

School Leadership Teachers Wish to Have

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Abstract

Original Research Article

Teachers expect and desire their principals to enact leadership in certain ways. Naturally, every school or teacher could have a list of desirables they wish to find in their school leadership. This study was not about a whole list of possibilities. It was positioned to explore the conditions that principals set their teachers for them to work optimally and feel appreciated on a day-to-day basis. Thus, the connection between leadership and working conditions created an inquiry into the kind of leadership teachers desired. Twelve teachers from a high and a primary school provided qualitative data using semi-structured interviews. The research questions facilitated a discussion of the contextual understanding of leadership, how leadership was enacted and what leadership teachers wished to have. Contextually, both set of participants had a general consensus of what leadership was. They saw the influence of leadership through resource provision, support, communication and motivation to varying degrees. The leadership desired emanated mostly from the resultant gaps. Consequently, teachers wished to have a more collaborative and participatory decision-making, more communicative and action-oriented leadership. This study recommends, a school leadership that promotes a feeling of worth, positive motivation, and constructive work relationships.

Keywords: Leadership, School leadership, Participatory decision-making, Adaptive leadership, Motivation.

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INTRODUCTION

School principals play pivotal roles in leading their schools. Effective principals exhibit strong leadership capabilities. Tedla and Kilango (2022) define strong principalship as having the knowledge of the teaching and learning process, and having power to inspire stakeholders to achieve common goals. At times they give incites and in other instances their role requires making tough and unpopular decisions that need to be made. Principals are visionaries, who capture and inspire a vision for their school units and work together with their teachers (their collaborator) to organize the proper functioning of the schools and solve any problem that arise (Gougas & Malinova, 2021). Thus, teachers are an integral part of the school organization and add value to what principals can do. They behave and respond to dynamics in place and the quality of service they provide is consequently connected to specific choices made by their leadership (Mincu, 2022).

Dedicated teachers know what is expected of them and need the guidance of their principals in executing their responsibilities. It is highly imperative that the principal's efforts be directed towards creating a

conducive school climate and positive relations with teachers so that they remain motivated, be professionally satisfied and offer top organizational commitment (Deligiannidou *et al.*, 2020).

Maas *et al.*, (2022) report that teachers undergo high levels of job-related stress. Some of it could be alleviated through principal actions such as respect, encouragement, support, counselling, recognition and comfort which can go a long in developing coping mechanisms (Krasniqi, 2021; Maas *et al.*, 2022). Such directives could lead to a deeper understanding of school leadership teachers wish to have.

A Review of Related Literature

Several studies have been done focusing at the relationship between school educational leadership and performance factors (Deligiannidou *et al.*, 2020). The debates that ensue are mostly about the most appropriate leadership styles that principals can enact in their schools for particular purposes. These discussions zero in around (of late) the effectiveness of transformative leadership (Assefa & Mujtaba, 2025; Erfiyana, Kartika, & Arifudin, 2026; Mansor, Abdullah, & Jamaludin, 2021; Tengi, Mansor, & Hashim, 2017) adaptive leadership (Dunn,

2020; Oktaviani *et al.*, 2025; Yaghi, 2017), distributed leadership (Harris & DeFlaminis, 2016; Sahlin, 2023; Spillane *et al.*, 2015). Nonetheless, online search has a dearth on literature that applies focus on what kind of leadership teachers desire of their principals.

Leadership is influence (Nikoloski, 2015; Northouse, 2021). It is concerned with organized agency and collective vision, and not just managerialism, because it is an organizational quality, and not simply a positionality attribute (Mincu, 2022). Leader influence should identify group needs and take steps that safeguard relative satisfaction amongst their followers (Kotter, 2006; Kurtessis *et al.*, 2017). In a school set-up, principals strive for conducive working conditions, influence others and ensure the compliance of others by imposing directly their will (Forsyth, 2014). As influence is enacted, reflection is central to meet the desired attributes of the leadership. According to Mincu (2022), any human organization requires a certain degree of hierarchy that offers direction but also must be accompanied with collegiality that can facilitate shared vision that makes teachers feel more supported. To improve teachers' performance, teachers prefer certain principal behaviours that accommodate the goal-oriented teaching-learning environment (Pardosi & Utari, 2021). Thus, principals must set realistic goals that can be met.

