

# Impact of School Principals' Communication Techniques on Teachers' Job Satisfaction in Private Secondary Schools in Juja Sub-County, Kiambu County, Kenya



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## Abstract

*The current situation in the world has made communication a critical tool used to achieve success in educational institutions. This paper reports on a study carried out to investigate the impact of school principals' communication techniques on teachers' job satisfaction in private secondary schools in Juja, Kiambu County, Kenya. The study adopted a mixed method research design. Findings of the study revealed that effective communication techniques had influence on teachers' job satisfaction. The study also identified, communication challenges faced by the principals such as lack of ICT skills, poor listening, poor timing and delayed feedback. The study concludes that clear verbal communication, focused listening skills, giving and receiving feedback can improve principals' communication techniques. The study recommends that awareness of appropriate communication techniques should be created among school principals through workshops and seminars to improve on their use of appropriate channels in communication.*

**Keywords:** Secondary school principals; ICTs; Motivational Language Theory; secondary school teachers; job satisfaction; private schools; Kenya; Kiambu County; communication techniques.

**Paper type:** Research paper

## Introduction:

The emergence of information communication technology (ICT) has made it easy to communicate even at the global level and as such, communication is now regarded as an indispensable tool used to achieve success in educational institutions. Årlestig (2008) confirms the importance of communication in education by stating that in almost all school activities, communication plays an important role. Similarly, Otieno (2013), states that communication is the soul of any organization, without which the working of an organization will be paralyzed. Otieno further defines channels of communication as a medium through which messages travel. In all types of communication such as verbal, non-verbal, written, mobile and electronic communication, messages and information flow vertically and horizontally in the school.



Though teachers are so important and their contributions to education significant to the development of a nation, Njiru (2015) in a research on job satisfaction and motivation among teachers in Kenya observed that approximately 6000 teachers leave the teaching profession annually. A research by Kinyua (2014) in Kenya posited that teachers feel cheated, are underpaid and made to work in insecure conditions where the government pays less attention to their dignity and self-esteem. Job dissatisfaction has been associated with low monthly salaries, incapable and unsupportive administrators and lack of collegial relationship with co-workers.

Surveys by Teachers Service Commission (TSC) on customer and employee feedback (2017) show that overall teachers' satisfaction index in Kenya stands at 62.5% and a poor score of teachers' motivation at 31%. Furthermore, Emoja (2016) explained that this has been caused by an increase in student-teacher ratio in Kenya where some classrooms have about 75 students, and has resulted in reduced individualized attention to slow learners thereby leading to a decline in the quality of education. Leadership in any organization is bound by effective communication and that is why there is speculation; could there be a breakdown in communication which has affected the productivity and satisfaction of teachers negatively? Could it be that school administrators are unaware of techniques of communication like the use of meaning-making language or empathic language to motivate the teachers?

A study by Mutuku and Mathooko (2014) in Kenya stated that organizations' communication practices are revealed in the level of morale, motivation and degree of work accomplishment of the employees. They further posited that about 70% of change programmes flop because of lack of proper communication within the organization. Organizational goals can only be achieved if employees are effectively communicated to on their specific roles and duties in the organization. That is why direction-giving speech by managers are important because it minimizes conflicts and aids the school principal to allocate duties, clarifies tasks, goals and rewards to employees.

A study by Madlock (2013) in the United States of America attests that motivational language can assist administrators to communicate effectively with workers to increase job satisfaction. Motivation of teachers depends on the techniques of communication used. According to Sullivan (1988) when an employer's language is clear, uncertainty reduces while motivation, job accomplishment and satisfaction increase. Everything in the organization operates in a continuous manner on the basis of communication and without communication it is difficult to organize and manage the work effectively (Uka, 2014). Effective communication by managers can lead to job satisfaction of subordinates in every organization, more so in an education system where all members are supposed to be linked with each other for the efficient and overall success and achievement of set goals.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The debate on the relationship between effective communication and job satisfaction is increasingly relevant today, given a renewed concern over administrative and managerial challenges in many areas and especially in education. The blame-trade between management and employees, as to who is at fault, tends to reveal inadequacies in communication management. This ranges from total lack, to insufficient or ineffective use of communication techniques.



