

CHALLENGES FACING DISTRIBUTED LEADERSHIP ON STUDENTS' ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS, MOROGORO MUNICIPALITY, TANZANIA

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Abstract

Distributed leadership involves aspect of sharing leadership which involving interaction of multiple parties such as the head teachers, teachers and other staff members a situation that permits the practice of distributed leadership. The purpose of this study was to investigate the challenges facing distributed leadership on students' academic performance in Morogoro Municipality. The study used case study design based on mixed approach i.e., quantitative and qualitative research approaches. Both purposive and random samplings were used in selecting 40 respondents for this study. Primary data obtained through questionnaire while interview and Focus Group Discussion (FGD) while secondary data were collected through documentary review i.e., school reports, journals, books, various NECTA reports from the internet, and other different literatures from previous studies. The collected data were coded, recorded, cleaned, processed; finally analyzed using the statistical tool SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Science) version 20 to compute descriptive statistics such as percentages, frequencies and standard deviation. The study result revealed that poor leadership style, lack of team building, lack of delegation of power to other teacher's, lack of cooperation, poor communication, poor distribution of teaching and learning materials, shortage of teachers were found to be challenges facing distributed leadership on students' academic performance in secondary schools in Morogoro municipality. Basing on the study findings, researchers concludes that distributed leadership influences students' academic performance, through sharing of ideas and collaboration among school leaders, teachers and other school members, therefore distributed leadership is to increase leadership capacity within the school so that the school can improve and grow in a good manner.

Key Words: *Distributed Leadership, Challenges, Students' Academic Performance*

1.0 Introduction

Leadership in education requires a culture of sharing of energy, commitment and contribution of all who work there to be successful with their leadership responsibilities (Pierro, 2020). Therefore, in this study leadership in different schools has been regarded as the authority or power given by the head teacher. Despite the fact that secondary schools as complex social organizations, depend on collaborative work to face challenges, but the need of distributed leadership within the school is not only a pragmatic issue of proportionally dividing the school leaders workload. Distributed leadership has the positive impact on the self-efficacy of teachers and other staff members by encouraging them to show their expertise and by supporting collaborative work cultures (Manaze, 2019). Hence, researchers in this study considered distributed leadership as mobilizing leadership expertise at all levels in school in order to generate more opportunities for change and to build the capacity for school improvement.

Moreover, distributed leadership encompasses the aspect of sharing leadership which particularly involving interaction of school leaders, teachers, and a situation that permits the practice of distributed leadership (Larsen & Rieckhoff, 2014). Despite that distributed leadership in the school context is not an easy task for school leaders to implement but different studies (Liljenberg, 2015; Larsen & Rieckhoff, 2014) failed to pinpoint difficulties associated with distributed leadership in the school context. Apart from discussing and explaining on the impacts of distributed leadership on student's achievement, little is known on teachers' interaction their responsibilities to top management.

Therefore, researchers come the study focused in assessing the impact of distributed leadership in public secondary schools and its influence in enhancing students' academic performance specifically at up with an idea on the impact of Distributed leadership on student academic performance in selected secondary schools in Morogoro municipality. The study will be helpful to government through policy makers for helping them formulate policies aiming at education development in the country.

1.1 Analytical and Theoretical Framework

1.1.1 Distributed Leadership Theory

In developed countries different forms of distributed leadership are already emerging in schools in the form of executive head, co-headship, assistant heads and leadership teams that traverse two or three schools in federation or partnership. Within the growing context of school-to-school networks, it has been argued that distributed leadership may provide greater opportunities for members to learn from one another. A recent systematic review of the literature on the impact of networks on pupils, practitioners and the communities they serve concludes that networks offer opportunities for teachers to share, initiate and embed new practices. While the direct link between networking and achievement was not forthcoming from this review of the research evidence, the data that do exist highlights a positive relationship between increased teacher collaboration both within and across schools and organizational development.

1.2 Conceptual Framework

A distributed perspective is a conceptual framework for thinking about and studying school leadership and management and its influence to student performance. The conceptual framework that was used in this study, aimed to investigate the challenges facing distributed leadership on students' academic performance in Morogoro municipality.

