Leadership Styles of Principals and Teachers' Organizational Commitment in Bale Zone Secondary Schools

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Abstract

This research was carried out with the intention of examining the relationship between leadership styles of school principals, and teachers' organizational commitment of secondary schools in Bale zone. To this effect, 186 teachers, 41 department heads and all 9 school principals were the sources of data. Questionnaire was the main instrument of data collection from teachers and department heads. Interview was utilized to collect data from principals to substantiate the data gained through questionnaire. The dependent variables of teachers' commitment was examined using Meyer and Allen's (1997) three component model of employee commitment (affective, normative and continuance) and the independent variables of leadership styles questionnaire (democratic, autocratic and laissez-faire) developed by Yusuf were adopted and modified to see the perception of respondents about their school principals' leadership styles. It was a mixed study hat used both the qualitative and quantitative methods of research. It adopted a correlation survey research design that helped in establishing the relationship between leadership styles, and teachers' organizational commitment. In this regard, data for this study was collected on the independent variable, which was leadership styles, and that of the dependent variable, teachers' organizational commitment. The relationship between the two variables was investigated by using Pearson product moment Correlation Co-efficient in order to determine the strength of their relationship and the coefficients of determination existing between them. Regression analysis was also used to see the effect of leadership styles on teachers' organizational commitment. In addition to this frequency, percentage and mean were utilized to analyze the demographic characteristics of the respondents. The qualitative data obtained through interview were analyzed using thematic analysis. The results showed that, Democratic style has inverse relation with Affective Commitment, but Laissez-faire showed positive relation with Affective Commitment, while Autocratic leadership showed no significant relationship with Affective Commitment. However, both Democratic and Autocratic showed positive significant relation with Normative and Continuance commitment of teachers; but Laissez-faire has no significant relation on Continuance commitment but inverse relation with Normative commitment. Overall findings of this study suggest that Democratic, Autocratic and Laissez-faire leadership styles do play roles in determining the levels of teacher's commitment. Leaders should consider in matching all leadership styles based on the situation of their teachers. Lastly, since no similar research has been done in

secondary schools, this finding may contribute to the understanding and improvement of teachers' commitment in secondary schools in Bale zone.

Keywords

Democratic, Autocratic Laissez-faire, Affective, Normative and Continuance

1. Introduction

1.1 Background of the Study

Education is essentially an adaptive social organization, which is the most important and necessary to social services, and the main sources of personal and social progress (Hoyle & Wallace, 2005). School leadership has great roles in education system. Nsubuga (2003) stated that school leadership has become a priority in education policy, and it plays a key role in improving school outcomes by influencing the motivations and capacities as well as the school climate and environment.

At secondary school level, it may require new leadership styles in order to enhance efficiency and effectiveness (Nsubuga, 2003). Nsubuga added that improved efficiency is needed and can be achieved through management reforms. Through inefficiency, much learning time is lost in many Sub-Saharan African (SSA) education systems. Twenty-five percent or more of school days may be lost each year in poorly managed schools (Lewin & Caillords, 2001). According to MoE (2008), a quantitative progress has been made, but the quality education being offered is not the desired level. Therefore, the government has now given an attention to improve quality of education. It has started quality education initiative called 'General Education Quality Improvement Package (GEQIP) of 2008. One of its programs is called organization and management of education.

Quality education is the world agenda today. For instance, as indicated on the Education for All global monitoring report (2008), one of the sixth goals of EFA which will be achieved in 2015, is quality education. Hence, to insure quality education and effectiveness; the commitment of teachers towards their organization plays a great role. One of the reasons that reduce organizational effectiveness and productivity is the low level of organizational commitment. Studies demonstrated that in the case of low level of organizational commitment, organizational trust decreases (Yılmaz, 2008). School principals' leadership styles are accepted to be one of the reasons for the problems that occurred in the school (O'Driscoll & Beehr, 1994).

Concordantly, it is assumed that examining the relationship between school principals' leadership styles and the level of teachers' organizational commitment is important for explaining the problems at schools.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

There are many factors affecting the provision of quality and relevant education such as lack of well experienced and competent teachers, organization of the school, the community, the curriculum and others. Among all the aforementioned factors, things which are related to school principal's leadership styles were the main causes for the problem of quality and relevance of the education system. Thus, the change that we need in the education system is inevitable for the improving quality and behavior of school principals (MOE, 2004).

