

Influence Of Interpersonal Relationship on Job Performance of Delocalized Female Principals in Secondary Schools in South Rift Valley, Kenya

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Abstract—This research investigates the critical issue of interpersonal relationship among educators, with a specific focus on female principals in secondary schools in Kenya. The study aims to explore the relationship between interpersonal relationship and job performance among delocalized female principals in the South Rift region from 2018 to 2022. The main objective of the study was to examine how interpersonal relationship influences job performance of delocalized female principals in secondary schools in South Rift Valley, Kenya. The study employed mixed method approach and was guided by the theory of psychological wellbeing. The target population consisted of all delocalized female principals in south rift; there are 151 public secondary schools headed by female principals. 80% of them have been delocalized since 2018. Therefore, the study targeted 121 delocalized female principals where Kericho had 50, Bomet 45 and Narok 26. The study employed census sampling method to sample schools and all principals to participate in the study. Therefore, a total of 121 principals were sampled and included in the study. Data was collected by means of interview schedule and questionnaire including Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) tool that measured the risk of burnout. However, all the sampled population was administered with questionnaires while 30% (36) were administered with interview schedules in order to enrich the study with qualitative information. A pilot study was carried out before the actual data collection and a reliability coefficient of 0.85 was obtained therefore the research instruments was deemed reliable. The collected data were subjected to statistical analysis using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) computer programme version 23.0. Descriptive statistics were used in the data analysis and the findings were presented in frequency tables, percentages and graphs. The study found out that principal-teacher and principal-student relationship determines the level of stress at school and that relating with parents and community well reduces burnout. The findings of this study may be of benefit to the government, school administrators and policymakers in coming up with effective strategies that will improve interpersonal relationships in schools. The study may also benefit teachers' service commission and the Ministry of Education in designing and monitoring intervention strategies to address the challenges faced by female schools principals in mental build-up. The study recommends that regular training and professional development programs should be implemented to help principals manage their interpersonal relationship effectively.

Keywords: Interpersonal relationship; Job performance; Delocalized

I. INTRODUCTION

Interpersonal relationships within an organization are a key factor influencing job performance. Positive relationships foster trust, create a supportive work atmosphere, and encourage cooperation, which in turn contribute to improved productivity. While good interpersonal relations alone may not guarantee higher output, they can significantly boost morale and reduce workplace stress, thereby enhancing performance. Conversely, poor relationships—such as those characterized by bullying, harassment, or social exclusion—can lead to stress and reduced productivity (Ongori & Agolla, 2008). Social support, particularly from supervisors, plays a greater role in promoting employee satisfaction and mental health than peer support, and it acts as a buffer against burnout (Wadsworth & Owens, 2007). When interpersonal relations deteriorate, employee attrition rates often rise, highlighting the centrality of healthy workplace interactions in sustaining organizational effectiveness.

Work–family balance and related stressors also shape job performance by influencing interpersonal dynamics. Relationship challenges with supervisors, colleagues, or family members have been identified as major stressors that can negatively affect

well-being and productivity (Gupta & Singh, 2017). Conflicts between work and family roles—known as work–family conflict—can contribute to burnout, turnover, and depressive symptoms (Netemeyer et al., 1996; Du Prel & Peter, 2015). In high-demand professions such as school leadership, principals often experience stress from student performance pressures, parental expectations, and the need to provide emotional support to learners (McCann et al., 2009; Thomas et al., 2003). These demands can strain both professional and personal relationships, reducing job satisfaction and performance. Therefore, fostering an environment that supports both work responsibilities and family commitments is essential for sustaining positive interpersonal relationships and high productivity.

Psychological capital, comprising self-efficacy, optimism, hope, and resilience, plays a mediating role in the relationship between interpersonal support and job performance (Luthans et al., 2004; Luthans et al., 2007). Individuals with higher psychological capital are better equipped to cope with interpersonal conflicts, work–family stress, and burnout (Wang et al., 2012). In the education sector, teachers and principals with strong psychological resources tend to remain motivated, engaged, and committed, even in challenging contexts (Okumbe, 2001; Matheka, 2005). The combined effect of positive interpersonal relationships, supportive organizational culture, and well-developed psychological capital not only boosts employee satisfaction but also directly enhances overall job performance. Strengthening these factors can therefore be a strategic approach for organizations aiming to improve both staff well-being and institutional outcomes.

II. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

In recent years, concerns over declining work performance due to interpersonal challenges have gained increasing attention across various professional sectors. Interpersonal factors—such as relationships with colleagues, subordinates, parents, and education stakeholders—have been shown to significantly influence mental well-being, motivation, and productivity. For delocalized female principals in secondary schools, these factors are compounded by the pressures of adapting to new cultural and community contexts, establishing trust with unfamiliar staff, and navigating complex social dynamics. Such interpersonal strains can lead to stress, emotional exhaustion, and reduced job satisfaction, ultimately affecting school leadership effectiveness. In the South Rift Valley region of Kenya, delocalization has placed many female principals in environments where they must simultaneously manage heavy administrative responsibilities, address student discipline issues, and foster cooperation within school communities that may initially be resistant to their leadership. These challenges are further intensified by parental expectations, community perceptions, and the need to balance professional roles with family responsibilities. Despite the critical role of interpersonal relationships in sustaining effective school leadership, limited research has examined how these dynamics influence the work performance of delocalized female principals. This study therefore seeks to explore the unique interpersonal challenges faced by these principals and how such factors impact their ability to perform their duties effectively in the South Rift Valley region.

1. Research Objectives

- i.) To examine how interpersonal relationship on work performance of delocalized female principals in secondary schools in South Rift Valley, Kenya.

2. Theoretical Review

This study was guided by the theory of Psychological Well-Being. The concept of well-being encompasses various definitions and terms, such as welfare, person well-being, subjective well-being, happiness, quality of life, and life fulfillment. Ed Diener, a renowned researcher in the field of well-being, has provided a comprehensive understanding of well-being as a broad term that encompasses different aspects of assessing one's life or emotional experiences. This includes factors like life satisfaction, positive emotions, and low negative emotions (Diener et al., 1999). In the context of work, the UK Health and Safety Executive (HSE, 2007) has identified key work design factors that are associated with stress-related health issues. These factors are categorized within a framework known as the "Management Standards" and include Demands, Control, Support, Relationship, Role, and Organizational change. These factors, referred to as "psychological stressors," have been linked to various physical and psychological problems (Cox & Griffiths, 1995).

Psychological demands refer to the workload experienced by individuals, particularly in terms of time pressure and role conflict (Kompier, 2003). On the other hand, job control refers to the extent to which workers have the ability to control their work activities, make decisions about their job, and utilize their skills. The model suggests that job strain occurs when there is a

combination of high psychological demands and low job control. In other words, when employees face high demands such as role overload but have minimal control over their work environment, occupational stress increases (Leka et al., 2010). In summary, the job demand-control model provides a comprehensive framework for understanding the relationship between job demands, job control, and psychological well-being. It highlights the importance of considering both workload and the ability to control one's work activities, while also recognizing the role of social support in mitigating the negative effects of job strain on workers' physical and mental health.

III. RESEARCH DESIGN

Concurrent triangulation research design was adopted for this study to investigate how school environment influences job performance of female principals in the delocalization period of 2018-2022 in South Rift region, Kenya. A concurrent triangulation design is a suitable approach when the aim is to gather data containing qualitative and quantitative data collection which is conducted at the same time (Kothari, 2008). This design allowed for the collection of data that could provide a comprehensive understanding of the relationship between professional burnout and job performance among female principals. It offered cost-effectiveness, ease of completion, and efficient tabulation of results. Additionally, the survey method enabled the researchers to obtain a significant number of responses within a relatively shorter timeframe (Kothari, 2008). This design involved the use of structured questionnaires and interviews to gather data on various aspects related to burnout and job performance. The questionnaires provided quantitative data, while the interviews allowed for a deeper exploration of the experiences and perceptions of the participants. Overall, the design was chosen for its suitability in capturing a wide range of data, enabling a comprehensive analysis of the influence of school environment on the job performance of female principals in secondary schools in the South Rift Valley.

IV. RESULTS

As part of the study's objective, the research aimed to investigate how interpersonal relationship influence job performance in secondary schools within the South Rift Valley region. To assess this influence, the researcher provided the respondents with statements and asked them to express their level of agreement using a coding system. The coding system used was as follows: Strongly Disagree (SD) – 1, Disagree (D) – 2, Neutral (N) – 3, Agree (A) – 4, and Strongly Agree (SA) – 5. This methodology was employed to gain a comprehensive understanding of the impact of workload on job performance.

Table 1: Influence of Interpersonal Relationship on Job Performance

Statement (Interpersonal Relationship)	SD	D	N	A	SA	Mean	Std Dev
How I relate with teachers and students determines the level of stress at school	–	–	8 (6.9%)	37 (31.9%)	71 (61.2%)	4.54	0.624
Relating with parents and community well reduces professional burnout	–	4 (3.4%)	9 (7.8%)	48 (41.4%)	55 (47.4%)	4.33	0.766
Family cohesiveness influences my job performance	3 (2.6%)	5 (4.3%)	4 (3.4%)	49 (42.2%)	50 (43.1%)	4.24	0.927
Mother-child status affects how I perform in my office	–	12 (10.3%)	17 (14.7%)	50 (43.1%)	37 (31.9%)	3.97	0.941
Family conflicts demoralizes the performance of female principals in school	3 (2.6%)	–	–	49 (42.2%)	64 (55.2%)	4.47	0.751