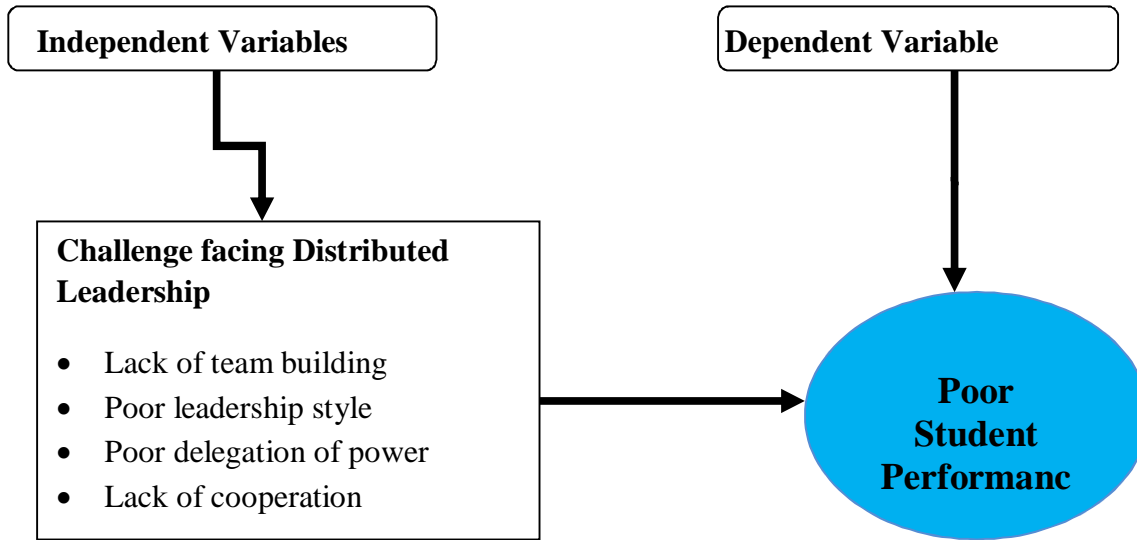


Figure 1 Conceptual Framework

Source: Author's Conceptualization, 2021

2.0 Research Methods and Methodology

2.1 Description of the Study Area

The selection of a study area was important as it influences the usefulness of information produced. As argued by Kombo and Tromp (2006) study area should be relevant to the research objectives. Therefore, this study was conducted in Morogoro municipality which is located in the eastern part of Tanzania specifically, at Kola Hill Secondary School and Nanenane Secondary School. The study was conducted in two different public secondary schools due to the geographical location. Morogoro municipality is one of the six districts of Morogoro region in Tanzania, it covers 260 square kilometers and it has a total population of 315,866 people; whereby male is 151,700 and female 164,166 (URT, 2012). Its geographical location coordinates are 6° 49' 20" south, 37° 40' 0" East.

2.2 Research Design

The study employed a case study research design based on both qualitative and quantitative approach in order to meet the research objectives.

2.3 Sample Size and Sampling Technique

Both purposive and random samplings techniques were used to acquire the number of respondents; purposive sampling technique was used in selecting two school :head teachers i.e., one from each school and two wards educational officer while random sampling was used to select ten (10) students and (10) ten teachers from each school making a total of 40 respondents. The sample size was obtained using the adopted formula developed in 1981 (Boyd *et al.*, 1981). Therefore; the sample size in this study was determined by using the adopted formula for infinite population which written as;

$$n = \frac{Z^2 \cdot N \cdot P \cdot (1 - P)}{(N-1) \cdot e^2 + Z^2 \cdot (1 - P)}$$

Whereby;

n = Sample size

Z = The value of standard variation at 90% (critical value $Z=1.28$)

N = Population Size

P = Expected proportion of the total population in which the study adopted 30% as emphasized by Kothari (2009).

e = Accepted error (This study used 10% as accepted sampling error)

Therefore; researcher using the adopted formula computed the sample size as;

Given;

$N = 5,049$ (A total number of all form four students and all teachers in Morogoro municipality i.e., 3,871 form four students and 1,178 school teachers)

$Z = 1.28$ (Critical value at 90% confidence level or interval)

$$P = 30\% (0.3)$$

$$e = 10\% (0.10)$$

$$n = \frac{Z^2 \cdot N \cdot P \cdot (1 - P)}{(N-1) \cdot e^2 + Z^2 \cdot (1 - P)}$$

$$n = \left(\frac{(1.28)^2 \times 5049 \times 0.3(1 - 0.3)}{[(5049-1) \times (0.10)^2] + [(1.28)^2 \times (1 - 0.3)]} \right)$$

$$n = \left(\frac{1737.179136}{(50.48 + 1.14688)} \right)$$

$$n = \left(\frac{1737.179136}{51.62688} \right)$$

SampleSize = 33 Respondents

The researcher was confident with 40 respondents in Morogoro municipality, of Morogoro region and hence a sample size (n) was chosen i.e., at least it was equal or greater than 10% of population size identified in the study area. Since the schools were purposely selected, the sample size to each school were 20 respondents i.e., 10 from four students and 10 teachers making a total of 40 respondents while 4 key informants i.e., 2 school head teachers and 2 wards educational officers were used to obtain additional information.

2.4 Data Type and Collection

Both primary data and secondary data were used in this study. Primary data obtained from 40 respondents through questionnaire while interview and Focus Group Discussion (FGD) were used to key informants i.e., two (2) school heads and two (2) wards' educational officers. Also,

secondary data were collected from various sources i.e., school reports, journals, books, various NECTA reports from the internet, and also other different literatures from previous studies.

2.5 Data Analysis

The collected data were coded, recorded, cleaned, processed; finally analyzed using the statistical tool SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Science) version 20 to compute descriptive statistics such as percentages, frequencies and standard deviation. Results were presented in the form of charts and tables.

3.0 Results and Discussion

3.1 Response Rate

The researcher distributed and administered 40 questionnaires to respondents in Morogoro municipality specifically to two public secondary schools namely; Nanenane Secondary School and Kola Hill Secondary School. Overall, 40 questionnaires were received which represented a response rate of 100%. This implies that the researcher was active in making follow-up to ensure that the data collected would be relevant and useful in this study.

3.2 Challenges Facing Distributed Leadership on Students' Academic Performance

3.2.1 Teachers' Response

In assessing the challenges of distributed leadership on students' academic performance in Nanenane Secondary School and Kola Hill Secondary School, the researcher provided ten (10) statements to twenty (20) teachers. The respondents were required to identify the challenges they are facing distributed leadership in enhancing students' academic performance in their schools by indicating whether they strongly agree (SA), Agree (A), Neutral (N), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD). Table 1 presents the results.

