

Original Paper

How Leadership Style influences Students' Learning in Selected Community Secondary Schools in Temeke Municipality, Tanzania

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Abstract

This study explored the effect of school leadership style in students' learning in community secondary schools. The study had three specific objectives, which were to examine the existing leadership styles practiced in the selected Community secondary schools, the effect of leadership style on students learning in selected community secondary schools and the effect of leadership styles on student's academic performance in those schools. The research was conducted in Temeke Municipality in the Dar es Salaam region of Tanzania. The study relied on both qualitative (observation, interview, reflection) and quantitative (official statistics, questionnaires) approaches. The data were collected through interviews, questionnaires, document reviews, and observation. A sample of 27 teachers was considered together with 4 school heads and 117 students from four selected secondary schools. Data were collected and analyzed by descriptive statistics and content/thematic analysis. The findings of the study revealed that the leadership style commonly applied in secondary schools in Temeke municipality is the democratic leadership style, which is used by head of schools to avoid being strict and firm in decision making. Unfortunately, this kind of leadership style does not support an effective teaching and learning process. This explained why the performance of students in selected secondary schools was still low and discipline was rather lax, while management of resources was poor. The study recommends that the authorities should make sure that the environment of the school is provided with all necessary materials for effective learning. In addition, teachers who were appointed in the position of head of school should be competent enough to supervise the teaching and learning activities and be given more authority to decide key school issues. For further research, it is recommended that a similar

study be conducted in other parts of the country to show the effect of this style and an intervention be introduced to test better leadership styles in those schools.

Keywords

Leadership Styles, Students' Learning, Students' Academic Performance

1. Introduction

With increased pressure from globalization and the race to produce excellent students and future superior workers, governments are pushing for educational institutions in their countries to improve student performance (Arbuckle, 2009; Friedman, 2016; Nakamura, 2017; Schmickle, 2018). America has felt this increased pressure as demonstrated through the landmark legislation, leadership is argued to be a way forward to improve performance in a variety of contexts including schools (Ball et al., 2018). The significance of effective leadership for the successful operation of schools and colleges is widely acknowledged in the twenty-first century (Bennis & Naus, 2003; Kasinga, 2016). As the global economy gathers pace, governments are realizing that their main assets are well trained people and that remaining, or becoming, competitive depends on increasingly on the development of a highly-skilled workforce (Kirima, 2014). In education, this requires trained and committed teachers but they, in turn, need the leadership of highly effective heads of schools and senior teachers (Mullins, 2006; MacDonald, 2017).

Teacher leadership research exhibits that there might be an association between the teacher's leadership style and understudy learning or execution (Cheng, 2014; Pounder, 2018; Wallace, 2017; Yildirim, et al., 2018). Tragically, Wallace (2017) demonstrated that while teachers do not consider themselves pioneers in the homeroom, their understudies do. Leadership research might give understanding into what establishes a specialist teacher, and on the off chance that it does, schooling could change the leadership preparing for the military and business pioneers to prepare teachers.

Leadership styles have a direct cause-and-effect relationship with teachers' effectiveness in providing quality education (Powell & Beard, 2018). It is considered as one of the key ingredients for the teachers' effectiveness. It is, therefore, important for a leader to understand what high-quality leadership style to employ in schools. According to Anyango (2015) leadership style is the manner and approach of providing direction, implementing plans, and motivating people.

In Tanzania since independence, the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MOEST) has been recruiting teachers in different colleges and universities, giving them skills and capacities not because of overcoming the shortage of teachers in schools but also to become good teachers (Nasibi, 2013). Nsubuga (2018) pointed out that the leadership style of the teachers is very important in school because leaders' behaviors affect positively or negatively students' academic performance.

Teachers in Temeke Municipality are facing challenges and complexities in deploying various leadership styles in schools (Mkumbugo et al., 2020). There is no single best way for supporting the

ability of students to perform various tasks assigned by teachers to students (Patrick, 2013). This makes the task of deploying leadership styles and approaches complimenting leaders' traits such as skills, abilities to play leading roles and functions, ability to tackle existing issues, and while maintaining the promotion of relationships a vital aspect (Ogunyinka & Adedoyin, 2013). This study focused on the use of various leadership styles as core elements to solve secondary schools' systems' tasks to facilitate students learning in Temeke Municipality.

