An Analysis of Leadership Training on Management of Lower Primary Grades in Selected Primary Schools of Kafue district, Zambia

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Abstract:

Leadership training symbolizes one of the instructional tools that school leaders can employ in order to deliver quality education in lower primary grades in Zambia. The delivery of quality education has been reiterated by Zambia in the Vision 2030 whose objective is to offer all-encompassing and quality education to all children by the year 2030. The objective of this study was therefore to analyse how school leadership training could improve the management of lower primary grades in selected primary schools of Kafue district. In order to achieve the objective of the research, a qualitative, interpretivist approach was adopted. The research design was descriptive in nature. The sample size comprised twenty-four (24) respondents, who were drawn from three (03) primary schools, in Kafue District, Zambia. Overall, the research found that school leadership was critical in the management of lower primary school grades as such grades are the bedrock and foundation of the entire educational ladder. School leaders should provide academic, professional, moral, financial and social support to teachers in order to motivate them for school improvement and lower primary school results improvement. They should set directions, develop teachers and make the school organisation work through monitoring teacher preparedness and the learning activity. Based on the research findings, the primary recommendation of the research was that school head teachers, senior teachers and school in-service coordinators should ensure that Teacher Group Meetings (TGMs), Continuous Professional Development (CPD), and School Program of In-service for the Term (SPRINT) activities take place in their schools as they are a cost-effective way of raising teacher capacity and professional development. In addition, monitoring of teacher preparedness should be taken as a priority in order to improve results.

Keywords: *leadership training, school leadership, lower primary, quality education.*

Introduction

Leadership training represents one of the instructional tools that school management can utilise in delivering quality education in lower primary grades in Zambia (Bambrick-Santoyo & Peiser, 2012. Zambia's commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is reaffirmed in the Vision 2030 whose aim is to provide inclusive and quality education to all children by the year 2030 (Ministry of National Development Planning, 2018). The values and beliefs of school managers' abilities and capabilities to provide effective teaching and learning in schools, shapes their leadership practices (Hallinger et al., 2018). Leadership training needs to focus on helping head teachers

and the entire management team in newly decentralised contexts better understand instructional supervision and other direct and indirect actions on their part that would most likely raise student performance. Training that aims to shape self-efficacy must ensure that school leaders have the skills necessary to act in desired ways and gain a better understanding of the links between the behaviours and the desired achievements (Hallinger et al., 2018). Regionally, Zambia is placed at the bottom in terms of reading and numeracy scores (Hungi et al. 2010). Despite Zambia having made considerable progress in improving access to primary education through the abolishment of user fees, the proportion of children who are illiterate still remains high. The Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) among grade 2 students in 2015 revealed that 65% of Zambian school children were illiterate (Broacher et al. 2015). Similarly, the World Development report found that only 55% of grade 2 children in Zambia could not read a single word of a text (Brombacher et al., 2015). Described by Bambrick-Santoyo & Peiser (2012) as "an instructional leadership approach focused on rapid and sustained school improvement that is replicable across school settings, leverage leadership can be used to address the concerns regarding the poor quality education at lower primary grades." Effective leadership creates enormous opportunities on which no child and learner can be left behind but ensure that learners obtain the best of their academic prospects and the planned curriculum."

Statement of the Problem

Effective leadership and management of lower grades in primary schools are ideal to the achievement of desirable results in the provision of education. Studies undertaken by various scholars have sought to identify the key factors influencing the effective teaching of lower grades in the provision of education in Zambia and have come to a general consensus that a majority of children in Zambia are unable to excel in literacy and numeracy, despite having attended school for several years (Brombache et al., 2015; Likando, 2017; Ankomah et al., 2005). This state of affairs in the Zambian academic circles, if not addressed, will lead to increased school dropouts from the education system and this in turn will contribute to escalation in illiteracy levels in the country, and this can be supported by a well-established fact that Zambia has continued to experience challenges in delivering quality education (MNDP, 2018). Effective teaching and learning can be achieved by establishing a positive link between school leadership training and management. It is against this background of the problem that a research study entitled: "An analysis of leadership training on management of lower primary grades in selected primary schools of Kafue district, Zambia, was undertaken.

Research Objectives

The aim of the study was to analyse how leadership training could help improve management of lower primary grades in selected primary schools of Kafue district.

Specific Research Objectives

Following from the research problem and research objective, the study formulated the following research objectives:

• To assess how leadership training can impact on management of lower grades in primary schools in Kafue district.

