
Relation-Oriented Leadership Behaviour in Management of Curriculum Changes in Lower Secondary Schools in Uganda

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Abstract

Leadership behavior plays a central role in managing curriculum change by providing vision, fostering communication, and empowering teachers to implement reform effectively. The approach and conduct of school leaders greatly influence institutional performance and culture, especially during educational transitions. This study examined how headteachers' relation-oriented leadership behaviors affect curriculum change management in Ugandan lower secondary schools. It focused on the extent of these behaviors, their influence on curriculum management processes, and their overall impact on reform outcomes. Guided by the Path-Goal Leadership Theory, the study adopted a mixed-methods design integrating quantitative and qualitative approaches. Data were collected from 23 secondary schools, involving 247 participants, including headteachers, deputy headteachers, directors of studies, teachers, and officials from the National Curriculum Development Centre and the Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES). Purposive, stratified, and random sampling techniques were applied. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics, while qualitative data were thematically analyzed to provide contextual depth. Findings revealed that relation-oriented leadership behaviours significantly influenced curriculum change management, accounting for 22.9% of the variance ($R^2 = .229$, $p < .05$). Headteachers who emphasized collaboration, open communication, and participatory decision-making improved teacher motivation, adaptability, and the overall effectiveness of curriculum implementation. Participants highlighted the importance of trust-building, collegial support, and continuous professional development as key enablers of successful reform. The study concludes that relation-oriented leadership is a strategic necessity for effective curriculum management. It recommends that the MoES institutionalize leadership development programs emphasizing communication, collaboration, and relational competence. Headteachers should integrate relational practices such as peer mentoring, reflective team sessions, and inclusive decision-making into their school culture. These practices can enhance teacher engagement, foster ownership of reform initiatives, and promote the long-term sustainability of curriculum management in Uganda's secondary education system.

Keywords: *Relation-oriented Leadership, Curriculum Changes, Lower Secondary Schools, Management, Behaviour*

1.1 Introduction

Curriculum reform is one of the most critical transformations in education, shaping not only what students learn but also how schools function. A curriculum encompasses planned learning

experiences and intended outcomes designed to meet societal and learner needs (Mulenga, 2018; McInnes, 2017). However, implementing curriculum change is not merely a technical exercise; it is a complex social process that requires coordinated adjustments in classroom practices, institutional norms, and, importantly, school leadership. Without effective leadership, even well-designed reforms risk poor adoption and limited impact (OECD, 2019; Nevenglosky, 2018).

In Uganda, the Competence-Based Curriculum (CBC) represents a shift toward skill-oriented, learner-centered education aimed at fostering critical thinking and problem-solving (NCDC, 2020). While the CBC promises relevance and adaptability, its implementation has been uneven, suggesting that policy alone is insufficient for meaningful change. Experience shows that the effectiveness of curriculum reforms is closely tied to the behavior and practices of school leaders, who play a central role in motivating teachers, fostering collaboration, and sustaining institutional change (Ghamrawi, 2023; Click, 2019). Detached or overly bureaucratic leadership can impede reform efforts, highlighting the importance of relational and participatory approaches (Abe, 2024; Molapo & Pillay, 2018).

Among leadership approaches, relation-oriented leadership, which emphasizes empathy, communication, and attention to staff needs has been shown to promote teacher engagement, institutional trust, and professional collaboration (Guzmán et al., 2020; Tusianah et al., 2019). Yet, in the Ugandan context, there is limited understanding of how these relational behaviors influence the management of curriculum changes, particularly in lower secondary schools where CBC demands high levels of teacher adaptability and cooperation.

This study, therefore, focuses on how headteachers' relation-oriented leadership behaviors shape the management of curriculum change in Uganda's lower secondary schools. By examining the relational dimensions of leadership rather than only administrative or technical competencies, the study seeks to illuminate how interpersonal practices grounded in trust, collaboration, and communication can enhance the effectiveness and sustainability of curriculum reforms. In doing so, it addresses a critical gap in knowledge and provides insights relevant to policymakers, school leaders, and education stakeholders seeking to strengthen school-level curriculum management.

1.2 Statement of the problem

Effective curriculum management is fundamentally dependent on leadership approaches that foster collaboration, motivation, and open communication among educational stakeholders. Relation-oriented leadership, characterized by the cultivation of trust, the strengthening of interpersonal relationships, and the empowerment of teachers, has been recognized as a pivotal factor in achieving sustainable educational reform (Kouzes & Posner, 2021; Bush, 2022). Such leadership fosters an environment where teachers feel valued and professionally engaged, thereby facilitating the successful implementation of curriculum changes. Conversely, the absence of relational leadership contributes to fragmented reform efforts, resistance to change, and diminished teacher morale, which collectively undermine reform outcomes.

