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LEADERSHIP OF LEARNING AND CHANGE FOR SUCCESSFUL LEARNING OUTCOME IN HISTORY EDUCATION

ABSTRACT

Managing History learning and teaching in schools of South Africa over the years has been characterised by diverse opinions regarding the causes of learner underperformance, who is to be held responsible over learner performance and possible leadership influence on History learner performance. In addressing the problem of underperformance in History from a leadership point of view, the researchers were guided by the managerial leadership and humanism learning theories. The selected qualitative methodology adopted an ethnographic design to establish hidden inferences. A sample of thirty participants comprising the provincial coordinator for History, subject advisor, principals, departmental heads, teachers and learners was obtained based on the availability of History-offering schools in the study area. Data collection was mainly through interviews and meta-analysis of documents. Both deductive and inductive reasoning was applied using ATLAS.ti version 8.4 and thematic analysis in the data analyses process. The findings suggest several managerial leadership measures ranging from policy to practice. These amongst others include the recommendation that History as part of social science should be separated in totality from Geography.

Keywords: *Leadership; school management; learning outcome, history educators; learner performance; learning and teaching.*

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE PROBLEM

Managing the learning and teaching of the subject History in South African schools over the last two decades has been characterised by a plethora of opinions from different stakeholders on the macro, meso and micro levels of the school management. The range of opinions stretches to the role of the past in humanities and of History in the national culture, the discipline and the nature of its influence on what History should teach (Little, 1990) as well as whose responsibility it is over learner performance in general, but specifically in History. In recent times, History education has become a rallying point in countries such as Nigeria

and South Africa (SA), at a time when many young people query the relevance of History in their lives and in the communities at large (DBE, 2018), followed by the unavailability of History educators to teach History. This could be detrimental in the schooling system where effectiveness and efficiency in the delivery of learning and teaching has made way for laisse-faire and subsequently poor learner performance.

The dilemma of learner underperformance in general faced by the management of some schools of South Africa, according to Nwati (2015), is being debated in circles among stakeholders within the macro, meso and micro levels. Such curiosity on its own, shows the intensity of how much stakeholders want to deal with this problem that has affected SA and the world at large for several decades. Notwithstanding, a brief review of the historical condition of SA would suggest ongoing discrepancies in History learner performance, which is largely due to the socio-economic imbalance between and amongst the black majority and the white minority. Nwati (2015) in fact indicates that among the challenges identified as causes of underperformance, the lack of resources is the most prominent. Mestry (2017) however includes the educators' pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) resulting from the appointment of unqualified educators as well as the non-participation by parents. But what seems certain from a leadership perspective according to Leithwood, Harris and Hopkins (2020) is that educators, parents and learners must collectively play a pivotal role in learning and teaching while principals as instructional leaders motivate and improve working conditions.

Moreover, Taylor (2008) says that the South African school sector can be categorised under high cost, high participation and a low-quality system. This is because from a macro leadership perspective, South Africa, similar to many other African countries including Ghana, Kenya and Nigeria, invest over 15% of the country's budget on education. It is expected therefore that leadership at meso and micro levels respectively would make adequate use of the available resources to facilitate learning and learner performance thereof. In so doing, the right environment for learning and teaching would be created by leadership for instance through proper management of the curriculum, monitoring and evaluating educators to name but a few, which varies from one school to another. With underperformance being a challenging phenomenon in most rural and township schools of South Africa (Du Plessis & Mestry, 2019), it is believed that the different managerial leadership alterations through policy and practice at the various levels would address the problem. The purpose of the study therefore is to derive possible leadership influence on learning and teaching of History for a positive outcome.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature section is structured to provide clarity on the relevance and nature by which leadership influences learner academic performance. Since the demise of apartheid, a key legislation (South African School Act 84, of 1996) gave considerable attention to school management and leadership, recognising their significance in a well-designed system, which would enhance the school and all its processes (Bush & Glover, 2016). In this study, we saw it necessary to spell out who does what and when by observing a formal structure of school leadership that ranges from top to bottom. In that respect, Heystek (2014) says the role and prospects of senior school leaders in each school could differ and the different contextual roles determine the extent to which the school leader interchanges from strategic (leadership) activities to organisational (managerial) activities during an ordinary school day. Seemingly, based on the seven strong claims by Leithwood *et al.* (2020) about successful school, there is an indirect but strong influence on learner achievement in a more centralised system. Louis *et*

