

AN EVALUATION OF THE ROLE OF INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP ON THE PERFORMANCE OF SCHOOLS IN ZIMBABWE.

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ABSTRACT. The purpose of this research was to investigate the extent to which instructional leadership is contributing to the performance of schools in Zimbabwe. The research was prompted by the little body of knowledge about the phenomenon in Zimbabwe. The study adopted a quantitative approach. A self-administered survey was conducted to collect data from three strata; council primary schools, government primary schools and secondary government schools. Data was analysed using descriptive, correlation and regression analyses. The findings of the study revealed that instructional leadership significantly contributes to both dimensions of school performance: teacher and pupil performances. The results provide some invaluable insights on how school leaders can improve the performance of schools through instructional leadership. Given the robust relationship between instructional leadership and school performance, the school heads should consider to use instructional leadership style in order to enhance the performance of their schools.

Key words: *leadership, transformational leadership, performance, school*

ABSTRAKT. Der Zweck dieser Forschung war es, zu untersuchen, inwieweit die Führungskompetenz der Leitung der Schule in Simbabwe beiträgt. Die Forschung erfolgte aufgrund der wenige gemeinsame Erkenntnisse über das Phänomen in Simbabwe. Die Studie hat einen quantitativen Ansatz angenommen. Eine selbstverwaltete Umfrage wurde durchgeführt, um Daten aus drei Schichten zu sammeln; staatliche Grundschule, Regierungsschule und sekundär Regierungsschule. Die Auswertung der Daten erfolgte mit den Deskriptiv-, Korrelations- und Regressionsanalyse. Die Ergebnisse der Studie enthüllt dass, die Führungskompetenz erheblich den beiden Dimensionen von Schulaufführung beiträgt: Lehrer- und Schule- Aufführung. Die Ergebnisse geben unschätzbare Einblicke wie die Schulleiter ihre Aufführung durch die Führungskompetenz verbessern können. Angesichts des robusten Beziehungen zwischen

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Führungskompetenzen und Schulaufführung, die Schulleiter sollen berücksichtigen, den Führungskompetenzenstil zu verwenden, zur Verstärkung der Aufführung ihren Schulen.

Schlüsselwörter: Führung, Transformationale Führung, Aufführung, Schule

1. Introduction

School leaders are critical for the success of schools as their leadership has a bearing on teacher performance and the overall pass rate of schools (Boonla, 2013; Horng, 2010). In recent years, the view of principalship that has been growing focuses on instruction, and not building management or other administrative matters, (Mendels, 2012). Many leadership styles, which include beaurecratic style, autocratic style, among many, were being practiced in Zimbabwean schools. The most effective leadership style is not really known. This study seeks to investigate the impact of instructional leadership style on school performance. According to the (Ministry of Education , 2011-2015), education was proclaimed as a basic human right and as such, a lot of investments were made in the education system in order to achieve the set objectives. Two decades into Independence, Zimbabwe's education system still remains the envy of Africa as it is regarded as one of the best and strongest in sub-Saharan Africa. However, schools in Zimbabwe are having different pass rates year in year out yet they all have pupils and teachers of almost similar credentials. Teachers are coming from almost similar training colleges and pupils from almost similar environments and backgrounds but yielding totally different performance levels in schools. What is not known is why there are different levels on teacher performance and pass rates in schools that have almost similar conditions. Could instructional leadership be the cause? If so, to what extent is instructional leadership impacting on teachers' performance and ultimately the children's pass rate? Few studies have been carried to investigate the impact of leadership styles on school performance in Zimbabwe. Such a somehow similar study was done in Kadoma Rural, by Mazise (2011) where he investigated the challenges and prospects of quality primary education in Zimbabwe. Ncube (2004) looked into the internal efficiency in rural day secondary schools in Zimbabwe. This study is one of its own in terms of research objectives and content since school heads are still using different leadership styles and still having pass rates disparities. No leadership style has been recommended to school heads as the best so far.

