



The Impact of Leadership Styles on Teacher Performance and Student Achievement in Three Primary Schools of Chilubi District of Northern Province of Zambia

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Abstract: Introduction: This study looked at the leadership styles used by head teachers in three primary schools in Chilubi District, namely Chibimbya, Chilubi, and Yombwe, and how these approaches affect teacher performance and students' academic success. Strong, thoughtful school leadership plays a key role in creating a positive school climate and helping both teachers and students thrive. **Methods:** A mixed research design combining quantitative and qualitative methods was used, including surveys and interview guides with head teachers and deputy head teachers from the selected schools. The data were analyzed using descriptive and thematic approaches to explore leadership practices, the challenges faced, and how these influence teaching and learning. **Results:** The findings showed that democratic and transformational leadership styles were the most common among head teachers. These approaches were marked by participatory decision making, motivating staff, recognizing achievements, and delegating responsibilities. Such leadership styles had a positive effect on teacher morale, instructional abilities, and student performance. That said, several challenges got in the way of effective leadership, including limited training in leadership skills, financial constraints, resistance to change, inadequate resources, and weak engagement with the local community. **Conclusion:** Effective leadership rooted in collaboration, teacher empowerment, and strategic resource management significantly enhances teacher performance and student achievement. Addressing identified barriers through capacity building, improved funding, and stakeholder involvement is essential for sustaining educational improvements in Chilubi District.

Keywords: Leadership styles, teacher performance, academic achievement, democratic leadership, primary schools, Chilubi District.

I. Introduction

Leadership in education plays a crucial role in shaping teacher performance and learner achievement. Effective leadership styles can enhance motivation, foster a positive learning environment, and improve academic outcomes, while poor leadership can lead to low morale, decreased productivity, and poor student performance. This study explores the Impact of leadership styles on teacher performance and student achievement in three (3) primary schools of Chilubi District of Northern Province of Zambia.

Globally, the relationship between leadership and educational outcomes has been extensively studied. Sultana et al. (2024) found that transformational leadership positively correlates with student academic performance and engagement. Conversely, authoritarian or laissez-faire leadership styles can adversely affect school



effectiveness (Asad et al., 2022). Countries with robust educational leadership frameworks, such as Finland, Canada, and Singapore, report higher teacher job satisfaction and improved student outcomes (OECD, 2021). The pivotal role of school leaders in policy implementation, resource management, and fostering supportive teaching environments is well-documented (Menon, 2024).

In a study by Natsir et al, (2020) in Indonesia, study revealed that the principal of Marioriwawo 3 Junior High School in Soppeng District exhibited strong transformational leadership qualities. Key traits included providing motivation, encouraging teacher development, creating opportunities for open dialogue, and fostering pride among staff. As educational systems continue to evolve in response to global shifts, school leaders are increasingly expected to be strategic and transformative figures capable of driving large-scale improvements in learning outcomes. No longer viewed solely as administrators, modern principals are now required to inspire, motivate, and lead schools through change, equipping students with the knowledge, skills, and values needed to navigate a dynamic world (Slamet et al., 2023). Transformational leadership has emerged as a crucial approach, with research showing its positive influence on school culture, teacher motivation, and student achievement (Nasra & Arar, 2019; Susanto et al., 2023). Effective school leaders must therefore combine visionary planning, inclusive decision-making, and strong organizational skills to foster a collaborative learning environment that supports both teacher development and student success (Manurung et al., 2021).

In Africa, educational leadership faces challenges including limited resources, overcrowded classrooms, and policy inconsistencies. Some school heads adopt democratic approaches that encourage teacher participation, others rely on autocratic methods that may demotivate staff (Ngcobo & Tikly, 2020). Initiatives in countries like South Africa and Kenya have introduced leadership development programs to enhance principals' effectiveness (Bush et al., 2021). Nevertheless, many rural and underprivileged schools continue to struggle with weak leadership structures, impacting both teacher performance and student achievement (Lumadi, 2023).

In a study by Chiwamba (2022) in Tanzania, opinions on whether their school heads had established an effective system to ensure punctual class attendance by all teachers were indicated otherwise. A total of 34% of respondents strongly disagreed, and 40.5% disagreed with the statement. In contrast, only 12.3% strongly agreed, and 11.4% agreed, while 1.8% were neutral. These findings suggest that the majority of respondents did not believe there was a reliable system in place to ensure that teachers attend their classes on time.

