

THE EFFECTS OF PRINCIPALS' MANAGEMENT STYLES ON FUNCTIONALITY OF SELECTED SCHOOLS IN OSHANA REGION, NAMIBIA

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ABSTRACT

Aim: This article expounds on findings of qualitative case study was conducted to investigate the effects of principals' management styles on functionality of schools. The aim of the study was to explore effects of principals' management styles on functionality of schools. Decisions making in schools depend on the management styles because they fall at top, middle and bottom in terms of exerting authority by the principals. These management styles were selected for their distinct qualities that identifying the decision-making patterns, problem solving and individual relations in schools.

Methods: Data was collected through the interview schedule, field notes and open-ended questionnaire. Criterion purposeful sampling technique was used to select ten principals and ten teachers from ten schools. Data analysis was conducted using typological analysis, content analysis and Atlas.ti.

Results: The findings have established effects of principals' management styles on functionality of schools, dominant management styles used and association between management styles and existing school functionality.

Conclusions: Principals need to study and learn the application of management styles, apply the management styles to optimise their success and enhance teaching and learning which result on student academic outcomes. Principals further need to use the combination of two management styles to strike the balance and avoid manipulation of one management style against other one.

Originality: This article concludes by suggesting the two models for the school principals which can be used to enhance their management practice at any educational setup.



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1. INTRODUCTION

While many researchers have studied principals' work, it appears that much of what principals do has been studied in relation to policy education issue, succession planning in an educational issue and principals work events that occur at the school site (Chruscziel et al., 2015; Pollock & Hauseman, 2017). Limited empirical research has

focused solely on what they do on daily basis and why they are engaging in them (Horng et al., 2010; Pollock & Hauseman, 2017). Moreover, although literature in education management aptly spells out the merits and demerits of each management style (Abbas et al., 2015; Iqbal et al., 2015), what remains to be investigated is what effect such management style has on the functionality of schools. Many researchers and scholars

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posited that management style is the most prevalent factor that influences employee attitudes and behaviours including school commitment (Alkahtani, 2016; Okon & Isong, 2016). In recent times Apolline (2015) notes that, education stakeholders have expressed their concern over the poor management of schools, poor morale and performance of teachers in some schools. Hansen (2016) postulates that, these result in poor student performance because school management has impact on student achievement through development of positive school climate and high levels of employee engagement (Atasoy, 2020).

Since 1997 to date, Oshana regional directorate of education, arts and culture through Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture, introduced seminars, training sessions, consultative meetings and other stakeholder conferences to enhance their principals' management skills with no tangible improvement in schools. Neither the African leadership training offered by African leadership institute through the millennium challenge account, nor the recent enhancement of continuous professional development given by the region through University of Namibia, helped principals to sharpen their administrative skills; more particularly the leadership and management styles. Nyongesa (2014) argues that schools can make difference in students' achievement because the principals' suitable management style can contribute to the student academic success (Anayatin, 2023). However, different management styles are in vague in management world, although they are employed by the principals with intention to enhance individuals and collective efficiency of the employees (Nadeem, 2012). This state of affairs needs to be addressed as matter of urgency. Being left unattended has many implications on the daily functionality of the schools such as dysfunctional schools that may lead to the low morale, underperformance or tension (Makuwa, 2005; Shikongeni & Nakafingo, 2016). However, majority of the principals get into situation in which they are not satisfied with the activities of employees and are forced to avail themselves to being critique (Dedina Jr., 2013).

Despite the measures taken to capacitate the principals in leadership and management of schools (Andende, 2016; Boampong et al., 2016) the Oshana regional directorate of education, arts and culture is still dissatisfied with the management and leadership practices used by the principals.

The current debate trend stresses that success of school leadership lies in its influence on student learning or their achievement through action taken by principals (Chaka, 2018). Gholami (2016) contents that they should do this while addressing issues and myriad challenges that are new, complex in nature and scope, paradoxical and dilemma filled and until now unknown to the schools (Prabahara & Jeromes, 2023).

