

Perception of Headteacher's Communication Style and Teachers' Motivation to Participate in Government Secondary School Activities in Sheema District Uganda

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Abstract

The study investigated the perception of head teachers' communication style and teachers' motivation to participate in secondary school activities in government-aided secondary schools in Sheema District Western Uganda. The study employed a parallel mixed model design for data collection, analysis, and interpretation. Purposive sampling was used to select 10 head teachers from 10 government-aided secondary schools in Sheema District Western Uganda. 186 teachers out of 371 teachers from the 10 schools in Sheema District Western Uganda participated in the study. Simple Random sampling was used to arrive at teachers. There was a significant and positive relationship between the perception of head teachers' communication style and teachers' motivation to participate in school activities ($r=0.386$, $p<0.01$). This relationship was mediated by Perceived Supervisor Support which presented itself as being positively and significantly related to supervisor communication ($r=0.399$, $p<0.01$) as well as to the intrinsically motivating factors ($r=0.408$, $p<0.01$). The perception of the communication style of the head teacher influences the morals and morale of teachers by 15%. Hence there is a need for head teachers to organize and plan concerning why, what, when, where, and whom to communicate (hence the 5Ws communication rule). Therefore, from the study findings, non-monetary forms of motivation are important factors in motivating teachers. This is because 15% of teachers' motivation is contributed by head teachers' communication style; 16% by Perceived Supervisor Support and 20% by Perceived Organization Support. Thus, the study recommended that head teachers should always recognize the strong points by for example saying "thank you" and avoid evaluating and observing the weak points only.

Keywords: Perception, Headteachers' Communication Style, Teachers' Motivation

1. Introduction

Communication style is the vital and vibrant way people influence their followers through the use of words (Jim, 2012; Mazzarella & Smith,

1998; Rukman, 2010; Gideon, 2023). Therefore, communication style is a set of various behaviors and methods of relaying information that impact all facets of life. Communication is part and partial of each and all of the six

functions of management: leading, planning, commanding, organizing, staffing, and controlling. He contends that the golden thread tying all these functions together and the best key to great leadership that motivates staff is clear and effective communication. In education, communication is a basic prerequisite for the attainment of organizational goals. (Dubrin, 2009; Cole, 2004; Gideon, 2023; Stewart, 2008; Daft & Maruc, 2011). Moreover, communication is perceived as the elixir that can ensure a happy long-term relationship and can guarantee organizational success. However, communication has remained one of the biggest problems facing modern management (Bennel, 2004; Taylor, 2009; Malik & Danish; Armstrong, 2009). There is a range of views the world over about communication and teachers' performance. For example, Bennel (2004) reported that in the National assessment of teachers' performance carried out in Pakistan in 2002, it was reported that poor leadership communication led to poor motivation of teachers. On the other hand, the study conducted by Maicibi (2003) in Uganda reveals that low teacher morale as seen from their absenteeism led to low-quality education in many schools. Further studies were carried out in Peru, Ecuador, Bangladesh, Indonesia, India and Uganda. However, results show that teacher absenteeism was highest in Uganda at 25% (Ojik, 2008). The causes of absenteeism included low teacher morale, poor working conditions, poor salaries, illness, too many pupils per class, and lack of teachers' accommodation among others (Ojik, 2008; Gideon, 2023).

The concept of motivation is defined as a psychological need that activates behavior. Therefore, motivation is the inducement of the desired behavior among employees (Okumbe, 1998; Beddoe, 2009; Bushe, 2009; Jackline, 2018). Additionally, motivation is the ability of

the worker to do more than the minimum/basic requirement. In a school setting when teachers are motivated, they exhibit a healthy relationship with the head teacher, in time management for example, assessment of learners, attendance of meetings, free interaction in the form of giving feedback, daily attendance to school duties, and activities, this is in agreement with Daft (2008). As such, Leaders and managers must realize the need to effectively convey and receive information. Effective communication of a leader is the foundation for meeting and developing the psychological and economic needs of the employees within small organizations such as schools (Caldwell, 2012; Adrian, 2010; Tan & Tan, 2000; Jackline, 2018; Abdul-Kudus, 2023). In addition, the head teacher plays a bureaucratic role because he is the middleman between staff members and board members (Yoon & Thyges, 2000). The authors contend that the head teacher is also an organizer, communicator, and line officer, and has other professional roles. However, the most important function that harmonizes all these roles is effective communication (Yoon & Thyges, 2000; Bulunywa, 2003; Lee & Chaung, 2009; Gideon, 2023; Mugizi, Ampeire, & Kemer, 2022; Iqbal, 2023; Abdul-Kudus, 2023).

