ABSTRACT
The aim of the study was to investigate the influence of principal's leadership styles on students’ discipline in public secondary schools in Mukaa district. The study sought to establish the extent to which principal’s age, gender and administrative experience influence students discipline in public secondary schools and also assessed how principals’ autocratic, democratic and laissez faire leadership styles influence students’ discipline in the district.

Descriptive survey design was used in the study. 28 principals were sampled from a total population of 32 principals, 168 teachers out 320 teachers and 336 students out of 6419 students in the district. Stratified random sampling was used to select 28 principals, 6 teachers and 12 students’ from each of the 28 sampled schools. Data were collected by use of questionnaires. The data collected was analyzed using descriptive statistics using the SPSS programme version 17 (Statistical Package for Social Sciences). Descriptive statistics such as frequency distribution and percentages were used and inferential statistics was carried out.

From the findings the principals’ gender, age and experience had an effect on students’ discipline. The study found out that there is a weak relationship between democratic leadership style and students’ discipline, (t= 0.772 p-value= 0.05 principals) and (t= 0.08 p-value 0.05 teachers). The study revealed that there is a relationship between principals’ autocratic leadership style (t= 0.968 > 0.05) and students’ discipline. The teachers’ findings show that, there is no relationship between principals’ autocratic leadership style and students’ discipline (t =0.01 p-value= 0.05).

On the principals’ Laissez-faire leadership style influence on students’ discipline in public secondary schools, analysis from the principals revealed that there is a relationship between students’ discipline and principals’ laissez faire leadership style. The teachers also noted that the principals’ laissez faire leadership style had a negative effect on students’ discipline. From the students responses it is clear that the principals were, autocratic, democratic and less laissez faire. The students and teachers suggested that guidance and counselling should be strengthened to meet students’ needs.

The following conclusions were drawn that the principals’ gender, age and experience had a relationship with students discipline hence this should be considered during principals’ appointments. There is need for the principals to incorporate all stakeholders in decision making process to enhance students’ discipline. The principals should use this strategy when it is necessary to maintain students’ discipline. The principals should sometimes give in to students’ requests if they do not compromise the schools discipline policies and standards. Guidance and counselling activities should be strengthened in public secondary schools to enhance students’ discipline.

The study recommended that age and experience should be prime considerations in the appointments of principals. It also recommends that the principals should use the most appropriate leadership style that facilitates collective responsibility and creates a
conducive teaching and learning environment in school. The principals should involve the parents, teachers and other stakeholders to maintain students' discipline. The principals should strengthen the guidance and counselling systems in the secondary schools to help the students cope with the challenges of adolescence in order to maintain discipline among the students. The principals in Mukaa district should organize forums with students to enable them express their grievances and challenges faced within the school. Such views may help the principals and teachers to improve on the guidance and counselling services to help in the cases of indiscipline. Following the findings of the study, the following are suggestions for further research; there is need to carry out another research covering a larger area such as a province or the whole country in order to enable wide generalization of the findings and future research should be wider to include other possible causes of indiscipline in schools climate.