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School Leadership Types and Teachers' Empowerment in Public Secondary Schools in Rwanda

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Abstract

Educational quality in developing countries has been an issue where government of different developing countries have shown commitment to overcome challenges which impede the quality of their educational system. Rwandan government through ministry of educational and other stakeholders have started quality awareness campaign with intention of identifying and assessing the challenges which educational system are still facing and hinder improvement of educational quality (MINEDUC, 2018). Improving educational quality begins with teachers as they are the ones who work daily with students, therefore working environment which empower teachers to do their work effectively is a crucial step in improving educational quality. This paper came up to establish the relationship between school leadership and teachers' empowerment in public secondary schools. The combination of correlational and descriptive research design was used. 167 teachers answered questionnaire designed to test teacher empowerment, 11 head teachers and 11 deans of studies were interviewed in guided interview. School leadership was independent variable while teachers' empowerment was dependent variable. Data collected was analyzed using SPSS version 21 and Karl Pearson Coefficient of Correlation was calculated to determine the relationship between school leadership and teacher empowerment. Analysis of the data collected from respondents shown that 27% of teachers confirmed use of autocratic leadership style, 83.5 % of teachers confirmed use of democratic leadership style while 79.2% confirmed use of Laissez-faire leadership style in school management. Data collected from questionnaire; 77.3% of teachers said that they are involved in decision making, 81.6% of teachers said that they are given opportunity to grow professionally. The study found low degree of positive correlation between professional development of teachers with being motivated and more creative where (r) 0.494. the study found a high degree of positive correlation between involving teachers in decision making with being motivated and more creative (r) 0.805 and there was also high degree of positive correlation between delegation of responsibilities with motivation and creativity among teachers (r) 0.777.

Key words: Leadership, School Leadership and Teacher Empowerment.

1.0 introduction

The role of teachers traditionally was limited only to delivery of content and management of classroom activities for better academic performance of the students but not school matter outside classroom like planning and decision making of the school which is invested in the school principal power not to teachers. The global trend of educational reforms advocates teachers' new empowered role in school like involving teachers in decision making of the school (Yao, 2014).

The findings of the research conducted in USA on school restricting reforms advocated the need for teachers to play new role in school setting on top of management of classroom activities (Lucey *et al.*, 2008). According to Caldwell (2004), the study findings indicated that, teachers need to be given opportunity to embrace the role of empowered teachers and successful implementation of teachers' empowerment lies upon on the attitudes and leadership of the school head teachers.

Empowerment involves real changes in one's professional expertise, advocate autonomy and active participation on decision making process (Bogler *et al.*, 2012). The research finding of Kimwari *et al.*, (2014) proved that empowered individual, possess necessary skills and knowledge which enables him or her to act in a given circumstance or to improve a situation a positive way, the findings shown that through teacher empowerment, teachers develop their own competence and discover their potential.

Pan (2001), undertaken a study to investigate how teacher empowerment correlates with job satisfaction of instructors in public elementary schools in Taiwan and the findings of the study shown that empowered teachers demonstrated high job satisfaction

Rwandan government has committed a lot of efforts to solve challenges in education system and improves its quality. Bogler and Nir (2012), research findings suggested that empowering teachers and building a supportive working environment to teacher can be a reliable solution to challenges related to educational effectiveness and thus teacher empowerment needs a much attention for sustainable quality education.

1.1 Problem statement

The government through ministry of education has committed efforts in facilitation of teachers to do their work effectively to ensure quality education, despite all efforts, Rwandan education system is still facing challenges which impedes quality education desired by government, as it is reported by UNDP (2018), Rwandan education system is ranked at 157 out of 178 countries, on the 2018 Human development index.

At school level there are number of factors which affect daily teachers' work and make teaching process ineffective, those factors are trainings, relations with others, school leadership and policies, working conditions among others (Gatsinzi, 2014).

Ingersoll (2007), conducted a research and findings indicated that 60% of teachers who quit their jobs pointed out dissatisfaction with working conditions as the main reasons where teachers said that lack of opportunities in participation of decision making and also lack of support from the side of school administration, ignored.

School leadership style adopted by head teachers may results in dissatisfaction of teachers, feeling neglected and ignored. According to VSO (2003) study, the findings indicated that teachers in Rwanda felt neglected, ignored by authorities and this environment does not support them to fulfill their responsibilities and this result in feeling of not empowered to do their work effectively, this

attracted interest of researcher to investigate correlational between school leadership and teacher empowerment in public secondary schools.

