

Principals Leadership Styles and Its Effects on Students' Academic Achievement in South West Region of Cameroon

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Background to the Study

Leadership is widely regarded as a key factor in accounting for differences in the success with which schools foster the learning of their students. Indeed, the contribution of effective leadership is largest when it is needed most; there are virtually no documented instances of troubled schools being turned around in the absence of intervention by talented leaders. While other factors within the school also contribute to such turnarounds, leadership is the catalyst. But there is much yet to be learned about who provides such leadership, how it is productively distributed across the school system (e.g., state, district, school and classroom) and what stimulates its development.

Any organization is administered for the purpose of effective and efficient management, so that it can achieve its goals and objectives. Educational institutions which include Primary, Secondary and Higher levels in the educational industry must be administered to ensure that educational goals are achieved (Mbua, 2003, p.1). In fact, educational administrators in general who have at their disposal sets of concepts and basic principles of school organizational life, have powerful tools of observing, interpreting and changing practice in a constantly dynamic milieu.

Educational Administration therefore can be defined as "The careful, systematic arrangement or organization, and use of human, financial and material resources, and programmes to achieve educational goals" (Mbua, 2003, p.572).

The importance of high quality, effective leadership has been shown to be one of the major contributing factors leading to high performance in schools (Reynolds, 1991). The leadership behaviour of school principals is an important aspect of student

performance and the general functioning of the school as a whole. Fieldler (1967) defines leadership behaviour as "the specific acts of a leader in directing and coordinating the work of group members". For instance, the leader can direct, command, make helpful suggestions and show consideration for the wellbeing of group members.

All students deserve the intellectual development, motivation and skills that equip them for successful work and lifelong learning. The principal's leadership behaviour influences school climate and affects students' academic achievement.

Research has consistently acknowledged and emphasized the critical role played by educational leaders in the improvement of the performance of institutions, individuals and students (Al-Omari, 2008). Regarding the significance of leadership in educational institutions, Simkins (2005) argues that "Leadership is one of the major factors or sometimes it seems the only factor that will determine whether an educational organization, be it a School, a College or a University, will succeed or fail".

As leadership is considered very significant for improvement of individuals and school performance, it has attracted the attention of researchers, theorists and educational institutions, where programmes in leadership studies have started throughout the world (Northouse, 2010).

A large portion of any administrator's time is directed at "power oriented" behaviour. That is, behaviour directed primarily at developing or using relationships in which other people are to some degree willing to defer to one's wishes (Kotter, 1978). Administrators possess varying degrees and combinations of the types of power they can use to achieve the goals or

objectives of the institution. There are five kinds of powers namely; reward power, coercive, legitimate, referent and expert power. Moreover, the way administrators use one type of power can hinder or facilitate the effectiveness of other kinds (Mbua, 2003, p. 220).

School leadership is crucial to creating an environment in which teaching and learning can take place effectively and successfully. Principal’s leadership styles has a very positive relationship with school effectiveness. The principal is an important personality in the governance and management of the school for several reasons which include: maintaining school ethics and discipline, soliciting support for the school from the community and developing the quality and standard of education (Asunda, 1983).

Leithwood (2003 P 138) holds that:

“Educational leaders must guide their schools through the challenges posed by an increasingly complex environment, Curriculum standards, achievement benchmarks, programmatic requirements, and other policy directives from many sources generate complicated and unpredictable requirements for schools. Principals must respond to increasing diversity in students’ characteristics, including cultural background and immigration status, income disparities, physical and mental disabilities, and variation in learning capacities.”

School Administrators (Principals) need strong leadership skills to successfully lead the schools of the twenty-first century and address school improvement pressures. Katz (1955) has identified

three basic skills upon which in his opinion, effective performance and consequently successful administration rest. These skills include technical, human and conceptual skills. There are three major mechanisms that facilitate the acquisition of administrative competence and skills. They are education, experience and mentor-mentee relationship (Peretomode, 1992).

Current educational reform has focused a great deal on the influence of leadership behaviour on School progress (Harris, 2005). Leithwood (2004) argued the effective Principal behaviour in terms of transformational and transactional leadership styles. They are of the view that, “influence of principal on teachers’ teamwork has an effect on the behaviour of Principals and teachers regarding school improvement.”

The study of leadership has moved from an analysis of the so-called “great man” to the exploration of traits, styles, behaviour, situations (contingencies), and a variety of other related concerns, including the effects on students’ academic achievements (Mbua 2003,p.211). Schools in many parts of the country are falling short in terms of student achievement in the General Certificate of Education (G.C.E) examinations according to statistics from the G.C.E Board. Despite government efforts to improve educational quality and improve students’ performances, the issue of low student academic achievement has persisted across Cameroon, particularly in the South-West Region.

For instance, the following poor GCE results statistics give us the actual state of the art.

Table 1: GCE results from 2011-2014 for the South West region.

G.C.E O/L	Year	Percentage	G.C.E. A/L	Year	Percentage
	2011	43.51		2011	64.39
	2012	32.16		2012	20.95
	2013	45.77		2013	65.97
	2014	34.3		2014	54.33

Source: G.C.E. Board statistics 2016.

The proceeding results shows the poor leadership styles of some principals in some selected secondary schools in Fako division was measure as one of the determinant of poor GCE outcomes of students. There is also much to learn about which forms of leadership are most likely to foster student learning and how such successful forms of leadership, often exercised at a distance from students, eventually make a contribution to their learning. It was the importance of knowing more about these aspects of educational leadership

Background to the Study

Globally there is still much to be learned about how leaders can successfully meet the educational needs of diverse student populations. But there has been a great deal of research concerning both school and classroom conditions that are helpful for students from economically disadvantaged families and those with diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds. The Educational system for some years now has been witnessing falling standards, high repetitions and poor academic performance in both internal examinations and the G.C.E examinations (Tambo, 1995). Many principals have been exhibiting different leadership behaviour in our school system, which is a cause for concern.

