

INFLUENCE OF PRINCIPALS' LEADERSHIP APPROACHES ON CAREER PROGRESSION AMONG MIDDLE MANAGERS IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN NAIROBI COUNTY, KENYA

¹Emily W. Mapesa, ²Susan Chepkonga, ³Joshua Abong'o Okumbe, ⁴Petronilla Kingi

¹⁻⁴ University of Nairobi

¹ewmapesa@yahoo.com, ²syego@uonbi.ac.ke, ³jaokumbe@uonbi.ac.ke, ⁴petronilla@uonbi.ac.ke

ABSTRACT

Progressing in career is a critical aspect of teachers' employment life considering that it comes with increased pay accompanying opportunities for individual development. Secondary school principals' leadership style beyond having influence on individual middle manager's job satisfaction and organizational commitment, plays a critical role in career progression. The focus of this study was on the influence of supportive, directive and strategic principals' leadership approaches on career progression among middle managers in secondary schools in Nairobi County.

*Adopting Path-Goal Theory proposed by **Martin Evans in 1970 and employing Ex-Post facto** research design, this study sought information using questionnaires and interview schedules from middle managers and principals respectively. Quantitative analysis was used involving both descriptive and inferential statistics. The study found that supportive leadership had suggesting non-statistical significance in career progression (p-value of 0.172); directive leadership also produced statistical significance with a p-value of*

0.017; and strategic leadership lacked statistical significance (P=0.133). The study recommended that MOEST need a policy to encourage secondary schools' principals to be more directive in guiding middle managers towards career progression. Recommendations on further research on the influence of supportive and strategic leadership approaches on career progression among middle managers in secondary schools was suggested.

Key Words: Career Progression, Leadership Approaches, Middle Managers.

INTRODUCTION

Secondary school principals' supportive role is increasingly becoming important not only in educational leadership but also in career progressions among middle managers. Progressing in career is a critical aspect of teachers' employment life considering that it comes with increased pay accompanying opportunities for individual development. In acknowledging that career progression provides opportunities for teachers in secondary schools to develop, Lee and

Fei (2021) argued that it is a pathway towards a position every middle manager hopes to attain.

At the time of getting a teaching job, middle managers in secondary schools aspired for a specific attainment before retirement that sometimes along the way becomes challenging to achieve. In agreeing that career progression is sometimes challenging, Mutanga et al (2021) noted that a number of determinants influence middle managers' journey towards achieving individual aspirations as a teacher in secondary schools. Such determinants include secondary schools' principals' leadership approaches and according to Don and Raman (2019) they have a role to motivate staff towards achieving individual career aspirations. Generally, career progression is highly dependent on secondary school principals' leadership styles as a key determinant of among middle managers' job satisfaction. In addition, Chi and Pan (2012) argued that apart from being a factor in job satisfaction among middle manager secondary school principals' leadership styles had an impact on their organizational commitment. Ideally, secondary school principals' leadership style beyond having influence on individual middle manager's job satisfaction and organizational commitment, plays a critical role in career progression.

Middle managers in secondary schools include deputy principals and heads of departments (HoDs) in some occasions experience a contemptuous influence towards career progression from institutional leaderships. Such a situation as argued by Lee and Fei (2021) may arise when the secondary school principals fail to mobilize the

necessary conducive environment to encourage middle managers focus on career progression.

In practice, career progression is highly dependent on secondary school principals' leadership approaches as a key determinant of job satisfaction and organizational commitment among middle managers. Don and Raman (2019) argued that supportive secondary school principals act as a social midway station between the national human resource management policy and individual middle manager career aspirations. In acting as a midway station, secondary school principal acts as guides, controls and provides leadership in a way that supports aspirations of middle managers towards career progression. Further, Banjarnahor et al (2018) added that secondary school principals practicing supportive leadership that is also directive will strategically to empower middle managers with minimal supervision for future promotion. Following observations of both Irungu et al (2019) and that of Irungu et al (2019) the role of secondary schools' principals as a determinant in career progression among middle managers warranted investigation. Therefore, this study looked at the influence of secondary school principals' leadership style on career progression of middle managers in Nairobi County, Kenya.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

In most cases there is no uniformity in career progression, some middle managers move faster while in others there is evident stagnation across the country Nairobi County included.