This implies that the results of the study will effectively contribute to the existing body of knowledge. It is against this background that the study sought to examine the effect of instructional leadership on the performance of schools in Harare Province.

The contributions of this study are expected to be academic and practical oriented. For instance, exploring the influence of instructional leadership on school performance will provide practical basis and motivations for schools in Zimbabwe to adopt instructional leadership style targeted at improving the performance of schools. On the academic front, the current study is expected to generate new literature on school leadership from an African perspective.

The rest of the paper is arranged as follows: A theoretical review, the conceptual framework and hypotheses will firstly be presented. Thereafter the methodology, data analysis and conclusions are discussed. The final section presents the managerial implications, limitations and recommendations for future research.

2. Leadership Theories

2.1 The Trait Theory

The assumption on trait theory , according to (Yukl, 2006), is that leadership is inherent in a few, select people and that leadership is restricted to only those few who have special talents with which they are born with. According to Stogdill (1975), successful leaders can be characterized by task persistence, self-confidence, tolerance of interpersonal stress and the ability to influence other peoples' behavior. Fayol (1949) managed to identify vigor, mental qualities like the ability to learn and understand and moral qualities like energy, firmness, loyalty and dignity as the three leadership qualities in the trait theory. The current study submits that a leader's traits have a bearing on how he/she leads the school and this has an effect on the performance of the school.

2.2 Instructional Leadership Style

Jenkins (2009) defined instructional leadership as leadership which occurs when the principal provides direction, resources and support to both educators and learners with the aim of improving teaching and learning at school. Instructional leaders are known for always ensuring an effective learning and teaching culture in schools. Horng and Loeb (2010) discovered that many new principal preparation and development programs emphasise the role of principals as "instructional leaders" and schools demonstrating growth in

student achievement are more likely to have principals who are strong organizational managers who are effective in hiring and supporting staff, allocating budgets and resources and maintaining positive working and learning environments. These schools demonstrating academic improvement are the ones being led by effective organizational leaders. The principal must possess certain skills to carry out the tasks of an instructional leader; that is interpersonal skills; planning skills; instructional observation skills and research and evaluation skills (Lashway, 2002).

DuFour (2002) also stipulated that instructional leaders also need up-to-date knowledge three areas of education that is curriculum, instruction and assessment. Curriculum involves educational curriculum and beliefs, curriculum sources and conflict and curriculum evaluation and improvement. Onyango and Akinyi (2014) also defined an effective principal as an instructional leader who must perform at high level in four areas: as a resource provider, as an instructional resource, as a communicator and as a visible presence. These two researchers were concurring on their identification of instructional leadership skills. Drawing from this reasoning, this study contends that the four instructional leadership skills are visible presence of the school head, the head as the instructional resource giving instructions to both pupils and to the teachers, heads as good communicators and last but not least, heads as resource providers. These four skills make an effective instructional leader.

2.3 Performance of Schools

There are various ways of measuring performance within the education system. According to the Alberta Treasury (1995), performance measures range from outcome measures, intermediate outcome measures, output measures, process measures and input measures. These performance measures help the organizations, schools in particular to assess and report on progress, find priorities for improvement and make budget decisions. The report states that the measures in school authority and school plans and in results reports focus on outcomes and constitute the core set of measures for assessing and reporting on progress and achievement (Alberta Treasury, 1995). For the performance measures to be effective, they should be understandable, valid, and relevant and appropriate for the study, reliable, comparable, discrete (non-overlapping), empowering and practical. In this study, teacher performance is to be measured using the outcomes. The final ordinary level results and the final grade seven results are under consideration in determination of the performance of school teachers.

3. The Conceptual Framework and Hypothesis Development

In order to empirically test the influence of instructional leadership on the overall school performance, a conceptual framework is developed. Performance of school pupils is the outcome variable, school performance is the outcome variable and is measured in terms of teacher performance as well as pupils performance. The relationship between the variables is that the adoption of instructional leadership style by school headmasters will have a positive effect on school performance dimensions of teacher and pupils' performance. Figure 1 illustrates the relationships and the details will be provided in the following sections.