1.2 Objective of the paper

To establish the correlation between school leadership and teacher empowerment in public secondary school in Kicukiro District, Rwanda.

2.0 Literature Review

2.1 Leadership style

Leadership is a process of influencing members of the organization and their activities for setting and realizing the goals and objectives of the organization (Megginson *et al.*, 1983). In education system, schools are considered as learning centers and school leadership process is a core in concertizing the purpose of the school as an institution, and this is effectively realized through creating a school effective school leadership process (UNESCO, 2009).

In the school setting, quality of teaching and learning is affected by how head teacher who have supervisory authority relate and offer leadership to teachers (Kabeta *et al.*, 2015), thus the role played by head teachers on the level of the school is very crucial factor which determine smoothness and of policy implementation and motivation of teachers.

In the Rizvi (2008), research, for improving effectiveness and efficiency in schools, head teachers need to adopt a kind of leadership which provide teachers with opportunities to exercise leadership, provide effective training and professional support which means empowering in short, efficiency and effectiveness of a head teacher determines performance of the school, teachers and students as the center of teaching and learning process.

2.1.1 Autocratic leadership style in schools

According to John, (2002) research findings described autocratic leadership style which is also called authoritarian style of leadership, as a style where power and decision-making is in hands of autocratic leader.

As shown in the research of Yukl (2002), autocratic leaders tend to have the following traits: they do not consult staff members of an institution during decision making process, the leaders put in place all policies and the subordinates must follow them, the leaders predetermine the instruction of doing the work, the leaders determine the responsibilities of the followers and the leaders set technical and performance evaluation standards.

Autocratic leader directs group members on the way things should be done and does not establish an effective communication channel between him or her and staff members, he or she does not delegate authority nor allow subordinates to take part in decision making.

2.1.2 Laissez-Faire leadership

Robbins (2007) described laissez-faire style as abdicates responsibilities and avoiding making decision. Different authors said that, in this style of leadership, leaders normally do not interfere with decision making process. They give subordinates full authority and power to take their personal decisions about the work. Staff members are free to bring creativity and innovation on how he gets work done and take their decision.

According to Osborn, (2008), laissez-faire leadership style has got some advantages like not reducing pressure on the leader. It gives opportunity to more visionary employee to do what they think it is necessary in environment free for leader interference.

2.1.3 Democratic Leadership Style

Democratic leadership style is also conceptualized as participative leadership (Makura, 2011). Democratic leaders consult ideas for the whole staff members before he came up with a certain decision about a given situation and what the team should do (Blese, 2000). Democratic leadership style has some advantages like, it enhances job satisfaction of the workers as they are consulted to make any decision in the institution, so they felt valued by the leader, workers are aware of what is taking place in the institution and therefore it enhances ownership spirit among workers.

2.2 School leadership and job satisfaction

According to Abraiz *et al.*, (2012) Job satisfaction is attitudinal behavior depicting individual assessment of his or her job. According to Zembylas and Papanastsiou (2004), job satisfaction is an effective feedback to the situation which a person involved at work thus; it is a distinguished relationship between what one wants from teaching and what one discerns it is suggesting to teacher.

There are considerable evidences which shown a significant positive correlation between school leadership and job satisfaction. In their study on Transformational leadership and job satisfaction in Malaysia Wan Omar and Hussin (2013) found that there is significant and positive relationship between intellectual stimulation and job satisfaction. It should be stressed that intellectual stimulation is one of the factors of transformational leadership.

2.3 Teacher Leadership

Teacher leadership is very important factor to consider in school reform with the purpose of improving the school effectiveness. In the research conducted by Fullan, (2000), the findings indicated that almost everyone agrees that the key to school reform is leadership, but teachers are seldom leading the process.

In an environment where distributed leadership is dominant, there should be a team work spirit and collaboration between personnel of a school (Hulpia *et al.*, 2009). In an environment where teachers are empowered, there is a cooperating group, and this group usually is made of school head teacher, assistant principal and teacher leaders.