As prescribed in TSC's Career Progression Guidelines (CPG), **secondary school system should provide a platform for continuous knowledge gain for middle managers to have equal** opportunities whenever vacancies are announced by TSC. However, this seems not be the cases as noted from available scholarly literature indicating that secondary schools' principals' leadership approaches that could influence career progression among middle managers in secondary schools. Understandably there is a directional relationship between principals' leadership approaches and middle managers in terms of leadership in secondary schools. This study therefore is focused at establishing the influence of supportive, directive and strategic principals' leadership approaches on career progression among middle managers in secondary schools in Nairobi County, Kenya.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study was to establish the effect of leadership approaches on career progressions among middle managers in public secondary schools in Nairobi County, Kenya. Specifically, this study looked at the effect of supportive, directive and strategic leadership approaches on career progression among middle managers in public secondary schools in Nairobi County, Kenya.

STUDY HYPOTHESIS

The study hypothesized that there is no significant relationship between supportive, directive and strategic leadership approaches and career progressions among middle managers in public secondary schools in Nairobi County, Kenya.

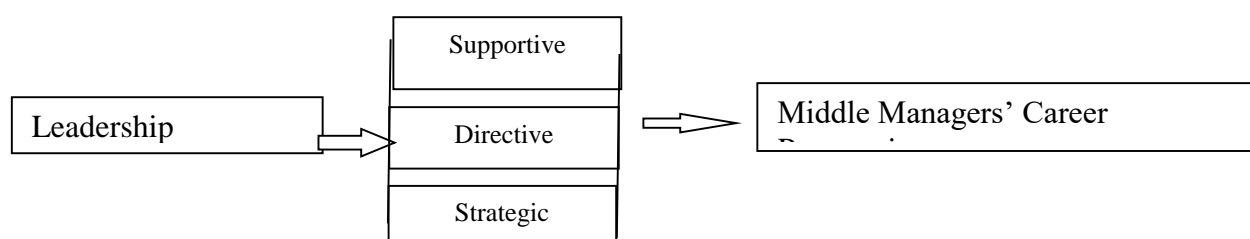
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study took an eclectic approach (Shaibu & Ejeh 2017) to present Path-Goal Theory proposed by **Martin Evans in 1970** to provide an underpinning theoretical base on secondary schools' principals leadership approaches on career progression among middle managers within Nairobi County Kenya. According to Vandegrift and Matusitz (2011), Evans **based his work on Victor Vroom's expectancy theory**, which suggests individuals are motivated to perform if they know their performance will be recognized and rewarded. This study considered career progression a motivating reward for middle managers performance in secondary schools. In adopting this theory, the study looked at secondary school principals' leadership approaches as a contingent upon satisfaction, motivation and performance on middle managers in secondary schools. Bhatti et al (2015) noted that Path-Goal theory explains the sense of purpose middle managers would have toward the collective goal and focus to gain the necessary management experiences a requisite factor in career progression.

The theory examines role of secondary schools' principals in provide a conducive environment for middle managers to accomplish goals and the fact that individual work performance is a significant factor in career progression among middle managers in secondary schools. However, according to path-goal theory for middle managers pursue career goals it is secondary school principal's leadership responsibility to remove obstacles that would derail their promotion (Pool, 2011).

Whatever would hinder middle managers from attaining career aspiration are leadership obstacles in secondary schools. In practice, leadership approaches determine the level of policy adherence in secondary schools and in return influence career progression among middle managers. Further, Vandegrift and Matusitz (2011) argued that when secondary school leadership fails to remove obstacles on a path around professional development, career progression becomes an illusion. To reduce career progression obstacles, secondary school's leadership needs to provide opportunity for middle managers to acquire skills and knowledge through management responsibilities.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK



METHODOLOGY

This study was *ex-post facto* research design to provide a statistical measure on the determinants of career progression among middle managers in secondary schools in Nairobi County. This study sought information from 728 middle managers comprising 104 deputy principals and 624 heads of departments (HODs) plus 104 principals in 104 public secondary schools totaling to a target population of 850. Stratified random sampling was used to select 34 public secondary schools and random sample two HODs were selected from the sampled institution sample size of 136.

The study used questionnaires for middle managers plus interview schedules to collect data from school principals. This combination of the tools enabled holistic data capture which raised depth and breadth of insights gathered, facilitating triangulation of findings (Nadarasa & Thuraisingam, 2014). Both quantitative and qualitative techniques were utilized to process and analyze the collected data. Processing qualitative data involved coding open-ended data, digitalization, cleaning to correct missing or misplaced codes, transform action of scale of measurement to facilitate analysis and aggregation of perceptions into thematic analysis.