• To establish challenges faced in the provision of leadership training and skills that can be shared in a school for better management of lower primary school grades.

• To determine how challenges faced in the provision of leadership training and skills can be addressed to improve management of lower primary grades in selected schools of Kafue District.

General Research Question

Arising from the research problem and the research objectives, the research study posed the following general research question: "How can leadership training help improve the management of lower primary grades in selected schools of Kafue district in Zambia?"

Specific Research Questions

Arising from the research objectives and the general research question, the study devised the following research questions:

▪ How can leadership training improve management of lower primary grades for effective learning and teaching in selected schools of Kafue district?

▪ What are the challenges faced in the provision of leadership training and skills that can be shared in a school for better management of the lower primary schools?

▪ How can challenges faced in the provision of leadership training and skills be addressed to improve management of lower primary grades in selected schools of Kafue district?

Theoretical Framework

The study was guided by Kolb, (1983) and Honey, who worked with Mumford, (1983). David Kolb offers a process of reflective learning based on the Lewinian Experiential Learning Model (Morris, 2017). This is a constructivist model of learning, based on the concept of creating meaning from experience, whose aim is to help the learner learn about and from the experience (Morris, 2017). Experiential learning is learning by experience or "learning by doing."
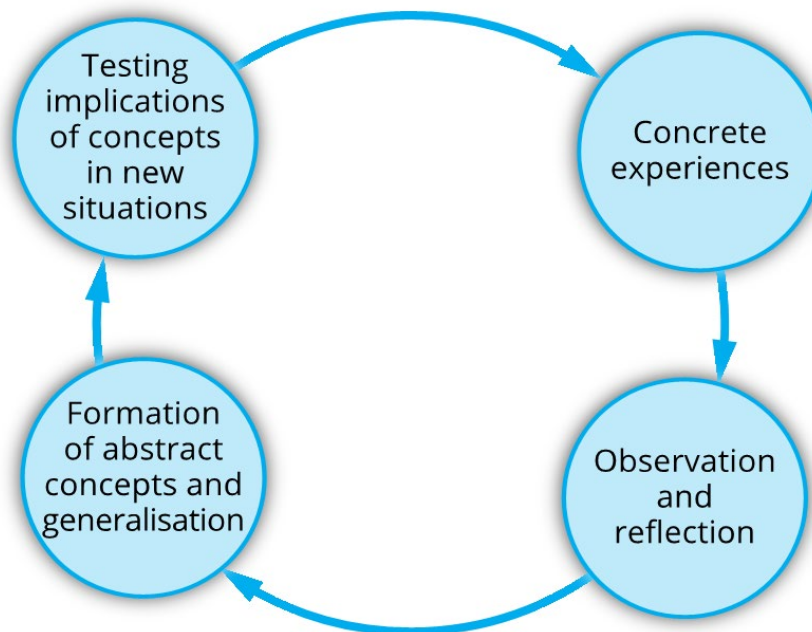

Figure 1. Kolb's Learning Cycle
Source: Morris (2017)

The process begins with concrete experience, which relates to the type of ill-structured and complex experience, for instance, poor or falling grades for pupils. As the process continues, the individual enters a phase of observation and critical reflection. That is, the teacher may seek to understand the cause of poor or falling grades for his/her pupils. This leads to a form of abstract conceptualisation where new concepts are created. For instance, the teacher realises that he/she is responsible for pupil learning, and this can be achieved only if the teacher adopts effective teaching methods. Finally, there is active experimentation as individuals take what they have learned from the process and make decisions and solve problems. For instance, the teacher plans for the next class meeting, in which he/she plans to use much effective teaching

methods incorporating question and answer sessions. The learner (that is, the teacher) is thus supplied with new adjusted concrete experience, from which to begin the cycle again. The approach emphasizes the importance of synthesis between individuals' behaviour and the evaluation of their actions. Reflection on what has been learned in order to experiment with new situations and to become aware of new possibilities is a vital part of the learning process (Morris, 2017). This is compatible with the notion of life-long learning.

Honey and Mumford (1986), cited in Morris (2017), built on Kolb's learning cycle. The Theorists observed that individuals differ not only in their learning skills, but also in their learning styles. Honey and Mumford drew up a popular classification of four learning styles for which people may have a natural preference (Morris, 2017).

