

## Assessment of the Challenges which Heads of Schools Face in Practicing Leadership Styles in Community Secondary Schools

Germana Staumi & Festo, W. Gabriel

Ruaha Catholic University

germananganda@gmail.com

### Abstract

This paper assessed to the challenges which heads of schools face in practicing leadership styles in community secondary schools in Iringa municipal council. This study was guided by pragmatism paradigm, descriptive research design and mixed research approach. The targeted populations were school heads, teachers and students from community secondary schools. This study involved 105 participants from 5 selected community secondary schools. In which 5 were school heads, 40 were teachers and 60 were students. The study employed two sampling Procedures namely purposive and simple random sampling techniques. Three methods of data collection employed such as face to face interview, focus group discussion and documentation. Descriptive and quantitative statistics used to analyze data. The data collected from the respondents were presented inform of tables and quotes. The responses coded and categorized into specific objective of the study. The findings indicated that head of schools faced several challenges in applying different leadership styles such as resistance of subordinates, inadequate leadership skills, effects led by over enrollment and insufficient community support. It is concluded that head of schools lacks adequate and quality support supervision regarding to the school leadership and management from regional and district educational officers. Head of school had inadequate leadership skills to influence teachers, students and parents.

**Keywords:** Leadership, Leadership Style, Resistance and Over Enrollment.

### Introduction

Leadership style is an important aspect in the success of school due to its effects on student's academic performance. According to Holmes (2000), leadership styles in a school set up refers to the way heads of schools use the human and other resources to promote best values including the methods or techniques found to be the best

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

### ARTICLE HISTORY

Received: 29<sup>th</sup> July 2021

Revised: 16<sup>th</sup> September 2021

Accepted: 17<sup>th</sup> October 2021

Published: 08<sup>th</sup> December 2021

ISSN: 2453 – 6016

Volume 7,

Issue 2,

pp. 168 – 175.

**CITATION:** Staumi, G. (2021). Assessment of the Challenges which Heads of Schools Face in Practicing Leadership Styles in Community Secondary Schools. *Ruaha Journal of Arts and Social Sciences*, 7(2), 168 – 175.

effective and practical means in achieving objectives. According to Lambert & Gonzales (2001), a good school requires effective leadership whereby heads of schools are able to handle both external operations as well as the school environment interaction. Furthermore, the Commonwealth Secretariat (1996) comments that one of the key factor influencing school effectiveness is the nature and quality of the leadership style and management provided by each school.

Mullins (2005) presented three basic styles in describing leadership which are autocratic, democratic and laissez-faire leadership styles. The main difference among these styles is where the decision-making function rests. The autocratic leadership style is where the focus of power is within the group more than move towards the manager. The democratic leadership style is where the focus of power is more within the group as a whole and there is greater interaction within the group. Laissez-faire leadership style is where the manager observes the members of the group working well on their own. The manager consciously makes decisions to pass the focus of power to members, to allow them freedom of action to do as they think best; and not to interfere, but is readily available if help is needed.

On the same idea, Nanjundeswaraswamy & Swamy (2014) asserted that there are four leadership styles, which are autocratic, democratic, laissez-faire and bureaucratic leadership styles. Autocratic Leadership this style allows the autocratic leaders to take the ultimate control of taking decisions without consulting others. An autocratic leader possesses a high level of power and authority and imposes its will on its employees, while a democratic style is characterized by presence of co-ordination, co-operation, and collaboration. Laissez-Faire Leadership is when a leader does not exercise control over its employees directly. Since employees are highly experienced and need little supervision, a laissez-faire leader fails to provide continuous feedback to employees under his or her supervision.

Bureaucratic Leadership is when a leader believes in structured procedures and ensures that his or her employees follow procedures exactly. This type of leadership leaves no space to explore new ways to solve issues and in fact work by book. Leadership styles can be organized into five categories namely autocratic, democratic, laissez-faire, transactional and transformational leadership style (Kramer, 2020). Each of these leadership styles has its benefits and its drawbacks, and each is more effective in certain workplace than others. The most effective leadership style for a workplace depends on the mix of employee personalities present or the mix of experience levels in the workplace.

