LEADERSHIP STYLE(S) PREDOMINANTLY USED IN COLLEGES OF EDUCATION IN ZAMBIA AND ITS INFLUENCE ON CREATION OF TEACHING AND LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

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ABSTRACT
The article is an extract from PhD study that investigated leadership styles used by principals to administer four colleges of education in Zambia with the view to establishing the styles' influence, pragmatism and suitability in creating conducive teaching and learning environments in the colleges studied. Using a cross section survey and mixed method research approach, the study analysed four leadership styles namely autocratic, democratic, laissez-faire and instructional to substantiate the most used style to manage two private and two government owned colleges studied. The analysis of generated data, guided by positivism paradigm, phenomenology and explanatory sequential strategy highlighted principals' predominant use of autocratic leadership style which mostly had paucity influence towards creation of conducive teaching and learning environments much needed in institutions of learning for good academic performance. The Pearson Chi square p value of 0.760 obtained indicated that the style was statistically insignificant for positive creation of conducive environment, thus resulting in creation of poor to moderate environments inappropriate for effective teaching and learning and good performance of colleges in various aspects of college life. The researchers recommended intermittent use of this style to foster creation of conducive environments most needed for excellent performance of studied colleges.

Keywords: Autocratic, Conducive Environment, Leadership Style, Learning, Teaching.

1. INTRODUCTION
Colleges of Education are among the learning institutions endowed with the responsibility of providing quality education to the products of these institutions. Quality education entails education that is responsive to the needs of the society and takes learners to higher levels. Ministry of Education (MoE, 1996) had realised that quality education prevails where good administration of the learning institution exists through application of good leadership. Good institutional leadership in colleges is cardinal as it has a direct bearing on creation of a conducive environment which leverages on high academic performance and productivity in various aspects of college life. A good number of people in various organisations in general and colleges in particular are more preoccupied with the caliber of leadership existing in their organisations and aspire for good leadership which is reactive to their needs and those of the organisation. This is based on understanding that leadership governs the success or failure of an institution (Puni, Ofei

&Okoe, 2014; Ebrahim, 2018 3), determines the working environment (Nyeri, 2015) as well as the motivation of the subordinates (Chowdhury, 2014). However, good leadership is ubiquitous in the leadership style mostly utilised by the person in the position of leadership. The style predominantly used regulates and defines the leadership of the institution (Smith, 2016). Leaders often select leadership styles they deem most appropriate to realise the affairs of the institution according to their wish and vision. But the question is do the styles chosen always produce good results? Do they meet the aspirations of people in the institution?

The objective of the study was to assess and establish which of the four leadership styles namely autocratic, democratic, laissez-faire and instructional was predominantly used by principals in both private and government owned colleges and to determine the effectiveness of the style in creating conducive T/L environments in the colleges studied.

1.1 Purpose of the Study

The study was undertaken to empirically and theoretically investigate leadership aspects prevailing in colleges of education in Zambia, with the view to establishing which style was predominantly used by college leaders and how effective the style was in facilitating the creation of conducive T/L environments in the colleges studied.

1.2 Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study.

1) What leadership style(s) is predominantly used by principals when running the affairs of colleges of education in Zambia?
2) How effective is the predominantly used style in creating conducive T/L environments in colleges of study?
3) What type of T/L environment is created by the predominantly used leadership style?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Leadership Style and Conducive Environment

Leadership is a term with many faces and facets hence cannot be restricted to one definition. For whatever definition, leadership involves one person exerting influence on others. It mandates one person inspiring others, motivating them and directing their activities towards achieving the groups' goal (Jones and George, 2003, Armstrong, 2010). These activities make leadership fundamental wherever a group of people is found. Thus, Kumar (2018) and Smith (2016) have indicated that leadership is needed in many circles such as politics, military, education and religion among others. This leadership is not just any leadership but one which is pragmatic to drive members to the attainment of the expected goals. Nonetheless, any form of leadership is expressed through a particular leadership style. Leadership style is the consistent behaviour the leader portrays in handling issues of the institution under the leaders' control (Ojokuku, Odetayo & Sajuyibge, 2012). It is believed that leadership provided in any form of organisation empowers the organisation to excel in its operations, to be productive and accelerate its performativity in various aspects of the organizations' life. However, it is again argued that the extent of the organisations' productivity and success is dependent on the style(s) of leadership the leader adopts (Ojokuku et al., 2012; Nanjundeswanswamy & Swamy, 2014) which determines the environment created for the subordinates to perform their duties appropriately (Puni et al., 2014).

