

**Participative and Pacesetting Leadership
Styles: Predictors of Teacher Job
Satisfaction in Public Secondary Schools
in Embakasi Sub-County, Nairobi.**

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Abstract

Teacher job satisfaction in public secondary schools remains a pressing concern. This study aimed to examine the influence of participative and pacesetting leadership styles on teachers' job satisfaction in public secondary schools in Embakasi Sub-County, Nairobi. Guided by Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, the study employed a descriptive survey design. The target population comprised principals, teachers, and education officers, with a sample of 71 respondents comprising 7 principals, 63 teachers, and 1 education officer. Purposive sampling was used for principals and education officers due to their strategic roles, while teachers were selected through a stratified random sampling technique. Data collection involved structured questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. Content validity was ensured through expert review, and instrument reliability was confirmed via a pilot study, yielding a Cronbach's alpha of 0.78. Quantitative

data were analysed using descriptive statistics, Pearson's correlation, and regression analysis. Results indicated a strong positive relationship between pacesetting leadership and teacher job satisfaction ($r = 0.741, p < 0.01$), with the pacesetting style showing the highest influence ($\beta = 0.801$). Participative leadership also had a significant positive impact ($\beta = 0.700, p < 0.05$). The findings reveal that while pacesetting boosts performance, it may alienate less confident teachers. However, Participative leadership fosters inclusion but may slow decisions. The study recommends a balanced leadership approach that combines high expectations with inclusive practices to enhance job satisfaction and institutional effectiveness.

Keywords: Leadership styles, participative leadership, pacesetting leadership, teacher job satisfaction, secondary schools, Nairobi.

1.0 Introduction

Effective leadership remains a critical factor in the performance and satisfaction of employees across various sectors, including education. Globally, leadership styles such as participative and pacesetting have been identified as key drivers of employee outcomes. Participative leadership encourages shared decision-making, collaboration, and empowerment, which often lead to higher levels of job

satisfaction. Abulaaban and Erhan (2024) argue that when leaders involve employees in planning and decision-making processes, it fosters a sense of ownership and belonging, contributing positively to motivation and performance. Similarly, Mpuangan, Govender, Mhlongo, and Osei (2024) affirm that participative leadership correlates significantly with teacher satisfaction and school performance.

On the other hand, pacesetter leadership is characterised by high standards, leading by example, and a relentless drive for results. While this leadership style can enhance performance, particularly in high-stakes environments, it can also be associated with employee stress, burnout, and reduced morale when overused (Lusterio & Arnejo, 2023; Munir, 2020). Anderson and Sun (2017) caution that while pacesetter leadership may achieve short-term gains, it may be detrimental in contexts where staff need mentorship, support, or development opportunities. The global evidence presents a mixed picture, while both leadership styles have their strengths, their impact varies depending on organisational culture, employee readiness, and job context.

In Kenya, the role of school principals has become increasingly central to the effective management and performance of public secondary schools. The Teachers Service Commission (TSC), through the

TSC Act of 2012, assigns principals as both instructional leaders and financial managers, reinforcing their influence over institutional success. Principals are expected not only to oversee curriculum delivery but also to create a positive work environment for teachers. Leadership approaches that empower teachers and recognise their contributions are especially critical in enhancing job satisfaction, a key factor in teacher retention, performance, and professional growth (Northouse, 2021). Despite this, few empirical studies in Kenya have examined how specific leadership styles—particularly participative and pacesetter—influence teacher job satisfaction. Most existing studies focus broadly on leadership without isolating the unique contributions and effects of these two styles.

The situation in Nairobi, and specifically Embakasi Sub-County, presents a compelling case for such a study. Embakasi is home to a diverse range of public secondary schools, many of which face challenges related to overcrowding, limited resources, and high teacher workloads. Preliminary reports and anecdotal evidence suggest varied experiences of job satisfaction among teachers in the region, raising questions about the role of school leadership in shaping these outcomes. However, there is a lack of localised research exploring how

principals' leadership styles may contribute to or mitigate these challenges.

This study addresses three significant gaps. First, global literature presents inconsistent findings on the impact of participative and pacesetting leadership styles, with some studies emphasising their benefits and others warning of potential drawbacks depending on context (Fung et al., 2020; Mpuangnan et al., 2024). Second, there is limited empirical data on the Kenyan context, particularly regarding how these leadership styles influence job satisfaction in public secondary schools. Third, within Nairobi County, Embakasi Sub-County has received little scholarly attention, despite its unique socio-economic and institutional dynamics that warrant targeted investigation.