In Zambia, the education sector has undergone various reforms aimed at improving leadership effectiveness in schools. However, challenges such as inadequate training for school heads, lack of resources, and ineffective supervision persist (Mulkeen, 2022). In rural areas like Chilubi Island, school leadership is particularly critical due to geographical isolation, limited access to professional development, and infrastructure challenges. In a study Mumba, (2022) in Lusaka Zambia, found that administrators acknowledged that creating a conducive school environment is essential for achieving good performance. This study found that head teachers made concerted efforts to involve teachers in school operations.



Theoretical Framework

The study is grounded in Leadership Theory, focusing on how different leadership styles of head teachers influence teacher performance and student academic achievement in primary schools on Chilubi Island as seen in Figure 1.1. Transformational Leadership emphasizes inspiring and motivating teachers and students to achieve higher performance through vision, support, and collaboration. Transactional Leadership, in contrast, focuses on structured management, using rewards and punishments to ensure tasks are completed and standards are met. Contingency Leadership highlights that the effectiveness of any leadership style depends on the specific school context and environment. Additionally, Servant Leadership emphasizes prioritizing the needs and well-being of teachers and students, fostering a supportive environment that can improve morale and educational outcomes.

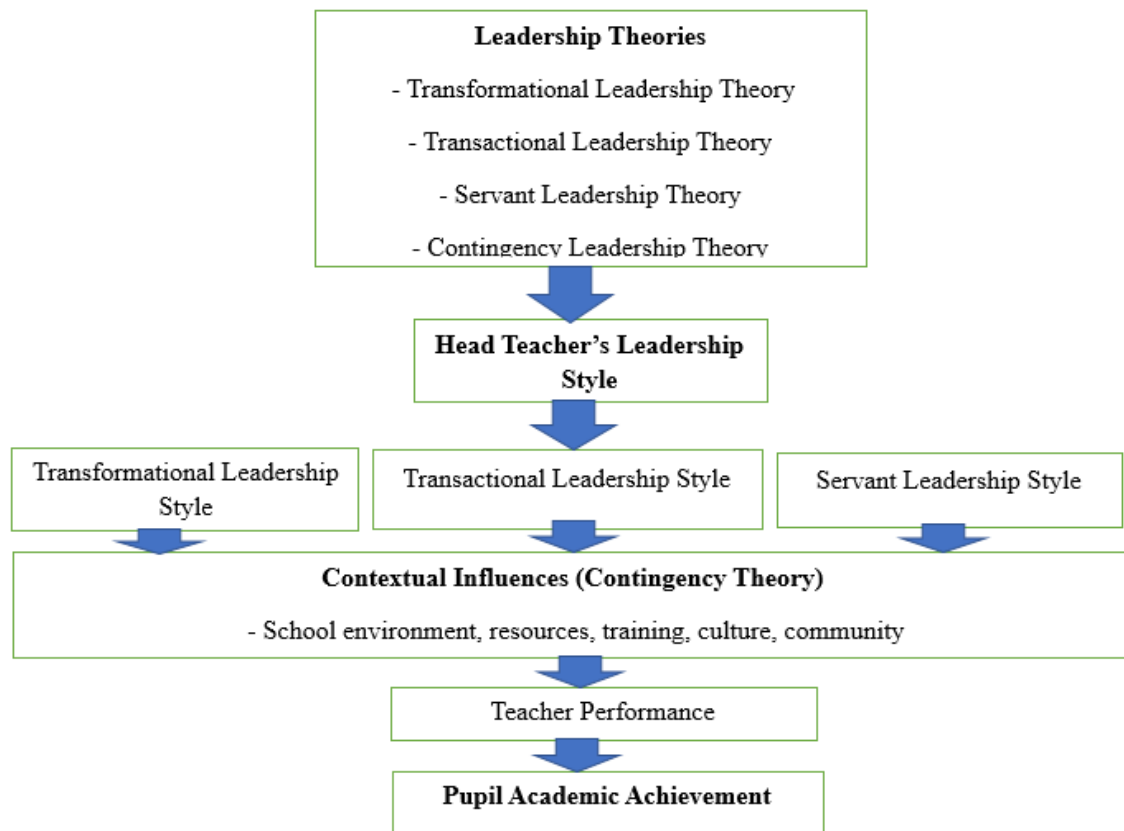


Figure 1.1: Theoretical Framework

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework identifies transformational, transactional, and servant leadership as the primary independent variables affecting school outcomes as shown in Figure 1.2. Transformational leadership is expected to enhance motivation and collaboration, while transactional leadership focuses on compliance



through structured rewards. Servant leadership emphasizes the well-being and development of both teachers and students to promote a supportive environment.