Table 1. Honey & Mumford's Classification of Learning Preferences

Learning style	Learning preferences
Theorists	**Individuals who learn by understanding the theory, models, and concepts behind actions.** They learn best from activities which are intellectually challenging; structured and theory based; which allow time for analysis, grasping underlying logic and which allow generalisation of reasons for success and failure. They do not thrive on training, which is experimental, skims over principles or appears intellectually disorganised.
Reflectors	**Individuals who learn by observing and reflecting on what happened.** They learn best from activities that encourage observation and reflection. They do not thrive on fast-moving, participative training
Activists	**Individuals who learn by doing.** They learn best from activities which are high on hands-on experience, immediate payoffs, excitement and variety. They do not have patience with theory, consolidation, risk analysis or constraints
Pragmatists	**Individuals who learn by putting what they have learned into practice.** They need to see a direct link between the subject being studied and a real-world task or problem for which they are, or may be responsible. They see no point in learning for its own sake. They learn best from activities which relate to work problems e.g. on-the-job training. They tend to be impatient with open-ended theory or discussion

Source Morris (2017)

Significance of the Study

Zambia continues to face challenges in delivering quality education (MNDP; 2018). The research study sought to analyse how leadership training on management of lower grades in selected primary schools of Kafue district, could help address challenges established in the course of the study. The findings from this research study should serve as a reference document for the policy makers, school managers and other relevant stakeholders within the education system, in developing the best leadership and management practices to produce good results in the provision of education

Delimitation of the Study

The study focused on analysing the leverage leadership training on management of lower primary grades in selected primary schools of Kafue district. This was based on the fact that the lower primary school grades were considered to be of critical importance in the education dispensation. However, the study acknowledged that a single study like this one could not exhaust all what school managers could do so as to enhance good learner performance in Kafue district as elsewhere.

Limitations of the Research

The main limitations experienced by the study were that the geographical area chosen (Kafue District) was too wide and constituted all forms of communities including the urban, peri-urban, rural and unplanned settlements. The potential respondents who were also the key informants were dispersed over a wide area in schools located far apart within the zone. This posed a challenge for data collection in Kafue district owing to time and resource constraints. Further,

the findings of the study were limited to 3 selected schools in Kafue district and 24 key informants from the targeted schools. The study could therefore, not be generalized to all the primary schools in Zambia as it was qualitative.

Literature Review

Recent research studies have revealed that leadership training is directly proportional to learner performance in any given school set up. This means that school leadership strategies or approaches can contribute directly to either the good learner performance or poor learner performance in learning and teaching environment. According to Bloom et al (2015) for instance, there is a link between poor learning and weak principals. This clearly shows that poor leadership without leverage training directly affects learner outcomes, a situation which could be trending in lower primary grades in schools worldwide. The status-quo in lower grades of primary schools leaves much to be desired as learners that progress to higher grades are seen to be struggling to excel in reading or writing as observed by Molina and Wilichowski (2018) that worldwide, hundreds of millions of children reach adulthood without acquiring even the most basic skills-a phenomenon dubbed "the global learning crisis."

In a study conducted in eight countries across the world recently, data was collected on management practices in more than 1800 Secondary Schools in Tanzania, India, Brazil, Mexico, Canada and United States. It was found that higher management quality is strongly associated with better educational outcomes which accentuate the vital role played by principals in learning (Bloom et al, 2015). This is also applicable to our local school setup when leverage leadership training is employed to influence the management of lower primary grades in schools.

Leadership training for school managers in schools can indeed leverage the management of lower grades especially from grades 1-4; it is at this level of education that the school leadership comprise of senior teachers and school in-service coordinators whose responsibility is to spearhead continuous-in service training activities for class teachers in addressing the leadership crisis in leverage leadership. School leaders improve teaching and learning indirectly and most powerfully through their influence on staff motivation, commitment and working conditions. A key task for leadership, if it is to influence student learning and achievement, is to improve staff performance. Such performance is a function of staff members' motivations, commitments, capacities (skills and knowledge) and the conditions in which they work. Considerable emphasis has recently been placed on school leaders' contributions to building staff capacity in particular. This emphasis is reflected, for example, in the popularity in many countries of the term 'instructional leadership' and in fledgling efforts to discover the curriculum content knowledge that successful school leaders should possess (as discussed earlier in this review). Recent research in the US demonstrates that the exercise of instructional leadership was much easier in elementary than in secondary schools, reflecting the greater complexity and size of secondary schools and the range of curriculum knowledge required. Brambrick-Santoyo (2012) argues that to be effective, Principals should shift from being bureaucrats burdened by administrative work to instructional leaders who provide pedagogical support to teachers.