The theory that underpinned this study is Abraham Maslow's theory of hierarchy of needs (1970). This theory affirms that communication is very important because, there is a need for leaders to always appreciate, honor, and recognize teachers for the accomplishments made on the job, for example, by having a board/wall of fame. Equally important (Barbara, 2002; Mwesigye, 2012 2008) concurs with Abraham Maslow's (1970) hierarchy of needs when she says that there is a need for head teachers to ensure that the terms of work are clear for example terms of services, job security, adequate medical care, and safe working conditions by effectively

communicating to employees. In support of this, Herzberg (1959) stresses the need for effective communication. The author contends that hygiene factors that include; company policies, administration, supervision, administration, working conditions, salary, status, job security, and interpersonal relationships can only be maintained through effective communication.

The motivator factors on the other hand center around a higher level of Maslow's hierarchy of needs that is; self-esteem and self-actualization (Caldwell, 2012; Chiok, 2001; Gideon, 2023). Therefore, as a motivator, the head teacher needs to consistently acknowledge and praise the performance of teachers through effective communication to ensure that the workers' needs at a higher hierarchy are satisfied/ properly addressed. About this, William Ouch (1981) indicates that Japanese companies were more successful than American companies. This is because in Japanese companies there was effective communication and shared decision-making, trust, and loyalty among managers and employees that helped to foster collective responsibility unlike in American companies where there was bureaucracy with individual decision-making and varying degrees of trust among employers. , Vroom (1964) believes that an individual's levels of productivity depend on three factors; individual goals, the perceived relationship between productivity and goal achievement, and the ability to influence productivity. Individual goals include; more money, job security, interesting jobs, social acceptance, and recognition. This concurs with Abraham Maslow's (1970) hierarchy of needs. Hence, the study answered the following research questions: What are the different communication styles used by head teachers in Sheema district Uganda? What is the relationship between head teachers'

communication styles and teachers' motivation in Sheema district Uganda?

The empirical studies were conducted about the present study, For instance, Mugizi, Ampeire, & Kemer, (2022) conducted a study on headteachers' leadership practices and students' discipline in Government aided secondary schools, the study found that while *the collaborative culture and interpersonal relationship had a positive and significant relationship with students' discipline, distributed leadership had a negative and insignificant one. On the other hand, Iqbal, 2023;* and Abdul-Kudus (2023) investigated secondary school head teachers' conceptions of the relationship existing between their leadership styles and students' academic achievement using a qualitative approach. The findings revealed that the Majority of the head teachers perceived that they use multiple leadership styles to improve students' academic achievement. Moreover, these head teachers were keen to improve the academic achievement of the students. For this purpose, they use different leadership styles. Furthermore, it was also evident from analysis that they prefer a democratic leadership style. In another development, Gideon (2023) carried a study titled: head teachers' communication methods and student discipline in selected secondary schools in sheema municipality, southwestern Uganda, the findings of the study discovered that found a moderately high statistical relationship between Head Teachers' communication methods and student discipline. Effective communication strategies play a pivotal role in fostering a conducive environment for maintaining student discipline. However, all these studies did not consider the motivation aspect of the head teacher about their styles of leadership which is critical to investigate.

2. Methodology of the Study

The study employed a parallel mixed-method research approach for data collection, analysis, and interpretation. Under this design, a mixed methods model was handy in concurrently answering specific research questions. The mixed methods model is a research strategy involving both qualitative and quantitative techniques. Its overall goal was to answer research questions in the study and to obtain a complete coverage of variables under investigation. This was done to achieve accuracy in that errors that would occur in qualitative analysis are corrected in quantitative analysis. A descriptive cross-sectional research design was preferred in this study because it allowed the researcher to collect views of a sample of a population at a single point in time about the perception of head teachers' communication styles on teachers' motivation to participate in secondary school activities in Government Aided Secondary schools in Sheema District, Uganda. Purposive sampling was used to select 10 head teachers from 10 government-aided secondary schools in Sheema District Western Uganda. 186 teachers out of 371 teachers from the 10 schools in Sheema District Western Uganda participated in the study. Simple Random sampling was used to arrive at teachers. Purposive sampling is the type of sampling technique, The sample size was established by using Krejcie and Morgan (1970).