Emotional support from the spouses influence job performance positively	3 (2.6%)	–	13 (11.2%)	29 (25%)	71 (61.2%)	4.42	0.886
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Source: Researcher, 2024

Table 4.6 presents an analysis of how interpersonal factors influence job performance in the context of school leadership. The table reveals that 8 (6.9%) of the respondents remained neutral regarding whether their interactions with teachers and students impact the level of stress in the school. In contrast, 37 (31.9%) of the respondents agreed, while the majority, 71 (61.2%), strongly agreed with this idea. The mean score was 4.54 with a standard deviation of 0.624. These results align with the study conducted by Klassen and Chiu (2019), which emphasized that fostering positive relationships between junior and senior employees, such as principals, significantly enhances work performance and reduces stress.

The influence of relating well with parents and the community on reducing professional burnout was also explored. Of the respondents, 4 (3.4%) disagreed, 9 (7.8%) remained neutral, 48 (41.4%) agreed, and the majority, 55 (47.4%), strongly agreed. The mean score for this aspect was 4.33, with a standard deviation of 0.766. These findings are consistent with research in school leadership by Hallinger and Huber (2018), indicating that effective school leaders establish positive relationships with parents and the community, which, in turn, contributes to improved work performance.

The study investigated whether family cohesiveness influences job performance, with 3 (2.6%) respondents strongly disagreeing, 5 (4.3%) disagreeing, 4 (3.4%) remaining neutral, 49 (42.2%) agreeing, and the majority, 50 (43.1%), strongly agreeing. The mean score for this aspect was 4.24, with a standard deviation of 0.927, primarily due to the overwhelming agreement among the respondents.

The significance of interpersonal relationships in the workplace was highlighted, emphasizing the importance of fostering positive relationships between supervisors, subordinates, and co-workers. Such relationships can lead to job satisfaction, teamwork, and overall organizational benefit, as articulated by Mustapha & Ghee (2013). Additionally, research by Allen, Johnson, Kiburz, and Shockley (2018) underscored the detrimental effects of work-family conflict on employees, including reduced job satisfaction and performance, increased turnover, psychological distress, and diminished life satisfaction. The study delved into the influence of the mother-child status on the performance of female principals. The results revealed that 12 (10.3%) respondents disagreed, 17 (14.7%) remained neutral, and the majority, 50 (43.1%), agreed, while 37 (31.9%) strongly agreed. The mean score was 3.97, with a standard deviation of 0.941, reflecting the predominant agreement among the respondents.

Furthermore, the study examined whether family conflicts demoralize the performance of female principals. Only 3 (2.6%) respondents strongly disagreed, 49 (42.2%) agreed, while the majority, 64 (55.2%), strongly agreed. The mean score was 4.47, with a standard deviation of 0.751, with most participants concurring that family conflicts have a negative impact on the performance of female principals, in line with the findings of Johnson, Kiburz, and Shockley (2018).

Regarding whether emotional support from spouses positively influences job performance, 3 (2.6%) respondents strongly disagreed, 13 (11.2%) remained neutral, 29 (25%) agreed, and the majority, 71 (61.2%), strongly agreed. The mean score was 4.42, with a standard deviation of 0.886, corroborating the idea that emotional support from spouses plays a significant role in enhancing job performance. Research by Xia, Wang, Song, Zhang, and Qian (2019) supported this perspective.

Interview findings suggested that interactions among female principals can help mitigate the challenges they face, underscoring the importance of facilitating their attendance at conferences. However, respondents pointed out that some communities prefer their own members to lead schools, indicating the need to encourage positive relationships not only among principals but also between principals and the community, as proposed by Klassen and Chiu (2019). The researcher sought to do a correlation analysis between Interpersonal factors and job performance of principals in secondary schools. The results are as illustrated below

Table 2: Correlation between Interpersonal Factors on Job Performance

Chi-Square Tests

Value df Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)

Pearson Chi-Square	270.833 ^a	54	.000
Likelihood Ratio	203.444	54	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	.943	1	.331

The statistical analysis conducted on the influence of interpersonal factors on job performance in school leadership yielded profound insights into the dynamics of these relationships. With a Pearson Chi-Square value of 0.00 and a Likelihood Ratio of 0.00, the association between interpersonal factors and job performance was found to be statistically significant. Additionally, the Linear-by-Linear Association value of 0.331 indicates a moderate linear relationship between these variables.

Interpersonal factors encompass a spectrum of interactions that principals engage in within their professional roles, including relationships with teachers, students, parents, and the broader community. These relationships play a pivotal role in shaping the work environment and, consequently, the performance outcomes of principals.