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Poor communication has been identified as one of the causes of unrest in secondary schools in Kenya (Muli, 2012). Similarly, in Kenya, Wairimu (2016) notes that in school situations, poor communication between teaching staff and the administration can lead to conflict, staff sabotaging initiatives by the administration or administrators taking unnecessary disciplinary measures. Poor communication has been found not to only affect the education sector negatively but other organizations as well. In their study in Malaysia, Gamil and Rahman (2018) indicate that poor communication has many effects and consequences on the construction industry such as cost overruns, time overruns, dispute and finally project failure.

Previous studies have been carried out on the relationship between communication by principals and the corresponding effect on job satisfaction of teachers. These studies ascertained that effective communication is paramount to the attainment of goals, improvement, job accomplishment and job satisfaction (Totseva, 2015, Uka, 2014) and when effective communication is absent, job dissatisfaction and turnover can be on the increase (Halawah, 2005 Muchemi, 2015). In the same vein, other studies seem to point at poor communication by administrators as having a negative influence on job satisfaction (Hajar and Kamal, 2016, Njenga, 2015). Even though the above studies centered on communication and job satisfaction, they did not focus on the impact of communication techniques of principals on job satisfaction of teachers. Therefore there is need to investigate impact of communication techniques of principals on job satisfaction of teachers in private secondary schools in Juja, Kiambu County, Kenya. This was the focus of this study.

### **Research Objectives**

This study was guided by the following research objectives:

- i. To investigate the impact of channels of communication used by the principals on job satisfaction of teachers in private secondary schools in Juja, Kiambu County
- ii. To investigate the impact of the use of leader-speech on satisfaction of teachers in private secondary schools in Juja, Kiambu County

### **Literature Review**

Leader-speech is a very important contributor to the smooth functioning of an organization. What the leader says and how it is said have effect on the climate of an organization. It can either build or destroy. Even though Yaffe (2018) asserts that verbal communication is only 7%, this little percentage is powerful enough to give direction, meaning, understanding, feedback, motivation and satisfaction to employees and place the organization on a competitive scale. A leader's speech should have the ability to inspire, motivate and influence the feelings and thoughts of subordinates. According to Mayfield and Mayfield (2012), the three types of leader-speech which are direction-giving language, empathetic language and meaning making language can be used to clarify speech to accomplish actions and enhance employee job satisfaction.

In the United States of America, Holmes and Parker (2017) carried out an online survey from 2011 to 2014 at an elementary school to determine the motivational language used by the principal. The school population was 950 students and 75 personnel. A survey was administered to the entire population of 75



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teachers. Findings showed that there was statistically significant correlation between behavioural integrity credibility and motivating language. It was also proven from the results that leader speech communication [leader talk] is an important factor in both employee and organizational success. With the results from findings, it was recommended that it is important for leaders to be careful with their speeches and make conscious effort so that their behaviour is coherent with their speech communication.

In the Philippines, Refozar et al (2017) investigated the extent of leader motivating language on faculty members' job satisfaction from a higher education institution. The study examined the effect of leader motivating language on the job satisfaction of staff considering factors like, direction-giving, empathy and meaning-making language. The study used a descriptive design and a sample size of 61 full-time faculty members. The study concluded that direction-giving language by the leaders in terms of keeping the faculty members informed about the organization's accomplishment and giving them opportunity for creativity and innovations with the organization leads to job satisfaction and accomplishment.

Results of findings on emphatic language by the leaders showed that emphatic language supports employees' development and promotes recognition which makes them feel satisfied with their work. To a great extent, meaning-making language helped in giving orientation about the regulations and progress of the organization because the language was used clearly in an understandable way. Holmes and Parker (2017) are of the opinion that administrators need not only to make direction-giving speeches, empathic and meaning making statements, they are to show integrity through their behaviours and credible attitude. This supports Refozar, et al (2017) who assert that direction-giving, empathic and meaning-making language were important for creating conducive organization climate, commitment, development and recognition of the employees.

Alqahtani (2015) conducted a study in Kuwait on teachers' perceptions of principals' motivating language and public school climates with a purpose to create awareness on the principals on the relevance of language choices. The approach used involved survey responses and correlational analysis. The study sample was 100 men and 100 women selected randomly from secondary schools. Findings from participants who were teachers showed that school climate and motivational language used by principals were good and effective respectively. Based on the study findings, it was recommended that principals should be trained on the use motivational language for effective management. The research setting, locale, title and sampling of the previous study created a gap for the current research to bridge by the use of both probability and non-probability sampling and mixed method design.