Understanding the relationship between leadership style and job satisfaction in this local context is essential. It will not only fill a literature gap but also provide practical insights for school leaders, policymakers, and the Teachers Service Commission in designing leadership development programs that foster a motivated, satisfied, and high-performing teaching workforce. By focusing on participative and pacesetting leadership styles, the study will offer a nuanced understanding of how different leadership approaches influence teacher motivation, engagement, and job satisfaction within Kenya's public education system.

1.1 Research Objectives

The study aimed at achieving the following objectives:

- i. To examine the extent to which the participative leadership style employed by principals influences teachers' job satisfaction in public secondary schools in Embakasi Sub-County.
- ii. To assess the extent to which the pacesetting leadership style employed by principals influences teachers' job satisfaction in public secondary schools in Embakasi Sub-County.

1.2 The study was guided by the following research questions:

- i. To what extent does the participative leadership style employed by the principal influence teachers' job satisfaction in public secondary schools in Embakasi Sub-County?
- ii. To what extent does the pacesetting leadership style employed by the principal influence teachers' job satisfaction in public secondary schools in Embakasi Sub-County?

2.0 Literature Review

2.1 Theoretical Framework

This study is based on Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory (1959), which categorises job-related factors into motivators and hygiene factors. Motivators are intrinsic, including achievement, recognition, responsibility, and opportunities for growth, and lead to job satisfaction. Hygiene factors are extrinsic, such as salary, supervision, work conditions, and policies, and their absence leads to dissatisfaction. Both sets must be considered to understand employee attitudes and performance effectively.

Scholars have affirmed the applicability of Herzberg's theory in the education sector, especially regarding leadership and teacher satisfaction. For instance, Bakare and Oredein (2022) noted that motivator factors such as professional autonomy and recognition are critical to teacher engagement, while poor administrative support and unclear policies—hygiene factors—lead to dissatisfaction. Similarly, Mpuangnan et al. (2024) emphasise that participative leadership enhances intrinsic motivation by promoting involvement in decision-making and fostering a sense of ownership. On the other hand, pacesetting leadership, while useful for driving performance, may increase pressure and reduce job satisfaction when hygiene needs like support and work-life balance are neglected. This reflects Herzberg's

assertion that motivators promote satisfaction, but their impact is undermined when hygiene needs are unmet.

This study applies Herzberg's theory to examine how participative and pacesetting leadership styles employed by school principals influence teacher job satisfaction. Participative leadership is aligned with motivator factors promoting teacher involvement, responsibility, and professional growth, thus likely to enhance satisfaction. Pacesetting leadership, depending on its implementation, may support motivation through high expectations but may also risk dissatisfaction if hygiene factors are compromised. Understanding these dynamics offers valuable insights for school administrators aiming to improve teacher satisfaction, engagement, and retention through context-appropriate leadership strategies.

3.0 Methodology

This study adopted a descriptive survey research design, deemed appropriate for investigating the relationship between variables within their natural settings without experimental manipulation. Descriptive surveys effectively capture participants' attitudes, behaviours, and experiences, especially in social contexts such as leadership and job satisfaction (McMillan & Schumacher, 2020). This design enabled the researcher to explore

the influence of principals' leadership styles specifically participative and pacesetting, on teachers' job satisfaction in public secondary schools in Embakasi Sub-County, Nairobi. The target population comprised principals, teachers, and education officers from public secondary schools in the sub-county. A total sample of 231 respondents was selected, including 7 principals, 63 teachers, and 1 education officer. Participants were chosen due to their interrelated roles in the school system. Principals were selected for their direct influence on school leadership and climate; teachers were included as primary recipients of leadership practices; and the education officer provided system-level insights critical for policy triangulation.

Purposive sampling was used to select principals and education officers based on their strategic roles and ability to provide in-depth perspectives aligned with the research objectives (Creswell & Creswell, 2020). Teachers were selected through stratified simple random sampling to ensure equitable representation across various departments and minimise selection bias. This dual sampling strategy enhanced both the validity and generalisability of the findings (Ary, Jacobs, Irvine, & Walker, 2022).

Data were collected using structured questionnaires for teachers and semi-

structured interviews with principals and education officers. Validity was ensured through expert review, and a pilot study refined the tools. Cronbach's alpha yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.78, indicating acceptable internal consistency (Taber, 2021). Quantitative data were analysed using descriptive statistics (frequencies, means, percentages) and inferential methods such as Pearson's correlation and regression analysis to assess relationships between leadership styles and job satisfaction. Interview data were transcribed and thematically analysed using Braun and Clarke's (2021) six-step approach to identify patterns that enriched quantitative findings. The study adhered to strict ethical standards. Informed consent was obtained, ensuring voluntary participation, confidentiality, and the right to withdraw at any time. Ethical approval was granted by the relevant education authorities and a research ethics committee.

