



Government School Principals Leadership Style and Its Effect on Academic Achievement in Ethiopia

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Abstract: This research was conducted at 15 government schools in Addis Ababa. The objectives of this research are to identify principal style and its effect on academic achievement. The “Leader Behavior Description Questionnaire” (LBDQ) formed by Halpin (1966) was used. Meanwhile Academic achievement was measured using the “School Certificate Examination Results from 2017-2020. A total of 191 teachers and 15 principals from government school in Addis Ababa were randomly chosen. Pearson correlation was used to analyze the data. To support data obtained from questionnaire given 10 teachers were interviewed. The results showed that most of the school leaders adopt a democratic style of leadership. There was a significant correlation between the structure of task-oriented leadership style and students’ performance in the examinations. Correlation analysis also showed that principals practice task- oriented structure and consideration-oriented structure in relation to their work responsibilities. Furthermore, findings also showed that majority of the principals are more likely to practice consideration-oriented leadership style compared to structure-oriented leadership style.

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1. Introduction

Principals often play their role as both leader and manager. Academically they are professional leaders who hold two complementary roles, namely leadership and management. The principal is the school's leading leader and, on his shoulders, lies the hopes of parents, students, teachers, the community and the government. Principals are an important factor in improving the quality of education in a school which is why they make them the most important people in the school organization. The hard work that goes with it is inevitable and as a result such situations can cause many principals to fail to manage and manage the school effectively.

As the main backbone of their school, the leadership style of principals can help create a happy working environment and promote career development among teachers and other members of the school staff. Principals have a responsibility and authority to develop school programs to improve their schools. This mandate enables principals to encourage schools that strive to achieve both academic and academic achievement, or to create less effective and less efficient subjects.

Principals must develop strategies that can improve the performance of teachers in their schools. This includes creating an enabling school

environment for learning and mentoring, especially for teachers, in the use of attractive teaching methods such as group teaching and a mobile classroom program. Principals and teachers should be educated people who will continue to strive to improve their knowledge and skills. Principals must therefore be equipped with skills that include leadership skills, technical skills, humanitarian skills, academic skills, cultural skills, communication skills, motivation and decision-making skills. Besides, they should also be physically, emotionally and spiritually stable, and behave very well.

A leader is a person in a group or organization who is given the task of directing and coordinating activities that seek to achieve the goals of the group or organization. This means that leadership is a process that influences the activities of the group and motivates them to achieve a specific planned outcome.

In the case of a school, it is important that schools are led by competent leaders whose influence is crucial in achieving an educational institution. School success depends on a number of factors, including teachers, students, resources and the learning environment. Wise students, for example, undoubtedly contribute to the well-being of the school, as well as dedicated teachers and adequate

school resources. However, research shows that the leadership qualities of a principal can have a profound effect on the quality and success of a school, the performance of students and the strength of teachers.

On the basis of research on successful schools the role of the principal is often identified as a contributing factor to the success of the school. Therefore, principals must play their important role successfully so that the school continues to strive to do well. Skilled principals can guide and monitor school progress because they are the most powerful and influential leaders in the school. And they are people who are always expected to be at the forefront especially when faced with any critical situations affecting the school.

In the education system of a certain country, principals or principals are given the responsibility to manage the school's administration in order to achieve the desired vision and policy. Specifically, the principal is the administrator and director of school property; the human factor (teachers, students and other staff) and the non-human factor (buildings, structures, teaching resources). In the management of the school, the principal must perform activities that demonstrate planning, leadership and efforts that can identify and solve the problems the school is experiencing. In short, there is evidence that a flexible principal can lead to great success in school. As a school leader, the principal can lead the school's most desirable transformation by creating teamwork with teachers, other school staff members and the local community.

2. Theoretical Background

This study is based on a theoretical framework presented by Likert (1969) in which Likert points out that there are two different styles of leadership - career-oriented leadership and employee-centered leadership. Leaders who create career-oriented leadership are those who are democratic and dependent on their power and position to influence their officials. These types of leaders tend to be firm and always ensure that employees follow the rules and regulations in place to perform well in their duties. A Career-Based Leadership style can clearly define the tasks a person has to perform. A leader of this type works best based on giving his subordinates a task plan and trying new ideas.