Effective management of the lower primary school grades can be farfetched unless leverage leadership skills are distributed and shared in a school. It is argued here that the sharing and distribution of leverage leadership skills relies much on the shift in the role or roles of a leader. According to Pont (2020), School leaders and their teams in the previous decades were more ascribed to administration roles and introduction of school leadership policies seemed less a priority but today school leadership policies are understood to be a key component in the improvement of education. However, shifts in the role of school leadership have evolved over the years in different countries and contexts. For instance, in the mid-20th century, School leaders were primary school teachers, while in the 1990s

these were referred to as managers increasingly occupied with school outcomes. In the years 2000 to 2015 the role of the school leader shifted from leading schools with more freedom and high accountability to a system characterized by collaboration and responsibility and therefore as these shifts have continued to be marked in important ways by specific contexts, policies as well as legal and instructional frameworks with which schools function (OECD, 2016: 85). It can also be noted that the shift in the roles of school leadership in the context of this study is manifested by the change from being referred to as Headmaster occupied by all administrative roles to Head teacher with increased responsibilities of collaborating with teachers in striving to achieve good learner performance or learner outcomes.

As Eurydice (2015) noted, leverage leadership skills can be distributed and shared in a school for better management of lower primary grades in the sense that it may consist of a team; a team can include one or more Deputy Heads and Administrative Assistants or Accountants, as well as Senior Teachers and School In-Service Coordinators.

The Research Gap

This research study therefore sought to fill the existing research gap by analysing how leadership training could improve management at lower primary grades in Zambia, with a special focus on learners in grades one to four. The researcher considered this study to be appropriate given the recent shift in the education policy focus for Zambia from 'access to school' to the quality of teaching and learning that takes place in schools. This shift in focus is articulated in Zambia's Seventh National Development Plan (SNDP) that spans 2017 to 2021. (MNDP, 2018). It was the researcher's considered view that quality teaching and learning could be attained through leadership training at lower primary school level.

Methodology and Research Design

The research study employed was qualitative and was interpretivist in nature (Merrian & Isdell,

2015). The researcher considered the approach appropriate as it enabled the researcher to develop a broader understanding of the subject under study. It also enabled the researcher to arrive at more objective findings for readers, relevant stake holders and policy makers. The interpretivist approach permitted the researcher to observe phenomenon in their natural, real-life settings; and offered the researcher an opportunity to develop a more accurate understanding of the phenomena under study (Saunders et al.; 2009). The key advantage of the qualitative, interpretive orientation was that the results of the study based on this approach were more valid and less artificial at primary level.

Research Population and Sample Size

The sample size refers to the number of items to be selected from the target population (Kothari, 2011). For the purposes of this study, the sample size comprised twenty-four (24) respondents. These were drawn from three (03) primary schools in Kafue District. The method used to select respondents was purposive and non-probability sampling method. According to Kumar (2014:244), purposive sampling method is a sampling procedure based on the judgement of the researcher in identifying research subjects that may provide the information most likely to enable the researcher achieve the objective of the study. The breakdown of the sample size of 24 respondents from the selected primary schools consisted of 3 School Managers, 3 School In-service Coordinators 6 Senior Teachers and 12 Class Teachers.

Data Collection Techniques

The study collected qualitative data through face-to-face interviews, participant observation and document revision, as instruments for collecting primary data. The researcher considered it appropriate to use the three independent data collection methods in order to collaborate with the research results (Saunders et al.; 2009: 185). An interview guide was used to collect data during face-face interviews. In participant observation, the researcher used a diary to record a narrative account of observation results, whilst administrative and

instructional documents were reviewed during document revision data collection method.

Data Presentation, Analysis and Discussions

N'gandu and Kasonde (2014) defined data analysis as the manipulation of collected data for the purpose of drawing conclusions that reflect on the interests, ideas and theories that initiate the study. N'gandu (2014) opined that the analysis of data can be achieved by organizing data to produce findings that require interpretation through coding and condensing the codes after which data is represented in figures or tables. This study was purely qualitative in nature and therefore the data was analysed manually. Interview notes were read thoroughly in order to gain an understanding of their content. Voice recordings were replayed repeatedly to grasp the responses as first-hand information. The responses were transcribed from the interview notes, researcher's diary, as

well as voice recorders which consisted raw data. The data was thereafter rearranged and tabulated systematically into themes, in order to translate analysis into a thematic analysis. Lastly, description of categories and subcategories of data was done, followed by identification of major themes that helped in the final analysis of the contents. However, in participant observation and document revision methods, data collection and data analysis were conducted simultaneously, depending on a given situation at the time of research (Saunders et al., 2009: 185).