4.0 Results and Discussions

4.1 Participative Leadership Style and Teachers' Job Satisfaction

The study examined how principals' participative leadership style influences teachers' job satisfaction. Key items included communication, decision-making, role clarity, teamwork, and responsiveness. Respondents rated each statement on a five-point Likert scale ranging from "Always" (5) to "Never"

(1), with the results summarised using frequencies, percentages, mean scores, and standard deviations in Table 1.

Table 1: Principals’ Participative Leadership Style and Teachers’ Job Satisfaction

Statement	A	O	S	R	N	Mean	Std. Dev.
	F	F	F	F	F		
	%	%	%	%	%		
Friendly and easy to dialogue with	315	60	109	60	71	3.7	0.930
Expresses confidence in staff despite disagreements	325	12	264	11	11	4.0	0.591
Accommodation of other teachers’ opinions	416	47	610	59	60	4.1	0.909
Encourages staff to express their opinions	437	46	466	71	46	4.2	0.819

Conflict resolution	239	437	172	111	11	3.7	0.550
Genuine communication	124	309	131	101	83	3.1	0.601
Clarifies of roles/duties	274	243	244	477	57	4.1	0.680
Ensures equal chance of spearheading tasks	356	277	-	-	-	4.6	0.998
Encourages teamwork	345	285	-	-	-	4.6	0.999
Reaches out to introverted teachers to speak out	114	277	121	103	12	2.8	0.512

The findings in Table 1 highlight that a majority of principals demonstrate participative leadership by promoting equal opportunities and teamwork. Half of respondents (55.8%) reported that

principals always ensured equal chances for staff to spearhead tasks, while 27 (44.2%) said this occurred often. Similarly, 34 respondents (55.2%) stated that principals always encouraged teamwork, with another 28 (44.8%) indicating this happened often. This suggests that most principals embrace inclusivity and collaboration, an approach that fosters ownership, motivation, and cohesion among teachers. Such practices can enhance staff morale and school performance by fostering a supportive, team-oriented environment.

Furthermore, the data shows that 43 respondents (69.9%) felt principals always encouraged open expression of opinions, while only 7 (11.7%) said this was rare. Additionally, 41 respondents (65.6%) reported that principals were always accommodating of divergent views. These figures reflect a leadership style grounded in open communication and tolerance. From my perspective, this openness not only nurtures trust but also promotes shared decision-making. However, the fact that a few principals (9.8%) never accommodate differing viewpoints points to a gap that may lead to staff disengagement or resistance if not addressed.

The findings also show that 27 respondents (44.2%) believed principals always clarified staff roles, and 24 (38.7%) said this occurred often. Likewise, 32

respondents (52.1%) indicated that principals always expressed confidence in staff despite disagreements, with 26 (42.3%) saying this happened sometimes. These behaviours, in my view, reflect clarity and trust, key elements in enhancing organisational efficiency and resilience. However, approachability appears to vary, as only 31 respondents (50.3%) said principals were always friendly and easy to talk to, while 7 (11.0%) noted they never were. This suggests that some principles may need to be improved in interpersonal relationships to strengthen staff relations and responsiveness.

Despite these strengths, there are notable weaknesses in information sharing and the inclusion of introverted teachers. Only 30 respondents (49.1%) felt that principals often shared information genuinely, while 10 (16.0%) said it occurred rarely. More concerning, only 27 respondents (42.9%) said principals often reached out to introverted staff, while 13 (20.9%) said they never did. These gaps in communication and inclusivity risk alienating certain staff members and reducing the overall effectiveness of participative leadership. The computed mean scores support these observations, with the highest being for equal task delegation (mean = 4.558), and the lowest for reaching out to introverted staff (mean = 2.791). With a total mean of 3.888, it is evident that while participative leadership

is generally practised, efforts must be made to make it more consistent and inclusive across all staff categories.

From the interviews, participants were asked to indicate when a principal should promote a participative leadership style in schools. Most interviewees reported that this style should be applied especially when delegating or reassigning roles and responsibilities. They emphasised that tasks must be assigned with clarity to avoid leadership failures associated with “one-man-show” tendencies seen in the past. They also noted that when launching new programs involving staff and stakeholders allows the principal to receive continuous feedback, which leads to better implementation outcomes.

One interviewee stated,

“This style helps the school community feel involved, and it prepares teachers for leadership by gradually entrusting them with responsibilities.”

