

IMPACT OF LEADERSHIP STYLE AND SCHOOL CLIMATE ONSTAFF PERFORMANCE IN THE SCHOOL

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Abstract:

The research study was designed to examine the leadership styles adopted by head teachers and the influence on staff performance in primary schools of Tehsil Burewala cluster in District Vehari. The research design used was a mixed method that incorporated both the quantitative and qualitative approaches. The target population consisted of head teachers, teachers and non-teaching staff from which a sample of five head teachers from five schools, thirty teachers and twenty non-teaching staff were involved in the study through purposive and random sampling. The research instruments used to collect data were open and close format questionnaire, in-depth interview and document analysis. The study findings showed that the overwhelming majority of head teachers employ democratic leadership style in Tehsil Burewala cluster primary schools which enhances positive school staff performance. Regarding to major factors that influence negatively the staff performance, the majority of the respondents highlighted lack of motivation, pupils' incompetence, low remuneration, coercive measures and lack of in-service training for professional development. It was evident from the findings that through democratic approach, staff participation and involvement in school matters and positive interpersonal relationship between school staff and head teachers influence the staff performance in various primary schools in Tehsil Burewala cluster. The study also established that there is a significant relationship between democratic leadership style and school climate. The main recommendations were addressed to the District Services of Education, youth and technology of Tehsil Burewala that should sensitise head teachers to apply democratic leadership style to enhance positive school staff performance, to run periodically in-service training to head teachers in collaboration with local universities which could adopt them with competence-based approach, towards management and leadership skills so that they improve the performance of their schools, to find ways of increasing school income for paying incentives and monetary reward so that it motivates the school staff.

Keywords: Leadership styles, school performance, Climate, Staff

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Introduction

This paper focuses on leadership styles adopted by head teachers and the influence on staff performance in primary schools of Tehsil Burewala cluster in District Vehari. Leadership is defined by Voon, Lo and Ayob (2011) as a process of interaction between leaders and followers where the leader attempts to influence followers to achieve a common goal. Leaders carry out this process by applying their leadership attributes, such as beliefs, values, ethics, character, knowledge, and skills. Leithwood, Louis, Anderson and Wahlstrom (2004) noted that leadership influences the interpretation of events for followers, the choice of objectives for the group or organization, the organization of work activities to accomplish objectives, the motivation of followers to achieve the objectives, the maintenance of cooperative relationships and teamwork and the enlistment of support and cooperation from people outside the group or organization.

According to Eduardo (2012) District Vehari has been embarked on a rapid expansion of access to primary schooling as a result of construction of many schools, enrolment of many children and teacher training institutions compared to the past whereby the colonial government had no real interest in educating the indigenous African peoples. The country's laws regarding education sector have also improved.

For instance, the new National Education Law of 1992, which replaced the 1983 legislation, also states that education is a right and duty of all citizens, and, while reaffirming the government's central role, opens up the sector to non-state actors. However, the expansion of school network should be accompanied by appropriate school leadership (ibid). Primary schools in Tehsil Burewala cluster have been facing serious problems such as low performance of school staff, demotivation of teachers and school workers due to shortage of wages, overloaded classrooms and higher teacher to pupil ratios. The quality of education is the overriding concern for a system, on which the multitude of reforms so far appear to have had no significant positive effects, and there is increasing evidence that the costs of education are excluding segments of the population (Eduardo: 2012).

School leaders are appointed to be the solution of the above problems through employing appropriate types of leadership styles. Transformational leaders employing democratic style differently from laissez-faire and autocratic leadership styles, transform the value, needs, aspirations, followers' priorities and also motivate their followers to exceed expectations (Thamrin: 2012). As a matter of fact, in last decades' scholars from worldwide show a great

deal in educational leadership matters and several studies were made. For instance, a study made in Iran by Rizi, Azadi, Farsani and Aroufzad (2013) concerned with the relationship between leadership styles and job satisfaction among physical education organizations employees, showed that there is a positive correlation between the overall leadership styles and job satisfaction.

In District Vehari, Bazo (2011) also conducted a research entitled “Transformational Leadership in Mozambican Primary Schools”. The main purpose was to examine the association between transformational leadership and organizational learning and the findings revealed that three school leader transformational practices, namely, vision and goals, structure and performance expectations were positively associated with individual teacher learning. From the above studies, the researcher concludes that there is a clear gap in all researches which do not examine leadership styles adopted by head teachers and the influence on staff performance in primary schools of Tehsil Burewala cluster in District Vehari which is the main purpose of the current study.