Debates on the place of management in schools have been ongoing for decades. Experts in the field observe that basic principles and practices of management have not changed significantly over the years (Dike et al.,

2015). Put differently, *raison d'être* for any going concern is to create utility (Nwadukwe & Timinepere, 2012). Boucher (2013) argues that large body of research exists that relates to the school management and school climate of which management styles and school functionality is part. Moreover, Extensive research on management practice reveals that there is potential research on this area, particularly in Namibia (Shikongeni & Nakafingo, 2016; United Nations Children's Fund [UNICEF], 2015). Recent studies such as Mushaandja (2010) focus on the model of in-service professional development for the school principals in Namibia, while Pomuti and Weber (2012) focus on decentralisation and school management in Namibia. Furthermore, Tshabangu (2013) focus on the distributive leadership in Namibia. None of these studies address the effects that principals' management styles have on functionality of schools, which is the prime concern of this study. This makes this study to contribute to the literature for local setting and means for generating new knowledge to contribute to the body of knowledge in this field.

This study attempts to establish the nature of management style used by principals in Oshana Region and school functionality associated with such management style. The study then attempts to elucidate and develop the two models that will optimise the chances for improving principals' success in enhancing schools' functionality in Oshana Region. These models will be developed in line with Miles' human relations and human resources models adapted in this study.

This study was therefore restricted to effects of principals' management styles on functionality of the schools in Oshana Region in Namibia. This study was then delimited to claim that decisions in schools depend on management styles because they fall at top, middle and bottom in terms of exerting authority by the principals. These management styles were selected for their distinct qualities that identifying decision-making patterns, problem solving and individual relations in schools. These preceding statements give important synopsis in which the roots of the problem statement of this study is based and emanated. Therefore, to extend our knowledge in this area, the purpose of this study was to explore effect of principals' management styles on functionality of schools in Oshana Region in Namibia. In this study, effects of principals' management styles on the functionality of schools is defined as set of factors that have effects on principals, school the population and school functionality on the daily operation of the schools. Considering above, this study sees an urgent need to explore effects of principals' management styles on functionality of schools. Therefore, the aim of this study was to explore the explore effects of principals' management styles on functionality of schools in Oshana Region.

The overarching primary research questions the study explored were:

What effects do principals' management styles have on the functionality of schools in Oshana Region?

Which management styles do principals use in Oshana Region?
What existing functionality of schools which associates with management styles?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Management styles and school functionality

Management styles are framework for managing human and material resources of school through directing, influencing and coordinating affairs of school using interaction and communication to achieve objectives of the school (Anayatin, 2023; Perez & Lumaad, 2021). In his research, Chaka (2018) further argue that management styles are the fundamental for employees' acceptance of change and in motivating them to achieve stated goals and high quality care. School functionality is influenced by factors that determine the choice of management style (Prabahara & Jeromes, 2023). Tiwari (2021) further posit that the choice of management style has effects on the daily functionality of school and its population. It determines approach used by principals to direct teachers to perform their duties effectively.

At the helm of each school is the principal with official power, who is also the heartbeat of the school (Altunkaynak et al., 2022). Providing the principals with position and rights in the school is no guarantee that they will perform (Verbo et al., 2023). Furthermore, it is not guaranteed that knowing the different management styles will make them effective in maintaining a stable school (Even & BenDavid-Hadar, 2021).

The task of identifying who is the good principal is admittedly complex, yet the consequences of hiring and/or retaining the mediocre principal is too grave to be taken lightly (Oyugi & Gogo, 2019). Turkle (2011) posits that there is more than one principal for different times, situations and organisations. Tough times may call for autocratic principal or product orientation principal who can take charge and make firm decisions (Taun et al., 2022). During employee shortages, democratic principal or people-oriented principal may be needed. People and product orientation each have their advantages (Atasoy, 2020). In general, however, it is believed that possessing both orientations would be ideal balance (Hoque & Raya, 2023). Vahedi and Asadi (2014) argue that principals are expected to use different management styles with different situation, different staff with different needs, abilities and expectations. The role of the principal in managing school is a complex one (Sarwar et al., 2022). Although the principals use different management styles in different situations and contexts with different teachers and tasks, what remains to be explored is the effect each management style has on functionality of the schools. Each school has its traditions, values, philosophy and/or concerns that influence how the principal acts (Memela & Ramrathan, 2022). It is insufficient for principal to think what works best but how his/her actions affect teachers, students and whole functionality of the school. It is also insufficient for the teachers to choose which

management styles they best respond to but what effect such management styles have on them and the whole functionality of school.