Quantitative analysis involved descriptive statistics to generate frequency distributions and percentages plus inferential statistics through linear regressions to determine the relationship between career progression as dependent variable and leadership approaches as independent variable.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Career progression is dependent on secondary school principals' leadership approaches and a key determinant of organizational commitment among middle managers. In this a return rate of 72.8% which included 26 (76.5%) principals out of 34 in participating secondary schools while out of 126 sampled middle managers in participating secondary schools 73.5% (75) filled up questionnaires. The dependent variable was career progression rate among middle managers in secondary schools which was established as in Table 1.

Table 1 Rate of Career Progression among Middle Managers

Rate of career progression	N	Percent
Lowest	30	40.0
Low	25	33.3
Moderate	14	18.7
High	6	8.0
Total	75	100

From Table 1, it indicated that there is low career progression among middle managers in secondary schools within Nairobi County with 73.3% in agreement with 18.7% rated it moderate and only 8% felt it is at higher rate.

These results are indicative of low motivation among majority of middle managers which could lead into lower commitment and is in concurrence with Bayar and Karaduman (2021) assertion that with morale due to promotion, performance would be wanting. In practice, middle managers expectation would influence individual behaviour and degree of career motivation. Higher expectations and the resultant lower degree of career motivation could explain the challenge of retention of middle managers in secondary schools continue as argued by Kiptum (2018) in a study on teachers' professional conduct and work performance.

PRINCIPAL DEMOGRAPHICS

The study intended to offer an insightful view of relationship between various demographic variables of the school principals and career progression among middle managers in secondary schools within Nairobi County. The results are presented in Table 2

Variables	Categories	N	Percentage
Gender	Male	14	53.8%
	Female	12	46.2%
	Total	26	100%
Academic Qualifications	Graduate	10	38.5%
	PGD in Education	3	11.5%
	Masters in Education	12	46.2%
	PhD	1	3.8
	Total	26	100
Years as a Teacher	Under 5	0	0.0
	6-10	0	0.0
	11-15	4	15.4
	16-20	14	53.8
	Over 20	8	30.8
	Total	26	100.0
Years as a Senior Master	Under 5	7	26.9
	6-10	15	57.7
	11-15	3	11.5
	16-20	1	3.8
	Over 20	0	0.0
	Total	26	100.0
Years as a D/principal	Under 5	9	34.6
	6-10	14	53.8
	Over 10 years	3	11.5
	Total	26	100
Years in current Position	Under 5	11	42.3
	6-10	14	53.8
	11-15	1	3.8
	Total	26	100

Table 2 indicates that 53.8% (14) of the secondary school principals who participated were males while 46.2% (12) were females, an indication that both genders are represented in institutional leadership in Nairobi County. CPG from TSC outline the academic and professional criteria for middle managers in secondary schools' career advancement with no mention of gender orientation for principals. Regarding qualifications, majority of secondary school principals had master's degree in education (46.2%), while 38.5% (10) are education graduates, 11.5% (3) percent had postgraduate diploma in education and 3.8% percent with PhD.

This is an indication that all secondary school principals were qualified to guide and manage career progressions among middle managers in

Nairobi County. This qualification is further affirmed by the fact that all secondary school principals in Nairobi have been teachers for over ten years which give them what Leonard and Olubunmi (2022) referred to as human competencies. It is also indicated that 53.8% (14) of secondary school principals in Nairobi have been in service for 16-20 years with 30.8% (8) having worked for more than 20 years and have developed unique set of experiences, perspectives, beliefs, and emotional and social requirements in human resource management.

Having arose from a progressive structure that originating from time of employment as teacher through ranks (TSC 2018) most principals in Nairobi County have the requisite experience to boost middle managers morale as far career aspirations are concerned (Nadarasa & Thuraisingam 2014).

Effectiveness secondary school principals gaining captivating performance as team leaders is dependent on experiences first as senior masters and the deputy principals as noted by Kinyua and Muchanje (2023). Experiences of secondary school principals which include majority having been senior masters and deputies for more than five years according to Bayar and Karaduman (2021) enhances their capacities in to work with middle managers in decision-making and encouraging team problem solving initiatives.

Experience of secondary school principals as established in this study would enable them to practice strategic, supportive and directive leadership approaches towards influencing career progression among middle teachers. Specifically, at current position 53.8% (14) had experience of 6-10 years as institutional heads, 42.3% (11) for under five years with only 3.8% having more than 10 years.

MIDDLE MANAGERS DEMOGRAPHICS

It is worth noting that middle managers' career progression is shaped by the broader legal and policy framework and substantially there is are variations across countries. In Kenya, TSC has a policy criterion for promotion of middle managers in secondary schools as career progression guide (Kiptum, 2018).