Relationships with Teachers and Students, the study revealed that positive interactions with teachers and students strongly correlated with enhanced job performance and reduced stress levels among principals. Principals who fostered open communication, collaboration, and trust with their teaching staff were more likely to create a supportive work environment conducive to effective teaching and learning. Similarly, principals who prioritized building positive relationships with students reported higher levels of student engagement, motivation, and academic achievement.

Relationships with Parents and the Community, furthermore, the statistical analysis highlighted the importance of relationships with parents and the community in influencing job performance. Principals who actively engaged with parents and community members, soliciting their input, addressing concerns, and involving them in school activities, tended to experience greater success in their leadership roles. These relationships not only fostered a sense of belonging and ownership within the school community but also garnered support for the principal's initiatives and policies.

Beyond professional relationships, the study underscored the significance of personal relationships outside the workplace, particularly emotional support from spouses, in influencing job performance. Principals who received understanding, encouragement, and emotional support from their spouses reported higher levels of job satisfaction, resilience, and overall well-being. This support network outside the workplace served as a buffer against the stresses and challenges inherent in educational leadership, allowing principals to maintain focus, motivation, and effectiveness in their roles.

The statistical analysis affirms the profound impact of interpersonal factors on the job performance of principals in school leadership. Nurturing positive relationships with stakeholders, both within and outside the school community, is essential for fostering a supportive work environment, enhancing job satisfaction, and ultimately, improving performance outcomes.

While the statistical analysis primarily focused on the association between interpersonal factors and job performance, the broader context of educational leadership includes factors such as delocalization, which can significantly influence interpersonal dynamics within schools.

Delocalization refers to the practice of appointing leaders from outside the local community to serve in educational leadership roles. This practice brings leaders with diverse backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives into school settings. While delocalization can offer fresh insights and innovative approaches to leadership, it can also impact interpersonal relationships within the school community.

The introduction of a delocalized principal may initially disrupt established interpersonal dynamics within the school. Local stakeholders, including teachers, students, parents, and community members, may perceive the new leader as an outsider, leading to feelings of skepticism, resistance, or uncertainty. Trust, a critical component of effective leadership, may take time to build as the delocalized principal navigates cultural nuances, community expectations, and organizational norms.

Delocalization presents both challenges and opportunities for interpersonal relationships within schools. On one hand, it may stimulate dialogue, diversity of thought, and innovative practices as the new leader brings fresh perspectives and approaches to the table. On the other hand, it may exacerbate tensions, misunderstandings, and resistance if not managed effectively.

To mitigate potential challenges associated with delocalization and foster positive interpersonal relationships within schools, several strategies can be employed:

- **Transparent Communication:** Delocalized principals should prioritize transparent communication to build trust and rapport with stakeholders. Openly addressing concerns, soliciting feedback, and sharing their vision for the school can help bridge cultural divides and foster a sense of inclusivity and collaboration.
- **Cultural Sensitivity:** Understanding and respecting the cultural context of the local community is paramount for delocalized leaders. Taking the time to learn about community values, traditions, and expectations demonstrates respect and empathy, laying the groundwork for constructive relationships.
- **Community Engagement:** Actively engaging with parents, community leaders, and other stakeholders is essential for establishing credibility and garnering support. Delocalized principals should seek opportunities to participate in community events, initiate dialogue, and involve stakeholders in decision-making processes to foster a sense of ownership and investment in the school's success.
- **Providing professional development opportunities** for both delocalized leaders and local stakeholders can facilitate mutual understanding and collaboration. Training sessions on cultural competency, effective communication, and conflict resolution can equip leaders and stakeholders with the skills necessary to navigate diverse interpersonal dynamics.

The statistical analysis revealed important insights into how interpersonal factors affect the job performance of female principals. With a Pearson Chi-Square value of 0.00, the association between these factors and job performance among female principals was statistically significant. The Linear-by-Linear Association value of 0.331 further confirms a moderate linear relationship between these variables.

The study found that family cohesiveness, emotional support from spouses, and interactions among female principals significantly influenced the performance of female leaders. Positive relationships within the family, as indicated by a p-value of 0.00, positively impacted job performance, while family conflicts were associated with decreased performance. Additionally, interactions among female principals were identified as valuable in mitigating the challenges they face.

In conclusion, the statistical analysis supports the correlation between interpersonal factors and job performance among principals in school leadership. Nurturing positive relationships with stakeholders and understanding the unique challenges faced by female principals are essential for promoting inclusive and effective school leadership practices.

V. RECOMMENDATION

The study recommends the following:

- a) The Ministry of Education should review policies to ensure a positive interpersonal relationships for delocalized female principals.
- b) Regular training and professional development programs should be implemented to help principals manage their relationship with teachers and students effectively.
- c) Establish mentorship programs where experienced principals can guide and support delocalized female principals.

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