School principals in Africa face series challenges because they are often appointed based on a successful record as teachers with an implicit assumption that this provides a sufficient starting point for school leadership (Tony & George, 2006). In developing countries where principals often receive no special management training, this leads school managers to lead and manage without having skill and knowledge of leadership and management (Gershberg & Winkler, 2003). Similarly, Tekleselassie (2002) in Tony and George (2006) illustrate that in Ethiopia school principals are the ones who are either outstanding in their teaching assignments or those who are popular among colleagues or their superiors. He also explains the assignment process appears to include bureaucratic, democratic and political aspects, leading to unpredictable outcomes.

At regional level and even more so at woreda level, school principal leadership styles has been a serious problem, with shortage of qualified managers (MOE, 2008). Similarly, in Bale zone secondary school principals' recruitment takes place randomly from school teachers without considering their school leadership capacity and experience (Tesfaye, 2012). But managing the school without an appropriate use of leadership styles may lead teachers to low commitment to their organization.

Similarly, annual report of Bale Zone Education Office (BZEO), (2011/12) indicated that, academic level all second-

ary school principals' was first degree and no one took any leadership courses beside other major and minor courses. The report also added that; the roles expected from secondary school principals were not being properly discharged in most cases in secondary schools. In addition, from a researcher experience as one of Bale zone secondary school principal; it observed that; as if teachers were unsatisfied with their principals' leadership style and they more preferred other sectors than schools. Due to this and also no study was made on the topic in secondary schools of Bale zone as far as the researcher's knowledge; that is why the researcher initiated to conduct this research.

Based on this statement of problems, the research was investigated whether there was a significant relationship between school principals' leadership styles and teachers' organizational commitment. The study had also tries to capture actual feelings of teachers towards their principal and aimed at investigating the relationship that exists between leadership style and teachers organizational commitment. Accordingly, this study attempted to answer the following basic question.

1) What is the relationship between principals' leadership styles and teachers' organizational commitment in Bale zone secondary schools?

1.3 Objective of the Study

The general objective of this study was to examine the relationship between leadership styles practiced by school principals, and teachers' organizational commitment of Bale zone secondary schools.

Specific Objective was

1) To find out the relationship between principal leadership styles and teachers' organizational commitment in Bale zone secondary schools.

1.4 Hypotheses of the Study

The hypotheses of the study are stated as follows:

1) There is a significant positive relationship between Democratic leadership style and Affective Commitment.
2) There is a significant negative relationship between Autocratic leadership style and Affective commitment.
3) There is no significant relationship between Laissez-faire leadership style and Affective Commitment.
4) There is a significant positive relationship between Democratic leadership style and Continuance Commitment.
5) There is a significant negative relationship between Autocratic leadership style and Continuance Commitment.
6) There is no significant relationship between Laissez-Faire leadership style and Continuance Commitment.
7) There is a significant positive relationship between Democratic leadership style and Normative Commitment.
8) There is significant negative relationship between Autocratic leadership style and Normative Commitment.
9) There is no significant relationship between Laissez-faire leadership style and Normative Commitment.

2. Research Methodology

2.1 Research Design

The researcher was used a correlation survey for the study. A correlation survey design intends to show the relationship existing between the independent and dependent variables of the study. In this regard, data for this study was collected on the independent variable, which is leadership styles, and that of the dependent variable, which is teachers' organizational commitment. The relationship between the two variables was investigated in order to determine the strength of their relationship and the coefficients of determination existing between the two.

Although the study was largely quantitative in nature, the researcher was used the integration of qualitative and quantitative research methodology. Because qualitative research develops an understanding of the individuals and events in their natural setting, and it is an important part of contextual analysis for the purposes of penetrating beyond the facts and the figures about institutions. At the same time, the quantitative approach was employed in order to manage data from the close-ended questionnaire.

2.2 Sources of Data

The data were collected from primary sources. The primary data were collected from principals, department heads and teachers who were selected from the sample secondary schools.

2.3 Sample and Sampling Techniques

Among 30 secondary schools in Bale zone, nine were selected by using systematic random sampling technique in order to give equal chance for each school. Principals, Department Heads and Teachers of these schools were the res-

pondents of the study. Because principals are the chief executives of the schools so that they can give sufficient information for the researcher. Similarly, department heads and teachers have different perceptions regarding the principals' leadership styles and know how the school was managed. All nine principals from the sample schools had been taken by using availability sampling technique, because they were small in number, and 186 teachers out of 359 and 37 department heads out of 41were selected from the sample schools by using systematic random sampling technique. According Krejcie and Morgan (1970) as cited by Cohen, et al. (2005), determine the size of sample as, 186 samples out of 360 populations and 36 samples out of 40 populations. In general, 232 respondents were included in the study.

2.4 Data Collection Instruments

The data collection instruments used was questionnaires and interviews.