Prevailing political, social and economic shifts in the environment in which schools are located, as well as significant changes in the education structure itself, such as the way educational institutions are managed demand that school leaders should be well developed to meet the challenges of the twenty first century (Northouse, 2010). Moreover, increased competition, technological advancements, the global demands of a professional workforce and the diverse needs of students are just a few indicators of why school leaders need to be efficient and to continually foster development to enable their schools to be sustained within a challenging environment in an era of globalization (Bono and Judge, 2003; House and Favidan, 2004).

Table 2: Presentation of Government Secondary Schools in the South-West Region.

S/N	Name of Division	No. of Government Secondary Schools	No. of principals	Gender	
				Male	Female
1	Fako	48	48	36	12
2	Meme	47	47	38	10
3	Ndian	30	30	18	5
4	Manyu	35	35	32	5
5	Lebialem	20	20	18	4
6	Kupe-Muanenguba	20	20	18	4
Total	06	200	200	160	40

Source: Regional Delegation of Secondary Education Buea, 2016.

In the context of the Region under study, there are about 200 Government Secondary Schools in the Region. Majority of the School Administrators (Principals) are males with very few female principals. The Schools are located both in the Urban Centres and in the peripheries.

The leadership behaviour of the various School Administrators (Principals) varies greatly because human beings have different personality traits which influence their behaviour. In the context of the study, the researcher adequately explained and analyzed the different leadership behaviour of School Administrators (Principals) and their impact on students' academic achievement.

Statement of the Problem

The foregoing background portrays that principals' leadership styles has an influence on students' academic achievement. This can be illustrated with weak and mediocre end of course results in the General Certificate of Education (GCE) as shown in the table 1 below.

Table 3: National results in the General Certificate of Education (GCE)

YEAR	ORDINARY LEVEL (O/L)	ADVANCED LEVEL (A/L)
	NATIONAL	NATIONAL
2000	46.79	52.00
2001	52.91	28.00
2002	47.34	49.00
2003	39.98	45.00
2004	53.42	42.03
2005	45.37	57.74
2006	31.35	53.58
2007	55.49	56.29
2008	48.61	57.79
2009	53.89	69.53
2010	58.02	69.61
2011	43.51	64.39
2012	32.16	20.95
2013	45.77	55.97
2014	34.41	54.33
2015	44.93	62.03
2016	62.17	66.52

2017	25.29	35.32
Lowest	25.29	20.95
Highest	62.17	69.61
Average	45.63	52.23

Source = Regional Delegation of Secondary Education Buea, 2006.

From the above GCE results statistics, Government schools perform poorly compared to denominational and lay private secondary schools in the end of course exams. From the statistics, out of the twelve (12) secondary schools that scored 100% at O/L in 2010, no Government college is involved.

There are other determinants that also affect students' academic achievement, such as school climate, school culture, poor governance policy and so forth. These factors together with the aforementioned leadership behaviors or styles affects student academic achievement

Again, out of 30 secondary schools that scored 95% and above at the GCE O/L, only two (02) Government secondary schools are involved in the 2015 GCE O/L results. The same statistics applies to GCE A/L 2008 out of 21 schools that score 95% and above only three (03) Government secondary schools are involved.

The burning question that pre-occupies the researcher is "Do Principals make a difference"? Also, what is the best leadership behaviour expected from principals to help our students perform well in their examinations and academics?

The challenging educational situation is worsened by conflicting and inadequate data on the relationships among school leadership styles, school climate and students' academic achievement (Glover and Coleman, 2005, Kelley *et al.*, 2005). In the light of these conflicting data, an in-depth research is needed to clarify whether Principal's leadership styles is indeed related to students' academic achievement.

It shows that such principals' leadership styles could be grouped under four categories of variables, that is, the democratic, autocratic, transformation, and laissez-faire leadership styles however, from statistics and facts mentioned above, leadership styles is pointed out as one of the major contribute factor to student's academic achievement or failure. In this respect, this study will investigate the extent to which factors related to the above four categories of variables contribute to students' academic achievements as perceived by selected respondents.

Main objective

The main objective of this study is to identify principal leadership styles and its effects on students' academic achievement in the South West Region of Cameroon.

Specific Objectives

1. To find out the extent to which principals democratic leadership behaviour affect students' academic achievement.
2. To investigate the extent to which principals autocratic leadership behaviour affect students' academic achievement.
3. To assess the extent to which principals transformational leadership behaviour affect students' academic achievement.
4. To appraise the extent to which principals laissez-faire leadership behaviour affect students' academic achievement.

General Research Question

To find out the extent to which principal leadership styles affect students' academic achievement.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This chapter presents Theoretical, Conceptual and Empirical frameworks on Principal's Leadership Behaviour on Students' Academic Achievement in various perspectives and in the context under study.

Theoretical Review

Many theories related to Principals' leadership behaviour and its effects on Students' Academic Achievement have been used in this study. Theories related to Leadership and Leaders Behaviour have also been used such as:

Trait Theories of Leadership

This approach represented the first "Scientific" effort to study and understand leadership. It is referred to as the "Great Man" approach to the study of leadership (Mbua, 2003)

In their attempt to identify leadership traits, Researchers according to Stoner (1978) and Vroom (1983) took two approaches, namely:

1. To compare the traits of those who emerged as leaders with the traits of those who did not as followers and
2. To compare the traits of effective leaders with those of ineffective leaders.

Most studies on leadership Traits, however, were in the first category. The tendency was to ignore Situational Factors. Most researches based on the trait approach were designed to identify intellectual, emotional, and physical characteristics of successfully leaders (Hoy and Miskel, 1996)

Myers (1954) analysed more than two hundred studies of leadership that had been made in the previous fifty years and came up with many assumptions and conclusions. The research indicates however, that the personal characteristics of leaders differ according to the situation leaders tend to remain leaders only in situations where the activity is similar. No single characteristic is the possession of all leaders (Mbua, 2003).