Demographic Information of Participants

This part sought the demographics of the respondents on variables such as the position in the school, gender, age and education attainment. Figure 2 depicts the demographic information according to frequency for the four categories of respondents.
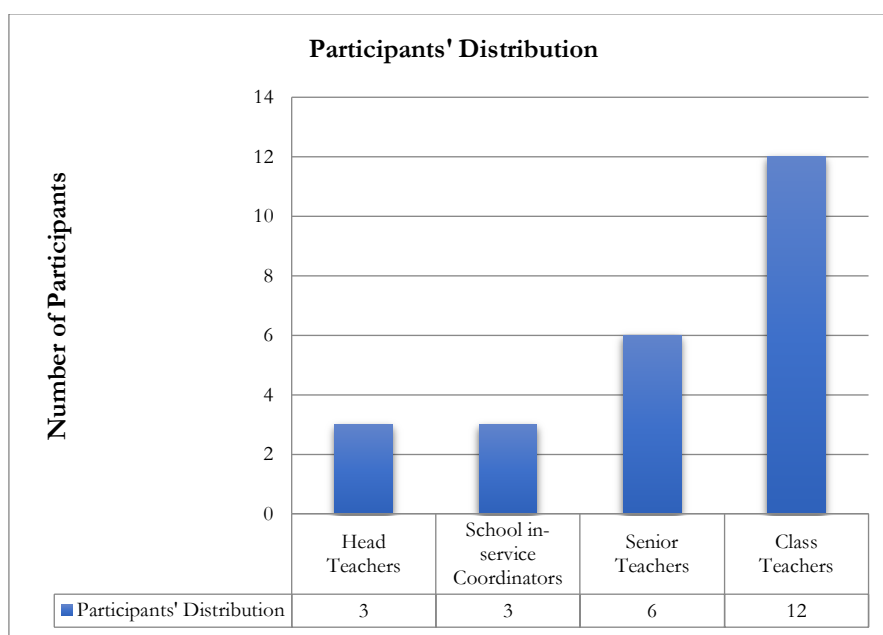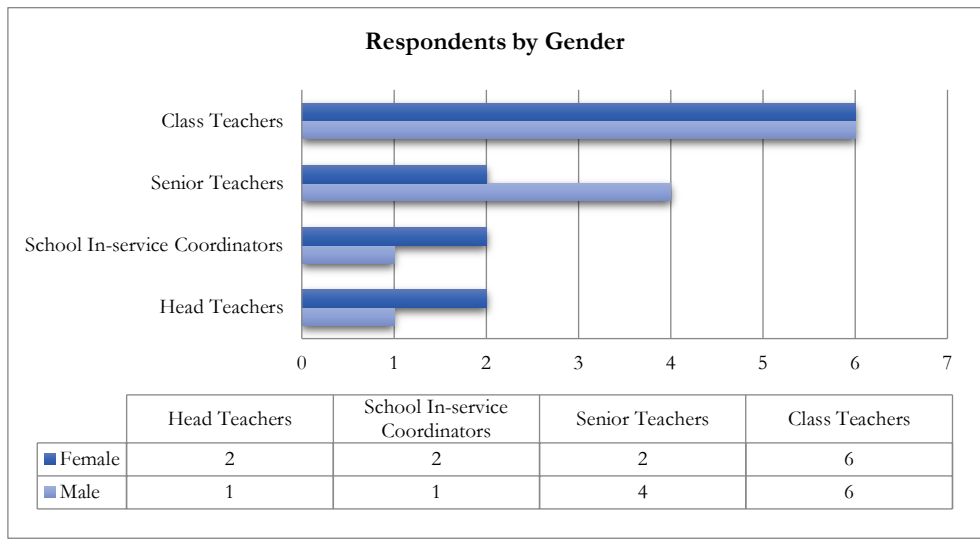

Figure 2. Distribution of Participants by Position Held in School
Source: Field Data (2021)

As regards the numbers of respondents, three (3) were Head Teachers, another three (3) were School In-service Coordinators, six (6) respondents were Senior Teachers and Twelve (12) were Class Teachers.

The overall respondents' gender was at 50% males and 50% females. This entails that the researcher was gender sensitive and not biased in choosing the research participants. It is imperative to note the perspectives and views of

both males and females with regards to leadership training on management of lower primary grades. It also implies that the Ministry of General Education (MOGE) is gender inclusive in as far as teacher recruitment is concerned.