Singh (2014) carried out a research in South Africa on employees' use of empathy to improve their job behaviour. The purpose of the study was to verify the need for teachers to develop and acquire empathy as a social skill in their job as teachers. The study assumed that in order to create positive relationships in an organization, social interactions through encouraging words, affirmations, patience, understanding and empathy were important. The research adopted a descriptive survey design. The sample was made up of six schools by which six teachers were purposively selected from each school to participate in the study. They were therefore a total of 36 respondents who were all teachers. The instruments used for data



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collection was structured questionnaires. Data collected was further analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics.

Findings showed that empathic behavior among employees encourages cooperative attainment of goals in their different roles. Furthermore, the findings suggest that it is essential for teachers to develop empathy as a skill to enhance their job behaviour since this will reduce their anxiety and make the environment conducive for learning. It was also affirmed that employees who have acquired some sense of empathy will also possess techniques in managing different situations encountered among learners. Singh (2014) used a descriptive survey design. The present researcher closed the gap by employing a mixed method design to ensure validity and reliability of the research instruments. The respondents of the present study were taken among principals, deputy principals, teachers and students.

A research by Acheck (2015) on strategies used by principals to motivate workers was carried out in some secondary schools in Fako Division, Cameroon. Acheck adopted a descriptive survey design. Questionnaires were administered to a sample of 178 respondents comprising of teachers and principals in selected secondary schools in Fako Division of Southwest Region of Cameroon. Collected data were analyzed by the use of means and standard deviation and presented in the form of tables and histograms. The research findings disclosed that motivational strategies of principals include empathetic, supportive, caring behaviours and transformational leadership style and had significant influence on teaching and learning process. The current research employed a mixed method design which enabled the researcher to use both questionnaires, in-depth interview guide and document analysis guides to collect information from respondents made up of principals, deputy principals, teachers and students.

Wangai (2015) conducted a study in public secondary schools in Nairobi County, Kenya to create a relationship among leadership behaviours, namely, directive, participative, supportive and achievement behaviours in relation to job satisfaction of teachers. The research design used was a correlational design. The target population included all the principals and teachers of public secondary schools in Nairobi County while the sample size was 270 participants, 45 principals and 225 teachers purposefully and randomly drawn from 45 schools.

Data for this study was collected by the aid of questionnaires. Results from data collection demonstrated a positive and significant relationship between principals' leadership behaviours and teacher job satisfaction. It was therefore recommended that principals should adopt leadership styles which will give clear direction to the teachers, encourage participative leadership and support the teachers to achieve job satisfaction. Wangai's study employed a correlational design and data was collected using only questionnaires but the present study adopted a mixed method design and data was collected using close and open-ended questionnaires, in-depth interview guide and document analysis guides for the purpose of triangulation.

In Kenya, a study was conducted by Wangithi (2014) on how headteachers' leadership styles influence teachers' job satisfaction in public primary schools in Kajiado County, Kenya. The study explored the effects of leadership styles like autocratic, democratic, laissez faire and transformational leadership on job satisfaction. A descriptive survey design was used to execute the research. The target population was 86 headteachers and 844 teachers in 86 public primary schools but the researcher randomly selected 26 headteachers and 169 teachers as sample size for



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the study. Findings showed that among various leadership styles, the most preferred style was democratic leadership style because it had positive influence on teachers' job satisfaction. Democratic leadership style embraces participation, communication and recognition and creates conducive environment which aids job satisfaction of teachers. The study recommended that school managers should uphold democratic leadership and specialized management and leadership training for people aspiring for management posts.

The study by Wangithi's (2014) was carried out in a public primary school using a descriptive survey design but the current study was done in private secondary schools using a mixed method design. Questionnaires were administered to head teachers and teachers in public primary school in the previous study but the current study administered questionnaires to principals, deputy principals, teachers and students in private secondary schools.