According to Pardosi and Utari (2021) the problem commonly encountered by teachers is a weakness in managerial competence and supervisory skills. A high training of leaders is essential at pedagogical, organizational and administrative level, so that all the necessary skills and abilities enable them to effectively manage schools and to consolidate the vision upheld (Gougas & Malinova, 2021). Additionally, the principal needs to be consistent and fair in their judgment, whatever the case. Therefore, his/her judgment must be credible, reliable and should come from good listening and communication skills (De Castro & Jimenez, 2022). Teachers thrive on a level of trust they have in their leaders as an important factor that influences their behaviour and attitudes towards the instructions given (Mansor, Abdullah, & Jamaludin, 2021).

Teacher motivation is again an indispensable aspect of principal leadership that directly affects learners (Htut & Khin, 2018) and teachers strive in an environment where it stays high. It is used in this study to refer to a teachers' desire and attitude towards work and participation in the pedagogical processes (Htut & Khin, 2018). According to Hardiyana (2024, p. 2903)

It is important to encourage teachers' achievement motivation by recognizing and appreciating their achievements, providing professional development opportunities, and creating a work environment that promotes collaboration, innovation, and growth.

Motivation also includes developing teachers' perceptions of teacher autonomy, work competence and connectedness with their colleagues (Freed *et al.*, 2021). Typically, a descriptive study by Lubis, Zainuddin and Lubis (2023) highlighted the importance of motivation. There were 58 respondents who provided data through interviews, observations and documents. The principal greatly improved teacher performance. The principal set an example for the teachers. He showed appreciation to teachers who excelled to motivate other teachers. He also increased teacher motivation, by providing a comfortable work environment where both young teachers and senior teachers mingled and exchanged ideas and experiences.

Effectual decision-making in schools is critically linked to the types of decisions made (Tijani, 2020). Teachers desire managerial skills that enhance effective participation of various school stakeholders (Chopra, 2020; Nyindo, 2023). They can be involved in consultation with their principals to be involved in decision-making for school operations, curriculum design, instructional activities, and in promoting school-community relationship (Agebure, 2013). A principal that takes participatory decision making with levity, is more likely to work in oblivion and puts in jeopardy attaining unified school goals and profitability (Tijani, 2020). A pilot case-study with teachers by Chopra (2020) is one of the current studies on effective decision-making that is distributed. This study showed that equality and equity in opportunity in education can only be realized if there was a process of equitable education where critical thinking, critical pedagogy and distributed leadership existed based on democratic values.

Problem Statement

School success or failure is attributed to the principal's role and actions. This usually goes without analyzing the impact principals have on day-to day occurrences at the school especially the relationships they develop with their subordinates. The schooling system places a principal at a school who may have predetermined and rigid leading styles. However, every school is different, and a need arises to adapt leadership to context. Leadership must lead to vision accomplishment which is intertwined with providing conditions that teachers desire to remain effective contributors.

Theoretical Framework

Leadership is not static. Principals grapple with curricular changes, learner and organizational variables that point to the fact that leadership cannot be stagnant. The educational landscape requires adaptability to conditions that are complex and that can change unexpectedly (Aldhaheri, 2021; Leithwood, 2016). This study was thus grounded on leadership that is hinged on making the right decisions to address people needs and change. Heifetz (1994) theorized adaptive leadership

theory that is defined as “the practice of mobilizing people to tackle tough challenges and thrive” (Heifetz, Grashow, & Linsky, 2009, p. 30). Adaptive leaders engage in mobilization, motivation, organization, orientation, and focusing on the attention of others (Heifetz, 1994). According to Northouse (2021) adaptive leadership joins the activities of the leader and those of mobilized followers in their respective contexts.

Adaptive leadership is composed of three iterative activities which are observe, interpret and intervene (Heifetz & Linsky, 2004). Adaptive leaders observe what is happening around them, interpret the observations by developing hypotheses to explain what is happening. They then design appropriate and pliant interventions founded on the observations and interpretations (Heifetz, Grashow, & Linsky, 2009). Each activity builds upon the preceding one every time and the process is iterative because the observing, interpreting and intervening are done continuously. Suitably, this study the aimed to align principal actions that showed giving time for observing the occurrences at the school, and then come up with theories of why ‘the what’ were occurring. The principal was then expected to help build and maintain the positives and strategize with their team to circumvent the ills. These interventions are critical so as to understand how teachers could remain motivated and get the leadership they desire.

