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## Strategies Employed by Heads of Schools in Managing Teachers' Behaviours in Public Secondary Schools

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### Abstract

*This study aimed to assess the school heads strategies in managing teachers' behaviours in public secondary schools. The study involved 30 participants whereby 4 were heads of schools and 26 teachers selected from four public secondary schools. The study employed a qualitative research approach in which data were collected using interviews, focus group discussion and documentary review. The study used a case study research design, and the data collected were analyzed thematically. Findings of this revealed that there are various strategies which can be used by heads of schools so as to manage teachers' behaviours in public secondary schools. The strategies included; heads of schools to reprimand teachers, the use of communication strategy, compromising in which heads of schools tend to negotiate and advise teachers on certain misbehaviours practiced by such teacher, avoidance strategy, cooperation as well as the use of punishment. . Based on these findings, the study recommends that heads of schools should establish regular meetings between them and teachers to discuss expectations, address concerns, and foster open dialogue as well as implementing structured feedback mechanisms where teachers can express concerns and provide input on management practices.*

**Keywords:** Management; School heads' strategies; Teachers' behaviours; secondary schools

### 1. Background of the Study

Teachers' behaviours refer to the actions, attitudes and mannerisms displayed by teachers in the educational setting (Munir, 2020). This encompasses the total ways in which teachers behave, for

instance when interacting with students and/or other fellow teachers, deliver instruction, manage classroom, provide feedback and provide professionalism.

Kamete (2014), expresses that in public secondary schools there are behaviours which are not acceptable for example, conflict behaviours. The nature and types of conflicts that occur in secondary school administration vary from one school to another. Conflict also consists actions that we take to express our feelings, articulate our perception and get our need met in a way that has potential for interfering with someone else ability to get his or her needs met (Moshia, 2018). This conflict behaviour may involve a direct attempt to make something happen at someone else's expense. It may be an exercise of power, violet or destructive.

Teachers behaviours which were scrutinized by Maliyamkono (2011), are such as inability to perform task assigned, unauthorized *absenteeism*, setting unrealistic targets for teachers, setting goals that are not specific, engaging teachers in crash programs where they have to cover wide sections of syllabuses in a fraction time, careless in implementation of school policies, unreasonable demands by school administration, drunkardness, love affairs with students among male teachers and carelessness among teachers.

Peregrino, Caballes, Necio and Pasion (2021), asserted that when teachers behave in un-accepted manner, the situation creates lack of tranquility in school. Therefore, teachers' behaviour management is crucial for creating a positive learning environment where students feel safe, engaged, and motivated to learn. Heads of schools are the one who are responsible for managing teachers' behaviour and ensuring that they behave according to directives as per their profession like to attend school regularly and actively participate in teaching and learning activities, working collaboratively with their colleagues and other school staff.

In managing teachers' behaviours, heads of schools are required to employ various and appropriate strategies (Harune, 2018). Strategies are carefully planned courses of action designed to achieve specific goals. Through the application of appropriate strategies in managing teachers' behaviours, Manaseh (2016), insisted that teachers may work effectively, efficiently, and collaboratively, overseeing various aspects of school affairs. Effective school leaders focus on critical issues related to learning, teaching, and the continuous improvement of schools. Effective management of teacher behaviours can lead to improved student outcomes, reduced disciplinary issues, and enhanced overall school performance (Karisa, 2015). However, head teachers are said to encounter various challenges when managing teachers' behaviours. These challenges may include resistance to change. Also, some teachers may be resistant to adopting new teaching methods or approaches proposed by the head teacher.

In other side Peregrino, Caballes, Necio and Pasion (2021), indicated lack of accountability in which to some cases teachers may not take responsibility for their actions or may disregard school policies. Poor communication between heads of schools and teachers can lead to misunderstandings and conflicts. Furthermore, teachers may face external pressures such as societal expectations, parental demands, or economic hardships, which can affect their behaviour at workplace.

Browarys and Price (2018), stipulated the management strategies that could be used to manage teachers' behaviours in Brazil such as compromise, collaboration, accommodation, coercion, confrontation, reconciliation, control of rewards, and climate of trust, formal authority, effective communication and avoidance. Also they base their approaches on the principles of authority and

unity of command to eliminate misbehaviours. They believe that misbehaviours could be eliminated or avoided in schools by recruiting the right people, carefully specifying job descriptions, structuring the organization in such a way as to establish a clear chain of command, and establishing clear rules and procedures to meet various contingencies.