Statement of the Problem

The problem in this study is related to the low performance of teachers and non-teachers which influence the quality of education in primary schools of Tehsil Burewala cluster primary schools. Based on Eduardo (2012), primary schools in Tehsil Burewala cluster are facing serious problems such as low performance of school staff, demotivation of teachers and schoolworkers due to shortage of wages, overloaded classrooms and higher teacher to pupil ratios. The quality of education is the overriding concern for a system, on which the multitude of reforms so far appear to have had no significant positive effects, and there is increasing evidence that the costs of education are excluding segments of the population (ibid).

The District services of education, youth and technology of Tehsil Burewala cluster has been registering an increasing number of schools and school staff. This development has to be followed by the existence of head teachers who adopt appropriate leadership style to his/her school staff, mainly teachers and non-teachers so that they perform adequately towards the fulfilment of the intended school goals.

The quality of education in public primary schools is generally considered by civil society, stakeholders, donors and parents as poor. Spaul (2011) points out that many problems faced today in education sector, such as pupils failing to read a text accurately in Portuguese and writing a composition after completing the primary level, teachers’ absenteeism, poor content teaching knowledge, dropouts estimated in 40% at primary level should be regarded as enemies for education development. In addition, we commonly see non-teaching staff not performing well their tasks such as cleaning conveniently classrooms, toilets, school offices

and so forth, despite the various interventions of the community and head teachers. Such a situation is alarming, bearing in mind that public schools accommodate the majority of the pupils and workers (teachers and non-teaching staff). The current study sought to examine leadership styles adopted by head teachers considered as a catalyst approach towards the school staff performance. Based on the background above, it is pivotal to ask the question: *To what extent do leadership styles adopted by headteachers have an influence on the schools' staff performance in primary schools of Tehsil Burewala cluster in District Vehari?*

Research Objectives

This study addresses the following research objectives:

To identify the most predominant leadership style adopted by head teachers in Tehsil Burewala cluster primary schools; To assess the major factors that influence negatively the staff performance in Tehsil Burewala cluster primary schools; To examine to what extent do head teachers' leadership styles influence the staff performance in Tehsil Burewala cluster primary schools:

- To find out the most predominant school climate that exists in Tehsil Burewala cluster primary schools.
- To evaluate to what extent the leadership style influence school climate in Tehsil Burewala cluster primary schools.

Methodology

The researcher used a mixed method which is inductive of qualitative and quantitative research design. The Qualitative research design was used due to personal involvement and in-depth responses of individuals who secure a sufficient level of truthfulness of the results. Through quantitative research design, data were represented numerically in tables in statistical analysis and pie charts. A total of fifty (50) primary schools with the corresponding number of head teachers, one hundred and forty eight (148) teachers and one hundred and one (101) non-teaching staff were the target population involved in the study, with the sample of five (5) primary schools with five head teachers, 30 teachers and 20 non-teachers from public and missionary primary schools through purposive and random sampling. Open-ended and close-ended questionnaires, semi-structured interviews and documentary review concerned with statistical reports were used as research instruments in the process of data collection.

Results and Findings

Findings Gathered through Questionnaire Instrument

In closed-ended and open-ended questionnaire format, the researcher involved head teachers, teachers and non-teaching staff in order to present full information needed in regard to leadership styles and the influence on staff performance in Tehsil Burewala Cluster primary schools.

In-Service Training of Head Teachers in Tehsil Burewala Cluster Primary Schools

The findings from table 8 indicate that 100% of head teachers participated actively in the present study. 40% of them assured that they are trained once per semester, similar percentage argued differently from others who assumed to be trained once per year while 20% of head teacher respondents once in two years.

Table 1. In-service training of head teacher respondents

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Once per semester	2	40.0	40.0	40.0
Once per year	2	40.0	40.0	80.0
Once in two years	1	20.0	20.0	100.0
Total	5	100.0	100.0	

In-service training through meetings, workshops, seminars being organized in schools provides the platform for sharpening and enriching the professional knowledge and skills of head teachers.

Description of School Staff Performance

Staff performance is a key issue for any school to achieve the intended goals. Data collected through questionnaire in regard to school staff performance presented below reveal that 60% of head teachers who participated in the study assumed that they have been facing high performance of their employees that is, teachers and non-teachers. However, 40% of respondents had different view characterized by facing low staff performance.