However, the current global trend towards acquisition of quality education created hot debate on the types of management styles that principals adopt (Mercy et al., 2020). This accelerated quest for quality education receives priority not only in most sub-Saharan African countries but also in Namibia (Nonyashe et al., 2023). It could be claimed that the importance of study management styles has a significant role in the school success (Haxhihsenil et al., 2023). Therefore, studies on effects of principals' management styles on functionality of schools seem to be in their initial stage and the importance of focusing the research on this area seems yet to be fully researched. Despite this knowledge gap, very little, if any, empirical research can be found on the effects of principals' management style on functionality of the schools in Oshana Region in Namibia. Of fundamental interest is the nature and styles of management currently practised by principals and relations they have on school functionality. This knowledge gap will become contribution of this study to literature. Given what is known about principals' management styles and functionality of schools, it is conceivable to go a step further to discuss Miles' human relations and the human resources models, which is adapted in this study.

2.2 Miles' Human Relations and Human Resources Models

This study was informed and based on human relations and human resources models adapted by Ndiku et al. (2009) which are closely associated with conceptual framework. These models provide valuable insight into what happens on the ground. According to these models, principals subscribe to the two management models, namely human relations model and human resources model.

In light of the above, the conclusion can be drawn that principals subscribe to two models when choosing which management style they should use. That is, one for teachers, which is associated with democratic style/people-oriented and other one for them, which is associated with autocratic style/task-oriented, hence adaption of human relations and human resources models in this study. Special emphasis is placed on the teachers' attitudes, the amount of participation and the teacher expectations.

Human relations and human resources models guide this study on exploring and interpreting the effects of principals' management styles on the functionality of the schools in Oshana Region in Namibia. These models guided us in data collection and data analysis on exploring effects of principals' management styles on functionality of schools in Oshana Region in Namibia. The researcher, being committed and determined to discover pattern of meaning through experience, systemic thinking, assessment and creative analysis, use human relations and human resources models that

underpin the approaches of management styles, namely autocratic, paternalistic, democratic and *laissez-faire* methods of management decision-making process in context of this study. This was done with intention to discover main factors rather than specific variables and outcomes affecting decision-making processes among participants in this study. In next section, the two models of management styles and school functionality, which were developed, adapted and elucidated from Miles' human relations and human resources of this study, are discussed.

The use of management styles require that principals should be well equipped, poses prerequisite skills needed to manage and inspire the teachers to improve teaching

and learning. They should regularly monitor how well the teachers are doing, give guidance and assistance were necessary (Auala, 2012). Without this, principals will fail in default (Mushaandja, 2010). On the other hand, the school management team as learning team in school development should meet regularly to identify development needs, classify these needs in appropriate development areas, use appropriate development strategies to learn, practice what they have learned, monitor practice, and evaluate performance in relation to teaching and learning. Figure 1 below sums up the model of principals' management styles and school functionality.