In practice, career progression policy provides step by step policy in promotion for middle managers in secondary schools. This study purposed to establish determinants in career progression among middle managers in public secondary schools in Nairobi County. Table 3 has the profile of middle managers who participated in the study.

Table 3 Middle Managers Demographic Information

Variables		Low		Moderate		High		Total
Variables	Categories	n	%	n	%	n	%	Total (n, %)
Gender	Male	29	38.7	11	14.7	43	5.7	44,58.7
	Female	24	32.0	56	6.7	27	3.5	31, 41.3
	Total	53	70.7	16	21.3	60	8.0	75, 100.0
Age	Under 25	0	0.0	1	1.3	1	1.3	2,2.7

	25-34	9	12.0	3	4.0	1	1.3	13,17.3
	35-45	17	22.7	3	4.0	1	1.3	21,28.0
	45-55	26	34.7	9	12.0	3	4.0	38,50.7
	Over 55	1	1.3	0	0.0	0	0.0	1,1.3
	Total	53	70.7	16	21.3	6	8.0	75, 100.0
Academic Qualifications	SI/ Diploma	1	1.3	0	0.0	0	0.0	1, 1.3
	Graduate	31	41.3	1	1.3	3	4.0	45,60.0
	Post-Graduate Dip. Ed	6	8.0	1	1.3	0	0.0	7, 9.3
	M. Ed	14	18.7	4	5.3	3	4.0	21,28.0
	PhD	1	1.3	0	0.0	0	0.0	1,1.3
	Total	53	70.7	16	21.3	6	8.0	75, 100.0
Years as a Teacher	Under 5	0	0.0	1	1.3	0	0.0	1,1.3
	6-10	6	8.0	1	1.3	3	4.0	10,13.3
	11-15	12	16.0	3	4.0	0	0.0	15,20.0
	16-20	10	13.3	4	5.3	0	0.0	14,18.0
	Over 20	25	33.3	7	9.3	3	4.0	35,46.7
	Total	53	70.7	16	21.3	6	8.0	75, 100.0
Years in this School	Under 5	18	24.0	6	8.0	5	6.7	25,33.3
	6-10	17	22.7	7	9.3	0	0.0	29,38.7
	11-15	6	8.0	1	1.3	0	0.0	7,9.3
	16-20	6	8.0	2	2.7	0	0.0	8,10.7
	Over 20	6	8.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	6,8.0
	Total	53	70.7	16	21.3	6	8.0	75,100.0
Years in Current Position	Under 5	13	17.3	6	8.0	1	1.3	20,26.7
	6-10	29	38.7	6	8.0	2	2.7	37,49.3
	11-15	5	6.7	4	5.3	1	1.3	10,13.3
	16-20	4	5.3	0	0.0	1	1.3	5,6.7
	Over 20	2	2.7	0	0.0	1	1.3	3,4.0
	Total	53	70.7	16	21.3	6	8.0	75, 100.0

a) Gender

Table 3 indicates that there are more male middle managers than their female counterparts in secondary schools within Nairobi County. It is shown in the table that male middle managers are 58.7% (44) while females are 41.3% (31) against the fact that most scholars have established existence of more female teachers in Nairobi (Irungu et al (2019). Given the fact that Nairobi City secondary schools have more female teachers, expectations are that male middle managers should be less. These results are vindicated by findings from Muchanje et al (2016) study on factors influencing career progression of tutors in public primary teachers' training colleges in Kenya that that gender was not significantly related to tutors' promotion. Contrary to Muchanje et al (2016) assertion, Penelope (2018) in a study on factors affecting female teachers in career progression in public secondary schools in Chingola District of Zambia revealed that female teachers found it hard to lobby for leadership positions, which could explain the Nairobi County scenario.

b) Age

Results in Table 3 indicates that majority of middle managers secondary schools within Nairobi County fall within 45-55 years of age making up to 50.7% (38) of the total followed by those aged 35-44 years old (28%). Middle managers aged 25-34 years old are 17.3% (13), below 25 years old are 2.7% (2) and above 55 years old are 1.3% (1). These results are in concurrence with Bayar and Karaduman (2021) assertion that there might be a positive relationship between age and promotion

opportunities since the upper levels administration are usually not open to less experienced teachers in secondary schools. In Kenya graduate teachers join the profession earliest at 22 years old explaining possibility of middle managers at 25 years of age, but as explained by Oyier et al (2017) that age comes with experience, a significant factor in career consideration and hence more middle managers in older categories.

c) Qualifications and Experience

Most middle managers in secondary schools in Nairobi County were graduate teachers with bachelor of education degree (60%) with a sizable number having masters qualifications (28.3%). In terms of professional years as teachers, majority (46.7%) of middle managers have worked for more than twenty years, followed with those who have worked for 11-15 years (20%) and those with 16-20 years (18%) in secondary schools. From the results above 64 out of 75 middle managers who participated in this study have worked as teachers for more 15 years, but only 4 feels career progression rate has been high enough.