Table 2. Teachers and Non-teachers' performance

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid High	3	60.0	60.0	60.0
Low	2	40.0	40.0	100.0
Total	5	100.0	100.0	

When commenting on staff performance, one had teacher respondent expressed that: *“In my school I feel that teachers and non-teachers are conscious of their roles. My subordinates are assiduous, punctual and obedient. They follow strictly the school rules and regulations. I feel that they are competent and confident when working.*

“We run this school altogether democratically and in open climate because we understand that these key issues will help us to accomplish our school goals. We have been facing decreased rate of teachers’ absenteeism, students’ drop out, low pass rate, efficient participation in school matters of all subordinates. We are in a right position”. Another head teacher had this to say:

“Generally, I feel that in my school we are not accomplishing adequately our school goals mainly due to teachers’ behavior. Some of them come to school smelling alcohol in class. Others ask pupils for gift especially when they are celebrating their birthdays and teachers’ day October 12th.

Life is hard for every Mozambican, kids from primary schools or their parents should not be penalized for their personal interests. So, “The Ministry of Education should change its policy. Teachers should be hired at 30 years old. In this school many teachers do not show commitment with their job”.

Another head teacher had this to say: *“We normally call for meetings periodically every two weeks. In such meetings we analyse pedagogic issues (teaching contents) and administrative matters. Because I understand that through meetings teachers and non-teachers have the opportunity to voice out their own ideas, opinions, and comments for a better school success towards the achievement of better school goals. Everybody is involved in school decision-making”.*

Types of School Climate faced by Teachers and Non-teachers

In regard to school climate the school staff that participated in the study according to the tables below revealed that the overwhelming majority of teachers (93.4%) face open climate while (3.3%) characterized it as closed climate. Non-teachers, on the other hand, assumed to be facing open climate based on 85% of the respondents while (10%) closed climate.

Table 3. School climate faced by teachers

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent

Valid	Open climate	28	93.4	93.4	93.4
	Closed climate	1	3.3	3.3	96.7
	Other	1	3.3	3.3	100.0
	Total	30	100.0	100.0	

Table 4. School climate faced by non-teachers

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Open climate	17	85	85	85
	Closed climate	2	10	10	95
	Other	1	5	5	100.0
	Total	20	100.0	100.0	

When the respondents were asked to comment on the school climate faced in Tehsil Burewala Cluster primary schools, one teacher had this to say: “...when the head teacher is an open person, friendly and talkative, like mine, the working environment and the school climate are good. The pedagogic planning occurs smoothly; we assess our pupils following strictly the planned schedule. Our pupils normally perform well. Our pass rate is about 90% to 95% annually. We hardly see girls leaving the schools for marriages or house working to increase the family income as we see in rural area”. Another teacher respondent expressed his feelings in this way:

“We can't penalize our pupils due to bad leadership approach used by a head teacher. This post is not trustful. Today you sleep as a school head and tomorrow wake up as an ordinary teacher. I am strongly committed with the school goals. This missionary school offers good conditions for us and for students. Our pass rate is always high almost 100% per year, because there is no complain. You find everything in the school. The school climate is really open.” One veteran non-teacher respondent affected in administration sector commented that: “Sometimes our head teacher uses coercive measures as a means to test people. But an old person like me I don't bother because it is a trap for getting demoralized and therefore affect my working performance. Even junior staff are able to separate this in our school.

They know that the head teachers' behavior should not affect their performance. I am punctual at work, I dress smartly and I hardly stay at home in working days. The school climate is good”.

Table 5. Relationship between teachers and head teacher

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Good	16	53.8	53.8	53.8
	Bad	5	16.5	16.5	70.3
	Normal	4	13.2	13.2	83.5
	Very good	5	16.5	16.5	100.0
Total		30	100.0	100.0	

Interpersonal Relationship Between School Staff and Head Teacher

The interpersonal skills at working place are relevant in building healthy relation in school towards the achievement of better results. The findings gathered from teachers and non-teachers reveal that there is a satisfaction with regard to their head teachers. As table 12 illustrates, (53.8%) of teacher respondents encounter good relationship with their head teachers and 16.5% assumed to be very good. However, bad relationship was pointed out by (16.5%) of the respondents and normal for 13.2%.

Table 6. Relationship between non-teachers and head teacher

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Good	15	75	75	75
	Bad	3	15	15	90
	Normal	1	5	5	95
	Very good	1	5	5	100.0
Total		20	100.0	100.0	

The majority of non-teachers (75%) who participated in the study based on data from table 13, expressed satisfaction because they have been facing good relationship with their head teachers. On the other hand, (15%) expressed as facing bad relationship while (5%) normal and similar percentage very good.