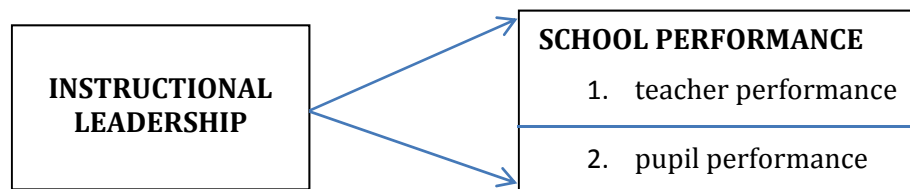


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

3.1 Instructional Leadership and Teacher Performance

Scholars such as Jenkins (2009), Horng and Loeb (2010) maintain that instructional leadership style has four key aspects or dimensions which underpins it. These are resource provision by the school head, the head as an instructional resource giving instructions to teachers and school pupils, good communication skills by the school head and last but not least the visible presence by the school head whereby the school head should be visibly present, going down as far as sometimes monitoring how lessons are delivered by teachers to school pupils. These attributes are what instructional leadership is and their impact on the teacher performance and hence on the overall school performance matters most. Kruger's (2003) study of the impact of instructional leadership by school heads on the culture of teaching and learning in two effective secondary schools in South Africa found that the schools that had experienced good matriculation examination results for a number of years would be characterized by a sound culture of teaching and learning, resulting from effective instructional leadership by school heads. The results showed a move away from the traditional authoritarian methods of instructional leadership towards a collaborative approach. The findings of a study by Enueme and Egwunyenga (2008) also found that influence instructional leadership style is a precursor to school performance.

This is further corroborated by studies done by Balu, Rekha, Horng and Loeb (2010) and Kruger (2003) which confirmed the hypothesis that instructional leadership impact positively on school teachers and pupils' performance. Another study on instructional leadership was carried out by Ponnusamy (2010) and found that there is a positive relationship between the external orientation dimension of teachers' organizational commitment and students' academic achievement and hence on the overall schools' pass rates.

A recent study by Msila (2013) confirmed that an effective instructional leader embraces a vision and succeed even in schools with few resources. All school principals should be hands-on in curricular issues and if they are directly involved, the learning climate is most likely to improve and hence effective learning and teaching. If teachers are involved in goal setting, they are more willing to achieve the set goals. Effective principals are also recommended to do constant staff appraisals and these should be negotiated with teachers beforehand to avoid witch hunting which is usually resisted by the teachers. The principals should be seen on the forefront magnifying reflection and teachers who reflect on their teaching are good learners who always improve their teaching. Drawing from these previous studies, in this study, it is noted that instructional leadership style positively influences the school teacher performance. Deducing from all these findings from previous researchers, the study hypothesized that:

The instructional leadership attributes by the school head positively influence school performance.

4. Research Methodology

The study adopted the quantitative research design which helped in quantify the impact of instructional leadership on school performance and to generalise the results to a wider population. The targeted population is all school teachers in council and government, primary and secondary schools in Harare Metropolitan Province which were drawn from the region randomly. According to the Ministry of Education, Sports, Arts and Culture report (2013); in Harare Metropolitan Region there are thirty (30) council primary schools, one hundred and fifty three (153) government primary schools and eighty two (82) government secondary schools. Three strata were formed; one for council primary schools, the other for government primary schools and lastly the one on government secondary schools. From each stratum, teachers to participate in the study were randomly selected.