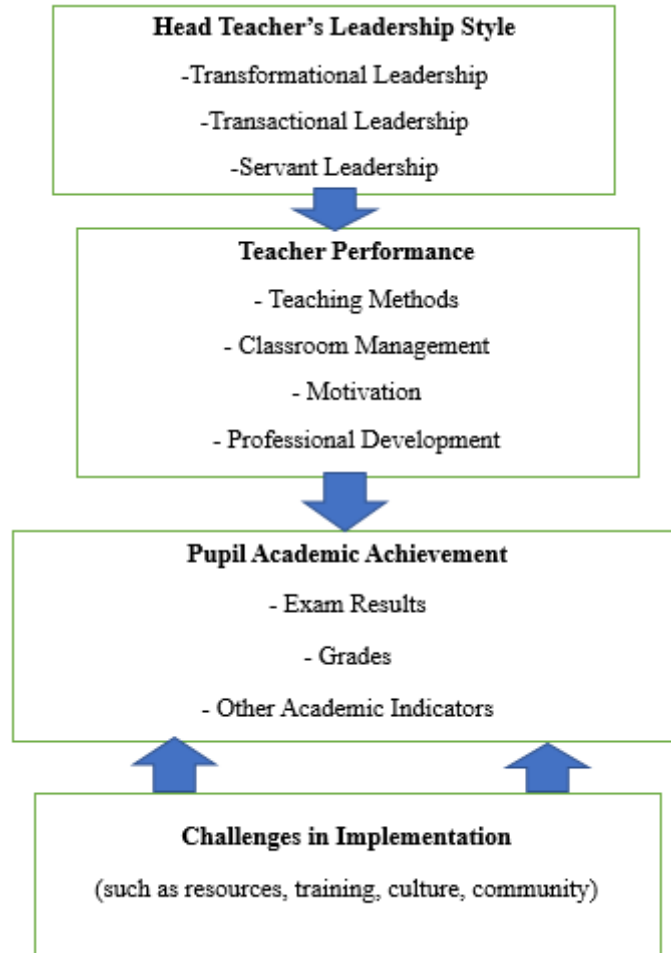


Figure 1.2: Conceptual Framework

II. Literature Review

This section reviews both local and international literature on leadership styles and their effects on teacher performance and pupil academic achievement in primary schools, particularly in relation to Chilubi Island. Leadership styles are defined as approaches used by leaders to guide and motivate teams, with common types including autocratic, democratic, transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire, each having varying effects on morale and performance (Northouse, 2019; Robbins & Judge, 2017; Goleman et al., 2013). Empirical studies indicate that democratic and transformational leadership styles are widely practiced and tend to positively influence teacher performance and student outcomes by promoting participation, motivation, and collaboration (Howard & Knight, 2022; Farooq et al., 2022; Sarwar et al., 2022; Kanchele,



2021). However, autocratic leadership, while effective for discipline and control, may limit teacher creativity and long-term development (Parveen et al., 2022; Yumba, 2022).

Further literature shows that leadership styles significantly affect teacher performance, with supportive and participatory approaches enhancing motivation, job satisfaction, and productivity (Wachira et al., 2017; Godwin & Kabeta, 2019). In contrast, lack of incentives, poor policies, and unfavorable working conditions can reduce teacher effectiveness despite the presence of good leadership (Phiri, 2022; Ssempala et al., 2020). Studies also reveal a strong relationship between leadership practices and pupil academic achievement, where supportive and achievement-oriented leadership correlates positively with improved school performance, while overly directive approaches may hinder progress (Wachira et al., 2017; Mutua et al., 2023). Additionally, contextual factors such as military-based leadership structures and mismatched qualifications can negatively affect both teacher morale and student outcomes (Yumba, 2022).

The literature further highlights numerous challenges faced by head teachers in implementing effective leadership styles, including inadequate resources, teacher shortages, heavy workloads, limited professional development opportunities, and poor working conditions (Bonsu, 2020; Agbadoku, 2020; Kanzaga & Lekule, 2023; Nyabuli & Mwila, 2024). Resistance to change, lack of motivation, and systemic issues such as policy constraints and infrastructure limitations also hinder effective school leadership (Shapaka, 2024).

