

LEARNING ACHIEVEMENT OF STUDENTS IN RELATION TO THEIR HEAD TEACHERS' LEADERSHIP COMPETENCE AT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL LEVEL

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Abstract

This study explored the influence of learning achievement of students in relation to their head teachers' leadership competence at elementary school level. The study was conducted in twelve elementary schools of Jajpur district in Sukinda Block involving 12 head teachers, 60 teachers, 1 block education officer. The study was exploratory in nature, based on descriptive survey involving ex-post facto research design. House's Path-Goal theory was employed in the study in attaining its goals and providing the necessary direction and/or support to ensure the compatibility with the overall objectives of the study. Moreover, the study utilised both quantitative and qualitative research approach but, quantitative approach was more dominant, while qualitative supplemented to it. To achieve the objectives of the study: open-ended and likert scale questionnaires were used together with documentary analysis. The findings of this study suggest that the leadership competence for elementary school head teachers in Sukinda education cluster has indirect impact on pupils' academic performance. Task oriented competence and Behavioural competence were identified as important types of competence for the head teacher to be active for the better academic performance of the school. However, this study revealed that most of the head teachers work under pressure since they face different kinds of adverse situations like inadequate infrastructures, shortage of teachers in remote areas and negative attitude of most of the parents towards education for their children. Generally, it was concluded that the government should employ many teachers and allocate them in rural schools at first and ensure that; head teachers get sufficient leadership skills before being appointed to the position.

INTRODUCTION

This study intended to investigate the influence of head teachers' leadership competence on the pupils' academic performance. In particular, this chapter presents the background of the study which is followed by the statement of the problem. Thereafter, the purpose of the study is presented and the research objectives and the questions come after. In addition, the chapter presents the significance, the scope and delimitation of the study. Lastly, definitions of the key terms are described. India faces a major challenge: while school enrolment is nearly universal at primary level, study after study shows that children are failing to meet grade-level learning

outcomes (ASER, 2015). At the same time, it is clear from research findings that of the several school-based factors affecting learning outcomes, head teachers can have the greatest impact (Hattie, 2012). As stated by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (2005, cited in OECD, 2009, p. 3) 'raising teaching performance is perhaps the policy direction most likely to lead to substantial gains in student learning'. It has also been recognised that quality among practicing teachers can be improved through more effective teacher evaluation (Borg, 2018).

Background to the Problem

Education has been formally recognized as a human right since the adoption of the universal declaration of human right in 1948 (UNICEF, 2007). According to Mbelle (2006), the governments in all countries both developed and developing ones try hard to provide education to their citizens with the understanding that education is essential, not only for economic growth, but also for social stability.

Public schools around the world are expected to prepare students academically so they can compete on a global level, as well as be held accountable by legislation, such as No Child Left behind (NCLB). NCLB is a federal attempt to measure student learning through high-stakes testing. As part of holding schools accountable for student achievement, teachers are required to become "highly-qualified" in the subject area they teach. Very few qualifications are placed on administrators to be "highly-qualified" in maintaining the success of the educational system. For example, under Governor John Engler's administration in the 1990's, in Michigan, qualifications for superintendents to have a background in education were not necessary, the underlying idea was that business leaders could lead schools and maintain high student achievement.

Much of the current literature studying school leadership posits that leadership has a minimal direct impact on student achievement (Ross & Gray, 2006). Kruger, Witziers and Slegers (2007), postulated that leadership is no longer proposed as having a direct influence on academic outcomes, but indirectly influences instructional organization and culture. It is important to research the extent to which school leaders and leadership styles impact student success. The literature review will integrate current data on the direct effects of school leadership on student success and some indirect effects school leaders might have on student achievement. A variety of leadership styles will also be researched to see if a specific leadership style is associated more positively with greater student achievement.

According to Sushila (2004), the head teacher is the leader in a school, the pivot around which many aspects of the school revolve, and the person in charge of every detail of the running of the school whether in academic or administrative. For instance the head teachers motivate and lead their teaching staffs, evaluate their performance and set goals and expectations for the school. Campbell et al, (1977) grouped the roles of head teachers' into six administrative task areas. These include management of curriculum and instruction, managing pupils, managing staff, managing physical facilities, financial management and school-community relations. However, the head teachers run their school according to the guidelines published by the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training (Chediel, 2009).

In developed countries, the principal/head teacher is the highest-ranking administrator in an elementary (Primary Schools) and middle or high school. Principals are responsible for

financial operations, building maintenance, student scheduling, personnel, public relations, preparation of policy regarding discipline, coordinating the instructional program, ensuring school safety and facilitating school interactions with parents and others in the school community (Thomas, 2001).

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In sub-Saharan Africa, head teachers carry most important responsibility for creating an effective educational environment in schools including management of human and material resources (UNESCO, 1999).

World Bank (2008) puts that much research has demonstrated that the quality of education depends primarily on the way schools are managed, more than the abundance of available resources. This is to say, the capacity of schools to improve teaching and learning is strongly influenced by the quality of the leadership provided by the head teacher. Studies conducted in U.S by Marvel and Morton (2006) identified the principal as the single most influential person in a school. He/she is the person responsible for all activities that occur in and around the school buildings. He/she has to set the standard of the school, the climate for teaching, the level of professionalism, the morale of teachers and the degree of concern for what students may or may not become.