4.1 Data Collection instrument and procedure

A self-administered questionnaire with standardised questions was distributed in person and through emails. A five point Likert scale was devised ranging from 1=Strongly Agree to 5=Strongly Disagree. The study adapted Robinson, Lloyd and Lowe's (2008) instructional leadership scale to develop a questionnaire for the current study. The items included were supervising and evaluating the curriculum; monitoring student progress; coordinating and managing curriculum; providing advice and support; visibility; promoting school improvement and professional development; and achievement orientation. The performance of schools was measured by pass rate, motivation of teachers to carry out duties, teachers' willingness to participate in extra-curriculum activities, and willingness to help needy students. The use of the Likert scale on both constructs (instructional leadership and school performance) helped to standardise response items and this ultimately made the responses easily comparable amongst respondents. It also eliminated response bias and made coding and analysis directly from the questionnaire possible (Cant 2003). Of the 120 questionnaires that were distributed, 83 were returned which gave a 69.17% response rate.

The data were then analysed in three phases. Firstly, descriptive frequencies were used to establish the distribution of the sampled respondents. Secondly, correlation analysis was utilized in order to ascertain the strength of the relationship between the variables under investigation. Lastly, regression analysis was carried out to identify the effect of instructional leadership style on school performance dimensions namely teacher and pupils' performance.

5. Results

Gender analysis depicts that more females participated in the study than males constituting 54.2% whilst male participants were 45.8%. The age composition provides evidence that the majority of the participants are from the age group of 31-40 (50.6%), the least percentage of participants is on the age group of above fifty (50) years which constitutes 3.6%. With regards to experience, those respondents who are below 5 years of experience constituted 28.9% while those with at least 15 years' experience constituted (34.9%). Furthermore, an analysis of educational qualifications revealed that most of the respondents are having first degrees and diplomas constituting 39.8% and 43.45% respectively. A handful is at ordinary and advanced levels in terms of qualifications constituting 3.6% of the respondents. Those respondents with post graduate qualifications are 13.3%.

5.1. Reliability and Validity Tests

Table 1. Reliability and validity tests

Variable	Items	Cronbach Alpha
Instructional leadership	23	0.941
Teacher performance	6	0.775
Pupil performance	5	0.768

As shown by the results in Table 1, the internal consistency of the reliability test gave a Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of 0.941, 0.775 and 0.768 for instructional leadership scale, teacher performance scale and pupil performance respectively. The figures are all greater than the acceptable benchmark of 0.7. Further checks to ensure face and content validity were done by seeking expert advice which enhanced the validity of the instrument. A pilot study was also conducted with a maximum of 20 respondents to check for adequacy of the questionnaire instrument. The pilot study results aided in adjusting the items in the instrument to fully represent each variable.

5.2. Correlation Analysis

Spearman's rank correlation "rho" was adopted. This is a non-parametric rank based statistical test that is unevenly distributed data. Correlation takes range from -1.0 for a perfect negative relationship to +1.0 for a perfect positive relationship. The table below shows the level of association between the independent variable (instructional leadership) and the outcome variable (school performance dimensions namely teacher and pupil performances).

Table 2. Correlation Analysis

Factors	Teacher performance	Pupil performance	Instructional leadership
Teacher performance	1		
Pupil performance	.575**	1	
Instructional leadership	.593**	.592*	1

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

Table 2 shows there is a moderate and statistically significant relationship between instructional leadership and school performance dimensions which are teacher performance ($r = .593, p < 0.01$) and pupil performance ($r = .592, p < 0.01$).

5.3. Regression Analysis

The study also conducted regression tests because correlation analysis only helped in ascertaining the direction of the relationship between the variables but regression is more robust since it analyses the cause-and-effect relationships amongst variables. The regression tests were carried out to test the predictive power of instructional leadership on teacher performance. Table 3 depicts the regression results.