School Staff Motivation

Both participants in the study that is, teachers and non-teachers expressed their lack of motivation as admitted by the overwhelming majority (93.4%) of teacher respondents who fellow motivation also assumed by (90%) of non-teacher respondents. This crucial result is minimized by 3.3% of other teacher participants and 5% of non-teachers who assumed to be strongly motivated while similar percentage of 3.3% and 5% of teachers and non-teachers respectively, are strongly demotivated as table 14 and table 15 indicate below:

Table 7. Teachers' motivation

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Low motivated	28	93.4	93.4	93.4
Valid Strongly motivated	1	3.3	3.3	96.7
Valid Strongly demotivated	1	3.3	3.3	100.0
Valid Total	30	100.0	100.0	

Table 8. Non-teachers' motivation

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Low motivated	18	90	90	90
Valid Strongly motivated	1	5	5	96.7
Valid Strongly demotivated	1	5	5	100.0
Valid Total	20	100.0	100.0	

When the researcher asked the respondents to comment on the answer given, one participant had this to say: *"The main problem starts with the salary. In education sector teachers do not earn a salary but peanuts. How can I get motivated with peanuts? Besides having the low salary, it also comes late due to excessive bureaucracy. We never know the exact days of payment"*. Another participant in the study had this to say: *"We are in general strongly demotivated. Apart from having low remunerations, we do not have incentives in schools differently from our neighboring countries. The salary is not enough and it does not cover 30 days of the month"*.

Relevant Findings Gathered through Interview Instrument

The researcher addressed the interview entirely to teachers because he understands that the main

focus when examining leadership styles commonly employed by head teachers at primary schools the pillars are teachers in providing reliable and valid information concerned with their superiors and not the head teachers themselves. In this circumstances, 30 teachers participated actively as respondents after the approval of District Education authorities.

Which leadership style is commonly adopted by head teachers in Tehsil Burewala cluster primary schools?

Generally, most participants corroborated that head teachers were democratic, though at times they were autocratic and laissez-faire, depending on the situation encountered in the school. For instance, during an interview a teacher from school **A** had this to say:

“...I have been working in this school for five years now and I was received by the current head teacher. We normally attend several meetings because our school head is so democratic and when we face problems like lack of course-books, chalks, parents not attending school meetings, our boss uses to call for meeting so that we find the solution as a group. He is a nice person although sometimes he shows a bad temper when he gets angry...” Another teacher from School **B** when interviewed about the types of leadership style employed by head teacher commented that: *“...I normally do not see the presence of my head teacher here. Anyone does whatever he/she wants to do. In case of any difficulty he normally says „do what you think is good for you” ...some of us teach without a dustcoat our head teacher does not care. Some pupils do not come to school on Saturdays for cleaning he does not take any measure. I do not feel the authority of our school leader. He fights to look nice for everybody without caring for the school and I cannot find any adjective to qualify him.”*

Focusing on the same question teacher **C** easily said: *“My head teacher is an authoritarian person. She acts as the only person with ideas. Whenever we face school problems we hardly sit as a group for problem resolution. I remember when I missed five lessons because of malaria. She ordered the administration sector to discount my salary without allowing me to present any justification. she behaves like a soldier. She does not allow any worker to come late even in the rain season, pupils are forbidden to make noise in corridor during the break time. I have never seen a head teacher like mine...”*

As the pie chart illustrates below, an overwhelming majority of teacher respondents, (82%) defend that their head teachers employ democratic style in school management while (12%) use laissez – faire style and (6%) argue that their head teachers employ autocratic leadership style.

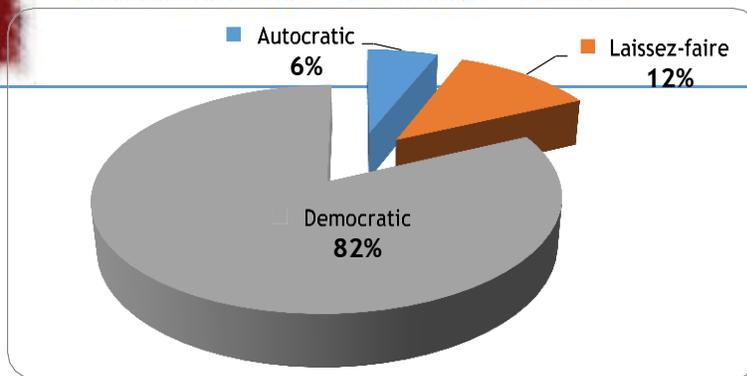


Figure 1. Types of leadership styles employed in Tehsil Burewala cluster primary schools

What are the main factors that influence negatively staff performance in Tehsil Burewala cluster primary schools?

The overwhelming majority of participants in the study indicated that the main factors hindering staff performance in Tehsil Burewala cluster primary schools, are lack of motivation, pupils' incompetence, low remuneration of teachers and non-teachers, coercive measures adopted by some head teachers and lack of in- service training for professional development.

