CHALLENGES FACED BY PRINCIPALS IN USING MANAGEMENT STYLES IN OSHANA REGION, NAMIBIA

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Abstract:
The aim of the study was to explore challenges faced by principals in using management styles in the Oshana Region of Namibia. Data was collected through an interview schedule, field notes and an open-ended questionnaire. Criterion purposeful sampling was used to select ten principals and ten teachers from ten schools. Data analysis was conducted using typological analysis, content analysis and Atlas.ti. The study established the challenges faced by principals when applying management styles and the things that need to be done to address them. This study also provides in-depth insight into factors that determine the choice of management styles and what needs to be done to address them. Therefore, principals need to learn and understand the implications of these challenges on the functionality of the schools.

Keywords: management styles, leadership styles, school management, school leadership, school governance

1. Introduction

The responsibility for improving leadership, management, instruction and learning rests in the hands of the principal (Mwape 2013). Hansen (2016) further argues that the lack of inadequacy of managerial skills has effects on teacher morale and learners' performance. If left unattended, these may have many implications on the daily functionality of schools that may lead to turbulence (Richtnér & Löfsten 2014), school uncertainty or tension (Bogers et al. 2015; Karim et al. 2016). Coupled with this, there is also a need to understand what challenges principals face in using such a management style that leads to dysfunctional schools (Modisaotsile 2012; van der Berg et al. 2011).

Today's world is full of complexities that propel schools to face numerous challenges in the process of growth and perfection (Gholami 2016). These challenges need to be addressed as a matter of urgency. Particular attention ought to be placed on the role

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of leadership in teaching and learning, current debates to focus on "how" of practice and function, and learning-centred leadership. Furthermore, attention needs to be afforded to close the wide gap between leadership and learning and redefinition of learning to be based on learners and learning achievement (Pomuti& Weber 2012; Villet 2012). Particular emphasis also ought to be placed on organisational learning in schools with the sole aim of attaining goals sought by the school. Without this, schools will fail in default.

Principals in today's globalised business environment, who are characterised by rapid change, should be equipped with emotional intelligence so that they can effectively exercise management roles while adopting various management styles when they lead others in schools (Alkahtani 2016). However, Caesar (2013) notes that schools are subjected to global and economic competitiveness, technological changes and advancement, migration and brain drain, imbalance, poverty, illiteracy, and inadequate health within a continuously changing environment. Total interactions of elements at micro and macro levels, frequent changes of government, government policies and priorities, public expectations of schools, and internal and external influences create unique challenges for schools and the Oshana Region is no exception.

Despite the government's commitment to expanding access to education, student performance reveals low achievement over the years (Caesar 2013). Nevertheless, government policy aimed to deliver quality education that translates into high academic performance remains unachieved (Boampong et al. 2016). The government resolved to halt the trend pertaining to poor academic performance by deploying quality teachers, remuneration, motivation and improved discipline and provision of instructional materials, but without success (Nsubuga 2009). What factors determine the choice of management styles that also have effects on school functionality?

This study explores the challenges faced by principals in using management styles and the factors that determine their choices. These preceding statements give an important synopsis on which the roots of the problem statement of this study are based and emanated. Therefore, to extend our knowledge in this area, the purpose of this study was to explore challenges faced by principals in using management styles and factors that determine the choice of management styles in the Oshana Region in Namibia.

2. Challenges faced by principals in using management styles

2.1 Challenges faced by principals who use an autocratic management style
Principals manage the whole school system (Khan et al. 2015). The success of a school depends on the ability of the principal, who is also responsible for the academic and administrative functions of the school. The principal also deals with learners, parents and staff (Kaazara et al. 2024). He/she also deals with school supervision inspection and fulfils responsibilities assigned from time to time (Gitaka 2014). Most schools in Oshana Region are faced with many constraints and lack adequate facilities in most cases. At times, it is the principal who has to function effectively in the absence of facilities, along with many

constraints. The efficiency and effectiveness of principals in managing schools in such situations require the capacity of skilled principals (Preetika & Priti 2013).

Talking about the Oshana Region, the majority of principals retain teaching responsibilities besides managerial and pastoral duties. The principal is expected to be visible at all times, meeting students, parents, and teachers, solving and dealing with various situations and representing the school (Ministry of Education, Arts & Culture [MoEAC] 2016). The principal is not only responsible for facilitating interaction with parents, but he/she is also responsible for discipline and academic performance (Ministry of Education [MoE] 2012). The principal is held accountable not only for the achievement of students but also for staff achievement. Principals faced frustrations in controlling student behaviour, promoting learning, improving teaching effectiveness, student retention and parent support. Challenges faced by principals while managing schools are multifaceted and often remain unnoticed, though lacunae of effective principals in school settings lies in how principals meet those challenges.

Paperwork and working with forms are some of the biggest frustrations faced by principals (Chaka 2018). Although efficiency is a very commendable and highly sought-after trait, it can be taken to the extreme (Ebrahimi 2012). The principal may feel he/she is in a constant race against himself/herself and against time. While efficiency can be regarded as excellent quality, principals should try to give themselves a break. The world will not end if they leave a bit of paperwork for the following day.