A pre-testing of instruments was carried out to establish their validity, to check on the content and the format of the instruments to find out the relationship between scores contained using one or more other instruments to measure. The validity of the questionnaires was determined by using the Content Validity Index (CVI) formula.

$$CVI = \frac{n}{N}$$

Where; n = items rated relevant

N = Total number of items

The CVI for the questionnaire was 0.85. The questionnaire was considered valid because the minimum validity index should be 0.70.

Also, the instrument was found reliable because using a Cronbach's alpha coefficient as shown below:

$$a = \frac{(K)(S_2 - \sum s_1^2)}{(S_1^2)(K - 1)}$$

Where,

K - Total number of items

S_2 -variance in all items

s_1^2 -variance in individual items

Moreover, the Cronbach's alpha obtained was 0.89 suggesting the questionnaire was reliable. This is because the minimum is $\alpha = 0.70$ and above which is the minimal level (Taber, 2018). In addition, the expert judgment method was used where many experienced experts verified the instrument.

3. Results of the Study

The results of the study are described based on the following headings below:

3.1. Findings from Interviews

The findings from the interviews are presented according to the themes used in the structure: demographics of the head teachers are introduced, head teachers' communication styles, and teachers' motivation.

Demographics of the Head Teachers

Table 1 below demonstrates the demographics from the interviews of the head teachers.

Table 1. Showing The Demographics from The Interviews of The Head Teachers

		<i>f</i>	%
Gender	Male	7	70.0
	Female	3	30.0
Marital status	Married	10	100.0
	Single	0	0.0
Highest academic qualification	Masters	4	40.0
	First Degree	6	60.0

Table 1 shows the demographic information indicating that the biggest number of respondents were males (70%). All the respondents (100%) were married. The majority of the respondents (60%) had First degrees, and (40%) with Master's degree as the highest academic qualification.

Head Teachers' Communication Style and Teachers' Motivation

Table 2. Summary of Results from Head Teachers Interviews

Variable	Emerging Themes	<i>f</i> (%)	Key findings
Communication	Mode of communication	9(90)	Face-to-face; Verbal communication; Staff meetings ;Discussions during meals; Staff retreats
		1(10)	Written notices; Letters; Memos; Circulars; and Briefings daily and weekly.
	Frequency of communication	8(80)	As often as it is necessary; Weekly; Class Meetings; Once a week; phone calls; messaging; office messengers.
		2(20)	Rarely; Beginning and End of term meetings; radio announcements
	Feedback	8(80)	Give and receive feedback through; Meetings, reports, discussions, implementation of school activities, demand feedback
		2(20)	Do not receive feedback because; People are naturally lazy, others like challenging authority, lack of commitment, part timing, lack of commitment, and are naturally rebellious. And nature of employment that is permanent and pensionable
	Significance	10(100)	Teamwork; self-mobilization to do activities; promotes responsibility / dutiful; no lame excuses; cooperation; owing resolutions create a sense of belongingness.
	Hierarchy of information flow	7(70)	Respect open door policy; the last man reaches the top office; the head teacher manages by walking about, and talking to the staff as he moves around.
		3(30)	Respect of hierarchy Passing through heads of departments; structures and guidelines followed; the head teacher must be informed if one is to do anything.
Motivation	Decision making	6(60)	Vital for employees to be involved in decision-making; participatory decision-making; and things of the majority, consultation has to be made.

	4(40)	Individual decision making; rubber stamping; many people mislead; delay of decision making because of discussions
Motivational tools	10(100)	Recognition, <i>Thank you</i> , simple reprimands, allowances, appreciation letters, medals, free interaction with the supervisor, praises, listening and giving them feedback, wall of fame; retreats; internal promotion; workshops for the teachers, contest for best teacher.
Teachers' attitude/morale	2(20)	Very good
	5(50)	Good
	3(30)	Fair

Table 3 indicates that the biggest number of respondents were males 124 (66.7%), the majority were married, the first-degree holders formed the highest proportion (67.7%), over 51% had responsibilities beyond subject teaching and 52.7% were on permanent employment,

these findings is consistent with the results of Gideon (2023).