al. (2010) therefore explain that most performing schools have a high level of collaboration with other school stakeholders as opposed to underperforming schools where there is low-level involvement. Such practices would work even better in a school climate where the managerial leadership theory is considered as a basic element for a successful learner performance.

Furthermore, Makgato and Mudzanani (2019) explain that the success of any school depends on the type of leadership in the school. That is, the current school leaders to some extent is expected to perform multiple functions when compared to leaders of the old centralised system. These functions among others include managerial, instructional, counsellor, arbitrator, curriculum and advisory roles. Thus, Leithwood *et al.* (2020) argue on the link between quality leadership and school performance, the conclusion arrived at is rather a contention as to whether such relationships really exist. And if they do, at what levels is leadership involved in attaining positive outcome for learners. Despite the contention that there is insufficient statistical evidence to support the relationship between school leadership and specific learner's academic performance, researchers such as Mestry (2017) and Leithwood *et al.* (2020) have variously alluded to the fact that school leadership quality indirectly influence teacher's effectiveness and learners' academic performance thereof.

In the school environment therefore, the core business of the leader would be the success of the school by making learning and teaching enjoyable and effective, involving all stakeholders including learners and parents. This explains why Coetzee and Van Niekerk (2015) emphasised on yet another leadership approach though closely related to the previously identified, which is to create a school climate conducive to learning and teaching as a prerequisite for good school academic performance. Notwithstanding, according to Leithwood *et al.* (2020), learners' cognitive, social and emotional growth is influenced to a greater extent by other factors such as the socio-economic influences, features of the home and relationships between the home and the school that could either be negative or positive. Therefore, besides factors within the school, especially at the level of the classroom, other factors outside the school equally matter for substantial change in learners' academic achievement in History. The other ways by which leadership influences learning and teaching outcome particularly in History is what these researchers seek to uncover.

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: THE MANAGERIAL LEADERSHIP AND HUMANISM LEARNING THEORIES

This section analyses the managerial and humanism learning theories by elaborating on how much influence they have in enhancing learner performance in History as a subject. According to Bush and Leithwood (2013) it is basically a top to bottom practice, with authorities at the macro level closely linked with more formal roles of policy making, while the rest (meso and micro leaders) do the implementation. The managerial leadership theory assumes that the duty of a leader ought to be on functions, tasks and behaviours to which if these roles are well executed, it follows that the work of other leaders would be facilitated. Such an ideological conceptualisation is certainly challenging in public schools of South Africa where the Department of Basic Education at the macro level determines the manner in which schools are run, though under very challenging circumstances because of decentralisation in the schooling system. Also, with the humanism learning theory, according to Parson (2013), learning is seen as a personal act to fulfil one's potential. Therefore, by utilising the theory of humanism in teaching, it centralises and privileges the learners. But most importantly, the learning process is expected to be personalised and coordinated by the teacher whose role is

best suited to that of a facilitator or instructional leader with the intention to enhance learner performance.

The link between these theories is not just on learners generating the relevant knowledge, but that it must be powered by managerial interventions on functions, tasks and behaviours. Leaders must therefore consider the context and situation as well as being able to change and consider the circumstances to create the climate and culture for constructive learning and specifically taking the human factor into consideration. The relevance of these theories is that they are both centred around the processes involved in producing value outcome, which is the primary objective of the study. However, though deemed relevant, it must be remembered that the application of these theories would vary from one school to another, be it public or private as well as urban or non-urban schools.

4. DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The qualitative mode of enquiry that is interactive in nature was adopted in an ethnographical design with the aim, according to Maree (2014), to establish the assumption that all human behaviour is intentional and observably designed to understand the reason behind people's actions. Ethnography was therefore used to describe the nature of phenomena by means of a detailed enquiry of individual cases relating to learner performance in History from one individual to another as well as from one school to the other. The sites of the study, which are township schools, were selected in conjunction with considerations such as the location and availability of History offering schools; and learner performance as per the National Senior Certificate (NSC) History examination from 2016 to 2019. The sites comprising 5 selected History offering schools were involved through interviews and meta-analysis of documents. A non-probability purposive sampling strategy was used in the selection of 30 participants who could purposefully inform an understanding of the research problem and illuminate the central phenomenon of the study. Thus, 20 learners particularly those in Grade 12 were selected to obtain first-hand experience. The rationale behind this selection of participants was based on Louis *et al.*'s (2010) notion that in order to determine whether a school is performing or not, learners ought to have been assessed for a minimum of 3 years to show consistency in either underperformance or performance. The rest of the participants comprised 1 provincial subject coordinator, 1 district subject advisor, 2 principals (who have background knowledge in History), 2 departmental heads and 4 educators. Purposive sampling was thus, adopted as a deliberate choice by the researchers.

5. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

As part of the concerns over ethics, no school was associated with either of the variables performance or underperformance that was used in the selection process to ensure that their privacy is maintained. Also, during the presentation of findings, acronyms such as SC for subject coordinator; S. Ad. for subject advisor; P for principal; DH for departmental head; T1S1 for teacher 1 school 1; L1S1 for learner 1 school 1 etc. were used, to represent the participants in order to protect their identities. This was followed by a voluntary participation process to which participants were requested to sign an informed consent form, indicating their acceptance to consciously participate in the study.

Regarding dependability and/or transferability of findings, we considered the fact that too much interaction with the participants might result in conclusions that are subjective in nature.

This could subsequently deprive the qualitative study of the quality of transferability of data to other contexts as well as dependability through the consistency of results. To overcome this dilemma, we ensured that maximum interaction took place only during data collection, while triangulation between the interviews and meta-analysis of documents was made to ensure validity and reliability.

6. ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

In analysing the data, both deductive and inductive reasoning was applied using ATLAS.ti version 8.4 as well as thematic analysis. Deductive reasoning was applicable with the original data based on existing literature, while inductive reasoning allowed new concepts, themes and ideas to emerge. In doing this, the researchers examined the selected data and performed coding and category construction, based on the data characteristics, to uncover themes pertinent to the phenomenon. The data analysis further adopted an idiographic process that starts with an iterative and detailed examination from one transcript to another. The data set was then loaded into the ATLAS.ti software for the actual analysis process. This was followed by the allocation of codes and quotations, detecting associations and links or relationships that would constitute preliminary interpretations. The initial notes were then transformed into emerging categories and themes.

The main research question therefore is "what are the possible influences of leadership on the learning and teaching of History for a positive learning outcome?
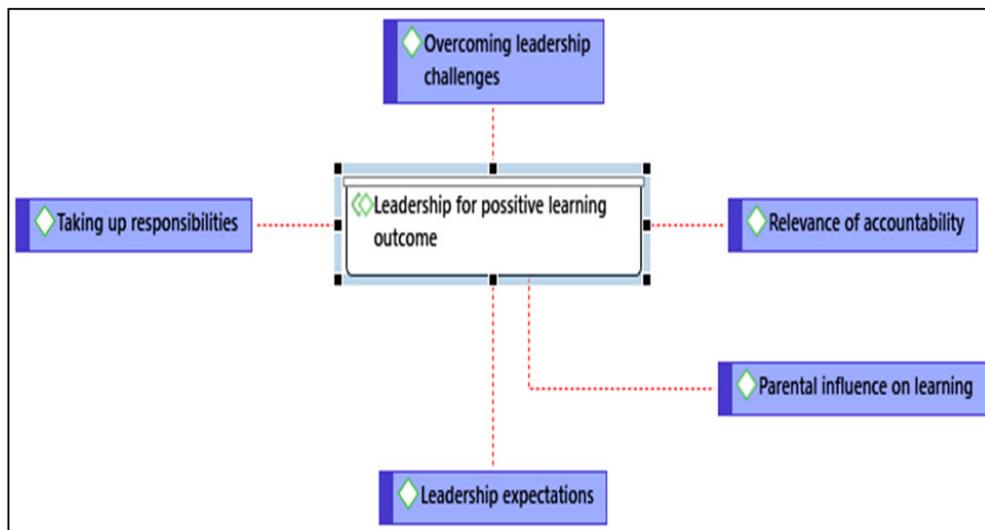