According to CPG, after any promotion middle managers has a minimum of 3 years before the next career progression. However, in table 3 it is indicated that nearly a half (49.5%) of middle managers have remained in current position for 6-10 years, 13.3% (10) have stayed without promotion for 11-15 years, 6.7% (5) for 16-20 years and 4.0% (3) for over twenty years in same position.

As much as experience could be a career progression determinant many middle managers seem to have stayed in same position for a longer time than stipulated in the CPG. Worse off, 38.7% (29) have stayed in the same secondary school for 6-10 years and 28% (18) for over 10 years in one institution. The findings were contrary to Nadarasa and Thuraisingam (2014) assertion that length of service, teaching and administrative ability should be the most important promotion criteria.

DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS ON PRINCIPALS LEADERSHIP APPROACHES

This study sought to answer the extent to which secondary school principals' leadership approaches would influence career progression among middle managers in Nairobi County, Kenya. Specifically, the study looked at supportive, directive and strategic leadership approaches influence on career progression among middle managers. The dimension of school principals' leadership was measured using 12 perception statements for middle managers who were asked to indicate their frequency on the five-point ordinal scale, calibrated as "lowest", "low", "moderate", "high", and "highest". Additionally, the analysis of composite means of the variables provides a clearer picture of the overall influence of secondary school principals leadership approaches on career progression among middle managers in Nairobi County.

Supportive leadership in secondary schools involve principals working with middle managers in an empowerment process to gain appropriate skills

enough for handling tasks with minimal supervision in the future. Middle managers opinion on involvement through delegation and guidance until completion of tasks as aspects of supportive leadership as critical factor in career progression was sought and the results posted in Table 4

Table 4 Middle Managers Perception on Supportive Leadership

Supportive Leadership Statements	VL	L	M	H	VH	Mean	Std. Dev
Principal maintains a positive teaching and learning environments for staff professional development	0 (0.0%)	4 (5.3%)	0 (0.0%)	16 (21.3%)	55 (73.0%)	4.63	0.749
Principals embrace teamwork towards targets to be achieved	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	15 (20.0%)	18 (24.0%)	42 (56.0%)	4.36	0.799
Principal is continuously mentoring middle managers toward career progression	11 (14.6%)	4 (5.3%)	8 (10.7%)	9 (12.0%)	43 (57.3%)	3.92	1.496

The principal encourages dialogue on available career progression on vacancies	11 (14.6%)	1 (1.3%)	17 (22.7%)	21 (28.0%)	25 (33.3%)	3.65	1.341
Average	7.3%	4.0%	13.2%	21.3%	54.9%	4.14	1.096

The results in Table 4 indicates that secondary school principals created and maintained positive teaching and learning environments that encouraged middle managers professional development with a confirmation from over 90% (21.7% & 73.0%) middle managers (Mean 4.63, SD=0.749). The mean score of 4.63 implies that creation of a positive learning environment highly influenced career progression among middle managers in secondary schools within Nairobi County.

Again, it is indicated that secondary school principals encouraged teamwork among middle managers towards achieving targets as shown by 80% (24.0% & 56%) of middle managers (Mean=4.36, SD= 0.799). In concurrence, Zhao (2018) argued that supportive institutional leader does not simply delegate tasks and receive results but instead would embrace teamwork among middle managers until the tasks are completely done. Additionally, the results showed that close to 70% (12% & 57.3%) of middle managers regarded supportive principals as mentors (Mean= 3.92, SD= 1.496).

These results echoed Chi and Pan (2012) assertion that secondary schools' principals provide emotional support for middle managers towards career progression and this supportive role is more satisfying through creating a feeling of happiness in work. Further, secondary schools' principals encouraged dialogue on available career progression vacancies as indicated by in Table 4.8 by about 60% (28% & 33.3%25) middle managers with a mean of 3.65 (SD=1.341). As noted by Bayar and Karaduman (2021) appreciation through promotion would enable middle managers grow a sense of self-esteem and commit to respective institutions and works. Ideally, motivated teacher due to promotion would be willing to help students and provide prompt service in secondary schools (Kiptum, 2018).