1.1 The Research Problem

Tanzania has made efforts to provide secondary education to its people as a response to the millennium challenge goals of 2000 (Godida, 2018). In 2004, the government launched the World-Bank funded Secondary School Education Program (SEDP1). Under this program, the government established secondary schools in every Ward (Mgeni, 2015). However, the performance of students from these Community secondary schools has been worse than the other schools owned by the government, seminaries, and other private schools. Teachers in schools are expected to assist learners to have better academic performance (Mtavangu, 2021). Low performance in secondary schools in Temeke municipality raises questions on whether teachers and students are effectively participating in the teaching and learning process and whether school heads exercise their support and authority effectively. The researchers were henceforth interested to know how monitoring and supervision of students and teachers were being conducted in schools and how teachers as leaders ensured that students were learning effectively.

The study has three major objectives:

- i) To examine the existing leadership styles practiced by selected Community Secondary Schools head teachers in Temeke Municipality.
- ii) To investigate the effect of leadership style on students' learning in selected Community secondary schools in Temeke Municipality.
- iii) To assess the effect of leadership styles on students' academic performance in Community secondary schools in Temeke municipality.

2. Methods

2.1 Research Approach

A mixed research approach was employed in this study using the concurrent method. This implies quantitative and qualitative research approaches. The study used a descriptive cross-sectional research design in assessing the effect of deploying different leadership styles in community secondary schools to facilitate students learning in Temeke Municipality. The use of this research design helped in capturing various views from the respondents, since these varied from one to another.

Temeke Municipality Community Secondary Schools environment was the study area. The study involved five community secondary schools which enrolled more than 2,000 students each and a large sample of students and teachers. The selected area is viable to yield reliable and valid data, as it

possesses many students to have related tasks because of the large number.

This study population frame comprised of homogeneous strata of 4 heads of selected community secondary schools whose students admitted are more than 2000 students and comprised a good number of subject teachers, class teachers as well as senior teachers. The population of selected schools including: 27 teachers, 4 school heads and 117 students.

Simple random sampling was used to select teachers while the Head teachers (HOS), Municipal Secondary Education officer (MSEO), and Ward Education Officer (WEO) were selected by using Purposive Sampling. This made a total of 148 respondents who participated in this study.

Data were collected by using a semi-structured interview, a questionnaire and observation. These kind of data were further analyzed based on their nature. Qualitative data analyzed through thematic analysis and quantitative data analyzed statistically with the help of standard software

3. Result and Discussion

3.1 Types of Leadership Styles Practiced in Secondary School

The teachers were required to rate the degree of different characteristics of democratic leadership. Four statements presented and the results are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Teachers Rating of Democratic Leadership Style

Variable	SD		D		N		A		SA	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Teachers' ideas and suggestions are heard and valued in decision making	0	0	7	14	5	18	11	50	4	18
Head of school offer a chance and rewards for creativity	0	0	1	5	5	23	19	64	2	9
There is delegation of power among teachers	0	0	0	0	2	9	12	41	13	50
Teachers are feeling more engaged in the process	1	5	2	9	5	14	13	59	6	14

Source: Research Field, July 2021.

The results from table 1 show that out of 27 respondents 15 (56%) agreed with the statement that teachers' ideas and suggestions are heard and valued in decision making, while 7 (26%) disagreed with the statement. Out of 27 respondents, 21(78%) agreed that the head of school offers a chance and rewards such as a certificate of recognition for being creative, while 12 (36%) strongly disagreed with the statement. The majority of respondents 25 (93%) agreed that there is delegation of power among teachers, 0 (0%) disagreed with the statement. Out of 27 of the respondents, 19 (70%) agreed with the statement that teachers are feeling more engaged in the process, while 3 (11%) disagreed with the

statement. For all four statements majority of teachers, 20(74) agree, 4(16%) were neutral and only 3 (10) disagreed. It implies that the type of leadership practiced in Temeke municipal by most of the head teachers is democratic. In terms of laissez-faire, the results were presented in Table 2

Table 2. Teachers' Assessment of Laissez Faire Leadership Style

Variable	SD		D		N		A		SA	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
All decision are left to teachers	1	5	14	55	7	32	4	5	1	5
Head of school take responsibility for overall actions and decisions	5	23	5	9	5	23	10	36	2	9
Teachers have access to many resources and tools	1	5	1	5	7	32	16	50	2	9
There is little guidance from the head of school	3	14	15	59	6	14	3	14	0	0

Source: Research Field, July 2021.