Principals want to promote learning to see better student outcomes. However, one of the biggest frustrations faced by principals is that parental involvement is lacking in supporting the school's efforts towards improving student achievement (Iqbal & Hamdan 2013). Parents also have to take joint responsibility for the poor performance of their children. Principals, staff spend energy on building relationships with students, teachers and nonteaching staff with no tangible results (Olowoselu & Bello 2015).

Another concern is the frequency at which principals are changed. It is a newly appointed principal who deals with the previous model of functioning and has to carry forward work. The change also leads to disruption in the function of the system. Many times, principals were transferred from one school to another. They had to carry on with practices from earlier school principals and, at times, had to implement innovations gradually (Moo & Rashad 2015). In schools with frequently changing principals, it is the newly appointed principal who has to iron out inherited difficulties and problems.

This is the issue of dealing with previous school principals' legacy, practice and style. One of the critical tasks of principals is to get work done by staff, which is especially difficult in government schools as a secure job makes them indifferent. This is the issue of dealing with ineffective staff and problems related to teachers. Maintaining the balance between personal needs and professional responsibility is problematic for many school principals (Wieczorek & Manard 2018). This is maintaining a balance between personal and professional life.

2.2 Challenges faced by principals who use a paternalistic management style

Studies indicated that principals lost focus on instructional supervision of teaching and learning in their schools (Olowoselu & Bello 2015). Many principals prefer to please their supervisors by focusing on administrative work to beat deadlines while ignoring teaching and learning, which is the core function of a school (Sarwar et al. 2022). Most principals have tough jobs because many responsibilities fall on their shoulders. Dealing with frustrated teachers and unhappy support staff who may try to undermine principal leadership is another big issue that consumes time and energy. Amid all this, principals need to maintain their sanity by creating a positive working environment; otherwise, burnout will set in.

Most principals are overwhelmed by special education requirements because they are not armed with both legal knowledge and empathy to deal with them (Styron & Styron 2011). They also do not realise that they have the power and creativity to retain their best teachers (Moo & Rashad 2015). These principals find it challenging to influence school achievement by creating situations that help improve the process of teaching and learning (Wieczorek & Manard 2018).

Effective leadership is one of the main challenges in bringing positive change. Such leadership affects aspects such as trust, culture and schools' vision as they facilitate change (Ağalday & Dağlı 2021). Principals only focused on developing relationships and trust among their teachers, students and parents and ignored teaching and learning, which are core functions of school (Vahedi & Asadi 2013). The main reason principals are appointed is to facilitate effective teaching and learning processes that result in student outcomes. Otherwise, they fail in default.

Principals faced challenges in dealing with accountability, disturbing trends regarding attention given to school safety and issues dealing with funding (Styron & Styron 2011). However, issues dealing with funding were seen as second-critical ones ranked behind accountability (Obama et al. 2015). This ranking may reflect current severe economic conditions.

2.3 Challenges faced by principals who use a democratic management style

Principals' management roles should be inclusive in order to recognize the roles of parents, staff, and students (Preetika & Priti 2013). One of the challenges that emerged was the management of the relationship between the principal and Parent-Teacher Association (PTA). Olowoselu et al. (2016) further argue that there is a need for principals to restore unity in schools and to embrace partnership with parents in their style of supervision. Most secondary schools in Namibia experience challenges with parental involvement in education. Many of them resolve to PTA meetings that are held once per term. This has affected quality education delivery. Parental involvement was considered necessary by principals, but how they could help was perhaps not realised. That was the reason why collaboration between parents and schools was limited to parent-teacher meetings only (ibid.).

The principal is the bridge between the community and the school. However, the principal's role in parental participation in education is neglected in most schools.

Principals do not play an active role in promoting parental participation (Iqbal & Hamdan 2013). Parental participation means sending their children to schools only. They consider parental involvement in education as interference in school affairs. Principals consider parents ill-equipped and lack the knowledge and skills to understand education delivery. Parental involvement in education will create more management issues for schools rather than finding solutions to management issues (Iqbal & Hamdan 2013).

Learner academic achievement depends on the leadership of principals (Chaka 2018). However, studies have shown a lack of principals' leadership role in learner academic achievement (Ogunola et al. 2013). Strong administrative leadership is a critical attribute of schools with high learner achievement (Australian Research Council [ARC] 2015). In practice, it is infrequent to find a principal who strikes a balance between administrative work and a leadership role of focusing on teaching and learning. Most principals choose only one between two approaches, although it is imperative to strike a balance between the two.