In the Ugandan context, the introduction of the Competence-Based Curriculum (CBC) has imposed new structural and pedagogical demands on secondary schools, particularly in regions such as Karamoja where implementation challenges persist (Nabushawo et al., 2020; Okwenje,

2021). Schools in these areas contend with inadequate communication channels, insufficient professional development opportunities for teachers, and strained relationships between school leaders and staff. These challenges are exacerbated by persistent disparities in resource allocation and leadership capacity, disproportionately impacting rural and marginalized communities.

Existing literature on curriculum reform in Uganda has predominantly addressed policy, administrative, and structural constraints (Musimenta, 2023; Atuhairu & Turyagyenda, 2023), leaving a critical gap in understanding the influence of relational leadership on curriculum change management. Specifically, there is limited empirical investigation into how headteachers' relation-oriented leadership behaviors such as trust-building, fostering collaboration, and supporting teacher professional growth affect teachers' engagement with reform processes. Addressing this gap is imperative to ensure that the implementation of the CBC not only meets its educational objectives but also reinforces a professional culture conducive to the sustainability of school-based educational change.

1.3 Objectives

- i. To examine the status of head teacher relation-oriented leadership behaviour in the secondary schools in Karamoja sub-region.
- ii. To assess the extent of management of curriculum changes in the secondary schools in Karamoja sub-region.
- iii. To determine the effect of the head teachers' relation-oriented leadership behaviour on the management of curriculum changes in the secondary schools in Karamoja sub-region.

1.4 Theoretical framework

This study is grounded in Transformational Leadership Theory, introduced by Burns (1978) and expanded by Bass (1985), which emphasizes leaders' ability to inspire and motivate followers to go beyond self-interest for a greater cause. Transformational leaders achieve this through idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration, fostering innovation, commitment, and organizational growth. In the context of Uganda's lower secondary education curriculum, this theory provides a framework for understanding how educational leaders inspire and mobilize teachers and students to embrace curriculum changes and pedagogical innovations. By applying transformational leadership principles, school leaders cultivate adaptability and continuous improvement, essential for effective reform implementation.

2.0 Literature Review

Effective leadership is a cornerstone of successful curriculum reform, particularly when it fosters collaboration, shared vision, and positive interpersonal relationships within schools. Leaders who prioritize relational dynamics create environments of trust, open communication, and collective responsibility—key elements for managing educational change. Latsch (2017) found a significant positive correlation between principals' leadership behaviors and curriculum management effectiveness, noting that reliance on autocratic styles often limited teacher engagement and

adaptability, thereby undermining reform sustainability. Abubakar, Singh, and Mohammed (2018) similarly emphasized that leaders' interpersonal strategies directly influence teacher motivation and pedagogical innovation. However, their single-country focus in Ghana highlights the need to explore relational leadership in different contexts. To address this gap, the current study examines how relation-oriented leadership operates in Uganda's lower secondary schools, particularly within the socio-economically marginalized Karamoja region, where resource constraints present unique challenges for curriculum management.

Evidence from across African contexts reinforces the importance of relational leadership. Musaiwa (2022) observed that limited leadership training and capacity constrained the implementation of democratic or transformational approaches, affecting communication, participation, and teacher commitment. Rundassa (2017) and Cansoy, Parlar, and Polatcan (2022) similarly noted that relational leadership characterized by empathy and support enhances teacher motivation during curricular transitions but is often limited by systemic challenges such as inadequate training and weak institutional support.

Tusianah et al. (2019) demonstrated that principals who practiced empathy and open communication fostered higher teacher engagement during curriculum change, while Marlow et al. (2018) concluded that, although both task-oriented and relation-oriented leadership yield positive outcomes, relation-oriented leadership uniquely promotes team cohesion, learning, and long-term productivity. Trust is central to this process, as leaders who cultivate relational trust enable teachers to participate actively in reforms and reduce burnout, thereby enhancing curriculum implementation (Almazrouei et al., 2023; Siegel et al., 2021; Chan & Tan, 2022; Harris & Jones, 2018; Maxwell, 2022).

Despite this evidence, research in Uganda remains limited. Many headteachers, particularly in regions such as Karamoja, operate amid minimal training, weak institutional support, and uneven professional development, leaving the relational dimensions of leadership underexplored. This study addresses this gap by examining how headteachers' relation-oriented leadership behaviors, particularly trust-building, collaboration, and teacher empowerment, affect the management of curriculum change in under-resourced secondary schools.

