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CONNECTING PRINCIPALS' LEADERSHIP, TEACHER COLLABORATION AND STUDENTS' ACHIEVEMENT

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ABSTRACT

The paper focused on connecting principals' leadership, teacher collaboration and students' achievement. The principal holds a key position in the administration of school. He has to give necessary advice and guidance to teachers, students and other members of the school and also ensure the school climate is conducive for teaching and learning. As an important component of the school, the principal has important roles and responsibilities to play. The success of the schools depends upon the ability of the arrowhead that is responsible for academic as well as collaborations between the teachers and the principals for excellent students' achievement. The definition of leadership and the different types of leadership style used by most principals in schools were discussed in detail alongside with teachers' collaboration and students' achievement. The paper also provided links between leadership and collaboration and the importance of leadership on students' achievement. The paper concluded that leaders should know what is required to improve the quality of teaching and learning process the ones who can make use of the employees' capacity and inspire enthusiasm and hopefulness, and suggested amongst that school principals and teachers should be trained consistently and increase in their level of collaboration for excellent students' achievement.

Keywords: Principal, Leadership, Teacher, Collaboration, Student, Achievement.

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INTRODUCTION

Education is seen as an important means of transmitting the skills and knowledge needed by individuals to participate in the society. It is also required in the contribution to the development of a country's economic, political and social development. Education is the key to national development. It has the capacity to change the world through teaching effectiveness as well as learning efficiency among learners. Leadership in education is the process of facilitating

learning, or the acquisition of knowledge, skills, values, beliefs, and habits. The school environment is such that could promote teaching and learning, good health and could cater for the number of students enrolled for the period. Through these learners many also educate themselves (Sule, 2013).

Education can take place in formal or informal settings, and any experience that has a formative effect on the way one thinks, feels, or acts may be considered educational. The students' achievement plays an important role in producing the best quality graduates who will become great leader; and manpower for the country and those responsible for the country's economic and social development. Leadership must awaken to the challenge adequate strategy, learn responsibilities and take on a type of leadership for change. Leadership strategies cut across many verticals and horizontals huddles (Amele, 2018).

When leadership becomes successful in secondary schools, it will provide for achievement in the secondary school. Whether it is in energy, financial services or healthcare, the underlying essence for effective leadership remains the same. Despite the excellence in resources provided to an operating organization, the challenge remains in the hands of a proactive leader to deliver predetermined goal and bring new opportunities. Leadership as an important task is only successful in a multi-directional ways, where crossed dimensional connectivity becomes the foundation and driver of great leadership, and an absolute causal factor to a successful organization especially in secondary school (Gimah, 2018).

Once the sense of trust and good leadership is created, leading by example, with core values of integrity, honesty and humility, spending time in performing the actual tasks alone with the resources will then not only provide them with face time for effective engagement and open communication, but it will also create sustainability in the organization. Then, the task of management shifts towards the function of leadership, deviating away from sense of micromanagement. To achieve effective strategies there must be management commitment and leadership of management to create a plan for implementing an organizational change while completely applying elements necessary for success. Without these elements the attempted changes will always create a large amount of resistance (Nwagwu, 2018). Direct and active participation, which clearly demonstrates top leadership commitment, is an essential factor to cope with strategies and sustain a change process for long. Leadership should personally establish new goals and directions for the school and then lead the team toward the realization of those goals and directions. It is a corporate fact of life that leadership's behaviour shades the corporate attitude and defines what is important to the success and survival of the school. It is not what management says; rather; it is what management does that is most influential on the organization and its people. Leadership strategies has a key role to play, both in setting direction, inspiring change throughout the organization and ensuring achievements of secondary schools goal attainment (Ogenme, 2018).