Table 3. Regression of Instructional Leadership and Teacher Performance

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	.760	.215		3.534	.001
infor	.568	.086	.593	6.630	.000

Dependent Variable: teachperf, F=43.953, sig 0.000,
R-squared =.352, Adjusted R-squared= .344

As depicted in Table 3, the R-squared value of .352 demonstrates that 35.2% of variance in teacher performance is explained by instructional leadership. The F value (43.953, $p < 0.05$) demonstrates that the model is fit to predict teacher performance since the level of significance is less than 0.05. The regression Beta value depicted in Table also indicates that instructional leadership is a significant predictor to teacher performance ($\beta = 0.593$, $p < 0.05$). Regression analysis was also conducted to establish the influence of instructional leadership on pupil performance. The results are shown in Table 4 overleaf.

Table 4. Regression analysis results

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	1.211	.213		5.679	.000
teachperf	.604	.095	.575	6.329	.000

Dependent Variable: pupil performance,
R-squared =.331, Adjusted R-squared = .32.3

Table 4, depicts an adjusted R-squared value of .323 which shows that 32.3% of variance in pupil performance is explained by instructional leadership of school headmasters. The F value ($F = 40.053$, $p < 0.05$) also demonstrates that the model is fit to predict school performance. The Beta value ($\beta = 0.575$, $p < 0.05$) is an indication that the headmaster's instructional leadership style has a statistically significant influence on the school performance dimension of pupil performance.

6. Discussion of Results

This research's main aim was to establish the influence of instructional leadership style by school heads on school performance dimensions of teacher and pupil performance. The results indicate instructional leadership style has a positive impact on teacher and pupil performance. This conclusion is supported by Crankshaw (2011) who concluded that effective heads may possibly improve teachers' perceptions of their instructional leadership efforts by being more visible and practicing effective communication among them. Rhodes and Brundrett (2010), in their research, also concluded that a successful instructional leader talk to teachers about their instruction and encourage collaboration between teachers hence teachers' effectiveness. Kruger (2003) found that schools that had experienced good matriculation examination results for a number of years would be characterized by a sound culture of teaching and learning, resulting from effective instructional leadership by school heads. Another study by Figlo and Kenny (2007) concluded that students learn more in schools in which individual teachers are given financial incentives to do better job or that better schools are creating good teaching environments for the teachers to perform and hence good school performance (pass rate).

7. Implications of the Study

The current study is an attempt to investigate the instructional leadership style as a predictor of company performance in an often most neglected context – the sub Saharan context. By and large, the findings of this empirical study are expected to have to provide fruitful implications to both practitioners and academicians. On the academic side, this study makes a significant contribution to the school leadership literature by systematically exploring its impact on school performance in Zimbabwe. Overall, the current study findings provide tentative support to the proposition that instructional leadership style should be recognized as a significant predictor of school performance in Zimbabwe.

On the practitioners' side, the significant influence of instructional leadership in Zimbabwe is highlighted. This study therefore submits that headmasters in schools can benefit from the implications of these findings. For instance, given the robust relationship between instructional leadership and school performance dimensions of teacher and pupil performance, schools administrators may need invest in this leadership style in order to improve the performance of their schools. Due to instructional leadership, teachers will be motivated and hence become more effective at work thereby improving the pupils' pass rate.

8. Limitations and Areas of Further Study

Despite the usefulness of this study aforementioned, the research has its limitations. First and most significantly, the study can be strengthened by including other schools in the country's different provinces. Second, the current study was limited to Zimbabwe. Subsequent research studies perhaps could contemplate replicating this study in other developing countries. All in all, these suggested future avenues of study stand to immensely contribute new knowledge to the existing body of school leadership literature in developing countries.

9. Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to assess the effect of instructional leadership on school performance dimensions (teacher and pupil performances). In particular, two hypotheses were developed. To test the proposed hypotheses, data were collected from Harare Province in Zimbabwe. The empirical results supported both the posited research hypotheses in a significant way. While in general the results indicate that instructional leadership positively influences school performance, in particular study findings show instructional leadership impacts stronger on teacher performance than it does on pupil performance. Therefore, it is important for schools to adopt instructional leadership when they want to enhance their performance. Through instructional leadership, Zimbabwe may sustain its position as a one of the countries with a very high literacy rate on the African continent.

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