Table 1 Challenges Facing Distributed Leadership on Students' Academic Performance

S/No	Challenges facing/Scale	SA	A	N	D	SD
1	Lack of team building	55.0%	25.0%	5.0%	10.0%	5.0%
2	Poor leadership style	85.0%	15.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
3	Poor delegation of power	75.0%	20.0%	5.0%	0.0%	0.0%
4	Lack of cooperation	75.0%	25.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
5	Fear of losing authority to school leaders	60.0%	35.0%	5.0%	0.0%	0.0%
6	Poor communication among teachers	60.0%	35.0%	5.0%	0.0%	0.0%
7	Lack of willingness of teachers to hold leadership roles and responsibilities	10.0%	15.0%	0.0%	35.0%	40.0%
8	Boundaries and respect between teachers and leaders	30.0%	35.0%	10.0%	10.0%	15.0%
9	Lack of interpretation of school vision, mission and goals in school	70.0%	25.0%	5.0%	0.0%	0.0%
10	Poor decision making in Administration of the school	65.0%	15.0%	15.0%	5.0%	0.0%

Source: Field Study, 2021

Lack of Team Building; the study sought to know the distribution of team building in the study area since team building regarded as the process of improving the performance of school to achieve a common goal i.e., improving students' academic performance in this case. However, in this study it was found that in the study area majority about 11 teachers accounted to 55% strongly agreed that lack of team building affects teachers' performance hence led to poor students' academic

achievement followed by 5 teachers comprised 25% who agreed with the statement to some extent. The study result implies that poor students' academic performance in the study area is highly affected by goal setting, interpersonal relations, problem solving, and role clarification due to lack of team building. Moreover, lack of team building was found to be a major challenge facing distributed leadership in secondary schools as it affects process outcome specifically students' academic performance. The same information was presented in pie chart as shown in Figure 2 below.

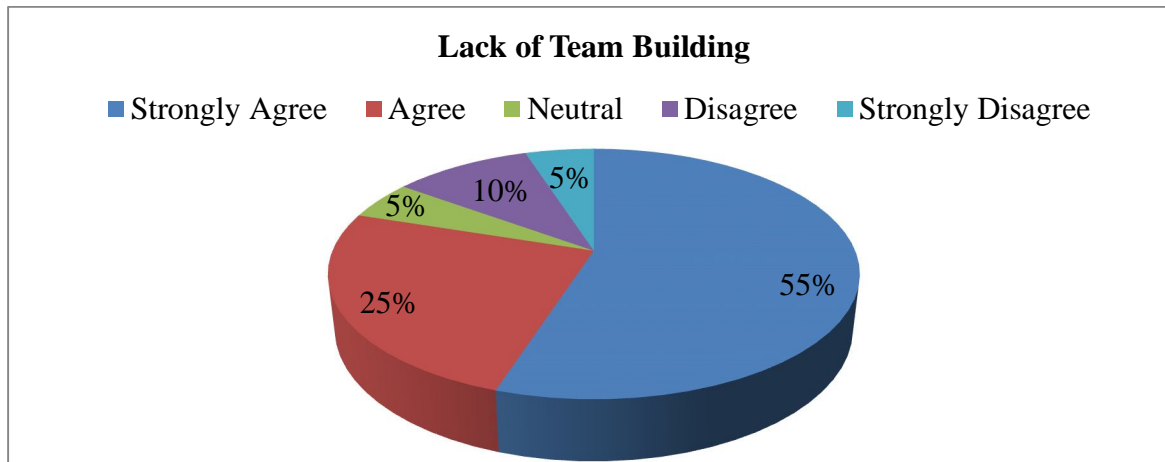


Figure 2 Lack of Team Building (n=20)

Source: Field Study, 2021

The study result in Figure 2 revealed that majority of respondents more than 80% agreed that lack of team building is the major challenge facing distributed leadership on students' academic performance. The study result is in line with the findings of various related studies (Ekimova & Kokurin, 2015; Marasi, 2019) who found that the lack of team building among teachers negatively affects students' learning and the development process hence poor performance. Basing on the study findings, researchers recommended that a team building is necessary and beneficial for teachers to develop good teamwork skills and create an effective team that would have a positive impact on students' academic performance.

Poor Leadership Style; the study identifies the distribution of leadership style in public secondary schools especially at Kola Hill and Nanenane secondary schools as the major influence of students' performance, whereby in order to improve students' performance head teachers or school leaders required to ensure management of the schools enhanced. In this study, it was found that high number of teachers about 17(85%) strongly agreed about leadership style used at Kola Hill and Nanenane secondary schools is poor followed by 3 teachers which comprised 15% agreed with the statement. The study result implies that poor leadership style in public schools caused by poor leadership styles of school leaders which regards as the major challenge facing distributed leadership in secondary schools. The same result presented in Figure 3 below.

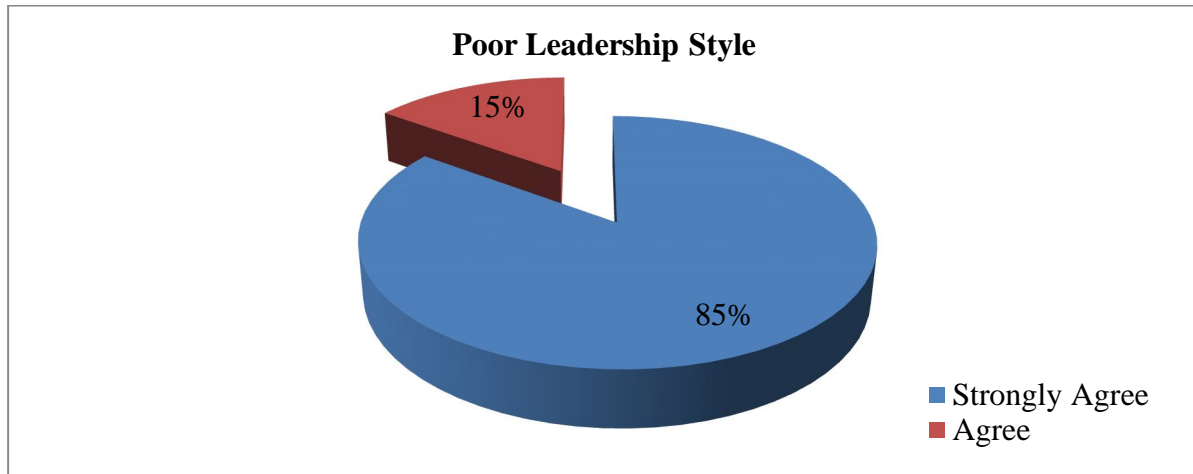


Figure 3 Poor Leadership Style (n=20)