In Tanzania, one of the main current problems in education system is the quality of education that is provided in the public primary schools. In this context, Omari (2002) argues that, the wide spread consensus is that schools are not working well and this results to provision of poor education. Again, in one of his speech, the current Prime Minister Kassim Majaliwa claimed that the presence of ghost pupils in primary and secondary schools reflects the irresponsibility of the head teachers and hence he directed intensive verification to unearth ghost pupils in public schools (Daily News, 2016).

Again, Venge (2010) comments that head teachers' roles have increased during PEDP implementation and this leads to poor academic performance as they fail to manage other responsibilities. Schools require good leaders to organize the process of teaching and learning to ensure the mission of the school is achieved (Lydia & Nasongo, 2009). In this regard, head teachers as school leaders occupy a critical position and greatly influence to the quality of education offered and the critical learning performance of the learners. He/she has the ultimate responsibility for the creation of goods or provision of services. Marondo (2013) points out

that, the head teachers are at the heart of the school; their professionalism is a key to improvement but so far, inconclusive evidence has been unveiled in some of the areas such as sukinda block.

Statement of the Problem

Primary school education is fundamental to the strengthening of higher level education, laying strong foundations in scientific and technological literacy and capacity and thus; a means to development at individual level and the community at large (MoEC, 1995). It is a gateway to secondary education, vocational training or a world of work (ibid). Stakeholders including parents and the community at large are thus concerned with the standards of performance in primary schools. Therefore, low pupils' achievement at PSLE examination often cause public outcry with head teachers baring the blame.

Reviewed studies confirm that, good leadership skills of head teachers lead to good performance of teachers and consequently good academic performance of students (Lena, 2015; Mtey, 2013; Nemes, 2012). Moreover, most of the studies carried out in the current context have limited to issues like the contribution of school heads in curbing teachers' misconduct (Tluway, 2015), challenges of managing school with limited leadership skills (Nemes, 2012), and head teachers' perception on their roles (Venge, 2010). However, it is apparent that few studies in the area of the influence of leadership competence on pupils' academic performance have been conducted. Therefore, the present study was designed to ascertain the extent to which school heads' leadership competence has any influence on the pupils' academic performance.

Purpose of the Study

The overall purpose of this study is to investigate the influence of the learning achievement of students in relation to their head teachers' leadership competence. More specifically, this study is guided by the following objectives.

Objectives of the Study

The specific objectives of the study are:

1. To explore the factors characterizing the primary school head teachers' leadership competence.
2. To associate the levels of pupils' academic performance to head teachers' leadership competence.

Research Questions

1. What are the factors characterizing to the primary school head teachers' leadership competence?
2. Is there any significant association between the levels of pupils' academic performance based on the levels of school head teacher leadership competence?

Significance of the Study

The findings of this study are expected to be significant to the educational industry as follows:-

- First, the findings of the study will create knowledge which will be useful for training of the school administrators in areas that need improvement.
- Secondly, the study will contribute to the body of knowledge in the area of the school leadership and its impact on students' academic performance.

- Thirdly, the study may offer practical insights about the extent to which Jajpur District in Sukinda block has utilized its scarce resources to improve the quality of primary education.
- Fourthly, the study will be potential to policy makers in the ministry of education in intervention and designing appropriate programs to redress the challenges that obscure the provision of education.

Delimitation of the Study

Delimitations are defined as the characteristics under the control of the researcher that limit the scope and define the boundaries of the study (Simon, 2011). This study is basically guided by a mixed method approach but mainly dominated by qualitative approach. The study is confined only in sukinda block in jajpur district. The study limits itself to know the extent to which learning achievement of students in relation to their head teachers' leadership competence. Also, the study is restricted to public primary schools and it involves 73 participants in total. Categorically, 12 are head teachers, 60 teachers, 1 Academic Officer. Furthermore, the data was collected in a short span of time (within Fifteen days) and it was during a summer season; hence, the summer disturbed the timetable and in some areas it was difficult access. Therefore, the results of this study depict the situation as it was at that particular period and hence, generalization is cynical.

Limitations of the Study

The following was a limitation faced the researcher during the study; shortage of time, financial constraints, weather condition (summer during data collection) and some of the respondents were so equipped with management activities. Lastly, inclusion of government primary schools would have been useful in order to gain broader understanding of the influence of head teacher leadership competence on pupils' academic performance. In this study, it was not possible due to financial and time constraints.

Definitions of Key Terms

In this study the following are used to mean:-

Primary School: a primary or elementary school is a school in which children receive primary or elementary education from the ages of about zero to fourteen years.

Head teacher: He or she is the appointed teacher to be executive head of a primary school. In Tanzanian context he or she has the overall responsibility for the leadership as well as a school manager who plan, organize and control the wellbeing of the school program (URT, 1995).

Leadership: Gupta (2012) conceptualised leadership as the process of influencing the behaviour of others towards the accomplishment of goals in a given situation. Further, Thornton (2004) defines leadership as the process of helping individuals, teams and organizations become more valued and achieve more than they ever thought possible. He contends that leaders help people become more: principled, knowledgeable, skilled, passionate, determined, integrated, and balanced.