Mukami (2013) conducted a study in Kenya with the purpose of examining the influence of head teachers' motivational practices on job satisfaction of public primary school teachers. The study adopted descriptive survey design on a population of 57 head teachers and 741 teachers while a sample of 25 principals and 206 teachers were selected to take part in the study. Questionnaires were used to gather data which was analyzed using descriptive statistics. Findings revealed that (80%) of head teachers motivate the teachers through staff training. It was therefore concluded that staff training had great influence on teachers' job satisfaction. Though majority of researches done on the effective use of leader-speech on job satisfaction affirm a positive relationship between leader-speech and motivation, improvement and commitment of employees, Mukami (2013) is of the opinion that staff training leads to motivation of teachers and has a great influence on job satisfaction also. It can also be argued that trained staff are also faced with job dissatisfaction. This means apart from training and development of employees, there is something more that needs to be uncovered about job satisfaction. The gaps created by Mukami's study was filled by the use of mixed method design and participation of students in the current research.

### **Research Design and Methodology**

This study used a mixed method design for the purpose of triangulation. Mixed design allowed the researcher to gather both quantitative and qualitative data on the same occurrences in relation to the research questions. The target population for this study was principals, deputy principals, teachers and students in private secondary schools in Juja sub-county. According to Orodho (2012), a target population is generally a large collection of individuals or objects that is the main focus of a scientific inquiry and it is for the benefit of the population that research is done.

In this study the population comprised all principals, teachers and students of private secondary schools in Juja sub-county. The principals and their deputies were in position to avail the researcher of the data on type or channels of communication they employ in their daily management activities of the private secondary schools. The teachers were involved because they were in a position to give data about the real causes of their dissatisfaction and constant leave-taking from the teaching job. The students in Form Three and Form Four were included in this study because they had been in the school environment for more than two years and had experiences



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of the continuous and high turnover of their teachers. They were therefore able to make contributions on what were the causes.

## Discussion of Findings

### *Demographic Characteristics of Respondents*

Table 1 presents gender of students, teachers, deputy principals and principals who were participants of this study.

**Table 1:**  
*Gender of respondents*

Gender	Students		Teachers		Deputy Principals		Principals	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Female	83	62.4	25	48.1	2	28.6	3	42.9
Male	50	37.6	27	51.9	5	71.4	4	57.1
Total	133	100	52	100	7	100	7	100

According to Table 1 more female students participated in the study than male students. This is because schools were stratified into girls, boys and mixed. Stratification of schools was based on the number and types of schools situated in Juja. There are 8 mixed schools, 8 girls' schools and 2 boys' schools. For the sake of proper representation, 3 girls' schools, 3 mixed schools and 1 boys' school were selected to participate in the study. Having more female schools in Juja could mean that more emphasis is placed on girl-child education.

Female teachers were 25 (48.1%) while male teachers were 27 (51.9), even though teachers were purposefully selected to create a balance according to departments. This means the percentage of teachers' participation according to gender was almost the same with only a difference of 2. Table 3 further depicts that there are more male deputy principals than females, which could point to gender imbalance in appointment to administrative posts in Juja private secondary schools. This could also mean that female teachers do not apply for these positions since some areas in Juja sub-county are quite remote or due to family commitments. On the other hand, the gender of principals seems to balance with only a difference of 1 male principal.

### *Impact of Principals' communication techniques on teachers' job satisfaction*

The first research objective of this study was to investigate the impact of principal's communication techniques on teachers' job satisfaction. Questionnaires were administered on teachers to obtain their perception on the matter. Table 1 presents data on the influence of communication techniques on teachers' job satisfaction.

**Table 2:**

*Teachers' Perception of Effects of Principals' Communication Techniques on Teachers' Job satisfaction n=52*



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Principals' Communication Techniques affect Job Satisfaction	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	42	80.8
No	5	9.6
No response	5	9.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Reasons</b>		
Motivates or demotivates me	23	44.2
Encourages or discourages me	16	30.8
Lack of communication brings confusion	4	7.7
No effect	4	7.7
No response	5	9.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>100</b>

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It is evident that communication techniques by the principals affect job satisfaction of teachers. According to data displayed in Table 2, majority of teachers, 42 (80.8%) affirmed this fact, stating that, principals' manner of communication can either motivate or de-motivate and can also encourage or discourage them. This implies that it motivates and encourages when it is positive but demotivates and discourages when it is negative. This reveals a high influence of communication techniques on job satisfaction. Hajar and Kamal (2016) posited that there is a significant relationship between principal-teacher communication practices and teachers' job satisfaction; these practices, according to them are, use of direct and continuous communication, and listening. The researcher assumes from the findings that teachers' dissatisfaction can be induced by unhealthy communication strategies by the principals. In other words, if the principals communicate appropriately and effectively, teachers' job satisfaction can be enhanced.