Source: Field Study, 2021

The study revealed that at Kola Hill and Nanenane secondary schools 100% of teachers Agreed that there is poor leadership styles caused by school leaders which enhancing poor academic performance of school. The study result related with the findings of Andende (2016) who found that head teachers' poor leadership styles affects the performance of students. Basing on the findings the researcher recommended that educational administrators should ensure that head teachers or school leaders are given appropriate orientations before they are appointed as school heads. And, head teachers are asked to use more democratic leadership style if they want students to achieve good academic performance.

Poor Delegation of Power; the study sought to know the delegation of power in schools as the major influence of students' academic performance. In this study it was found that in Morogoro Municipality especially at Kola Hill and Nanenane secondary schools there is poor delegation of power among teachers about 15(75%) strongly agreed with the statement followed by 3(15%) agreed while 1(5%) among of them was neutral. The study result implies that poor delegation of power in public secondary school affected by school leader's abilities on how they delegate power to teachers. The same data presented in Figure 4.

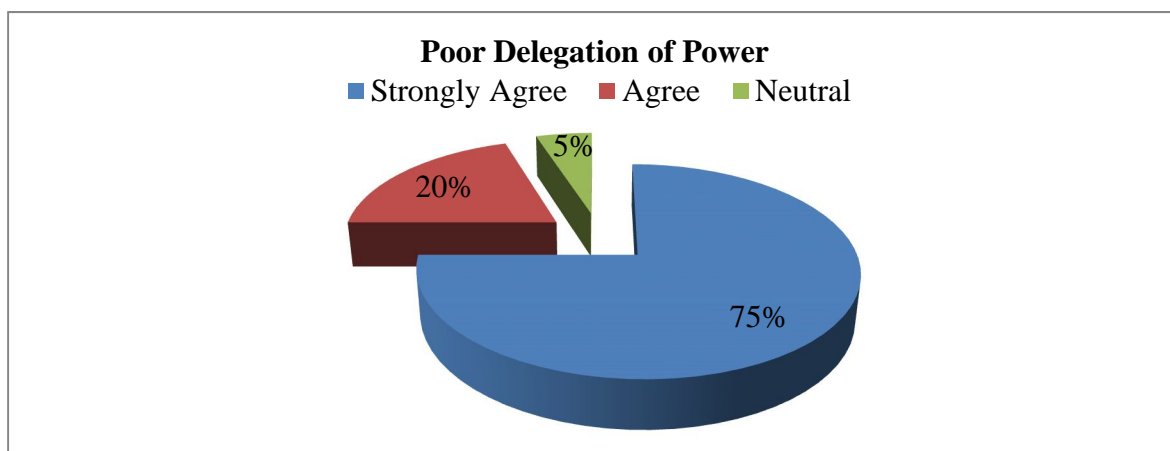


Figure 4 Poor Delegation of Power (n=20)

Source: Field Study, 2021

The study revealed that poor delegation of power affects the students' performance in Morogoro Municipality especially at Kola Hill and Nanenane secondary school. The study result is similar with the findings of Bakar (2015) who found that in organization poor delegation of power between leaders and subordinate enhance poor performance of school. Basing on the result findings the researcher recommends that delegation of power in order to be successful the school leader has to establish objectives of delegation also the head has to specify the tasks to be accomplished and decide who is to accomplish them.

Lack of Cooperation; the study sought to assess the cooperation among teachers in public secondary schools as the major cause of students' academic performance. It was found that at Kola Hill secondary school and Nanenane secondary schools, most of teachers about (75%) 15 strongly agreed with the statement that there is lack of cooperation, followed by (25%) 5 agreed with the statement. The study implies that lack of cooperation is the major challenge facing distributed leadership in secondary schools The same data presented by the researcher in Figure 5 as shown below.

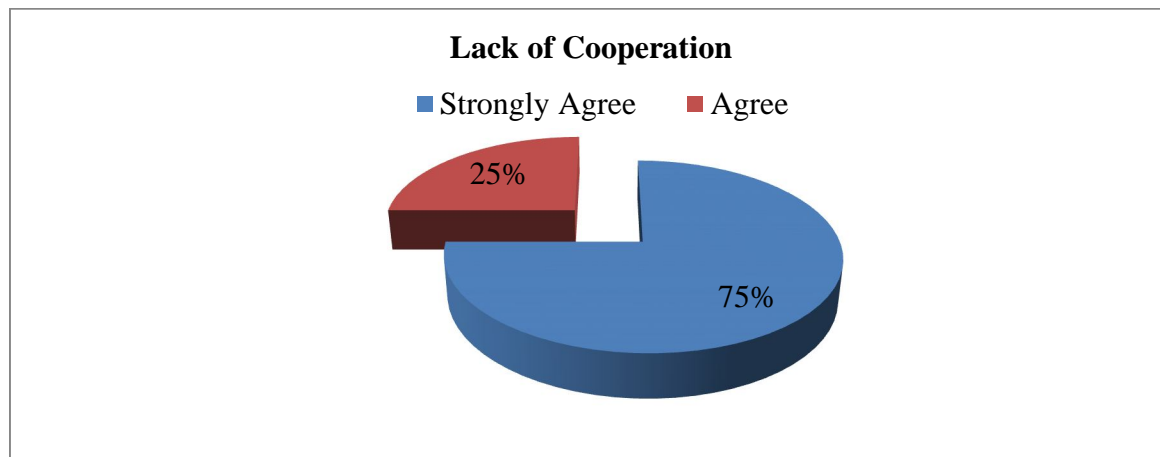


Figure 5 Lack of Cooperation (n=20)