Figure 1. Leadership influences on learning outcome

From the above figure 1, it shows some degree of uniqueness in all the categories indicating that the leadership influences could be derive at various levels of managerial leadership. The categories identified above comprise ways by which leadership could influence learning and teaching for a possible outcome in History Education. In the analysis process, each of these main categories were expanded to include other minor categories as indicated in Table 1 below:

Table 1: Main and sub-categories of leadership influence on learning outcome

Theme	Main categories	Sub-categories
Possible influences of leadership on the learning & teaching of History for a positive outcome	Leadership expectations	- Eliminate streaming system - Make History compulsory - Award scholarship to History learners
	Performing leadership responsibilities	- Play multi-functional roles - timeous school visits/intervention - recruitment of History teachers
	Overcoming leadership challenges	- Progressed learners - lack of pedagogical content knowledge - geographical barriers
	Parental influence on learning	- exclude learners from house chores - Child headed families - Constant communication with management
	The relevance of accountability	- unhappy over accountability practices - Wake up call for teachers Blame shifting by stakeholders

The above table comprises the themes of the study, the main and sub-categories. A detailed analysis as indicated on the table is presented below.

6.1 Leadership expectation in the learning of History

An analysis of the empirical findings through interview reveals that one of the expectations from a leadership perspective is the reiteration of the need for History to become compulsory. Besides History becoming compulsory, it is the expectation of some school leaders that learners be given an opportunity to choose their learning subjects including History as a matter of choice. This is against the assumption by some participants that in cases where learners are influenced by authorities, it has often resulted in the recommendation of mostly underperforming learners to take History as a subject. In a review of the interview, participant Sub. A indicates that;

> in schools where there is no streaming, a learner can do Maths, Physics, History. But with streaming we restrict that, but then, History will only be for those leaners who are struggling, or those who are dropouts from Maths and Physics.

Should this be the case, History would be portrayed as a dumping ground or easy to pass subject for learners who are poorly performing in other subjects. What further comes to mind under such circumstances is that learners going for History are academically weak. Consequently, without leadership influence learners are left with no direction. This is what the Humanism Learning Theory emphasises, as reiterated by Parson (2014), that as humans, we ought to have control over our destiny, of the things we do and say. The implication behind this theory in dealing with learners who are mostly minor is that though the theory warrants learners to make their own decision, it would work best if learners are directed rather than guided by leaders because they cannot make informed decisions on their own. As part of

the leadership approach to fulfil this expectation, an analysis of findings from the interview and meta-analysis of documents suggest that plans are on the way to award scholarships to learners studying History as a form of motivation. This is contrary to the opinion by another participant (DH) that;

> should History become compulsory, everyone including the best of our learners will be doing History.

To our understanding, should History become compulsory, learners across all disciplines would participate thereby raising the chances of learner performance in History to be improved from ordinary level 2 and 3, which seems to be a norm for most schools in the township areas, to level 4 and 5 pass target. This of course is affirmed from a meta-analysis of documents of the matric results for History where the study area shows that with the exception of some quintile 4 and 5 schools, most of the schools are performing at 30–39 and 40–49 which is at a level 3 and 4 pass rate respectively. Thus, as indicated in the managerial leadership pyramid, top school officials could facilitate the work of others by performing their responsibilities which among others include motivation and guidance.