Competence: in the most general terms, are "things" that an individual must demonstrate to be effective in a job, role, function, task, or duty. These "things" include job-relevant behaviour, motivation (how a person feels about a job, or organization), and technical knowledge/skills (what a person demonstrates regarding facts, a profession, or procedures) (Marzano *et al.*, 2005; and Mc Cauley, 2006).

Learning: Learning is a key process in human behaviour. All living is learning. If we compare the simple, crude ways in which a child feels and behaves, with the complex modes of adult behaviour, his skills, habits, thought, sentiments and the like- we will know what difference learning has made to the individual.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The Education Commission (1964-66) mentions about the need for headmaster's training and says "special training course be organized for headmasters. They should include short induction course for those who are newly promoted as head masters as well as periodical refresher courses for others".

National Policy on Education (1986) states "A very important role must be assigned to the Head of an Educational Institution; Heads will be specially selected and trained". According to the perspective paper on Education prepared by the Ramamurthy Committee (1990) to review NPE (1986) "The Head of the educational institution shall have significant role to play in the effective management of the schools. The role of the institutional head is a crucial factor in management. It is in this view of the critical link between institutional managers and institutional efficiency that training of Principals has been emphasized".

Secondary Education including the Senior Secondary stage has been a crucial segment of Indian Educational Hierarchy. Secondary Education is the "lintel of the entire educational edifice of a country. It has remained largely unrecognized and under-provided among the various sectors and levels of education. This sector has grown much faster than all other sectors of education and is poised for a bigger leap with success in universal primary education. Greater the success in Universalization of Elementary Education, greater will be the pressure on Secondary Education (Mukhopadhyay, 1999).

National Knowledge Commission (2006-09) in its recommendation on school education highlighted the need for training talented individuals for the task for school Principalship by assigning such training responsibilities to existing institutions like SCERT or SIE and effectively leveraging the expertise available in Navodaya Vidyalayas, Kendriya Vidyalayas, Government Schools as well as Private Schools.

According to Ward, Penny and Read (2006), secondary schools in Uganda consider textbooks essential for performance but few students have the reading skills and capacity to research and access information. The author adds that quantity and quality of textbooks is important but it is one thing to have them and it is another to utilise them. In the view of the researcher, if the teacher is managed well: motivated and developed can impart into the learners and inculcate into them the reading culture. This is where the researcher agrees with Ward, Penny and Read (2006) and argues that students need to cultivate reading culture by developing personal initiative driven by goal orientation, what one wants to be after school that makes them read and perform.

Supervision of teachers assists them to be effective in classroom teaching. Okumbe (2007), advocates for the recent method of supervision – *clinical supervision*. This is when the head teacher diagnoses the source of the problem together with the teacher, say during classroom supervision. When the problem is found beyond the teacher, action research can be done to establish the problem and its solution (Best and Ralin, 2009).

Okumbe (2007), goes ahead to say that “Supervisory leadership helps the teachers to develop syllabi, curriculum guides, purposeful units of instruction and lesson plans”. (pg. 181). He contends that it is not enough to procure resources, both human and materials and so it is incumbent upon supervisors to ascertain how well they are maximally utilised to achieve the organisational objectives. In such a case the supervisor will be evaluating or auditing the educational teaching – learning process (Fapojuwo, 2002). “This audit will enable the supervisor to make decisions which will enable the educational process within the organisation to be improved for an effective achievement of the predetermined objectives” (pg. 182).

Okumbe (2007), adds that for a head teacher to be effective in supervision has to have basic skills in supervision: Conceptual Skills. These involve the ability to acquire, analyse and interpret information in a logical manner. Supervisors must understand both internal and external environment in which they operate. Human Relations skills refer to the ability to understand the teachers and interact effectively with them. Human relations skills enable the supervisor to act both officially and humanly, while technical skills include understanding and being able to perform effectively the specific process practices and techniques required of specific jobs in an organisation. The author advises that “It is imperative that supervisors should enhance their supervisory effectiveness by acquiring newer and emerging concepts and techniques in supervision through further training and staff seminars” (pg. 183).

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METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

Research Design

Research design is a road map of the study. It is said to be a researcher’s overall plan for creating an empirical test to support or refute claims. The current study was exploratory in nature based on descriptive survey involving ex-post facto research design. According to Koul (1993), descriptive survey is the only means through which opinions, attitude and suggestions for improvements of educational practices and instructions can be collected. Conversely, ex-post research design is defined as a research design in which the independent variable have already manifested and a researcher seeks to find the relationships between independent and dependent variables after an action or event has already occurred (Kerlinger, 1964). Since the researcher’s goal was to determine whether the independent variable (head teacher leadership competence) had any effect on the outcome of dependent variable (pupils’ academic performance). Therefore, it is this reason why the descriptive survey involving ex-post facto research design was considered most appropriate.