Source: Field Study, 2021

The study revealed that most of respondents agreed that there is a problem of cooperation in public schools which regarded as the major challenge facing distributed especially in Morogoro Municipality. The researcher recommends that to improve effective communication in the school environment, principals should respect and give attention to other subordinates so as to hear their ideas this will help on improving the performance of the school.

Poor Communication among Teachers; the study sought to identify the communication among teachers as the major factor for students' academic performance in public schools, whereby communication is the life-blood vessel within the school environment because it is through communication that management functions such as motivation, discipline, problem solving and conflict handling are implemented. In this study, it was found that high number of teachers about 12(60%) strongly agreed that there is poor communication among teachers at Kola Hill and Nanenane secondary schools, followed by 7(35%) agreed about the statement while one of them 1(5%) was neutral. The study implies that poor students' academic performance affected by poor communication between leaders and teachers with in the school environment, whereby regarded as the major challenge facing distributed leadership on students' performance. . The same data presented in Figure 6 below.

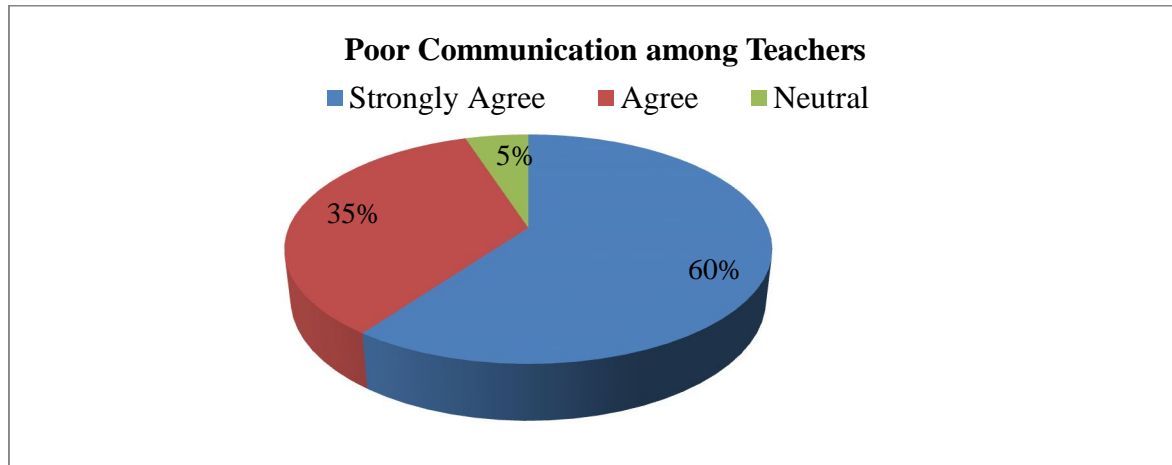


Figure 6 Poor Communication among Teachers (n=20)

Source: Field Study, 2021

The researchers revealed that majority of respondents about 95% agreed that at Kola Hill and Nanenane secondary school communication among teachers is the major challenge facing distributed leadership on students’ academic performance. The study result is similar with the findings of Dinu, (2015) who found that poor communication by teachers is the major challenge that have led students to abandon their study at a certain level. The researcher recommends that for better performance of school there must be a good communication among teachers which will enhance the good performance of students in academic area.

Boundaries and Respect between Teachers and Leaders; the study sough to know how boundaries and respect between teachers and leaders regarded as the process of improving the performance of secondary schools, in this study, it was found that at kola Hill and Nanenane secondary school most of teachers about 7(35%) agreed that the boundary and respect between teachers and leaders is major challenge facing distributed leadership on students’ performance , followed by 6(30%) strongly agreed about the statement, while 2(10%) were neutral and 2(10%) disagreed about the statement followed by 3(15%) Strongly disagreed with the statement. The study implies that poor students’ academic performance affected by Age of school leaders and teachers also level of education of school leaders and other teachers without forget the position of school leaders which cause disrespect to other teacher’s which regarded as the major challenge facing distributed leadership in schools. The same data presented in Figure 7 below.

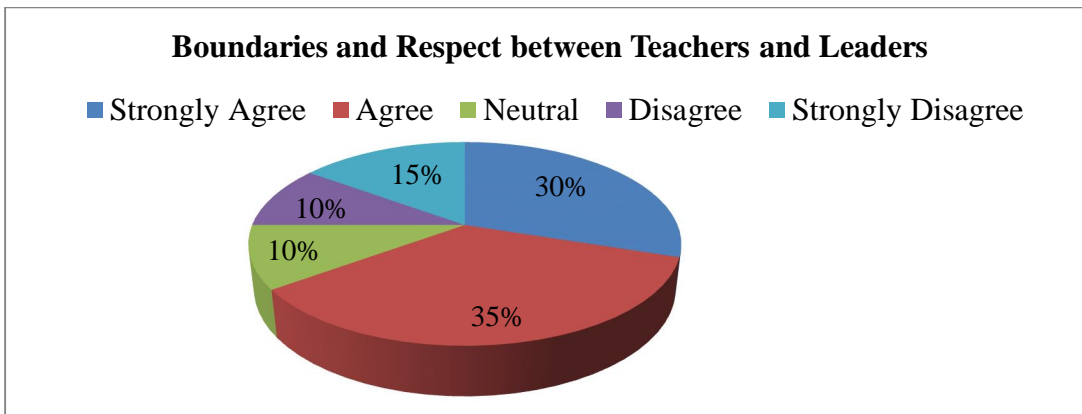


Figure 7 Boundaries and Respect between Teachers and Leader (n=20)

Source: Field Study, 2021

The study revealed that boundary and respect between teachers and leaders is the major challenge facing distributed leadership on students' performance at Kola Hill and Nanenane secondary schools. The researcher recommends that respects and boundaries between teachers and leaders is necessary for the better performance of the school.