Figure 3. Distribution of respondents by gender
Source: Field Data (2021)
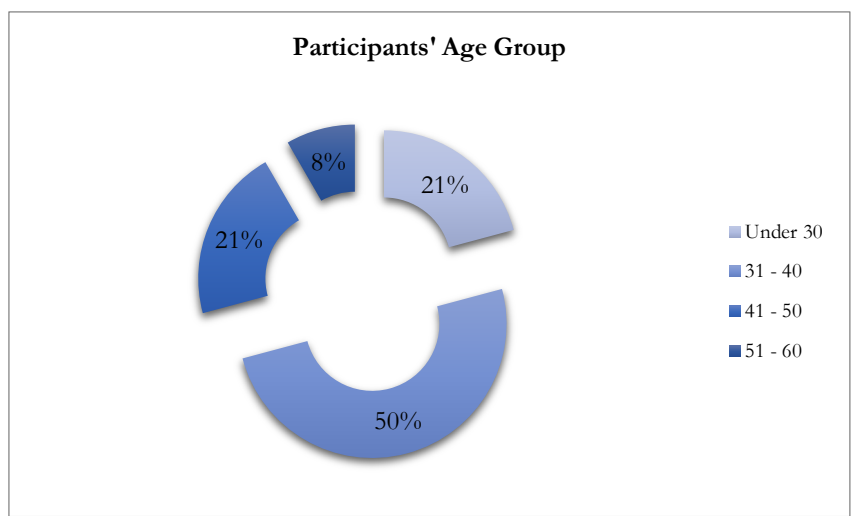
Figure 4. Distribution of respondents by age group
Source: Field Data (2021)

Mostly, all the research participants in the three selected primary schools of Kafue district were well able and mature to deliver quality education and manage school affairs. The respondents were mostly in the youthful category of the age groups between 30 to 50 years against 8% who were in the age group between 51 to 60. This implied that teachers in the selected schools had the impetus and energy to diligently execute the demands of their professional mandate as well as raising learner pass rate in their respective schools.

Distribution of Respondents by Qualifications Attained

This section gives a presentation of findings on the demographic information of the participants by highest level of education attained as shown in table 2. below.

**Table 2: Academic Qualifications**

Respondents	Certificate	Diploma	Degree	Masters	Doctorate
Head Teachers			3		
School In-service Coordinators			3		
Senior Teachers		4	2		
Class Teachers		10	2		
Total:	**0**	**14**	**10**	**0**	**0**

Source: Field Data (2021)

The research findings revealed that the Teachers in the selected schools of Kafue district were qualified with qualifications of Diploma and Degree. 42% were Degree holders and 58% were Diploma holders. This makes them capable of executing their duties effectively.

Analysis of Findings

Leadership and Management Styles of Schools
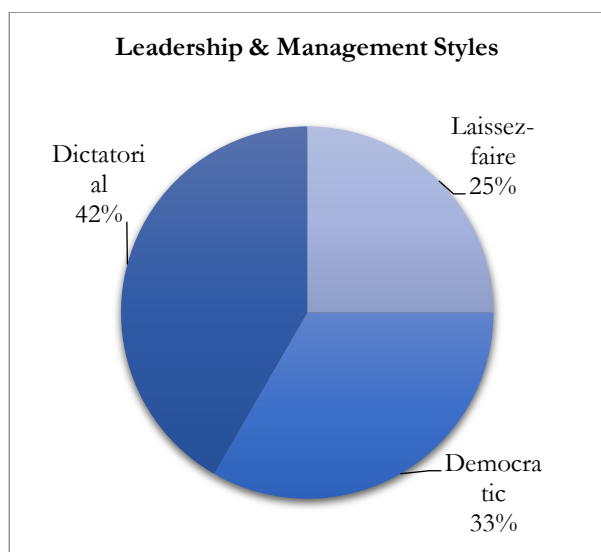
Figure 5. Distribution of Leadership and Management Styles in Schools
Source: Field Data (2021)

The research findings revealed that schools used difference types of school leadership and management styles. The 10 class teacher informants representing 42% responded that school administration which tended to be dictatorial, existed in their schools. The other eight (8) teacher informants representing 33% responded that school activities were done democratically in their schools, while 6 teacher respondents translating into 25% indicated that there was laissez-faire leadership in their schools. Different styles of leadership and management approaches, namely dictatorial, democratic and laisser-faire existed in the selected primary schools of Kafue district. The findings are presented in Figure 5.