Creating a conducive working environment is one of the key responsibilities of every institutional leader. There is a strong correlation between good leadership and conducive working environment (Oyetunji, 2006; Nyeri, 2015). Creating a conducive teaching and learning environment means setting an atmosphere in an institution which is friendly to both the staff and students. A friendly environment entails an atmosphere which is not tense, not frightening, and which has all the necessary resources among them human, material and financial needed for teaching and learning to take place. Lumadi (2014) describes conducive T/L environment as an environment where the levels of cooperation, networking and collaboration among staff, students and administrators are high to foster attainment of institutional goals. The cooperation, networking and collaboration become feasible when the leader apply good leadership skills in his/her operations. Conducive environment is determined by the style of leadership in vogue in an institution. Many researchers have come up with many leadership styles which define and differentiate one leader from the other. Among them are the three classical leadership styles which includes autocratic, democratic and laissez-faire. While others are contemporary like transformational, transactional and instructional. The study investigated the three classical styles and one contemporary as discussed in the next section to substantiate their efficacy and suitability in creating conducive working environments in the colleges studied.

2.2 *Autocratic leadership and Conducive environment*
The first classical leadership style investigated was **autocratic** which anchors on complete centralisation of authority in the top leadership, who has the powers to make decisions and policies with minimal consultation from members of the group under pretext that the leader is the embodiment of wisdom and the only competent person in the organisation (Adeleye, 2015). This attitude negatively affects subordinates' motivation, job satisfaction (Ebrahim, 2018) and deprives the institution of bright ideas from staff which can enhance creation of conducive working environment. Autocratic leadership is a style that is characterised by formal centralised structures, procedures of doing things, processes and mechanisms which are clearly defined and are enforced to ensure that subordinates do their tasks effectively and efficiently within the rules (Puni et al., 2014; Mureithi, 2012) and without question (Kakanda, 2013). This style of leadership attract unilateral decision making and one way communication pattern, which is usually from the leader to the subordinates. The unilateral and single decision making attract resentment; alienate subordinates from sense of belonging to the institution and thwart innovation and creative solutions to problems which adversely impact good performance of the institution and negatively affect creation of conducive working environment. However, in times of emergency the style works superb where the leader acts expeditiously without waiting for other people to solve the problem as well as when dealing with unskilled personnel who need direction and guidance.

2.3 *Democratic Leadership and Conducive Environment*
The second classical leadership style was **democratic** where powers to run the institution in this case the college comes from all members of the group. In this style of leadership functions of leadership are shared with members of the group and the leader is more part of the team (Mullins, 2007; Mureithi, 2012). It is characterised by cooperation, active participation, accountability and delegation of responsibilities and tasks (Al Rahbi, Khalid &Khan, 2017) where group members have a greater say in decision making, determining of policies,

implementing systems and procedures (Russell, 2011; Puni et al., 2014). Besides, the leader encourages collaboration by communicating to subordinates everything that concerns their work and shares decision making and problem solving responsibilities which accelerate the spirit of belonging to the institution in members and help to build team spirit (D'Souza, 2007). These practices inculcate trust in subordinates and boost their morale, motivate them and culminate in better ideas and more creative solutions to problems (Puni et al, 2014).The above mentioned characteristics proliferate the creation of conducive T/L environments and add to development of competent and committed employees who are willing to deliver the best, think for themselves, communicate openly and seek responsibility without being forced (Puni et al., 2014). Nonetheless, the style works effectively well when subordinates are willing to share knowledge and skill (Nanjundeswaraswamy & Swamy, 2014). When roles are not clearly defined and time is limited the style often leads to failure of consensus, programmes, projects and other aspects of college life (Al Rahbi et al., 2017).