At the same time, staff-focused leaders will be regarded as democratically elected leaders who always provide an opportunity and opportunity for their employees to participate in any decision-making process. The leadership style of a leader can indirectly influence the behavior of others. Therefore, a leader must be careful about the leadership style he

uses because he will always be looked after by his subordinates.

3. Statement of the Problem

The results of the Public Primary School Examination from 2017-20 showed that the pass percentage of Addis Ababa Public School was very high (Reports from the Examinations Unit, Department of Education, 2021) (see Table 1). If we look at the positive achievements of public schools in Addis Ababa, then this study aims to see if the leadership styles practiced by principals in different schools are in line with student achievement.

Table 1. Percentages of passes in the Government Primary School Examination (2017-2021): Addis Ababa

Percentages of Passess			
2017	2018	2019	2020
97.49	95.26	97.62	96.88

Based on the examination results according to districts and zones, Addis Ababa was still at the top level (see Table 2).

Table 2. Percentages of passes: District wise (2017-2020)

Percentages of Passess				
	2008	2009	2010	2011
Adama	81.12	91.31	89.24	90.78
A. Ababa *	97.49	95.26	97.62	96.88
Dire Dawa	94.29	89.47	95.22	91.49
Jimma	82.88	84.35	86.96	95.28

4. Research Objective

From the problem statement, the objectives of this study are; 1) Exploring the approach of principal leadership in public schools in Addis Ababa; 2) Identify the relationship between work-based leadership style and student achievement in the Public Primary School Examination.

5. Research Design

The research design for this study was for research. According to Kerlinger (1986), developing a research framework is a very important process for a researcher to be able to answer a proposed research question and the stated goals. As mentioned earlier, one of the main objectives of this study was to investigate the leadership style of government

teachers in a public school in one of the districts in Ethiopia. The study used a quantitative approach in which a total of 191 public school teachers from 15 public schools out of 22 schools were involved.

Halpin's Behavior Definition Questionnaire Questionnaire was used in this study. The results of the pilot study showed that cronbach alpha is 0.922, meaning that the level of authenticity of the tool is important. Data from the questionnaire were analyzed analytically using SPSS and Pearson's correlation was used to determine the relationship between work-based leadership style and consideration and student achievement with a r value of r , ranging between 0 and 1 ($0 < r < 1$) when -0 indicating the lowest correlation and 1 denoting the highest value of the correlation.

0.00-0.20 : Very weak, very low correlation

0.21-0.40 : Weak correlation

0.41-0.70 : Average correlation

0.71-0.90 : High correlation

0.91-1.0 : Very high, very strong correlation

In the list of questions provided, there are 15 factors that define the characteristics of a leader. Likert scale is used from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). The percentages of 'strong disagreement' and 'consensus' have collapsed and the same thing goes to the scale of 'firm consent' and 'consensuses'. This was done because the researcher would only want to see the percentage difference to agree and disagree further.

The researcher randomly assigned selected schools. Of the 22 public schools, 15 schools were selected comprising more than one third of the total number of public schools in the district. In addition, all 6th-year students from 15 public schools to 191 students were selected. The Leadership Behavior Definition Questionnaire (LBDQ) was used as a research tool. This tool was developed by Halpin

(1966) which was translated into Malay by Rahimah Ahmad (1981). The LBDQ contains 15 items all in the form of almost endless questions.

Cronbach Alpha was used to test the reliability of the material and the value obtained was 0.922. This means that the material in the LBDQ measures the path of government teacher leadership in one of the districts in Ethiopia. In the LBDQ, Halpin highlighted the importance of relationships between leaders and subordinates and at the same time emphasizes the importance of organizational structure, clear communication channels and regulations.

6. Findings

Table 3 shows the leadership characteristics of principals. From the results obtained, it is clear that most principals of public schools in Addis Ababa have signs of success and enthusiasm. Generally, everything was at a very high level. The findings indicate that leadership characteristics are satisfactory based on item points at 77% or higher.

According to teachers, the characteristics of the top five leadership principals are: strong belief and confidence that students can improve (91.1%), good leader (90.6%), willing to help teachers improve their performance especially about teaching-learning (90%), problem-solving (89%) and being a creative and experienced leader (88.5%).