According to Crowther *et al.*, (2009) study survey in four countries to find out impact of giving teachers' freedom to decide the way to complete their work and school becoming more effective, the results shown in the school where teachers act as leaders impact positively on school effectiveness, but the findings also revealed that this concept of teacher leadership has not yet implemented to the fullest level. The same results were found in the research conducted by Hulpia *et al.*, (2009) where the results revealed the need for head teacher to embrace leadership style which encourage team work among staff and to have a common vision and work with all their efforts to achieve the set goals.

2.4 Teacher Empowerment

Empowerment is conceptualized as giving opportunity to teacher's for actively participate in making instructional decisions of the school. Empowerment can be also looked as considering teacher as someone who have enough skills and experience of handling teaching and learning matters (Valerie, 2012).

Human resources in any institution is considered as the most important assets for successful achievement of its goals (Burma, 2014). This is the reason why institutions take different strategies

to make sure that their employees work effectively and efficiently by bringing new innovative ideas that benefit institution (Tindowen, 2019).

Teachers' empowerment brings a conducive working environment (Martin *et al.*, 2001). Many researches were conducted with the intention of assessing a correlation between one of the domains which affects teaching conditions (professional development, autonomy, leadership, teacher empowerment) and the findings revealed a positive relationship between empowering teachers to improve students' academic performance.

2.5 Decision-making

According to Martin *et al.*, (2001), decision-making is one dimension of empowerment. Allowing teachers to take part in decision making of the school is an important factor in school leadership as teachers will feel valued and increase the sense of ownership in taken decision.

According to Hirsch *et al.*, (2006a), giving teachers' opportunity to take part in making decision about their working environment is foundation to concretize empowerment. Hirsch *et al.*, (2006a) study findings suggest that teachers are in good position to make decisions about what happen in the classroom.

2.6 Professional Growth

According to Short and Johnson (1994), professional growth refers to the way teachers perceive how they are given opportunity develop their skills. In the survey, Hirsch *et al.*, (2006), teachers should be given opportunity to work as team and given a chance of taking in service-training which develop them professionally and become well equipped on best teachings technics. In the study, Martin *et al.*, (2001) findings indicate that teachers should develop sense of life-long learning

3.0 Methodology

The study employed correlational research design which was used to determine correlation between school leadership and teacher empowerment, correlation research design was supported by descriptive research design. The study targeted 357 people who were classified into three strata (Head teachers, dean of studies and teachers) working in public secondary schools located in KICUKIRO district. The sample size was calculated basing on the recommendation given by (Yamane, 1967). A combination of purposive, stratified and simple random sampling techniques were used to determine sample size and on top of that proportionate method was used to know the number of representatives from each stratum where a combination of all these techniques gave 189 respondents.

In collection of data, prepared questionnaires were given to teachers and filled them according to instructions which were given before. Head teachers and dean of studies were interviewed in guided interview to compliment the information collected from questionnaires.

The data collected from different groups were coded and analyzed using descriptive statistics which include frequencies, percentages and Pearson Correlational Coefficient to determine the relationship between school leadership and teacher empowerment was also calculated.

4.0 Findings

The objective of the paper was to investigate the relationship between school leadership and teacher empowerment in public secondary schools in Kicukiro district, relevant instruments was developed to collect information which responds to the general objective of the study.

4.1 Analysis of School Leadership Style used in Secondary Schools

Questionnaire which assessed leadership style used in secondary school was developed and answered by teachers.

4.1.1 Democratic leadership style

Teachers presented their perceptions about the use of democratic leadership style in secondary schools through answering statements prepared in questionnaire and the answers given were analyzed using descriptive statistics summarized in the Table 1.

Table 1: Teachers’ responses on school leadership practices basing on democratic style

Statements	SD		D		N		A		SA		Mean	Std
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%		
Teachers take part in decision making	10	6.0	19	11.4	11	6.6	91	54.5	36	21.6	3.74	1.10
Delegation of responsibilities to teachers	7	4.2	14	8.4	1	0.6	65	38.9	80	47.9	4.18	1.08
Having effective channels of communication	6	3.6	11	6.6	3	1.8	92	55.1	55	32.9	4.07	0.97
Involving teachers in school activities	9	5.4	11	6.6	3	1.8	90	53.9	54	32.3	4.01	1.05
Involved in planning process	5	3.0	13	7.8	4	2.4	96	57.5	49	29.3	4.02	0.95
Promoting teachers to sense of ownership	7	4.2	15	9.0	7	4.2	96	57.5	42	25.1	3.90	1.01
Sharing among teaching staff	5	3.0	14	8.4	12	7.2	84	50.3	52	31.1	3.98	0.99
Embrace teachers in leadership role	6	3.6	14	8.4	7	4.2	95	56.9	45	26.9	3.95	0.99
Promote innovation and creativity	10	6.0	15	9.0	9	5.4	78	46.7	55	32.9	3.92	1.13