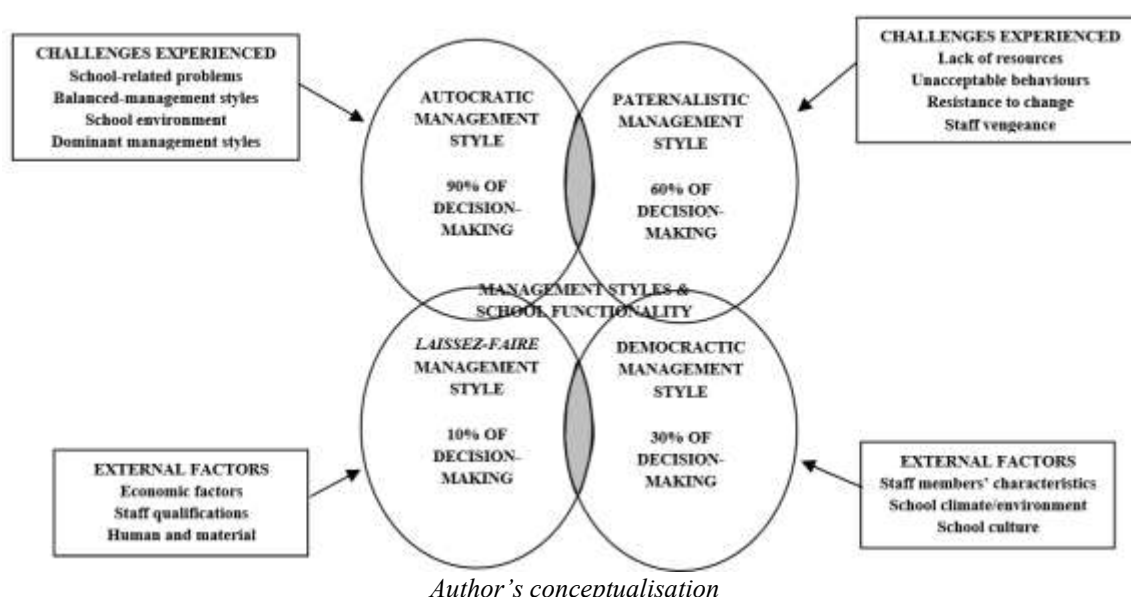


Figure 1. Model of principals' management styles and school functionality

It can be depicted from Figure 1 that the devolution of power and authority, the delegation and decentralisation of decision-making process at educational setup are based on the representation of management styles. This representation of management styles can be better synthesised and understood using analogy of percentages. Therefore, according to Figure 1, principals use ninety percent of decision-making process in autocratic management style, sixty percent in paternalistic style, thirty percent in democratic style and ten percent in *laissez-faire* management style.

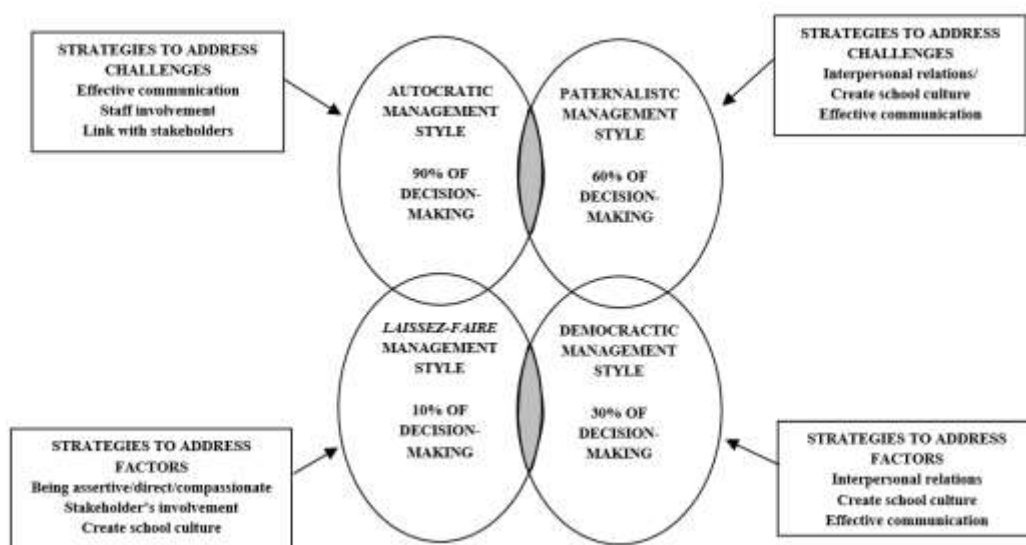
It is apparent from Figure 1 that there are many challenges and factors that faced by principals while using management styles that have effects on school functionality. For instance, principal knowledge, skills, professional attitudes and values are of little value if principals are unable to enhance and improve learner academic performance. There should be a correspondence between knowledge and action.

The intent of using the four management styles was to delve into philosophical assumption and intentions that underpins each style and to indicate how the key

elements are referred in each of the styles. One of the key messages put forward is decision-making process is undertaken that will allow or inhibit teachers to participate in decision-making process in terms of the purpose of the decision, for whom it is likely to benefit or valuable or carried. How decision is conducted, from what and/or whom to carry the task and how the task maybe best carried is also important consideration in this regards.