Table 1. Study Design

Phase	Activity
I	Designing the research instruments
II	Conducting a pilot study to ensure the desirability of the instruments
III	Editing and validating the research instruments
IV	Data collection
V	Data analysis and its dissemination

Source: Researcher Self Design (2018)

Research Approach

According to the nature of research objectives and its corresponding research questions, this study adopted both quantitative and qualitative research approach. Quantitative approach was more dominant, while qualitative approach supplemented it reaching into the broad and parsimonious conclusion. Moreover, the use of both kinds of research approach expected to enable the researcher to gain deeper understanding of the problem which leads to poor academic performance in Jajpur district in Sukinda blocks. Generally, mixed approach provided a specific pattern of the head teachers’ leadership competence influence on the pupils’ academic achievement.

Population and Participants

The target population of the current study was all head teachers, teachers, and students of all government elementary schools of Jajpur district. The investigator purposively selected one

block namely Sukinda out of the 10 blocks of Jajpur district. On the basis of BEO office report, the investigator further purposively selected six high performed and six low performed elementary schools. Furthermore, all 12 Heads, all teachers (56) and total score obtained by all 525 students of Class-VII of last examination of the concerned schools were included in study.

Research Instruments Used for Data Collection

The choices of data gathering methods depend on the nature of the research problem, purpose of the study and research undertaken (Seidman, 1991). The current study used two types of data collection instruments. The instruments used were both open and closed ended questionnaire as well as documentary review guidelines. Categorically, the questionnaires were used to collect primary data, while documentary review was used for collecting secondary data.

Open - ended Questionnaire

This instrument was administered to the Head Teachers, Academic Officers and Education Quality Assurer Officer with a view to explore the factors characterising the school heads leadership's competence. Open – ended questions enabled the researcher to discover the respondents' priorities and frame of reference [and to] reveal the depth of a persons' knowledge (Anderson & Arsenault, 1998). Through open-ended questionnaire, a researcher was able to capture the range of views/experiences and pursues saturation of data. Hashemnezhad (2015) affirms that in most cases 'open-ended' questions are not necessarily worded in exactly the same way with each participant. With open-ended questions, participants are free to respond in their own words, and these responses tend to be more complex than simply 'yes' or 'no'. Further, the first part of open - ended questionnaire asked respondents to provide their background information, while the second part was meant to uncover the actual views, experiences pertaining to the head teachers' leadership competence.

Questionnaire for Measuring School Heads Leadership Competency

With respect to development of the head teacher leadership competency questionnaire, the researcher first enlisted all the possible dimensions of head teacher leadership competence. He benchmarked with experienced head teachers, educators, lecturers (department of management) and various related literatures on school heads leadership competency such as Marzano et al. 2005; Marcotte, 2014; Walker, Bryant & Lee, 2013; and Ndinza, 2015.

The head teacher leadership competency was divided into two major dimensions, these are *Task oriented competency* and *Behavioural competency*. Task oriented competency was the first dimensions which comprises – leading organization competency, leading others competency, and managing program competency. Further, leading organisation competency comprises – articulation of clear goals of the school; examining the school development plans; ensure availability of teaching and learning resources; involving stake holders in making school rules and regulations; reviewing school development plans, income and expenditure. Similarly, leading others competency includes – setting communication channels; establishing appropriate routine for smooth running of the school; evaluation of teachers' strength and weakness; and improving pupils' academic performance through consensus.

Again, managing program competency includes – logical analysis and interpretation of the information; setting of standard teaching and learning outcomes; provision of feedback timely; judicious use of resources; and ensuring provision of quality education. Finally, the second dimension was *Behavioural competency*. This can be defined as the self – competency as well.

This includes – establishing harmonious relationship; ensuring ethics and integrity; establishing collaborative school culture; and creating environment that develops sense of belongingness. Eventually, it can be declared that these clusters of competencies are viewed as independent variable in this study and pupils' academic performance is treated as dependent variable.

Validity and Reliability

Ascertaining validity and reliability of the research instruments is very important for the researcher, because the trustworthiness of the study findings could be brought out through this process. The quality of a study whether qualitative or quantitative, should be judged by its own paradigms (Healy & Perry (2000). It means that in quantitative research reliability and validity are the essential criteria for assessing the quality, while qualitative researchers use terms such as: credibility, neutrality or conformability, consistency or dependability, and applicability or transferability as the essential criteria for quality (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Reliability of the Instruments

In order to estimate the reliability of the school heads leadership competence scale, the researcher administered the test to 125 primary school teachers at first. After administering the test, the researcher scrutinized all the answer-scripts thoroughly. In this process, 6 respondents were rejected due to their recklessness attempt. Finally, the remaining 60 test scripts were considered for the reliability estimation. In this stage, *Cronbach's Alpha* and *Split-half* methods were employed to estimate reliability coefficient. The Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient was found 0.85 while, Split-half reliability coefficient was found 0.90. This indicates that, the school head leadership competence scale was highly reliable.

Besides, in order to ensure the degree of consistence (credibility) of the open ended questionnaire, the researcher gathered information from more than a single group of respondents by using proportionate stratified simple random sampling technique. Again, the participants were encouraged to be frank from the outset of each session, by establishing a rapport in the opening moments and indicating that there are no right answers to the questions that were asked. Similarly, to ensure the dependability a researcher used triangulation of different methodological approach. A diary of events was used to accurately record and maintain the data; the data was compared with the codes and developed during and after the data gathering session.

Finally the researcher observing the issue of biasness by presenting the findings as generated from the participants without basing on his characteristics and preferences. This was attained through being neutral when examining the research problem while focusing on the interest of the public in general during the data gathering and analysis process to ensure the meaning was reflected in the resultant report.

