International Journal of Science and Research (IJSR)
ISSN: 2319-7064
Impact Factor 2025: 7.089

Leadership of School Principals and Teacher Performance in Accredited Private Secondary Schools in Lubumbashi 1 School District

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Abstract: ***This study focuses on the leadership of school principals and teacher performance in accredited private secondary schools in Lubumbashi 1 School District. Its main objective was to analyze the influence of different leadership styles on teachers' pedagogical practices and to propose a leadership model suited to the realities of schools. To achieve this objective, we used the survey method, supported by a questionnaire, documentary analysis, and semi-structured interviews. The data collected were processed using content analysis and the chi-square test. The results show a positive influence of leadership on teacher performance, particularly through pedagogical, distributed, transformational, transactional, and situational leadership styles. They highlight the importance of supervision, motivation, collaboration, shared responsibilities, and adaptation to professional realities. Based on these results, we proposed a theoretical model called "integral or multidimensional leadership of school principals". This model recommends combining the five leadership styles to improve pedagogical practices, teacher performance, and the quality of education.***

Keywords: Leadership, school principal, teacher performance

1. Introduction

Teaching is a complex process whose success depends on the involvement and collaboration of several stakeholders, particularly teachers, students, parents, and school authorities. Among these stakeholders, the school principal occupies an important position because of their responsibilities in organizing, coordinating, and managing the educational institution. Through their leadership, they guide teachers' actions, promote collaboration, and ensure the achievement of educational objectives. However, the effectiveness of their actions depends on the leadership styles adopted in daily management. It is from this perspective that our research examined the influence of school principals' leadership on teacher performance. It aims to analyze the different leadership styles and their contribution to improving pedagogical practices. It concludes by proposing an integral or multidimensional leadership model suited to the management of schools.

2. Theoretical Foundations

This section presents the theoretical foundations of the study in relation to our research. It clarifies the key concepts, situates the research within its scientific framework, presents the theories related to the study, and discusses several studies connected to our topic.

2.1 Definition of Concepts

In defining the concepts, we will determine precisely the meaning of the keywords identified in our research topic so that readers understand them according to the context in which we use them. These concepts are:

- Leadership
- School
- Performance

2.1.1 Leadership

According to Coby (2000), cited by Luboya Tshiunza et al. (2021), leadership refers to a person's ability to take the lead in a group, guide it, and influence its members. It is demonstrated through staff mobilization, recognition of individual competencies, and the guidance of an organization toward its objectives.

Plane (2015, p. 2) defines leadership as a process through which a person guides and influences a group of individuals to implement a policy and achieve objectives. This conception emphasizes the leader's ability to mobilize and unite individuals around collective action.

As for us, leadership refers to a manager's ability to guide, mobilize, and unite the stakeholders of an organization around a shared vision and common objectives, while promoting their commitment and contribution to collective action.

2.1.2 School

Bloch and Wartburg (1932, p. 256) explain that the term school comes from the ancient Greek word "skolē," which referred to leisure or time devoted to study. Rey (2010, p. 1123) highlights its evolution toward the designation of a place of education devoted to reflection, study, and learning.

Robert (1951) defines a school as an institution where collective instruction is provided to learners of the same age under the responsibility of a teacher. This conception presents the school as an organized environment responsible for transmitting knowledge and educating students.

As for us, a school is an organized educational institution that welcomes children to provide them with knowledge, skills, and values necessary for their intellectual development and integration into society.

2.1.3 Performance

Le Petit Robert (2010) defines performance as a numerical result obtained in a competition. This definition refers to the assessment of results based on established criteria.

Medley (1982) associates teacher performance with the effectiveness and efficiency of teaching, assessed particularly through students' academic results and behavior. This approach links performance to the outcomes of pedagogical action.

As for us, teacher performance refers to the results achieved by a teacher in carrying out pedagogical and instructional tasks, assessed in terms of effectiveness, efficiency, and contribution to students' learning.