2.5 Methods of Data Analysis

The data collected through questionnaire was tabulated and analyzed through descriptive statistics such as frequency counts, percentage, mean and standard deviation to answer the demographic and work profile of the respondents, the perceptions of teachers and department heads towards principal leadership styles, and type of commitment they currently involved with. The Pearson product moment Correlation Co-efficient was used to analyze the relationship between leadership styles of principals and teachers' organizational commitment depending on the research question. The data obtained through interview were analyzed qualitatively to strengthen the quantitative data. More specifically, thematic analysis was used.

3. Data Presentation, Analysis and Interpretation

3.1 Inter-Correlations among Variables

It has been evidenced that, there is a significant (r =0.29, p<0.001) very slight, positive correlation between Democratic leadership style with Continuance commitment, and also a moderate positive significant (r = 0.38, p=0.000) correlation between Democratic leadership style and Normative commitment, however it was noticed that the relationship between Democratic leadership style and Affective Commitment was significantly very slight negative correlated (r = −0.22, p= 0.001). The moderate positive correlation with Autocratic style and Normative Commitment is significant (r = 0.35, p=0.000), and also a significant very slight positive relationship (r = 0.27, p=0.001) between Autocratic leadership style and Continuance commitment, however there is no significant relationship (r = 0.017, p=0.295) between Autocratic and Affective commitment. In addition a very slight positive correlation with Laissez-faire style of Leadership and Affective Commitment is also significant (r = 0.22, p<0.007) however there is no significant relationship between Laissez-faire and Normative Commitment (r =0.16, p=0.052), and also with Continuance Commitment (r = −0.13, p=0.111). Table 1 presents the inter-correlations among variables being investigated.

3.2 Regression Analysis

This finding were necessary to compare results from the independent variable leadership styles and those from the dependent variables so as to determine which variable has a greater influence on teachers' organizational commitment. The results in Table 2 below indicate that the R-square, as computed using the regression, is 0.105 showing that the predictor variable, represented by leadership styles, contributes (10.5%) to teachers' commitment in secondary schools.

Overall, all independent variable of Leadership styles were significant on organizational commitment with p<0.01 and together explained 10.5% on Organizational Commitment. Other 89.5% factors are the extent to which extraneous variables like the teachers' salary, availability of school facilities, instructional materials and experience of school principals, school culture and nature of the students which contributes to teachers' commitment remain unexplained. This implies that the contribution of leadership style to teachers' commitment is below average. It takes more than leadership styles to have committed teachers. From the findings, it should be noted that leadership style alone couldn't influence teachers' commitment in secondary schools. It requires a combination of other factors, which are essential to commitment. In an interview, one school principal had this to say:

"Other than school principals' leadership styles; there are many factors that affect the commitment of teachers; such as school culture, violence, external influence and specially salary are the major one".

The findings of hypotheses are as follows:

Table 1. Inter-correlations among variables

		Democratic	Autocratic	Laissez-faire	Affective	Continuance	Normative
Democratic	Pearson Correlation	1					
	Sig. (2-tailed)						
Autocratic	Pearson Correlation	.172[*]	1				
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.040					
Laissez-faire	Pearson Correlation	-.124	-.088	1			
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.139	.295				
Affective	Pearson Correlation	-.224[**]	-.017	.223[**]	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.007	.840	.007			
Continuance	Pearson Correlation	.285[**]	.271[**]	-.134	.089	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	.001	.111	.291		
	N	215	215	215	215	215	
Normative	Pearson Correlation	.384[**]	.349[**]	-.163	-.148	.193[*]	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.052	.078	.021	

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

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

Table 2. Regression analysis result of leadership styles and teachers' commitment

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.324[a]	.105	.086	.66059

a. Predictors: (Constant), Laissez-faire, Autocratic, Democratic

3.3 Regression Analysis on Leadership Styles and Affective Commitment

Democratic Leadership style showed negative significant relationship on Affective commitment, with ($p < 0.007$), but positive significant correlation between Laissez-faire Leadership style and Affective Commitment with ($p < 0.007$); however Autocratic leadership showed no significant interaction Affective Commitment ($p < 0.840$). Leadership styles only explained R-Squarechange of 9.0 % ($p < 0.004$) on Affective Commitment which is very low. Relatively, even though this amount is significant, however it is observed that other factor contributes more than principals' Leadership styles in explaining the low Affective commitment in the secondary schools of Bale zone. In this scenario, it showed that Affective commitment is low when Democratic Leadership style is high, but high when Laissez-faire Leadership style is high which may be explained perhaps by the literature that affective commitment depends on the attitude of the employees whether their personal goal are congruent with the organizational goals. In this case, teachers who achieve affective commitment are most probably independent individuals who are confident enough to determine their future. Autocratic on the other hand, does not give any interactions with the needs of feeling affectionate in the secondary schools. Thus this finding explored that leadership style has minimum interactions on Affective commitment of teachers. Table 3 illustrates the regression analysis result of Leadership styles and Affective commitment.