In total, Table 4 indicates that over 75% (21.3% & 54.9) of middle managers regarded supportive leadership among secondary school principals had an influence career progression in Nairobi County. The overall mean of 4.14 is in tandem with Zheng et al (2017) assertion that the basic purpose of the human resource management role of secondary school principal is to enhance the confidence among middle managers' attitude towards educational goals.

This study considered directive leadership among secondary school principals as a task-oriented approach that prepares middle managers for career progression.

Table 5: Middle Managers Perception on Directive Leadership

Directive Leadership Statements	VL	L	M	H	VH	Mean	Std. Dev
The principal is assertively in ensuring targets are achieved	0 (0.0%)	11 (14.6%)	25 (33.3%)	20 (26.7%)	19 (25.3%)	3.63	1.024
Principal make middle managers aware of performance expectations	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	15 (20.0%)	30 (40.0%)	30 (40.0%)	4.2	0.753
Principals expect middle managers to fully complete given tasks	0 (0.0%)	11 (14.6%)	19 (25.3%)	32 (42.7%)	13 (17.3%)	3.63	0.941
The principal decisively sticks to rules and procedures toward completion of tasks	0 (0.0%)	11 (14.6%)	20 (26.7%)	15 (20.0%)	29 (38.7%)	3.83	1.107
Average	0.0%	11.0%	26.3%	32.0%	30.2%	3.82	0.956

Table 5 indicates secondary schools' principals assertively ensured targets were achieved as perceived by over 95% (33.3%, 26.7% & 25.3%) of middle managers (Mean 3.63, SD = 1.024). In tandem with these results, Bell et al (2014) considered directive leadership rewarding because secondary school principals practicing it provide

guidance to middle managers in taking decisions and actions that may influence career progression. Again, results indicate that 100% middle managers agreed that principals made middle managers aware of individual performance expectations (Mean 4.2, SD= 0.753) in preparation for career progression. Again, results show that over 80% (25.3%, 42.7% & 17.3%) of middle managers agreed that principals practicing directive leadership expected full completion of given tasks for everyone (Mean 3.63, SD= 0.941) as part of preparations for career progression.

These results agreed with Rani et al (2013) assertion on directive leadership that secondary school principals practicing it remove obstacles that may prevent middle managers from career progression as an award for appreciation. Further, results show that over 80% (26.7%, 20% and 38.7%) of middle managers agreed that principals in secondary schools within Nairobi County decisively stuck to rules and procedures in ensuring tasks were completed (Mean 3.68, SD = 1.107). Table 5 indicates that, directive leadership among principals in secondary schools is highly appreciated by 62.2% (32.0% & 30.2) as a determinant of career progression. This was confirmed by a general mean of 3.82, which was in concurrence with Leonard and Olubunmi (2022) assertion that secondary school principals take active roles in setting clear objectives in guiding middle managers towards achieving career aspirations.

This echoed Shaibu and Ejeh (2017) argument that that secondary schools' principals practicing directive-style leadership act aggressively and controlled, a characteristic which is critical in shaping abilities of middle managers towards career progression.

A strategic leadership balances interests of various stakeholders in the school setting hinged on vision, mission, strategy, and strategic objectives towards career progression. In this study, the focus was on establishing influence of strategic leadership in creating comparative advantage that would enhance career progression among middle managers among secondary schools in Nairobi County, Kenya. Table 6 presents middle managers perception on strategic leadership among secondary schools in Nairobi County Kenya.

Table 6: Middle Managers Perception of Strategic Leadership

Strategic Leadership Statements	VL	L	M	H	VH	Mean	Std. Dev
The principal guides on available positions for career progression	4 (5.3 %)	6 (8.0 %)	18 (24.0 %)	21 (28.0 %)	26 (34.7 %)	3.79	1.166
The principal equally considers middle managers for promotion	5 (6.7 %)	0 (0.0 %)	31 (41.3 %)	23 (30.7 %)	16 (21.3 %)	3.6	1.04
Principal balances interests of various stakeholders in career progression	0 (0.0 %)	8 (10.7 %)	22 (29.3 %)	22 (29.3 %)	23 (30.7 %)	3.8	1.09
Principal expects teaching-learning a collaborative venture with middle managers	4 (5.3 %)	3 (4.0 %)	20 (26.7 %)	12 (16.0 %)	36 (48.0 %)	3.97	1.185
Average	4.3 %	5.5 %	30.3 %	25.8 %	33.4 %	3.79	1.121

From Table 6, it is indicated that close to 90% (24%, 28.5 & 34.7%) of middle managers agreed that principals practicing strategic leadership gave a guidance on available positions for career progression (Mean 3.79, SD = 1.166).