Although principals play a pivotal role in improving student learning and attaining educational outcomes, they work under strenuous conditions to deal with multifaceted transformational issues (Raj 2017a). Principals have challenges in coping with numerous changes, partly because they are inadequately prepared for leadership position or simply lack necessary skills, knowledge and attitudes to lead and manage schools (Ünler & Kılıç 2019). Studies discovered that there is no formal preparation for aspiring practising principals taking on leadership/management positions, and very few in-service professional development programmes are available (Raj 2017b). In Namibia, different professional development programmes are practised using different modes of delivery. However, there is no formal policy guideline that regulates how the programme should be implemented.

There are also critical challenges in curriculum implementation, providing teaching and learning resources to meet teacher training and development needs (Raj 2017b). All these critical challenges are linked to financial constraints (Mushaandja 2010). Principals are unlikely to be effective in instructional roles without putting in place sound financial empowerment frameworks in schools (Ndaita 2015).

2.4 Challenges faced by principals who use a laissez-faire management style

Many schools in Namibia are still using traditional methods of teaching with an old curriculum that lacks Information, Communication and Technology (ICT) content despite the government's desire to have schools in the country be ICT compliant. These schools are still manually operated from classrooms to offices as classrooms contain black chalkboards, and teaching staff prepare lessons manually. Lesson plans, timetables, notes and materials are manually developed from essential textbooks following a large syllabus that is non-ICT content-based.

The challenges faced by principals in the implementation of ICT-based curriculum and instruction are alarming (Lambaino et al. 2016). Kouzes and Posner (2013) further argue that principals' leadership has a crucial role to play in ICT implementation in teaching and learning. However, the level of ICT implementation is at its initial stages

(Nyongesa 2014). Curriculum leadership is one of the significant factors that challenge the ICT implementation process (Anayatin 2023). If applied, there would be improved and successful implementation of ICT in schools (Lambaino et al. 2016). In the Oshana Region, the Directorate of Education has resolved to have one ICT symposium per year to encourage ICT implementation in schools. However, there is no formal policy guideline that stipulates how ICT should be implemented (Kirimu et al. 2017).

Many principals repudiate claims that the primary function was to manage teaching and learning (Raj 2017a). However, one of the primary reasons for the poor academic standards of learners in public schools is the ineffective leadership role of principals (Nellitawati 2020). Many principals place more emphasis on their managerial/administrative duties rather than focusing on teaching and learning (Villet 2012). Although principals are accountable for a plethora of administrative and managerial tasks, there is an urgent need for them to take active leadership roles to enhance learner performance (Raj 2017b). Unfortunately, this is not always the case. Studies discovered that some principals rely on practice wisdom from anecdotal experience while ignoring scientific knowledge discovered by research in managing schools (Osborne-Lampkin & Folsom 2017).

3. Factors that determine the choice of management styles

One way of approaching management styles is by looking at the organisational power of the principal, the perception of employees and factors that determine the choice of management style (Taucean et al. 2016). The organisational power of the principal is derived from positional power, such as legitimate, reward, coercive, and personal power, such as expert and referent power. Perceptions of employees are essential for the degree of success or lack of it in school, while relationships between principal and employees and the situation at hand determine the choice of management style (Tuytens & Devos 2013).

Another way of approaching management styles is by looking at the impact of management styles and their effects on a principal's school commitment, job satisfaction, communication, and managerial effectiveness versus the school's structure, such as the type of branch and principal's individual traits like age, level of education (Ekaterini 2010). With the increase in age, there is less authority exhibited by principals. With increasing age, they acquire more knowledge and tend to be flexible. With growing age, they start to depend on others for help, and this too might affect their management styles (Kotur & Anbazhagan 2014). With growing knowledge, they adjust to their surroundings, capable of understanding others better. Gender is found to influence management styles used by principals (Kotur & Anbazhagan 2014). For example, males scored higher on comfort with authority and confidence, while females scored higher on interpersonal skills and integrity (Küçükgöz 2021).

When analysing a principal's management style, it is necessary to take into consideration key factors such as conditions that shape management style and opportunities for the principal to change and improve gradually (Marcinkevičiūtė &

Žukovskis 2016). The efficiency of the principal's behaviour and the choice of management style results in objective and subjective factors. Objective factors include factors that cannot be affected by the environment, such as specifics of managed school, specifics of addressed issues, management level and peculiarities of managed staff, career path and school of principal. Subjective factors depend on personal qualities that can be developed and improved, like the principal's personal quality, the reason for his/her emergence and his/her education (Kotur & Anbazhagan 2014). Situational factors include the needs and personal qualities of employees and the nature of tasks and requirements (Marcinkevičiūtė & Žukovskis 2016).

While some principals become heads of the pack, others emerge as great principals after years of hard work and dedication. Put differently, to handle yourself, use your head, to handle others, use your heart (Eleanor Roosevelt in Queendom 2020). This statement revealed that effective principals possess specific personality profiles. Principals set clear guidelines, reward excellent performance, provide feedback, and take management roles in assigning tasks to employees (Kark et al. 2016). They possess, among others, high emotional stability, excellent motivational and mentoring skills, a strong vision for success and share a vision in a way that inspires employees (Osborne-Lampkin & Folsom 2017). Unfortunately, principals whose personalities differ from this ideal will feel that they are not fit to lead employees and end up struggling should they find themselves in a leadership position. To be effective principals takes hard work (Agustin et al. 2022). Those who have a desire and determination to sharpen their wits, hone their skills and accentuate their virtues can pull away and deftly lead others to success (Bridgman et al. 2016).