Poor Decision Making in Administration of the School; the study sought to know decision making in administration of school in the study area, good decision making regards as the source of students performance in secondary school especially at Kola Hill and Nanenane secondary schools. In this study it was found that high number teachers about 13(65%) strongly agreed that at Kola Hill secondary school and Nanenane secondary school there is poor decision making in administration of the school followed by 3(15%) agreed about the statement while 3(15%) were neutral and one of them 1(5%) disagreed about the statement. The study result implies that poor students' academic performance affected by poor decision making done in schools. The same data presented in Figure 8 below.

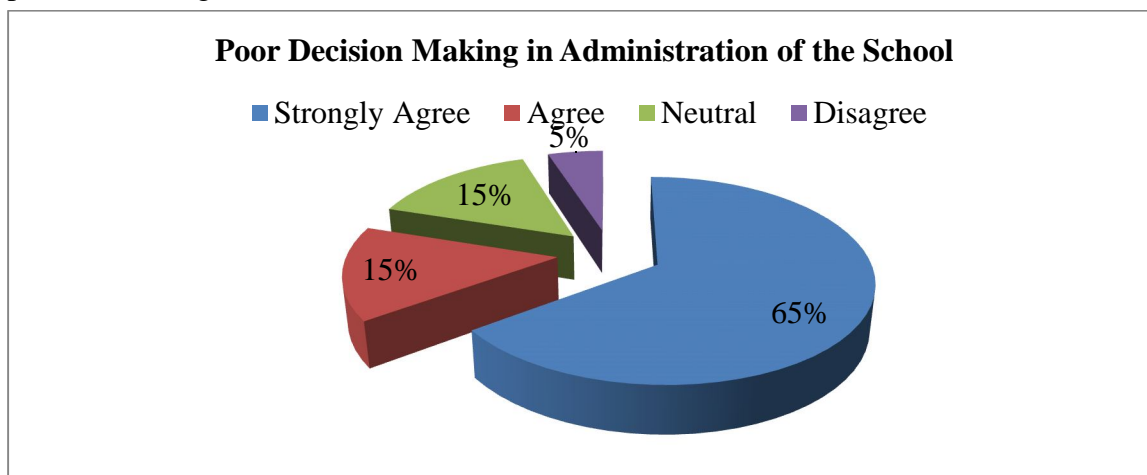


Figure 8 Poor Decisions Making in Administration of the School (n=20)

Source: Field Study, 2021

The study revealed that poor decision making in any organization is a major challenge which led to poor performance especially at Kola Hill and Nanenane Secondary schools. The study result is similar with the findings of Abrar, Baloch and Ghouri, (2010) who found that in academic organizations there are a lot of challenges in the process of decision making. Thus, effective management in academic fields is yet a dream to be actualized. Basing on the findings the researcher recommends that teachers need to be actively involved in decision-making in their schools to encourage, motivate and utilize their wide range of experience so as to improve the academic performance of school.

3. 2.2 Students' Response

Also, the researcher sought to assess the challenges of distributed leadership in enhancing students' academic performance in Nanenane and Kola Hill secondary schools in Morogoro municipality. The researcher provided six (6) statements to twenty (20) students; the respondents were required to identify the challenges facing distributed leadership on students' performance in their schools by indicating whether they strongly agree (SA), Agree (A), Neutral (N), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD). Table 2 presents the results.

Table 2 Challenges Facing Distributed Leadership on Students’ academic Performance (n=20)

S/N	Challenges	SA	A	N	D	SD
1	Poor teaching methodologies	75.0%	20.0%	0.0%	5.0%	0.0%
2	Lack of cooperation among teachers	50.0%	35.0%	0.0%	15.0%	0.0%
3	Inadequate teaching and learning materials	55.0%	20.0%	10.0%	10.0%	5.0%
4	Shortage of teachers	40.0%	55.0%	5.0%	0.0%	0.0%
5	Lack of confidence of senior teachers	70.0%	10.0%	5.0%	5.0%	10.0%
6	Lack of laboratories	55.0%	15.0%	15.0%	10.0%	5.0%

Source: Field Study, 2021

Poor Teaching Methodology; the study sought to assess the distribution of teaching methodologies in public schools whereby teaching methodology is the way of teachers delivers the subjects to students by using certain methods corresponding to the characteristics of students that were encountered. Therefore, in this study it was found that students about 15(75%) strongly agreed that at Kola Hill and Nanenane secondary schools there is poor teaching methodologies used during teaching and learning process, followed by 4(20%) agreed with the statement while 1(5%) was against with the statement. The study implies that poor student’s performance in schools affected by poor teaching methodologies used during teaching and learning process. The same data presented in Figure 9 below.