2.4 *Laissez-Faire Leadership and Conducive Environment*
The third classical leadership style was **Laissez-faire** where the leader gives the subordinates maximum autonomy in their work, sets no goals or procedures but allows subordinates to work without his/her interference (D' Souza, 2001).The delegation of powers and permitting of subordinates to make their own decisions as well as setting their own goals cannot lead to creation of conducive T/L environment as some subordinates are not competent enough to set goals without guidance. Others are weak in meeting deadlines and making decisions that can boost creation of conducive working environment in the institution (Jerotich, 2013).This style of leadership is a permissive kind of leadership which guarantees the leader diminutive powers to run the institution than subordinates who hold a high degree of independence in their operations (Thungu et al, 2012). The leader deliberately circumvents setting up institutional operational goals and rules in preference of any structure created by his/her subordinates in the institution. The practice is deficient of staff focus and sense of direction which if not controlled has the potential to lead to staff dissatisfaction and a poor institutional image. The style works well where subordinates are highly skilled, experienced, educated and eager to put in the best as it might result in producing competent leaders in the institution. On the contrary the benevolent sharing of freedom to subordinates wane the system due to misuse of freedom by some members which may result in creation of non-conducive T/L environment. In institutions like colleges, where members need direction, quick feedback and praise, the style is likely to activate indiscipline in members of staff and students, and is fertile ground for anarchy and chaos in the institution (Kakanda, 2013) which sabotage creation of conducive teaching and learning environment.

2. 5 *Instructional Leadership Style and Conducive Environment*
 Instructional leadership is one of the contemporary leadership styles used in the study that focuses on standardising teaching and learning. The leader in this style is more concerned with learning of students hence the style is called "**learning-centered leadership" (**Southworth, 2009). Every leader of a learning institution is expected to be an instructional leader whose role should be operationalised in supervising classroom instructions, coordinating the school curriculum and monitoring student progress (Dongo, 2016; Prytula, Noonam & Hellsten, 2013;

Mafuwane, 2011). To achieve this the principal of a learning institution is obliged to set clear goals for his subordinates to follow, monitoring lessons, and allocating required resources for existence of effective teaching and learning (Hallinger, 2005). It is also mandatory for a leader to be evaluating educators regularly for effective promotion of student learning and high academic performance. These tasks when well performed and coordinated enhance creation of a conducive teaching and learning environment. In principle this style has all it takes to create atmospheres that facilitate teaching and learning when properly utilised. But in many instances leaders of learning institutions lack training in instructional leadership hence, concentrate on administrative roles than being instructional leaders (Phillip, 2009, Kabeta, 2015).

The four styles were assessed to establish which style was predominantly being used by principals when running their colleges and to determine the efficacy of the style in creation of conducive learning and teaching environments in selected colleges of education in Zambia.

2.6 Theoretical Framework

The study was informed by two theories namely path-goal and Fiedlers' contingency theories. 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 ranges 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).Second is task structure which is the degree to which the job assignments are organised, structured or unstructured (Robison &Judge, 2009). 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 favorable situation for effective leadership while poor member-follower relationship, unstructured task and high or low position powers results in unfavorable 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 creation of conducive teaching and learning environment.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design and Sampling

To investigate the most predominantly leadership style used by principals in managing the affairs of the colleges, a cross section survey and mixed research approach were used where collecting and analysing of both qualitative and quantitative data was done in a single study. The rationale

for using mixed method research design was based on understanding that mixed method allows the use of multiple methods of data collection to address the problem and in this way empower the researcher to answer questions that cannot be answered by using one single approach (Creswell, 2012) and to enhance good coverage of the topic. But, most importantly the approach was favored to allow offsetting of the problem of generalisation and enhancing the validity, credibility, dependability and reliability of the research findings. The study engaged 372 participants drawn from principals, vice principals, academic and non-academic staff, directors, MoE officials and student universe. The choice of the sample was done using stratified and purposively sampling based on leadership positions held in the institution, gender, knowledge of the topic and interest shown.

Thus, eight (8) administrators who included principals, vice principals, director and Ministry of Education official were engaged based on their leadership positions. Students in Student leadership and third years taking leadership courses because of their knowledge of the topic and long stay in the college were also engaged. Hence, 221 students (110 males and 111 females) took part in answering the questionnaires while 12 males and 12 female students took part in interview and Focus Group Discussion (FGD) respectively. Lectures were put in four stratas of middle managers (consisting of HoDs and HoS) those teaching leadership courses such as Educational Management and Leadership (EMA) and Educational Leadership and Management (ELM) was another strata. The other was made up of all those holding responsibilities of leadership in the colleges such as Chief Internal Examiner, Open and Distance Education Coordinator among others. And the last was for ordinary lecturers who had interest in the topic. These were included to counteract the responses of those in positions of leadership. In forming these stratas gender was considered. Hence 96 lecturers (44 males and 52 females) answered questionnaires and 23(12 males and 11 females) took part in interviews and FGD. Respondents for qualitative were handpicked purposively based on their knowledge on the topic and positions held in the institution.