Another Interviewee shared a practical example and emphasised inclusivity in diverse environments, stating,

“The principal can promote this style to promote a sense of inclusivity, to give every teacher a chance to exploit their potential. Again, when he realises that a section of the teachers is

introverted, he can promote this style to help them open up.”

When asked whether each member of staff should be given a chance to spearhead tasks, interviewees strongly agreed. They explained that it is only through being assigned actual responsibilities that a teacher’s true abilities are revealed.

One respondent commented,

“Sometimes academic papers lie; someone may have a strong CV but cannot manage a simple task, while another with fewer credentials may surprise you with excellent results.”

They also pointed out that testing individuals through leadership tasks helps uncover hidden talents.

One participant gave a compelling example, saying,

“You won’t know who is a poor communicator until you assign them a role to address a gathering.”

They also agreed that such engagement fosters teamwork and reinforces the idea that every staff member brings unique value to the institution.

On the question of creating an atmosphere for introverted teachers to speak out, participants unanimously supported the idea. They reported that an open, welcoming school environment ensures

that all teachers, regardless of their personality, feel accommodated and respected. This inclusion, they observed, promotes a sense of belonging, encourages expression, and helps introverted teachers gradually integrate into the social fabric of the school. One interviewee affirmed,

“When the environment is safe and inclusive, even the quietest teachers begin to speak up and contribute ideas—they stop feeling like outsiders.”

Finally, the interviewees were asked how participative leadership affects teacher job satisfaction. They stated that this style enhances motivation because it assures teachers that their ideas matter whether or not they are adopted. One respondent noted that,

“When teachers are involved, they find themselves attempting new things—sometimes even surprising themselves.”

They emphasised that participative leadership fosters innovation, psychological safety, and self-efficacy. Additionally, it encourages open interaction, gives teachers freedom to choose leaders for tasks without fear of bias, and allows them to share challenges and ideas freely. They concluded that this leadership style ultimately leads to higher job satisfaction and a more cohesive and empowered teaching staff.

The findings strongly reinforce the view that participative leadership is not merely a theoretical concept but a practical necessity in today’s dynamic school environment. The voices of the interviewees affirm that when principals adopt inclusive, transparent, and empowering leadership approaches, teachers feel respected, involved, and motivated to contribute. It is clear that, beyond improving administrative effectiveness, participative leadership has a deep psychological and professional impact on teachers. It nurtures a sense of belonging, surfaces hidden talent, and lays a foundation for collective growth. However, the success of this style requires deliberate and consistent effort, particularly in creating space for the often-overlooked introverted staff, and ensuring that participation is not tokenistic but meaningful and sustained.

To test the correlation between the participative leadership style employed by the principal and the teachers’ job satisfaction, the study used Pearson’s correlation analysis. The findings are as shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Correlation Matrix for the Participative Leadership Style and Job Satisfaction

Teachers’
job
satisfaction

Teachers' job satisfaction	Pearson Correlation	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.
	N	62
Participative leadership style employed by the principal	Pearson Correlation	.603
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.028
	N	62

The study established a positive relationship between teachers' job satisfaction and the participative leadership style employed by principals, as indicated by a Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.603. Additionally, the p-value of 0.028 ($p < 0.05$) signifies that the relationship is statistically significant. Consequently, the study rejected the null hypothesis, which stated that there is no significant relationship between participative leadership style and teachers' job satisfaction in public secondary schools within the sub-county.

The model summary presented in Table 3 offers a concise overview of the key statistical indicators used to evaluate the regression model examining the relationship between the participative leadership style employed by principals and teachers' job satisfaction.

Table 3: Model Summary for the Participative Leadership Style and Teachers' Job Satisfaction

Model R	R Square	Adjusted Square	R Std. Error
1	0.603	0.363	0.323
			1.075

The results show that the correlation coefficient ($R = 0.603$) indicates a moderate positive relationship between participative leadership style and teachers' job satisfaction. Moreover, the coefficient of determination ($R^2 = 0.363$) implies that 36.3% of the variance in teachers' job satisfaction can be explained by the participative leadership style employed by the principal. This suggests that while other factors may also influence job satisfaction, participative leadership plays a significant role in shaping teachers' experiences and perceptions within the school environment.

The ANOVA results presented in Table 4 play a critical role in determining the overall significance of the regression model, particularly in evaluating whether the participative leadership style employed by the principal significantly predicts teachers' job satisfaction in public secondary schools in Embakasi Sub-County.