4. Miles' human relations and human resources models

This study was informed and based on human relations and human resources models that were adapted by Ndikuyuda, Simiyu and Achoka (2009), which are closely associated with the conceptual framework. These models provide valuable insight into what happens on the ground. According to these models, principals subscribe to two management models, namely, the human relations model and the human resources model.

Principals subscribe to two models when choosing which management style they should use (Bwambale et al. 2024). That is, one for teachers, which is associated with a democratic style/people-oriented and the other one for them, which is associated with an autocratic style/task-oriented, hence the adaption of human relations and human resources models in this study. Special emphasis is placed on teachers' attitudes, amount of participation and teachers' expectations (Iroabuchi & Kaegon 2019).

Human relations and human resources models guided this study on exploring and interpreting challenges faced by principals in using management styles in the Oshana Region in Namibia. These models guided us in data collection and data analysis and explored challenges faced by principals in using management styles in the Oshana Region in Namibia. We, being committed and determined to discover patterns of

meaning through experience, systemic thinking, assessment and creative analysis, used human relations and human resources models that underpin challenges faced by principals in using management styles, namely autocratic, paternalistic, democratic and *laissez-faire* methods of the management decision-making process in the context of this study. This was done with the intention of discovering main factors rather than specific variables and outcomes affecting decision-making processes among participants in this study. In the next section, models of management styles and school functionality, which were developed, adapted and elucidated from Miles' human relations and human resources of this study, are discussed.

The use of management styles requires that principals be well-equipped to possess the prerequisite skills needed to manage and inspire teachers to improve teaching and learning. They should regularly monitor how well teachers are doing and give guidance and assistance where necessary (Auala, 2012; Villet, 2012). Without this, principals will fail in default.

On the other hand, the school management team, as the learning team in school development, should meet regularly to identify development needs, classify these needs in appropriate development areas, use appropriate development strategies to learn, practice what they have learned, monitor practice, and evaluate performance in relation to teaching and learning (Mushaandja, 2010). Figure 1 below sums up the model of principals' management styles and school functionality.
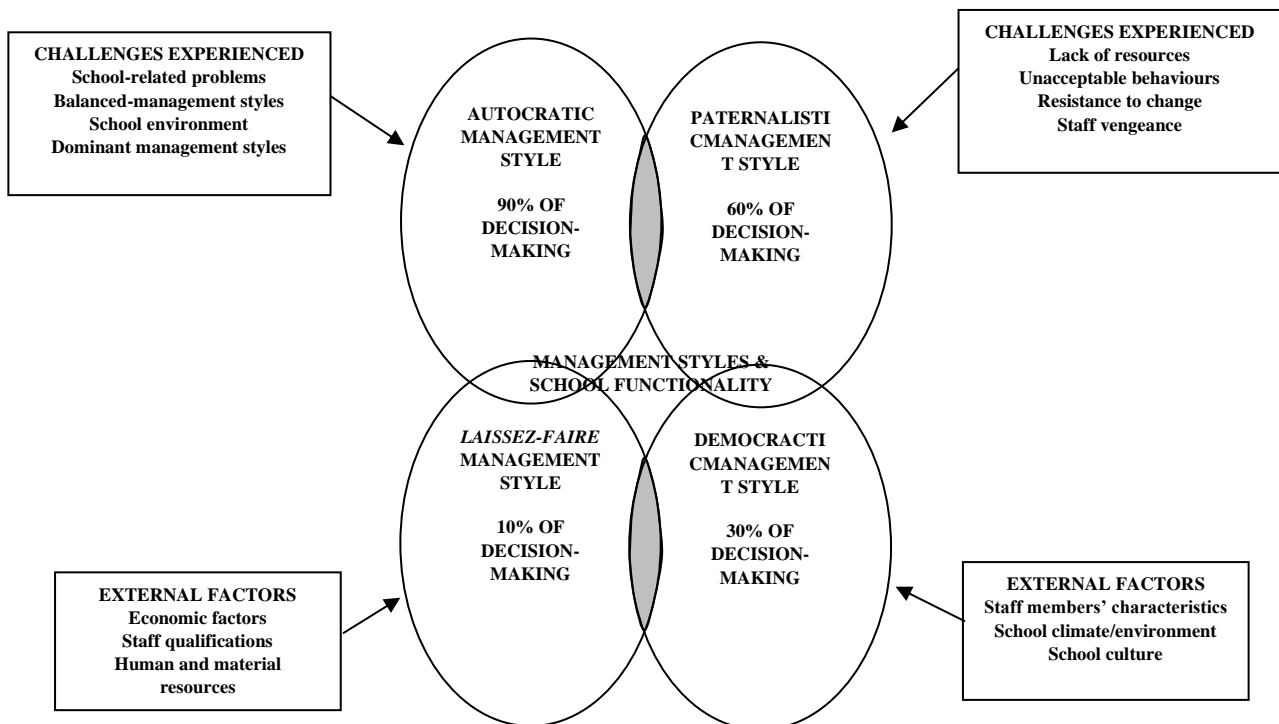