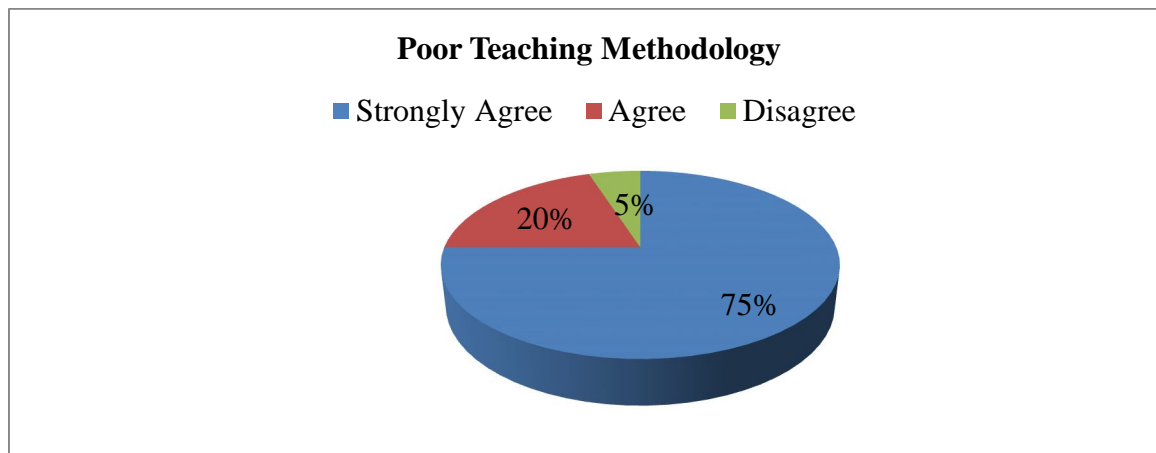


Figure 9 Poor Teaching Methodologies (n=20)

Source: Field Study, 2021

The study revealed that most of students about 95% agreed that poor teaching methodologies related with poor academic performance at kola Hill and Nanenane secondary school. The study result related with the findings of Hermas (2014) who indicated that poor teaching methodologies affect the performance of students academically. The researcher recommends that in order to bring desirable changes in students, teaching methods used by educators should be best for the subject matter.

Inadequate Teaching and Learning Materials; the study sought to know the distribution of teaching and learning materials in school as the major influence of students’ academic performance, whereby availability of teaching and learning materials enhances the effectiveness of schools as the basic things that can bring about good academic performance. Therefore in this study it was found that teaching and learning materials is the most challenge at Kola Hill and Nanenane secondary schools, most of students about 11(55%) were strongly agreed with the statement followed by 4(20%)

agreed while 2(10%) were neutral, 2(10%) were against with the statement and one among of them 1(5%) strongly agreed with the statement. The study implies that inadequate teaching and learning materials related with poor academic performance. The same data presented in figure 10 below.

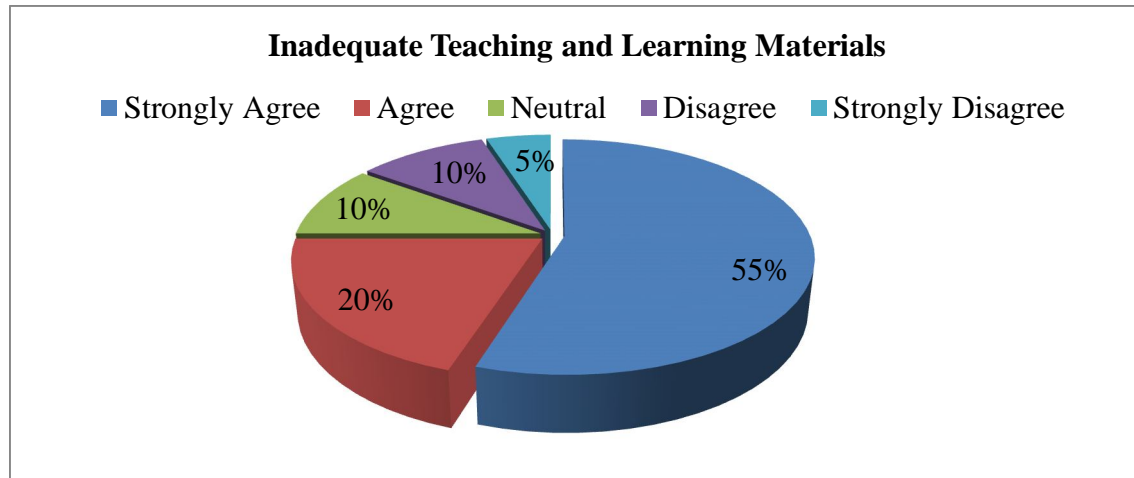


Figure 10 Inadequate Teaching and Learning Materials (n=20)

Source: Field Study, 2021

The study revealed that high number of respondents about 75% agreed that teaching and learning materials is the most challenge facing distributed leadership which caused poor performance of students at kola Hill and Nanenane secondary schools. The study result related with the findings of Likoko *et al.*, (2013) who found that inadequacy of teaching and material resources in schools is a major challenge of poor performance; Schools that do not have adequate facilities such as workshops, laboratories, classrooms, and teaching materials are unlikely to post good results. The researcher recommends that availability of teaching and learning materials influence learners hence good academic performance of students.

Shortage of Teachers; the study sought to identify the distribution of teachers in public schools especially at Kola Hill and Nanenane secondary school as the major influence of students' academic performance, therefore it was found that in Morogoro municipality there is a problem of shortage teachers in schools especially science teachers at Kola Hill and Nanenane secondary schools' high number of students about 11(55%) agreed with the statement followed by 8(40%) strongly agreed while one of them 1(5%) disagreed with the statement . The study implies that shortage of teachers especially science teachers are the major source of poor performance .The same data presented in figure 11 below.

