Teachers' Perceptions of school heads' Instructional leadership behaviours at two primary schools in Lower Gweru district of Zimbabwe

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Abstract: **Educational leadership literature has identified generalised instructional leadership roles of school leaders particularly in the context of the Western world. Using a multiple case study design, targeting ten senior teachers at two primary schools as participants, the study aimed at exploring teachers' perceptions of school heads' instructional leadership behaviours that supported or hindered effective teaching and learning. The two primary schools are situated in Lower Gweru District in Zimbabwe. The ten senior teachers from each school were purposefully sampled to participate in the study. Data for the study was generated using three research instruments namely group interviews, semi-structured interviews and document analysis. The data was analysed using the thematic approach. What came out of the study was that there are certain instructional leadership behaviours which were perceived by teachers as facilitating teaching like generating an attractive and inspiring vision of academic excellence, modelling best instructional leadership behaviours, creating a school atmosphere conducive for teaching and learning, individual consideration behaviours focusing on teachers' professional and social needs and incentivising teachers. However some Instructional leadership behaviours by school heads were labelled as retrogressive to effective teaching and learning and these include lack of personal commitment to leadership by the school head (being a visiting head), an atmosphere of insecurity and inconsistencies, being disrespectful to teachers, not knowing curriculum content and managerialism. It was recommended that school heads should spend the greatest part of their time at their work station or better reside at their work stations to afford themselves enough time to monitor instructional processes at their schools. Workshops on instructional leadership must be held often to familiarise school heads of their new leadership roles.**

Key words: **Instructional Leadership, Transformational leadership, practice, School head, Perceptions**

I. INTRODUCTION

Instructional leadership issues have shaken the core foundations of management and leadership in Zimbabwe. It's no longer business as usual for school leaders due to the ever-growing internal and external demands placed upon schools to create and produce quality teaching and learning environments and results (Masuku, 2011). Some universities like Midlands state university have responded to this challenge by crafting a module on instructional leadership in their school leadership and management degree. However this noble effort is not the silver bullet. Effective instructional leadership is still a concern in schools (Chimwechiyi, 2014, Chitumba, 2019). There is need for more rigorous research in order for schools to strike the right tune. There is need for research that will guide school heads as to what instructional leadership behaviours are beneficial to teachers' instructional efforts and which ones are not.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Since the concept of instructional leadership is at the centre of discussion in this study, it will be very helpful to define it and shed a little light on its background.

According to Hallinger and Murphy (2012), instructional leadership is an influence process through which leaders identify direction for the school, motivate staff and coordinate school and classroom-based strategies aimed at improvements in teaching and learning. In other words instructional leadership is leadership that facilitates effective teaching and learning in a school. Hallinger and Murphy (1985) were the first to come up with a framework of instructional leadership that identified specific, key behaviours enacted by principals that defined the construct of instructional leadership. From their studies, the construct of instructional leadership can be defined by putting together three dimensions which are; (i) Defining the School's Mission, (ii) Managing the Instructional Program, and (iii) Promoting a Positive School Learning Climate (Townsend, 2019). The mission starts with a school head having a vision of success for all educators and learners in the teaching learning process. Then, the head's to do list in management gets dominated with managing educators' instructional efforts and learners' learning and the creation of a conducive climate where educators and learners feel motivated to achieve more.

The concept of instructional leadership started and developed in the United States within the effective schools programme and no child left behind movement of the early 1980s (Brown, Holewinski & Jones, 2010). The concept has since spread to many nations including Zimbabwe, and has become a key lever of the schools' standards control mechanisms. Instructional leadership has become part of the curriculum for most state universities and is a concern for school leadership. For example, Ministry of Education, Sport,

Arts and Culture, Zvishavane: DEO's Circular No. 3 of 2011 and also Chimwechiyi (2014) in his thesis, emphasise that the core business of the school head is instructional leadership and that the teaching of learners is central to the duties of a school head. This comes at the backdrop of school heads having been working in the traditional mode as school administrators and managers. The traditional head's major task has been seen as that of setting policies and procedures, hiring and supporting non-teaching staff, setting budgets, and providing a safe and secure environment for students and staff (Brazer & Bauer, 2013; Salem, 2016).However the sweeping wave of accountability in schools has seen focus shifting from the usual role of school heads as school managers to that of being instructional leaders (Manaseh, 2016).As a result, school heads are increasingly being held accountable for the academic achievement of their students more than ever before. This has necessitated more involvement by school heads in teaching and learning aspects of the school organization (Botha, 2013; Brazer & Bauer, 2013).