Despite extensive research, a significant gap exists in understanding how contextual and cultural factors influence the effectiveness of leadership styles, particularly in rural and marginalized settings. Many studies focus on outcomes without adequately considering how local environments shape leadership practices and their reception. Additionally, limited attention has been given to students' perspectives on how leadership impacts their learning experiences. Therefore, this study seeks to address these gaps by providing a more context-specific analysis of leadership styles and their impact on educational outcomes in primary schools on Chilubi Island.

III. Methodology

The research methodology outlines the procedures followed to ensure the study was systematic, reliable, and valid. A descriptive cross-sectional and phenomenological research design was adopted within a mixed-methods approach, combining both quantitative and qualitative techniques to examine the impact of leadership styles on teacher performance and student achievement. A descriptive survey design was used to gather data through structured questionnaires and interview guides. Quantitative data were analyzed using statistical methods, while qualitative data were analyzed through thematic analysis to identify key patterns and insights.

The study was conducted in three primary schools on Chilubi Island in Northern Province, Zambia; Chibimbya Primary School, Chilubi Primary School, and Yombwe Primary School. These schools were selected to capture diverse perspectives across different zones of the island. The study population consisted of 37 participants, including head teachers and teachers, who were directly involved in school leadership and instructional processes. A combination of purposive and simple random sampling techniques was used to



select participants with relevant experience. The final sample size was 31 participants, determined using Yamane's formula (1967) at a 95% confidence level, while also considering data saturation for qualitative findings.

Data were collected using structured questionnaires and interview guides. The questionnaires contained closed-ended questions to generate quantitative data on leadership styles and their effects, while the interview guides included open-ended questions to capture participants' experiences, perceptions, and challenges. Instrument validity was ensured through expert review and alignment with existing literature and theoretical frameworks, while a pilot study was conducted to test clarity and relevance. Reliability was established using Cronbach's alpha coefficient, with a value of 0.7 or above considered acceptable.

The data collection process involved obtaining ethical clearance and permission from relevant authorities before engaging participants. Respondents were informed about the purpose of the study, and their participation was voluntary. Questionnaires were distributed to teachers, and interviews were conducted face-to-face and audio-recorded to ensure accuracy. All data were handled confidentially and securely stored throughout the research process.

Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequencies and percentages with the help of SPSS software. Qualitative data were transcribed, coded, and organized into themes through thematic analysis to identify recurring patterns related to leadership styles and their effects on teacher performance and student achievement. Ethical principles were strictly adhered to, including informed consent, confidentiality, anonymity, and the right of participants to withdraw at any time.

IV. Results and Discussion

Demographic Information

Figure 4.1.1, 4.1.2, 4.1.3, 4.1.4, 4.1.5, 4.1.6, and 4.1.7 represent the demographic data of respondents regarding age, gender, qualifications, and professional experience, which provided the necessary context for understanding perceptions of leadership styles within the primary schools of Chilubi District. By analyzing these variables, the study examined how gender dynamics, academic training, and years of service influenced teaching performance and administrative effectiveness. Identifying specific roles allowed the research to distinguish between the unique perspectives of school administrators and classroom teachers

Table 4.1.1: Gender (n=31)

	Frequency	Percent	Percent
Male	25	81	81
Female	6	19	19
Total	31	100	100

The findings above indicated that the majority of the respondents were male, accounting for 25 participants (81%), while females constituted only 6 participants (19%).



Table 4.1.2: Age (n=31)

	Frequency	Percent	Percent
20–29 years	13	42	42
30–39 years	4	13	13
40–49 years	8	26	26
50 years and above	6	19	19
Total	31	100	100

In terms of age distribution, as shown above, the largest proportion of respondents, 13 participants (42%), were in the 20–29 years age category. This was followed by 8 participants (26%) who were aged between 40–49 years. Six participants (19%) were aged 50 years and above, while the smallest group, comprising 4 participants (13%), fell within the 30–39 years range.

Table 4.1.3: Marital Status (n=31)

	Frequency	Percent	Percent
Single	14	45	45
Married	6	20	20
Divorced	5	16	16
Widowed	6	19	19
Total	31	100	100

Regarding marital status, as presented above, the results show that 14 participants (45%) were single, followed by 6 participants (20%) who were married. An equal proportion of 6 participants (19%) were widowed, while 5 participants (16%) were divorced.