Poor academic performance might be caused by many factors of which one of them is the leadership styles practiced in secondary schools. It has been established that, application of a poor leadership style may lead to low leader's commitment, poor policies, teachers and students behaviors that indicate low motivation and low teacher's retention (Kambambovu, 2018). Leadership forms a very important portion in running secondary schools in Tanzania. Leadership as a key component in the

education system led to the government establishing an institution to specifically train education personnel. This is to say, leadership has been at the heart in the education system as a key determinant of success. The role of leadership style is a critical factor in performance and effectiveness of all levels of education in developed and developing countries including Tanzania. It is quite important to conduct the study on the influence of heads of schools leadership styles on the student's academic performance in community secondary schools that would complement to the effort done by the government in improving the management of secondary schools.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Performance in secondary school has been linked with leadership styles utilized by heads of schools. Given the importance attached to education, every district in Tanzania is striving to improve the quality of education and students' academic achievement through effective school leadership and management. So, improving learning outcomes requires an approach to leadership development, which focuses on leadership styles. Normally head of schools are expected to oversee the organization of departments and the allocation of resources within the units in the school, facilitate professional development and in-service training of human resource, as well as monitoring how teaching and assessment of students is conducted and effectively managed. Setting vision and mission of the school, recruitment, induction, developing and motivating people and teaching and learning in the institution are some sets of practices that constitute the basics of successful leadership practice in school.

Leadership is an important function of management which helps to maximize efficiency to achieve organizational goals. The heads of schools as leaders also use different leadership styles which define their value and perspectives, where the key goal of a school is good students' performance. Despite the fact that leadership is an important function of management which counts on the success and achievement of a school, various findings indicates that, there is low academic performance in community secondary schools for over four years consistently. This study intended to assess the influence of heads of schools leadership styles on students' academic performance in community secondary schools, in Iringa Municipal Council.

### **Research Methodology**

The study conducted in Iringa Municipal Council in Community Secondary Schools. The reason of choosing this area was to examine the influence of heads of schools leadership styles on students' academic performance following poor academic performance in CSEE in the community secondary schools in the municipal for over 4 years consistently 2017-2020. In terms of methodology, this study is guided by pragmatism paradigm, descriptive research design and mixed research approach. The targeted populations for this study were School heads, Teachers and Students from community secondary schools. This study involved 105 participants from 5 selected community secondary schools. In which 5 were school heads, 40 were teachers and 60 were students. The study employed two sampling Procedures namely purposive and simple random sampling techniques. In this study three methods of data collection

were employed such as face to face interview, focus group discussion, documentation. In this study, descriptive and quantitative statistics used to analyze data. The data collected from the respondents presented in form of tables and quotes. The responses coded and categorized into specific objectives of the study.

### **Challenges Head of the Schools Facing in Practicing Leadership Styles**

With regard to whether there are any challenges the heads of schools are facing when practicing different leadership styles. Through interview, the findings from this study indicated that, the challenges head of schools faced were resistance of subordinates, inadequate leadership skills, lack of support from community as well as effects led by over enrollment.

#### **Resistance of Subordinates**

The findings in this study indicated that, resistance of subordinates is a challenge facing school heads when applying leadership styles particularly Dictatorship style. The response of head of school A indicated that, teacher refused to implement teaching activities in a school when used dictatorship leadership style. A sub theme when posed to head of school B, argued that;

There are different challenges we as head of schools we are facing when applying different leadership styles. Every style has its own challenges even democratic leadership style its application depend on the nature of staff and nature of a task as well, if the teamwork are not responsible and committed to work this style is not working, though it is good if the staff members are responsible and committed to the job otherwise do not expect any good job at all (Interview, Head of school B: March 17, 2021).

Findings in this study concur with the study conducted by Yılmaz and Gokhan (2013) about resistance to change and ways of reducing resistance in educational organizations. The study indicated that leadership styles preventing people from fulfillment of economic, social, esteem, and other needs may encounter with resistance. Thus, people resist changes that lower their income, job status and social relationships like dictatorship style of leadership in schools. Mullins (2005) supported the study by indicating that dictatorship style of leadership reduces members' freedom when leadership is seen as troublesome and reduce freedom of action with increased control organization members may resist to implement some of the duties assigned by a leader or organization.