Analysis of departmental files in 6 out of the 7 sampled schools reveal that principals use meetings and verbal communication as channels and also occasionally circulate information through the heads of department. In line with findings from students and teachers on the extent of use of channels of communication, one of the deputy principals noted:

We communicate with the teachers mostly during briefings and to convey urgent messages to them. When urgent information needs to be communicated we make use of social media like phone calls. But when teachers are in class, we usually delay the information until break time (January 22, 2019)





When the principals were probed, majority of them said same thing though in different ways, that they communicate mostly during meetings, both general and departmental meetings. The principals confirmed data from the students that most times information is passed from the principals through the heads of department to the teachers and students. Importance of staff meetings can be likened to findings from Menard (2010), who said that staff meetings are essential because it aids in perpetuating organizational culture. Similarly, Cosman (2013), in his study found that oral communication enhances meetings, interviews, and group discussions in both formal and informal settings. In addition, written communication enhances development of reports, manuals, memo in both formal and informal formats. On non-verbal communication, the principals 5(71.4%), confirmed the earlier data from the teachers that they do not use non-verbal communication. One of the principals said:

“I really do not use gestures or non-verbal channel since it might be misinterpreted. The teachers may not understand” (January 22, 2019)

Based on findings, principals may have acquired skills of communication through frequent workshops and trainings which has enabled them to adopt direct communication channels as preferred by the teachers. Okumbe (2013) defined training as the process of providing junior employees with skills to assist them in accomplishing specific tasks while senior employees can be provided with conceptual skills through development. Training is important in investing human resources for increased productivity. It is an essential factor in increasing motivation and satisfaction of employees and increases stability especially in the education sector while at the same time maintaining high retention of teachers. Direct communication as established through data collection, helps teachers to receive immediate feedback on their performance and feel more secure and satisfied about their jobs and that is why it is the most preferred.

#### *Effect of Principals' Leader-Speech on Teachers' Job Satisfaction*

The second objective of this study was to establish if leader-speech by the principal has effect on job satisfaction of teachers. The responses from students on their perception on effect of principals' leader-speech on job satisfaction of teachers are represented in Table 3.



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**Table 3:***Students' Perception on Effects of Principals' Leader-Speech on Job Satisfaction n=52*

Leader-Speech on Job Satisfaction	SA %	A %	UN %	D %	SD %
The principal set clear vision and system to enhance effective achievement of the school's mission.	67 50.4	40 30.1	4 3.0	5 3.8	13 9.8
Job accomplishment is enhanced by the principal through giving of deadlines	33 24.8	48 36.1	28 21.1	7 5.3	11 8.3
Principal appreciates the teachers openly when they perform well	51 38.3	40 30.1	6 4.5	11 8.3	21 15.8
The Principal promotes spirit of commitment among all the teachers	53 39.8	39 29.3	15 11.3	10 7.5	12 9.0
The principal has never spoken angrily to the teachers in front of students	61 45.9	46 34.6	4 3.0	5 3.8	14 10.5
Exceptionally performed teachers are recognized by the principal	27 20.3	47 35.3	16 12.0	15 11.3	24 18.0
The principal sets clear goals and objectives to be followed by the teachers	45 33.8	50 37.6	15 11.3	8 6.0	12 9.0

In Table 3, majority of the students, 107 (80.5%), acknowledged the system of clear goals and vision set by their principals, while 18 (13.6%) were of the opinion that clear goals are not set. Setting clear goals and objectives by principals invariably promotes clarity, job accomplishments and initiative among teachers. Teachers who work in such environment feel motivated and satisfied. Clear goals and vision can be seen as means to diminish confusion and disruptions in an organization. The findings from the students are similar to findings by Acheck (2015) who posited that leaders who communicated using clear instructions motivated employee job satisfaction in times of challenges especially those related to their jobs. This implies that challenges in schools can be overcome by clear and precise language by leaders. It was also interesting to note from the data collected, that some students, 107 (80.5%) were able to perceive that principals never spoke angrily to the teachers in their presence. A total of 91 (68.4%) students agreed that the principals do not speak angrily to the teachers in their presence, while a low degree of disagreement, 32 (24.1%) was recorded.