While other things like planning and good communication get 87.4% points and having a positive attitude and having an open mind for teachers 86.4%. Similarly, the spiritual thing, which ensures the availability of resources in the system of learning and respecting others received the same score of 85%. Also, the 'encourage teacher engagement' score of 81.7%, 'being able to give new ideas about teaching strategies for 79.1% points and 'letting others get 77%.

Table 3. Leaderships' Characteristics of the Principals: Frequencies and Percentages

	Disagree		Not Sure		Agree	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Appreciate others	1	0.5	43	22.5	147	77.0
Able to communicate well	2	1.0	22	11.5	167	87.4
Able to plan well	2	1.0	22	11.5	167	87.4
Positive attitude & open minded towards teachers	3	1.5	23	12.0	165	86.4
Well disciplined	2	1.0	16	8.4	173	90.6
Able to solve problems	1	0.5	20	10.5	170	89.0
Encourage participation from teachers	3	1.6	32	16.8	165	81.7
Has self respect towards others	3	1.6	25	13.1	163	85.3
Qualified, creative, knowledgeable on the needs being a leader	3	1.6	19	9.9	169	88.5
Spiritual	3	1.6	24	12.6	164	85.8
Able to give new ideas with regard to teaching techniques	1	0.5	39	20.4	151	79.1
Ensuring the availability of facilities in the teaching-learning process	2	1.0	26	13.6	163	85.4
Ensuring the teachers are practicing the philosophy of ' students are able to improve their performance'	1	0.5	15	7.9	174	91.1
Helping teachers to improve their performance regarding teaching-learning, to know the characteristics of an effective school	5	2.6	14	7.3	172	90.0

N= No. of teachers responded

The Correlation Between Task-Oriented Leadership Style and Students' Achievement

In this section, there are 15 factors that define the aspect of consideration in the form of leadership. Pearson's relationship was used to

determine the relationship between the leadership style and the success of the students in their government's Primary School examination from 2017-2020 at a pivotal rate of $p = 0.01$.

Table 4. The correlation between task-oriented leadership style and students' achievement

Task-Oriented Leadership Style	Students' achievement (government Primary School Exam)			
	2017	2018	2019	2020
To show firm stand in all matters	$r = -0.397^{**}$	$r = -0.306^{**}$	$r = -0.215^{**}$	$r = -0.084$
Give personal help to teachers & staff	$r = -0.297^{**}$	$r = -0.235^{**}$	$r = -0.176$	$r = -0.023$
Be attentive to small matters in order to help teachers	$r = -0.169$	$r = -0.244^{**}$	$r = -0.176$	$r = -0.121$
Easily understood by all staffs	$r = -0.333^{**}$	$r = -0.249^{**}$	$r = -0.318^{**}$	$r = -0.217^{**}$
Willing to listen to teachers' problems	$r = -0.348^{**}$	$r = -0.209^{**}$	$r = -0.285^{**}$	$r = -0.118$
Not being transparent on certain matters	$r = -0.062$	$r = 0.142$	$r = 0.157$	$r = -0.047$
Care for teachers' and staffs' welfare	$r = -0.324^{**}$	$r = -0.239^{**}$	$r = -0.222^{**}$	$r = -0.096$
Don't explain clearly on the action taken	$r = 0.106$	$r = 0.246^{**}$	$r = 0.159$	$r = -0.012$
Inform honestly on the teachers' performance	$r = -0.111$	$r = -0.294^{**}$	$r = 0.037$	$r = 0.074$
Treat every teachers equally	$r = -0.369^{**}$	$r = -0.263^{**}$	$r = -0.294^{**}$	$r = -0.193^{**}$
Willing to accept changes	$r = -0.394^{**}$	$r = -0.201^{**}$	$r = -0.343^{**}$	$r = -0.190^{**}$
Friendly and approachable	$r = -0.311^{**}$	$r = -0.118$	$r = -0.319^{**}$	$r = -0.166$
Comfortable to talk with	$r = -0.368^{**}$	$r = -0.119$	$r = -0.386^{**}$	$r = -0.248^{**}$
Accept opinion/ideas from others	$r = -0.295^{**}$	$r = -0.151$	$r = -0.289^{**}$	$r = -0.069$
Ask for teachers' agreement before doing anything	$r = -0.201^{**}$	$r = -0.163$	$r = 0.289^{**}$	$r = -0.156$