The study of personality traits alone will not explain leadership. These studies have shown clearly that the assumption, “leaders are born, not made”, is largely false. The only inherited trait that has been identified as having some relationship to leadership is intelligence (peretomode, 1992).

Cartwright and Zander (1968) have stated that, most other studies in this area have also found that effective leadership does not depend on a particular set of traits, but on how well a leader’s trait matches the requirements of the situation he or she is facing.

Finally, Szilagyi (1981) points out after a series of studies that effective leadership depends not so much on who the leader is but on what the leader does and how well he or she adapts to the varying requirements of different situations.

The Hersey-Blanchard Life cycle Theory of Leadership

The life cycle theory of leadership is a contingency theory developed by Paul Hersey and Kenneth Blanchard (1977). Hersey and Blanchard (1977) started with the Ohio State University dimensions of Consideration and Initiating Structure and derived four leadership styles based on combination of these style. The contingency aspect of the theory came about through a single environmental dimension, that is, the maturity of the subordinates. Hersey and Blanchard define “maturity” not as age or emotional stability, but as desire or readiness to tackle the task facing the group. It is the desire for achievement, willingness to accept responsibility, and task related ability and experience. Maturity therefore, involves elements of both motivation and of stability (Vroom, 1983).

According to the life-cycle theory, as the level of maturity of one’s subordinates increases for the purpose of achieving effective leadership, the leaders’ behaviour also has to be varied appropriately. By dividing the maturity continuum of life-cycle into three levels, namely; below average, average and above average.

More specifically, the theory proposes that a low maturity among subordinates require a “telling” mode, that is, high task and low relationship style to help the group to achieve success and to be considered effective. In other words, as the level of maturity of followers or subordinates increases, the leader should increase relationship behaviour (participation) and finally when the group achieves maturity the leader should exhibit low levels of both task and relationship behaviour (delegation).

Vroom-Yetton Contingency Leadership Theory

Vroom and Yetton (1973) theory of leadership focuses on participation of subordinates in decision making. It also focused on the degree to which the educational administrator (or manager or leader) should encourage participation of subordinates (in this case teachers) in decision-making.

Vroom and Yetton in their typology identified five leadership (decision) styles or processes which might be available for use by educational administrators. Their theory is a contingency approach. This is because it attempts to identify the appropriate leadership style for a given set of circumstances or situations, maintaining that no one leadership (decision-making) process is best under all circumstances. They are of the view that effectiveness of one’s choice is dependent upon properties of the situation at hand. The model makes a distinction between two major types of decision problems; individual and group.

In order to determine which decision style is most appropriate for a particular situation, the educational administrator is required to provide answers “yes” or “no” to questions related to decision-making and participation by subordinates (Mbua, 2003, p.264).

Vroom and others concluded, the basic proposition underlying these studies is that, leadership is not a divine right which only special persons are born with, it is a combination of the personality factors, or innate abilities, and characteristics of the people and of situational factors and opportunities.

Theory X and Theory Y Approach

The scientific management and human relations approach to leadership behaviour were given formal expression as Theory X and Theory Y (McGregor, 1960). The Theory X approach assumes that people are lazy, dislike work and therefore must be coerced, led and directed. Theory X is compatible with scientific management and bureaucracy. Bureaucracy is a formal, orderly and rational approach to organizing business enterprises. Theory Y assumes that people find satisfaction in their work and function best under a leader who allows them to work towards their goals. This is indeed true in the education situation in the case of the traditional schools with an impeccable culture and strong religious values, where the majority of teachers love teaching; they love their school and hence do not need direction.

In such institutions, control and punishment are not necessary to bring about good job performance. People are industrious, creative and seek challenges and responsibility on the job. However, in some new schools and particularly in respect of young teachers, the situation might be different. Some of them do not have the profession at heart, whilst some may have joined the teaching profession by default or as a last resort.

Theory Y is compatible with Maslow's view that people seek inner satisfaction and fulfillment of our human capacities towards self-Actualization. It is also the same with the human relations movement in management and with the participative, democratic style of management. An example of the application of Theory Y is management by objectives.

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter describes the research design, the area or the site of the research, target population, sample of the population, sample and sampling techniques, instruments for data collection, validity and reliability of instruments, administration and retrieval of instruments, methods of data analysis and ethical consideration.

Research Design

Research design is the blueprint, methodology or plan of activities to be implemented by the researcher towards successfully completing his work (Mbua, 2003). Amin (2005) and Nana (2015) goes further to state that it is a stated structure and process of conducting a research project, detailing the plan and method for systematically and scientifically obtaining the data to be analyzed.

In this study, the researcher used a mixed survey design with both, Quantitative and qualitative research methods. Cohen, Manion and Morison (2000), remind us that survey research involves collecting data to answer questions concerning the phenomenon under study and is used to describe the nature of existing conditions, identify standards against which existing conditions can be compared, and/or investigate the relationships that may exist between events.

Area of Study

This research was carried out in the south-west region of the Republic of Cameroon. The South West Region has six divisions and it is highly cosmopolitan with many schools owned by the government, private and missionary bodies.

Target Population

The target population of this study included all the teachers, students' leaders and principals of Government Secondary Schools in the South-West Region of Cameroon.

Sample Population

The sample of this study consists of 457 participants drawn from 36 government secondary schools in the South-West region of Cameroon. The sample was categorized into teachers, students' leaders and principals as shown under sample and sampling procedure below.

3.6 Sample and Sampling Procedure

Sample size

Sample size was estimated using sample calculation for one proportion with the support of Epi Info 6.04d (CDC, 2001) as explained by Nana (2015)

The total population of teachers who are the main stakeholders considered in this study is estimated to be 1800. The following additional parameters were used to estimate the sample size:

$d=5\%$

$P=50\%$

DEFF=1.1 (greater than 1 because convenience sampling and not simple random sampling is used) as to improve the variability.