In the secondary school level of education, the principal is the head. It is also the responsibility of the principals to provide the appropriate leadership practices which entails effective administration of the school. Principal's leadership practices are directly related to interaction between teachers and students, decision making, teaching and learning, and the entire administration of the school administrators ensure that the aim and objectives of establishing the institution is achieved. The success of an institution depends on the way or manner in which leaders operates, to succeed a leader has to adopt a particular leadership style or blending of style together to achieve the aim and the objective of that institution. An effective leadership style leads to achievement of school goals and objectives. Therefore, the success of any school

depends on the ability of the principals in his or her leadership style, he is the leader of teachers and students of the school. Emerging research indicates that principals' leadership style affects teachers' collaboration and student achievement. Good leadership falls within and beyond the scope of the principal. Therefore, school leaders should involve teacher's collaboration to bring about school improvement. Indeed, extant research suggests the importance of principals' leadership style and its effect on teachers' collaboration and student achievement among schools. The more principals work routinely with teachers on instructional improvement, the more likely are principals to be positioned socially to share best practices and keep teachers connected to the core of their work.

CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATIONS

Leadership

Leadership according to Stogdill (1950) as cited in Abraham (2013:63) is "the process of influencing the activities of an organized group toward goal setting and goal achievement". Lipham (1964) as cited in Abraham (2013, p. 63) defined leadership as "the initiation of a new structure or procedure for accomplishing an organization's goals and objectives or for changing an organization's goals and objectives. Adeyemi (2006) viewed leadership as a process through which persons or group influence on the attainment of goals. Burns (2003) stated that leadership is not only a descriptive term but a prescriptive one embracing a moral, even passionate dimension. Omolayo (2000) in his own view described leadership as the ability to get things done with the assistance and corporation of other people within the school system.

Leadership means influencing people to work willingly with the zeal towards the achievement of the cooperate goals. A leader cannot work alone he must have people to influence, direct, carry along towards the achievement of the organizational goals. Leadership style however, refers to the pattern or the collection of leadership behavior that characterize a given leader. Leadership style represents a range of behavior of a leader, a leader adopt a particular; leadership style in order to succeed. It's also involves those variables that a leader will do in an organization such as planning, structuring of tasks, controlling and his relationship with staff under his jurisdiction. Leadership is the key to progress and survival of any organization. Ezenwa (2005) saw it as an act of influencing people so that they strive willingly and enthusiastically towards the accomplishment of goals and objectives in the same vein.

From the above definitions, it is seen that leadership positions come with power and influence. This power and influence is important in coordinating and directing, decision-making, instructional supervision and the entire transformation of the organization towards goal attainment.

Principals' Leadership

Leadership is an essential part in achieving the desired school quality. Schools will progress if they have a visionary school principal, high integrity in carrying out quality improvements, and good managerial skills. The key to the success of the principal as a supervisor is to re-interpret the meaning of supervision. Principal leadership in school management implementation is considered important as it could ease sharing work activities. A well-organized school environment involves several elements, including the principal, teachers, employees and students. Furthermore, good organization creates tasks and responsibilities divisions that were

evenly distributed to facilitate the work process in achieving shared goals. A close cooperation and involvement between principals, teachers, employees and students through their respective responsibilities would improve the school quality (Umaedi, 1999).

Successful division of tasks in schools also depends heavily on the ability of the principal to perform his leadership. In implementing the leadership, the principal can determine school management according to the organizational climate found in the school. Therefore, the principal is tasked with fostering the institution to achieve the educational goals that has been set together by always directing and coordinating with all parties involved in all activities. Principals in occupying their duties as managers should have basic functions and skills of a manager. The basic function that should be owned by the principal as a manager is a function in planning, organizing, mobilizing and controlling school management (Ololube, 2017). While the basic skills that should be mastered are skills in building concepts in planning, establishing human relations by building good communication and technical skill is performing tasks directly in the field especially when finding a problem, this skill is often used to control subordinates in the field (Ololube, 2019).

Effective schools could be pursued through effective and efficient organizational procedures implemented by school principal. The effective managerial is characterized by the functioning of a good organizational structure in order to meet schooling services. A research states that the principal leadership style could determine the performance of the teacher under their leadership. Adequacy in school capacity creates good bureaucratic system, and if the principal leadership does not work properly, it will undermine the performance of the organization, which indirectly would become a weakness (Ololube, 2017). Despite principal leadership that is inherently personal, there are other things that supports the creation of effective school management—technology in school, a well-integrated information system, and school culture as bridges to create good relationships between principal, teachers, other employees, students and the communities around the school environment.

