

The Effectiveness of Students Involvement in Leadership Process in Schools and its Impact on increasing their Academic achievement in Jordanian Schools: The Case of Schools in Ramtha City.

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Abstract

The purpose of this research is to investigate the effects of involving students in leadership positions. More specifically, the research looks into the impacts of engaging students in leadership roles in the schools in Ramtha City, Jordan. The research has established that involving students in leadership roles in Ramtha City schools is one of the determinants of the academic performance of the latter. First, student leaders are able to make correct decisions which directly impact the decisions they make in their academic lives. Leadership also allows the students to take part in decision making in Ramtha City schools which in turn influence managerial decisions as well as policy formulation in the schools. In this case, the schools are able to formulate policies that boost the academic achievement of the students. Further, the ability to collaborate that is developed as a result of leadership roles also enhance the performance of the students. Therefore, in the context of Ramtha City (Jordan) schools, leadership has been noted to directly contribute to the improved academic performance of the student learners.

Keywords : Leadership Process, Academic Performance, Ramtha City, Time Management, Interpersonal Communication, Classroom Participation.

1. Introduction

According to Asha and Hawi (2016), decision making at any level is one of the most significant elements that affect the life of an individual (p. 61). This further has a great impact on them as a key to arriving at the solutions they face in everyday life and face the challenges that come along in life. Typically, an average human being makes a number of decisions every day which vary both in the degree and the significance (Asha and Hawi, 2016, p. 61). On the same note, Ashcraft (1994) observed that the decision-making process applies in the case of the education systems. He observed that it is an important aspect that results in a great influence in the lives of individuals that may ultimately affect their well-being. On the same note, involving students in leadership positions, which allow them to take part in decision-making in their education endeavors has been considered to be one of the elements necessary to boost their performance and concept retention rate (California State University, 2012; Office of the Institutional Research, 2011, p. 1). Advancing a similar view, studies by Nannyonjo (2017) and Stave et al (2017) on how *to Improve the academic performance of students in Jordanian schools* concluded that students need to be involved in leadership positions (p. 11). The study further highlighted that engaging students in leadership make them more responsible which can ultimately boost their academic achievement (Stave et al, 2017, p. 11). Premised on this brief background, this research paper will investigate the effects of involving students in leadership positions on their performance using the cases of schools in Ramtha City, Jordan.

1.1 Conceptual framework

This research paper is an explanatory study that will present both quantitative and qualitative findings of the previous researchers on the significance of involving students in leadership in schools in Ramtha City. The outcomes of this research are significant as it can be directly applied to improve the performance of the students in the schools in the city.

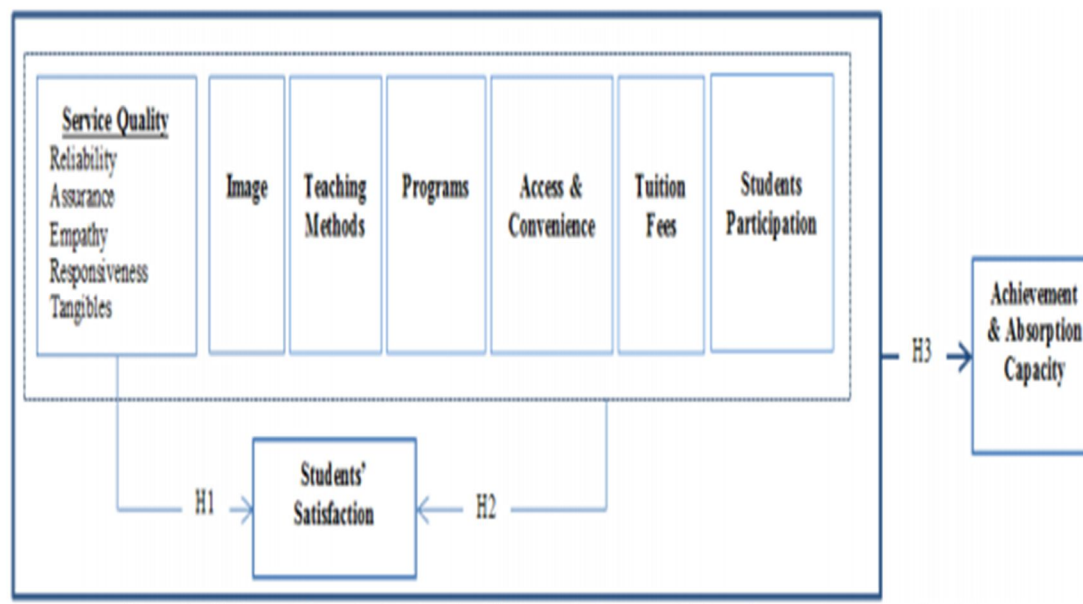


Figure: Factors affecting Students satisfaction and achievement in schools

Source: Adapted from Sohail and Shaikh (2004), Zeinabadi (2013), and Zeithaml et al (2009)