Most importantly, the categorisation of management styles and school functionality is arranged according to the continuum/continua of the decision-making process and the devolution of power from principals to teachers. Each of management styles and school functionality sit on continua, that is, from tight control of the decision-making to act in loco parentis in decision-making, from involving teachers in the decision-making to allowing them freedom to make decisions whether informed or not. It is thus evident to note that any decisions in educational setup depend on the management styles in term of exerting authority by the principals. These styles identify decision-making patterns, problem-solving and individual relations in educational setup. Figure 2 below

sums up the model of school heads management styles and school functionality.



Author's conceptualisation

Figure 2. Model of school heads management styles and school functionality

It is apparent from Figure.2 that there are many strategies the principals can use while using management styles to address challenges and factors that determine choice of management styles that have effects on school functionality.

Even from alphabet letters of the word “principal” one can derive nine critical management roles of the principal. These are that the principal should plan school activities and provide guidelines, respect wishes of the school population, reply to requirements and listen, indicate and command school population and never dictate to orders. Then there is *networking* to school population and make timely contacts, consult with school population and conduct constructive changes, instruct school population and accept new ideas. As well as participate in school activities and encourage teamwork, attract school population and motivate them to learn and teach hard and lead the school population in right direction and learn from them (Farah, 2013). It can be claimed from this finding that principals’ management role is no longer straightforward. Subsequently, expectations of teachers have become more complex and paradoxical. The paradox roles of *plan*, *respects*, *indicate*, *networking*, *consults*, *instructs*, *participates*, *attracts* and *leads* is the mammoth one. It is clear that managerial responsibility, resultant accountabilities; increased workload and the day-to-day principals’ role have become multifaceted (Heissenberger & Heilbronner, 2017). Principals promote cooperation among staff members and assist them to work together towards the common goals (Tuytens & Devos, 2013). Staff members feel positive about the school environment when the principals values them as partners in the school programme and not just as staff members (Kraft & Gilmour, 2016).

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research design

This was a qualitative case study, which emanates from constructivist worldview, was conducted to explore effects of principals’ management styles on functionality of schools in Oshana Region in Namibia. The term constructivism as applied to the learning theory is an interpretivist notion, it represents untruth about ways individual learn (Ling & Ling, 2017). This study was qualitative case study, meaning the kind of information that was collected was presented in words expressed as feelings, perceptions and attitudes of participants that narrated the account about the study in detail. This study utilised case study to provide insight into role participants played in the study. Information collections provide in-depth information and variety of perspectives, describe many facets and clarify perceptions in problem being explored. Case study emphasises understanding through careful documentation, thoughtful analysis of participants’ words, actions and records (Dey, 2003) based on experiences of researchers and selected participants to explore problem in interpretive view and investigation using case study research design.

Studies point out that case study allows researchers to focus on unit of study known as bounded system for in-depth exploration of actual case (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). Case study was, therefore, used to gain in-depth knowledge and the understanding of issues, problems and challenges associated with the effects of principals’ instructional strategies on the promotion of professional learning communities in Oshana Region in Namibia.

The effect of principals’ management styles on functionality of schools cannot be studied outside of its natural setting with its focus on this contemporary issue. The issue is that control and/or manipulation of subjects,

namely the effect of principals' management styles on functionality of schools is not possible. The theoretical knowledge on the issue under investigation is limited and not yet mature. Case study method was thus the suitable method for this study. Study without qualitative component cannot be used as a basis to recommend actions to teachers nor to inform policy, contribution that research into effects of principals' management styles on functionality of schools often seeks to deduce.

3.2 Participants

Using Oshana directorate of education's latest statistics of 2023, population of ten principals and ten teachers from ten schools in junior/senior primary, junior and the senior secondary schools in Oshana Region was utilised. Based on the Oshana regional directorate, many schools are poorly managed (Shapaka 2024; United Nations Children's Fund [UNICEF] 2015), which may lead to many dysfunctional schools.

3.3 Sampling

Criterion purposeful sampling was used, based on the researcher exposure to, engagement of ten principals and ten teachers in ten schools in Oshana Region. According to Oshana directorate of education's latest statistics of 2023, there are five Circuits in Oshana Region; they are Eheke, Oluno, Ompundja, Onamutai and Oshakati circuits. The researcher selected two principals and two teachers per Circuit.

3.4 Data collection

Data was collected through the interview schedule, field notes and open-ended questionnaire. Individual in-depth interviews were conducted using the interview schedule in which the same interview schedule was used to find participants' views on the effects of principals' management styles on functionality of schools in Oshana Region in Namibia.