School management is a factor that determines the quality of the education, because it indirectly determines the effectiveness of the curriculum, learning facilities and infrastructure, time and learning process. From a management perspective, effective schools seek ideal utilization of all school components. As a formal educational institution, schools are required to produce graduates who have academic abilities, skills, attitudes and mentality, and competent personalities so that students have competitiveness after they graduate from an institution. Schools that have strong principal leadership are predicted to be able to develop effective school management, because they are supported by various aspects, such as the application of technology, school culture, information systems and developed organizations. However, not all principals are able to run strong leadership-based schools (Ololube, 2019).

Theories of Leadership Applied by Principals

Certain theories of leadership have been identified (Ogunsanwo, 2000). These include; the trait theory, situational theory, contingency theory, behavioural theory and path goal theory. The traits theory tends to emphasize the personality traits of the leader such as appearance, height, initiative, aggressiveness, enthusiasm, self-confidence, drive, persistence, interpersonal skills and administrative ability. The situational theory stipulates that leaders are the product of given situations. Thus, leadership is strongly affected by the situation from which the leader emerges and in which he operates. The contingency theory is a combination of the Trait Theory and

Situational Theory. The theory implies that leadership is a process in which the ability of a leader to exercise influence depends upon the group task situation and the degree to which the leader's personality fit the group (Sybil, 2000).

The behavioural theory could either be job-centered or employee-centered. The job-centered leaders practiced close supervision while employee-centered leaders practiced general supervision. The path goal theory is based on the theory of motivation. In this theory the behaviour of the leader is acceptable to the subordinates only if they continue to see the leader as a source of satisfaction (Ajayi & Ayodele, 2001). Ibukun (1997) argued that the main task of the principal is to create a conducive atmosphere for the teachers to be able to achieve desired changes in students' learning. Supporting this argument, Ijaiya (2000) remarked that teachers in Nigeria express a desire for more participation in decision-making. The way the principal relates with his or her staff could contribute immensely to their effectiveness or otherwise.

Types of Principals' Leadership

There are different perspectives concerning leadership and leadership style in terms of leading institutions and organizations. Leadership is associated with colleges and college administration in the educational sector. College leaders are expected to guide and motivate all employees and encourage them to meet the objective of the college (Karadağ et al., 2015).

Autocratic (Authoritarian) Leadership

An autocratic leader is one who decides and comes up with a solution for the entire group on their own with little or no discussion with other team members. Decide on their perception until they convince the subordinates (De Cremer, 2006).

Laissez-faire or Free Rein Leaders

Laissez-faire or free rein leaders are leaders who give very little guidance when dealing with group issues provide overall authority and control to their subordinates (Al-Ababneh, 2013). They assert that free-rein avoid holding power and responsibilities by one higher official, improves job satisfaction of the subordinates as well as ensuring that the potential of the subordinates can be optimally utilized (Ololube, 2017).

Democratic (participative) Leadership

This leadership is very relaxed and participative in which the leader invites the subordinates or team members to participate in the decision respecting them and their input into overall processes (Sheshi & Kërçini, 2017). Democratic leaders consistently take input and advice from those members or followers in a decision making process within the mission setting, many of the participants displayed this kind of leadership by obtaining suggestions from other members of the group to come to a team consensus when trying to solve a problem or an issue (Iqbal et al., 2015).

Transformational Leadership

Leaders are inspiring, the team members with a shared vision, they spend most of their time by guiding and discussing with their subordinates, they are not willing to do everything but delegating responsibilities amongst their teams and when they are observing weakness they are ready enthusiastically to help their subordinates with detail and reasonable guiding principle (Ayoko & Chua, 2014). These can create and sustains a context that maximizes human and organizational capabilities; facilitate manifold levels of transformation, and align them with core values and a unified purpose. Make organizations charisma a special leadership style commonly associated with transformational leadership; extremely powerful, extremely essential for team work (Wang, 2014).