Table 1 presents the analysis of teachers’ perceptions about use of democratic leadership style. Findings revealed that, majority of head teachers use democratic leadership style in managing schools as seen proved by teachers where 83.5% of teachers who responded to asked statements agree that head teachers use democratic leadership style in school management while 16.5% disagree with the use of democratic leadership style in school management.

4.1.2 Autocratic leadership style

Teachers presented their responses related to the use of autocratic leadership style in secondary schools through answering statements prepared in questionnaire and the answers given were analyzed using descriptive statistics summarized in the Table 2.

Table 2: Teachers’ responses on school leadership practices basing on autocratic style

Statements	SD		D		N		A		SA		Mean	Std
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%		
Act without consulting teachers	72	43.1	46	27.5	4	2.4	26	15.6	19	11.4	3.56	1.40
Don’t explain decision to teachers	54	32.3	71	42.5	3	1.8	6	3.6	33	19.8	3.90	1.25
Head teachers decide how and what should be done	72	43.1	58	34.7	4	2.4	7	4.2	26	15.6	4.14	3.31
Head teacher gives order and classify procedures	74	44.3	58	34.7	6	3.6	4	2.4	25	15.0	3.94	1.09
Head teacher acts as a chief judge	74	44.3	56	33.5	7	4.2	9	5.4	21	12.6	3.88	1.17
Teachers are not involved in school Planning process.	72	43.1	60	35.9	3	1.8	5	3.0	27	16.2	3.93	1.14
Head teachers don’t focus on teacher’s welfare	8	4.8	21	12.6	4	2.4	74	44.3	60	35.9	3.94	1.15
No freedom to express ideas	71	42.5	63	37.7	5	3.0	7	4.2	21	12.6	3.97	1.14

Table 2 presents the analysis of teachers’ responses on the use of autocratic leadership style. Findings indicated that, head teachers do not use autocratic leadership style in school management as seen 72.3 percent of teachers who respondents to statements of questionnaire meant to assess the use of autocratic disagree with the use of autocratic while 27.7 percent of teachers agree with the use of autocratic leadership style in school management.

4.1.3 Laissez-Faire style

Teachers presented their perceptions about the use of democratic leadership style in secondary schools through answering statements prepared in questionnaire and the answers given were analyzed using descriptive statistics summarized in the Table 3.

Table 3: Teachers’ responses on school leadership practices basing on Laissez-faire style

Statements	SD		D		N		A		SA		Mean	Std
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%		
Enough freedom to make decision	11	6.6	20	12.0	6	3.6	74	44.3	56	33.5	3.86	1.19
Don’t interfere teacher’ work	8	4.8	22	13.2	5	3.0	60	35.9	72	43.1	3.99	1.19
Allow teachers to do their own work	11	6.6	16	9.6	7	4.2	71	42.5	62	37.1	3.94	1.18
Freedom of delegating responsibilities	9	5.4	19	11.4	3	1.8	74	44.3	62	37.1	3.96	1.16
Leave staff to make decision	12	7.2	18	10.8	4	2.4	71	42.5	62	37.1	3.92	1.21
Decisions made from down to top	12	7.2	18	10.8	3	1.8	67	40.1	67	40.1	3.95	1.23
Don’t embrace leadership role	12	7.2	20	12.0	4	2.4	60	35.9	71	42.5	3.95	1.25
Don’t visit teachers in classroom	13	7.8	20	12.0	5	3.0	60	35.9	69	41.3	3.91	1.27

Table 3 presents analysis of teachers’ responses about use of laissez faire style in schools.

Findings shown that, apart from democratic leadership style preferred by head teachers in school management, Laissez faire leadership style is also a leadership style which is used by the majority of head teachers in their daily activities of managing schools as shown by teachers where 79.2 percent of teachers who respondents to questionnaire statements to assess the use Laissez faire style agree with the statements while 20.8 percent of teachers disagree with the statements.