Figure 1: Model of principals' management styles and school functionality

It can be depicted from Figure 1 that the devolution of power and authority, delegation and decentralisation of the decision-making process at educational setup are

based on the representation of management styles. This representation of management styles can be better synthesised and understood using the analogy of percentages. Therefore, according to Figure 1, principals use ninety percent of the decision-making process in the autocratic management style, sixty percent in the paternalistic style, thirty percent in the democratic style and ten percent in the laissez-faire management style.

It is apparent from Figure 1 that there are many challenges and factors faced by principals while using management styles that have effects on school functionality. For instance, principal knowledge, skills, professional attitudes and values are of little value if principals are unable to bring improved learner performance. Thus, there should be a correspondence between knowledge and action.

The intent of using four management styles was to delve into philosophical assumptions and intentions that underpin each style and to indicate how key elements are referred to in each of the styles. One of the key messages put forward is that a decision-making process is undertaken that will allow or inhibit teachers from participating in the decision-making process in terms of the purpose of the decision for whom it is likely to benefit or be valuable or carried, how the decision may be conducted, from what or whom to carry the task and how the task may be best carried out is also an important consideration in this regard.
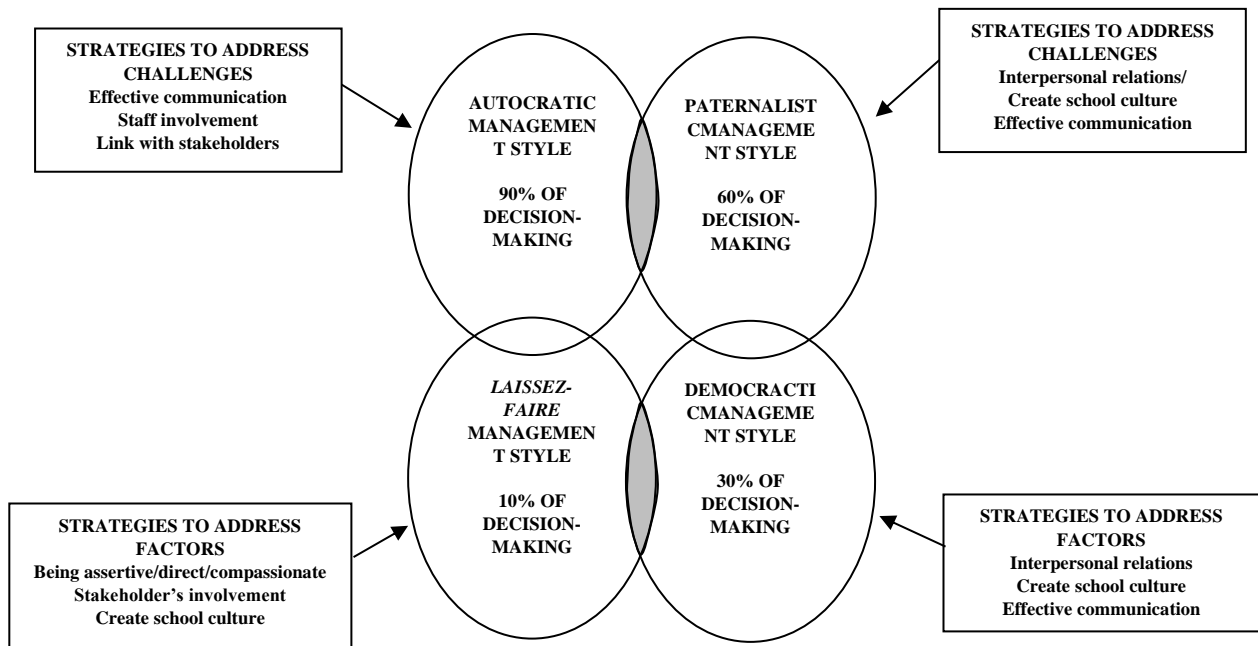

Figure 2: Model of school heads' management styles and school functionality

Most importantly, the categorisation of management styles and school functionality is arranged according to the continuum/continua of the decision-making process and the devolution of power from principals to teachers. Each of the management styles and school functionality sits on continua, that is, from tight control of the decision-making to acting in loco parentis in decision-making, from involving teachers in the decision-making to allowing them the freedom to make decisions whether informed or

not. It is thus evident to note that any decisions in educational setup depend on management styles in terms of exerting authority by principals. These styles identify decision-making patterns, problem-solving, and individual relations in educational setups. Figure 2 sums up the model of school heads' management styles and school functionality.

It is apparent from Figure 2 that there are many strategies principals can use while using management styles to address challenges and factors that determine the choice of management styles that have effects on school functionality.