Teacher Collaboration

An effective way to connect teachers is to create structures that encourage collaboration. Collaboration plays an important role in helping teachers focus on instruction. When collaboration is absent and teachers work in isolation, little professional growth occurs. Successful collaboration requires allocated time and specified goals or outcomes (Friend & Cook 2009). While teachers may have some control over those factors, school leaders are instrumental in providing necessary support and focus for collaboration to be effective. Principals may foster teacher collaboration by providing instructional leadership and sharing leadership with teachers. In turn, higher levels of teacher collaboration may lead to improve student achievement. Notably, most research on collaboration has focused on improved outcomes for teachers, with little attention given to its impact on student achievement (Goddard et al., 2007). Recent studies have begun to examine this link, but much more research is required to establish statistically significant connections between teacher collaboration and student achievement.

For several decades, researchers and practitioners have advocated for teacher collaboration in school settings (Friend & Cook, 2009). This is logical, given that teachers are professionals, possessing knowledge about their students and how they learn. Through teacher training programs, various professional development opportunities, and first hand work with their students, teachers acquire unique knowledge about instructional and classroom management approaches. To maximize opportunities for knowledge diffusion and innovation, they should be intimately involved in collaborating around instructionally related matters that concern improvements in student outcomes. Much existing literature related to teacher collaboration, however, has focused on discovering encouraging effects of collaboration for teachers, as opposed to more direct effects for students.

Specifically, positive outcomes for teachers have included improved efficacy, improved attitudes toward teaching, greater understanding of students, and higher levels of trust. Perhaps research has converged on teacher effects because teachers face substantial obstacles related to collaboration. Finding time to collaborate is one of the most consistent hurdles teachers face (Darling-Hammond & Richardson, 2009; Friend & Cook, 2009). Additionally, teachers may face challenges related to the structure or content of their work together. For example, Darling-Hammond and Richardson (2009) indicated that to focus teachers' work on improving instruction, group members must make their work public and be willing to adjust their practices. Because these obstacles must be addressed at the teacher level, research on overcoming them is

important. While this research is important, the impact of changes that teachers make to their practices as a result of collaborative efforts must be studied as well.

Students' Achievement

Despite the attention paid to a broad definition of educational outcomes, however, students' achievement remains central. Students' achievement is a term that appears frequently married in education discourse. Students' achievement is a multidimensional construct composed of the skills, attitudes, and behaviors of a learner that contribute to academic success in the classroom. It is a satisfactory and superior level of performance of students as they progress through and complete their school experience. The implication of this definition is underscored by research which repeatedly demonstrates that the vast majority of students who withdraw from school do so for no reason other than poor students' achievement (Ololube, 2011).

The measurement of students' achievement continues to be a controversial topic among policymakers, measurement experts, and educators (Ololube, 1997). Researchers have used a variety of ways to measure students' achievement such as report card grades, grade point averages, standardized test scores, teacher ratings, other cognitive test scores, grade retention, and dropout rates (Ololube, 2017). However, for the purposes of this study, students' achievement is defined by the degree to which a student is able to accomplish a given class work in the school setting.

Links between Leadership and Collaboration

Research indicates that school leaders influence teachers' practice. For example, Louis et al. (2009) found that leaders had a direct impact on teachers' professional community (which measured teacher collaboration, among other constructs). Further, professional community was associated with improvements in math achievement on state assessments. This work supports the view that instructional leadership requires principals to collaborate in meaningful ways with others in the school (Hallinger, 2003). In any organization, skill sets and expert knowledge are typically dispersed across all personnel and do not reside with just one, or even a few individuals. Therefore, it is important for school principals to work collaboratively with teachers to maximize the outcomes of collective expertise. This notion is supported by Marks and Printy (2003) who found that effective principals combine transformational leadership - which involves building a positive school culture through such approaches as participatory decision-making, collaboration - and shared instructional leadership.