Validity of Research Instruments

All the instruments were further subjected to validity test. In this stage, whether or the instruments measured what were supposed to be measured were checked? Categorically, validation of the instruments was carried out by taking expert opinions in account. Therefore all research instruments were given to the experts in the field of educational management and senior head teachers and experienced teachers who were teaching at primary schools. According to their expert comments, the items which were considered valid and suitable for

the purpose were selected, a few were eliminated and some were modified for ensuring face validity and content representation. Further, all the instruments were subjected to item validity and sampling validity. In this way, some items were deleted and some items were modified to suit the purpose.

Data Analysis Procedure

Data in this study were analyzed both qualitatively and quantitatively in two phases. In the first phase, qualitative data obtained from the open ended questionnaire and documentary analysis was subjected to qualitative content analysis involving inductive reasoning process as one of the important characteristics of qualitative methodology. This approach allows researchers to understand social reality in a subjective but scientific manner. The process of content analysis suggested by Patton (2002); and Best and Khan (2006) was followed. Therefore, themes and categories/patterns were constructed from the data through the researcher's careful examination and constant comparison; and eventually, the emerged patterns and themes were interpreted meaningfully as well.

Categorically, the directed content analysis approach together with three phases of content analysis process – preparation, organizing and reporting suggested by Hsieh and Shannon (2005) was mainly adopted. Thus, in the preparation phase, raw data obtained in the field were coding was done for identifying of the main ideas, themes and discarding irrelevant data that emerged from the informants. Then, data were organized for easy understanding; drawing conclusions and putting patterns into an analytic framework.

Nevertheless, the documentary data obtained were also subjected to content analysis to determine the information relevant to the study in accordance with research objectives. Besides, in the second phase, the data which was collected by using closed – ended questions was subjected to data cleaning in order to identify incomplete response, unengaged response, missing values, or unreasonable data so as to improve the quality of data. After data cleaning, the data was coded into a coding sheet and analyzed using a computerized data analysis package known as Statistical Package for Social Science SPSS 21.0. Mainly, both descriptive statistics (mean, and standard deviation) and inferential statistical techniques (Coefficient correlation, Independent sample t-test) were used.

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATIONS

Profile of the Participants

This part shows the number and characteristics of participants involved in data collection; that is education quality assurer, academic officer, head teachers and teachers. These participants were classified on the basis of their gender, education qualifications and work experience in the current post. Besides, the profile of the school which was classified into bands of three major groups namely high, moderate and low leadership performance of the school are presented as well. Eventually, this section presents the head teachers' satisfaction on their school performance, factors that hinder pupils to perform well in elementary school, and strategies to be employed to ensure good academic performance in elementary school.

Table. 2 Profile of the Participants involved in the Study

Sex	Education			Work Experience		
	Qualification					
Male					≤	≥
	Female	Total	Degree	+2	10th	10
						15
	35(51.47)	33(48.53)	68 (100)	23(33.82)	27(39.71)	18(26.47)
						41
						27

Source: Field Data Survey (2018)

Results in table 4.1 shows that the respondents were fairly represented because 35 out of 68 of the respondents were male. This is to say, 51.47% participants in the present study were representing the male gender while females were 33 out of 68 which constituted 48.53% of the female representation in the study. Thus, there was fairness in the selection of respondents in the study as the researcher used simple stratified proportionate random sampling technique. Again it is observed from the above table that 68 respondents who were involved in the study had varied education qualification as well as work experience. Despite the variation, all respondents met the required education qualification of being a teacher or head teacher in primary school level as stated in ETP of 1995. Out of 68 respondents, 23(33.82%) of respondents had either bachelor or masters degree qualification, while 27 (39.71%) respondents were diploma holders and 18(26.47%) are 10th qualifications. This pointed out that in terms of training; the head teachers were qualified to their positions. Similarly; forty one (41) teachers had the experience of ≤ 10 years working as teachers whereas twenty seven (27) teachers had the experience of ≥ 15 years in the teaching profession. This implies that more teachers had the teaching experience of ten years under.

Table. 3 Profile of the Schools involved in the Study

School Ranks	Frequency	Percentage
High	3	25%
Moderate	6	50%
Low	3	25%
Total	12	100%

Source: Field Data Survey (2018)

Results in Table 4.2 above indicate that 25% of the school involved in the study had graded as High leadership competency school; 50% Moderate leadership competency school; and 25% Low leadership competency school. The results were obtained from the reviewed *Official School Ranking* record. PSLE schools are ranked based on average total marks of the school which is computed by summing the total scores of each candidate in all six examination subjects divide by the total number of students sat for the examination in that school. This average score ranges between 0 – 250, the higher the average the higher the performance and vice versa (NECTA, 2015). In this ranking, schools are classified into bands of three major groups namely *High* (pupils of a school scored 198 – 250 marks); *Moderate* (pupils of school scored 129 – 197 marks); and *Low* (pupils of a school scored 0 – 128 marks) out of 525 students.