Significant level $p=0.01$ ($p>0.01$)**

r = Pearson's correlation value

In Table 4, it can be seen that there are a number of leadership styles associated with student achievement (Government Primary School Exams) even though the corresponding values are not strong. Some of the styles associated with student success for 4 consecutive years (2017-2020) are like having a firm stand on all issues, easily understood by all staff, treating everyone equally at school and being willing to accept change. The critical level is $p = 0.01$.

Moreover, the correlation is seen between a 'thought-provoking' leadership style and student achievement for 3 consecutive years (2017-2020) although the corresponding values are not strong, namely firmness, willingness to listen to teachers' problems and a sense of caring for teachers' well-being.

In 2017, there are 11 things about 'thought-provoking' leadership styles that are not as closely linked to student success as being firm in all the tasks offered, such as helping teachers, easily understanding and communicating effectively with teachers, being a good listener. in the case of teachers, be impartial, open-minded, and willing to accept change. On the other hand, by 2020, there are few 'thinking-centered' leadership styles that are aligned with student success, namely, being able to communicate and understand the needs of teachers, non-discrimination and the ability to adapt to new changes.

In Table 4, it can be concluded that the principals of the public schools in Addis Ababa are practicing to be a considerate leader. The relationship between these processes and student achievement is not strong, which is why it suggests that there may be other factors that can contribute to the positive outcomes achieved by students such as teacher motivation and teacher commitment.

Keeping in mind that all principals have less than 5 years of experience in being appointed as principals, it can be concluded that the type of leadership style they have used has little to do with student achievement. There may be other factors that may contribute to a student's ability to do well in his or her elementary school examinations, such as extracurricular activities offered during the school holidays, correctional training classes, teacher training methods, and so on.

7. Discussions and Conclusions:

Based on the aforementioned results, the study found that principals of public schools in Addis Ababa exercise democratic leadership. Numerous previous studies have also proven that school leaders who practice democratic leadership can have a positive effect on the performance of school teachers.

In addition, data analysis also shows that the characteristics of a school leader are one of the most important factors contributing to the success of his or her subordinates. This is reflected in the good relationships that are built between school leaders and teachers that may contribute to good school performance.

Leading a school can be a daunting task. Therefore, a leader must be intelligent, knowledgeable and willing to apply and embrace change especially in order to improve student performance. As the results show, many principals have been concerned about the performance and success of their students, emphasizing the importance of discipline in their schools, and are determined to help teachers become more successful, especially in their learning and teaching. This can be seen from the data analysis that showed that most principals were well-trained, open-minded, knowledgeable, and able to make decisions.

9. Suggestion

Based on the findings, a few suggestions can be made to increase leadership skills among principals. Among other things, the relevant departments and departments can develop programs, especially for school leaders, to improve their governance and leadership. This should be considered because the development of the administration today is evolving and naturally around the world. The appointment of school leaders is based on maturity and information can be asked about how they carry out their duties and responsibilities as school leaders. Can they carry such burdens?

Not only that, educational visits to schools that have produced a good management system and academic achievement should be encouraged. This is important in ensuring that the best ways to manage a school can be shared and ways to overcome weaknesses and problems can be discussed. In addition, principals working as transformation leaders can encourage creativity, open-mindedness and facilitate situations and events that create a favorable environment for technology adoption to encourage teachers to use technology in their teaching and learning.

However, this paper has no limitations, where it requires further investigation. This paper used the measurement method only without controlling additional information from another party as an example; students, parents and others. Therefore, further research can be expanded by increasing the number of samples by adding another group and not just focusing on judgment from

teachers. In addition, a variety of methods can be used as integrated methods.

As school leaders, principals must be able to deal with a variety of problems, be able to think critically and logically, always play the role of a mediator in solving problems that teachers are facing, and always try to make decisions that will satisfy everyone. In order to achieve academic success, principals need to act smartly and systematically so that a well-planned strategy can be used effectively. In addition, the principal must be able to influence school staff to continue fighting for change.

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