One of the respondents had this to say: "...I am teaching from grade 1 to grade 5. In grade 1 the class is composed of 89 students. The class is overloaded without enough chairs and course-books. When I set a test it is difficult to invigilate properly. Consequently, pupils end up copying to each other. Which performance do you expect from me? I am not motivated at all". Another respondent expressed his feelings in this way: "The autocratic style employed by head teacher is the major factor which contributes negatively to our bad performance. People in this school do not have the working uniform beside teachers with dustcoat. The school toilets are authentic mess. The head teacher does not value us as workers of this school. She is arrogant, no communication with subordinates and she hardly calls for meeting".

To what extent the leadership style influence school climate in Tehsil Burewala cluster primary schools?

The respondents through an interview corroborated that higher democratic style employed favourable open climate the head teacher cultivates on his /her school staff. The more authoritarian is the leader more closed is the climate. One of the respondents expressed his feelings in this way: "If everything is under control there is no complain. Head teachers in missionary schools lead the schools democratically which enhances open school climate. The school offers good conditions for us and for students. Our pass rate is always high almost 100% per year. You find everything in the school. The school climate is really open." On the other hand, one veteran non- teacher respondent affected in administration sector commented that: "Sometimes our head teacher uses coercive measures as a means to test people. But it is very bad because it affects directly the staff performance.

Consequently, we end up coming late to our working place without morale and motivation to perform well”.

Documentary Review

The researcher sought permission to access statistical reports from District Services of Education, Youth and Technology from 2012 to 2013 related to pupils’ academic achievement and the findings are as follow:

Table 9. Average of pupils’ pass rate in five schools from 1 to 7 grades:

Year	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7
2012	86,85%	76,54%	86,80%	86,15%	66,31%	85,03%	67,93%
2013	90,2%	80,0%	89,6%	89,9%	69,9%	86,2%	70,8%

Drop Rate

The annual average drop rate was 7.7% in 2013 against 9.4% in 2012, a decrease of 1.7% in comparison to the previous year. The highest rate was registered in school C a public institution with 24.2% and the lowest in School B a missionary with 5.02%.

Conclusion

This paper attempted to examine the leadership styles adopted by head teachers and the influence on staff performance in primary schools of Tehsil Burewala cluster in District Vehari. The findings revealed that most of the head teachers employ democratic leadership style in the school management affairs proved to be successful in attainment of school goals. However, few of them are reported at times employing laissez-faire and autocratic leadership styles, depending on the situation. The main factors hindering staff performance in Tehsil Burewala cluster primary schools are lack of motivation, pupils’ incompetence, low remuneration of teachers and non- teachers, coercive measures adopted by some head teachers and lack of in-service training for professional development. It also emerged from this study that the the best leadership style that influence positively school staff performance is democratic style associated with other practices such as staff participation and involvement in school affairs and positive interpersonal relationship existing between school staff and head teachers. In regard to school climate data revealed that the school staff faces mostly open climate and finally, the study established that there is a significant relationship between democratic leadership style and school climate. It was highlighted that higher democratic style more favorable open climate the head teachers cultivate in primary schools of Tehsil Burewala cluster in District Vehari.

Recommendations

This study deeply recommended that even though the majority of head teachers employ democratic leadership style, there are some of head teachers who adopt laissez-faire and autocratic leadership styles. It is recommended that the District services of education, youth and technology of Tehsil Burewala, should sensitize head teachers to apply democratic leadership style in Tehsil Burewala cluster primary schools because it enhances positive school staff performance. It emerged from the study that had teachers attend irregularly in-service training for professional development. The District services of education, youth and development in Tehsil Burewala in collaboration with the local universities should run periodically in-service training to head teachers.

This could adopt them with competence-based approach, towards management and leadership skills so that they improve the performance of their schools. From the study, it also came out that lack of staff motivation, pupils' incompetence, low remuneration of teachers and non- teachers, coercive measures adopted by some head teachers were described as the hindrance factors which directly affect staff performance. In regard to these factors the District services of education, youth and technology in collaboration with different school stakeholders should find ways of increasing school income for paying incentives and monetary reward so that it motivates the school staff. It is also recommended that the head teachers and different stakeholders, should find strategies to improve teachers' school accountability as civil servants so that they play their expected role with ethics, morality and able to safeguard students' health and well-being, avoiding absenteeism and asking for gift on birthdays. Conclusively, head teachers are recommended to keep improving the school climate and staff performance through the persistent use of good practices such as staff participation and involvement in school affairs and positive interpersonal relationship existing between school staff and head teachers for attainment of intended school goals.

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