Democratic Leadership Style and its influence on the Creation of Conducive Teaching and Learning Environments in Colleges of Education in Zambia

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Abstract

The study investigated democratic leadership style to determine its applicability and influence towards the creation of conducive teaching and learning environments in two private and two government owned colleges of education in Zambia. Democratic leadership style has demonstrated to be one of the most effective leadership styles whose efficacy in various organisations is conspicuous in good performance, job satisfaction and motivation of workers, among others. Using mixed method approach, data was generated from 372 participants randomly and purposively selected from principals, vice principals, academic and non-academic staff, Ministry of Education officials, directors and student populace. Employing explanatory sequential design, quantitative data was analysed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) tool version 23 and Pearson's chi-squared test to assess the significant levels of variables as well as get inferences while qualitative data was analysed thematically. The findings illuminated peripheral use of this style of leadership leading to the creation of poor to moderate teaching and learning environments, not conducive for effective teaching and learning. The principal's ineffective utilisation of tenets of democratic leadership in their administration of colleges has resulted in inept application of democratic leadership. The researcher, therefore, argues that the tenets of democratic leadership should be utilised appropriately for effective administration of the colleges.

Key words: leadership, democratic, leadership style, conducive environment, teaching, learning.

1.0 Introduction

Leadership is a famous concept in the vocabulary of many organisations. Members of various organisations are concerned about the leadership prevailing in their contexts. Every organisation, including institutions of learning such as colleges, desire to have a good and effective leadership to boost the smooth running and advancement of their organisations. Despite the lack of a universal definition of the term "leadership", members of various organisations anticipate that those entrusted with the responsibility of administering the affairs of their organisations (leaders) are diligent, transparent and honest when discharging the assigned duties to facilitate the attainment of institutional goals (Comment: citation here). This task is achieved through the use of a particular leadership style, which is the method the leader designates to use when dealing with followers in an institution. In colleges of education, principals select leadership styles which they deem most advantageous to overseeing their institutions in the most befitting manner. . Leadership styles to choose from are as many as leadership concepts (Nsubuga, 2008) and are reliant on what the leader envisions for the institution. However, some leadership styles such as autocratic, democratic and laissez-faire are classical and have been used for a very long time. Besides, a lot of researchers (Mureithi, 2012, Chafwa, 2012, Chowdhury, 2014, Nyeri, 2015) have conducted studies on these styles of leadership to establish their suitability and practicability in various dimensions. This research investigated the democratic leadership style to determine its use, popularity and effectiveness in

administering the affairs of the colleges studied and establish its contribution towards the creation of conducive teaching and learning environments in the colleges.

1.1 Purpose of study

The purpose of the study was to empirically and theoretically investigate the principals' use of democratic leadership style in administering some colleges of education in Zambia and determine its contribution to the creation of conducive teaching and learning environments in the colleges of study.

1.2 Objectives

The study was guided by the following objectives:

1. To establish the principals' use of democratic leadership styles in their colleges.
2. To determine the democratic leadership styles' influence on the creation of conducive teaching and learning environments in the colleges of study.
3. To analyse the type of environment created by democratic leadership style in the colleges of study.

2.0 Literature Review

Democratic leadership is one of the most popular leadership styles which most institutions of learning want to be associated with (Isundwa, 2015). In the Zambian context this style of leadership became more famous after the fall of the first republic and rise of multipartism when democratic leadership was introduced in politics of the country (Chikwanda, Masaiti and Banda, 2019) Since then every leader wishes to be associated with democratic leadership and every follower wants to participate in the leadership of their organisations. It is one style that is people-oriented whose focus of power is invested in the whole group with greater interaction taking place within the group (Bhatti, Maithlo, Hashmir & Shaika, 2012). This entails collective execution of leadership functions, which are shared between members of the group and the leader who is regarded as part of the team (Mureithi, 2012). It is one style of leadership which anchors on collaboration, delegation of duties, team work and effective communication. Isundwa (2015) demystifies democratic leadership as the type of leadership characterised by the distribution of power and authority between subordinates and managers to proffer subordinate involvement in decision making. This explanation is exemplified by Adeleye (2015) who describes democratic leadership as leadership where a leader routinely consults and considers the opinion of the subordinates, encourages discussions in the decision-making process and arrives at a decision after popular consent. His description gives a synopsis of what democratic leadership implies. The inclusion of subordinates in decision-making in this manner stimulates interest and a sense of belonging in the subordinates and encourage them to identify themselves more with their leader and institution at large.