Another question answered in this is: What are the Different Communication Styles used by Head Teachers? The results are demonstrated in Table 4 below:

Table 4: Descriptive Statistics and Correlations of Questionnaire Items

	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5
1. Supervisor Communication	4.003	.389	1				
2. Intrinsic Motivation	4.144	.437	.386**	1			
3. PSS	4.160	.785	.399**	.408**	1		
4. POS	3.968	.836	.295**	.451**	.433**	1	
5. Affective commitment to the Supervisor	3.683	.643	.110	.207**	.161*	.319**	1

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The means, standard deviations, and inter-correlations among the variables of the questionnaire are shown in Table 5 above. Descriptive statistics from the teachers' response in Table 5 reveal that the head teachers' communication style (Mean = 4.00, SD = 0.39) leans more towards two-way communication style; intrinsic motivation (Mean = 4.14, SD = 0.44) indicates that teachers are motivated; PSS (Mean = 4.16, SD = 0.79) signifies that their head teacher cared and valued their contribution and effort; POS

(Mean = 3.97, SD = 0.84) points to the teachers' perception that government aided schools valued their contribution and cared about their needs though to a lesser extent compared to PSS; Affective commitment to supervisor (Mean = 3.68, SD = 0.64). For these statistical measures, participants rated their agreement with each statement using a 5-point Likert-type scale (1 = strongly disagree; 5 = strongly agree). The findings reveal that there is a significant relationship between supervisor communication style and the Intrinsic

Motivation of teachers as $r = 0.386$ p-value $= 0.01$; there was also a significant relationship between supervisor communication and the extraneous variables that are; Perceived Supervisor Support where $r = 0.399$; Perceived Organizational Support $r = 0.295$; Affective Commitment to the Supervisor $r = 0.110$ and p-value is Significant at 0.01. The results further reveal that there is also a significant relationship between the intrinsic motivation of teachers and extraneous variables that is; Perceived Supervisor Support $r = 0.408$; Perceived Organizational Support $r = 0.451$; Affective Commitment to the Supervisor $r = 0.207$ and the p-value is significant at 0.01.

4. Discussion of the Findings

The findings of the study are described below:

1.4.1. Sample Characteristics

The majority of participants were males with a first degree as the highest level of academic qualification. The academic qualification was relevant in this study as it helped the researcher to gather quality data because the above academic qualification put participants in a position to interpret the questionnaire and interview questions concerning the study variables. Therefore, the findings about gender indicate there are more males than females who attain higher education as indicated in Table 1.

4.1.1. Communication Style

In this study, it was found that between one-way and two-way communication styles, the two-way communication style was more prevalent than one way. This is indicated by the mean score of 4.00 (SD = 0.389) from descriptive statistics on the teacher questionnaire in the 1 – 5 Likert scale.

As evidence, one of the head teachers during the interview had this to say, Face-to-face is preferred because most teachers feel comfortable when you talk face

to face and do not like writing, letters, or memos because they feel you can use it for future evidence in case of any mistake.

However, face-to-face communication was valued by head teachers because it involves the exchange of information and feedback is guaranteed. They consider face-to-face feedback as being good at; intention specificity, description, usefulness, timeliness, clarity validity, and reliability readiness. The findings reveal that two-way communication is useful in resolving problems more efficiently, generating long-term relationships, creating opportunities quickly, and motivating employees. This is justified because, from the findings of this study, 90% of head teachers subscribed to using a two-way communication style as it guarantees feedback and maintains that feedback is the form of reward that motivates employees. Feedback emphasized in a two-way communication style builds confidence and competence in teachers when it is given appropriately by supervisors. The results are in agreement with the findings of Sarah, Bariham, and Quansah (2023).

In conclusion, therefore from the above findings it should be pointed out that for the success of any management system, a two-way communication style should be used as it is flexible and adaptable in a way that will reduce tension and increase cooperation, trust, and team spirit among employees. This is because people will tell you how to deal with them if you know how to communicate and listen to their needs.