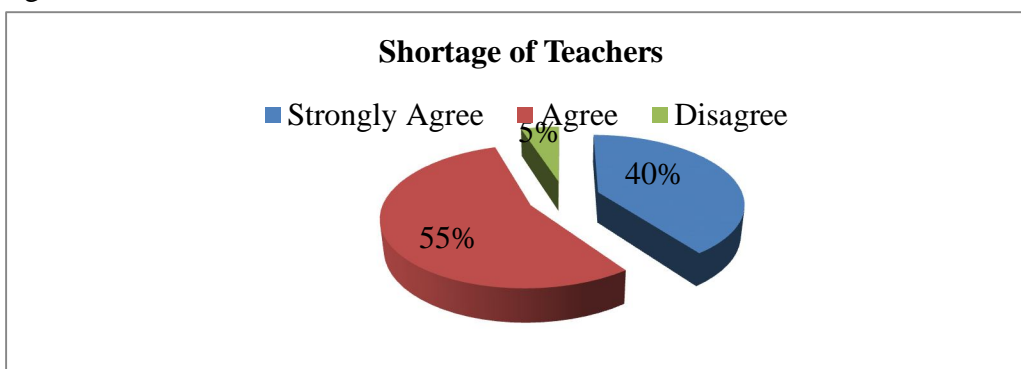


Figure 11 Shortage of Teachers (n=20)

Source: Field Study, 2021

It was found that the problem of shortage of teachers especially science teachers is the most challenge facing distributed leadership on students' academic performance especially at Kola Hill and Nanenane secondary school. The study result is similar with the findings of Hermas (2014) who pointed out the shortage of teachers especially in science subject as one of the major problems facing secondary schools in the country. The researcher recommends that students' academic performance varied with teachers' professional qualification, working experience and professional development therefore good performance of students influenced with the availability of qualified teachers.

Lack of Confidence of Senior Teachers; the study sought to assess the confidence of senior teachers regarded as the process of improving the performance of school. In this study it was found that lack of confidence of senior teacher is the most challenge facing most of teachers at Kola Hill and Nanenane secondary schools, high number of students about 14(70%) strongly agreed with the statement followed by 2(10%) agreed while one of them 1(5%) was neutral, 1(5%) disagreed and 2(10%) strongly disagreed with the statement. The study implies that lack of confidence of senior teachers affected by level of education, lack enough professional competence, also fearness which caused by the leaders from top management. The same data presented in figure 12 below.

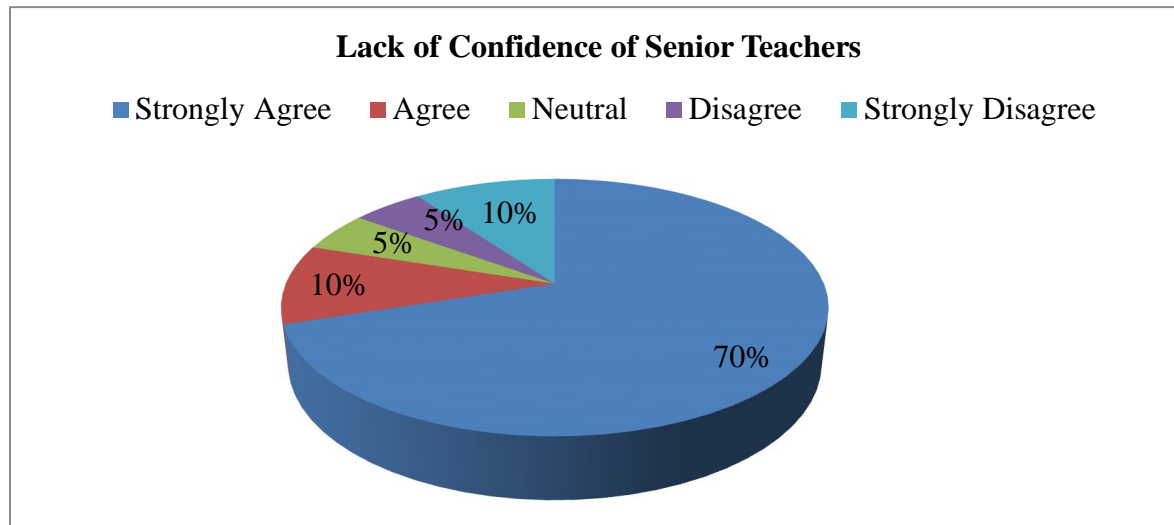


Figure 12 Lack of Confidence of Senior Teachers (n=20)

Source: Field Study, 2021

The researcher revealed that majority of respondents about 80% agreed that lack of confidence of senior teachers is the major challenge facing distributed leadership on students' academic performance. The researcher recommends that confidence of senior teachers is necessary and it bring positive impacts towards the performance of students.

4.0 Conclusion and Recommendations

The study aimed at investigating the challenges facing distributed leadership on students' performance in Morogoro Municipality. It was found that poor leadership style, lack of team building, lack of delegation of power to other teacher's, lack of cooperation, poor communication, poor distribution of teaching and learning materials, shortage of teachers were major challenges facing distributed leadership on students' academic performance in secondary schools in Morogoro municipality especially at Kola Hill and Nanenane secondary schools. Basing on the study findings, the researchers recommended that school leaders should initiate and encourage teachers to contribute ideas and participate in decision making based on their experiences and field of study for the success of schools. Also, leadership training should be for school leaders and if possible for all the academic staffs so as to improve efficiency to distributed leadership within the school therefore it will improve students' academic performance in Morogoro Municipality.

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