Eleven deans of studies were interviewed on leadership style practice which is commonly used in schools and the process of teacher empowerment in the schools. Dean of studies were asked questions regarding leadership style used in their schools and why such leadership style is used. The responses collected from guided interview, were categorized in the theme related to the first specific research objective. All eleven dean of studies interviewed said that there is no one single leadership style which is effective in school management because effectiveness of any leadership style depends on the circumstances although they pointed out that democratic style of leadership is the one which is common as it brings together commitment of teaching staff and administration in enhancing teaching process.

Deans of studies were also asked questions regarding empowerment of teachers, 10 deans of studies in 11 answered that empowerment of teachers is done mainly through involving them in

decision making where they own decisions made and ensure successful implementation of decisions. In eleven deans of studies interviewed 4 deans of studies added that consulting teachers before taking decision promotes sense of being empowered among teaching staff. Dean of studies interviewed added that delegating teachers in some responsibilities is another dimension of empowering teachers.

Head teachers were interviewed of both leadership style used in school management and the process of teacher empowerment. Their answers were categorized in themes following general objective.

Eleven head teachers were interviewed on leadership style used in schools, 9 head teachers in which represents 81.81% of head teachers answered that they mix democratic and Laissez faire leadership style in their daily activities of managing their schools, even though they may take some decisions without consulting their teachers in some situations which happens rarely.

Eleven head teachers were interviewed on empowerment of teachers, 8 head teachers in 11 answered that empowerment of teachers is very important aspect in building effective school, they pointed out that before taking decision they consult teachers who are experienced. They were also asked on involving teachers in decision making process, 9 head teachers answered that they involve teachers in decisions making as on way of empowering teachers as they create motivation on the side of teachers because they felt valued and playing a big role in the school management.

4.2 Correlation between school leadership and teacher empowerment

This paper wanted to establish the extent to which the variables that make school leadership and teacher empowerment are correlated. This was found by calculating Karl Pearson coefficient of correlation.

Table 4: Involving teachers in decision making and being motivated

		Correlations	
		Involved in decision making	Being motivated
Involved in decision making	Pearson Correlation	1	.805**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	167	167
Being motivated	Pearson Correlation	.805**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	167	167

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

The Table 4 shows that involving teachers in decision making is correlated to teachers' motivation, motivated teachers are empowered, the high positive degree of correlation with Karl Pearson coefficient of correlation (r) 0.805.

Table 5: Delegation of responsibilities with creativity and innovation.

		Correlations	
		Delegation of responsibility	Creative and Innovation
Delegation of responsibility	Pearson of Correlation	1	.777**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	167	167
Creative and Innovation	Pearson and Correlation	.777**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	167	167

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

The table of correlation above indicated that delegating responsibilities to teachers has a high positive degree of correlation with making teachers more creative and innovative hence empowered. The degree of correlation (r) was found to be was 0.777.

5.0. Summary

Following the specific objective of the study which was to investigate the relationship between school leadership and teacher empowerment, where empowerment of teachers was measured in terms of motivation, creativity and innovation of teachers in their daily activities. The study found a high degree of positive correlation between involving teachers in decision making, delegating some responsibilities to teachers with motivation, creativity and innovation where (r) was 0.805 and 0.777 respectively.

6.0 Conclusion

Considering the third research questions which was “What is the relationship between school leadership and teacher empowerment public secondary schools in Kicukiro District, Rwanda” it was concluded there is a significance high degree of positive correlation between school leadership and empowerment of teachers and this proved that school leadership matters a lot in achieving school goals.

7.0 Recommendations

Following the findings of the study, the following recommendations were addressed.

7.1 General recommendations

1. School head teachers are encouraged to use democratic leadership style where decisions making is shared among staff which enhance ownership and ensure successful implementation of curriculum
2. Rwanda Education Board through the department of teacher management should set up a policy which facilitate teachers to embrace new roles which are beyond classroom activities and make a follow up of how teachers are daily facilitated to do their work effectively
3. Ministry of education in their daily inspection should include also teacher empowerment to reinforce this process as it will solve some educational challenges.

7.2 Recommendations for further research

Conducting research on school leadership and teacher empowerment in private secondary schools to come up with a comparative study.

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