Performance of lower primary school grades

According to the research findings based on the interviews conducted, documents reviewed and participant lesson observations carried out, School N was high performing in lower primary school grades measured according to numeracy and reading skills for the learners. The class teacher participant at the school hinted that 75% of her grade 4 learners were able to breakthrough in numeracy and literacy tasks and assessments in both catch-up and Primary Literacy Program (PLP). The PLP is a lower primary school, from grades 1 to 4, reading program and an initiative in the Ministry of General Education (MOGE) to encourage learner breakthrough in literacy like sounds, vowels, consonants, syllables, words, sentences and paragraphs. The assessments are conducted twice in each term, in weeks 5 and 10. This was in comparison to a participant from

school K who indicated that his grade four assessments were moderately at 52% of learners assessed. The case at School M indicated the performance of learners at average of between 40% to 45%.

Research findings revealed that leadership is a key factor to improve the condition of school aspects. Respondents opined that functional schools and outstanding performance did not exist without effective leadership styles. Other participants also agreed that there was a great relationship between leadership styles and academic performance in schools in selected primary schools of Kafue district of Zambia. The study revealed that unless the Head teachers, senior teachers and school in-service coordinators, as well as other school managers exploited their leadership tact, there would be academic stagnation and results would not improve. Equipped with knowledge and skills through training, school leadership would influence schools to good academic performance. The respondents agreed that a leadership style affects academic performance as it can enhance quality of teaching and learning.

The findings of the study indicated that leaders were needed to provide academic (as instructional leadership), financial, moral and social support to the teaching staff. Other ways of ensuring leadership training impact the management of lower primary school grades, according to respondents, included: setting directions, developing people and making organisations or schools work. By setting directions, it was opined that leaders chart a clear course that everyone understands, establishing high expectations and using data to track progress and performance. By developing people, it was envisaged that leaders provide teachers and others in the system with the necessary support systems and training in order for them to succeed. And by making the organization work, the participants were of the view that leaders should ensure that the entire range of conditions and incentives in schools fully support teaching and learning.

Research findings from the interviews conducted revealed that the leadership

workforce is ageing (with 29 % of the workforce being above 41 years old). The implication for this is that a large numbers of school leaders are likely to retire over the next five to ten years. At the same time, it was agreed that unplanned local, regional, provincial and national teacher transfers create leadership gaps in most schools of Kafue district. It was opined that at a time of high demographic turnover in school leaders, education systems need to focus on fostering future leaders. It was also revealed that the challenge facing school leadership was not only to improve the quality of current leaders but also to develop clear plans for future leadership and effective processes for leadership succession. Another participant pointed out that some school leaders were not prepared to share their leadership experience and were seemingly "absent school Heads", they were too busy for their role of providing school leadership. Further, it was revealed that there has been less emphasis on School Program of In-service for the Term (SPRINT) and Continuous Professional Development (CPD) topics bordering on school leadership for the sole purpose improving schools' proper management.

Research findings revealed that school leaders know that they cannot do it all alone. It was observed that school leaders know that they must surround themselves with their teachers and colleagues and, not only that, they must fully support teachers and staff by encouraging them to continually learn through Continuous Professional Development (CPD) School Program of In-service for the Term (SPRINT) activities available within their schools, zones and district. The foregoing was emphasised by one School In-service Coordinator (SIC) who encouraged school Heads and senior teachers to ensure these activities and programs needed to be on top of the school agenda if results were to be improved. The participants hinted that CPD and SPRINT activities were critical in developing teacher skills helping them to improve classroom practices to the effect that teachers can become leaders themselves within their professional mandate. It was revealed that it was without secret that when teachers were

given opportunity for career growth, as well as autonomy and control over their work, they became more productive, more engaged and more effective regarding their teaching work and this would raise school's academic performance in the lower primary school levels as others. Other avenues were to encourage teachers to make it their goal to seek higher qualifications and upgrades.

Discussion of Findings

The first objective of the study was meant to assess how leadership training could impact on management of lower grades in primary schools in Kafue district. Respondents had views such as providing teaching and learning materials, observing and monitoring teacher preparedness and providing a conducive learning atmosphere to both learners and teachers. It was also indicated that leaders needed to provide academic support (such as instructional leadership), financial, moral and social support to the teaching staff. Other ways of ensuring leadership training impact the management of lower primary school grades, according to respondents, included setting directions, developing people, and making organizations or schools work. By setting directions, it was opined that leaders chart a clear course that everyone understands, establishing high expectations and using data to track progress and performance. By developing people, it was envisaged that leaders provide teachers and others in the system with the necessary support systems and training in order for them to succeed. And by making the organization work, the participants were of the view that leaders should ensure that the entire range of conditions and incentives in schools fully support teaching and learning.