Table 4.1.4: Highest Qualification (n=31)

	Frequency	Percent	Percent
Certificate	1	3	3
Diploma	27	87	87
Bachelor's Degree	3	10	10
Total	31	100	100



The findings from above revealed that the majority of respondents, 27 participants (87%), held a diploma qualification. A smaller proportion, 3 participants (10%), possessed a bachelor's degree, while only 1 participant (3%) had a certificate.

Table 4.1.5: Position Held in School (n=31)

	Frequency	Percent	Percent
Head Teacher	3	10	10
Deputy Head	3	10	10
Senior Teacher	3	10	10
Class Teacher	22	70	70
Total	31	100	100

Regarding positions held in school, as presented above, the results show that the majority of participants, 22 (70%), were class teachers. Equal proportions of 3 participants (10%) each were head teachers, deputy head teachers, and senior teachers.

Table 4.1.6: Years of Teaching Experience (n=31)

	Frequency	Percent	Percent
Less than 5 years	4	13	13
5–10 years	17	55	55
11–15 years	4	13	13
More than 15 years	6	19	19
Total	31	100	100

In terms of teaching experience, above showed that the largest group, 17 participants (55%), had between 5–10 years of teaching experience. Six participants (19%) had more than 15 years of experience, while 4 participants (13%) each had less than 5 years or between 11–15 years of teaching experience.

Table 4.1.7: Leadership Styles (n=31)

	Frequency	Percent	Percent
Democratic dominated	20	65	65
Autocratic dominated	7	23	23
Laissez-Faire Leadership	2	6	6



Transformational Leadership	2	6	6
Total	31	100	100

Findings indicate that democratic leadership is the most prevalent style among head teachers in the surveyed schools, accounting for 64.5% of the total responses. Autocratic leadership followed at 22.6%, reflecting a more centralized approach that prioritizes quick policy implementation over collaborative input. Both laissez-faire and transformational styles were significantly less common, with each representing only 6.5% of the observed practices.

Leadership Styles Employed by Head Teachers in Primary Schools

Table 4.2.1 represents leadership styles employed by Head teachers at Chibimbya, Chilubi, and Yombwe Primary schools.

Table 4.2.1: Leadership Styles Employed by Head Teachers in Primary Schools

Attributes	Responses	
	Yes (%)	No (%)
Head teacher involves teachers in making key decisions	25(81%)	6(19%)
Head teacher motivates teachers to improve performance	27(87%)	4(13%)
Head teacher recognizes and rewards good performance	23(74%)	8(26%)
Head teacher delegates responsibilities to staff members	26(84%)	5(16%)
Head teacher provides guidance and support when challenges arise	28(90%)	3(10%)
Head teacher encourages teamwork among teachers	27(87%)	4(13%)
Head teacher regularly monitors and evaluates teachers' work	29(94%)	2(6%)
Head teacher organizes professional development/training	24(77%)	7(23%)
Head teacher sets clear goals and expectations	26(84%)	5(16%)
Head teacher leads by example in conduct and work ethic	28(90%)	3(10%)

The study shows that head teachers in Chilubi District utilize a blend of participatory and instructional leadership practices, with 94% of respondents highlighting regular monitoring as the most common behavior.



Strong support is evident through guidance in challenges (90%), leading by example (90%), and active motivation (87%), while 81% of staff are involved in key decision-making processes. While delegation (84%) and goal setting (84%) are widely practiced, the lower figures for professional development (77%) and reward systems (74%) suggest specific areas for growth.

Impact of Head Teachers' Leadership Styles on Teacher Performance

Table 4.3.1 shows the impact of Head Teachers' Leadership Styles on Teacher Performance from the three schools.

Table 4.3.1: Impact of Head Teachers' Leadership Styles on Teacher Performance

Attributes	Responses	
	Yes (%)	No (%)
Leadership style improved classroom performance	26(84%)	5(16%)
More motivated to teach because of leadership	25(81%)	6(19%)
Support helps manage teaching responsibilities	27(87%)	4(13%)
Improved teaching skills because of leadership	26(84%)	5(16%)
Regular feedback helps professional growth	24(77%)	7(23%)
Leadership encouraged innovation in teaching	22(71%)	9(29%)
More confident in teaching due to guidance	27(87%)	4(13%)
Increased job satisfaction under current head teacher	23(74%)	8(26%)
Head teacher plays a key role in professional development	25(81%)	6(19%)
Leadership contributed to better classroom discipline	28(90%)	3(10%)

The results demonstrate that head teacher leadership styles exert a strong positive influence on teacher performance, with 90% of respondents noting improved classroom discipline and a conducive learning environment. High levels of support and guidance boosted teacher confidence and management abilities for 87% of the staff, while 84% reported direct improvements in their classroom performance and teaching skills. Motivation and professional development also saw significant gains, though lower figures for regular feedback (77%) and innovation (71%) suggest that these are specific areas where further growth is possible.