The findings imply that there is a good organization and coordination by the principals, in other words, communication flow is effective enough to enhance clear attainment of goals and vision set by the schools. Furthermore, 91 (68.4%) students agreed that the principal openly appreciates teachers with high achievements while 74 (55.6%) said exceptionally performed teachers are recognized by the principals. This supports findings by Mayfield and Mayfield (2012), who stated that direction-giving language, empathetic language and meaning making language can be used to clarify speech to accomplish actions and enhance employee job satisfaction.

In the researcher's view, the data attests that principals have become more aware of the need for clarity in giving instructions and setting clear goals which can boost job accomplishments, better human relations and high productivity. They are therefore doing everything in their power to retain their teachers by the use of leader-speech and good inter-personal relations to enhance job satisfaction of teachers.

The responses from teachers on their perception on effect of principals' leader-speech on job satisfaction of teachers are represented in Table 4 below.

**Table 4:**

*Teachers Perception on the Effect of Leader-Speech on Job Satisfaction n=52*

Leader-Speech on Job Satisfaction	SA %	A %	UN %	D %	SD %
The principal gives clear, direct, and concise messages.	21 40.4	22 42.3	0	7 13.5	1 1.9
Our principal discusses school issues with teachers regularly	19 36.5	22 42.3	1 1.9	8 15.7	1 1.9
The principal gives me adequate and timely information and instructions.	12 23.1	22 42.3	1 1.9	14 26.9	2 3.8
Our principal listens to me when I discuss issues with him/her.	15 28.8	24 46.2	0	10 19.2	2 3.8
The principal welcomes and appreciates my thoughts and ideas when I give them.	11 21.2	28 53.8	0	11 21.2	1 1.9
The principal stimulates me to adopt a leader's role as a teacher.	13 25	22 42.3	0	12 23.1	2 3.8
The principal encourages me and gives me assurance so I feel comfortable when communicating with him/her	9 17.3	30 57.7	0	10 19.2	2 3.8
Good interpersonal relations exist in my school	12 23.1	29 55.8	0	7 13.5	3 5.8
I am allowed by my principal to use my initiative in decision making in my assigned duties	10 19.2	31 59.6	0	10 19.2	0

According to data presented in Table 4 above, majority of the teachers are of the opinion that the principals' leader-speech is satisfactory. This is noted in the responses; principals give clear, direct and concise messages which stands at 82.7% and good interpersonal relationship exists in the school at 78.9%. This is confirmed by another 75% of 'yes' presented on Table 4 on teachers' response that principals show empathy to teachers in times of need. Most of the teachers went further to explain that principals give permission as required. Satisfactory empathy behaviour by any leader is important because apart from the fact that it makes the leader compassionate and understanding towards employees, it endears the leader to the employees also. Subordinates are comfortable sharing their problems with the leader because of the assurance that they will be listened to and this is realized when leader-speech behaviour is effective. This is in line with a study by Artz and Kaya (2014) who found that effective leadership communication may create stronger mutual trusting relationships and can increase employee success.

Table 5 below represents responses from the teachers who were further asked to rate principals' leader-speech behaviours.

**Table 5:***Teachers' Perception on Leader-Speech by the Principals n=52*

Leader-Speech	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	39	75
No	11	21.2
No response	2	3.8
Total	52	100
<b>Indications</b>		
By consoling	6	11.5
Giving permission as required	18	34.6
Financial support	5	9.6
Listening	7	13.5
Refuses to give permission	9	17.4
Teachers' welfare is active	6	11.5
No answer	1	1.9
Total	52	100



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According to Table 5 a small percentage (17.4%) which should not be ignored stated that principals refuse to give permission in times of need. In Table 5, which displays data from students on retention of teachers, respondents observed that lack of motivation, unsatisfactory administrative styles, unfair treatment among others, were the main causes of low retention. This could imply that some principals are yet to adopt empathetic language in their administrative responsibilities which has caused many teachers to leave their teaching career.