3.2 Data Collection and Analysis

Data were collected in two phases at two private and two government owned colleges using self-made questionnaires, semi-structured interview guide, Focus Group Discussion (FGD) and self-made observation check list. Quantitative data were collected first using questionnaires. The questionnaires had six sections which included demographic section, four sections which examined the four leadership styles while the last examined conducive environment. The questions in the questionnaire assessed each leadership styles' features and how they were being applied in the institutions in relation to creation of conducive T/L environment. The responses were measured using five point likert scale where the frequency performance was distributed into five levels ranging from strongly disagree, disagree, no opinion, agree and strongly agree. Collection of data through questionnaires was followed a year later with qualitative data collection to clean the lacunas noted in quantitative data. An explanatory sequential design guided the analysis of data where quantitative data were analysed first using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software version 23 and Pearson Chi-square to get frequency tables, bar charts and inferences. Qualitative data were analysed using thematic analysis strategy. Thus, quantitative data were analysed using positivism paradigm to add objectivity epistemological value to the study whilst qualitative data were analysed using phenomenology to elicit in-depth information of the phenomenon from lived experiences of the participants' perspective. The steps taken made the findings more reliable and authentic. Triangulation of data also guaranteed

validity of the findings while reliability was guaranteed by long stay at each site and collection of data in two phases. The getting of same responses after a year constituted reliability of the findings. The analysis of data was informed by Fiedlers' contingency and Path-goal theories

4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION
4.1 Predominant Leadership Style used by Principals

Principals when asked which leadership styles they were using, all indicated democratic while two stated combination of democratic and autocratic when needs dictated especially when dealing with matters to do with policies and principles of the college. However, their subordinates who felt the weight of their leadership had a different version. Their responses highlighted autocratic as the predominant leadership style used as indicated by 66 lecturers (69%) and 131 students (59%).

Figure 4.1 Predominant Leadership Style
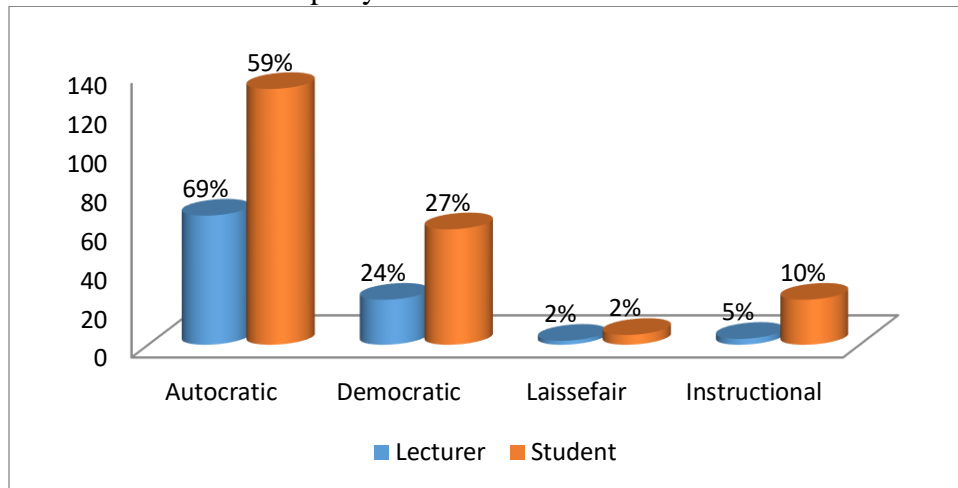
These figures and percentages when compared with other leadership styles were too high designating that this style was outstanding in principals' operations and surpassed other leadership styles. The above responses were reinforced by qualitative data where most students and lecturers pointed out that their principals used mainly autocratic leadership style as reflected in the following verbatim by respondents from both categories of colleges. One lecturer from a government college intimated *"Our principal mainly uses autocratic leadership style."* Another from private stated *"you and I will agree that in private institutions leadership is mainly autocratic; democratic may be there but very minimal."* Students had same sentiments that leadership was mainly autocratic since they were rarely involved in the running of the institution. These responses corroborated quantitative data presented above and were consolidated by students' and lecturers analysis of some features of autocratic leadership presented below.