3.5 Procedure

After all the required permission were sought and granted, all instruments were pilot tested and re-adjusted. Participants were interviewed individually because they come from different schools and every participant is different.

3.6 Data analysis

Typological analysis and content analysis were used to analyse qualitative data from interviews. As recommended by Leedy and Ormrod (2023), the researcher also used a computer software programme namely Atlas.ti to accommodate multiple, possibly overlapping coding of data.

3.7 Ethical considerations

After all the required permission were sought and granted, anonymity and confidentiality were obtained when reporting on the utterances and narratives of the participants, whose names were not mentioned. Instead, pseudonyms were opted for to protect their identity.

Ethical measures, which include informed consent, guarding against manipulating participants were applied during data collection and reporting processes.

4. DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

This section presents the findings on effects of principals' management styles on functionality of schools in Oshana Region in Namibia. The section comprises the views of ten principals and ten teachers that were collected from the interview schedule, notes taken during fieldwork and from the open-ended questionnaire. Some of the participant responses were summarised and presented in descriptive forms while others were reported verbatim and presented in italics. The participant responses were then compared with the empirical literature in the field. Although combining the two sections could have compromised key findings, it might be a good practice to collapse two sections to allow the researcher to talk to data presented, improve clarity and make it easier for the reader, hence combining of the two in this study.

4.1 Management styles and school functionality

The theme presented in this section is derived from the thematically analysed data obtained from the interviews, open-ended questionnaires and field notes, with selected ten principals and ten teachers from ten schools in Oshana Region. The theme is on effects of principals' management styles on functionality of school in Oshana Region. It is worth-noting that the theme relates to the manner in which the relationship between the principals' management styles and measures of school functionality could be constructed and developed in order to find association between the two (Ndiku et al., 2009). In this study, the researcher had to determine whether principals and teachers understand effects of principals' management styles on school functionality. This was done to respond to the question: What effects do principals' management styles have on functionality of schools? The responses of the principals showed that principals should study management styles and choose management style that fits working environment. For example, one principal at senior secondary phase said: *"Principals should know and familiarise themselves with different management styles."*

Nevertheless, another principal at senior primary phase, when asked on effects of management styles, said: *"School performance depends on principal flexibility, their application and/or use of different management styles."*

Many studies are in agreement with these findings (e.g. Okon & Isong, 2016; Sarwar et al., 2022). For instance, management style is regarded as framework for managing both human and material resources of the school through directing, influencing and coordinating affairs of school using interaction and communication to achieve overall objectives of the school (Haxhihsenil et al., 2023). It is evident from their responses that the

principals viewed the school performance in relation to applied management styles.

The clarion call is that the principals should study management styles; choose those that fit their working environment as they have effect on performance of staff members and effectiveness of the school. Adverse effects of these management styles include staff member resistance, poor workmanship, poor communication, low labour turnover, staff members' withdrawal, poor staff participation and the staff members' conflicts of interest. The uses of management styles were perceived to be used in schools, as shown in the study and they are clearly depicted in Figure 1.

On the other hand, the teachers said that the principals' management styles could build or destroy the school. It is thought that the manner in which school operated and managed determine how it affects the school. One teacher at junior secondary phase was sceptical about the process said:

"Principals' management styles can improve or destroy school."

Another teacher at junior primary phase said:

"This refers to how major types of management styles namely autocratic, democratic, laissez-faire and paternalistic management styles affect management of the school either positively or negatively. All management styles have their advantages and disadvantages in the functionality of school."

Studies on effects of management styles on functionality of schools indicate relationship between autocratic/initiative structure of management paternalistic/consideration structure of management and democratic/participatory structure of management styles, which affects students' academic performance (Bello et al., 2016; Smith, 2016).

Several studies show that principals prefer different management styles to manage teachers and support staffs (Hardman, 2011; Jiang, 2014) because they yield different outcomes; they work differently in different situations or tasks being performed.

Although findings were collected from the principals as supervisor and teachers as supervisee, the conclusion can be drawn that they all view that principals' management styles have an effect on school functionality.