Olaleye and Arogundade (2023), argued that different management strategies may lead to either desirable or undesirable outcomes depending on their effectiveness or ineffectiveness, respectively. Effective management strategy may result in desirable outcome such as smooth management, enhanced discipline, and effective management of time, team spirit, and effective use of resources, achievement of goals, good relationships and great value by stakeholders. However, according to Athiambo and Simatwa (2021), when ineffective management strategy is used, undesirable outcomes such as strikes, demonstrations, destruction of property, poor performance, emotional stress, and misallocation of resources, absence and frustration may occur.

Iqbal (2017), denoted that in Asia schools, principals use motivation strategy in managing teachers' behaviours. He stipulated that the strategy plays a critical role since teachers feel having shame on behaviours which can make the school principal hate. Due to that context, the strategy helps in enhancing teachers' performance and efficiency, ultimately influencing the quality of education. Motivated teachers are more focused on educational improvement and are less likely to create obstacles for school management in their efforts to enhance academic performance.

John and Mkulu (2020), explained that in Tanzania secondary schools, heads of schools use various strategies in managing teachers' behaviours in which collaboration strategy is included. Heads of schools work together with staff in discussing issues associated with teachers' behaviours. Heads of schools call upon those who misbehave or goes against his/her roles as per educational rules and directives and discuss together with staff to find out the solution. The application of this strategy is concurring with Karisa (2015) who pinpointed that in Tanzania when heads of schools collaborate with teachers on issues relating with teachers' behaviour, many teachers can willingly obey regulations at schools and hence increasing productivity. Decisions made at staff meetings as part of the application of collaborative strategy are crucial in managing teachers' behaviours which are contrary to school policies and practices which can have negative effects on students' academic performance.

While there is existing research on teacher behaviour and its management strategies, there is limited literature addressing the existing problem of teachers' behaviour and the strategies employed by heads of schools in order to manage teachers' behaviours. Also, for the few studies which have been conducted on the strategies employed by heads of schools, are silent on those strategies employed with their impact in managing teachers' behaviours. Therefore, the researcher under the current study intended to assess heads of schools employed strategies and their impact in managing teachers' behaviours in public secondary schools, exemplifying Kilolo District Council (DC).

## 2. Methods and material

This study was conducted in Kilolo district council in which four public secondary schools were selected from four wards namely; Irole, Lugalo, Ihimbo, and Kilolo. The selection of these wards was due to the fact that these wards in the study ensured a

comprehensive assessment across different areas within the Kilolo district. This approach provides a more representative sample of public secondary schools, capturing a range of management practices and challenges specific to various local contexts. It helps to account for regional differences and offers a broader perspective on the effectiveness of strategies for managing teachers' misbehaviors throughout the district.

The study employed a qualitative research approach with a case study research design. The target populations of this study included the heads of schools and teachers from selected public secondary schools. A sample size of 32 participants was selected from the population in which both simple random and purposive sampling techniques were employed. The data which were obtained, were analyzed qualitatively through content analysis. Finally, the researcher observed and followed all research ethical issues before going in the field for data collection, during data collection and during data analysis.

### 3. Results and Discussion

Regarding the strategies employed by heads of schools in managing teachers' behaviours in public secondary schools, the questions were responded by heads of schools and teachers in which the instruments used in data collection were interviews, Focus Group Discussion (FGD) as well as documentary reviews. In coping with teachers' behaviours in public secondary schools, heads of schools employed various strategies such as; heads of schools to reprimand teachers, the use of communication strategy, compromising in which heads of schools tend to negotiate and advise teachers on certain misbehaviours practiced by such teacher, avoidance strategy, cooperation as well as the use of punishment.

#### *Reprimanding Teachers*

Reprimanding is a strategy used by school leaders to address and correct undesirable behaviors among teachers. It involves direct communication about specific issues, emphasizing the importance of professional standards and expectations. By providing feedback, school heads aim to foster accountability and encourage improvement. Effective reprimanding is constructive, focusing on solutions and professional development rather than simply punishing the teacher. This approach helps maintain a positive school environment and promotes a culture of collaboration and growth.