Based on this model, El-Hilali (2015) have suggested a number of factors that affect the satisfaction and the performance of students using the case of Business Studies students (p. 421). Amongst the factors included are the student participation which includes the leadership roles given to the learners. Therefore, based on this study, which is also affirmed by other studies such as that of Anderson and Lu (2017) and Nannyonjo (2017), student leadership has a direct impact on their performance. This research is therefore embedded within the context of the effects of engaging students in leadership positions and the ultimate impact on their academic performance. In light of this, the following section will present a general review of the literature on the effects of students' leadership on their academic performance.

2. Literature review

2.1 Importance of Involving Students in the Leadership Process in Schools

In most cases, educational leadership is associated with the administration of the schools (Hay and Dempster, 2004, p. 411). However, the roles can be undertaken by all the stakeholders in the education system including the students (Wallin, 2003, p. 55). This involves giving students a chance to exercise their skills in positions of responsibility (Hay and Dempster, 2004, p. 411). In view of this, leadership roles in schools have been noted to confer positive effects on those who are involved, including at student level (Black et al, 2014, p. 32). On this note, Lavery and Hine (2013) have asserted that student leaders acquire skills such as time management, organization, interpersonal

communication, decision-making, public speaking, and conflict resolution amongst others (p. 41). According to one Chinese study, student leadership improved their test scores, enable them to take initiatives, improves their popularity in class, and boost their beliefs about their efforts (Anderson and Lu, 2014, p. 1).

Further, Black et al (2014) have stated that apart from reflecting the pre-existing skills in the students, the leadership roles also help the students to develop and strengthen their cognitive capability including academic performance (p. 32). In addition, it has been stated that leadership gives the students' opportunities the experience that facilitates their transition into adulthood. This is because the roles give the student a learning chance that facilitates the acquisition of life experience and learning. Leadership has thus been considered part of a lifelong learning that enables those involved to not only acquire and advance their skills but also improve their academic excellence (Hay and Dempster, 2004, p. 411). The following section of the report thus discusses the academic effects of involving students in leadership positions in schools in Ramtha City, Jordan.

2.2 Impacts of involving students in leadership Positions on their Academic Performance in Ramtha City, Jordan

Student leadership involves engaging the learners in activities such as student parliament, class representation, and collaborative decision making on the issues that either directly or indirectly affecting the learners. Though not much exploited, the concern about the impacts of involving students in leadership in schools has been a longstanding concern amongst scholars, not only in Ramtha and Jordan but all over the globe (Anderson and Lu, 2016, p. 1). On this note, a report by the Ministry of Education (2004), on *The Development of Education: National Report of Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan* highlighted the need to activate the role of students and the youth in Jordanian schools to make them more effective, learners. Moreover, the report also recommended that the schools in the region should conduct promising leadership programs for the learners and encourage their participation in the national programs organized by bodies, for example, the Child Saving Institution (Ministry of Education, 2004).

The report further highlighted that a vibrant economy for Jordan needs the availability of young leaders who are multi-talented only achievable through their education system (Ministry of Education, 2004). Moreover, the proposed framework by the ministry identified that leadership in schools enables learners to be good decision makers and excellent academic achievers. In addition, student leadership allowed the learners to develop abilities, become more creative and give a platform for self-realization, excellence, and mastery of the roles (Ministry of Education, 2004). This study and report conform to a similar study carried out by Anderson and Lu (2014) amongst the Chinese learners which concluded that leadership roles build cognitive abilities of learners and improved their grades (p. 1).

Similarly, a study by Stave et al (2017) on how to *Improve Learning environments in Jordanian Public Schools* concluded that academic performance of the learners can be improved either at school staff level, student level or regional level (p. 11). At the student level, Stave et al (2017) observed that encouraging students to take leadership positions in schools would boost their performance (p. 11). Further, student parliament was observed to be significant in boosting classroom teaching through the enhancement of language development in the learners (Stave et al, 2017, p. 11). Notably, responsibility in schools enable the students to be good decision makers which by extension allows them to make good decisions concerning their academic goals. Therefore, by involving learners in the leadership of Jordanian schools (and more specifically Ramtha City schools), the latter are able to be good decision makers and thus boost their own performance through effective decisions concerning their academic goals (Anderson and Lu, 2017; Gornito, 2009, p. 11). Advancing the same view, Quaglia and Corso (2014) noted that the performance of students would improve if they are involved in decision-making processes in schools (p. 31). On this note, Quaglia and Corso (2014) on a study to investigate the *Effects of Pumping up the voice of students* found that when faculty meetings are advanced to become school meetings by allowing students to take up leadership roles (through selection of subjects leaders among students), the faculty leaders (teachers) would get a chance to learn the teaching tricks from the subject geeks hence tailor their teaching methods to meet the needs of the learners (p. 31).