6.2 Performing leadership responsibilities

In the context of this category about performing leadership responsibilities to facilitate learning for a possible learner performance in History, various analyses were deduced. In an individual interview, participant P2 acknowledged that leadership is diverse because;

> one has to play different roles for example the psychologist to learners, a parent, a teacher, and a lawyer in trying to raise the curiosity of the learners.

This suggests that leadership entails multi-functional activities. Another concern brought to the attention of these researchers by participant SC is the role of the subject advisor (subject specialist) who as part of the responsibility must make regular visits to the schools to ensure that policy implementation through learning and teaching takes place. As affirmed by the teacher participant T4S4;

> it is the responsibility of the subject advisors to consult with educators by regularly visiting the school to understand their challenges regarding certain topics and address the problem for instance, through an analytical intervention.

Beside the intervention provided in dealing with challenging topics, another form of leadership role played according to participant T1S1 is to monitor educators. This is based on the belief that *If teachers are not monitored, they will bunk classes*. Therefore, such visits are necessary for curriculum management and implementation.

Notwithstanding the unfortunate thing about monitoring in township and rural schools is that most of these schools have only one History teacher who doubles as the departmental head (DH) or in the worst case scenario where the DH is not trained to teach History. Thus, the act of internal curriculum monitoring becomes unrealistic. This finding contradicts Mendels' (2012) view on curriculum leadership where the role of the principal teacher among others entails monitoring of learning and teaching activities, giving feedback to educators and guiding them. Therefore, the phrase; *I cannot monitor myself* as expressed by a participant (T2S2) under the above circumstances must be taken seriously by management to ensure proper monitoring of the curriculum.

Unfortunately, the issue of resources is identified as a possible barrier towards fulfilling these tasks. A synthesis of findings according to (Nwati, 2015) suggests that due to unavailability of physical resources such as money, various forms of assistance required by educators are irregular and repeatedly take the form of crash courses to familiarise educators with current policies for implementation rather than adequate training for teaching and learning. This is affirmed by one of the participants who in an interview says;

> they see you once or twice a year whereas they are expected to frequent the school, especially these underperforming schools or the schools that are having poor results (T1S1).

Based on the managerial leadership theory, one would then say leadership at the higher level is failing the educators who depend on them so much. Because the process of learning and teaching must go on, it becomes the duty of the school-based management to take full responsibility based on the managerial leadership tendencies.

6.3 Overcoming leadership challenges

In trying to derive ways to enhance learner performance in History, there is a need to look at the challenges faced by leadership at the helm of learning and how to overcome the challenges. The issue of progressed learners is one amongst many challenges facing the leadership of most parts of South African schools. In trying to accommodate the less privileged or "the poorest of the poor" within the communities, the problem of progressed learners has remained unresolved. A synthesis of this view with existing literature perhaps clarifies why Hompashei (2018) says that South Africa lags far behind other countries on learner performance due to its dysfunctional leadership in many schools. This has long-term effects on the country's economy, looking at the articulation by Voogt and Roblin (2012) which suggests that the dynamic changes in the types of jobs demanded by the corporate world poses huge challenges to educational systems that are expected to prepare young people for a job that does not yet exist. Preparing these young people, which in most cases rest on the shoulders of the educators, requires some degree of collaboration with leadership at all levels including the school. In an individual interview participant T4S4 elucidates saying;

> the progressed learners have this mentalities that even when they fail, they will be pushed to the next class. As a result, they are not putting in enough effort.

A similar sentiment was obtained during a focus group interview in one of the underperforming schools where L1S4 says that;

> they pushed us to the next class they will do the same again.

Judging from the above point of view, it undoubtedly reveals how much of a threat it is to the growth and development of the learners, but particularly to the leaders who are responsible for moulding these learners while adhering to the policy of progression. This is important as the non-committal attitude of these learners points to a complete lack of curiosity that partly contributes towards their underperformance. Therefore, it is important to reiterate the role of the Humanism Learning Theory by Parson (2014), which urges that though learners have a greater control over their learning, the system would work better for learners with a high level of motivation and curiosity to learn as well as self-actualisation.