Most importantly, the consultation and acceptance of ideas and opinions from group members   accelerate better ideas, create solutions to problems and upsurge productivity

in the institution. As the saying goes, "two minds are better than one." This implies that when creative minds from various group members are integrated great benefits are yielded (Isundwa, 2015). The involvement of members in decision-making enhance collaboration which is a recipe for team building, and cardinal in enhancing productivity, commitment and task accomplishment. Suffice to say, collaboration generates family spirit in the work place and aids in building of respect among members' contribution (Hoyle, 2012).Thus, the democratic leader acts as a coach who, albeit having a final say, gathers information from subordinates before making a decision (Jerotich, 2013).

Furthermore, democratic leadership in various organisations is conspicuous in effective communication. Leaders practicing this leadership style keep key stakeholders informed about what is to be done, how well they are doing and what can be done to improve performance (Robbins & Judge, 2009). Such a leader provides working knowledge to subordinates concerning the intricacies of the institution (Russell, 2011; Puni, Ofesi & Okoe, 2014). This practice by leaders put all members of their organisation in the limelight of organisation activities, vision and mission and boosts their morale. The morale stimulates them to put in the best as it precipitates them to believe that they have a stake in the outcome of the institution (Puni *et al.*, 2014). Correspondingly, democratic leaders exercise top-to-bottom and bottom-to-top patterns of communication where ideas flow from both the top and subordinates, who are given the autonomy to share their ideas, values, opinions and make suggestions to the top management which when necessary are taken on for the betterment of the institution. This step also results in creativity and sense of ownership as each member feels obliged to contribute positively to the growth of the institution and thus, lead to the creation of a conducive working environment. A "conducive environment" in this study refers to a working atmosphere which is responsive to the needs of the subordinates, where the levels of co-operation, networking and collaboration between administrators and other stakeholders exist (Khalid, 2008) to foster attainment of institutional goals.

Authority in this style of leadership is decentralised and it accords subordinates the freedom to participate freely in decision making, determining of policies and implementation of systems and procedures (Russell, 2011; Mullins, 2007) of the institution through delegation of duties by the leader. The leader delegates because he/she believes that naturally people are trustworthy, self-motivated and like responsibility which fosters teamwork (Puni et al., 2014). The delegation of duties and sharing of responsibilities proliferate motivation and job satisfaction in the subordinates. Nsubuga (2008) observes that motivated staff are always looking for better ways of doing their jobs and more concerned with standard outcomes. Moreover, delegation of duties expedites the development of abilities in subordinates and trains them in leadership roles (Thungu, Wandera, Gachiel & Alumande, 2012), which culminates in the development of strong a bond between the management and the subordinate staff. Smith (2016) pointed out that a good democratic leader delegates wisely without losing sight of the fact that he or she bears the crucial responsibility of leadership. By implication, this means that though the leader delegates and allows members to take part in decision making, such a leader holds the final say in all the undertakings of the organisation. Whenever conflicts occur, a democratic leader settles the

conflicts objectively and amicably by addressing the causative factors and not based on personalities. In this way, a fair conflict resolution strategy is employed, which does not leave any of the two parties hurt permanently.

Many studies conducted on this style have attributed this style to good performance in organisations such as banks (Puni et al., 2014) and schools (Chafwa, 2012; Nsubuga, 2008; Oyetunji; 2006). Besides, democratic leadership style has been aligned to job satisfaction (Vrgovic & Pavlovic, 2014; Smith, 2016) motivation and commitment (Chowdhury, 2014; Alghazo & Al-Anazi, 2016) among others. These studies highlighted the positivity of democratic leadership where it is exercised appropriately. However, other researchers have recounted some shortcomings which the style has. Nsubuga (2008) and Oyetunji (2006) have observed negative consequences where the leader fails to utilise suggestions forwarded when making decisions. This weakness is likely to frustrate and demoralise staff who provided the in-put. In addition, the style is noted to be inappropriate during crises when the situation demands on-the-spot decision (Adeleye, 2015). Russell (2011) alluded that this style of leadership works exceptionally well when the focus of what is being undertaken is quality and not quantity or speed. During crises situations, waiting to get other peoples' views may jeopardise the situation, delay urgently needed action and result in disastrous outcomes. By implication, this means that the style works superb when there is sufficient time for brainstorming, developing a plan and voting for the best course of action. In situations where roles are unclear and time limited, the use of this style may result in communication failures and uncompleted projects which may adversely affect the operations of the institution. Suffice to say, the endless meetings render democratic style leaderless and may lead to confusion where consensus remains elusive.