The findings of the study revealed that the provision of reprimands is a commonly employed strategy by heads of schools to manage teachers' behaviours in public secondary schools. It was found that while reprimands can be effective in correcting misbehaviour, they must be implemented thoughtfully to avoid negatively impacting teacher morale. A balanced approach that includes constructive feedback, supportive measures, and fair application of policies will enhance the effectiveness of reprimands and contribute to a more positive and productive school environment. In the interview with HSs, they were quoted saying:

In managing teachers' behaviours, I employ various strategies. The use of certain strategy depends much on the nature of behaviours among teachers. I usually employ reprimands as a strategy to address and correct inappropriate behavior among teachers. It's a way to maintain discipline and ensure that all staff adhere to school policies and professional standards. This strategy is helpful especially for a teacher who is not much

affected by certain behavior i.e when a teacher starts drunkardness which was not his/her behavior before (Interview with HS from SB held on 11<sup>th</sup> July, 2024).

On the same vain, head SC had said:

Reprimands are part of our disciplinary procedures. They are intended to correct behavior and provide a clear message that certain actions are unacceptable. However, we aim to use this strategy as a last resort after other supportive measures have been tried (Interview with HS from SC held on 15<sup>th</sup> July, 2024).

Information obtained through FGDs with teachers highlight that when HSs are in grief and anguish caused by teachers' behaviours, they use reprimanding strategy to manage such behaviours. In the FGDs teachers had the following to say:

While reprimands are necessary at times, they should be part of a broader approach that includes support and development opportunities. This ensures that teachers understand how to improve and feel valued rather than just punished" (FGD, teacher 3 from public secondary SA held on 10<sup>th</sup> July, 2024).

Also, in the documents which were reviewed by the researcher during data collection it was found that there are various reprimanding letters which teachers were provided as a result of un-accepted behaviors they practiced. Therefore, the findings show that reprimands are a common strategy used by Heads of Schools to manage teacher behaviour. While they are seen as a necessary tool for maintaining discipline, there are concerns about their impact on teacher morale and the effectiveness of their implementation. Teachers view reprimands as a useful corrective measure but stress the importance of combining them with supportive and developmental approaches.

Reprimands can be an effective tool for addressing specific instances of misbehavior. They serve to remind teachers of the standards and expectations within the school, helping to correct inappropriate actions and maintain order. Frequent or poorly handled reprimands can negatively impact teacher morale. When reprimands are perceived as overly punitive or unfair, they can lead to decreased job satisfaction, lower motivation, and strained relationships between staff and administration. For reprimands to be effective, they should be delivered constructively. This means providing clear, actionable feedback on what the teacher needs to change and offering support to help them improve. Constructive reprimands can be more motivating and lead to positive behavioral changes.

Reprimands should be part of a broader strategy that includes supportive measures. This can involve providing additional training, mentoring, and resources to help teachers address the root causes of their behavior. Combining reprimands with supportive actions helps teachers feel valued and encouraged to improve. It is crucial for reprimands to be applied consistently and fairly. Clear policies and procedures should be in place to ensure that all staff members are held to the same standards and that reprimands are justified and appropriate.

#### *Communication strategy*

Communication is a strategy which involves open and transparent dialogue, where heads of schools share expectations, provide feedback, and address concerns. Effective communication fosters trust and collaboration, allowing teachers to feel supported and

understood. Regular check-ins and professional development discussions help clarify goals and encourage positive behaviours. The findings obtained from teachers and heads of schools stipulated that by maintaining clear, open, and constructive communication, schools can set clear expectations, provide valuable feedback, resolve conflicts, and foster a supportive environment. This approach not only helps in managing behavior but also enhances teacher engagement and performance, contributing to a more positive and productive school climate. In the interview with heads of schools they were quoted with the following to say:

There are several strategies which I use in managing teachers' behaviours at my school in which communication strategy is included. Effective communication is key to managing behavior. By maintaining clear and consistent communication channels, we can provide guidance, address concerns, and foster a collaborative environment that supports teachers in their professional development (Interview with HS from SD held on 18<sup>th</sup> July, 2024).