Also, selecting the right educator to teach History in more remote schools is another pertinent challenge to leadership. This is important as quite often the right persons are unwilling to be redeployed to teach in these areas. Unable to select the right candidate, the quality of learning and teaching outcome becomes jeopardised. Beside the unwillingness by educators to go into remote areas, analyses from interviews with departmental heads and principals suggest that school leaders are generally faced with the problem of unavailability of qualified educators to teach History. After selecting the readily available candidate, a more serious challenge is presented, which is to implement the curriculum. In an interview with one of the leaders (S. Ad), he expressed dissatisfaction saying;

> in textbooks we include everything, while the annual teaching plan (ATP) will require educators to focus on specific areas. But there is this educator who was teaching everything in the textbook.

Another participant (DH) expressed a similar opinion, saying;

> I have observed that most of the educators that am supporting, are teaching in the classroom not what they have been taught or what is expected of them.

Therefore, though the issue of PCK has long been identified by researchers such as Carl and Negumbo (2017), in terms of subject specific content, the problem has hardly been addressed as evidence from the above interviews clearly shows that besides the unavailability of History educators, those that are available lack the required PCK in History. In addressing this challenge, school leaders are required to perform their responsibility as emphasised in managerial leadership theory by "head hunting" the right candidate without compromising quality.

6.4 Parental influence on learning

Data collected during interviews indicate that the leadership role provided by parents either directly through the SGB or indirectly through the learners, varied from one parent to another based on the geographical location and the performance level of the school as determined by the socio-economic factor. As deduced from the interview, for schools at the centre of the townships or urban areas, maximum support is often received through moral and financial contribution compared to the schools away from townships where this type of assistance to leadership is barely available. From the perspective of the learners, two contrasting views were obtained representing performing and underperforming scenarios. While participant L1S4 from a performing school says;

> my parents play a crucial role to improve the rate of my performance because at home they have excused me from doing house chores to focus on my schoolwork.

Another view (L3S1) from an underperforming school in a non-urban settlement says;

> *they do not help us, I am on my own.*

Therefore, if the duty of a leader is on functions, tasks and behaviours as postulated by Bush and Leithwood (2013) in respect to the managerial leadership theory, it follows that parents in their collaborative leadership effort could give full support to the principal who is at the centre of school management by assisting learners at home and attending meetings when invited.

In trying to determine the influence by parents on learning from the perspective of educators, it was revealed by participant T1S3 that;

> to be a parent in this school can be a nightmare due to the constant summons by management. In all, the school tries to maintain constant communication which would help to drive home expectations of both the school and the learners.

Inferring from the viewpoint of the managerial leadership theory, it emphasises active involvement of the entire management by means of collaborative interaction to construct knowledge compared to what Warnich and Meyer (2013) describe as knowledge transmission that depict the transfer of knowledge from educators to learners. On this note it could be deduced that the theory aligns with a school climate of the magnitude where parents are willing to make themselves available when invited by the school management to answer for the deeds and misdeeds of their children as opposed to scenarios where parents are hardly available either at school or at home.

As established in this category, it could be concluded that the availability of parents to lead and guide their children in the learning process, is vastly determined by the geographical location and the financial status of the parents. This has been the bone of contention to some researchers such as Nwati (2015) and Eleanor (2019) who argue that underperformance rests on the fact that a lot of attention is diverted from the teacher pedagogical content knowledge (PCK), to aspects on parental involvement and finance. Consequently, although the lack of PCK in History educators has been identified as a primary concern on numerous occasions, the influence of other factors such as the geographical influence on the school and educator, as well as the leadership role of the parents are all important ways to influence learning. This is important because an analysis of the findings suggest that collaborative teaching has proven to work for most schools at the centre of the township compared to schools away from the township.