Again, the results also showed that over 90% (41.3%, 30.7% & 21.3%) of middle managers agreed that secondary school principals in Nairobi County practicing strategic leadership equally considered qualified middle managers for promotion (Mean 3.6, SD= 1.04) when vacancies arise. In giving guidance and giving preference to those qualified for promotion, principals practicing strategic leadership acted in concurrence with Prasertcharoensuk and Tang (2017) argument that that middle managers individually attribute of rareness for consideration in career progression. Career progression interests many stakeholders and the results in indicate that close to 90% (29.3%, 29.3% & 30.7%) of middle managers agreed that principals practicing strategic leadership in Nairobi balanced these within institutional setting (Mean 3.8 SD = 1.01).

Given that middle managers have varies abilities Kiptum (2018) opined that principal practicing strategic leadership need to encourage teamwork in decision-making regarding career progression. Further, results indicate that slightly over 90% of middle managers agreed that principals practicing strategic leadership expects teaching-learning a collaborative venture with middle managers (Mean 3.97 SD 1.185). In concurrence, Prasertcharoensuk and Tang (2017) asserted that strategic principals motivated and guided middle managers career aspirations by creating a positive institutional culture to favour all irrespective of stakeholders' positions.

In general, Table 6 shows that 30.3% of middle managers moderately, 25.8% had a high regard and 33.4% very highly agreed that appreciate strategic leadership among secondary school principals. With an overall means of 3.79, these results were in tandem with Mahdi and Almasfir (2014) view that strategic leadership among secondary school principals provided a policy orientation that guide decisions and actions as a base for formulation and implementation of plans designed to enhance career progression for middle managers.

Inferential Statistics on Principals' Leadership Approaches and Career Progression

The study utilized linear regression to model the relationship between career progression and leadership approaches in terms of supportive leadership, directive leadership, and strategic leadership. The linear regression equation is represented as;

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \epsilon \dots\dots\dots (1)$$

Where β_0 represents the intercept (baseline career progression among middle managers), $\beta_1 X_1$, $\beta_2 X_2$, $\beta_3 X_3$ denote coefficients quantifying the impact of each leadership attribute, and ϵ denotes the error term accounting for unexplained variability. The model summary results were presented in table 7.

Table 7 Model Summary (Leadership Approaches)

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.292 ^a	.085	.047	.93443
a. Predictors: (Constant), Strategic, Supportive, Directive				
b. Dependent Variable: Rate your career progression				

Table 7 indicate that the correlation coefficient (R) value of 0.292 was realized, indicating a moderate positive linear relationship between leadership approaches (independent variables) and career progression among middle managers (dependent variable). This value of R suggests that as the leadership attributes, such as supportive leadership, directive leadership, and strategic leadership, increase, there is a likelihood for career progression among middle managers, albeit moderately. In addition, the coefficient of determination (R-squared) value was 0.085, which indicates that approximately 8.5% of the variance in career progression among middle managers could be explained by the independent variables, namely supportive leadership, directive leadership, and strategic leadership.

Additionally, the analysis yielded the adjusted R-squared value of 0.047, which considers the number of predictors in the model, reflects a slight decrease compared to the R-squared value, indicating that the additional predictors have contributed marginally to the explanatory power of the model. The results of the ANOVA (Analysis of Variance) test are shown in table 8.

Table 8 ANOVA (Leadership Approaches)

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	5.793	3	1.931	2.211	.094 ^b
Residual	61.994	71	.873		
Total	67.787	74			
a. Dependent Variable: Rate your career progression					
b. Predictors: (Constant), Strategic, Supportive, Direct					

Under the Regression section, the results show the sum of squares, which represents the variability in career progression among middle managers explained by the regression model. Table 8 indicates that the model accounts for 5.793 units of variability in career progression among middle managers. This insight is complemented by the degrees of freedom, reflecting the number of predictors in the model—namely, supportive leadership, directive leadership, and strategic leadership, which stand at 3. Calculating the mean square provides an average measure of variability explained by each predictor, further elucidating the impact of leadership approaches on career progression among middle managers. The F statistic, with a value of 2.211, underscored the significance of the regression model, indicating a substantial improvement in prediction compared to scenarios with no predictors.