Table. 4 High leadership competency school in student's achievement

High	Moderate	Low	Total
33(27%)	76(62%)	13(11%)	122(100%)

Source: Field Data Survey (2018)

Results in Table 4.3 above indicate that 27% students are High achievement of High leadership competency schools, 62% students are Moderate achievement of High leadership competency school and 11% students are Low achievement of High leadership competency school.

Table. 5 Moderate leadership competency school in student's achievement

High	Moderate	Low	Total
59(18.8%)	153(48.9%)	101(32.3%)	313(100%)

Source: Field Data Survey (2018)

Results in Table 4.4 above indicate that 18.8% students are High achievement of Moderate leadership competency schools, 48.9% students are Moderate achievement of Moderate leadership competency school and 32.3% students are Low achievement of Moderate leadership competency school.

Table. 6 Low leadership competency school in student's achievement

High	Moderate	Low	Total
24(26.7%)	43(47.8%)	23(25.5%)	90(100%)

Source: Field Data Survey (2018)

Results in Table 4.4 above indicate that 26.7% students are High achievement of Low leadership competency schools, 47.8% students are Moderate achievement of Low leadership competency school and 25.5% students are Low achievement of Low leadership competency school.

These findings are supported by Dough (2010) by reporting that, academic performance can be improved by increasing the teaching and learning time, using appropriate pedagogy and assessment techniques, improving teacher quality and leadership effectiveness, increasing parent and community involvement in school development and by developing appropriate school climate. Similarly, Moswela (2014) asserted that, students' academic achievement can be brought forward by making availability of committed teachers, by using collective teacher efficacy and finally the intervention of the teachers, school leaders, and parents is much needed. Thus, the school head as a leader needs to adopt these strategies on a continuous basis so that the school vision and mission in general and pupils' learning performance in particular could be achieved. However, determinants of learning performance differ across localities as well (Mbele & Katabaro, 2003).

Table. 7 Head Teachers' Satisfaction on their School Performance

Frequency	Percentage (%)	
Yes	9	75
No	3	25
Total	12	100

Source: Field Data Survey (2018)

Table 4.6 above authenticated that majority (75%) of the head teachers satisfied with their school academic performance, while only (25%) of head teachers were dissatisfied with the performance of their school.

Task Oriented Competence

Task oriented competency conceived of three micro tasks (leading organization, leading others and managing program). These are considered to be performed by the school heads so as to achieve the school vision and mission in general and the school performance in particular. Further, for *leading organization* effectively, the head teacher needs to be knowledgeable and skilled in management and administration of the school; decisive in setting school vision and pragmatic in developing innovative strategies for better learning outcomes; capable in formulating objectives and consistent in implementing plans with the long-term interest of the school. It is unveiled again that for better leading organization/school, the head teacher should hold high level of education (+2).

The head teacher should possess basic knowledge and skills in management and administration, high level of education (Diploma holder) and able to communicate school vision and goals with all staff, students, parents and community for the development of school in academic (DAO, April 2017).

Similarly one of the head teachers again had commented that:

The competent head teacher should have hold high level of education (Not less than Diploma), disposition of hard working and need to have the ability to implement educational reform (Head teacher from school K, April 2017).

This idea is in line with the National Policy on education (NPE) of 1995. The TETP stipulated that education managers at ward and primary school level should have a certificate or diploma in education, as well as professional training in educational management and administration from a recognized institution (URT, 1995). Similarly, Craggs et al (2007) as cited by Shehu (2013) is of the view that an educational leader is one who is able to promote a shared community vision, mobilize people, lead and supervise curriculum and pedagogical practice, administrate effectively and reflect critically all practices.

Furthermore, *leading others* as a competence, the head teacher needs to: establish collaborative school culture and interpersonal discipline among pupils and staff; use the communication channels judiciously; follow the standard operating procedures for assigning the duty fairly and make its follow up closely; and value the diversity and difference. Taking the above views in consideration, one of the head teachers from a rural school had the following views:

The head teacher should create and maintains open and effective lines of communication with staff, pupils, parents and other education stakeholders for the success of the school (Head teacher from school K2, April 2017).

Similarly, in account EQAO had reported that:

The competent head teacher is he/she who has ability to create and keep up good relationship with community leaders and community as a whole. Also he/she regularly assesses pupils learning and ensures the provision of specific and timely feedback to teachers and pupils.

These facts are in line with the findings by Nemes (2012) and Ruben (2012) who put that the effective head teacher with leadership competence builds strong relationships based on mutual respect, trust, and empathy; improves classroom teaching by setting clear expectations; and observes, coaches, and evaluate teachers and other staff properly. Similarly, Moswela (2014) cemented further that the improvement of student's academic achievement is the result of a platform of collaborative engagement between schools, their communities and the education authorities outside the school. He further adds that each of these partners has a useful contribution to make in an attempt to raise the standard of school outcomes.

Eventually, *managing program* as the third indicator, the head teacher needs to monitor and assess the effectiveness of curriculum implementation and its impact on pupils learning; and make sure the availability of teaching and learning resources; and finally the head teacher has to be accountable and transparent in managing and organizing the financial and material resources. It was explained by DAO that:

The head teachers should monitor and evaluate the implementation of curriculum to accelerate learning for all students, ensure the teaching and learning resources, and motivate teachers to develop TLMs by using locally available materials as budget allocation for this is not sufficient (DAO, April 2017).