6.5 Reiterating the relevance of accountability

In the contemporary school environment, concerns on whether the levels of accountability for teachers should be tightened or relaxed and limited to self-accountability have been raised. This is because of some educators who feel insecure that they are being investigated and therefore not trusted. In a school environment, it is the responsibility of the curriculum leader to supervise educators in the completion of a designated ATP which often varies from one school to another. During individual interviews all the participants acknowledged the existence of a unique accountability system ranging from schools, district, province and to the national level. However, they differ in terms of their feelings about the processes involved. Participant T1S2 for instance indicates saying;

> we do have accountability systems from the school to the provincial, though unhappy with the way it is conducted.

Regarding the different levels as indicated above, it depicts some degree of hierarchy within the system that takes the shape of a pyramid as emphasised in the managerial leadership theory which stresses a top to bottom leadership approach. For instance, at the level of the school, the subject teacher reports to the DH, who then reports to the deputy principal and lastly to the principal in a collaborative fashion. The relevance of this process, as indicated by a participant (Sub. A), often lies on the opinion that some teachers need to be called to order to perform their responsibilities.

Subsequently, teachers with such reckless behaviour often end up playing victim of inspection. Unfortunately for most schools involved in the study, findings reveal that no proper accountability process is done either due to insufficient staff or the absence of a qualified leader who specialises in History as a subject as opposed to social science where Geography tends to dominate. In an interview, participant T1S1 says;

> according to my understanding reporting to a higher authority is a wake-up call to do your job efficiently. Unfortunately for me I am the only History teacher and whatever I give to the principal he never questions.

Moreover, the decision over which teacher is called to account is in most cases determined by the pass target and the delivery of the ATP, which also varies from one school or district to another. This form of accountability, however, has not entirely been welcomed by some educators (T2S2 & T2S3) whose views have been reiterated in the Humanism Learning Theory which holds that besides taking control of their learning, learners should equally be held accountable over their learning and performance thereof (Parson, 2014). In view of learner pass rate target, it was deduced as a common practice that at the end of every term, the educators under the direction of the DH do an item analysis of results to determine the various levels of pass rate that ranges from levels 1–7. A more detailed analysis in this regard shows that discussions are often held with educators based on the outcome of the analysis of learner performance. Participant DH thus says;

> in my department, after the analysis of results at the end of the term, I will call a formal curriculum meeting where educators are accounting to me as the DH as to what went wrong.

Thus, accountability at the level of the school, though complex, is vital as it enables particularly the educators to be on their toes, knowing that positive results in terms of pass rate target is expected of them at the end of every term. Besides acting as an instrument to monitor educators, accountability must always be seen and embraced as part of a process of support and development. To the interpretation of these researchers therefore, educators perhaps see accountability as a form of control or inspection rather than a support system.

7.   DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The different ways in which leadership influences learner performance in History, as identified in section 6.1 to 6.5, range from general to specific involving all the stakeholders from macro to micro levels. These influences, which seems unique, are all inter-related to leadership in different ways.

First, the selection of educators and the process of learning and teaching throughout the interview process proved to be problematic for History as a subject. While in most subject areas educators may be available but not have the minimum requirement, the case of History in most instances different as educators are often unavailable as determined by the geographical location of the school. Apparently, this is because educators often prefer to work in more advanced and developed city centres compared to working in townships and rural areas. Even when they do accept positions in the townships, they often do not live there, which explains why at some point, underqualified educators are hired. A synthesis with existing literature by Ogundele *et al.* (2014) and Taylor (2008) on the quality of the educator shows that the quality of any educational system depends to a greater extent on the quality of educators in terms of academic and professional qualifications, know-how as well as their competency

and dedication. Thus, an indication that leadership owes to the school and department, the responsibility of hiring the right educator for efficient and quality learning outcome.