Table 3. Regression analysis result of leadership styles and affective commitment

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.300[a]	.090	.071	1.36432

a. Predictors: (Constant), Laissez-faire, Autocratic, Democratic

The hypotheses results of the relationship between leadership styles and affective commitment has indicated below.

In order to examine the relationship between the Leadership styles and Affective commitment, the analyses were performed using the Pearson Correlation Coefficient. The scores obtained on the independent variable (Democratic

Autocratic and Laissez-faire leadership style) were correlated with the predicted variable Affective commitment (Please see Table 1).

H1a: There is a significant positive relationship between Democratic leadership style and Affective commitment.

Democratic Leadership is said to promote Affective commitment where it can escalate the loving and involvement of teachers in secondary schools of Bale zone. However results have shown that Democratic Leadership style is inconsistent with their emotional attachment. Thus:

Findings = H1a is rejected (p < 0.007)

H1b: There is a significant negative relationship between Autocratic leadership style and Affective commitment.

Autocratic leadership style was presumed to be hypothesized as providing negative directions to Affective commitment. However in this study, it was shown that autocratic style does not portray any relationship with Affective commitment.

Thus:

Findings = H1b is rejected (p >0.840)

H1c: There is no relationship between Laissez-faire leadership style of school principals and affective commitment.

Laissez-faire leadership style was hypothesized to be no relation with Affective commitment. However, results have shown that there is a very slight positive relationship between their emotional attachments with this type of leadership style.

Thus:

Findings = H1c is rejected (p<0.007)

3.4 Regression Analysis on Leadership Styles and Continuance Commitment

Democratic, Autocratic and Laissez-Faire leadership styles showed significant explanation on Continuance Commitment with R-square change of 13.9 % (p<0.01). Teachers perceived that Democratic, Autocratic and Laissez-faire leadership styles are relevant to promote to their Continuance commitment in secondary schools of Bale zone which lead to the rejection of negative attitude to Autocratic leadership style on the early assumptions. The findings of this regression showed that there are others 86.1% unexplained factors that contribute to continuance commitment. Table 4 illustrates the regression analysis result between Leadership Styles and Continuance Commitment.

Table 4. Regression analysis result of leadership styles and continuance commitment

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.373[a]	.139	.120	.93537

a. Predictors: (Constant), Laissez-faire, Autocratic, Democratic

The hypotheses results of the relationship between leadership styles and Continuance commitment has indicated below.

In order to examine the extent of the relationship between the Leadership Styles and Continuance commitment, the analyses were performed using the Pearson Correlation Coefficient. The scores obtained on the independent variable (Democratic Autocratic and Laissez-faire Leadership Style) were correlated with the predicted variable Continuance commitment (Please see Table 1).

H2a: There is a significant positive relationship between Democratic Leadership Style and Continuance commitment.

Similarly; in this study results have showed that Democratic Leadership Style is another element where teachers believe it as supporting their Continuance commitment.

Thus:

Findings = H2a is accepted (p<0.001)

H2b: There is a significant negative relationship between Autocratic Leadership Style and Continuance commitment

Autocratic leaders who have direct control were earlier presumed to be negative relationship on Continuance. However, the results showed otherwise. Teachers believe that the existence of Autocratic style is important for their continuity.

Thus:

Findings = H2b is rejected (p<0.001)

H2c: There is no relationship between Laissez-faire Leadership Style and Continuance commitment

Laissez-faire leadership style was hypothesized as no significant relation with Continuance commitment. Results

have also shown that there is no relationship between teachers' Continuance commitment with Laissez-faire leadership style.

Thus:

Findings = H2c is accepted (p=0.111)

3.5 Regression Analysis on Leadership Styles and Normative Commitment

Democratic, Autocratic and Laissez-Faire leadership styles showed significant explanation on Normative Continuance with R-square change of 23.9 % (p=0.00). This shows that teachers and department heads perceived the needs of having Democratic Autocratic and Laissez-faire Styles of leadership to be loyal in the secondary schools. However, there are other 76.1% unexplained factors that contribute to Normative Commitment. Table 5 below illustrated Regression analysis result between Leadership Styles and Normative commitment.