In Zimbabwe the ministry of primary and secondary education compiles a list of top one hundred schools after each terminal examination and this list is posted to all media outlets in the country and also find its way into the social media. This has exerted immense pressure on school heads to improve instructional leadership in their schools. The situation has been made no better by the dearth of literature which is Zimbabwean context specific and also proper guidance from the ministry about good instructional leadership behaviours. The only recognisable effort to empower school heads in their emerging role has been to upgrade qualifications for the school heads from a general teaching qualification to at least a degree in education, but not necessarily in educational management and leadership. Despite this effort, more and more schools are scoring a zero percent pass rate in terminal Zimbabwe school examinations (The staff reporter, 2017; Tshili, 2018; Chitumba, 2019). This is a direct blow to the founding principles of instructional leadership whose vision is to see no child being left behind in terms of academic achievement. It is also a pointer to the fact that whilst appealing in principle, instructional leadership is easier said than done.

In a study by Gurley, Anast-May, O'Neal and Dozier (2016), it came out that instructional leadership behaviours are context specific. This suggests that more research about what school heads in Zimbabwe actually do day in- day out to enhance instructional effectiveness and student achievement is an urgent necessity since the generality of literature available is about the American context or some other countries. Whilst this is the point of departure for this study, equally important also are lessons that can be drawn from instances where instructional leadership behaviours of school heads in Zimbabwe fail to produce desired results.

III. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

General descriptions of instructional leadership and the head's role are abundant in leadership literature (Hallinger &

Murphy, 1985; Leithwood et al., 2004; Gurley, May, O'Neal & Doezier 2016, Salem, 2016). This is a good starting point. However the problem is the scarcity of research identifying specific school heads instructional leadership behaviours that are seen as helpful and least helpful from the perspective of teachers in given teaching learning contexts particularly the Zimbabwean context. The identification by teachers of such instructional leadership behaviours goes a long way in improving curriculum content about instructional leadership in Zimbabwe and other countries with a similar context; subsequently improving instructional leadership in the schools.

IV. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study was to explore teacher perceptions of school heads' instructional leadership behaviours in situations where effective and ineffective teaching and learning is said to be taking place. This study is also a contribution to the scanty body of literature on instructional leadership in Zimbabwe.

A. Major Research Questions

1. What school head instructional leadership behaviours are perceived by teachers as promoting effective teaching and learning?
2. What school head instructional leadership behaviors are perceived by teachers as hindering effective teaching and learning?
3. Why do teachers hold perceptions they hold about school heads' instructional leadership behaviours in each situation?

V. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK:

The researcher sees a very strong relationship between effective instructional leadership behaviours and Transformational leadership, and hence school heads' instructional leadership behaviours will be seen through the lens of transformational leadership theory. Transformational leadership is leadership that fosters performance above expectations in followers by engaging in behaviours that help encourage followers to transform their values and goals from self-interests to organizational interests (Bass, 1985; Pounder, 2008). In this case, the assumption is that school heads foster performance in instruction by teachers that is above expectations by engaging to a greater extent in Transformational leadership behaviours. Such school heads may achieve these positive results by displaying one or more of the following transformational behaviours in their instructional leadership behaviour; 'idealized influence', 'inspirational motivation', 'intellectual stimulation', and 'individualized consideration.' These behaviours are discussed in detail below.

A. Idealized Influence.

As a way of stimulating performance above expectations in instruction by teachers, the school head provides vision and

a sense of mission, expresses confidence in the vision, instils pride, gains respect and trust, and increases optimism in the teachers (Pounder, 2008). The school head becomes a role model in the process and walks the talk by being seen teaching and prioritising instructional time in the whole school.

B. Inspirational Motivation

The school head knows that a gloom school atmosphere spells doom for effective instruction. As such, the school head becomes a cheerleader; demonstrates enthusiasm and optimism, models best in delivering instruction and uses appropriate symbols to focus teachers' efforts and commitment to a shared goal (Pounder, 2008; Lai, 2011). This motivates both teachers and learners to strive for academic excellence.