Influence of Leadership Styles on Pupils' Academic Achievement

Table 4.4.1 describes the influence of leadership styles on pupils' academic achievement from the three primary schools.

Table 4.4.1 Influence of Leadership Styles on Pupils' Academic Achievement

Attributes	Responses	
	Yes (%)	No (%)
Improvement in pupil academic performance	26(84%)	5(16%)
Leadership style positively affects outcomes	27(87%)	4(13%)
Encourages practices supporting pupil performance	28(90%)	3(10%)
Leadership led to increased pupil attendance	22(71%)	9(29%)
School environment contributes to academic success	27(87%)	4(13%)
Pupils performed better in assessments	25(81%)	6(19%)
Head teacher monitors and evaluates pupil progress	28(90%)	3(10%)
Leadership improved pupil discipline	29(94%)	2(6%)
Motivation of teachers benefits pupil achievement	27(87%)	4(13%)
Better academic results recorded because of leadership	26(84%)	5(16%)

The findings confirm that head teacher leadership styles significantly enhance pupil achievement, with 94% of respondents identifying improved discipline as the most prominent outcome. High levels of agreement were reported regarding the tracking of academic progress (90%), the use of effective performance strategies (90%), and the creation of a conducive learning environment (87%). While 84% of participants noted a direct link between leadership and better academic results, the slightly lower impact on pupil attendance (71%) suggests a potential area for further engagement.

Challenges Faced in Implementing Leadership Styles

Table 4.5.1 shows the challenges faced in implementing leadership styles as observed during the study.

Table 4.5.1: Challenges Faced in Implementing Leadership Styles

Attributes	Responses	
	Yes (%)	No (%)
Difficulties due to inadequate leadership training	21(68%)	10(32%)



Limited financial resources affected leadership strategies	29(94%)	2(6%)
Resistance from some teachers to new approaches	20(65%)	11(35%)
Lack of teaching and learning materials	30(97%)	1(3%)
Lack of community support hinders effectiveness	19(61%)	12(39%)
Difficulty balancing admin with instructional leadership	26(84%)	5(16%)
Infrastructural limitations make leadership challenging	28(90%)	3(10%)
Shortage of qualified teaching staff affects leadership	24(77%)	7(23%)
Cultural/traditional beliefs impact leadership style	18(58%)	13(42%)
Low teacher morale under leadership	17(55%)	14(45%)

The study identifies several critical barriers to effective school leadership, with a lack of teaching materials (97%) and limited financial resources (94%) cited as the most severe obstacles. Infrastructure limitations and a heavy administrative workload also pose significant challenges, affecting 90% and 84% of respondents respectively. While a majority of leaders struggle with inadequate training and staff shortages, lower but notable percentages report difficulties involving teacher resistance, community support, and cultural beliefs. These findings suggest that while internal leadership styles are important, external resource constraints and systemic pressures heavily dictate the success of educational management in the district.

Table 4.5.2 shows the relationship between Teacher Demographics, Perceptions, and Challenges with Leadership Styles in Selected Primary Schools of Chilubi District

Table 4.5.2: Chi-Square Test Results

FACTORS	Democratic dominated	Autocratic Dominated	Laissez-Faire Leadership	Transformational Leadership	N (%)	P-Value
Gender:	20(65%)	5(16%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	25(81%)	.001
<input type="checkbox"/> Male	0(0%)	2(7%)	2(7%)	2(6%)	6(20%)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Female						
Age:	13(42%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	13(42%)	.0001
<input type="checkbox"/> 20–29	4(13%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	4(13%)	
years	3(10%)	5(16%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	8(26%)	
<input type="checkbox"/> 30–39	0(0%)	2(7%)	2(6%)	2(6%)	6(18%)	
years						
<input type="checkbox"/> 40–49						
years						