5. Research methodology

5.1 Research approach

This qualitative case study, which emanates from the constructivist worldview, was conducted to explore challenges faced by principals in using management styles in the Oshana Region in Namibia. This study was a qualitative case study, meaning the information that was collected was presented in words expressed as feelings and attitudes of participants that narrated accounts about the study in detail. This study utilised a qualitative case study approach (Yin 2014) to provide insight into the role participants played in the study. Qualitative information collections during research study provide in-depth information and a variety of perspectives, describes many facets and clarify perceptions around the problem being explored. The qualitative method emphasises understanding through observation, careful documentation and thoughtful analysis of participant words, actions and records (Meyer & Willis 2016). This methodology was based on our experiences and selected participants to explore the problem in an interpretive way and investigation using case study research design.

The case study allows us to focus on a unit of study known as a bounded system, in this case, principals and teachers, for an in-depth exploration of the actual case (Creswell 2014). Case study is a design of inquiry found in many fields, including education, in which we develop in-depth analysis of cases. Since we were primarily interested in the meaning principals and teachers gave to their life experiences, we employed case studies to immerse ourselves in the activities of the small number of principals and teachers. This was to obtain intimate familiarity with their social worlds and to look for patterns in principals' and teachers' words and actions in the context of the case. The qualitative case study was, therefore, used in order to gain in-depth knowledge and understanding of issues and problems associated with challenges faced by principals in using management styles in the Oshana Region in Namibia. This was done to provide deep insight and understanding of ideas and issues in a natural setting (Suter 2012) to a particular situation (Yin 2014). To illustrate the case study type of research, Creswell (2012) guides us when he argues: "*qualitative research is best suited to address research problem in which you do not know variable and need to explore the phenomenon.*" The purpose of employing this method was to describe the nature of the situation as it exists at the time of the study and to explore challenges faced by principals in using management styles in the Oshana Region in Namibia.

Challenges faced by principals in using management styles in the Oshana Region in Namibia cannot be studied outside of its natural setting, which focuses on this contemporary issue. The issue is that control or manipulation of subjects, in this instance, challenges faced by principals in using management styles, is not possible. Theoretical knowledge on the issue under investigation is limited and not yet mature. The case study method was thus a suitable method for this study. Using a case study supports the relevance of the study since a case study is considered more persuasive to principals and teachers than theoretical discussion (Levy & Powell 2005). A study without a qualitative component cannot be used as a basis to recommend actions to principals and teachers nor to inform policy (Merriam 2009). The contribution that research into challenges faced by principals in using management styles often seeks to deduce.

Using Oshana Directorate of Education's latest statistics for 2019, a population of ten principals and ten teachers from ten schools in junior/senior primary, junior and senior secondary schools in Oshana Region was utilised. According to the Oshana Regional Directorate, many schools are poorly managed (Shikongeni & Nakafingo 2016; United Nations Children's Fund [UNICEF] 2015), which may lead to many dysfunctional schools.

In this qualitative case study, purposeful sampling was used based on our exposure to, familiarity with, and engagement with ten principals and ten teachers in ten schools in the Oshana Region. According to the Oshana Directorate of Education's latest statistics for 2019, there are five circuits in the Oshana Region, namely Eheke, Oluno, Ompundja, Onamutai and Oshakati circuits. We selected two principals and two teachers per Circuit.

Data was collected through an interview schedule, field notes and an open-ended questionnaire. Individual in-depth interviews were conducted using an interview schedule in which the same interview schedule was used to find principals' and teachers' views on challenges faced by principals in using management styles in Oshana Region in Namibia.

After all the required permissions were sought and granted, all instruments were pilot-tested and re-adjusted. In this qualitative study, participants were interviewed individually because they come from different schools, and every participant is different.

Typological analysis and content analysis were used to analyse qualitative data from interviews. As recommended by Leedy and Ormrod (2015), we also used a computer software programme, namely Atlas.ti, in order to accommodate multiple, possibly overlapping, coding of data (Maguire & Delahunt 2017).

After all the required permission was sought and granted, anonymity and confidentiality were obtained when reporting on the utterances and narratives of the participants whose names were not mentioned. Instead, pseudonyms were opted for to protect their identity (Creswell 2012). Ethical measures, which included informed consent (McMillan & Schumacher 2010), guarding against manipulating participants were applied during data collection and reporting processes.

6. Findings and Discussion

This section presents findings on challenges faced by principals in using management styles in the Oshana Region in Namibia. The section comprises views of ten principals and ten teachers that were collected from the interview schedule, notes taken during fieldwork and open-ended questionnaires. Some participant responses were summarised and presented in descriptive forms, while others were reported verbatim and presented in italics. Participants' responses were then compared with empirical literature in the field.

6.1 Challenges faced by principals in using management styles

In order to determine the challenges faced by principals in using management styles, we asked the following question: What challenges do principals face when using such management styles?

One principal in the junior secondary phase expressed this view as follows:

"Resistance to change by staff members is based on certain developments at school."