4.1.2. Level of Teacher Motivation

The level of motivation among teachers of government-aided secondary schools in Sheema district, Uganda was also found to be equally high. The mean score on a Likert scale of 1 – 5 was found to be 4.14 (SD = 0.437). The reasons forwarded by teachers about their

motivation were; the effective communication style of their immediate supervisor, the care and value the supervisor attached to their contribution (PSS with mean score = 4.16, SD = 0.785), and the government support as their employer (POS with mean score = 3.97, SD = 0.836). These findings were also evidenced in the qualitative results from the interviews where 2(20%) said their teachers had very good morale and 5(50%) said good morale. Therefore, from the interviews (70%) of head teachers believed that their teachers were enthused in carrying out school activities. Also, the findings of this study indicate high teacher morale as even affirmed by 70% of head teachers who agreed that teachers' morale was high. The findings indicate head teachers used motivational tools such as recognition, a thank you, a simple reprimand, appreciation letters, medals, praises, timely feedback, internal promotion, workshops, and free interaction among others to boost teachers' morale. These findings are consistent with what Jackline (2018) and Iqbal (2023) discovered in their studies.

Moreover, the findings reveal that if there is a high perception that an organization supports employees as well as a feeling that the supervisor values and cares about his or her subordinates, it encourages the employees and is likely to result in more productive input. Additionally, employees develop a general perception concerning the extent to which the supervisor values their contributions and cares about their well-being. Such perceived supervisor support would also be valued as assurance that help will be available from the supervisor when needed to carry out one's job effectively and to deal with stressful situations. Henceforth, head teachers/ supervisors are challenged to take care of, value their employees' contribution, and avoid the keen sight of the weak points only to encourage employees to perform beyond the minimum.

The findings reveal that the relationship between head teachers and teachers should be characterized by mutual respect and understanding that motivates employees to work with enthusiasm. Headteachers revealed that whether a manager has 100 or 500 employees in his or her organization/school, he or she should know every person by name as well as something he or she does, to support these findings. Nasim, Khurshid, Akhtar and Kousar (2023) conducted a study found almost similar results.

A healthy work relationship between teachers and head teachers promotes the development of teachers' careers and motivates them to participate in school activities with zeal. People like to be recognized for any achievement in work accomplishment. In conclusion, therefore, from the study findings non-monetary forms of motivation are important factors in motivating teachers. This is because 15% of teachers' motivation is contributed by head teachers' communication style; 16% by Perceived Supervisor Support and 20% by Perceived Organization Support. Thus, head teachers should always recognize the strong points by for example saying "thank you" and avoid evaluating and observing the weak points only.

4.1.3. The Relationship Between Communication and Teachers' Motivation

The intercorrelations (see Figure 1) suggest that there is a significant and positive relationship between head teachers' communication and teachers' motivation to participate in school activities ($r=0.386$, $p<0.01$). This relationship is mediated by PSS which presents itself as being positively and significantly related to supervisor communication ($r=0.399$, $p<0.01$) as well as to the intrinsically motivating factors ($r=0.408$, $p<0.01$). According to organization support theory (1986), PSS is associated with intrinsically motivating work conditions such as

psychologically supporting supervisor, recognition, freedom of expression, and delegation of challenging responsibilities (Eisenberg et al, 2001).

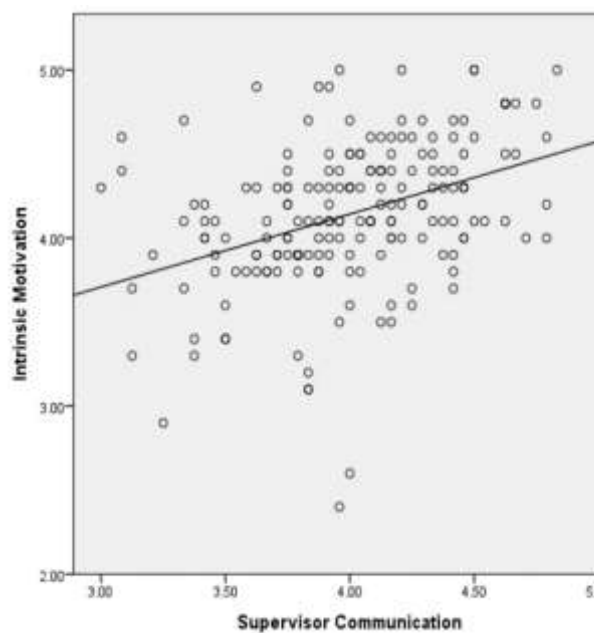


Figure 1. Supervisor Communication

It should be noted that the role of effective communication resonates from social exchange theory that is highlighted in the argument forward by Andrew Dubrin (2009) that "no feedback means no recognition and no recognition means no reward". This according to him could lead to discouragement and frustration. Therefore, from the findings of the study naturally, intrinsically satisfying job conditions are tied to the supervisors' actions and not the extrinsically satisfying conditions because these are generally controlled by the organization itself. The allocation of such conditions is or may be limited to the extent that he or she is induced to behave only by set organizational rules. As such, intrinsically satisfying job conditions should not be concluded as a sign of care and respect for employees from the supervisor.