Data in Table 2 item 1 indicated that 5(19%) of the respondent's opinions agreed that all decisions are left to teachers while 15 (56%) respondents disagreed in their opinions. This left the 7(26%) respondents who were neutral on that statement. Item two was asked about the head of school taking responsibility for overall actions and decisions where 12 (44%) of teachers agreed, 10 (37) disagree and a minority of teachers 5 (19%) were neutral.

The table further reveals that the majority of the respondents 18 (67%) that teachers have access to many resources and tools, while 1(7%) disagreed with the statement. This left 7(26%) who were neutral. Less than a quarter of respondents 3 (11%) agreed that there is little guidance from the head of school while 18 (67%) disagreed with the statement and 6(22%) remained neutral. This means that the majority 107 (62.9%) of the secondary school teachers were able to tools assess. This statement intended to find out the practices of Laissez-faire leadership and the response shows that only item 3 (teachers have access to many resources and tools) scored more than half (67%). That means in Temeke municipal the head of schools as supervisors allow teachers to access resources in school, which provide a chance of being creative and innovative. Generally, 42% of teachers disagree, 35% agree and only 23% were neutral on the practice of laissez-faire leadership style. Another part of the questionnaire sought to check whether the head teachers applied autocratic leadership. Four statements presented to teachers and the results summarized in Table 4

Table 3. Teachers' Assessment of Heads' Autocratic Leadership Style

Variable	SD		D		N		A		SA	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Almost all decision are made by head of school	8	27	16	59	2	9	1	5	0	0

Ideas and suggestions from teachers are always discouraged	5	23	19	64	2	9	1	5	0	0
There is no chance and rewards for creativity	11	27	8	36	6	27	1	5	1	5
Teachers carry out their duties under fear and threats	7	32	12	32	2	9	6	27	0	0

Source: Research Field, July 2021.

The results of item 1 from table 4 shows that only 1 (4%) of teachers agree, 24 (89%) disagreed and 2(7%) remain neutral on a statement which states that almost all decisions are made by the head of schools. When teachers were asked if their ideas and suggestions are always discouraged only 1(4%) of teachers agreed with the statement, 24 (89%) disagreed and 2(7%) were neutral on that statement. Furthermore, the results from the same table revealed that 2 (7%) of teachers agree, 19 (70%) disagreed and 6(22%) remained neutral on whether there is no chance and rewards for creativity.

The last item is intended to know if the teachers carry their duties under fear and threats. 6 (22%) of respondents agreed with the statement while the majority of teachers 19 (70%) disagreed and only 2 (7%) remained neutral. In Temeke municipality heads of schools do not prefer to practice autocratic leadership as revealed by table 4 where 80% of teachers disagreed, 9% agreed, and 11% were neutral.

3.2 The Influence of Leadership Style on Learning Process

The second objective was to establish the effect of head teachers' leadership styles in Temeke municipal and determine whether the leadership styles have any influence on students' learning. The study found out that all four head teachers applied the democratic leadership style more than autocratic and laissez-faire. From that point, the researcher intended to know the effect of the leadership style used by head teachers in Temeke municipal. Observation and interview were used and the results presented in different themes.

3.3 Provision/Preparation and Use of Appropriate Teaching Resources

During the study, one of four heads of schools who interviewed described the situation as follows:

Take an example of geography subject how a teacher can teach a topic of the survey without having instruments like a tape measure, ranging pole and tripod stand... as head of school I tried to purchase some materials like the manila card for teachers to draw diagrams but the challenge is that some of the teachers are not creative, they need teaching resources which are ready made for use but our budget is not enough to meet the growing demand for each department... Interview, Head of school, July 2021.

Through observation, it was revealed that in Temeke municipality, few teachers prepared and used teaching aids. Most of them taught without any teaching aids, especially language subjects like Kiswahili and English.

3.4 Scheduling of Teaching and Learning Activities

The study sought to find out how the learning and teaching activities are scheduled and for that case the head of school was interviewed and other information collected through observation during the visit. In

all four secondary schools visited, the general school timetable was prepared manually by considering the guidelines given in the curriculum of secondary school. The curriculum observed by the researcher clearly stated the number of periods per week for each subject.