According to the research findings from the interviews conducted, in most schools, the leadership workforce is ageing and large numbers of school leaders are likely to retire over the next five to ten years. At the same time, it was agreed that unplanned local, regional, provincial and national teacher transfers create leadership gaps in most schools of Kafue

district. It was opined that at a time of high demographic turnover in school leaders, education systems need to focus on fostering future leaders. It was also revealed that the challenges facing school leadership was not only to improve the quality of current leaders but also to develop clear plans for future leadership and effective processes for leadership succession. Another participant pointed out that some school leaders were not prepared to share their leadership experience and were seemingly "absent school Heads", they were too busy for their role of providing school leadership training, as they occupied themselves more with administrative responsibilities rather than balancing up with the provision of leadership in school In-service training activities for teacher capacity building. Further, it was revealed that there has been less emphasis on School Program of In-service for the Term (SPRINT) and Continuous Professional Development (CPD) topics bordering on school leadership for the sole purpose improving schools' proper management. The study also established some leadership styles and management approaches employed in managing lower grades in primary schools as challenging to teacher capacity building.

According to the interviews conducted, it was revealed that school leaders know that they cannot do it all alone. It was observed that school leaders know that they must surround themselves with their teachers and colleagues and, not only that, they must fully support teachers and staff by encouraging them to continually learn through Continuous Professional Development (CPD) through School Program of In-service for the Term (SPRINT) activities available within their schools, zones and district. The foregone was emphasised by one School In-service Coordinator (SIC) who encouraged school Heads and senior teachers to ensure these activities and programs needed to be on top of the school agenda if results were to be improved. The participants hinted that CPD and SPRINT activities were critical in developing teacher skills helping them to improve classroom practices to the effect that teachers can become leaders

themselves within their professional mandate. It was revealed that it was without secret that when teachers were given opportunity for career growth, as well as autonomy and control over their work, they became more productive, more engaged and more effective regarding their teaching work and this would raise school's academic performance in the lower primary school levels as others. Other avenues were to encourage teachers with means to seek higher qualifications and upgrades. Research findings also revealed that leadership styles and management approaches used in schools had an influence on the overall performance of lower grades in primary schools. For instance, in schools where democratic leadership existed, learning outcomes were more likely to improve than in dictatorial and laisse-faire led schools in which teachers were left to either follow religiously what management had already put in place without any critical scrutiny or carry out In-service training activities on their own with little or no supervision from the managers. The participant school administrators who included Head teachers, Senior teachers and School In-service Coordinators were unanimously of the view that adequate monitoring and mentoring at school level was the most significant solution to addressing the challenges of providing leadership training for better management of lower grades in primary schools.

Conclusion

Based on the findings, the study concluded that, to a greater extent, school leadership should provide academic, professional, moral, financial and social support to teachers in order to motivate them for school improvement and lower primary school results improvement. They should set directions, develop teachers and make the school organisation work through monitoring teacher preparedness and the learning activity. Lower primary grades can only improve when school leaders are both instructional and transformational leaders who follow after democratic tenets of leadership styles. School leaders should surround themselves with their teachers and colleagues

and, not only that, they must fully support teachers and staff by encouraging them to continually learn through Continuous Professional Development (CPD) School Program of In-service for the Term (SPRINT) activities available within their schools, zones and district as this is the most cost-effective and efficient way of teacher capacity building.

Recommendations

- The Ministry of General Education (MOGE) should aim at motivating teachers in primary school, especially those who are handling lower primary school grades as their work is critical and foundational to all other levels.

- School Head teachers, senior teachers and school in-service coordinators should ensure that Teacher Group Meetings (TGMs), Continuous Professional Development (CPD), and School Program of In-service for the Term (SPRINT) activities take place in their schools as they a cost-effective way of raising teacher capacity and professional staff development.

- Adequate internal and external Monitoring of teacher preparedness should be taken as a priority in order to improve results.

- There is need to take seriously the Primary Literacy Program (PLP) reading strategy so as to encourage learner literacy since all their other tasks in school is dependent on reading and understanding.

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