Despite the weaknesses highlighted, it is an effective leadership style which is conducive when the leader is uncertain about some institutional occurrences and needs direction and guidance from the group, and when seeking for fresh ideas for executing new visions. Notwithstanding what has been said, it can be made more effective by equipping the subordinates with working knowledge of the intricacies of the organisation so that at all times subordinates are referring to what they know in order to hasten good performance and thus, assist in creating good working environment. In many organisations, democratic leadership is practiced by involving staff in decision making, which is done through regular meetings and decisions made implemented. It is also exercised by delegation of duties, holding regular meetings as a way of allowing the majority staff to participate in the affairs of the institution. It is as well applied through communicating important information to rightful people at the right time. The primary question asked was: are principals exercising the tenets of democratic leadership style in their administration of the colleges? Does the use of democratic leadership style aid in the creation of conducive teaching and learning environments in the colleges of study?

2.1 Theoretical Framework

The study was informed by two theories – namely, the path-goal and Fiedlers' contingency theories. The Path-goal theory is one of the contingent theories developed by Robert House. The theory explains how the behaviour of a leader influences the performance and

satisfaction of the subordinates (House, 1996).The fundamental principle of the theory is premised on the fact that leadership behaviour should be motivating and satisfying to the extent that it accelerates goal attainment of subordinates and clarifies behaviour that points to the rewards. Good performance is encumbered on the match between leadership style chosen and prevailing situation. The styles to be chosen from range from directive, supportive, participative to achievement-oriented. When good style that fits in the environment is chosen positive results are recorded which satisfy the leader and subordinates.

The second theory was Contingency Theory advanced by Fred Fiedler in 1967. The theory anchors on three elements. The first is leader-member relationship which entails how well the leader and subordinates get along, the amount of loyalty, dependability and support the leader receives from the followers (Hanaagan, 2008). The second is task structure which is the degree to which the job assignments are organised, structured or unstructured (Robbison & Judge, 2009). The third is position power which is exemplified as the power the leader acquires by virtue of their position and the degree to which they exercise this power to influence things in the organisation (Mullins, 2007). Fiedler intimated that the three variables should match with leadership style and situation to provide effective leadership. He opined that a good leader-member relationship, structured task and either high or low position power attracts a favourable situation for effective leadership while poor member-follower relationship, unstructured task and high or low position powers results in unfavourable working environment with negative leader effectiveness. The two theories were used as they fitted in what the study was trying to investigate in trying to establish which leadership style was effectively used and its impact on the creation of conducive teaching and learning environment.

3.0 Methodology

3.1 Research Design and Sampling

The article is premised on the doctoral study that investigated four leadership styles - namely autocratic, democratic, laissez-faire and instructional to determine their influence on the creation of conducive teaching and learning environments when used in the colleges of education in Zambia. To investigate the principals' use of democratic leadership a mixed research approach was employed which required collecting and analysing both qualitative and quantitative data in a single study. The rationale for using mixed method research design was based on the understanding that combining the two approaches provided more insight and understanding of the phenomenon (Creswell, 2012).But most importantly was the fact that the mixed method approach allowed the use of multiple methods of data collection to address the problem which enhanced good coverage of the topic (Mapoma & Masaiti, 2012; Masaiti & Simuyaba, 2018). The combining of both quantitative and qualitative approaches enabled the offsetting of the problem of generalisation and augmented validity, credibility, dependability and reliability of the research findings (Masaiti, 2015). The study used positivism paradigm which is a feature of quantitative methodology to add objective epistemological value to the study, while phenomenology

which is attached to qualitative approach, was used to elicit in-depth information of the phenomenon from lived experiences of the participants' perspective.

3.2 Research Participants

The study engaged 372 participants from principals, vice principals, academic and non-academic staff, directors, Ministry of Education officials and students. The choice of respondents depended on their positions and responsibilities in the college as well as gender. For students only third years who were taking courses in Leadership and Management and who had stayed longer in the colleges were engaged in the study. These were put in strata of ordinary third year students and those involved in student leadership. Another strata was that of administrators who included principals, vice principals, directors and Ministry of Education officials. For lecturers four strata were also considered. These included members of middle management Heads of Departments (HoDs) or Heads of Sections (HoSs), lecturers in positions of leadership, that is those with responsibilities who were required to provide leadership in one way or the other such as School Experience Coordinators, Chief Internal Examiner, among others. The focus were those teaching leadership and management courses who understood the concept of leadership clearly. The last strata were ordinary lecturers who had interest in the topic of study. This group was included to counteract the responses of those in positions of leadership. Respondents - especially for quantitative approach - were sampled using a stratified sampling technique and involved 317 respondents, that is 221 students (110 males and 111 females) and 96 lecturers (44 males & 52 females). As for the qualitative sample, it was culled using purposive sampling techniques where respondents were mainly handpicked based on how knowledgeable they were and responsibilities held in the institution. 31 (16 males & 15 females) were used for interviews and 24 (12 males & 12 females) for Focus Group Discussion. The two methods went side by side with observation using a self-made observation check list. The inclusion of qualitative methodology was aimed at eliciting in-depth and illustrative information from respondents so that the various dimensions of the problem (Queiros *et al.*, 2017) from participants' perspective were grasped.