METHODOLOGY

The research objective of this study was to find out (1) teacher understanding of leadership (2) how leadership was enacted in the respective schools and (3) what kind of leadership did teachers wish to have. A qualitative approach was adopted for this study to bring forth meaning relevant to the research objectives (Mertens, 2019) and to make the study as contextual as possible. It was also a case study in one religious inclined institution in Eswatini comprised of a primary and secondary school. The thrust was to get a comprehensive analysis of the leadership phenomena at the two schools (Yin, 2018).

This study was also set in the interpretive research paradigm which allows for subjective reality that emanates from the peoples’ lived experiences (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). Although owned by a religious denomination, the school had teachers employed by both the school board as well as Teaching Service Commission (TSC) of Eswatini. Both principals were also employed by the TSC but deputy principals by the school board. Besides being governed by a school board, each school worked independently. The primary school principal had been in the school for more than a decade whilst the high school one had a vast leading experience but less than two years at the school. Convenience sampling was used to select twelve participants, (six from each).

A semi-structured interview guide was used to collect data from each participant. This type of interview permitted a chance for flexible questioning and probing (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2018). All participants were asked similar questions on their understanding of leadership, perception and expectations of their leadership actions.

Data analysis started after data collection. This started through reading and rereading the interview data to generate initial meaning (Creswell & Creswell, 2023). Themes were generated to condense the data and create a discussion of findings. The researcher’s viewpoint is used interpret the findings and generate meanings relative to literature and the theoretical framework (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018).

Research Findings

The field findings are organized into themes that address the understanding of leadership, the leadership observed and teacher expectations. Three major themes were obtained from the data analysis and they are presented here with their subthemes. Pseudonyms are used henceforth to protect the identity of the teachers. To improve on readability, and easy following, the description of the teacher is given on the first time he or she is mentioned. For example, Titus (*Expressive arts and religious studies teacher, Primary school*).

The Understanding of Leadership

This investigation explored each participant’s understanding of the term leadership and how it impacted their working conditions. A multiplicity of responses was obtained. They varied from summarizing leadership as authority, the action of leading itself; creating order; goal-orientation; people, events and resources management. Other responses further delved into certain qualities that a leader must have. However, all the responses highlighted that schools had structure, order and control and all the different types of resources (including people) involved are aligned to meet specific goals.

Contextually, the description by Titus (*Expressive arts and religious studies teacher, Primary school*) is more expressive:

Leadership is how people in a position of power, have expectations of making sure the welfare of their subordinates is well taken care of and the objective of the organization are clearly met.

Anselmo (*Accounts teacher, High school*) highlighted that:

It’s just influencing people or showing direction to some followers. Leadership should be giving instructions to people, and people should know exactly what is expected of them at any point in time.

Participants identified the principal and deputy principals as the people in charge and whom they were accountable to. They also recognized the school board and the Eswatini Ministry of Education and Training as higher forms of leadership. Responses on teacher leadership were not quickly forthcoming. Half the teachers did not see themselves as leaders although they could mention how they practiced leadership in the classroom, in sports and other activities. The practices on teacher leadership revealed that teachers aimed to be role models and good examples to learners. For instance, Gidza (*Biology teacher, High school*) said:

I also have to show some leadership skills with my learners. When they look at me, they should look at a leader because I lead them through learning. The way I conduct myself, I should be an example. I should be a role model to them. So, as well as in terms of my work ethics, they should also see that the teacher is dedicated to impact their learning.

Teachers generally had a challenge in responding to how they could improve in teacher leadership. And the responses on teacher leadership obtained were confused with how they could improve their teaching approaches.

The Leadership Observed

Having defined leadership, the participants were then asked to highlight specifics of the leadership they were accustomed to in their respective schools. The school leadership of both schools provided leadership that was cited by all participants. Leadership was observed in areas of resource provision, teacher motivation, and professional development.

a) Resource Provision and Conducive Work Environments

All participants mentioned that their schools provided materials required for day-to-day teaching and learning. These materials included different software and hardware; physical teaching materials and aids; different kinds of reading and writing materials and access to Cambridge resources. Jan (*Maths and Science teacher, Primary school*) mentioned that: "The school provides us with the right tools to do the work and offer as well. Whenever you have a challenge or need support, you are free to go to the leaders to ask for help. This was seconded by Chakazile (*Health and Physical Education teacher, Primary school*) who highlighted that she was young and relatively new in the school and benefitted immensely from the advice obtained from the leadership. Chakazile exposed:

The school leadership gives me advice in so many things, in terms of how to discipline a child who is misbehaving in class and providing me with the necessary materials for me to execute my job.