In the FGDs with teachers, informants indicated communication strategy to be essential in managing teachers' behaviours in public secondary schools. This was evidenced when one among teachers was quoted saying: *"Communication from the administration is crucial. When feedback is timely and constructive, it helps us understand what is expected and how we can improve. It also makes us feel more supported and valued"* (FGD, teacher 2 from SC held on 17<sup>th</sup> July, 2024).

Another teacher from SA said: *"Regular and open communication can prevent misunderstandings and conflicts. It allows teachers to voice their concerns and receive guidance, which helps in managing behavior and improving overall school dynamics"* (FGD, teacher 1 from SA held on 10<sup>th</sup> July, 2024).

The findings highlight that communication is a fundamental strategy used by heads of schools to manage teachers' behaviours. The findings is similar with that of Makaye and Ndofirepi (2014) in Zimbabwe in which it was identified that effective communication is the best strategy for managing teachers' behaviour because it makes teachers aware of the kind of communication which could lead to problem solving. According to Gikungu and Gunawan (2014), communication is a method of informing teachers about what is happening and when it is happening. It is the lifeblood of a school because it is impossible to carry out any of school's activities without communication.

#### **The Use of Compromise Strategy**

Compromise involves actively listening to teachers' concerns and perspectives while balancing the needs of the school. By fostering a collaborative approach, heads of schools negotiate solutions that satisfy both parties, promoting a sense of ownership and commitment. This strategy encourages teamwork and helps create a positive work environment, leading to enhanced cooperation and a more harmonious school culture. Heads of schools and teachers expressed their views engaging in negotiation and finding mutually acceptable solutions, schools resolve conflicts, foster collaboration, and maintain a positive working environment. This approach not only addresses behavioural issues effectively but also enhances teacher engagement and satisfaction, contributing to a more harmonious and productive school atmosphere. In the interviews, heads of schools had the following to say:

We use compromise as a strategy to manage teachers' behaviors when conflicts arise. By finding middle ground

and negotiating solutions, we can address issues while considering the needs and perspectives of both the teachers and the school. Compromise helps in resolving disputes and managing behavior effectively. It allows us to work collaboratively with teachers to find acceptable solutions that maintain harmony and support the overall goals of the school (Interview with HS from SD held on 18<sup>th</sup> July, 2024).

Also, in the FGDs with teachers they had the following to say: *"When conflicts or issues arise, a willingness to compromise can lead to better outcomes. It shows that the administration is open to understanding our concerns and working together to resolve problems"* (FGD, teacher 5 from SD held on 21<sup>st</sup> July, 2024).

*"Compromise can be effective in managing behavior; especially when both parties are willing to adjust their positions. It helps in finding solutions that work for everyone and fosters a more collaborative atmosphere"* (FGD, teacher 5 from SA held on 7<sup>th</sup> July, 2024).

Compromise was found to be a valuable strategy employed by heads of schools to manage teachers' behaviours in public secondary schools in Kilolo district. This approach not only addresses behavioural issues effectively but also enhances teacher engagement and satisfaction, contributing to a more harmonious and productive school atmosphere. The findings are the same with Ghaffar (2019) who stipulated that compromise is an effective tool for resolving conflicts between teachers and the administration. On the same vein, Saiti (2015) in Greece identified a compromise approach as a strategy which used by heads of schools in managing teachers' behaviours in schools. In this strategy, opposing parties maintain their differences while being obligated to find a solution that is equally acceptable to both parties before resolving. It's a middle-ground strategy based on assertiveness and cooperation, requiring a compromise in the search for an acceptable middle-ground for all parties.

#### **Avoidance Strategy**

Avoidance is a strategy that heads of schools use to manage teacher behaviours by not directly addressing certain issues. This approach is beneficial in situations where tensions are high or when a matter may resolve itself over time. By choosing not to confront every issue immediately, leaders can prevent escalation and maintain a calm environment. However, over-reliance on avoidance lead to unresolved problems, so it's important for heads of schools to balance this strategy with proactive measures when necessary. Avoidance is a strategy used by heads of schools to manage teachers' behaviours, particularly for minor issues or to prevent escalation. While it can be effective in certain situations, over-reliance on avoidance can lead to unresolved problems and negatively impact teacher morale. A balanced approach that includes both avoidance and proactive measures is essential for effective management. By ensuring clear communication and addressing issues in a timely manner, schools can maintain a positive and productive working environment. In the interviews with HSs, they had the following to say:

Avoidance is sometimes used as a strategy when dealing with minor behavioral issues or conflicts that don't require immediate intervention. It allows us to focus on more pressing issues while hoping that small problems resolve themselves over time. In some cases, avoidance can be a practical approach, especially if addressing an

issue directly might escalate tensions. However, we are careful not to over-rely on this strategy, as it can sometimes lead to unresolved problems (Interview with HS from SC held on 15<sup>th</sup> July, 2024).