<input type="checkbox"/> 50 years and above						
Years of Teaching Experience	4(13%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	4(13%)	.0023
<input type="checkbox"/> Less than 5 years	16(52%)	1(3%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	17(55%)	
<input type="checkbox"/> 5–10 years	0(0%)	4(13%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	4(13%)	
<input type="checkbox"/> 11–15 years	0(0%)	2(7%)	2(6%)	2(6%)	6(21%)	
<input type="checkbox"/> More than 15 years.						
Teacher Perception of Leadership Impact.	20(66%)	6(19%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	26(85%)	.001
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	0(0%)	1(3%)	2(6%)	2(6%)	5(15%)	
<input type="checkbox"/> No						
Challenges Faced (such as inadequate training)	20(66%)	1(3%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	21(69%)	.068
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	0(0%)	6(19%)	2(6%)	2(6%)	10(31%)	
<input type="checkbox"/> No						

The Chi-square analysis revealed significant associations between leadership styles and key demographics, noting that democratic leadership is predominantly exercised by males and younger teachers under age 40. Older and more experienced staff are more likely to encounter autocratic or transformational styles, with the latter appearing exclusively among those with over 15 years of service. Perceptions of performance are also strongly linked to leadership, as the vast majority of teachers who reported a positive impact were working under democratic management. Although the relationship between leadership style and operational challenges was not statistically significant, the data consistently shows that democratic approaches are the most widely recognized across all categories.



Table 4.5.3 shows the qualitative results from the Deputy and Head teachers interview responses.

Table 4.5.3: Deputy and Head Teachers Interview Responses

MAJOR THEMES	SUBTHEMES
Leadership Styles Employed by Head Teachers	Leadership Approach Motivation Strategies Adaptability in Leadership
Impact of Leadership Styles on Teacher Performance	Influence on Teacher Motivation and Commitment. Performance Evaluation and Support Teaching Effectiveness
Influence of Leadership Styles on Pupil Academic Achievement	Leadership Role in Academic Success Alignment of Teaching Strategies Leadership-Driven Outcomes
Challenges in Implementing Effective Leadership Styles	Barriers to Leadership Implementation. Resource Limitations Support Needs

Leadership Styles Employed By Head Teachers

Leadership Approaches

Head teachers in Chilubi District employ diverse strategies including democratic, transformational, and instructional styles to drive school performance. Key practices involve fostering teamwork through inclusive decision making, maintaining approachability, and ensuring curriculum adherence. Many leaders also utilize a situational approach, combining authoritative and participative methods while prioritizing clear communication of roles and expectations.

Motivation Strategies

School heads enhance teacher performance and job satisfaction through a mix of psychological and professional incentives. Common methods include public verbal praise, involving staff in activity planning, and delegating responsibilities to build trust. Furthermore, leaders support professional growth through workshops and aim to provide necessary teaching materials and a positive interpersonal environment to ease workloads.

Adaptability in Leadership

Adaptability is a core trait allowing leaders to respond to shifting school needs and diverse staff personalities. Head teachers shift to task-focused approaches during critical periods like exams, use mentoring for new recruits, and employ collaborative conflict resolution. This flexibility includes adjusting supervisory styles to grant autonomy to high performers while balancing firmness with encouragement based on individual circumstances.



Influence on Teacher Motivation and Commitment

Effective leadership practices directly correlate with increased teacher dedication and a willingness to exceed standard duties. Teachers report that being valued in decision making and receiving recognition for their efforts significantly boosts morale and punctuality. Supportive leadership that prioritizes staff wellbeing and professional growth is essential for fostering long term loyalty and consistent lesson delivery.

Performance Evaluation and Support

Systematic evaluation and professional mentoring are vital for maintaining high teaching standards. Head teachers utilize regular classroom observations, fair performance appraisals, and constructive feedback to identify development needs. Transparency in these processes builds trust, ensuring that teachers view evaluations as supportive opportunities for growth rather than purely punitive measures.

Teaching Effectiveness

Effective leadership fosters a professional culture that prioritizes consistent lesson planning and innovative instructional delivery. Regular monitoring and constructive feedback from school heads encourage teachers to prepare thoroughly and employ diverse teaching strategies. This active involvement from leaders not only increases teacher accountability but also creates a positive correlation between supportive management and improved student outcomes.

Leadership Role in Academic Success

School leaders are central to academic achievement by setting high expectations and maintaining a school climate focused on learning goals. By closely monitoring curriculum delivery and providing early interventions for underperforming students, leaders ensure that pupils receive necessary academic support. Their presence and active engagement in school affairs motivate both staff and learners, keeping all stakeholders aligned with the institution's academic priorities.