Primary school teachers Titus, Joan (*French teacher*) and Joe (*ICT teacher*) added that the working environment was conducive with clear communication lines that resource provision was explained and justified. This was captured in Titus' quote: "We have a conducive environment. The resources are always there and the communication is efficient just in case something is not provided for. And where we need make do with less, we are advised reasonably."

Whilst the primary school teachers mentioned the timely acquisition of all the teaching resources they needed, the high school teachers mentioned that they had needless spells of waiting for materials. Two teachers from the high school Gidza and Felistas (*Chemistry teacher*) were not pleased with chemicals and material provision. The biology teacher provided this scenario:

At the beginning of the term, I requested (through the head of department as per requirement) for two bags of fresh potatoes to carry out practicals. I never got them, although the requisition reached the principal. No clear explanation came to me as to why I could not get them. I ended up just teaching without doing much-needed practicals. I hear other teachers complain too about a lack of this or that.

b) Professional Development

The teacher interviews had aspects of staff motivation and professional development aspects as key leadership considerations that are needed in schools. The high school teachers revealed that there was professional development that was organized by the school at the beginning of the year. Usually at the beginning of the year, different speakers were invited to up skill teachers in pertinent issues that affected them or needed to be coached on. This helped create a roadmap to guide them throughout the year. Felistas and Panashe (*ICT teacher, High school*) remarked that they helped them reflect on becoming better teachers especially in giving assessment and life at work. Although this type of professional development was broad-based, Tino (*Career guidance teacher, High school*) felt the need for department-specific or area specific professional development: "I strongly believe that in the future, if they can organize staff development programs that touch specifically on what I do, because for myself, it's a new field of study, per se. We are generally experimenting as a school".

The primary school teachers talked about similar formats of professional development. The school leadership organized a day for professional development. Again, teachers at the primary school found such days very important for self-reflection and methods of operation. Titus brought this revelation:

The previous staff development we had was about teaching us to understand the learners holistically based on different home background, society, economic

settings. Every learner is different, and can have his/her own problem. Then the program went on, and another speaker talked to us about us developing myself personally and financially development. They tried to enlighten us on how we could fight falling into debts and living within our means.

Two primary school teachers (Njabulo - General studies, English and Social studies teacher and Joe) and one high school teacher - Tino revealed that their respective principals also supported personal professional growth. This was through encouraging teachers to upgrade their qualifications by enrolling with tertiary institutions. Njabulo said that:

The school supports me by, number one; it allows me to attend university so that I can complete my degree. And then number two, it allows me to go for workshops that are provided by the Ministry of Education and Training.

c) *Staff Motivation*

All the responses from the primary school teachers spoke highly of principal actions that motivated them to be at their school. They talked about a working environment that was conducive to work and positive working relationships fostered by the principal. The conducive environment also emanated from getting required resources to work with and support the school vision. One teacher (Joan) mentioned that the principal had genuine love for both the learners and the staff. Jan mentioned that "You are not forced to do the work, but you are motivated to do the work. No one will go after you, whether you do the work or not, but you are motivated to do the work". Primary school teachers also mentioned the kind of relationship they had with their principal. In this quote, Njabulo exposed that:

There is an open-door policy. I can go to him any time to sit down and talk about my work. I feel encouraged. My colleagues are supportive too and you know that you are not always on your own here.

The high school teachers on the contrary were less motivated at their work station. Teachers cited frustrations that emanated from deemed autocratic type of leadership, lack of recognition, general school unhappiness and lack of self-worth. Two teachers felt that the environment had become toxic with no care for well-being. What drove them to come to school, was the deep concern for the learners. Generally, teachers felt that the principal was just interested in good results and never in the teachers' welfare. Felistas provided this citation:

There's not much motivation. This year has been a tough year, especially because I am teaching more groups than usual. I have five groups, and there is also an AS (Advanced Subsidiary) class which I am teaching for

the first time. I do not have support and encouragement. It has been difficult and challenging. Moreover, there are learners that are hard to deal with. And some of these issues the administration knows about, but I do not see them doing much. Sometimes I am demotivated and I just let things be. Then sometimes I motivate my own self and say let me do my part.