Also, the combination of History and Geography to form what is known as social science, was identified as one of the major problems facing History as a subject area. This is because most educators focus more on Geography than History during training, as confirmed by the researchers – all of whom are lecturers and former lecturers in History. The above challenging situation was previously identified by Carl and Negumbo (2017) who explain that in some instances at the senior phase, the social science educator is only trained in geography and therefore not interested or spends minimum time in the teaching of History as part of social science. However, as a possible managerial leadership solution, educators from other subject areas most of whom specialised in geography are often converted to teach History, a practice that comes with huge consequences on the learning outcome. This was further affirmed by another participant (T4S4) that;

> I am the only History teacher. Though my HoD wants to help, she is only a geography teacher and lacks the skills in teaching History.

Thus, if learner performance is greatly influenced by the pedagogical content knowledge of the educators, as suggested by Ogundele, *et al.* (2014), it follows that more training or equal content knowledge needs to be provided to the social science teachers during training.

Interestingly, however in respect to the lack of adequate human resources, is the constant conflict of interest or opposing views of participants. For instance, while some participants from a rural or deep township area allude to the unavailability or shortage of History educators resulting in time management issues, those at the heart of the township express some degree of contentedness with the available History educators, which allows for maximum engagement. Speaking of engagement, Taylor (2008) calls on the need for a change in the attitude of educators, from one which blames their situation on external motives like the lack of resources and support, to one in which they feel in control to improve their own situation by exercising innovativeness and positive energy. An example of such an innovative attribute was obtained from the findings which reveals that;

> the use of WhatsApp as a communication tool ease collaborative teaching with colleagues of other schools (T1S1).

Thus, the use of various social media methods of communication as this one could be re-emphasised to help in addressing the problem of inability to meet with subject advisors on a regular basis.

8. CONCLUSION

This study explored the various ways in which leadership could influence learner performance in History, as pointed out in sections 6.1 to 6.5, which range from general to specific, involving all the stakeholders from macro to micro levels. These influences that all seems unique, are inter-related as guided by the managerial leadership and the humanism learning theory. Therefore, because of the existing differences in the leadership approach, which varies from one school to another as well as one geographical area to another, school leaders, as indicated by Heystek (2014), can occasionally interchange from strategic to organisational activities for a smooth functionality of the learning and teaching process. This is important as the humanism learning theory cautions that stakeholders must be watchful about the risk

of depending on standardised protocols in dealing with related challenges that are often very complex and rather improvised as it is usually the case with leaders in some private institutions. Thus, although managerial leadership has an indirect influence, it remains an important determinant of learner performance in History.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

An overview of the History educators related queries allude to the fact that a handful of Geography student educators are compelled only to take part in one History module in the second year of their studies, which has proven to be insufficient. It is therefore not surprising that when they get appointed at the end of their course as History educators and not geography, they are unable to deliver. As a recommendation from a leadership perspective therefore, History could be separated in totality from Geography as part of social science at both the General Education and Training (GET) phase and Further Education Training (FET) phase to serve as independent subjects.

Another recommendation is that, besides making History compulsory, the Department could begin by identifying prospective History learners at an early stage (Senior phase) and place them on scholarship, rather than letting them go for History only at a later stage (FET phase), which might be construed as an escape route subject for poorly performing learners. This is crucial as experience from these researchers through classroom practice suggest that most of the learners admitted for a BEd programme in History are often not knowledgeable about the subject. Consequently, because most of the schools in the area are socio-economically less privileged, school leaders can attempt to motivate and create curiosity in the learners to learn in the absence of parental support and other important resources through timely changes and interventions, while managing the school organisational goals efficiently.

Alternatively, the humanism theory advocates for learners to construct knowledge of their own, but not without leadership intervention or guidance by the educator. Thus, as postulated by Kotter (2018), while it is important to recognise the differences between leadership and management, it is equally imperative to acknowledge that they both have complementary strengths. It is hereby recommended that besides influencing (leadership) decisions, school leaders such as the principal could support the conditions under which quality learning and teaching is attained (management) thereby fostering a positive learning outcome. In other words, school principals could consider taking up managerial leadership functions rather than just management that limits their responsibilities to implementation alone.

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