3.3 Research Sites

Data was collected on both private and government owned colleges. The choice of colleges was premised on the fact that both categories were training teachers - that is, at Primary, Secondary and Early Childhood Education (ECE) levels to serve in the same Zambian schools. Besides, both categories of colleges were being supervised by same Ministry of Education officials. The choice of colleges was also dependant on the setting. Rural and urban settings were considered to find out if both had similar or different leadership needs. Thus, one rural college and one urban were picked in staggered provinces. One private college named college A was picked from Central province and college B was picked from Luapula province as rural private colleges. College C was picked from Northern province which is rural, while college D was picked from the Copperbelt province which is urban. The size of colleges was also considered. Big and small colleges were both selected as well as the gender of the principal. College C was included because it was the only government college with a female principal.

3.4 Data Collection and Analysis

Data was collected in two phases at both private and government owned colleges using self-made questionnaires, a semi-structured interview guide, Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and an observation check list. Quantitative data was collected first using questionnaires. The questionnaire explored how democratic tenets such as consultation, delegation, team building, job satisfaction, motivation, communication and interpersonal relationship of the principal and subordinates, were being exercised in the colleges by the principals. These tenets appeared to contribute more to the creation of conducive teaching and learning environment. The data collection using the questionnaire was taken first to get a clue of what participants thought about the topic at random. This step was followed a year later with qualitative data collection to clean the lacunas noted in quantitative data. The delay in qualitative data collection was necessitated by massive transfers of college lecturers and administrators in government colleges which had been initiated by the Ministry of Education and coincided with the research. Some key respondents had just been transferred, so were not known in their new places. They needed to get settled. The researcher was also a victim of these transfers thus delayed the second data collection.

To analyse the collected data an explanatory sequential design was used which required analysing quantitative data first. To do this Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software version 23 was used where after computing data in the software, frequency tables, pie and bar charts were generated. To get inferences and assess the relationship between the leadership style and conducive environment, the use of hypotheses was introduced and a Pearson chi-square test where the five variables were cross tabulated with conducive environment using 0.05 as alpha level of confidence. Whereas for qualitative, data was coded, categorised and generated into themes which were analysed manually in what is called thematic analysis strategy. The triangulation of data from qualitative and quantitative approaches guaranteed validity of the findings while reliability was guaranteed by the long stay at each site and collection of data in two phases. The collection of same responses after a year constituted reliability of the findings.

4.0 Findings and Discussions

4.1 Principals' use of Democratic Leadership style

The findings on what leadership styles principals used produced results as presented in Figure 4.1.

These findings depicted that the principals' use of democratic leadership style was minimal going by the small number of respondents who answered in the affirmative. The findings indicated 23(24%) lecturers out of 96 respondents and 59(27%) students out of 221 student respondents acknowledged that college principals were democratic leaders. This number was too small to show that the principals rarely used democratic leadership in running the affairs of their colleges.

Figure 4.1: Principals' Leadership Styles
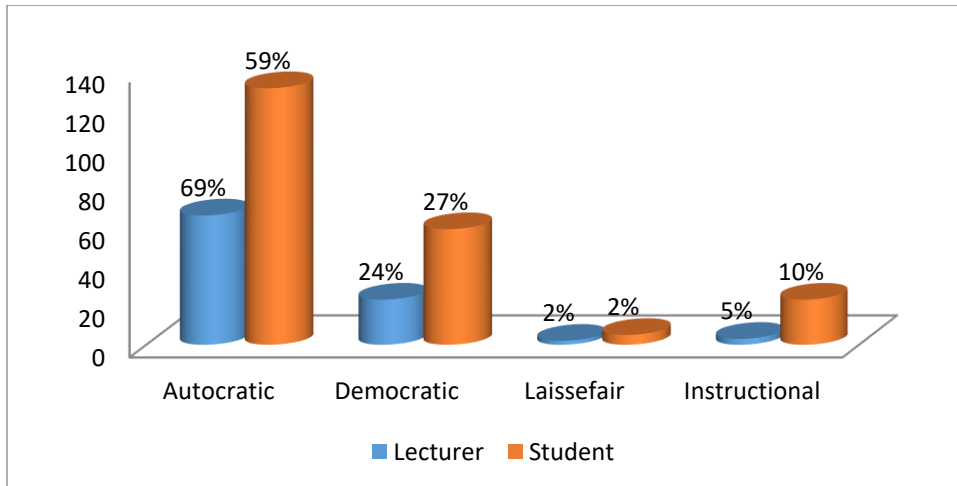
The above responses in Figure 4.1 were consolidated by lecturers' analysis of democratic variables examined in the questionnaires as presented in Figure 4.2 below.