Figure 4.2 Lectures' and Students' Analysis of Autocratic Leadership Style
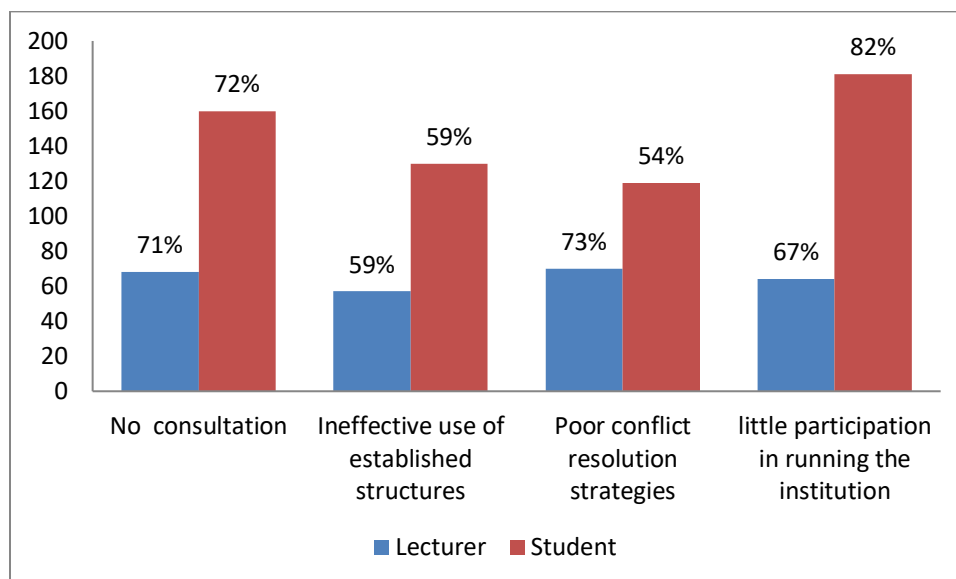
Students (160 out of 221 comprising 72%) and 68 lecturers out of 96 (71%) noted principals intermittent consultation of majority of the stakeholders when making decisions in their colleges. They bemoaned inconsistence in consulting them where sometimes they were consulted but often not consulted or only a small group was consulted. This was consolidated by qualitative data where some respondents in both colleges alluded:

> *Consultation in this college is not there, especially to us ordinary lecturers we are not consulted when new things are introduced in the institution, we just see things happening.*

But Oyetunji (2006) contends that the traditional approach to leadership that always expect the top management to make decisions and staff to follow them are outdated and not always the best. The statement implies that every member needs to take part of decision making by being consulted. One HOD also lamented *"Some members of the inner circle are more consulted than us members of the Middle Management."* Student leadership in all colleges echoed *"as student leadership we are never consulted when decisions concerning us are being made."*

However, Chepkong, Ogoti, Jepkoech and Momanji (2014) elucidated that an institution works effectively well when those affected by the organisations' decisions are fully involved in the decision-making process. Non-involvement of students and lecturers in decision making through consultation and dialogue deprived them of the sense of belonging and ownership of the institutions' undertakings. Lack of dialogue or consultation is a strong variable of autocratic leadership hence the assertions confirmed principals' use of autocratic leadership.

The other variable examined was utilisation of leadership structures. Both students(119- 59%) and 57 lecturer (59%) respondents also pointed out ineffective use of established leadership structures in the institutions as prevailing and as one trait of autocratic leadership their principals were practicing. This they said frustrated those in positions of leadership and contributed to creation of negative and tense working environment. Their analysis was supported by qualitative

data where a good number of those in positions of leadership felt sidelined as one HoD from the government college asserted:

> *We feel sidelined in our work as HoDs because our roles are sometimes ignored. Some ordinary lecturers who are in the inner circle of the principal are consulted on many issues and they take part in decisions made while us as members of the middle management we are blank.*

One vice principal from government college had same sentiments where he indicated that his office was being ignored by the principal and that his work as chief advisor to the principal was mostly being done by the registrar. Students had same complaints and expressed them in the following:

> *As members of Students Union (SU) we don't feel our leadership is recognised because we are never consulted when decisions affecting students are being made. When increasing fees for example there was no consultation; we just found that fees have been increased.*

But Nsubuga (2008) opined that learning institutions are composed of intelligent people whose ideas are critical in the day-to-day running of the institution. The ignoring of position holders in the institution dispossessed the institution of the expertise, skills and competences possessed by these leaders which are necessary in the smooth running of the institution and are capable of taking the institution to greater heights.