The high percentage of positive leader-speech behaviours could mean that principals are more aware of empathetic techniques and have noticed that teachers work better and are more satisfied when they are treated humanely. It could also mean that when the principals give clear, direct and concise messages, they receive a corresponding positive feedback from the teachers. This can create awareness in the principals, a realization that when good interpersonal relations exist, work accomplishment, motivation and job satisfaction are enhanced. This is in accordance with Mehta, Mehta and Mishra (2011) who asserted that effective leadership communication has impact on organizational growth and consequently supports employee motivation, work accomplishment, empowerment, morale, and job satisfaction.

The finding is also in line with Motivational Language Theory by Sullivan (1988) as cited in Mayfield and Mayfield (2016) that, direction-giving language provides the context for job accomplishment towards the goals due to the specific nature of the instruction given. The data could mean that clear, concise and direction-giving instructions contribute to high productivity, motivation and job satisfaction. It also offers opportunity for clarification in doubtful situations and enhances responsibility. Furthermore, principals have come to the realization of the fruitfulness of it and have decided to employ it in their administrative duties.

In terms of clear vision of the school and security of teachers, contract files were viewed to justify the terms of appointment and security appropriated to the teachers. It was discovered from contract files made available to the researcher by 4 schools that there were clear contracts provided to the teachers to sign during employment negotiations. Some conditions were fair while some were not. This was interpreted by the researcher as being part of the causes of low retention. Housing contracts were also reviewed from 3 schools which had housing system for their teachers. The deputy principals and principals on probing mentioned that they employ different techniques in showing empathy to the teachers. Some of the techniques mentioned were assigning teachers distinct roles, listening and focusing on their strengths rather than weakness. One of the principals said:

“We organize a common lunch from time to time to accord us time to be together, we also have teachers’ welfare that sees to the wellbeing of teachers and reports to the administration regularly” (January 24, 2019)

Another also said:

“By emphasizing core values, because everything here is based on christian values. I also try to give them clear and concise orientations and expectations after employment. Some who think they cannot conform usually leave” (January 25, 2019)

Based on the data analysed both qualitatively and quantitatively, it is evident that principals have used empathetic communications with their teachers and this accounts for the 87.2% who are satisfied in terms of leader-speech. This is in support with the theoretical framework of this study which says that empathetic language (Illocutionary Speech) strengthens the bond of relationship between the leader and the subordinates and makes the leader to feel what subordinates feel.

### **Conclusions and recommendations**

Based on the study findings, the study concluded that principals’ communication techniques are effective and interaction with teachers are done through the use of verbal, written and electronic channels, which enhance teachers’ job satisfaction and very rarely use non-verbal communication. The study concluded that principals in private secondary schools in Juja set clear goals and vision for the teachers to follow and in addition promote good interpersonal relations within the schools. The study also concluded that teachers in private secondary schools in Juja are satisfied with communication techniques of principals.

Low retention of teachers was partly due to lack of motivation, unsatisfactory administrative styles, unfriendly environment, seeking greener pastures and unfair treatment. The study further concluded that effective communication by the principals could be improved by the use of appropriate channels of communication, focused listening to teachers, giving timely information especially by releasing school calendar at the beginning of the term and feedback. In other words the study concluded that principals’ communication behaviours and practices are related to teachers’ job satisfaction. This means that job satisfaction of teachers can



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be enhanced if principals utilize appropriate communication techniques in their administrative duties.

This study recommends that the ministry of education, through various leadership trainings should help principals become aware that, though communication behaviours/techniques may not be the only factor affecting teachers' job satisfaction, using various positive leadership communication behaviours can contribute in motivating the teachers, consequently impacting on job satisfaction. This can be done through workshops, seminars and trainings. Institutions of higher learning should prepare teachers to be self-confident and intrinsically satisfied with their jobs as experts in their own fields.

Principals should be more direct and straightforward in giving instructions to the teachers and be more empathetic and humane about the feelings of teachers. Principals should create healthy work environment, good administrative styles, be fair in their dealings with teachers, and encourage them to work as a team rather than giving information to a selected few in a bid to avoid being challenged.



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