2.2 Theories of the Study

In conducting this study, we selected certain theories, which are not exhaustive, to support our reasoning while maintaining a reflective approach. They provide the guiding framework that will enable us to analyze several factors and arrive at reliable conclusions. Considering that an effective school principal draws on several leadership styles to ensure the effectiveness and efficiency of their institution, we will rely on the following theories:

2.2.1 Transformational Leadership

According to Plane (2015), transformational leadership is based on the leader's ability to transform the attitudes, values, and motivations of their collaborators in order to guide them toward a higher level of commitment and performance. From this perspective, the school principal develops a shared vision and inspires teachers to go beyond their individual interests in pursuing educational objectives. This theory will enable us to analyze how the school principal mobilizes teaching staff around the educational mission, even under difficult working conditions.

2.2.2 Instructional Leadership

Instructional leadership, developed by Mubuy Mubay (2014) and operationalized by Luboya Tshiunza (2021), places the improvement of teaching and learning at the center of the school principal's responsibilities. It includes identifying pedagogical problems, coordinating curricula, supervising classrooms, checking educational records, evaluating teachers and students, and providing continuing professional development. This theory will enable us to examine the school principal's pedagogical practices within the Congolese educational context and their contribution to teacher performance.

2.2.3 Distributed Leadership

Distributed leadership, inspired by the work of Mary Parker Follett and presented by Plane (2015), considers leadership a collective practice based on cooperation and coordination of competencies. The school principal brings people together, unites them, and values teachers' abilities while promoting their participation in the institution's common objectives. This theory will enable us to analyze how the school principal mobilizes collective intelligence, shares responsibilities, and promotes cohesion within the educational team instead of concentrating all decisions in their own hands.

2.2.4 Situational Leadership

Situational leadership, proposed by Hersey and Blanchard and presented by Plane (2015), considers that the leadership style must adapt to collaborators' competencies, motivation, and level of autonomy. The school principal therefore adopts a directive, participative, or delegative approach according to teachers' needs and the difficulties they encounter. This theory will enable us to examine how school principals, inspectors, and trainers adapt their pedagogical support to teachers' shortcomings in order to promote their professional development.

2.2.5 Transactional Leadership

According to Bass and his collaborators (2003), cited by Lebeau (2021), transactional leadership is based on an exchange between the leader and their collaborators, whereby the completion of expected tasks results in a reward or recognition. The school principal specifies objectives, expectations, and consequences associated with professional behavior, using contingent rewards and active or passive management by exception. This theory will enable us to analyze how mechanisms of recognition, control, and sanctions influence the motivation and performance of teaching staff.

2.3 Review of Previous Research

Without claiming to have conducted an exhaustive review of the two aspects of this investigation, we present five studies conducted by different researchers. These works address school leadership, teacher behavior, and school performance. They help us understand the findings already established in relation to our topic. We present their objectives, methods, and main conclusions.

Progin and Thurler (2012), in their study entitled "Instructional Leadership: A Lever for Transforming Work Organization Within Schools," analyzed the influence of school principals on their collaborators' professional practices. They sought to understand how different leadership styles transform school organization. The results showed that instructional and distributed leadership promote improvements in the teaching and learning process. These practices also contribute to combating school failure.

Zawadi Asindirika (2023), in her study entitled "School Principals' Leadership and Its Impact on Teacher Behavior in Private Schools in the City of Goma," analyzed the influence of leadership on teachers' behavior and motivation. She used the survey method, supported by questionnaires and documentary analysis. The results showed that the democratic leadership style contributes more significantly to teacher satisfaction. She also established a relationship between leadership style and the effectiveness of learning mechanisms.

Paul (2010), in his research on the determinants of secondary school performance in Haiti, sought to identify factors associated with academic results in the Central Department. He conducted a questionnaire survey among twenty-four secondary schools that participated in the 2009 official examinations. The results revealed an average pass rate of 39.55%, classes frequently consisting of more than fifty

students, and a shortage of libraries. This study highlights the importance of material conditions and school management in institutional performance.