The other variable examined was conflict resolution. Respondents noted poor conflict resolution strategies in their leaders. Poor conflict resolution strategies in government colleges by principals were reported to be experienced in being sidelined in college activities, withdrawing favors such as being sent for workshops or awards even when the victim deserved them and surrendering them to the ministry for redeployment elsewhere. Such actions were taken whenever lecturers differed with the principal by giving divergent views or opposing their actions. Those in private colleges had their contracts terminated prematurely. These actions made many to keep quiet even when the institutions were not being run effectively. Bourgeois (2003) however, argues that treating every person in the group the same is a recipe for institutional disaster. This implies that leaders should not expect all members of staff to be the same and act in the same way. The use of poor conflict resolution strategies when settling scores culminated in hatred between the leader and culprit and bad working relationship that negatively influenced the working habits of the affected subordinates.

On participation in the running of the institution, 64 lecturers (67%) and 181 students (82%) overwhelmingly indicated low participation in the governing of the institution. Those in government colleges complained of rare staff meetings and underutilisation of committees to have undermined their full participation in college undertakings. Kulbur (1996) intimated that members of staff participate in administration of their institutions through staff meetings and various committees. This was not taking place as one lecturer respondent from a government college echoed *"Staff meetings where we have a chance to contribute to issues affecting the institution are rarely conducted."* Another pointed out:

> *Most committees are not functioning; the few vibrant ones are being used as rubber stamps for the administration which has taken over the running of committees.*

Those in private colleges condemned the manner staff meetings were being held which they stated had been turned into forums for giving directives and instructions since they had no say in

the college administration. Committees they said were just rubber stamps for administrators' decisions. Kochhar (2011) suggested that institutions of learning must be having frequent meetings of the whole staff, where there should be full and frank discussions and two-way traffic communication of ideas on all matters pertaining to the welfare of the institution. The rare holding of staff meetings and underutilisation of committees precluded many subordinates from taking part in the running of the institutions. These statements confirmed principals' use of autocratic leadership style in their management of colleges.

4.2 Contribution of Autocratic Leadership to Conducive T/L Environment

To establish the relationship between autocratic leadership and conducive teaching and learning environment the use of hypothesis had to be introduced as follows:

Null Hypotheses- H_0: There is no significant relationship between autocratic leadership and conducive T/L environment.

Alternative Hypothesis H_1: There is significant relationship between autocratic leadership and conducive T/L environment.

Using Pearson Chi-square and cross tabulation of autocratic variables with conducive atmosphere and collaboration, as well as using 0.05 as alpha of confidence, the findings are presented below.

Table 4.1: Autocratic Leadership and friendly Atmosphere

Variable	Pearson chi2	Df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Principal interacts well with staff	22.432[a]	16	.130
Principal uses established structures effectively	13.877[a]	16	.608
Principal uses good conflict resolution strategies	50.655[a]	16	.000
Principal discusses before making decision	21.138[a]	16	.173
Centralisation of powers in principals' hands	11.765[a]	16	.760

These findings indicated that autocratic leadership used in the way it was described above had no statistically significant relationship to creation of conducive teaching and learning environment. The Pearson Chi-square and p values above 0.05 posited that the variables were not appropriately applied to aid in creation of conducive T/L environment.

The poor interaction of the principal with staff and students created a tense and intimidating atmosphere which did not create good working environment. The bad relationship between the principals and subordinates in the institutions led to hostility, resentment and rumor mongering which were hindrances to the smooth running of the institutions and positive working environment. Umara, Munirat, Isyaka, Ifeyinwa, Bature and Kazeem (2014) opined that maintenance of cordial relationships between leaders and subordinates is one of the most important factors that heighten subordinate performance. The ineffective use of established institutional structures, lack of consultation when important decisions were being made and centralisation of powers in the hands of the leader frustrated and alienated other members of the institution from participating in the running of the institution. All these variables noted in principals collectively made autocratic leadership ineffective when used to create conducive T/L environment in colleges of study. This thus, rejected the alternative hypothesis and accepted the

null hypothesis. Table 4.2 summaries the relationship of autocratic leadership and conducive environment.