C. Individual Consideration

The leader coaches, mentors and provides continuous feedback to teachers by visiting them in their classrooms to discuss academic issues. This enables the head to give attention to individual teachers' day to day instructional needs like stationary and other provisions as well as developmental and social needs. However the head will not forget to link these individual teachers' needs to the organization's mission, which is to achieve academic excellence though effective instruction (Pounder, 2008; Hobman, Jackson, Jimmieson & Martin, 2011).

D. Intellectual Stimulation

The school head stimulates teachers to rethink old ways of doing things and to reassess their old values and beliefs about teaching (Pounder (2008). In the process the school head provides teachers with interesting and challenging tasks and encourages them to be creative and solve problems they encounter in teaching in their own ways. With this perspective of a transformative head, I move on to discuss the research design used to generate teachers' perceptions of school heads' productive and unproductive instructional leadership behaviours.

VI. RESEARCH DESIGN

This study utilises a multiple case study design targeting ten senior primary school teachers from two primary schools as participants. Using Yin (1984) and Merriam (1988)'s classification of case studies, this case study is a descriptive case study that gives narrative accounts of participants and the study phenomena. According to Griffee (2012) and also Yin (2018), the case study design is a design that is used to probe a single or multiple instances deeply and analysing them intensely within a bounded system. To achieve this level of probing and analysis, in line with the mentioned design characteristics, two primary schools named A and B in Lower Gweru district were chosen for the study. The schools chosen had been under the leadership of at least four school heads over a period of fifteen years and the schools' performance in teaching and learning as measured by terminal examinations

had varied significantly with each head. The schools were also chosen because the majority of senior teachers in the schools who experienced the instructional leadership of the various school heads who left or were still at the stations had not transferred to other schools. It is assumed that a deep probing and intense analysis of data from these teachers at the selected schools may provide rich insights about school heads instructional leadership behaviours at the schools and possibly at other schools sharing similar contexts. Next, the research instruments that were used for the study are discussed.

VII. INSTRUMENTS

Case study data can come from at least six sources which are documents, archival records, interviews, direct observations, participant observation, and physical artifacts (Cohen, Manion and Morrison 2018; Yin, 2018). From the list above, the research instruments that were used to gather data for this study were interviews and Documents. How the instruments were used and justification for using them is discussed below.

A. Group interviews

Group interviews are a good way to gather together people from similar backgrounds or experiences (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2018). Like in this case, teachers were brought together to discuss a specific topic of interest. Group interviews need to be prepared carefully. As a result, the researcher identified the main objectives of the interview meeting, developed key questions, came up with an agenda and planned how to record the session in advance. The researcher then went on to identify and invite suitable discussion participants who were in groups of five for each discussion session. For this research a total of 10 participants were chosen from the two schools and they were all senior teachers.

During Group interviews, the participants were free to share their rich experiences about different school heads' instructional leadership behaviours. In the discussions that ensued, the members agreed and disagreed with each other and this provided an insight into how the groups thought about various heads' instructional leadership behaviours.

The discussions also generated a range of opinions, ideas and revealed consistencies, inconsistencies and variations that exist among the teachers in terms of experiences with various school heads' instructional leadership behaviours. Also, having more than one interviewee present provided many versions of the same event – a cross-check (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2018), and participants complemented each other with additional points, leading to a more complete and reliable record.

The researcher was pleased that no particular participant dominated the discussions at any given time. This is owed to the researcher's balanced chairing of the discussions and distribution of questions. From the discussions, the researcher was able to explore meanings about a range of opinions or views on the topic of instructional leadership. However the

Group interviews were not able to provide much detailed data due to the number of participants and free debate. So, in-depth interviews were also used to complement the shortcomings of Group interviews in this research. However, it is from these Group interviews that pertinent issues that needed further probing were identified and used to prepare questions for the semi-structured interview. The semi-structured interview process is discussed in detail below.