Confidence interval=95% giving a $Z_{\alpha/2}$ =level of significance = 1.96.

The calculated sample size is 457 respondents. Prospecting 10% missing for precautionary reasons, the minimum number of questionnaires to be administered will be 457.

Table 4: Schools and participants of the study

Division	Sub-division	SN	Schools	Teachers		Students
				Frequency	Percent	
Fako	Buea	1.	GHS Buea Town	11	3.2	2
		2.	GHS Bokwango	12	3.4	2
		3.	GHS Bomaka	10	2.9	2
		4.	GBHS Muea	13	3.7	2
		5.	GHS Bolifamba	9	2.6	2
		6.	GHS Bokova	12	3.4	2
		7.	GHS Great Soppo	12	3.4	2
		8.	GSS Tole	9	2.6	2
		9.	GBS Molyko	9	2.6	2
	Tiko	10.	GBHS Tiko	10	2.9	2
		11.	GBHS Mutengene	9	2.6	2
		12.	GHS Mudeka	11	3.2	2
		13.	GHS Motombolombo	10	2.9	2
	Limbe	14.	GHS Limbe	10	2.9	2
		15.	GBHS Limbe	8	2.3	2
		16.	GHS Batoke	11	3.2	2
		17.	GHS Bonadikombo	9	2.6	2
	West Coast	18.	GHS Idenau	10	2.9	2
	Muyuka	19.	GBHS Muyuka	9	2.6	2
		20.	GHS Malembe	10	2.9	2
		21.	GHS Ekona	11	3.2	2
22.		CCAST Kumba	12	3.4	2	
Meme	Kumba	23.	GBHS Kumba	9	2.6	2
		24.	GSS Kang Barombi	10	2.9	2
		25.	GSS Finago	10	2.9	2
		26.	GSS Ediki	10	2.9	2
		27.	GSS Balangi	8	2.3	2
		28.	GBHS Ekondo Titi	11	3.2	2
Ndian	Ekondo Titi	29.	GSS Lobe Estate	9	2.6	2
		30.	GSS Bekora	9	2.6	2
		31.	GHS Fontem	9	2.6	2
Lebialem	Fontem	31.	GHS Fontem	9	2.6	2
	Alou	32.	GHS Alou	8	2.3	2
Kupe Muanenguba	Mbangem	33.	GBHS Bangem	8	2.3	2
	Tombel	34.	GHS Tombel	7	2.0	2
Manyu	Mamfe	35.	GBHS Mamfe	6	1.7	2
		36.	GHS Mamfe	8	2.3	2
6	12		36	349	100.0	72

The sample of this study consists of 457 respondents drawn from 36 government secondary schools in the South-West region of Cameroon. The 36 schools make a percentage of 18% of the 200 secondary schools in the region,

which is above 15% and this is therefore statistically satisfactory as far as the number of clustered sampled was concerned. The sample was categorized into schools, teachers and students as shown in table 4.

All the six divisions of the region were involved in the research. However simple random sampling was used to select 12 sub-divisions from which the schools were selected through simple random sampling. The divisions were all raffled in pieces of papers and No and Yes was properly written to all the pieces of papers representing all the divisions, all divisions with Yes after the simple random selection were selected for the study.

Therefore thirty six (36) government secondary schools were randomly selected from the above divisions and sub-divisions in the region. From each school, teachers were conveniently selected making a total of 349 teachers. Also, from each school two (2) student leaders were conveniently selected making a total of 72 student leaders. The principals of each of the 36 schools were interviewed.

Table 5: Distribution of sample size by category of participants

Category of participant	Expected N	Effective N	Return rate
Teachers	349	349	100%
Principals (one per each sampled school)	36	36	100%
Students' leaders (two per school)	72	72	100%
Total	457	457	100%

Data Collection Instruments

Instruments for data collection were questionnaires, interview schedule, and documentary analysis. The researcher divided the questionnaire into three parts: The socio-demographic *items* included sex, age, and educational qualification, year of teaching experience and years in the present position concerning teachers

The second section (Likert scale) consisted of aspects concerning principals' leadership behaviors. The statements were grouped under the different leadership styles making each of them a specific part namely democratic leadership behaviour; autocratic leadership behaviour, transformational leadership style, transactional leadership style, laissez-faire leadership behaviour, then principals' attitudes, professional knowledge and skills. The responses were to be on a scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. In the last section, participants were asked to respond to six open-ended questions about their views of principals' leadership behaviors in their schools.

The researcher used interview schedules to compliment the questionnaire because interviews allow the researcher to consider another person's view point, to better understand his/her experience (Patton, 1990). Interview also allows a wide range of participants understanding to be explored and can reveal important aspects of the phenomenon under study. In-depth interviews were conducted with principals

Validity of Instruments

The questionnaire and interview schedule were subjected to suggestions from colleagues and research supervisor. The numerous recommendations helped in reducing the size of the instrument to its final state, which was considered suitable for data collection. Shaughnessy, Zechmeister and Zechmeister (2003), state that validity refers to the truthfulness of a measure; whether it measures what it intends to measure.

Construct validity

Construct validity was the first method used to ensure the validity of the questionnaires. This necessitated that the researcher's peers—PhD students were involved. Five of them reviewed the first draft to ensure that the items were understood and their suggestions were taken into consideration. The time needed to answer the questionnaire ranged between 15 and 20 minutes and this was generally considered reasonable. Pilot testing was carried out in four (4) government secondary schools in Limbe and Buea sub-divisions. Following the pilot test, revisions were made on the instruments.

Content validity

Content validity was checked by the supervisor of this study, a principal and the statistician. This was to ensure that the items adequately addressed the purpose of the study and research questions. Based on their observations and remarks, some adjustments were made. For example, some items were rephrased.