Figure 4.2: Lecturers analysis of college principals' use of Democratic Leadership Style
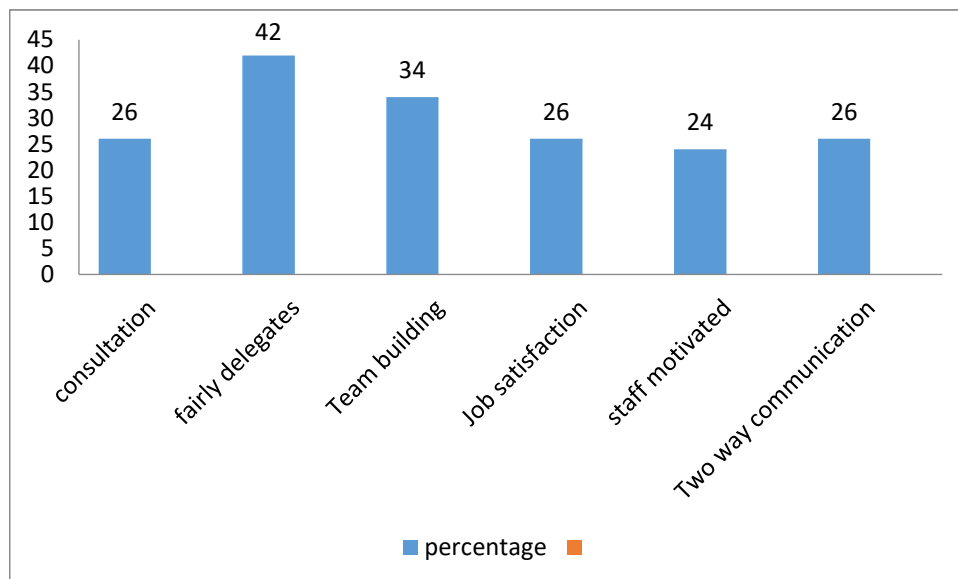
The findings in Figure 4.2 illustrate that the lecturers' analysis of principals' use of democratic leadership tenets was nominal with the highest variable recording 42 per cent on fairly delegates, while others were between 24 per cent and 26 per cent respectively.

The lack of consultation when making decisions by college principals, inadequate team building skills resulting in job dissatisfaction and demotivation of lecturers and poor communication strategies had compromised the democratic leadership. The variables examined were tenets of democratic leadership expected to prevail where democratic leadership exist and which would lead to the creation of conducive working environment. These variables were reinforced by students' responses from the student questionnaire presented in Figure 4.3

Figure 4.3 Students' Analysis of Principals use of Democratic Leadership Style
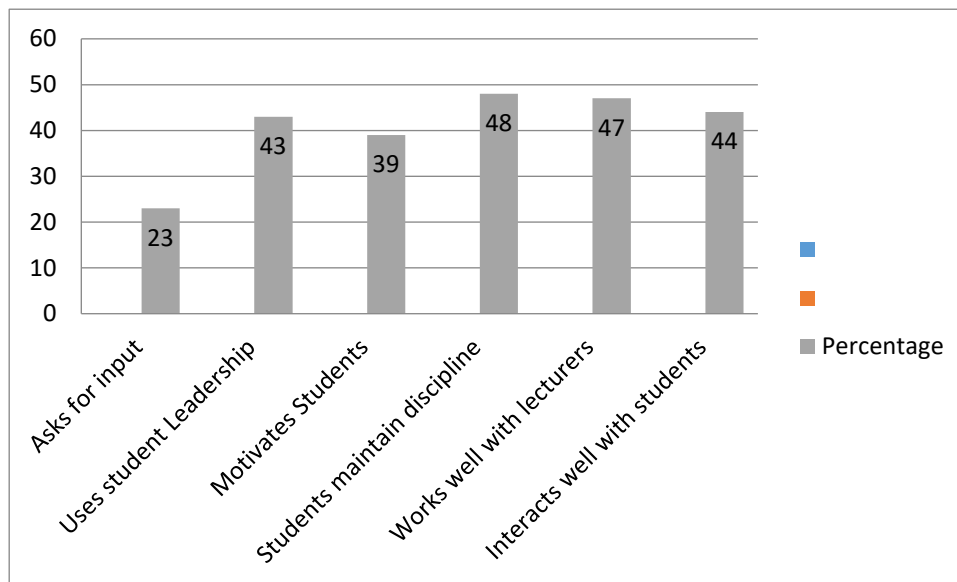

Figure 4.3 illustrate students' analysis of principals' exercise of democratic leadership confirmed and underpinned the lecturers analysis deduced from the low affirming percentages ranging from 23 per cent to 48 per cent, respectively. Students highlighted the principals' inability to ask for inputs when making important decisions on matters affecting them, ineffective use of their student leadership, inadequate motivation and principals' bad relationship with lecturers and students to have undermined principals pragmatic use of democratic leadership in the colleges.