B. Semi- structured Interviews

Interviews can be seen as planned discussions between the interviewer and interviewee (Creswell, 2014). Semi-structured interviews involve a schedule of interview questions with open ended items. Semi-structured interviews proved to be very useful because they accorded the researchers the opportunity to verify given information by seeking further clarifications on issues raised during the Group interviews. By using semi-structured interviews, the researcher saw the interview as a way of generating useful data and knowledge about a topic of interest amongst the teachers through structured conversation. The ability to offer face to face interaction between the interviewer and interviewees in this regard made the interview a method of choice for this case study. This was so because the interviewer was able to probe so as to get in-depth responses, follow leads that emerged from the immediate context and also read non-verbal communication cues from participants which revealed hidden convictions. Apart from interviews, data for the study was also generated from official documents. These are discussed next.

Document analysis

The back born of effective school management is meticulous documentation of teaching and leading activities. Yin (2018) opines that Document analysis as a data collection instrument in case studies is always an instrument of choice. In this study, document analysis was chosen as a supplementary data collection instrument to the interviews. The researcher realised the need to cross check or triangulate data collected through interviews by verifying certain interview responses through perusing official documents. Of interest to instructional leadership issues were the supervision critiques by current and previous school heads, old and current scheme books, Minute books for general staff meetings and also minute books for staff development programmes for current and previous school heads. At this point it is interesting to know how data that was generated by these methods discussed so far were analysed. I discuss this next.

VIII. DATA ANALYSIS

After data had been generated, there is need to employ well thought out procedures to identify essential features and relationships the data may reveal. To do this, the researcher used thematic analysis to analyse data. First, I captured thick descriptions of how teachers experienced the school heads' instructional leadership and their evaluation of these experiences. This was then followed by rigorously examining teachers' responses to identify and cluster units of meaning to form themes. At this point, the researcher conducted a 'validity check' whereby he gave participants relevant parts of their data generation responses from Group interviews and semi structured interviews to read, and where necessary seek adjustments to what he would have captured. The researcher ended the data analysis by extracting recurring and general themes from all the Group interviews and semi-structured interviews to make a composite summary which became findings of the study.

IX. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Permission was sought from the ministry of primary and secondary education to do this study and was granted. At the stations participants were told that participation was voluntary and only one teacher who commuted from town withdrew because she wanted to catch transport to town. She was replaced. Issues of confidentiality and anonymity were also stressed to participants before the study began.

X. DATA PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION

Group interviews were held first followed by Semi-structured interviews and lastly document analysis.

A. Be Your Best All the Time

Participants first responded to the following major research question; *what school head instructional leadership behaviours are perceived by teachers as promoting effective teaching and learning?* The researcher was also interested in knowing why teachers held perceptions they held on issues raised. Please note that all names mentioned here are pseudonyms.

What came out very strongly in all groups at the two schools was that the school heads encouraged educators through their own behaviours (modelling) to always offer their best when it comes to curriculum delivery. For example at school A, it was mentioned in all the focus groups that the school head, when he first joined the school, took a class that had been scoring 0% pass rate for the previous two years and taught it. At the end of the year the class scored 30% pass rate. One teacher, Mr Zulu commented on the school head's behaviour towards teaching and learning when he said;

> You wouldn't think he was a head as we know most school heads. He would bury himself into teaching learning issues of his class and we all felt that the whole school atmosphere had changed. I think even learners from other grades other than his saw it too because the behaviour of all learners in the school changed in no time. Everyone began to see a new vision of the school. When we were doing staff development on teaching of Religious and Moral Education, the head volunteered to prepare and teach a model lesson. From that day, the culture of volunteering set in the school. He never told us to change our ways and be more serious with teaching issues. If you were not teaching you just felt you were at the wrong

school and you would tell yourself what needs to be done. Before subjects in the curriculum became as many as they are today, he would set all mid-year tests either for juniors or infants and participated in marking the tests (Mr Zulu of school B).

Teachers at school B attested to have observed the same behaviour from their school head. For example, one teacher said if you came late for a lesson you would find the head in your class teaching and marking. He would welcome you with a smile and then leave you with your class. During sports time, he would put on sports gear and be with teachers at the sports fields. The school head was active and visible in all curriculum activities. Their school became one of the best schools, both in terms of pass rate and sports awards in a few years. This change may be attributed to school heads' transformational leadership. The transformational leadership behaviours described in the data were corroborated by contents in some general staff meetings at the two schools. For example in one of the meetings, a school head was captured as saying;

Our school will never be the same again. Judging by what I see you doing with your classes, I am confident that the new values shaping your practice will take our teaching and learning processes to a very high level (School head B).