Table 5. Regression analysis result of leadership styles and normative commitment

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.489[a]	.239	.223	.78394

a. Predictors: (Constant), Laissez-faire, Autocratic, Democratic

The hypotheses result of the relationship between Leadership Styles and Normative commitment has indicated below.

In order to examine the extent of the relationship between the Leadership Styles and Normative commitment, the analyses were performed using the Pearson Correlation Coefficient. The scores obtained on the independent variable (Laissez-fair, Autocratic, Democratic leadership Style) were correlated with the predicted variable Normative commitment (Please see Table 1).

H3a: There is a significant positive relationship between Democratic Leadership Style and Normative commitment.

Democratic Leaders who participates their teachers in ensuring task to be completed was found to be stimulating the interests of teachers to stay with the school. The results showed the same direction.

Thus:

Findings = H3a is accepted (p=0.00)

H3b: There is significant negative relationship between Autocratic leadership style and Normative Commitment.

Autocratic leaders was said to reduce the Normative Commitment of teachers. However in this finding, it showed inverse relations where teachers perceived that there is a need of Autocratic style for them to be loyal.

Thus:

Findings = H3b is rejected (p=0.00)

H3c: There is no relationship between Laissez-faire Leadership Style and Normative Commitment.

Laissez-faire leadership style was hypothesized as no relationship with Normative Commitment. Result has also shown that there is no significant relationship between Laissez-faire Leadership style and Normative Commitment.

Thus:

Findings = H3c is accepted (p<0.01)

4. Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations

4.1 Conclusions

Based on the findings stated above, the following conclusions have drawn.

Based on the current investigations, all leadership styles are significant in promoting teachers' commitment in secondary schools, which means that principals should be sensitive towards the condition of the teachers before applying any style.

Given the absence of significant relationship of Autocratic on Affective commitment, it is not possible to conclude whether this leadership style was perceived as either contributing or detracting from teachers' perceptions about their principals on Affective commitment. But Laissez-faire leadership style has significant Positive relationship with Affective commitment. Thus, it can be concluded that, when employees increase their emotional attachment with their schools, they prefer principals to maintain high Laissez-faire leadership style. In this model, a person can become committed without making an overt pledge; if a person develops sufficient set of strong and positive attitudes or sense of goal congruence, then at some point that person is committed.

This finding has also lead to the understanding that, as a whole, Democratic and Autocratic leadership styles can encourage the participations of teachers in terms of Normative and Continuance. On the other hand, Laissez-faire leadership style encourages the teachers in terms of Affective Commitment. Therefore, it can be concluded that teachers who perceived their principals to be adopt all three styles, would exhibit high loyalty and interest to attach or remain with the schools. The findings have also suggested that there is a significant relationship between school principal leadership styles and teachers' organizational commitment. Thus the present study also support the findings made in previous similar researches (Zeffane, 1994; Mathieu & Zajac, 1990; Yousef, 2002).

Three elements of organizational commitment that were discussed in the research paper are very important since they describe a unique characteristic that each commitment holds. Combining these three elements will not only create teachers that are responsible towards their school but eventually help the school to grow. The schools should not only depend on individuals who "needs" and "ought" to stay but specifically, it is very important to have teachers who feel that they emotionally want to stay in the organization without any factors influencing the decisions. Thus, it can be concluded that school principals can play important roles to create the scenario that people want and feel comfortable to work within the organizations.

4.2 Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study and the conclusions drawn above, the following recommendations are given.

Teachers will feel satisfied if their effort is being recognized by the other employees. Satisfied teachers will in turn be committed to work harder in the schools, realizing to the fact that they will receive something in return for the effort and hard work given. Rewards do not necessarily mean financial investments, however a small thanks or smile can also bring a lot of meaning to other people. Therefore school principals should consider effective Human resource management practices.

School principals may also consider on improving their leadership skills in order to create better working relationship with teachers and conducive environment in particular to the teacher's perceptions.

The nature of school activities is changing; everything should be done in an effective manner, decisions have to be made precisely and speed is necessary to keep pace with any changes. This context requires more innovations and creativity and individual thought. To enhance the motivation and commitment, every individual may have the opportunity to express their idea. Therefore; school principals try to develop the skills, potential and abilities of every teacher.

Future research should attempt to investigate other factors that can increase teachers' organizational commitment, for example, organizational climate, salaries, empowerment and such. Research is also needed to investigate further on why affective commitment was considered low in secondary schools.

This study strongly recommends induction training in management and leadership need to be provided for the newly appointed school principal. Similarly, a program for CPD including issues of management and leadership is recommended for serving school principal.

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