Another principal in the junior primary phase said:

"Teachers who tried to be divisive and display unprofessional conduct give challenges to principals."

Another principal at the senior secondary phase observed:

"Autocratic and laissez-faire management styles can be applied in few circumstances...with autocratic principal may end up alone and with laissez-faire, it may create chaos at school."

This form of leadership and management focuses on people and tasks and ignores the complexity of processes, interactions and tensions within the school, disregarding the external environment, societal changes and cultural contexts surrounding their existence (Caesar 2013). For instance, culture affects the implementation of strategic plans. Schools do not operate in value-free (Bush, 2011). Their operations are governed and directed by school culture. Implementation of strategic plans triggers cultural change.

On the other hand, one teacher at the junior primary phase said:

"One cannot apply only one management style."

Studies indicated that the use of a dominant management style inhibits effective management of schools (MoEAC 2016). For instance, teachers need freedom to make choices, which sometimes makes it difficult for the principal to maintain his/her style.

Another teacher at the junior secondary phase said:

"Convincing staff members to accept management style is always challenging. Management styles are taken with mixed feelings."

For example, when principals apply an autocratic management style, it makes staff members feel that they are not welcome to partake in decision-making. Consequently, they will never be committed because everything is forced on them.

We then asked the question: What needs to be done to address identified challenges? One principal at the senior secondary phase said:

"The Ministry of Education should change the ways they deal with disciplinary issues at school. Disciplinary procedures need to be revised. They need to spell out the long-awaited outcome of the disciplinary hearing."

Many studies parallel these findings (Lambaino et al. 2016; Raj 2017b). Principals need to face the problems of dissatisfied staff. They should work on significant influences that are champions of change (Boonla & Treputtharat 2013). They should identify and silence internal opponents by building alliances with natural allies and isolating external opponents (Osibanjo & Adeniji 2012).

Moreover, one teacher at the junior primary phase said:

"Principals should always approach teachers in a professional manner."

Many studies parallel these findings (Ampaire & Namusonge 2015). For instance, the efficiency and effectiveness of a principal in dealing with staff in such situations may expose the capacity of a skilled principal (Preetika & Priti 2013). Another teacher at the senior primary phase observed:

"Principals should convince staff about the necessity of using such management styles."

One teacher at the junior secondary phase said:

"Principals should involve staff members in decision-making and help them to understand policies and their duties."

Another teacher at the senior secondary phase said:

"Principals should engage teachers, learners and make them feel part of school."

Studies show that stakeholders' involvement in school affairs is very crucial to the smooth running of the school (Evans et al. 2016; Kocchar 2011). For example, the principal is not only responsible for facilitating interaction with parents, but also responsible for discipline among students and academic performance (MoE 2012). The principal is held accountable not only for the achievement of students but also for staff achievement, and

this is in line with human relations and human resources models adopted in this study. The clarion call is that principals should study the situation and apply a management style that fits.

6.2 Factors that determine the choice of management styles

In order to identify factors that determine the choice of management styles, we asked the question: What factors determine the choice of the management styles that also have effects on school functionality. One principal at the senior primary phase said:

"These factors include staff member attitudes and personality, types of tasks to be completed and school diversity."

Many studies parallel these findings (Iqbal & Hamdan 2013; Olowoselu & Bello 2015). For instance, principals invest time in instructional programmes and involve teachers in designing, implementing, and monitoring assessments at the classroom and school levels (Chaka 2018; Villet 2012). This, in turn, yields a positive school culture and instructional improvement that is aligned with goals and objectives consistent with the mission and vision of the school. School culture determines how things are done at school, and this sometimes creates a conflict of interest and rejection, whereas the school setting and environment determine the choice of management styles.

On the other hand, one teacher at the junior primary phase observed:

"These factors include personal preferences, previous experiences, staff members' attitudes towards nature of the task to be performed, principals' relationship with staff members and length of principals stay at school."

Many researchers indicate that principals lack, among others, Human Resource (HR) skills, Human Resource Planning (HRP), Human Resource Management (HRM), Strategic Human Resource Management (SHRM), Knowledge Management (KM) and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) (Davoudi & Kaur 2012; Okon & Isong 2016). Many scholars hold the view that changes in schools have affected staff members' attitudes, knowledge, intellectual capital, social values and social responsibility. Attention was given to KM, CSR and the development of HRM (Sumi 2011). However, according to the human relations model, sound relations between principals and teachers are essential in creating trust and bonding them together to enable them to contribute to a positive school climate (Henderson 2014). Teachers perform better when they feel safe, when they are free to ask for or offer assistance to colleagues and when their contributions are recognised and appreciated by authority.

We then asked the question: What needs to be done to address identified factors? One principal at the senior primary phase said:

"Principals should be aware that they have the right to listen to what other staff members have to say, although they should continue to make their own decisions."