Fournier (2019), in her study entitled "Teacher Involvement: One of the Possible Keys to Educational Performance," analyzed the relationships between teacher commitment and individual and collective performance. She used the survey method, supported by questionnaires. Her work aimed to identify forms of involvement that promote teacher and school performance. The results showed direct relationships between teacher involvement and student performance.

Luboya Tshiunza and collaborators (2025), in their article entitled "Instructional Leadership of the School Principal as a Determinant of Teaching Staff Performance in Public Secondary Schools in the Lukunga Educational Province of Kinshasa," studied the relationships between instructional leadership and teacher performance. Their research examined leadership practices and the leadership styles used in the schools concerned. The results showed a positive and significant influence of instructional leadership on teacher performance. The profiles studied were characterized particularly by democratic and situational leadership styles.

From the above, we observe similarities between our investigation and the studies presented, insofar as they address school leadership in relation to teacher behavior, performance, or learner achievement. These studies highlight the importance of pedagogical practices, motivation, and collaboration in school functioning. However, our study differs through its particular focus on the impact of leadership exercised by principals on teacher performance in private schools within Lubumbashi 1 Secondary School District. This focus constitutes the distinctive feature of our investigation.

3. Presentation of the Study Area

Modern Congolese education dates back to 1880, a period during which its establishment and management were entrusted mainly to Catholic, Protestant, and Kimbanguist missionaries. The State granted them land and subsidies to construct school buildings and provide education. These institutions, known as subsidized independent schools, operated independently according to their religious networks. Their curricula were based particularly on catechism in Catholic schools and the Gospels in Protestant schools.

The duration of studies varied between two and three years, with the objective of training educated Christian communities capable of transmitting their knowledge and skills. School supervision was provided by missionary inspectors. In 1908, the colony organized the accreditation of schools, requiring them to adapt their curricula, submit periodic reports, and undergo inspections by State officials. In December 1926, the General Inspectorate of Education was established alongside the missionary inspectorate, with the authority to inspect official and subsidized independent schools.

In 1960, Katanga organized a competition to recruit Congolese inspectors responsible for supervising primary education, working alongside Belgian inspectors responsible for general and technical secondary education. In 1972, the State's direct management of schools led to the abolition of the missionary inspectorate position and the integration of its members into the official inspectorate. In 1977, the Lubumbashi 1 Primary, Secondary, and Technical Education Subdivision was established, also giving rise to the Secondary School District. From 1978 onward, the inspectorate became an autonomous service responsible for monitoring the implementation of educational directives, in accordance with successive regulatory texts.

The study area is Lubumbashi 1 Secondary School District, a decentralized entity of the Provincial Inspectorate, whose school district chief's office is located on the third floor of Lubumbashi City Hall. This school district covers two administrative municipalities, namely Lubumbashi and Kamalondo. The municipality of Lubumbashi is bordered by the municipalities of Annexe, Kampemba, Katuba, Kamalondo, and Kenya, while Kamalondo is an old municipality of the city, established in the early twentieth century. A presentation of the Lubumbashi 1 Secondary School District office is included in the appendices of this study.

4. Methodological Framework

Within the framework of this study on the impact of school principals' leadership on teacher performance in private schools in Lubumbashi 1 Secondary School District, we used methodological procedures suited to our research topic. These procedures include the methods and techniques used to collect, analyze, and process data. They enabled us to contact participants, gather their opinions, and examine school documents. We present below the methods and techniques selected.

4.1 Research Methods

A method is an organized and rational approach that enables a researcher to achieve the objectives of an investigation. According to Larousse Illustré (2009) and Mpala Mbabula (2021), it constitutes a set of rules and steps that logically guide thinking toward a result. In this study, we selected the survey method because it enables us to examine school principals' leadership within their professional environment. It helps us collect the opinions of school principals and teachers regarding leadership practices and their influence on teacher performance.