Similarly, one of the head teachers expressed that:

The head teacher should carefully allocate and manages budget and resources effectively in support of learning goals (Head teacher from school K, April 2017).

This finding is in line with Marzano (2012) who asserts that the school leader should ensures appropriate school-level and classroom-level programs and practices are in place to help all students meet individual achievement goals. Moreover, these findings also concur with Day and Sammon's observation in 2014 that, head teachers are central to school improvement. Thus he/she has to identify the need to improve the conditions in which the quality of teaching can be maximized and students' learning performance could be enhanced. Even school head need to develop strategies to improve the school buildings and facilities. By changing the physical environment of the schools and improving the classrooms facilities better learning performance could be ensured. Eventually, task oriented competence is conceived as a set of knowledge, skills, and abilities required by the head teacher to lead the organization and other personnel in one hand, and manage the programme on the other hand so as to enable the fulfilment of school vision and mission.

Behavioural Competence

Behavioural competence is comprised of a set of micro behaviour which *leads to self*. Leading self as the competency can be measured by the observable behaviours such as; habit of listening others and making positive judgement for building good relationship; creative and flexible to

adhere positive changes; confident walk the talk; driving for results; inspire and motivate others by maintaining ethics and integrity. In this context, the following was explained by the EQAO: A competent head teacher has to be creative, confident to perform his/her duty according to the rules and regulations; a man of ethics, integrity, flexibility and a source of motivation; committed towards his/her duties; and listen and respect the wishes of others (EQAO, April 2017).

In the same line, one of the head teachers had this to comment:

The competent head teacher listens others, embraces changes and values teachers and pupils differences in order to maintain good relationship with staff, parents, and community for better academic performance of the pupils in the school (Head teacher from school V April 2017). 61 Thus, behavioural competence is conceived as the ability to which the school head must have possessed in order to guide/lead self by building good relationship among teachers, pupils, parents and community around the school; motivate teachers in order to maximise their efforts toward teaching; remaining flexible to adhere positive changes; and being a man of ethics and integrity. Burber and Butler (2005) supports this idea with the view that if school collaboration and unity are alive and well established, teachers build the sense of family and a genuine team because they can share ideas, opinions, and strategies for the benefit of the school. The view quoted above concur with Cavazos and Ovando (2012) who argue that, the head teacher should recognize the unique style and needs of teachers, encourage, acknowledge their good works and help them to achieve their own performance goals. Moreover, it is delineated that the head teacher should have the ability to build good relationships and be able to understand the thoughts, emotions and feelings of pupils and teachers and reply accordingly, inspire and motivate staff and students with respect to the school vision for the academic success of the pupils (Farah, 2013; Huang, 2013 Marzano et al, 2003; Stolp, 1994).

However, the school head leadership competency is eventually conceived as set of knowledge, skills, and abilities required by the head teacher to lead the organization, self and other personnel in one hand; and manage the programme on the other hand so as to enable the fulfilment of the school vision and mission in general and learning performance of the pupils in particular. The conceived school head leadership competency as a construct is more or less in with the meaning placed by Day and Sammons (2014); Wallace Foundation, (2013); Marzano, (2012); Mc Cauley, (2006); and Stolp, (1994).

The Association between Different Levels of Pupil's Academic Performance at Various Levels of School Head's Leadership Competency

This section presents the result relating to the quality of association between Students learning achievement and school heads' leadership competence. In case when distributions of scores are markedly skewed, measurements made with the interval or ratio scale the rank before the correlation is computed in Spearman's rank difference correlation coefficient (ρ) calculated. It was found that the value of $\rho = .30$. **The obtained value** indicated that there was weak coefficient co-relationship between learning achievement of students and head teacher leadership competency.

Actually students achievement depends on own interest, affords, environment is helps to the her/his academic achievements so finally head teachers competency not only accademic works, but also he is also maintained the good relationship in SMC, PTA, MTA, local peoples.

The Head teacher leadership competency is significant differences between learning achievements of students in elementary school, so null hypothesis accepted and alternative hypothesis is rejected. By the way, the school head leadership competency can be perceived to be the significant factor that can contribute more often than not to the primary school children academic performance.

The finding revealed above is in line with Budohi (2009), Day *et al.* (2009), and Fullan, (2000). They reported that the school heads in more effective schools have values, virtues, and competencies and hence successful academic outcomes are observed. Similarly, it was also revealed that there was a weak and negative influence of democratic school head's leadership style on students' academic performance (Isundwa, 2015; Ndyali, 2013; & Wakarindwi, 2013). Moreover, Obama and Eunice (2015) asserted that, there was a not significant relationship between the leadership styles of head teachers as perceived by teachers and student academic performance in public school in Jajpur district Sukinda.

However, in contrary, Benson (1997) in his study on the assessment of leadership training of head teachers and secondary school performance in Mubende district Uganda conformed that, there is no significant relationship between head teacher's training and secondary school performance. More often than not, is felt from the various empirical studies that for ensuring effective utilization of human and material resources and, school time in promoting quality education largely rest upon the effectiveness of leadership quality at both school and classroom levels. Thus, it can be concluded that school head's leadership competency are one among the many that influences academic performance of pupils to a not great extent.