Content validity was further appreciated mathematically by the statistician of this study, using the content validity index (CVI) whereby the instrument for data collection was checked by the above mentioned expert (statistician) and scored. To come out with the statement that the instrument was judged valid the inter-judge coefficient of validity was computed using the following formula: $CVI = (\text{No of judges declared item valid}) /$

(total No of judges). Generally, above 0.75, CVI is satisfactory (Amin, 2005; Nana, 2015). In the context of this study, $CVI=3/3=1$, indicating that the instrument was generally termed valid.

Face validity

The final stage in the process of validation of the questionnaire was carried out by a principal, a lecturer and the supervisor. The purpose was to ensure that the language was used effectively and that instructions were easy to understand. Their suggestions led to the correction of some expression and accuracy errors. The series of reviews led to the construction proper of the final questionnaires.

Reliability of the Instruments

For the reliability of the questionnaires, the internal consistency of the final instruments were appraised before the instruments were validated for analysis.

Reliability Analysis for Teachers

Table 6: Reliability Analysis for Teachers.

Conceptual components	Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient	Variance	N _{cases}	N _{item}
Democratic leadership style	0.738	0.002	349	5
Autocratic leadership style	0.926	0.004	349	5
Transformational leadership style	0.842	0.008	349	5
Laissez-faire or permissive leadership style	0.905	0.007	349	5
Principals Attitude	0.878	0.003	349	7
Integrated Value Mapping (IVM)	0.777	0.037	349	27

The Cronbach's Alpha Coefficients range from 0.738 to 0.948 thus indicating that the internal consistency assumption was not violated for any of the conceptual components with Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient all above 0.5. This therefore implies that the teachers were consistent in their responses. The low values of the variances which are almost close to zero further indicate that teachers were more likely to be homogenous and not too diversified in their responses. Generally, when the Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient is above 0.5, the instrument is considered reliable for the study (Nana, 2015).

Reliability Analysis for Student Leaders

Table 7: Reliability Analysis for students' leaders

Conceptual components	Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient	Variance	N _{cases}	N _{item}
Democratic leadership style	0.913	0.000	72	5
Autocratic leadership style	0.946	0.008	72	5
Transformational leadership style	0.953	0.000	72	5
Transactional leadership style	0.571	0.497	72	5
Laissez-faire or permissive leadership style	0.917	0.011	72	5
Integrated Value Mapping (IVM)	0.952	0.023	72	38

From the output above, it is observed that Cronbach's Alpha for all the conceptual components and the Integrated Value Mapping (IVM) were above 0.5, ranging from 0.571 to 0.963. This was good for the validity of the data, given that the internal consistency assumption was not violated. It is however important to note student leaders' perceptions of principals' transactional leadership style was the least consistent and heterogeneous with the lowest value of Alpha and relatively high variance of 0.497.

FINDINGS

This section starts with the socio-demographic characteristics of participants which are important to situate the findings in their socio-cultural and economic contexts (Nana, 2015). In this study, data was collected from 349 teachers, 72 student leaders, and 36 principals given a total of 457 respondents.

Table 11: Demographic description for student leaders

Background indicators	Categories	Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	42	58.3
	Female	30	41.7
Age range	<15 years	1	1.4
	16-20 years	71	98.6

Religion	Christianity	70	97.2
	Ancestrority/African Traditional Religion	2	2.8
Cycle	First cycle (Form 1-5)	9	12.5
	Second cycle (Lower sixth and Upper Sixth)	63	87.5
Duration of stay in the current school	1-3 years	26	36.1
	4 years and above	46	63.9
Position as student leader	Senior prefects	50	69.4
	Education prefect	6	8.3
	Religion prefect	4	5.6
	Labour prefect	4	5.6
	Sports prefect	2	2.8
	Bilingualism	1	1.4
	Social prefect	4	5.6
	Punctuality prefect	1	1.4

N=72.

Among them, 42 constituting 58.3% were males while the remaining 30 (41.7%) were females. Almost all the student leaders were age between 16-20 years, 98.6% (71). Only 2 making 2.8% person were not Christian. They were mostly from second cycle 87.5% (63) with 12.5% (9) being from the first cycle. Most of them 63.9% (46) had spent more than 4 years in their current school which was good for the validity of the sample.

The positions they occupied were diversified as well, though the senior prefect were the most represented with proportion 69.4% (50). Other positions included education prefect, religion prefect, labour prefect, sport prefect, bilingualism

Research objective one: 1. To find out the extent to which principals democratic leadership behaviour affects students' academic achievement.

This section explores how teachers, students and Principals appreciate the various indicators that elucidate democratic leadership behaviour, how they predict students' academic achievement, first of all individually, and subsequently their aggregated effect.

GCE O'L results in 2016

In average, schools had a score of 49.98%, the median was 52.88% the lowest school had 30.00% and the best 76.64%. The Standard Deviation was relatively high (12.17%) implying a high variability in performances among schools.

Teachers Perspective

In aggregate, majority of the teachers with a weight of 96.7% were of the view point that their principals do practice democratic leadership style in their administrative activities and a global mean of 1.74 and standard deviation of 0.51 further indicate that the teachers are more likely to be the same in their trend of appraising principals' democratic leadership style. To be more explicit, majority of the teachers making a proportion of 99.1% (346) were for the opinion that principals delegates powers to other administrators in running the school, adopts participatory approach and collaborates with teachers, and school management Board 98.0% (342), usually organises meetings to make decision and takes decision based on consensus with the school management board during meetings with equal weight of 95.7% (334) and finally also collaborating with class prefects and school prefects 95.1% (332), as presented on table 30.

