rahman and Jantan (2020), Banjarnahor et al. (2018), Golabdost and Rezaei (2017), Islam et al. (2018), and Mutmainnah et al. (2022). This means that if head teachers provide direction to the teachers, their commitment is enhanced. Therefore, the directive leadership behaviour is important for secondary school teachers. However, the finding was inconsistent with the findings of scholars such as Banji (2020), Mukherjee and Mulla (2022), and Pahi et al. (2022) who reported that directive leadership negatively influenced employee commitment. Nonetheless, it should be noted that with the finding of the study consistent with the findings of most scholars, it can be inferred that largely directive leadership is necessary if the commitment of secondary school teachers

is to be enhanced. Further, the finding that supportive leadership had a positive significant influence on commitment of teachers concurred with previous scholars. For example, Ab Rahman and Jantan (2020), Astuty and Udin (2020), Bahkia et al. (2020), Cilek (2019), Ibukun and Abisuga (2016), Rana et al. (2019), and Tremblay et al. (2018). This implies it is a recognised fact that support leadership behaviours have a positive significant influence on commitment of teachers.

Nevertheless, the finding that participative leadership had a negative and insignificant influence on the commitment of teachers was contrary to the findings of previous scholars. All previous scholars Adigüzel et al. (2020), Arief and Sulastri (2021), Bakare and Ojeleye (2020), Banjarnahor et al. (2018), Bhatti et al. (2019), Ibukun and Abisuga (2016), Mutiu and Ojeleye (2022), Odoardi et al. (2019), and Pahi et al. (2022) reported that participative behaviours positively and significantly influence employee commitment. This surprising result contrary to the findings of previous scholars was because in the current study, teachers rated their commitment to be generally high while they rated head teachers' use of participative behaviours to be moderate. Therefore, the association between participative leadership behaviours and commitment of teachers was insignificant because despite head teachers' moderate display of participative leadership behaviours, the teachers were still committed.

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusions

The discussion above led to the conclusion that directive and supportive leadership behaviours play a meaningful role in promoting commitment of teachers. Therefore, teachers get committed to their job when head teachers make them understand; what is expected of them, what needs to be done, how to perform their roles, level or performance expected from



them, and set goals for them. Thus, to promote commitment of teachers, it is imperative that head teachers provide teachers direction such they are not lost in darkness. Further, teachers get committed to their job when the head teachers are supportive by being friendly, pleasant, inspiring, helping, are thoughtful about their needs and care for them. Teachers also become committed when they feel head teachers understand the viewpoints, meet their needs, are reliable, appreciative, respect and listen to them, and recognise their strengths and areas for development. Therefore, to promote commitment of the teachers, they need support involving creating an environment that shows that the leader is mindful about them. However, participative leadership plays a lesser role in promoting commitment of teachers. This implies that individual and group expression of ideas, opinions and suggestions, involvement in problem solving, and emphasising open and honest self-expression will not essentially lead to commitment of teachers. This is because largely teachers require to be provided direction and feel supported.

Recommendations

The conclusions above lead to the recommendation that head teachers should demonstrate directive and supportive leadership behaviours in the managing of schools. However, the head teachers should not over emphasise participative behaviours. The implication of the study is that from the fundamental behaviours of the Path-Goal Leadership Theory expected from leaders that include directive, supportive and participative, the findings offer insights on the basic ones a school leader should emphasise to enhance commitment of teachers, these are directive and supportive leadership behaviours.

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