Similarly, Blase and Blase (2000) observed that effective principals work to develop connections between teachers socially and in the exchange of professional knowledge. Good school leaders encouraged open communication, guiding teachers to reflect critically on their own learning and teaching practice. Performing an instructional monitoring function, principals provided feedback to teachers post-observation and through informal day-to-day interactions. Teachers reported that effective principals modeled teaching practices in classrooms and that collaboration with principals increased teacher motivation, efficacy, reflective practice, and instructional innovation. Research on school leader effects shows mostly indirect impact on student achievement, largely through leader support of teachers (Hallinger, 2003; Leithwood & Mascall, 2008).

The conclusion is often that teacher professionalism is a necessary, but insufficient condition to increase student academic outcomes. More recent research, however, provides some support that teacher collaboration, sometimes included as a subset of professional community affects student achievement positively (Louis et al., 2009). Emerging research connects teachers' collaborative practices to student achievement, much more exploration is required to confirm and extend these findings. Further, while evidence supports the impact that leaders have on teachers' work and emerging evidence shows that leaders impact student achievement indirectly, research in these areas is just beginning as well. Therefore, the work we present here supports and extends the knowledge base linking shared instructional leadership and teacher collaboration to students' academic achievement (Ololube, 2019).

Importance of Leadership on Student Achievement

Leaders are the heart of the organization to achieve short and long-term goals and objectives. They can help the team to develop a shared understanding of organizations, mission, vision, and its activities, can give clear and convincing organizational direction to their followers (Ojokuku et al., 2012). Scholars say that leadership matters because effective leaders make a difference in people's 'career and live; empower followers and educate them on how to do their activities by taking appropriate actions that can facilitate change. Leaders should know what is required to improve the quality of teaching and learning process the ones who can make use of the employees' capacity and inspire enthusiasm and hopefulness. In this case, leaders may get the best out of their employees and as a result increase their productivity (Karadağ et al., 2015).

Apart from the fact that the school head knows what to do, he/she knows when, how, and the reason for doing it, the consequence of improvement that brings about perfection on students' achievement. It may therefore, be argued that a head teacher, who does not engage in actions consistent with instructional leadership, has a wrong perspective of the students' achievement (Ouma et al., 2015). So that, the main job of the college head is to create an inspiring atmosphere that fosters competence, effective teaching, and learning. Therefore, the type of environment that exists in a college could be used as an instrument to measure the head teacher's effectiveness (Vaismoradi et al., 2014). In light of the stated views, leadership will be perceived as the ability of the school head to relate with the teachers such that the flairs that are embedded in individual teachers are liberated, causing them to constantly see and seize opportunities to improve organizational performance and enhance student achievement.

CONCLUSION

Education is the process by which society through schools deliberately transmits its cultural heritage (accumulated knowledge, values and skills) from one generation to another. The paper focuses on connecting principal leadership, teacher collaboration and student achievement. Leadership is the process of influencing the activities of an organized group toward goal setting and goal achievement. There are different perspectives concerning leadership and leadership style in terms of leading institutions and organizations. An effective way to connect teachers is to create structures that encourage collaboration. Collaboration plays an important role in helping teachers focus on instruction. When collaboration is absent and teachers work in isolation, little professional growth occurs. Successful collaboration requires allocated time and specified goals or outcomes. Despite the attention paid to a broad definition of educational outcomes, however,

students' achievement remains central. It is a satisfactory and superior level of performance of students as they progress through and complete their school experience. Effective leaders make a difference in people's 'career and live; empower followers and educate them on how to do their activities by taking appropriate actions that can facilitate change.

Suggestions

The following suggestions were made:

- School principals and teachers should be trained consistently and increase in their level of collaboration for excellent students' achievement.
- Leaders should know what is required to improve the quality of teaching and learning process.
- Government should provide all the required school resources for public schools to function effectively and private schools should do same for effective students' achievement.

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