Table 4: ANOVAa for the Participative Leadership Style and Teachers' Job Satisfaction

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Std. Error of the Coefficient	Standardized Coefficients (Beta)	Sig.
Regression	10.542	1	10.542	34.211	1.162	0.603	2.19E-07
Residual	18.489	60	0.308				
Total	29.031	61					

The F-statistics of 34.211 with a p-value of 2.19E-07, which is significantly less than the conventional alpha level of 0.05, indicates that the regression model is statistically significant. This means that the participative leadership style employed by principals makes a meaningful contribution to predicting teachers' job satisfaction. Based on these findings, the null hypothesis was rejected, and it was concluded that there exists a statistically significant relationship between participative leadership style and teachers' job satisfaction. This confirms the model's validity and supports the importance of inclusive and collaborative leadership practices in enhancing teacher morale and satisfaction.

Table 5 presents the regression coefficients, which estimate the strength and direction of the relationship between the participative leadership style.

Table 5: Regression Coefficients for the Participative Leadership Style and Teachers' Job Satisfaction

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients (B)	Standard Error	T	Sig.
Constant	2.604	1.162	2.241	0.028
Participative Leadership Style	0.700	0.238	2.938	0.004

The results indicate that the participative leadership style employed by the principal has a positive and statistically significant effect on teachers' job satisfaction, with an unstandardized coefficient (β) of 0.700 and a p-value of 0.004. Since $p < 0.05$, the result is significant at the 95% confidence level, suggesting that changes in the level of participative leadership are reliably associated with changes in teacher satisfaction. In other words, for every one-unit increase in participative leadership behaviour, there is an estimated 0.700-unit increase in teacher job satisfaction.

Based on the statistical findings, the regression model can be represented as:

$$Y = 2.604 + 0.700X_3$$

Where:

- **Y** = Teachers’ job satisfaction in public secondary schools in Embakasi Sub-County
- **X₃** = Participative leadership style employed by the principal

The findings further support the qualitative data and observations gathered in the study. Principals were reported to consistently ensure equal opportunities for all staff members to lead tasks and actively foster teamwork among teachers. Additionally, they were found to promote an open culture where staff can express their opinions freely, accommodate diverse viewpoints, clarify roles, and display trust and confidence in staff even amid disagreements. Principals also demonstrated approachability and empathy, allowing teachers to participate actively in both formal and informal decision-making processes. As supported by Bashir and Khalil (2017), such leadership behaviours are closely linked with increased motivation, collaboration, and teacher satisfaction, reinforcing the critical role of participative leadership in nurturing a supportive and empowered school environment.

Pacesetting Leadership Style and Teachers’ Job Satisfaction

The second objective of this study was to examine the influence of the pacesetting leadership style used by principals on teachers’ job satisfaction. Respondents

rated statements reflecting pacesetting leadership, including quick results, self-motivation, unilateral decisions, high performance expectations, revised targets, strict deadlines, clear communication, and task assignment to skilled staff. Statements were rated on a five-point Likert scale: Always (A), Often (O), Sometimes (S), Rarely (R), and Never (N). The findings are presented in Table 6.

Table 6: Principals’ Pacesetting Leadership Style and Teachers’ Job Satisfaction

Statements	Frequency					Mean	Standard Deviation
	A	O	S	R	N		
Demands	19	1	10	9	7	3.0	0.8
Instant results		2			1		4
Promotes staff self-drive	38	2	-	-		4.61	0.9
Makes decisions for teachers	33	2	1	-		4.52	0.5
	53	9	1	-		5.4	0.3

Utilizes the abilities to maxim	1	2	10	8	1	2	0
um	2	9	16	14	3	95	7
Compel s to meet the set targets	-	3	11	11	1	2	0
Keeps revisin g targets to be met by teacher s	57	2	11	1	2	4	0
Leads by exampl e	91	3	8	1	3	79	8
Gives strict deadlin es	21	2	8	5	5	3	0
Comm unicate s regular ly	34	3	13	8	9	79	7
	3						3
	27	1	6	6	6	3	0
	44	6	10	10	1	83	8
		2			0		5
		5					
	35	2	1	-	-	4	0
	56	7	1		-	55	5
		4					2
		1					

Deman ds instant results	44	1	1	-	-	4	0
	72	6	2			66	9
		2			-		0
		6					

Legend: A= Always, O= Often, S=Sometimes, R=Rarely, N=Never.