#### **Inadequate Leadership Skills of the Heads of Schools**

The findings of the study showed that inadequate leadership skills were another challenge facing school heads when applying leadership styles. The response of head of school D indicated that heads of schools appointed according to officers' interest without considering leadership skills and qualification criteria. During interview, head of school D asserted that:

You know most of us are just getting appointment as per our officer's interest but in fact we have little knowledge concerning leadership skills. Normally in teachers college, no one is prepared to be a head of school. The focus there is to impart content and teaching methodologies to a student teacher rather than leadership skills. Also, political interest is another problem to take into consideration when coming to the point of maintaining the quality of education in our schools, some of us are getting appointments of being school heads because of their political influences. Our standing order as civil servants does not allow us to have any political interest but unfortunately you may find that some of us are given appointment because they are the followers of a political party which is in power at the moment regardless of the qualifications and level of professionalism a person may possess (Interview, Head of school C: February 27, 2021).

The demographic information's of the interviewed heads of the selected community secondary schools in Iringa Municipal council from 2017-2020, concerning their leadership skills and qualifications, leadership experience and time of leading a current school as well as level of education. The findings reveals that heads of the selected schools are graduates with bachelor of education studied much on pedagogical knowledge and skills rather than leadership skills. They are still given position of leading schools regardless of their low skills and qualification on the aspect of leadership. They just given orientation which is not enough for leading a school as an organization. The findings reveals only one among of the five heads of the selected schools has more than five years' experience in the course of leading schools, but the rest are less than five years' experience.

The findings from this study concur with Gonfa (2019) who asserts that, leadership skills matters in making difference. Skills play key role that it helps the leaders to influence others in achievement of organizational goals. Insisting on that the study conducted by Dilts (1996) indicates that leadership skills are one of the most important skills that are required in the changing world. Leadership skills are vital for effective performance of leadership roles as it helps the leader to move the organizations forward. Moreover, leadership skills are important in developing and maintaining cooperative relationship with superiors, subordinates, peers and others. Leaders need to possess leadership skills in order to build and keep healthy relationship with the people in and outside of the organizations. These all will add to the productivity and success of the organizations.

### **Insufficient Community Support**

The findings in this study indicated that, the surrounding community did not support school heads. To achieve school goals and objectives require high community support. The response of head of school B during interview indicated that parents were not able to participate in school meeting when invited to do so. The head of school B asserted that:

Most of this community secondary schools parents are less concerning with their children academic development. For example when the school calls for a meeting to share problems facing the school, you will find poor responses. Even when teachers provide assignment to the students, parents are not following. This leads to low academic performance among students. Furthermore, parents and other community member's surrounds us is a problem, they are not cooperative to a school. When they are asked to make their contribution for their children and teachers to have meal during day time and other school developmental activities they don't accept, therefore it is difficult to manage a school while students and teachers are starving (Interview, Head of school D: February 24, 2021).

The visited head of schools mentioned various challenges they are facing in practicing the different leadership styles. These challenges include conflicts among the school stakeholders such as teachers, students and parents, hatred and under-performance, which in the future might cause poor academic performance. This is supported by Nthenya (2012) who found several barriers to school leadership to include teachers' conflicts, teachers' engagement in private tuition or establish private business, resistance among teachers to the leaders, teacher absenteeism, less community support, teachers' resistance to change and teachers' lack of commitment towards learning and training. Singano (2015) believed that if head of secondary schools in the region appropriately select leadership styles. It could serve to enhance the quality of support supervision they offer to their teachers and consequently. It would improve student academic performance.

### **Effects Led by Over Enrollment**

It was revealed from the findings that the teachers teaching load is very high which compromised the quality of education they offer to the students as they experience time limit in preparing lessons. This could be attributed by the high students-teacher ratio in most of the community secondary schools of which most classes are overcrowded. It was found that overcrowded class rooms affect the process of teaching and learning. Due to this fact there are lots of distractions during the lessons, for example giving assignments and making follow up become difficult due to over load for teachers. This is evidenced by the head of school A, when asked argued that:

We fail to perform well due to high number of students we have, compared to the number of teachers available at school. Sometimes teachers are giving assignment to the students which are not proportional to the class level, for instance a form three student in Biology monthly test being given multiple choice questions only instead of Analysis and discussion questions simply because a teacher is afraid of marking too much work load (Interview, Head of school A: February 25, 2021).

A teacher from school C when asked on the same topic said:

You know we teachers we have a lot of activities to do in our professional to mention few including preparing teaching and learning materials, preparing scheme of work, lesson plans, designing extra curriculum activities for students to perform and marking students assignments and tests bad enough you may find that one teacher of mathematics or physics teach a larger number of students, for example a teacher may teach physics form three A, B, C and D and the same teacher is teaching form one A to D the same subject which same times it makes the total of 31 periods in a week for one teacher to cover, this actually declines the quality of education in our schools (Interview, Head of school C: March 08, 2021).