The quantitative data presented above were supported by qualitative data discussed in the subsequent section.

On what type of leadership style principals were using, two principals indicated democratic leadership while the other two justified the combination of democratic with autocratic when dealing with policy matters and principles of the college in case of private colleges. Contrary to principals' responses, academic and non-academic staff and students noted autocratic leadership with a bit of democratic to be the most prominent leadership style of their principals. One lecturer respondent from a government college alluded that:

> *Leadership is mostly autocratic; democratic is very limited because of favouritism where often some members who are in the inner circle of the principal are consulted and involved in many college activities while the majority are not involved (0#C1).*

Another respondent from a private college intimated that:

> *"You will agree that in private colleges leadership is mainly autocratic. Democratic may be there but to a very small extent."* (0#A1)

These statements were also echoed by students from both categories of colleges. One student from a private college stated:

> *Leadership is mainly autocratic as we are rarely consulted on matters concerning us. When they increased school fees our student leadership was not involved. When they went to ask the management banned the Student Union (0#B1).*

Another student from a government college asserted:

> *Our leadership is mostly autocratic and very little democratic leadership is being practiced because decisions are often made without our input. When increasing fees we were not consulted as students through our Student Representative Council (SRC) it was just announced to us that fees have been increased. Our complaints were not listened to. When changing college rules again we were not involved in the amendments made. We just received new college rules (0#D1).*

These statements confirmed the ineffective use of democratic leadership by principals of the four colleges of study.

With regard to consultation both students and lecturers bemoaned insufficient consultation taking place in colleges. Some lecturers during FGD from a government college intimated:

> *Consultation is often not done especially to us ordinary lecturers. Sometimes we just see things happening without being informed or having discussed anything. Staff meetings where we are supposed to discuss things are rarely held. So we are not involved in decisions made in the institution (0#C2)*

Another indicated that "E*ven when consulted but what is implemented is different from what was discussed so decisions are made by the principal and those in his inner circle.*" (0#C3) These statements were supported by their colleagues from college D. Students also had akin assertions. These assertions confirmed the principals' lack of consultation when making decisions affecting students and lecturers. The reported lack of consultation culminates in lack of creativity as often ideas implemented are from one person who may not even be skillful, innovative or very conversant on the matter being dealt with. Chepkong, Ogoti, Jepkoech and Momanji (2014) elucidated that an institution becomes effective when those affected by the organisations' decisions are fully involved in decision making process. Nsubuga (2008) takes it further and posits that learning institutions are composed of intelligent people whose ideas are critical in the day-to-day running of the institution and when untapped, these intelligent ideas go to waste. Thus, non-involvement of staff and students in decisions made deprive them of the sense of belonging and ownership of colleges' undertakings which lead to loss of initiative and morale and degenerates in poor productivity.

On delegation all principals indicated that they were using that tenet well. One principal from a private college emphasised this in the following:

> Yes, I delegate a lot. As principal you need wide tentacles to involve others in your work. So I am interactive. I delegate my VP. I delegate my registrar. I delegate various lecturers and other workers in the institution. I delegate as needs arise (0#A2).

But observations and reports from teacher trainers exemplified that the principals' delegation was discriminatory and restricted to the same people especially those in their inner circles. The responses revealed a lot of favoritism being practiced when delegating and in the way affairs of the colleges were being administered. One principal unknowingly confirmed this when he stated that:

> "When delegating I always go for the most reliable. Why should I go to somebody I know will not do the work to my satisfaction?"(0#D3).

This statement affirmed the principals' selective delegation. Admittedly, it is worth noting that even those not trusted and considered not reliable need to be trained by being delegated as delegation is one way of training people for leadership roles (Thungu *et al.,* 2012). Confining delegation to selected few entails that others will never be proficient in leadership. On team building lecturers especially in government colleges had observed divisions where their colleges were divided into camps - with one group supporting the principal and another the vice-principal, whereas those who did not belong to any camp were left living like lost sheep in the institution. Some lecturers from a government college during FGD boastfully stated:

> "The college is divided we have abakucaume (those supporting male leader) and abakucanakashi (Supporters of female leader (0#D4)."