Alignment of Teaching Strategies

Leadership plays a vital role in ensuring that classroom instruction aligns with curriculum goals and meets the diverse needs of learners. Through workshops and team meetings, head teachers promote learner centered approaches and support the use of remedial or enrichment activities. Furthermore, effective leaders use performance data to help teachers adapt their methods, ensuring consistency in lesson delivery across all grade levels.

Leadership-Driven Outcomes

Strong leadership directly results in tangible academic improvements, including higher examination pass rates and enhanced student discipline. Leadership initiatives such as academic awards and motivation programs generate positive results by boosting learner focus and teacher accountability. Additionally, the use of data driven decision making allows for targeted interventions, enabling schools in rural districts to achieve performance levels comparable to urban institutions.



- **Challenges in Implementing Effective Leadership Styles**

Barriers to Leadership Implementation

School leaders face significant obstacles, including teacher resistance to modern practices and a lack of formal leadership training that forces reliance on instinct over strategy. Conflicting expectations between the ministry and staff, coupled with heavy administrative workloads, often leave leaders with insufficient time to execute their professional visions. Additionally, cultural norms and social pressures within the community sometimes interfere with objective school decision-making.

Resource Limitations

Serious resource gaps, particularly the shortage of basic teaching materials and inadequate classroom infrastructure, severely hinder leadership effectiveness. The lack of ICT tools and transport for supervision further reduces the efficiency of modern management approaches. Tight budgetary constraints and insufficient funding consistently delay the implementation of critical school improvement programs and staff motivation initiatives.

Support Needs

To overcome these hurdles, there is an urgent call for ongoing professional development and clearer policy guidance from the Ministry of Education. Leaders emphasize the need for stronger community involvement to reduce staff resistance and seek more opportunities for peer mentorship and collaboration. Regular feedback from the district education board and the introduction of leadership incentives are also viewed as vital components for sustaining effective school management.

V. Conclusion

The study demonstrates that democratic and participatory leadership in Chilubi District significantly boosts teacher performance and student outcomes by fostering a positive, motivational climate. While these styles have successfully improved discipline and academic results, systemic challenges such as financial constraints and resource shortages threaten to undermine these gains. Sustaining this progress requires a concerted effort to strengthen leadership capacity, secure consistent funding, and improve stakeholder engagement to ensure schools remain effective centers of learning.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this research, several strategic measures are recommended to enhance educational leadership within the Chilubi District. Primarily, the Ministry of Education and relevant stakeholders should prioritize the implementation of regular, comprehensive leadership training programs designed to equip head teachers and deputy head teachers with modern management skills and innovative strategies. This professional development must be supported by an increase in funding and resource allocation; improved financial support is essential to provide the necessary teaching materials, infrastructure, and technological tools required for effective instructional delivery.



Furthermore, there is a clear need to promote inclusive and participatory leadership. Head teachers should be encouraged to adopt democratic and transformational styles that involve staff in decision-making processes, recognize high performance, and delegate responsibilities to foster professional growth. This collaborative spirit should extend beyond the school walls by strengthening community engagement, thereby building partnerships with parents and local members to reduce resistance to change.

To ensure long-term success, the district should establish supportive supervision and mentorship programs that allow for peer learning and the sharing of best practices among new and seasoned leaders. Simultaneously, efforts should be made to improve time management by streamlining administrative burdens, allowing leaders to focus their energy on instructional guidance. Finally, the study suggests a shift toward data-driven decision-making, where performance data is regularly analyzed to inform leadership actions, alongside the development of incentive systems to reward and sustain high morale among both teachers and administrators.

Future Research Work Recommendation

While this study provided significant insights into primary schools within the Chilubi District, further research is needed to expand the geographical and academic scope of these findings. Future studies should consider a comparative analysis between rural and urban schools in the Northern Province to determine how different environmental contexts influence leadership effectiveness. Additionally, longitudinal research could track the long-term impact of specific leadership interventions, such as formal mentorship programs, on student exam pass rates over several years. Investigating the perspectives of pupils and parents more directly would also provide a more holistic understanding of how school leadership affects community engagement and learner motivation.

Data Availability

The quantitative and qualitative data used to support the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this manuscript.

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Declaration of generative AI and AI-assisted technologies in the manuscript preparation process

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