Table 19: Teachers characterization of principals' democratic leadership behaviour

Test items	Stretched				Collapse		N
	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Agree	Disagree	
My principal usually organises meetings to make a decision	42.7% (149)	53.0% (185)	3.7% (13)	0.6% (2)	95.7% (334)	4.3% (15)	349
My principal delegates powers to other administrators in running the school.	43.6% (142)	55.6% (194)	0.6% (2)	0.3% (1)	99.1% (346)	0.9% (3)	349

My principal adopts a participatory approach and collaborates with teachers, the PTA and school management Board.	31.8% (111)	66.2% (231)	1.4% (5)	0.6% (2)	98.0% (342)	2.0% (7)	349
My principal takes decision based on a consensus with the school management board during meetings	17.5% (61)	78.2% (273)	3.2% (11)	1.1%(4)	95.7% (334)	4.3% (15)	349
My principal collaborates with class prefects and school prefects	15.5% (54)	79.7% (278)	4.0% (14)	0.9% (3)	95.1% (332)	4.9% (17)	349
MRS	30.2% (527)	66.5% (1161)	2.6% (45)	0.7% (12)	96.7% (1688)	3.3% (57)	1745

Table 20: Teachers characterization of principals' democratic leadership behaviour by background indicators

Background indicators	Categories	Satisfied with principals democratic leadership style		N _{responses}	Chi-square test
		Agree	Disagree		
Location of school	Urban	98.1%(785)	1.9%(15)	800	$\chi^2=1.58$ P=0.209
	Rural	95.6%(903)	4.4%(42)	945	
Type of school	First cycle	77.1%(54)	22.9%(16)	70	$\chi^2=0.00$ P=1.000
	Both (first and second cycle)	97.6%(1634)	2.4%(41)	1675	
Gender	Male	93.5%(514)	6.5%(36)	550	$\chi^2=4.00$ P=0.045
	Female	98.2%(1174)	1.8%(21)	1195	
Age ranges	<30 years	91.4%(32)	8.6%(3)	35	$\chi^2=0.00$ P=1.000
	30-40 years	84.1%(143)	15.9%(27)	170	
	41-50 years	98.4%(1353)	1.6%(22)	1375	
	51 years and above	97.0%(160)	3.0%(5)	165	
Longevity in service	1-5 years	92.7%(51)	7.3%(4)	55	$\chi^2=0.00$ P=1.000
	6-10 years	99.4%(348)	0.6%(2)	350	
	11-20 years	96.3%(1209)	3.7%(46)	1255	
	21 years and above	94.1%(80)	5.9%(5)	85	
Teaching qualification	PCEG	97.3%(584)	2.7%(16)	600	$\chi^2=0.00$ P=1.000
	Degree Holder	100.0%(125)	0.0%(0)	125	
	PLEG	95.7%(871)	4.3%(39)	910	
	Masters	98.1%(103)	1.9%(2)	105	
	PhD	100.0%(5)	0.0%(0)	5	
Marital status Marital regime	Married	97.3%(1581)	2.7%(44)	1625	$\chi^2=0.00$ P=1.000
	Single	88.2%(97)	11.8%(13)	110	
	Widowed	100.0%(10)	0.0%(0)	10	

Teachers' appreciation/characterization of principals' democratic leadership style was significantly dependent only on gender ($P < 0.05$) with the female teachers more agreed to principals' democratic leadership style making a proportion of (98.2%) when compared to the teachers (93.5%) and was not dependent on location of school, type of school, age ranges, longevity in service teaching qualification and marital status ($P > 0.05$). This therefore implies that teachers were more likely to be the same in their responses in relation to the appreciation of principals' democratic leadership behaviour irrespective of the location of their school, the type of school, age ranges, longevity in service, teaching qualification, and their marital status.

Student Leaders' Perspective

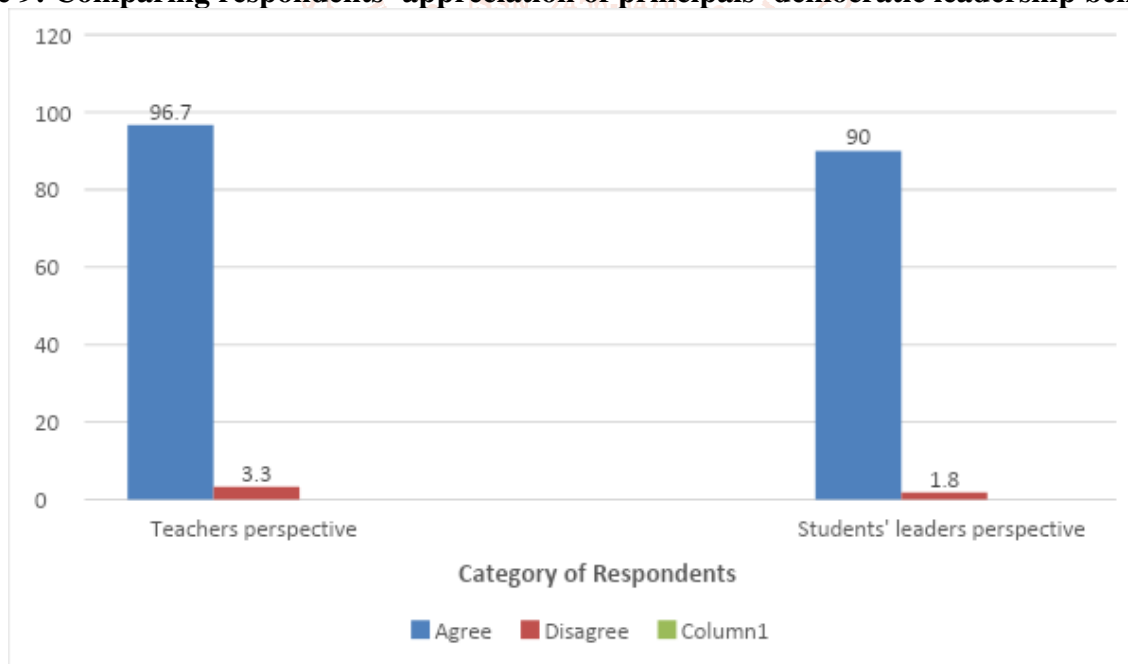
Table 21: Student leaders' characterization of principals' democratic leadership behaviour