The survey method consists of collecting information from a population through organized procedures. According to Felligi (2003) and Cambo (2013), it enables data collection from individuals in order to study their characteristics, opinions, and behaviors. In our research, this method enabled us to conduct fieldwork, contact participants, and collect information related to our research problem. It also helped us compare the collected data with the hypotheses of our study.

4.2 Research Techniques

Research techniques are practical procedures used by researchers to produce and collect the data required for their investigation. According to Larousse Illustré (2009) and De Landsheere (1979), they include the means and procedures

used to obtain information related to a scientific objective. In this study, we used questionnaires, documentary analysis, and semi-structured interviews to collect data. These techniques enabled us to gather participants' opinions, examine school documents, and explore the professional experiences of school principals in greater depth.

For data analysis and processing, we used content analysis and the chi-square test. Content analysis enabled us to examine information collected through questionnaires, interviews, and school documents in order to identify significant elements. The chi-square test was used to examine relationships between school principals' leadership and teacher performance. These techniques therefore enabled us to organize, analyze, and verify the relationships studied.

5. Results

The results of this research show that teacher performance is closely related to the leadership exercised by school principals. Indeed, their way of directing, organizing, and managing schools directly influences the quality of teachers' work. Leadership therefore constitutes a determining factor in improving pedagogical practices. It acts particularly through supervision, motivation, and the development of professional competencies. Thus, the quality of leadership exercised by school administrators contributes to the effectiveness of classroom teaching.

This influence is explained particularly by the combination of several leadership styles, including instructional leadership. This style emphasizes teachers' support, supervision, and continuing professional development. It aims to strengthen their knowledge and professional competencies in order to improve their teaching methods. Through classroom observations, pedagogical meetings, and training activities, school principals guide teachers toward better practices. This style therefore promotes improvements in the quality of learning.

Distributed leadership also constitutes an important element in improving teacher performance. It is based on shared responsibilities, collaboration, and collective participation in school management. From this perspective, teachers are no longer mere executors of decisions made by school principals. They actively participate in solving problems and finding pedagogical solutions. This approach encourages the exchange of experiences, teamwork, and the accountability of each stakeholder. It therefore contributes to strengthening the quality of pedagogical practices.

Furthermore, transformational leadership plays an important role in teacher motivation and commitment. It is based on inspiration, the development of a shared vision, and the mobilization of staff around common objectives. The school principal therefore encourages teachers to develop their professional commitment and improve their working methods. Transactional leadership is also involved, based on a system of rewards and sanctions intended to guide professional behavior. These two approaches contribute to strengthening discipline, motivation, and a sense of responsibility within the school.

Moreover, situational leadership relies on the school principal's ability to adapt their leadership approach to the realities of the environment and teachers' needs. It takes into account the competencies, experience, and difficulties encountered by each teacher in carrying out their duties. This flexibility enables appropriate support to be provided according to the situations encountered. It promotes better consideration of teachers' professional and pedagogical needs. Thus, adapting the leadership style contributes to improving working conditions and classroom teaching practices.

The research therefore shows that teacher performance partly depends on school principals' ability to mobilize several leadership styles in a complementary manner. Combining instructional, distributed, transformational, transactional, and situational leadership promotes supervision better suited to school realities. The more school administrators adopt this multidimensional approach, the more they promote competency development, motivation, and collaboration among teachers. These elements directly contribute to improving classroom pedagogical practices. Consequently, multidimensional leadership constitutes an important lever for strengthening teacher performance and the quality of education.

6. Contribution

The theoretical model proposed in this study, as a contribution to science, is designated as "integral or multidimensional leadership of school principals." This model aims to propose a management approach suited to school realities in order to improve teacher performance. It is based on the combination of five complementary leadership styles, namely instructional leadership, founded on supervision, support, and guidance of teaching practices; transformational leadership, focused on inspiration, motivation, and the mobilization of teachers around a shared vision; distributed leadership, which prioritizes collaboration and shared responsibilities; transactional leadership, which relies on rewards, recognition of efforts, and sanctions in cases of misconduct; and situational leadership, which is based on adapting the management approach to teachers' needs and the realities of the institution.