Consequently, the performance of the students, in this case, would improve (Quaglia and Corso, 2014, p. 31; Office of the Institutional Research, 2011, p. 1). Furthermore, allowing students to make decisions by engaging them in leadership positions allow the schools to avoid their punitive policies that may not make much sense to the students. The schools thus adopt policies that allow the learners to comprehend that their own actions have consequences, not necessarily the consequences handed down by the holders of power (Quaglia and Corso, 2014, p. 31). In light of this thus, involving students in leadership positions make them appreciate the consequences of their actions including hard work and academic excellence. The latter thus remain more focused which improves their performance in studies. Similarly, involving students at Ramtha City schools will ensure that they are able to take responsibility and remain more focused thus improve their academic performance.

On the same note, a study conducted by Acosta (2017) to *investigate the opinion of teachers in Jordanian schools regarding the effective peace education with Syrian refugees* revealed that student leadership improves classroom cooperation in learners which ultimately enhance their performance (p. 65). In an interview with one of the Jordanian teachers, it was noted that collaborative learning was one of the techniques that the teachers used to achieve academic excellence in the schools (Acosta, 2017, p. 65; Pedersen et al, 2012, p. 4). This is a technique that allows all

the students to be involved in the leadership roles in the delivery of a concept. Moreover, rotational leadership during the lessons to as frequent as five minutes was noted to be the most effective strategy in Jordan for the first, second, and third graders (Acosta, 2017, p. 65). In addition, student leadership enhanced their collaboration and sharing of ideas which in turn improved their academic performance. Besides, collaboration allowed the students to avoid discrimination or distinction which apart from improving the learning environment allowed them to share varied ideas (Pedersen et al, 2012, p. 4; Edwards, 2018). Therefore, leadership in Jordanian schools (mostly at the class group work levels) allows the student leaders, as well as the other students, to tap on the advantages brought about by diversity to improve their academic performance (Beaman et al, 2009, p. 1497; Acosta, 2017, p. 65).

Finally, a study conducted by Abu-Shreah and Al-Sharif (2017) on *the management of meetings in the secondary schools located in Ramtha City* concluded that engaging students in leadership, which by extension allowed them to make decisions in the schools improved the performance of the student leaders in Ramtha City schools (p. 13). In this case, student leadership in Ramtha schools has been explained using the concept of school meeting which has been aptly described as a discussion amongst a group of like-minded people. Further, the concept of the meeting has been recognized in the context of schools as a face to face means of communication. On the other hand, it has been noted that a meeting is a period during which members of a given institution meet from time to time to deliberate on the issues affecting their institutions (Abu-Shreah and Al-Sharif, 2017, p 15). It is on this view that the role of student leaders come in handy to boost their own performance as well as those of others as presented in this case of Ramtha District schools. In light of this, Abu-Shreah and Al-Sharif (2017) have observed that leadership enables learners to be directly involved in solving the problems that bedevil their schools and thus boost their performance (p. 15).

For instance, student leaders are able to identify challenges in the school before they escalate and break down the school's communication system (Abu-Shreah and Al-Sharif, 2017, p. 15; Gates et al, 2004). This enables the student leaders as well as the school management to deliberate on the issues thus improving their academic performance. Based on further results of this study, it was noted that out of an average score of 3.83, principals in Ramtha City secondary schools had an arithmetic average score of 3.62 of implementing the results of the meeting where the student leaders gave their views on the management of schools in Ramtha City (Abu-Shreah and Al-Sharif, 2017, p. 24). This, therefore, showed that student leadership directly contributed to the higher academic performance of the learners in the schools as noted in the study.

3. Conclusion

Performance of students in schools, not only in Ramtha City but all across the globe is affected by a number of factors. Amongst the factors that have been presented in several studies is the leadership roles the students play in schools. For instance, students who are involved in leadership in schools in Ramtha City have been noted to have advanced decision-making skills, collaborative, and efficiently contribute to effective curriculum delivery of the schools. Leadership also enable the students to enhance their teamwork and acceptance of others from different groups hence boosting their academic excellence through sharing of ideas. Moreover, school meeting and allowing student leaders to contribute to solutions of issues affecting the schools have been noted to enhance communication in Ramtha City schools which in turn boost student performance (including the performance of the student leaders). Essentially, leadership roles improve the academic performance of students in Ramtha City schools as has been discussed in this report.

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