Each group was being favoured by their leader in terms of workshops and other advantages when in the position to do so, while others were sidelined by both leaders. Other lecturers from another government college consolidated the division in the following:

> The college is divided into camps. The principal uses the system of divide and rule. The relationship between top management and members of staff is not cordial. Favouritism being practiced by the principal has affected team spirit and good relationship. The spirit of wanting to listen from certain sections of members of staff and not the other makes relationship sour. Some members of staff are made to be reporting on others as well as some students who report on lecturers and fellow students. The scenario has affected what could have been a good relationship (0#C4).

The division prevented both lecturers and students from working together for the common good and thwarted talents that could be tapped for the benefit of the institution. The habit of selecting some staff to participate in the running of the institution to the exclusion of others inhibited the development of the institutions in various aspects of college life. It further demoralised those willing to put in the best and led institutions to be producing incompetent staff with "I don't care" attitude towards work, resulting in poor performance

of the institution in various angles of college life. The lack of team work noted in colleges fitted in Fiedlers' contingency theory where leader-member relationship was bad as well as task structure because of high position powers of principals leading to the creation of unfavourable environment which did not favour conducive teaching and learning.

The failure to build teams had a multiplier effect on job satisfaction and motivation of staff. One lecturer respondent from a private college when asked if he was satisfied working in his college intimated:

> *"I am not satisfied. I am working here just to pass time. If there was a better place to go to I would have left this college* (0#B2).*"*

His ideas were shared by more respondents from all colleges. This response entailed existence of job dissatisfaction and work against path-goal theory. The favouritism and selective involvement reported affected job satisfaction where those not in any camp were frustrated in their work. This is contrary to Smith (2016) findings whose study revealed democratic leadership to be associated with job satisfaction. People get satisfied when they are fully involved in what is taking place in an institution, when they are involved in decision making, when goals are clearer and effectively communicated. Ineffective application of all these elements had adverse effects on most staff who often felt disconnected to the institution and contributed to making the environment unfriendly and negatively influenced how those staff conducted themselves in discharging their duties. Robbins and Judge (2009) contend that dissatisfied subordinates passively take note of the situation and allow things to get worse without any intervention, as opposed to satisfied subordinates who most likely talk positive about the institution, assist one another and go beyond the normal expectations in their duties. The job dissatisfaction recorded were the consequences of ineffective leader-member relationship which has resulted in unfavourable working environment and fits in Fiedlers' contingency theory.

Ineffective team building had demotivated staff not in any camp who admired their friends being favoured all the time. This works against research conducted by Chowdhury (2014) who associated democratic leadership with motivation. Lecturers and students both reported that they were demotivated because the institutions were not providing them with the much needed resources. Lecturers also complained of the principals' open exercise of partiality as a source of their demotivation. Favouritism, selective involvement, inability to provide the most needed resources to both lecturers and students among other practices overshadowed the spirit of motivation expected to exist in CoE where democratic leadership exist and negatively influenced the creation of conducive T/L environment. Students and staff want to be recognised, to be praised for the good they do for the institution and want to be included in most of college undertakings. The sidelining and exclusion noted and reported demotivated the victims and made the learning environment non-conducive. Khuong and Hoang (2015) contend that benefits and rewards can be important elements of motivation, but characteristics and personalities of a leader are major decisive factors that create effective motivational work environment. Principals' behaviour and practices triggered the demotivation experienced by staff and students. Demotivated staff are likely to lose enthusiasm in their work which disturb the attainment

of good results of an institution and weaken productivity. This situation fits in the Path-goal Theory which states that the leaders' behaviour influences subordinates satisfaction and attitude towards work. In this case the principals' behaviour had negatively influenced lecturers' and students' satisfaction.

Communication especially in government colleges was reported to be coming often from the top and benefiting mostly those in the inner circle who were always in the know-how of what was happening in the institution. One lecturer respondent from a government college indicated:

> Communication in this institution is not good. Often only those in the inner circle know what is happening in the institution. Sometimes information is just passed on to us in the streets or is given to one person and is taken as if all were informed. At other times we get information from students or support staff. (0#C5).

The scenario demotivated most staff and affected how democratic leadership was practiced. Mwamba (2015) postulated that what and how you communicate either builds or harms relationships between the follower and the leader. The practice of senior officers getting information in the streets or through junior officers had been a source of frustration and resentment and caused divisions noted and reported in the colleges. It had excluded some members from having a sense of belonging to the institution and thus compromised democratic leadership which anchors on inclusive decision making, participation, collaboration, delegation and effective communication (Russell, 2011). Smith (2016) posits that highly effective leaders make effective communication a priority. The inability to prioritise effective communication has resulted in bad relationships not good for institutions of learning. These findings contradict Oyetunji (2006) and Nyeri (2015) who found out that the use of democratic leadership in schools led to the creation of good working climate.