Table 6 presents the findings on the extent to which principals demonstrate pacesetting leadership behaviours and how these relate to teachers' job satisfaction in public secondary schools. The overall cumulative mean score of 4.019 suggests that pacesetting leadership is frequently employed, though the degree of practice varies across specific dimensions. A majority of respondents, 57 (91%), indicated that principals always revise targets to be met by teachers, resulting in a mean score of 4.79. This points to a strong tendency among principals to continuously adjust performance expectations, a key characteristic of the pacesetting leadership style. Similarly, 44 respondents (72%) reported that principals always assigned tasks to skilled teachers, while 16 (26%) stated this occurred often, yielding a mean score of 4.66. These results reflect a focus on performance, expertise, and the strategic allocation of responsibilities. Regarding communication and decision-making, 35 respondents (56%) indicated that principals regularly communicated with staff, while 27 (41%) noted this

happened often, producing a mean score of 4.55.

In terms of decision authority, 33 respondents (53%) reported that principals always made decisions on behalf of teachers, and 29 (46%) said this occurred often, with only 1 respondent (1%) indicating it happened sometimes. This resulted in a mean score of 4.52, highlighting a leadership approach that is largely directive and top-down, where autonomy in decision-making may be limited.

When it came to motivation, 38 respondents (61%) observed that principals always promoted self-drive among staff, while 24 respondents (39%) reported this happened often. The absence of responses in lower categories contributed to a high mean score of 4.61, indicating widespread encouragement of self-motivation. In contrast, the behaviour concerning the extent to which principals utilise teachers' abilities to the maximum was less positively rated. Only 1 respondent (2%) reported that this behaviour was always demonstrated, while 29 respondents (47%) indicated it occurred often. The remaining 32 respondents (50%) were distributed across the categories of sometimes, rarely, and never. This yielded a lower mean score of 2.95, suggesting that although principals may prioritise performance and delegation to skilled staff, they may

not consistently tap into the full potential of all teachers. The data reflect a potential gap in inclusive capacity-building and comprehensive staff development within the pacesetting leadership approach.

In terms of goal enforcement, 30 respondents (48%) indicated that principals often compelled staff to meet set targets, while 11 respondents (18%) reported this occurred sometimes. An additional 11 respondents (17%) each stated it happened rarely and never, respectively. This resulted in a mean score of 2.96, reflecting a moderate and somewhat inconsistent application of performance pressure. Similarly, concerning the demand for instant results, 19 respondents (30%) noted that this behaviour was always demonstrated by principals, 18 respondents (29%) observed it occurred often, while the remainder reported it happened with lower frequency. The mean score of 3.53 suggests that while some principals emphasise urgency, its application is not uniform across the board. In terms of modelling behaviour and managing time, 21 respondents (34%) reported that principals always led by example, and 23 respondents (37%) said this occurred often. The mean score was 3.79. For the behaviour related to setting strict deadlines, 27 respondents (44%) indicated that principals always practised this, while 16 respondents (25%) stated it occurred often. The remaining 30% reported that it

happened with varying frequency, including sometimes, rarely, or never. This resulted in a mean score of 3.83.

The results show that most principals consistently apply pacesetting leadership, especially in performance monitoring, communication, and task-based delegation, highlighting a focus on output and discipline. However, lower scores in ability utilisation and motivation suggest the need for a more balanced approach. To improve teacher satisfaction and overall school effectiveness, principals should complement high standards with inclusivity, empathy, and support for diverse staff needs and talents.

The interviewees were asked to explain how much time principals typically allocate for teachers to achieve results in their assigned duties. Most respondents emphasised that the time given should depend on several factors, such as the nature and complexity of the task, the scope of responsibility, and the teacher's other duties. They agreed that principals must issue realistic deadlines to ensure teachers perform optimally. Unrealistic timelines, they noted, often lead to frustration and poor results.

One participant remarked directly,

"If the target is SMART, then the principal needs to be realistic so that the target is achieved. Time allowed should also depend on the

nature of the assignment and resources availed, for example, an assignment that is not supported with resources cannot be done in time."

Interviewees were also asked when principals should make decisions on behalf of teachers. Most felt that this should only occur when directives or policies are issued by the government or the Teachers Service Commission (TSC), especially where the law or confidentiality is concerned.

One interviewee noted that this is necessary, for example,

"When a teacher has failed to perform their duties as per the TSC Code of Regulations or has been absent without reporting for over a week."

Interviewee offered a detailed response, stating,

"Government policies must be followed as issued," one participant said. "So, the principal may act without consulting teachers. He also makes decisions on placements and training based on his experience, especially when there's no time to consult."

The interviews revealed mixed views on deadline setting by principals. Most respondents agreed that whether deadlines

should be strict or flexible depends on factors such as task urgency, available time, and assignment complexity. While some supported strict deadlines for time-sensitive tasks, others advocated for flexibility, especially when resources are constrained. Regarding the impact of pacesetting leadership on teacher job satisfaction, interviewees had varied opinions. Several highlighted that the style often benefits only high-performing teachers, potentially leaving less confident staff feeling excluded or demoralised.