Analysing responses from the two schools it may be deduced that the school heads modelled best instructional leadership behaviours by teaching model lessons, protected instructional time, and prioritized teaching ahead of all other duties in their day to day leadership. The heads did not force a vision on teachers but made teachers to open up their eyes and see an appealing vision. The direct involvement of the school heads in teaching and learning may also be seen through the lens of transformational leadership's idealised influence where the school head becomes a role model and walks the talk by being seen teaching and encouraging other teachers to do the same. According to Northouse (2019), transformative leaders mobilize teachers to accept a new group identity or a new teaching philosophy for their organizations. The long term effect of such behaviour is the transformation of teachers' instructional value systems, culture and teaching-learning climate of the school.

B. You Are a Star

In a focus group interview, teachers from the two schools also said best school heads were those who gave public comments when a teacher or teachers have done something good like producing a good pass rate or doing a good lesson presentation. When probed in an interview, one teacher at school A said;

Such praises (personal recognition) are a big motivator for me since they boost my status within my significant others. He once said, 'you are a star' and I have tirelessly tried to

keep up the image of a flying star among my colleagues ever since (Mrs Moyo of school A).

The researcher went through large box files where old and current supervision critiques written by school heads identified as effective instructional leaders by the participants. I observed that most comments in the critiques were positive and developmental. This corroborated what was said by the participants in the interviews.

Whilst the role of supervision cannot be overemphasised, we learn from Mrs Moyo that positive comments from the school heads during supervision (inspirational motivation) are seen by teachers as encouraging effective teaching. This transforms teachers' work behaviours and has a long term effect of shaping teachers' positive organisational citizenship behaviours. This is also echoed by Northouse (2019, p.272) who says, transformational leaders use emotional appeals to focus group members' efforts to achieve more than they would in their own self-interest.

C. Be In Charge

What also came out of the study was that whilst school heads normally tried to develop and communicate high expectations for student achievement (intellectual stimulation), teachers at the two schools preferred school heads who expressed the same idea by asking teachers to set such expectations themselves and have the discretion to craft strategies to achieve set goals. For example, this is what one teacher said was told by his school head.

'You are in charge. You know what your learners need to succeed. Do whatever you can. I will always support you.'

When he said this I felt great, respectable, responsible and trusted. Though I am not very senior in the school hierarchy, I felt I was seen as a senior by the school head. I also felt I was not just a teacher, I was a partner in this journey of teaching and learning in the school (Mr Zembe from school A).

Mr Zembe went on to say that if expectations he set for himself were not met, the head would sit down with him to discuss challenges and plans to overcome the challenges. In interviews at both school A and B, teachers said they preferred this approach because they said it diluted a 'commanding tone' associated with a head setting the high expectations for teachers and replaced it with a sense of empowerment, responsibility, trust and feelings of owning the greater part of the process. This finding is in line with earlier findings by Mary Parker Follet in her well-publicised research publication; 'The giving of orders' who pointed the pitfalls of giving orders to subordinates. She said that when a worker is given an order s/he does not agree with by the boss, the worker addressed feels that his/her self-respect is attacked, that one of his/her most inner sanctuaries is invaded (Nitin, 1995). Effective instructional leaders work collaboratively with teachers and the head and the teacher are all learners in the process.

D. We Are a Strong Team

During Group interviews and interviews at school A, teachers said the school head encouraged all teachers to teach topics of their own choice from the syllabi to grade sevens as a way of preparing them for terminal examinations. This was done towards the examinations date. At school B, teachers mentioned peer supervision done by all teachers followed by an after supervision conference. A teacher from School be had this to say;

> We sometimes do group class tours and also peer supervision. I did not like it first but I now realise that it is very helpful. I am now very confident in my teaching. My teaching has also been enriched by observations and comments from my colleagues. Staff relations have also improved because of the sense of trust, professionalism and team work that has engulfed our school. As a school we are such a strong team of educators (Mrs Raj of school B).