On the other hand, *perceived Organizational Support (POS)* was measured to gauge the extent of extraneous extrinsic motivating factors on the study variables. However, it

shows a positive and significant relationship with the intrinsic factors indicating that the teachers regard the employing organization as playing an important role in caring and determining the job conditions that affect their personal growth and commitment. Thus, the findings of the study reveal that weak and poor incentives for teachers in public education systems lead to low morale. These include poor recognition systems of performers and sanctions these findings are consistent with the results of Abdul-Kudus (2023). Additionally, the findings of this study indicate that poor human resource management including ineffective communication led to low morale among employees. It should be noted that the authoritarian management style at national and sub-national levels, limits active participation, delegation, and decision-making among others hence does not boost morale. The findings are in agreement with the results of Jackline, (2018). Consequently, the results point out that an effective leader who appeals to the employees' social values enhances social communication encourages working as individuals, and exhibits a higher degree of employee participation in school activities. Thus, excellent leaders who have communication abilities will not only inspire subordinates' potential to enhance efficiency but also meet the requirements in the process of achieving organizational goals.

Thus, the perceived communication style of the head teacher influences the morals and morale of teachers by 15%. Hence there is a need for head teachers to organize and plan concerning why, what, when, where, and whom to communicate (hence the 5Ws communication rule)

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, despite the limitations discussed previously, this study has the potential to make a significant contribution to educational

planning and administration. The findings of this study reveal that head teachers commonly use a two-way communication style in the Sheema district Uganda. The two-way communication style is frequently used by head teachers because it is specific and reliable as feedback is always guaranteed. The study further revealed that 90% of head teachers believe in a two-way communication style because of its usefulness in resolving problems more efficiently generating long-term relationships that create opportunities quickly and motivating employees.

Whereas, the level of motivation among teachers of government-aided secondary schools in the Sheema district was also found to be equally high. The reasons forwarded by teachers about their motivation were; the effective communication style of their immediate supervisor, the care and value the supervisor attached to their contribution, and the government support as their employer. This finding was also evidenced in the qualitative results from the interviews where 70% (20% said their teachers had very good and 50% said good morale) of interviewed head teachers believed that their teachers were enthused in carrying out school activities.

However, Female head teachers had the challenge of low teacher morale. All the 100% of female head teachers who participated in this study reported the motivation of their teachers to be fair and not promising. The reasons they forwarded for this low morale of teachers were; lack of commitment, permanent and pensionable scheme of service, part timing in other schools hence lack of time, and disrespect of the head teacher because naturally people like challenging women's authority due to cultural factors. Also, the findings indicate that there is a positive correlation between perceived head teachers' communication style and teachers' motivation

to participate in secondary school activities. Therefore, perceived head teachers' communication style affects the performance of the teachers in secondary school activities in Sheema district, Uganda.

6. Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, it has been recommended that refresher courses and training workshops to educate head teachers on the relevance of better communication styles for them to build constructive relationships with their employees/staff be facilitated by the government yearly. Teacher training institutions and universities should emphasize the teaching of communication skills as a course unit for all students. Furthermore, the employment scheme of service of secondary school teachers should be changed from permanent and pensionable to contract basis so that teachers work to produce results with zeal according to set goals and objectives. A performance assessment tool for the renewal of the contract be put in place and strictly respected. In addition, the head teachers should be given more autonomy in the supervision and control of the teachers on issues concerning transfers, salaries, and promotion.

Finally, the present study only investigated the head teachers' communication style and teachers' motivation to participate in secondary school activities. There are many other non-monetary factors of teachers' motivation that can be studied, these include; decision-making style and teachers' commitment to school activities, Management by Walking About/Around (MBWA) and teachers' motivation, Perceived Supervisor Support (PSS) and teachers Job performance.

7. References

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