4.2 How Democratic Leadership Contributes to the Creation of Conducive Teaching and Learning Environment.

To substantiate the above statement, two hypotheses were formulated as follows:

Null Hypotheses (H_0): There is no significance relationship between democratic leadership style and conducive T/L environment.

Alternative Hypotheses (H_1): There is significant relationship between democratic leadership and conducive T/L environment.

The analysis started by cross tabulating democratic variables from the lecturers' questionnaire with friendly atmosphere and collaboration which represented conducive environment using Pearson Chi square and 0.05 as the alpha of confidence level. Table 4.1 presents the findings.

Table 4.1: Democratic Leadership Style with Friendly Atmosphere

Variable	Pearson chi2	Df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Consults staff before decision-making	18.977[a]	16	.278
Fair delegation	17.506[a]	16	.354
Good leadership to lead to team building	42.062[a]	16	.088
Good leadership to lead to job satisfaction	25.516[a]	16	.061
Good leadership to lead to motivation of staff	18.928[a]	16	.272
Top-bottom and bottom-top communication	27.717[a]	16	.064

The six variables presented in Table 4.1 had all their p-values above 0.05 per cent which was the chosen alpha level of confidence showing that they were insignificant to creating a conducive teaching and learning environment. These variables and their p-values demonstrated that democratic leadership style when used in the way it has been described does not contribute to the creation of a conducive teaching and learning environment. The results of the findings depicted that there was no statistical significance of the above mentioned variables to the creation of conducive working environment in the colleges studied because of the way tenets of democratic leadership had been used. The results therefore rejected the alternative hypotheses which stated that there was significant relationship between democratic leadership and conducive environment and accepted the null hypotheses which stipulated that there was no significant relationship between democratic leadership and conducive environment. Democratic leadership is very effective where tenets are well practiced and where theory and practice are in tandem. The disparity of the theory and practice noted in this study had affected the relationship between independent (democratic) and dependent (conducive environment) variables.

The analysis of what type of T/L environment is created by the use of democratic leadership style illuminated the findings presented in Table 4.2

Table 4.2: Analysis of Democratic Leadership Style and Creation of Conducive T/L Environment

	Low		Average		High	
	F	%	F	%	F	%
Poor	51	81	1	25	9	31
Moderate	11	17	2	50	18	62
Conducive environment	1	2	1	2	2	7
Total	63	66	4	4	29	30

The results in Table 4.2 indicated that the use of democratic leadership created poor to high teaching and learning environment. The low usage and inappropriate application of the tenets of democratic leadership style examined in this study (consultation, delegation, team building, job satisfaction, motivation and communication) climaxed in the creation of poor to moderate teaching and learning environments with inconsequential results in the creation of conducive teaching and learning environment expected to exist in institutions of learning like colleges. Factors such as a dearth of consultation, selective delegation, poor team building and communication and demotivation of both staff and students among others, influenced negatively the creation of a conducive T/L environment. The poor to moderate T/L environment created did not lead to effective teaching and learning arising from lecturers job dissatisfaction and demotivation due to working in a poor environment. These findings are contrary to Oyetunji (2006) and Nyeri (2015) studies who found out that democratic leadership led to the creation of good working climate in schools and fit in Fiedlers contingency theory where task structure was unfavourable.

4.0 Conclusion

The study conducted on four colleges revealed a paucity of differences in the way colleges were being administered and the type of leadership exercised in these colleges. The study illuminated insignificant differences in the principals' leadership behaviour and practices across the government and private colleges. The study had also shown that the location of the college, size and gender of the leader had no significant impact on how leadership was exercised. However, to a small extent the government colleges seemed to be more democratic than private but to a large extent both had challenges in applying democratic leadership. Tenets of democratic leadership expected to exist with potential to contribute to the creation of conducive teaching and learning have barely been practiced hence compromising the application of democratic leadership in colleges. Tenets such as good interpersonal relationship, constant consultation during decisions marking, evenly delegation of duties, and inclusive team building which accelerate job satisfaction and motivation and effective communication have been casually practiced thereby

overshadowing democratic leadership. The situation has created a gap between the theory and practice of this type of leadership.

For effective democratic leadership to prevail in colleges the theory should inform the practice and work in tandem. Both government and private owned principals need to champion this style of leadership premised on its successful stories where it has been perfectly used and recorded results in good performance of institutions (Puni *et al.*,2014), job satisfaction (Vrgovic & Pavlovic, 2014), motivation of employees(Chowdhury, 2014) and creation of good, working environment (Nyeri, 2015) among others. The negligence of good tenets of this style of leadership has resulted in bleak working environments least expected in institutions of learning like colleges. The theory and practice of this form of leadership must tally for effective application of this style and good results.

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