Through this approach, school principals are expected to move beyond the isolated use of a single leadership style and adopt integrated, flexible, and participative management. They must therefore provide pedagogical supervision, inspire and mobilize their collaborators, promote teamwork, share responsibilities, recognize efforts, and adapt their interventions to different professional situations. This combination of leadership styles constitutes, according to our proposal, a management mechanism likely to promote the development of professional competencies, commitment, and improvements in teachers' pedagogical practices. Thus, integral or multidimensional leadership is presented as a theoretical contribution aimed at strengthening school principals' capacity to exercise effective leadership and sustainably improve teacher performance.

7. Discussion of Results

Since teaching is a complex process involving several stakeholders, particularly students, teachers, parents, and school authorities, the school principal plays a determining role in organizing, coordinating, and mobilizing everyone's efforts to achieve school objectives. The results of this research show that teacher performance is positively influenced by the leadership exercised by school principals, particularly when they combine instructional, distributed, transformational, transactional, and situational leadership styles.

These results are consistent with the findings of Thurler, Pelletier, and Dutereq (2017), as well as those of Luboya Tshiunza et al. (2025), who highlight the positive influence of leadership on teacher performance. However, they contrast with the findings of Zawadi Gasindikira (2023), who identifies a predominance of autocratic leadership and its negative effects on teacher motivation, while Rogivue (2019) emphasizes the importance of distributed and transformational leadership in building a cooperative school culture. These different findings reinforce our position that adopting integral or multidimensional leadership promotes teacher motivation, collaboration, professional commitment, and the development of pedagogical competencies.

8. Conclusion

This research focused on the leadership of school principals and teacher performance in accredited private secondary schools in Lubumbashi 1 School District. Its main objective was to analyze the influence of different leadership styles exercised by school principals on teachers' pedagogical practices and to propose a leadership model suited to school realities in order to improve their performance. Based on our research problem, we sought to understand the extent to which instructional, distributed, transformational, transactional, and situational leadership styles influence teacher performance. Our hypothesis maintained that combining these different leadership styles promotes improvements in pedagogical practices and, consequently, teacher performance.

The results obtained show that the leadership exercised by school principals constitutes a determining factor in improving teacher performance. Indeed, their way of directing, supervising, motivating, and mobilizing teaching staff directly influences their professional practices. Instructional leadership promotes support and competency development, distributed leadership encourages collaboration and shared responsibilities, while transformational leadership stimulates motivation and commitment around a common vision. Transactional leadership contributes to recognizing efforts and regulating professional behavior, whereas situational leadership promotes adaptation of the management approach to teachers' realities and needs.

Furthermore, comparing our results with previous research revealed several similarities, particularly with the works of Thurler, Pelletier, and Dutereq (2017), Luboya Tshiunza et al. (2025), and Rogivue (2019), which highlight the importance of leadership practices in improving teacher performance and building a cooperative school culture. However, the findings of Zawadi Gasindikira (2023) show the limitations of predominantly autocratic management, particularly regarding teacher motivation and performance. These different findings led us to propose a theoretical model called "integral or multidimensional leadership of school principals," based on the combination of the five leadership styles studied.

At the end of this research, we therefore conclude that effective school leadership requires an integrated approach in which the school principal simultaneously assumes the roles of educator, mobilizer, collaborator, manager, and regulator according to circumstances. Integral or multidimensional leadership constitutes our theoretical contribution to improving school management and teacher performance. This study highlights the importance of continuous pedagogical supervision, participative management, appropriate motivation, and adaptation to teachers' professional realities. It also opens up opportunities for further reflection on school leadership practices likely to promote educational quality and improve learner achievement.

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