4.2 Management styles used by principals to manage schools

In order to determine management styles used by principals the researcher asked the question: Which management style do principals use in Oshana Region? The responses of the principals indicated that majority of principals use democratic management style whereby staff members take part in decision-making, collaborate effectively and consulted in most issues. Nevertheless, the principals are clear and consistent that the commonly used management style is democratic, yet some teachers tend to take style for granted and go beyond its limits (Bosiok, 2013; Waters, 2013). One principal at senior secondary phase said:

"The majority of principals use democratic management style. Other principals use autocratic management style at most appropriate time."

Most advocates in education management and the policymakers aptly ascertain that democratic management style assist the principals to address emergent demands of schools (Bosiok, 2013; Tiwari, 2021). What these principals are actually stating profoundly is that principals practised various management styles depending on situation although each principal practised at least two management styles of which one was more dominant than other. Indirectly, they are referring to the democratic and autocratic management styles respectively. The use of management styles are clearly depicted in Figure.2.

Equally important, teachers also indicated that prevailing management style used by principals is democratic style followed by autocratic style. For example, one teacher at junior primary phase said:

"Principals used democratic management style in which staff members encouraged to be team players."

Another teacher at junior secondary phase, when asked on prevailing management styles, said:

"Some principals dominate teachers using autocratic management style and make the decisions without consulting staff members."

One teacher at senior primary phase said:

"Principals used autocratic management style. They decide everything without involving staff members, but the commonly used management style is the democratic management style which encourages team spirit."

What these teachers are actually stating profoundly is that principals use democratic management style to encourage team spirits/team prayers while other principals used autocratic management style to manipulate and dominate the decision-making process at the school. Indirectly, they are referring to democratic and autocratic management styles respectively.

4.3 Existing school functionality

In order to determine the existing school functionality the researcher asked the question: What types of school functionality exist in Oshana Region, which associates with such management style? The responses of the principals indicated that principals should write down strengths and weaknesses of these styles. Principals made concrete suggestions about how current practices could be improved through tackle issues that need serious attention and immediate intervention. One principal at junior primary phase said:

"Principals should re-evaluate management approaches and adjust to what benefit teachers, learners and the process of teaching and learning."

Many studies showed direct link between principals' management styles and process of teaching and learning (Evans et al., 2016; Hoque & Raya, 2023) which is the core function of the school. Another principal at senior secondary phase said:

"Principal should critically look at the identified negative effects, align them to personalities of staffs, the

work they do, the situation and circumstances in which they find themselves.”

What is interesting in the responses above is that one of principals went on to say that principals should re-evaluate management approaches and adjust to what benefit teachers, learners and the process of teaching and learning, an aspect that is emphasised by Fuller (2013) and Nyongesa (2014).

In the current existing school functionality, the study discovered that principals should delegate duties to staff while organising teambuilding activities. In line with these findings, Karim et al. (2016) argue that principals' firm emotional control is essential skill in leadership position, since stress levels encountered are often very high. However, what emerged in this study was that the staff members are able to perform in both democratic and autocratic environments although the concern is on the level of performance under each environment.

On the other hand, teachers indicated that it depend on reaction from staff members. For these teachers, it was suggested that principals should deal with situation fairly and take decisions that have less detrimental effect at workplace while taking the decisions that suit work environment. Significantly, it emerged that teachers want principals to hold staff members responsible while solving problems on their own. One teacher at junior primary phase said:

“Principals should hold the staff members accountable. They should inform their immediate supervisor where necessary.”

What is interesting in these responses is that one of the teachers went on to show that principals should hold regular meeting pertaining to issues concerning the management of school, an aspect that is also emphasised by Fuller (2013) and Nyongesa (2014).

Establishing existing school functionality, which associates with management styles, was one of the critical aspects, which was investigated in this study. Principals indicated that they should involve teachers in management of school. One principal at junior primary phase expressed this aspect thus said:

“Principals should ask views from staff members and their take on styles used to improve school management.”

Another principal at senior primary phase said:

“Principals should identify proper channel of communication they use most of time.”

For these principals, ideal situation was to consult staff while organising team-building activities. It is clear from above statements that teacher personality and amount of participation have effects on the daily functionality of school and this finding is coherent with the proposition of Ejimabo (2015) who put emphasis on teacher involvement in management of school.