Many studies concur with these findings (Osborne-Lampkin & Folsom 2017; Wieczorek & Manard 2018). For instance, a supportive environment enables schools to perform and encourage learners and staff to achieve higher outcomes (Sumi 2011). The findings suggested that they should encourage active participation.

Recent research has suggested that these strategies are attributed to four critical dimensions of HRM, namely commitment, flexibility, quality and integration (Guest in Osibanjo & Adeniji 2012). In commitment, staff members are expected to identify the interests and goals of the school and align and commit to achieving these goals. In terms of flexibility, staff members are expected to adapt to change within the school structure without any strife or prejudice. Quality implies that high levels of performance attainment depend on the quality of staff members and management of such schools. Integration involves matching human resources strategies to the needs of school strategy (Eleanor Roosevelt in Queendom 2020).

One of four types of assets managed in school is human assets, besides physical assets, financial assets, and intangible assets. Human assets are competent individuals with the capacity to render services to schools, and they operate at the pivot of operations. It implies what they have to contribute to achieve school goals (Lapiṇa et al. 2013). It is, therefore, worth noting that human assets control, guide, and manage the use of other assets to achieve school goals (John Quincy Adams in Queendom 2020).

On the other hand, one teacher at the junior secondary phase said:

"Personality and ways individual think should be taken into consideration."

As scholars correctly put it, *"If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more and become more, you are a leader"* (John Quincy Adams in Queendom 2020). Collaboration with stakeholders leads to better teacher and learner performance. Principals should influence school effectiveness. Another teacher at the junior secondary phase said:

"Building team encourages cooperation and coordination of responsibility while flexibility helps staff members to adjust to the changing environment, but communication helps to transmit index not efficiently."

Many studies concur with this finding (cf. Karori et al. 2013; Prasad et al. 2010). For example, some scholars emphasise the role of culture and school structure (Ekaterini 2010; Taucean et al. 2016) as aspects to be considered to promote effective management of school while other researchers emphasise information system (Osborne-Lampkin& Folsom 2017; Rajasekar 2014) in the smooth running of the school. As Fuller (2013) put it, a school with an unhealthy, negative culture becomes the breeding ground for many problem behaviours. Such a statement reminds us about the importance of culture in school functionality.

The findings of this study suggest three criteria for comparison, namely, the development of the environment, the development of relationships with stakeholders

and business ethics (Sumi 2011). The most important criterion is the development of the environment. The second criterion is developing relationships with stakeholders, and the least essential criteria are business ethics. The first important HRM practices are those from the soft HRM approach, including managing the work environment, safety and health, rewards and compensating staff members (Lapiṇa et al. 2013).

7. Conclusions and Recommendations

This article explores challenges faced by principals in using management styles in Oshana Region in Namibia. The main question answered by the study was: What challenges do principals face in using such management styles? The prominent issues that emanated from the findings were that there are many challenges faced by principals in using management styles. What emerged from the study suggests that challenges faced by principals in using management styles are attributed to barriers like cognitive hurdles, resource hurdles, motivational hurdles and political hurdles. These findings concur with Kaazara et al. (2024), who posit that there is evidence of diminished motivation, participation and innovation, which contributed to stagnating learning outcomes over a decade, a suggestion that principals should be equipped and well-trained to provide necessary management skills to teachers. The principal issue encompassing these findings is that principals should prioritise, plan, draw up a schedule of activities and communicate schedules to staff members. Findings also suggest that barriers identified in this study can be addressed by reducing resources that do not add value and transferring them to practices that have high potential performance gain. Furthermore, principals need to sort out the problems of unsatisfied teachers. This finding ties in with Sarwar (2022), who argues that principals should adopt styles according to teachers' level, and management styles should be changed according to specific situations in the institution.

The principal issue from the study is that there are many factors that determine the choice of management styles. It is very crucial to examine various factors, such as principals' management style, in order to address this issue effectively (Asanairi 2024). What emerged from the study suggests that many strategies could be used to address identified factors. Taken together, these findings suggest that principals should be assertive, direct and compassionate.

In view of the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made: Firstly, principals need to learn and understand the implication of these challenges on the functionality of the schools.

Secondly, principals need to learn and understand the implications of factors that determine the choice of management styles and their effect on the functionality of the schools.

Conflict of interest statement
The author declares no conflicts of interest.

About the author

The author is a focused education professional with a doctoral degree in management and experience in helping students achieve education goals. Talented at building lasting relationships and partnering with others to meet objectives. The author is enthusiastic and ambitious with career success, building strong, effective teams of inspired educators and support staff. The author has over 32 years of experience in the academic landscape, with expertise in leadership and management, motivational Academic leader excelling in performance-increasing initiatives, improving customer satisfaction and driving overall operational improvements. Innovative Academic leader focused on engaging students and educators to meet objectives and drive student progress. Fourteen years of managing performing institutions, cultivating student rapport and promoting successful education delivery. The author is an experienced leader with 14 years of experience in leadership/management through participation, coordination, supervision, delegation and devolution of power. The author currently focuses on advanced intensive/advanced research skills and publication in the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture.

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