Table 4.2: Chi-square Test of Autocratic Leadership Style and Conducive Environment

	Value	Df	Asymptotic Significance (2-Sided)
Pearson chi-square	11.765[a]	16	.760
Likelihood ratio	12.989	16	.674
Linear-by-Linear Association	3.457	1	.063
N of Valid Cases	96		

The above results denoted that autocratic leadership style was insignificant to contribute to creation of conducive teaching and learning environment because of the way variables were applied by the principals. The p value of 0.760 which is above 0.05 level of confidence indicated the statistical insignificance of the leadership style towards building of conducive working environment.

4.3 **Type of T/L Environment Created by Autocratic Leadership Style**
Table 4.3: Lecturers' Analysis of Autocratic Leadership and Conducive Environment

	Low		Average		High		Total
	f	%	f	%	f	%	
Poor	45	82	9	50	7	30	61
Moderate	9	16	7	39	15	65	31
Conducive Environment	1	2	2	11	1	1	4
Total	55	57	18	19	23	24	96

The table above summarised the environment created by autocratic leadership and demonstrated that the use of autocratic leadership style resulted in creation of poor to moderate environments which were not conducive for effective teaching and learning in colleges of study. The findings illuminated that principals were less likely to create a good teaching and learning environment because of their lack of consultation of subordinates in decision-making, and inability to effectively utilise established leadership structures in the colleges. Others are poor selection of conflict resolution strategies, centralisation of powers in the hands of the principals and inability to encourage participation of subordinates in running the affairs of the college, inter alia. These factors overshadowed creation of conducive teaching and learning environment and encouraged creation of poor to moderate environments which undermined good performance of colleges in many aspects of college life.

5. CONCLUSION
The research conducted to investigate the predominant leadership style used by principals in colleges and determine its efficacy in creation of conducive T/L environments, highlighted autocratic as the most predominant style used by principals in all colleges even though principals considered themselves to be democratic leaders. The use of this leadership style to a large extent

did not seem to contribute to creation of conducive teaching and learning environments because of its tenets which seemed to produce negative results whenever it was used as found out by many researchers (Adeleye, 2015; Nyeri, 2015; Puni et al., 2014; Jerotich, 2013; Mureithi, 2012). Its use in colleges had led to failure to create a good rapport with majority stakeholders in the institutions. The failure had resulted in poor leader-member relationship which created unfavourable environment to heighten teaching and learning. This scenario fits in Fiedlers' contingency theory which stipulates that the bad leader-member relationships emerge in unfavourable conditions which have serious repercussions on leadership (Razin & Swanson, 2010), institutional performance and conducive working environment. The ineffective use of established leadership structures negatively influenced task structure and made the environment unfavourable for effective teaching which too suits in Fiedlers' contingency theory. The scenario resulted in promoting poor to moderate working environments which negatively influenced teaching and learning in the colleges studied. The lack of consultation and centralisation of powers in the principals to the exclusion of majority members had emanated in creation of unfavourable working environment which had paucity influence on creation of conducive T/L environments. This situation corresponded with contingency theory of Fiedler. The dissatisfaction highlighted throughout the study worked against the Path-goal theory as the leaders in all institutions have failed to satisfy and show correct paths for the subordinates to record credible performance in their colleges. Notwithstanding what has been said, the style though in this study demonstrated statistical insignificant towards creation of conducive T/L environment in other areas it can be effective thus, needs to be used sparingly so as not to disturb working environments in institutions of learning. Researchers have shown that it is effective in stressful situations that need agent attention (Russell, 2011) as well as when dealing with unskilled labor that requires guidance. In institutions of learning like colleges where members are skilled, educated, experienced and professionals using this style that seem to sideline stakeholders in the running of the institution did not augur well hence, tended to create unnecessary tensions, hostilities, resentments which undermined the smooth running of the institution. Therefore, the onus is on the leader to decide when the style is appropriate to be used and when not.

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