The researcher also checked the staff development record books and detailed peer supervision and group tour reports were found. This boosted the researcher's confidence in the reliability of the interview data. Data from the two schools points to strong team work and distributed leadership management structures that facilitated teacher collegiality and collaboration leading to effective teaching. Also, teachers were very positive about this approach which they saw as transparent and encouraged professional debates that generated new insights about best instructional leadership behaviours.

E. Life-Long Learning

Teachers also felt that school heads that facilitate staff development programmes in and outside the school, were innovative and encouraged creativity in teaching (Intellectual stimulation) facilitated effective teaching in the schools. For example in a focus group discussion one teacher at school B said,

> Whilst we have a schedule for staff development in the school and attend cluster and district level staff development and workshops, staff development at our school happens almost daily via our WhatsApp group. It all started with the head positing very enriching articles on this group and eventually it became a culture of everyone in the group. The social media platform has become a strong pillar of professional development around instructional leadership in the school. Social media has now pervaded the whole school system. Teachers have groups where they share with parents of each class the positive teaching learning experiences of their classes. There is also a group for sports where all willing parents are participants. This has worked wonders in terms of parental involvement. As a result, our teaching and learning will never be the same because of the rich

information we share on these platforms (Mrs Fana from school B).

All Group interviews at the two schools also singled out the frequent visits by the school heads formally assessing their work or simply discussing teaching issues related to their classes. In the process, if challenges were raised the school heads would quickly act on them. The researcher verified these claims by checking the frequency of supervision stamps in teachers' schemes of work. The researcher noted that schemes of work record books were supervised by the school head, deputy or Teacher In Charge (TIC) after every two weeks.

Talking about frequent supervision and staff development in group and semi-structured interviews, teachers said they felt reassured and motivated by these instruction supportive behaviours. Teachers understood these instructional behaviours which may be taken as individual consideration behaviours as a sign that the school heads had keen interest in the teachers' work, honoured their hard work and were eager to identify with the progress of their classes. From the data presented here, it may be suggested that teachers see school heads who open up and broaden professional growth and development as good instructional leaders

The various personnel development initiatives mentioned may also be seen as a departure from seeing quality instructional as a product created by vigorous inspections to seeing it as a process that can only be enhanced by quality input like teachers driven by lifelong learning culture, an achievement culture, and the leader's consideration behaviours.

F. Thank You

In both semi-structured interviews and Group interviews, participants talked of incentives which they said heightened their zeal to teach. What participants said in groups is best captured by the following verbatim quote from one of the teachers at school A below.

> Money incentives have since stopped but our head used to give us produce from the school garden. Where he saw that it was necessary, he would at times allow us to knock off early particularly on Fridays. He also praises teachers and learners who do well in their school work at school gatherings and sometimes there are prizes given to teachers and learners. One of his biggest incentives was a generous, smile and a heart-felt thank you. These simple words created positive feelings in us which transformed our attitudes about teaching and our commitment to the school and all its activities and programmes (Mr Chuma from school A).

From what the teacher said, inspirational motivation behaviours by the school heads generated incentives for teaching and learning for the teachers and learners. This created a positive school climate that promoted healthy working habits which in turn fostered effective teaching and

learning. Drawing from the quote above, it is critical to note that whilst most schools in Zimbabwe are going through a painful phase of economic meltdown and their finances are in bad shape, valuable incentives that promote good instructional practice for teachers and learners may be as cheap as just a praise, a smile and a heart-felt thank you. Still on the same issue, whilst extrinsic motivation is good, Lunenburg and Ornstein (2012) reminds educational leaders of the potentially powerful role played by intrinsic motivation to enhance job satisfaction. Making teachers and learners feel good and rewarded by their good work intrinsically motivates them to perform at a higher level.

XI. THE DARK SIDE OF INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP

Whilst a lot of research has a strong bias towards the positive side of research phenomena, the researcher is of the opinion that there is equally good lessons that can be learnt from what we do not do right. As such, the researcher was also interested in school head instructional leadership behaviours that teachers perceived as hindering effective teaching and learning and why teachers held such perceptions.