Another teacher (Gidza) had similar sentiments:

Because the way I am working, I feel like sometimes I compromise my work. I also reduce the quality of the work that I produce because I am working under so much pressure and my principal does not know that I work so hard (nor does she care). I hardly see her.

The Leadership Wanted

The researcher asked questions on what teachers felt strongly about what the school leadership could do for them as individuals or as a school to work effectively. Teachers from both schools understood the core business that brought them together. Nonetheless, certain conditions were mentioned and were believed that they could improve the working conditions. These conditions were mostly about decision-making, communication, motivation and general morale. They are discussed in turn.

a) *Participatory Decision-Making*

Decision-making touched teacher conduct. Whilst the majority of the primary school teachers were happy that they were partisan to decision-making, one (at the primary school) said it was more of the principal giving orders. Joe summed it like this:

The bonds of friendship that are created in the school, are the ones that also keep us running. The school leadership fully engages teachers in some decision making. It is not always top to bottom, but it is both ways.

All the high school teachers preferred a more inclination towards collective decision-making as cited from Panashe who said: "The leadership should engage us in the operation of the school, consult and hear our suggestions. They should not assume that all that they do is good for a teacher". Pressed on examples of instances where her say is not considered, Panashe added that: "For example, the principal does not know anything about my subject but insists on buying certain resources and using certain teaching methods".

High school teachers decried the current system whereby teachers were simply called to be told that things are now going to be like without prior deliberations. Gidza underscored that teacher involvement in decision-making should be prioritized:

The decisions made affect us at the end of the day. So, a collective and democratic process must somewhat prevail. It is not like we want the principal to

consult us on everything. But there are some decisions on teaching and learning were our thoughts and considerations matter.

b) *Effective Communication*

Whilst the primary school teachers did not cite communication problem with their principal, their counterparts at the high school complained of information that never reached them on time or never. Felistas remarked that:

In this institution, the leadership lacks enough communication and the type of things to communicate to teachers, which will continue making them ineffective in leading the school. We want to be informed. Sometimes, they communicate only with parents and yet that message affects our teaching and learning. Typical example, last week I looked for some learners in my class, only to be told that they were suspended. Again, we are not told in good time that our requisitions did not pull through and we should not expect the things we had ordered.

This feeling was collaborated by Anselmo who said:

You get these instances whereby you think you should have been told about things. Communication should be key when you are a leader. So, messages may come late, but at times we do receive messages on time. I think they can improve on that.

c) *Motivation and General Morale*

This was another area of concern at the high school. Five teachers at the primary school mentioned that their principal tried his best to keep the motivation up. A frustration cited at the high school by two teachers was that the principal was insensitive and had called them to meetings to inform them about salary cuts and forfeiting certain incentives. Andrew (*Life skills teacher, High school*) summed it as follows:

The principal does not care for our well-being. She has called us to several meetings to inform us that we must get new contracts which come with less salary scales. She then threatened teachers of foreign origin with loss of employment with no apparent reason. Recently we were called for a meeting to negotiate on a cost-of-living adjustment money that the government had made a ruling for all civil servants to get. How do you negotiate for that? Everyone must get it. That meeting literally destroyed my morale.

On motivation, high school teachers preferred a working relationship where their leader recognized the need to appreciate team-work and effort. One of the ways to be motivated to do better was cited by Anselmo:

Motivation can be done simply by recognizing teachers that have done well in producing good results in a particular year. Not none at all. Not even to say, "Thank you have well done for this year".

You are not recognized. In my case, I got 100%, in Enterprise, but nobody said, "Well done." Besides, the school could give some rewards or a token of appreciation. Just a small thing. It can be a cup, or even be E50 (fifty emalangi).

DISCUSSION

The findings in this study show that principal actions and responsibilities played a big role on the how leadership was perceived by the teachers in the two schools. The findings clearly pointed out the contextual differences in the two schools. However perceived; there was no mistaking from all the teachers in the study that leadership must imply someone in charge who gives instruction or directive. This was the action upon which leadership was judged to be effective or not, and desirable or not. The later had more to do with other qualities that bring people together with synergy.

Leadership was thus seen in this study to strongly imply certain skills like good communication, empathy, adaptability, fostering togetherness, and decision-making skills. All these descriptions of leadership are in agreement with (Toma, Catana, & Grădinaru, 2020) postulations. These authors regarded leadership to be a complex, multifaceted, context-based, dynamic, and outright an elusive concept because of unavailability of a universal definition of leadership. Despite, the ambiguity that scholars could have, there is one individual that others must approach for approval and held accountable by authorities that put them in position. Thus, this discussion puts more emphasis on what teachers experienced in comparison to expectation. As seen from the primary school teachers' findings, whenever things are moving in the right direction, people do not question the leadership they have.