One teacher noted,

"This style only recognises the best-performing teachers. Those who don't meet targets are often overlooked, which can be very discouraging."

Another pointed out, "Teachers don't like being forced to deliver instant results for goals they never even helped set."

On a more positive note, a few interviewees acknowledged that pacesetting could push staff to reach higher performance levels.

As one participant put it,

"A pacesetter brings out the best in some of us; we end up doing things we never imagined we could."

The narratives reflect both the strengths and limitations of pacesetting leadership. While this style can lead to quick results and drive top performers, it risks undermining morale among staff who need support, collaboration, and inclusion. Effective school leadership should therefore strike a balance, combining high expectations with empathy, flexibility, and participatory decision-making to cultivate a motivated and satisfied teaching force.

To test the correlation, Pearson correlation analysis was conducted, and the results are presented in Table 7.

Table 7: Correlation Matrix for the Pacesetting Leadership Style and Teachers' Job Satisfaction

		Teachers' job satisfaction
Teachers' job satisfaction	Pearson Correlation	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.
	N	62
Pacesetting leadership style employed by the principal	Pearson Correlation	.741
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.008
	N	62

The findings show a strong positive correlation ($r = 0.741$) between the pacesetting leadership style used by principals and teachers' job satisfaction. This indicates that the more principals exhibit pacesetting behaviours such as setting high standards, leading by example, and closely monitoring performance, the more likely teachers are to report higher job satisfaction. Additionally, the p-value of 0.008 is less than the significance level of 0.05, demonstrating that the correlation is statistically significant. Therefore, the study rejects the null hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between pacesetting leadership style and teachers' job satisfaction. The results underscore the influence of high-performance expectations and strong leadership modelling on teacher morale and engagement. While the pacesetting style may not suit every context, when effectively applied, it appears to positively shape teacher attitudes toward their work, especially when combined with adequate support and recognition.

The model summary in Table 8 presents the key statistical indicators used to evaluate the regression model.

Table 8: Model Summary for the Pacesetting Leadership and Teachers' Job Satisfaction

	R	Adjusted Std.		
Model	R	Square	R Square	Error
1	0.741	0.549	0.542	0.378

The results show a correlation coefficient (R) of 0.741, indicating a **strong positive** relationship between the pacesetting leadership style and teachers' job satisfaction. The coefficient of determination (R^2) is 0.549, which implies that approximately 54.9% of the variation in teachers' job satisfaction can be explained by the pacesetting leadership style employed by principals. The adjusted R^2 value of 0.542 accounts for the number of predictors in the model, confirming the robustness of the relationship. This substantial explanatory power highlights the critical role of the pacesetting approach in shaping teacher satisfaction. It suggests that when principals maintain high standards, lead by example, and emphasise performance, they can significantly influence how teachers perceive their work and their professional environment.

Table 9: ANOVA for the Pacesetting Leadership Style and Teachers' Job Satisfaction

The ANOVA results presented in Table 9 are critical for assessing the overall fit of the regression model.

Table 9: ANOVA^a for the Pacesetting Leadership Style and Teachers’ Job Satisfaction

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	10.455	1	10.455	73.146	5.63E-12
Residual	8.5760	6	1.4293		
Total	19.031	6			

The F-value of **73.146** with a **p-value of 5.63E-12** (which is less than 0.05) indicates that the regression model is statistically significant. This confirms that the pacesetting leadership style employed by principals has a substantial effect on teachers’ job satisfaction. Consequently, the null hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between pacesetting leadership and job satisfaction was rejected. This significant F-statistic reinforces the assertion that leadership behaviours in schools are not just managerial tools but pivotal elements influencing teacher morale and job satisfaction. The findings support the idea that when principals set high standards and lead by example, they positively shape the professional environment, thus enhancing job satisfaction. These results

underscore the importance of incorporating leadership training in educational management to promote effective school leadership and improve overall institutional outcomes.

Table 10 presents the regression coefficients estimating the strength and direction of the relationship between pacesetting leadership style and teachers’ job satisfaction.

Table 10: Regression Coefficients^a for the Pacesetting Leadership and T Job Satisfaction

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta			
1 (Constant)	1.131	0.642			1.762	0.082
Pacesetting leadership style employed by the principal	0.801	0.236	0.741		3.394	0.001

The results indicate that the pacesetting leadership style employed by the principal has a statistically significant positive influence on teachers' job satisfaction, with a standardised beta coefficient (β) of 0.801 and a p-value of 0.001, which is less than the threshold of 0.05 at the 95% confidence level.