A. Retired On the Job School Head

During Group interviews at the two schools, teachers raised concern about school heads who stayed in town and commuted to their rural schools. For example this is what was said by Mr Solo a teacher from school A;

What is normal with our school head is to come late almost daily and leave in a hurry well before dismissal time; leaving us teachers behind working on our own. A couple of teachers have joined him and even learners now seem to see no value in maintaining punctuality or taking learning seriously. If a head does not value his or her job, at times you end up questioning your own priorities as a teacher and say, is it possible for a teacher to value teaching and learning more than the school head? I think teaching is a call, particularly in harsh rural areas. You have to work beyond the call of duty if you want to produce any meaningful result and visiting heads are a big stumbling block in this endeavour (Mr Solo from school A).

From the data, teachers see school heads who lack commitment and take school leadership and management as a part time job as hindering effective instructional leadership. This is in line with findings by Gurr (2019, p.80) that research suggested that most principals devoted relatively little time to instructional leadership.

It may also be inferred from what Mr Solo said that the, 'I don't care' attitude by some school heads also breeds a retired on the job culture in the school that militates against effective instructional leadership.

B. Managerial Head

At school A, teachers disapproved of a head who is obsessed with management at the expense of leadership and instructional leadership in particular. This is what one participant said;

Our school head is either attending meetings out of school or is in the office the whole day. Doing what? No one knows. We normally see our school head when he enters his office and will see him again when he leaves the office for an unknown destination. On many occasions he is too busy to attend assemblies. His 'big' office 'is very far from us' and we rarely visit. The head I think, has no contact with teaching and learning activities going on in the school (Mrs Tom from school B).

Teachers at both school A and B said both the managerial head and the aloof head were a hindrance to effective teaching and learning because of their quarrelsome behaviour each time they met teachers. Bush (2015) asserts that managerialism may be a danger to the core values of effective management. Teachers said they teach best in a friendly and peaceful school atmosphere where the head respected all teachers and in turn earned their respect as a result.

C. The Incompetent Head

Teachers from the two schools also reiterated that a head who is not conversant with syllabi content and instructional strategies for different grades did not promote competent teaching in the school. In line with this a teacher Mrs Tom at school B gave an example of an Early Childhood Development (ECD) teacher. She said;

With our first EDC teacher, ECD learners spent the whole teaching day singing and sleeping. …she said that is what ECD learners should do according to what they learn at college these days. However, when the teacher left and a new teacher came in, we all then saw the difference. The ECD teacher misled us, and also the ignorant school head about teaching and learning of ECD learners for a long time... I think an effective school head must be knowledgeable about curriculum content for all grades (Mrs Tom from school B)

From the above quote, instructional leadership incompetence may be a big blow to the head's instructional leadership efforts.

Out of interest, the researcher perused schemes of work and other teaching records for school heads whose instructional leadership behaviours were alleged to be hindering effective teaching. The researcher noted that there was no systematic record keeping on the part of both the school heads and teachers. Lesson observation was rarely done and supervision critiques had no standard format. The researcher contends that effective record keeping is critical for effective instructional leadership. As such, claims of incompetence levelled against some school heads were confirmed by the archaic instructional leadership documentation in their offices.

D. Insecurity

Teachers also said school heads that do not protect them from violent parents and antagonistic politicians (Individual considerations) disheartened their teaching spirit. Incidents of teacher victimisation were reported at the two schools as prime drivers of teacher insecurity which hindered them from performing their duties to the maximum. In a focus group discussion, one teacher said,

You end up not teaching but just passing a duty as a way of buying your safety. You cannot do anything if the head or the community is not supportive and there is an anti-teacher activism atmosphere (Mr Solo from school A).

From a transformational leadership perspective, the teachers seemed to be voicing their displeasure with school heads that lacked individual consideration behaviours. Not attending to teachers' personal worries created an insecure working environment that militates against best instructional leadership in a school.

XII. RECOMMENDATIONS

- School heads may need to be staff developed on instructional leadership.
- It is recommended that school heads should spend the greatest part of their time at their work station or better reside at their work stations to afford themselves enough time to monitor instructional processes at their schools.
- School heads should aim to transform teachers' attitudes, beliefs and values in their instructional leadership.
- School heads should create obligations in teachers by modelling best instructional leadership behaviours.
- School heads should prioritise social aspects of teachers' lives which are a critical factor in creating school climates where effective teaching and learning thrives.

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