Principals at the schools used their experiences and needs-analysis to make the schools productive in terms of staff acquisition, support and resources provision. Similarly, studies Chabalala and Naidoo (2021) and Aas, Andersen and Vennebo (2020) agree that it is the principals' responsibility to deliver the curriculum effectively and improve learners' results through intervention and support. Whilst this was evident at the primary school (and adaptive leadership clearly visible), the high school principal lagged in some of the critical functioning of a principal of timely providing requisite resources. This mishap was also found in a study by Mohale *et al.*, (2020) where the school leadership did not fully monitor and support curriculum implementation.

Hsieh, Liao and Lee (2022) and Tonich (2021) discovered that strong principal leadership enhanced teaching and promoted good working environments. In the current study, the connection between leadership and working conditions created an understanding of the kind of leadership teachers desired. They desired leadership that mostly provided motivation, key communication

strategy and an involvement in decision-making. The primary school principal was reported as adaptable and believed in creating ideas for changing environments. This resonates with the theoretical framework that underpins the current study. Again, it resounds with De Castro and Jimenez (2022) study. These researchers established that the teachers appreciated that their principal was a creative and a deep thinker, besides having other qualities like dependability, organization, and perseverance that they emulated. He was also approachable, gave accurate, clear and regular information; discussed issues in the school; listened to and appreciated teachers' ideas and suggestions. Similarly, Nuswantoro *et al.*, (2023) found out that the principal's daily behaviour of concern, openness, cheerfulness, wisdom, and commitment created school stability.

Teacher job satisfaction and self-efficacy were picked up from the primary school findings which emanated from the instructional leadership shown by the principal. As in Liu, Bellibaş and Gümüş (2021) findings; these two aspects were directly connected to principal mediation effects of creating a supportive school culture. The primary school teachers highlighted a relatively high morale and clear communication structures they had with themselves as well as with the principal. On the contrary high school teachers suffered in ways that pinpointed to their leadership missing something from a complete whole.

High school teachers required participatory decision-making especially on matters that affected teaching and learning. It did not make sense to them that they hear certain things from parents or learners. Yet the principal could have informed them duly. Unlike, this scenario, Agebure (2013) unearthed constructive and progressive schools emerge where teachers are involved in consultative decision making with their principals in matters of curriculum offer, teaching and learning school-community relationships. In corroboration, Naidoo (2019) and Nuswantoro *et al.*, (2023) also found that leadership capacity entails that principals participate with relevant stakeholders, to produce sound leadership practices.

Limitations of the Study

This study was carried out with an awareness that case studies cannot be extrapolated entirely to different schools and studies (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2018; Denzin & Lincoln, 2018) because schools all have their own contexts. Thus, the findings in this study are specific to these two schools. The study design deliberately left out principals to focus on teachers' perspective. However, a weakness was allowed there that left out what principals could have said. Their inclusion could have brought out a dimension as to why they operated in the way that they did.

CONCLUSION

School leadership actions are broad but the overall outcome should meet specific goals that perpetuate and sustain schools. Principals lead professionals who see through every action and justification. It was seen in this study that school principals should provide mostly resources, direction, support and conducive environments through which teaching and learning can proliferate. Because two schools were involved in this study, an inevitable comparison emerged. Although primary and high schools are disparate in exact management working environments remain the same in terms of relationships fostered and commitment. Thus the primary school participants produced more positive responses compared to their high school colleagues. High schools teachers mentioned many aspects that did not congeal well with a professional continuum. The examples emanated from less effective communication, non-inclusion in decisions that directly affected teaching and learning and what seemed to be deliberate intentions to demoralize teachers. The leadership that teachers preferred is thus supposed to be built upon participative decision-making, strong school relationships that esteems everyone's worth and communication that builds strategy and continuity.

Recommendations

This study recommends that:

- School principals should acknowledge the importance of well-timed communication in setting tone to all other activities in the school.
- Decision-making must be done in a nexus that examines why the decision is made and its worth.
- Decision-making should be participatory to involve many stakeholders to counter ill- feelings and questions of congruence.
- Staff motivation should be a very important feature of leadership that principals should grapple with to sustain their schools.

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