In all 4 secondary schools the general timetable was pinned on staff, academic and head of school notes board, also every teacher had his/her time table found in the lesson plan. In each class, it was observed that there is a class timetable that shows the number of sessions and allocated time per day. It was further observed that on average the number of periods is 9 each of 40 minutes and a single break of 20 minutes. The first session begins at 08:00 am and the last one ended at 02:20 pm.

It was further revealed that some teachers do not adhere to the timetable as they combine two-streams with different lessons in the timetable to cut down the work load. This was due to the fact that teachers who teach science subjects are very few and their workload would be larger if they tried to teach each stream.

3.5 Management of Curriculum Implementation

To find out the influence of leadership on the learning process the study was interested in understanding how the head teachers supervised the implementation of the curriculum. The first question in the semi-structured interview required the head of schools to state whether they have an internal quality assurance team. All 4 of head teachers had internal quality assurance. One of the head of school asked how the head of school select the quality assurance team and their responsibilities and he said that:

We select a team based on teachers' experience and other assigned duties. For example, the academic master is selected to the team due to his position. The team is given guidelines and a short seminar on how they can work together with an appointment letter, which shows the role of each member in the team. ... Interview, Head of school, July 2021.

To find more evidence the researcher observed different written documents such as the schemes of work, lesson plans, and lesson notes. For a case of teaching schemes, most of the teachers prepared well and on time but the challenge was on how they are checked. All scheme of works observed during the study had been checked by the teacher only once before the beginning of the academic year. In the scheme of work, there is a column of comments, which requires a teacher to fill after teaching a specific topic or subtopic but for all observed schemes, no one filled that column of comments. It can be concluded that the important documents like schemes of work, which are used as a road map for teachers were not well supervised by head of schools in all four secondary schools of Temeke municipality.

These findings differ from that one of Njuguna et al. (2013) who reported that school heads are exposed to possess greater accountability for supervision of the school curriculum through administration of their subordinates, budget management, and resource mobilization from numerous sources. It can be generalized that the leadership styles applied in secondary schools in Temeke municipal (Democratic leadership does not seem to influence the teaching and learning process.

3.6 Classroom Observation

For a better understanding of teaching and learning activities practiced in secondary schools in Temeke municipal, a single lesson of English language was observed and the study come with general comments.

Generally, the lesson was fairly prepared and presented. The teacher was active and good in command but some weaknesses were observed and they needed some improvement. First, the issue of time management where it was observed that a shift from one lesson to another there is no gap of time to allow a pause of shifting. From that point, it was observed that some minutes were wasted during shifting from one lesson to another. It is advisable that there should be at least 2 minutes of shifting from of session to another. Second, the teacher did not prepare and use any teaching media. The subtopic was “Negotiating solutions to the problem” where the teacher would use a variety of teaching resources including literary works (newspapers and texts on true-life experiences). It can be concluded that the teacher lacked creativity during the teaching and learning process as he used the traditional methodology of teaching that is lecturing.

3.7 Impact of Leadership Styles in Students’ Academic Performance

All the four visited secondary schools are ordinary level comprising of students from form one to form four. These students are set for national examination once within four years of study. The results of students for two current years are presented in Table 6

Table 6. National Examination Performance in Sampled Schools for Year 2020

Schools	DIVISION PERFORMANCE SUMMARY											
	DIV I		DIV II		DIV III		DIV IV		DIV 0		TOTAL	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	T	%
School A	2	1%	8	2%	29	8%	240	63%	103	27%	382	100%
School B	3	1%	28	6%	40	8%	271	55%	155	31%	497	100%
School C	1	0%	28	8%	42	12%	163	48%	103	31%	337	100%
School D	4	1%	7	2%	30	8%	220	61%	100	28%	361	100%

Source: NECTA website 2021.

In Temeke municipal although the teachers are comfortable with leadership style, students’ academic achievement is not well attained. In all visited schools the performance of students in division one was only 1% on average. Majority of students, more than 50% in all visited schools had scored in form four examination division 4 [the lowest] and leaving the other group (more than 25% of the class) failing the examination by scoring division zero, ie: filing all subjects. This is a lesson to the municipal authorities. It looks absurd that they can sit in their offices and let such a large number of students fail

while they can provide training and motivation to improve the situation.

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