Moving to the residual section, the sum of squares signifies the unexplained variability in career progression not accounted for by the regression model. With 74 degrees of freedom for the residuals, the mean square offers an average measure of this unexplained variability in career progression among middle managers.

Lastly, the total section amalgamates the total variability in career progression among middle managers, integrating both the explained and unexplained variability career progression among middle managers. The small p-value (Sig.) of 0.094 (denoted as "b") indicates that the observed career progression among middle managers is unlikely due to random chance, further reinforcing the importance of the predictors (supportive leadership, directive leadership, and strategic leadership) being career progression determinants. The results of coefficients of leadership approaches are presented in table 9.

Table 9 Coefficients (Leadership Approaches)

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.014	.581		3.465	.001
	Supportive	.085	.062	.345	1.379	.172
	Directive	-.181	.074	-.618	-2.436	.017
	Strategic	.085	.056	.266	1.520	.133
a. Dependent Variable: Rate of career progression						

The results from Table 9 provided insights into the impact of each predictor variable Supportive leadership, Directive leadership, and Strategic leadership as determinants of career progression among middle managers in secondary schools. Specifically, Supportive leadership yielded an unstandardized coefficient (B) of 0.084, indicating a minimal effect on career progression.

The standardized coefficient (Beta) of 0.345 further confirmed this minimal impact, indicating that supportive leadership had a negligible influence on career progression when expressed in standard deviation units. Additionally, the t-value of 1.379 and the associated p-value of 0.172 suggested that the coefficient for supportive leadership was not statistically significant in career progression among middle managers. In contrast, directive leadership also produced significant effect on career progression among middle managers, with an unstandardized coefficient of 0.181 and a standardized coefficient of 0.618. The t-value of 2.436 and the associated p-value of 0.017 indicates statistical significance, suggesting that directive leadership has a significant impact career progression among middle managers.

In strategic leadership, the t-value of 1.320 and the associated p-value of 0.133 indicated lack of statistical significance, underscoring minimal meaningful contribution of strategic leadership to variations in career progression among middle managers. As a consequence, the linear regression model may be summarized as:

$$\text{Career Progression among Middle Managers} = 1.014 + .172 (\text{Supportive leadership}) + .017 (\text{Directive leadership}) + .133 (\text{Strategic leadership}) - 0.133$$

Based on the analysis provided, the study's null hypothesis, stated as "*Ho1. There is no statistically significant relationship between leadership approaches and career progression among middle managers Nairobi County, Kenya,*" was rejected as untrue.

This rejection occurred because directive leadership was found to be significantly associated with career progression among middle managers at a 95% confidence interval. Therefore, the regression model offers evidence that leadership approaches play a significant role in predicting career progression among middle managers, with directive leadership emerging as the most significant determinant in enhancing career progression among middle managers.

CONCLUSION

The study results on school leadership highlights how supportive, directive and strategic approaches contribute towards career progression among middle managers in secondary schools in Nairobi County. There was evidence that secondary school principals acknowledged that supportive leadership involve working with middle managers in an empowerment process to gain appropriate skills enough for handling tasks with minimal supervision. Secondly, middle managers appreciated involvement through delegation and guidance completing critical tasks by underscoring the importance of teamwork in career progression.

Results indicated that often secondary school principals encourage middle managers to work with colleagues and appropriately guide one another towards individual career aspirations. Further, the findings indicate that secondary school principals embrace strategic leadership by taking an active in setting clear objectives to guide middle managers towards achieving career aspirations.

In this case the middle managers are made aware of performance expectation through properly laid down directives. It is clear that supportive institutional leader does not simply provide a conducive instructional environment, but instead would embrace teamwork among middle managers until the tasks are completed. Embracing teamwork would require mentorship attainment of educational goals in supportive leadership. Further, secondary school principals practicing directive leadership expect full accomplishment of tasks from middle managers by being stringent as far as following policy regulations and rules are concerned.

In conclusion, to ensure fairness in consideration for career progression, secondary school principals need to appreciate individual middle managers' attributes when considerations are being made for promotions through an internal institutional policy on career progression.

RECOMMENDATIONS

This study suggested recommendations targeting policy and research opportunities. In this regard policy recommendations as that MOEST need a policy that will encourage secondary schools' principals to be supportive and strategic in guiding middle managers towards career progression. On further research, the study recommended the investigation on the influence of supportive and strategic leadership approaches on career progression among middle managers in secondary schools.

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