Test items	Stretch				Collapse		N
	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Agree	Disagree	
My principal usually organise meetings to make a decision	54.2% (39)	33.3% (24)	5.6% (4)	6.9% (5)	87.5% (63)	12.5% (9)	72
My principal delegate powers to other administrators in running the school.	58.3% (42)	36.1% (26)	5.6% (4)	0.0% (0)	94.4% (68)	5.6% (4)	72
My principal adopts a participatory approach and collaborates with students' leaders and school management Board.	61.1% (44)	23.6% (17)	5.6% (4)	9.7% (7)	84.7% (61)	15.3% (11)	72
My principal consult students' leaders in some decision-making process	25.0% (18)	66.7% (48)	8.3% (6)	0.0% (0)	91.7% (66)	8.3% (6)	72
My principal collaborate with class prefects and school prefects	27.8% (20)	63.9% (46)	8.3% (6)	0.0% (0)	91.7% (66)	8.3% (6)	72
Multiple Response Set (MRS)	45.3% (163)	44.7% (161)	6.7% (24)	3.3% (12)	90.0% (324)	10.0% (36)	360

Generally, most of the student leaders' responses were in agreement to the various test items of democratic behaviour of principals with weight of 90.0%. Student leaders mostly perceived that principals delegate powers to other administrators in running the school 94.4% (68), 91.7% (66) agreed to the fact that principals consult students' leaders in some decision-making process, the same proportion acknowledged that principals collaborate with class prefects and school prefects, 87.5% (63) were of the opinion that principals usually organise meetings to take a decision while 84.7% (61) perceived principals adopts a participatory approach and collaborates with students' leaders and school management board.

Comparing perceptions of democratic leadership among the stakeholders

Figure 9: Comparing respondents' appreciation of principals' democratic leadership behaviour.



χ^2 -test: $\chi^2=9.74$; $df=2$; $P=0.008$.

Perception of principals' democratic leadership differed significantly ($P<0.05$) among teachers and student leaders. Though they generally perceived that principals practiced democratic leadership style at very high proportions of 96.7%, and 90.0% respectively for teachers, and student leaders, students leaders significantly least expressed this positive view.

Research Hypothesis One: There is no relationship between principals democratic leadership behaviour and students’ academic achievement

Table 34: Relationship between democratic leadership behaviour and students performance at GCE examination

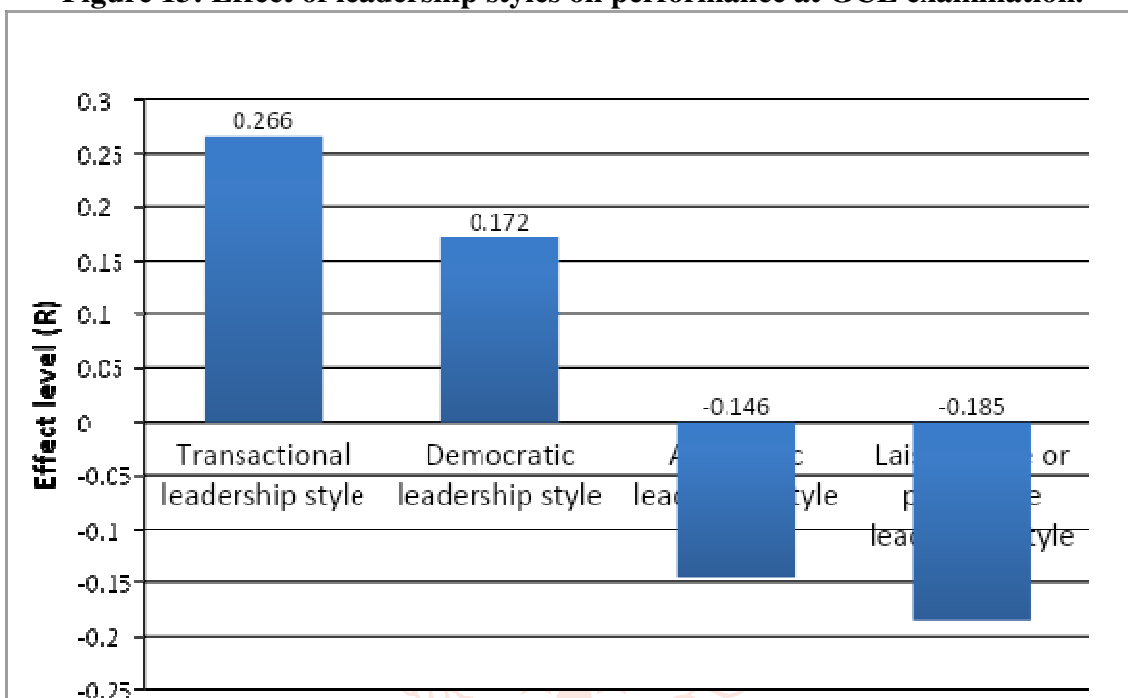
	Spearman’s rho	GCE Ordinary Level Result
	R	0.172**
	P-Value	0.001
Democratic Leadership Behaviour	N	342

**correlation is significant at 0.01 level(2-tailed)

From the two tailed test calculated above, there was statistically enough evidence that better democratic leadership behaviour leads to improvement in students’ performance at the GCE at $P < 0.05$. the null hypothesis stated above was then rejected and the alternative hypothesis accepted. That is there was a significant relationship between democratic leadership behaviour and students’ academic achievement

Summary of findings

Figure 13: Effect of leadership styles on performance at GCE examination.



Transformational leadership style had the highest effect level on performance at the GCE examination ($R=0.266$), followed by democratic leadership behaviour at the second position ($R=0.172$), then came autocratic leadership behaviour and laissez-faire or permissive leadership style had a negative effect with effect level of $R= - 0.146$ and $R= - 0.185$ respectively.