On the other hand, the teachers in the study indicated that it depend on situation at school. One teacher at junior primary phase expressed this aspect thus said:

“Principals can held staff members accountable and inform their immediate supervisor where necessary.”

Another teacher at senior primary phase said:

“This can be done by asking the individual teachers opinion during the personal interview with colleagues and by using suggestion boxes at the schools.”

Yet another teacher at senior secondary phase said:

“Poor teachers' attendance should be addressed by putting a system in place that makes sure all staff members are present at work.”

It is clear from the above statements that school management is a sharing responsibility and this finding is coherent with proposition of the Ministry of Education, Arts & Culture (2016) and Prasad et al. (2010) which emphasise collaboration between stakeholders in educational setup.

The study discovered that in any school, the principals are perceived to use a combination of autocratic, paternalistic, democratic or *laissez-faire* management styles where each management styles have two ways effects on the functionality of school, which is either positive or negative.

5. MAJOR FINDINGS AND OUTCOMES

This article investigated effects of principals' management styles on the functionality of schools in Oshana Region in Namibia. The main question answered by the study was: What effects do principals management styles have on the functionality of the schools? The prominent issues that emanated from the findings were that there is direct link between principals' management styles and the school functionality that have direct effects on school functionality. The above finding agrees with those of the previous research studies (Hoque & Raya, 2023; Oyugi & Gogo, 2019) which highlighted the relationship between principals' management styles, teachers' behaviours and the learners' academic performance in an educational setup.

The principal issue encompassing these findings is that this link is attributed to how the school operates, managed and approaches and methods used by principals to manage and lead school, thus confirming similar findings of earlier research study such as Memela and Ramathan (2022).

Another principal issue noteworthy from study is that principals practised various management styles depending on situation at school. In other words, in any school, principals are perceived to use combination of autocratic, paternalistic, democratic or *laissez-faire*. This finding is consistent with those of the previous studies that assessed the usefulness of various management styles in educational setup (Atasoy, 2020; Prabahara & Jeromes, 2023).

Findings point that each principal practised at least two management styles of which one was more dominant than the other one. This finding correlate with earlier study explored by Anayatin (2023) on dominant management styles in an organisation.

Nevertheless, it was evident from the study that democratic style was the most favoured style but some

teachers tend to take style for granted and goes beyond its limits.

Although autocratic management style was perceived to bulldoze staff members, its use was still recommended to speed up implementation of plans and to force staff members to do their work within the stipulated time.

Most obvious findings emerge from study is that this direct link between principals' management styles and school functionality is also attributed to factors that determine choice of management styles and challenges faced by principals when using different management styles. This is clearly depicted in Figure 1 and Figure 2 respectively.

6. CONCLUSION

Based on the design used and findings of the study, principals' management styles have an effect on functionality of schools, teachers' performance which result in positive or negative student academic performance. Based on these findings, it can be concluded that principals' management style has an effect on functionality of schools that positively or negatively affect the livelihood of schools, principals and teachers' performance which result in positive or negative academic student outcomes. It was evident from this study that principals should take management styles very seriously.

7. SUGGESTIONS

In view of the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made: Firstly, principals should use democratic management style to improve and enhance their performance, the life of school, learner performance and allowing staff to take responsibility for their work. Secondly, principals should use management styles to enhance the functionality of the schools. Thirdly, principals should use both democratic and autocratic management styles to strike the balance

between the two and to avoid manipulation of one particular management style against other one. This will also help them to strike the balance between authority of the teachers' expertise of curriculum and positional authority of the principals. Lastly, the study recommends an urgent need for the principals to study and learn the application of management styles, apply the management styles to optimise their success and enhance teaching and learning which result on student academic outcomes. This can be done using the two models in Figure 1 and Figure.2 respectively.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE WORKS

Limitations exist with this study. Although the study offers valuable insights, the study failed to compare these findings with other regions or countries facing similar situation. Such comparison might have provided a broader perspective on effectiveness of the management styles at different educational setting. However, its scope was confined to Oshana Region in Namibia. Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made for future research: Firstly, future research can be taken to establish correlation between principals' management styles and school functionality since this was beyond the scope of this study. Lastly, the conceptual framework used in this study provides platform for exploration pertaining to school management that have not yet been explored. Research on these characteristics holds potential benefits for educators who work in various management positions in schools.

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