In the FGDs, teachers had these to say: *“We have noticed that sometimes issues are avoided rather than addressed directly. This can be frustrating because it feels like problems are not being dealt with, which can affect our work environment”* (FGD, teacher 4 from SA held on 10<sup>th</sup> July, 2024).

The findings reveal that avoidance is a strategy employed by heads of schools to manage teachers' behaviours. The findings are consistent with Moore (2014) who found that avoidance is a strategy employed by heads of schools to manage teachers' behaviours. Avoidance strategy allows heads of schools to prioritize more serious concerns and manage their workload effectively. Over-reliance on avoidance can lead to unresolved issues that may escalate over time. Problems that are not addressed promptly can grow, leading to more significant conflicts and affecting the overall school environment.

When teachers perceive that issues are being avoided rather than addressed, it can lead to frustration and decreased morale. Teachers may feel that their concerns are not taken seriously, which can impact their engagement and performance. Effective management requires a balance between avoidance and proactive intervention. While avoidance can be appropriate in certain situations, it should be complemented by proactive measures to address and resolve underlying issues in a timely manner.

#### **Cooperation Strategy**

Cooperation is a strategy that school leaders use to foster a collaborative environment among teachers. By encouraging teamwork and shared decision-making, heads of schools promote a sense of community and collective responsibility. This approach helps build trust and open communication, allowing teachers to feel valued and engaged. When teachers work together to address challenges and set common goals, it enhances their commitment to positive behaviours and creates a supportive atmosphere that benefits the entire school. Encouraging cooperation among staff helps in creating a positive atmosphere, resolving conflicts, and promoting professional growth, ultimately leading to a more effective and harmonious school environment. In the interviews with HSs, one among heads of schools had this to say:

We actively promote cooperation among staff through team-building activities, collaborative projects, and open dialogue. This approach not only helps in managing behavior but also strengthens the overall school community and enhances professional relationships (Interview with HS from SA held on 7<sup>th</sup> July, 2024).

In the FGDs, teachers had the following to say:

When cooperation is encouraged, it creates a positive and supportive atmosphere. We feel more engaged and are more likely to address issues collectively rather than individually, which can lead to better outcomes (FGD, teacher 3 from SB held on 13<sup>th</sup> July, 2024).

The findings indicate that cooperation is a key strategy used by heads of schools to manage teachers' behaviours. Heads of schools view cooperation as essential for creating a positive work environment and resolving behavioural issues collaboratively. Teachers appreciate this approach, noting that cooperation leads to

a more supportive and effective work atmosphere. Encouraging cooperation among teachers fosters a collaborative work environment where issues are addressed collectively. This approach helps in resolving conflicts and managing behaviors through mutual support and shared goals. Cooperation contributes to a positive and supportive work environment. When teachers work together and support one another, it enhances job satisfaction, reduces stress, and promotes a more harmonious workplace.

Cooperative strategies are effective in resolving behavioural issues. By promoting open dialogue and teamwork, schools can address problems constructively and prevent them from escalating. Cooperation allows teachers to share best practices and learn from one another. This collaborative approach supports professional development and can lead to improvements in teaching practices and behaviour management. Fostering a cooperative environment helps in building trust between teachers and school administration. When teachers feel supported and valued, they are more likely to engage positively with school initiatives and adhere to behavioural expectations.

#### **The Use of Punishment Strategy**

Punishment is a strategy that typically involves formal disciplinary actions, such as warnings or sanctions, aimed at correcting behavior and reinforcing expectations. While punishment can serve as a deterrent, its effectiveness depends on its fairness and clarity. Heads of schools ensure that consequences are consistently applied and communicated, as excessive reliance on punishment can create a negative environment and damage relationships. Balancing this approach with support and guidance is essential for promoting lasting behavior change.