Based on the coefficients from Table 10, the regression model can be expressed as:

$$Y = 1.131 + 0.801X_4$$

Where:

- **Y** represents teachers' job satisfaction in public secondary schools in Embakasi Sub-County.
- **X₄** represents the pacesetting leadership style employed by the principal.

These findings imply that for every one-unit increase in pacesetting leadership behaviour, teachers' job satisfaction increases by 0.801 units. This underscores the significance of performance-driven leadership practices, which involve high expectations, consistent communication, and leading by example, as powerful contributors to a positive work environment for teachers. Encouraging principals to apply this leadership style effectively can promote morale, accountability, and enhanced instructional outcomes.

4.2 Discussions

Based on the findings, it is evident that participative leadership enhances teachers' job satisfaction in public secondary schools within Embakasi Sub-County. This leadership approach, characterized by open communication, shared decision-making, and role clarity, fosters a sense of belonging and empowerment among teachers. When principals create an environment where staff feel heard, respected, and actively involved in school processes, it builds trust and psychological safety. Its inclusivity not only improves morale but also enhances commitment to institutional goals. The statistical evidence ($r = .603$, $p < .05$) confirms that participative leadership practices have a substantial influence on how teachers perceive their work environment and overall satisfaction. These findings align with studies by Akinyi and Otieno (2021) and Onyango and Wambugu (2021), which emphasised the importance of staff involvement in leadership decisions for fostering motivation and productivity.

Nonetheless, it is important to acknowledge that participative leadership is not without its limitations. As observed by Chepkemboi and Cheruiyot (2023) and Muli and Gachoka (2022), this style may lead to delays in decision-making or inconsistencies in implementation if not properly structured. While participative

leadership holds great potential, its effectiveness depends on a principal's ability to balance authority with inclusiveness and ensure that every staff member, especially the introverted or less vocal, is meaningfully engaged. Leadership development and capacity building are, therefore, crucial to maximising the benefits of this approach. Ultimately, fostering participative leadership is not just about consultation but also about creating an organisational culture that values collaboration, trust, and continuous learning.

The results of this study strongly highlight the role of pacesetting leadership in shaping teachers' job satisfaction. With a high overall mean score (4.019), the data indicate that principals frequently employ pacesetting behaviours such as setting strict deadlines, revising targets, allocating tasks based on skill, and leading by example. These traits reflect a leadership approach that emphasises high performance, discipline, and clear expectations. Quantitative results, including a strong Pearson correlation coefficient ($r = 0.741$) and a significant regression model ($p < 0.001$), confirm a robust positive relationship between pacesetting leadership and job satisfaction. These findings align with studies by Ghani et al. (2021) and Kiplangat and Korir (2020), which argue that high-expectation leadership, when paired with effective communication and modelling,

fosters increased staff motivation and accountability in school settings.

However, while the pacesetting style demonstrates clear advantages, it also presents challenges that must be carefully managed. Qualitative interview data suggest that this style may marginalise teachers who require more support or are less confident when decision-making is centralised or when unrealistic deadlines are imposed. This concern is echoed by Achieng and Simatwa (2022), who warn that overemphasis on targets and output can lead to burnout and demotivation among staff. Thus, while the data validate the efficacy of pacesetting leadership in improving job satisfaction, the study emphasises the need for balance. Principals must complement high standards with inclusivity, emotional intelligence, and flexible approaches to address the diverse needs of their teaching staff. This balanced application ensures not only high performance but also teacher well-being and sustained school effectiveness.

5.0 Conclusions and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusion

Based on the study's objectives and findings, it is concluded that both participative and pacesetting leadership styles significantly influence teachers' job satisfaction in public secondary schools in Embakasi Sub-County. Participative

leadership, marked by inclusivity and collaboration, boosted teachers' morale, motivation, and sense of belonging through a supportive work environment. Teachers felt valued and empowered to contribute to school development. Pacesetting leadership, with its high expectations and goal focus, enhances job satisfaction by promoting performance and accountability through clear standards and strong leadership. However, the study noted that while pacesetting motivates high achievers, it may discourage teachers who require more support if not complemented with empathy and inclusive practices. The findings underscore the need for principals to adopt a balanced leadership approach, one that blends participative engagement with the performance-driven nature of pacesetting, to cultivate a satisfied, committed, and high-performing teaching workforce.

5.2 Recommendations

1. **To TSC and the Ministry of Education:** Provide leadership training for principals to strengthen inclusive decision-making and teacher engagement.
2. **To Principals and Education Officers:** Maintain high performance standards while offering support to enhance teacher motivation and reduce burnout.

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