Table 73: Psychometric interrelatedness of conceptual components

	Spearman's rho	Democratic leadership style	Autocratic leadership style	Transformational leadership style	Transactional leadership style	Laissez-faire or permissive leadership style	Attitude	Professional skills
Democratic leadership style	R	1.000	.078	.139**	.084	-.160**	.177**	.178**
	P-value	.	.147	.009	.116	.003	.001	.001
	N	349	349	349	349	349	349	349
Autocratic leadership style	R	.078	1.000	-.154**	-.281**	.190**	-.081	-.136*
	P-value	.147	.	.004	.000	.000	.130	.011
	N	349	349	349	349	349	349	349
Transformational leadership style	R	.139**	-.154**	1.000	.283**	-.252**	.110*	.067
	P-value	.009	.004	.	.000	.000	.040	.213
	N	349	349	349	349	349	349	349

Transactional leadership style	R	.084	-.281 ^{**}	.283 ^{**}	1.000	.328 ^{**}	.004	.041
	P-value	.116	.000	.000	.	.000	.943	.450
	N	349	349	349	349	349	349	349
Laissez-faire or permissive leadership style	R	-.160 ^{**}	.190 ^{**}	-.252 ^{**}	.328 ^{**}	1.000	-.249 ^{**}	-.081
	P-value	.003	.000	.000	.000	.	.000	.129
	N	349	349	349	349	349	349	349
Attitude	R	.177 ^{**}	-.081	.110 [*]	.004	-.249 ^{**}	1.000	.842 ^{**}
	P-value	.001	.130	.040	.943	.000	.	.000
	N	349	349	349	349	349	349	349
Professional skills	R	.178 ^{**}	-.136 [*]	.067	.041	-.081	.842 ^{**}	1.000
	P-value	.001	.011	.213	.450	.129	.000	.
	N	349	349	349	349	349	349	349

^{**}. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

^{*}. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

It was realized that the better the attitude the better the democratic leadership behaviour, the better the professional skills the better the democratic leadership behaviour, and these relationships were significant, given the positive sign of the correlation coefficients and the P-values < 0.05. The trend was the opposite with principal having autocratic leadership skills as they were more deficient in good professional attitude and professional skills given the negative sign of the correlation coefficient and the relationships were significant (P-values < 0.05).

The better the attitude, the better the transformational leadership style and the better the professional skills, but this relationship was significant (P<0.05) with attitude but not with professional skills (P>0.05).

Transactional leadership style was not related with attitude and professional skills (P>0.05).

The poorer the attitude, the more the laissez-faire leadership style given the negative sign of the correlation coefficient, and this relationship was significant (P<0.05). This trend was the same with professional leadership style, but was not significant (P>0.05).

Attitude was highly correlated with professional skills, therefore implying that the better the professional skills, the better the attitude and vice versa (P<0.05).

It was found that principals with democratic leadership styles were less deficient (given the positive sign of the correlation coefficient) in other leadership styles, and this significantly (P<0.05) in transformational and laissez-faire leadership behaviour, unlike principals with laissez-faire and autocratic leadership styles.

Principals with transformational leadership behaviour tend to give room to participatory leadership more than those with transactional leadership styles given the negative sign of the correlation coefficient and the

former and the positive sign in the later, and these relationships were all significant (P<0.05).

Principal with autocratic leadership style were significantly (P<0.05) reluctant to laissez-faire leadership given the negative sign of the correlation coefficient, but this trend was the opposite with the other leadership styles given the negative sign of the correlation coefficient.

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

➤ Ho1 there is no relationship between principals' democratic leadership behaviour and students' academic achievement

Research question one: To what extent does principals' use of democratic leadership behaviours impact students' academic achievement?

This study unveils that the various aspects of democratic leadership style notably the organization of meetings to make decisions, the delegation of power to other administrators in running the school, the adoption of participatory approach and collaboration with stakeholders were effective in the study area with aggregated weight ranging from 91.3% for students, 96.7% for teachers This approach of leadership termed 'Consultative Leadership' by Flippo (1976) was positive for the educational system and the study effectively reveals that it significantly and positively impacts students' academic achievement. Several research studies have shown effective leadership not only improves educational outcomes, it also ensures that disciplinary problems among students are addressed effectively (Reynolds, 1991). Lewin's study (1939) found that participative leadership, also known as democratic leadership is typically the most effective leadership style. Democratic leaders offer guidance to group members, but they also participate in the group and allow input from other group members. In Lewin's study,

children in this group were less productive than the members of the authoritarian group, but their contribution were of a higher quality.

Recommendations

- The government and educational stakeholders should promote transformational, transactional and democratic leadership behaviour in order to boost academic achievement while discouraging autocratic and laissez-faire leadership behaviour which are not beneficial to the school system.
- The government should improve on the learning by reducing the class size and providing didactic materials as well as equipping the school library as to facilitate research.
- School principals should do all what is possible to support curriculum implementation by encouraging team spirit among students and staff so as to improve school performance. This should include setting target for each year, complete teaching syllabuses and organize remedial teaching for weak students.
- Principals should perform their pedagogic role and supervision of instruction role so as to enhance school performance.
- Revisiting the appointment policy of principals by involving other educational stakeholders and considering the profile & moral standards of the principal.
- There should be training school for principals and this should be sustained by continuous professional training.
- Periodic seminars and workshops to be organized by the government and other education stakeholders to improve on principals' leadership behaviour and skills, to achieve pedagogy of excellence and promote quality education for learners.
- Strengthening the auditing and supervision of principals and school activities in general for more efficiency and accountability.
- Tackling other factors that hinder the effectiveness of principals such as lack of assiduity on the part of the teachers, reinforcing discipline in school and encouraging parents to provide school need to their children, notably textbooks.
- Improving on teachers and principals' salaries and incentives to motivate them and enhance output.

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