The most fundamental task of the heads of schools is to ensure students are getting their academic potentials. Despite the fact that most of heads of schools claim to use different leadership styles interchangeably depending on the situation but the shortage of teaching and learning resources remain a big problem toward students' academic performance. The findings in this study are supported by Pacaol (2021) who intensified workloads add some pressure on teacher's effectiveness and leave minute time on how to meet up the major teaching duties such as designing class discussion or giving feedback to students.

The findings in this study indicate that, an increase of workloads from policymakers often resulted in teachers' burnout. This causes the feelings of powerlessness and lack of enthusiasm in teaching and making the school a pleasant environment. The quality of classroom teaching is unfavorably influenced by huge workloads. This is also in line with Jomuad, Mabelle, Cericos, Bacus, Juby & Beverly (2021) on teachers' workload in relation to burnout and work performance. The findings indicated that, teachers are prone to burnout due to long hours of teaching and a heavy workload. Teachers stated that they had to deal with new technological systems, new requirements for long term educational planning to align the teaching with the goals, new needs for grading and assessment of students' results, and extensive individual development plans for each student with increasing time pressure. It was perceived to cause unplanned changes in the schedule and a higher workload.

## **Conclusion**

Head of schools lacks adequate and quality support supervision regarding to the school leadership and management from REO and DEOS. Schools lack parents' cooperation whereby teachers work themselves where very few parents cooperate with them. In order to improve students' academic performance in community secondary schools for the aims of achieving national educational objectives the REOs and DSEOs are recommended to provide heads of schools with adequate and quality support supervision regarding to the school leadership and management. This could be attributable to the excellence in performance of the school heads as instructional leaders in those schools. On the other hand the parents have to play their role on their

students' academic performance through cooperating with teachers and attending parents meeting for better achievement of their students. The government in collaboration with the Ministry of Education science and technology should provide training to head of secondary schools in order to enhance leadership skills.

## References

- Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2000). *Research Methods in Education*. 5<sup>th</sup> Edition, London: Routledge Falmer.
- Commonwealth Secretariat. (1996). *Managing and Motivating Teachers Under Resource Constraints: Training Head Teachers to Face the Challenges*. London: Commonwealth Secretariat.
- Dilts, R. B. (1996). *Visionary Leadership Skill: Creating a World to which People Want to Belong*. Meta publishing.
- Gonfa, B. D. (2019). Review of Effects of Poor Leadership Skill in Organization: Evidences. *Arabian Journal of Business and Business and Management Review*, 9(2), 1- 5.
- Holmes, R. (2000). *Is Learning a Contaminated Concept: A handbook for Schools*. London.
- Jomuad, P. D., et al. (2021). Teachers' Workload in Relation to Burnout and Work Performance. *International Journal of Educational Policy Research and Review*, 8 (2), 48-53.
- Kambamovu, M. E. (2018). *Assessment of Leadership Styles in Relation to Students' Academic Performance in Secondary Schools: A Case of Tabora Municipality*. Dar es Salaam: The Open University of Tanzania.
- Kramer, L. (2020). *Advantages & Drawbacks of the Autocratic Leadership Style*. California: Hearst Newspapers, LLC.
- Lambert, L., & Gonzales, S. (2001). Teacher Leadership In Professional Development Schools: Emerging Conceptions, Identities and Practices. *Journal of School Leadership*, 11(1), 6- 24.
- Mullins, L. J. (2005). *Management and Organizational Behavior*. New York : Prentice Hall.
- Nanjundeswaraswamy, T. S., & Swamy, D. R. (2014). Leadership styles: Advances in Management. *JSS Academy of Technical Education*, 7(1), 57 – 63.
- Pacaol, N. (2021). Teacher's Workload Intensification: A Qualitative Case Study of Its Implications on Teaching Quality. *International Online Journal of Education and Teaching (IOJET)*, 8(1), 43-60.
- Singano, A. (2015). *The Role of Leadership Styles on Teachers' Working Morale in Primary Schools in Kibaha Town Council*. Unpublished Masters Dissertation. The Open University of Tanzania.
- Yılmaz, D., & Gokhan, K. (2013). Resistance to Change and Ways of Reducing Resistance in Educational Organizations. *European Journal of Research on Education*. 1(1), 14-21.