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary of the Study

The current study was carried out in the Jajpur district of sukinda block. The purpose of the study was to investigate the influence of head teachers' leadership competence on the pupils' academic performance at government elementary school in sukinda block. The study based on Path – goal theory of leadership. Moreover, critical review of the related literature was conducted and the knowledge gap was established on the issues pertaining to the head teacher leadership competence and pupil's academic performance. To grasp the intended solution of the problem, the study was guided by three objectives namely: to explore the factors characterising the primary school head teachers' leadership competence; to associate the levels of pupils' academic performance based on the levels of head teachers' leadership competence; and to differentiate the levels of pupils academic performance at various levels of head teachers' leadership competence.

To achieve the research objectives above, both quantitative and qualitative approaches were employed. Specifically, descriptive survey involving ex-post facto research design was employed in the study to enable the researcher to come up with valid findings. The data was gathered from twenty five (12) primary schools in Jajpur district. Specifically, the data were collected from education quality assurer, academic officer, head teachers and teachers. Further, open – ended questionnaires and documentary analysis were used as research instruments for getting the appropriate data relating to the objectives. Finally, qualitative data were analysed by using qualitative content analysis involving inductive reasoning process while the quantitative data were analyzed by using descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation) and

inferential statistics (coefficient correlation) so as to associate and differentiate levels of pupils' academic performance and head teachers' leadership competence.

The Main Findings of the Study

The major findings that emerged from the current study were presented basing on the research objectives stated above.

- It was unveiled that head teacher leadership competence indirectly influence pupils' academic performance in Elementary school
- Further, the Elementary schools which are under the leadership of competent head teachers had higher academic performance. While the schools that indicated that their head teachers were incompetent and had less leadership experience their pupils perform poorly in school.
- Moreover, continuous assessment (Exercises, Test and Examinations), effective teaching by using appropriate pedagogy, total curriculum implementation (the coverage of syllabus in a specified time), ensuring discipline among teachers and pupils, motivation for teachers and pupils to work hard, setting proper communication channels, and creating harmonious relationship among staffs, pupils, parents and community around the school were identified as best strategies to be employed by the head teachers for the better academic performance of the pupils in School. All these reasons are complemented by head teachers' leadership competence, teachers input and pupil's efforts.
- Lastly, the study found that all education stake holders are responsible in enhancing pupil's academic performance by supporting the government efforts. Furthermore, it was also revealed that besides the head teachers' leadership competence, the government should allocate sufficient budget for education, improve school infrastructure, and employ many teachers and post them to the remote areas.

Conclusions

This study intended to investigate the influence of head teachers leadership competence on pupils' academic performance. Basing on the analysis of the data obtained from the field, it is logical to argue that academic performance of pupils in primary schools depended on the established conducive learning environment. This environment is not just happen accidentally but it is made and the competent head teacher present in the school. This claim follows from the finding that primary schools with competent head teachers were observed to have better academic performance than those with head teachers with insufficient leadership competence. Therefore, the government as the authority of the state has to strive in all the way to increase the education budget for renovating the schools' infrastructures, recruiting adequate trained and qualified teachers, making appropriate teaching and learning resources and establish the effective monitoring mechanism to achieve the better academic achievement of pupils in the Elementary schools.

Recommendations of the Study

In relation to study findings and conclusion, two categories of recommendations are made: recommendations for immediate action and recommendations for further research.

Recommendations for Immediate Action

The study recommends the following for immediate action:

- Since competent head teacher is nothing if there is no sufficient number of teachers, the government should employ and allocate teachers in the remote schools. Again, the government provides that head teachers and teachers get professional training pertaining to the leadership competence and pedagogy of teaching.
- The government should continue to increase school infrastructure so as to ensure improved learning environment in all government schools. For instance, the government should build classes, teachers' house and increase teachers' salaries so that their teaching morale and academic achievement is improved respectively.
- To avoid disparities in the provision of education between rural/remote primary schools and urban primary schools, the District Education Officers (DEO's) should establish various strategies on how to improve the quality of education in rural areas. Categorically, the inter-schools academic meeting between rural public primary schools and urban primary school teachers should be established to give teachers opportunity to discuss several issues pertaining to the method of teaching. This will help them to teach effectively as well as integrating various theories of learning with practice.
- Efforts should be made for meetings to be convened with all education stake holders to address different challenges facing education sector in Sukinda Education Cluster as well as share ideas that are capable of improving pupil's academic performance.
- It is highly recommended that school leaders should frequently collaborate with school committees, community and political leaders to raise parent's education awareness and gain their crucial co-operation so as to boost pupil's attendance and care for academic activities, hence better performance in Elementary School.

Recommendations for Further Research

Basing on the study findings, the following recommendations were made for further research:

- Since the study was conducted in government primary schools only; it is recommended that a similar study should be conducted in all public and private primary schools with a large sample to get further insights at a wide scope of the influence of learning achievement of students in relation to their head teachers' leadership competence at elementary school.
- This study was conducted by selecting a very small representative sample from one clusters in Jajpur district; thus, the findings revealed from this study cannot be generalized to the schools located in Jajpur city.
- Other researchers should also focus to identify the reason why the failure of pupils in elementary school is a burden of the head teachers and not the teachers and pupils.

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