While punishments can be effective in certain situations, they must be used with caution to ensure fairness, consistency, and minimal impact on teacher morale. A balanced approach that includes preventive and supportive measures alongside punitive actions is essential for fostering a positive and productive school environment. In the interviews with HS, they had the following to say: *“We use punishments as a last resort when other strategies for managing teachers' behaviors have failed. It is important to ensure that any punitive measures are fair, consistent, and clearly communicated to avoid any perception of injustice”* (Interview with HS from SD held on 18<sup>th</sup> July, 2024).

Another HS had this to say: *“Punishments are part of our disciplinary framework, but they are not our first line of action. We apply them in situations where other interventions have not worked and always aim to use them as a deterrent to prevent future infractions”* (Interview with HS from SD held on 18<sup>th</sup> July, 2024).

On the other hand, teachers expressed the use of punishment as a strategy which is used by heads of schools in managing teachers' behaviours. However, they explained that punishment should be employed in the manner that it will not affect teachers work performance by making them lose morale and hence lead to under productivity. Some of teachers from public secondary schools said:

Among the strategies which are used by heads of schools in managing teachers' behavior, punishment is included. Punishments can be effective in addressing serious misconduct, but they can also lead to resentment if not handled properly. It's crucial that punishments are fair and that teachers understand the reasons behind them (FGD, teacher 2 from SA held on 7<sup>th</sup> July, 2024).

Similarly, teacher from another school said: “*While punishments are sometimes necessary, they should be balanced with supportive measures. Excessive or poorly applied punishments can damage morale and trust between teachers and the administration*” (FGD, teacher 6 from SD held on 18<sup>th</sup> July, 2024).

The findings reveal that the provision of punishments is a strategy used by heads of schools to manage teachers’ behaviours, particularly when other strategies have not been effective. Heads of schools view punishments as a necessary component of the disciplinary framework but emphasize their use as a last resort. Teachers acknowledge the role of punishment in addressing serious issues but express concerns about fairness and potential negative impacts on morale. Heads of schools employ punishment strategy in managing teachers’ behaviours in public secondary schools. However, the findings were contrary with the findings obtained by Dady (2015) who asserted that excessive or poorly administered punishments negatively affect teacher morale and motivation. Teachers may feel demoralized or resentful if they perceive punishments as unjust or overly harsh. Punishments should be part of a comprehensive approach that includes preventive measures, such as training and clear expectations, and supportive interventions, such as counseling and professional development. This approach helps in addressing the root causes of behavioural issues and reducing the need for punitive actions. The primary purpose of punishment is to deter future misconduct and encourage behavioural improvement. For punishments to be effective, they should be accompanied by guidance and support to help teachers understand and correct their behaviour.

## Conclusion and Recommendations

The strategies employed by heads of schools in managing teachers’ behaviours in public secondary schools are crucial for maintaining an effective and positive educational environment. However, the findings of this study revealed that the extent to which the strategies used by heads of schools to manage teachers’ behaviours will bear positive impact, depend much on the appropriate application of such strategy. Also, the selection of certain strategy depends much on the certain malpractice among teachers. It is clear that not every strategy is appropriate in every misbehaviour practiced by teachers. The study indicates that a balanced approach, integrating communication, cooperation, and constructive feedback, tends to yield better outcomes than punitive measures alone. Strategies like collaboration and compromise promote engagement and accountability among teachers, leading to improved morale and performance. Conversely, reliance on avoidance or punishment can result in unresolved issues and diminished trust. Ultimately, the most successful heads of schools adapt their strategies to the specific context and needs of their staff, creating an inclusive culture that supports professional growth and enhances overall school effectiveness. This adaptive leadership style is essential for sustaining positive teacher behaviors and improving student outcomes.

Based on the conclusion, it recommend that heads of schools adopt a flexible and adaptive approach to managing teachers’ behaviours. This includes actively fostering open communication and creating opportunities for collaboration among staff. Professional development should focus on effective communication to empower teachers. Additionally, heads of schools should balance discipline with support, ensuring that expectations are clear and that positive behaviours are recognized. Regular assessments of management

strategies can help leaders adapt to the needs of their staff and maintain a constructive school environment.

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