3.0 Materials and methods

This study employed a mixed convergent parallel design, integrating both quantitative and qualitative approaches for a more comprehensive understanding of the research problem (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The target population consisted of 644 participants, including secondary school head teachers, deputy head teachers, teachers, and directors of studies, with a sample size of 247 determined using the Sloven formula. Purposive sampling was used for head teachers, deputy head teachers, and directors of studies due to their leadership roles, while cluster sampling ensured teacher representation across schools. Data collection involved structured self-administered questionnaires (SAQs) and face-to-face interviews. SAQs were chosen for their efficiency in collecting standardized data from a dispersed population, ensuring objectivity, reliability, and anonymity (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). Interviews with head teachers and deputy head

teachers provided deeper insights, allowing for clarifications and richer contextual details (Dubey, 2022; Mosteo et al., 2021).

To ensure validity and reliability, the research instruments underwent supervisor consultation, yielding a Content Validity Index (CVI) of 0.79. Reliability was tested through a pilot study using the split-half technique, producing a Cronbach's reliability coefficient of 0.812, confirming strong reliability (George & Mallery, 2018).

Data analysis utilized SPSS, with descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages, means, standard deviations) and inferential statistics (simple linear regression) for quantitative data. Qualitative data were transcribed, coded, categorized, and analyzed through content analysis, employing a narrative approach to present findings cohesively for better readability, particularly concerning curriculum management in secondary schools in Karamoja sub-region and Uganda.

4.0 Results

4.1 Demographic information

Table 1: Demographic data

Gender of Respondents		
Characteristic	Frequency	Percent
Male	123	56.4
Female	95	43.6
Age Bracket of Respondents		
Under 30 years	39	17.9
30-40 years	172	78.9
41-50 years	7	3.2
Education Level of Respondents		
Diploma	86	39.4
Bachelor's Degree	132	60.6
Distribution of Respondents by Duration of Teaching in the School		
Less than one year	39	17.9
1 - 3 years	179	82.1

Source: Primary data (2024)

The demographic profile of the respondents indicates that the majority were male teachers, composing 56.4%, with females making up 43.6%. Most respondents (78.9%) were within the 30–40-year age range, suggesting they are in their prime teaching years, while a minority (17.9%) were under 30, and only 3.2% were between 41 and 50 years old. Regarding educational qualifications, 60.6% held bachelor's degrees, and 39.4% possessed diplomas, indicating that most teachers met the minimum qualification requirements stipulated by the Ministry of Education and Sports. The participants' teaching tenure was predominantly between 1 to 3 years (82.1%), with the remaining 17.9% having served less than one year, possibly due to recent transfers or recruitment. This demographic composition suggests that the respondents had sufficient experience and qualification to provide reliable insights into headteacher leadership behaviors and curriculum management in the study context.

4.2.1 Status of headteacher relation-oriented leadership behaviour

table 2: Headteacher relation-oriented leadership behaviour

Relation-Oriented Leadership	SD (%)	D (%)	IND (%)	A (%)	SA (%)	Mean	Std. Dev
School leadership is more concerned with developing close, interpersonal relationships with staff	49.1	7.3	7.3	25.2	11.0	2.92	1.550
School leadership provides for a two-way communication method to show social/emotional support	49.5	7.3	00	28.0	14.2	2.51	1.638
School leadership helps the staff feel comfortable about themselves, their co-workers, and their situations	53.2	3.7	00	18.3	24.8	2.58	1.782
School leaders demonstrate an understanding of their employees' problems	46.8	3.7	00	11.0	38.5	2.91	1.889
School leaders help to develop their employees' careers	60.1	3.7	00	11.0	25.2	2.88	1.785
School leaders provide their employees with enough information to do the job	67.9	00	00	00	32.1	2.66	1.872
School leaders allow individual autonomy of their staff at work	67.9	00	00	00	32.1	2.87	1.872
School leaders show appreciation of what their staff do	61.0	00	00	00	39.0	2.56	1.955
School leadership provides support to inexperienced staff to grow	33.0	00	13.8	53.2	00	2.87	1.358
School leaders recognize the needs/feeling of their staff	00	00	13.8	78.9	7.3	3.94	.456
Overall Mean						2.87	

Source: Primary data (2024)

0.0 - 1.0 = *Very poorly exercised*; 1.01 - 2.0 = *Poorly exercised*; 2.01 - 3.0 = *Fairly exercised*; 3.01 - 4.0 = *Well exercised*; and 4.01 - 5.0 = *Excellent exercised*.

The findings in Table 4.8 reveal that most respondents perceive weaknesses in relation-oriented leadership among school leaders in the Karamoja sub-region. Nearly half of the respondents strongly disagreed that school leadership prioritizes developing close interpersonal relationships with staff, reflected in a mean score of 2.92, indicating limited relational engagement. Similarly, a majority disagreed that leaders facilitate two-way communication for social or emotional support (mean = 2.51), pointing to a lack of effective communication and mutual support. Over half of the respondents also disagreed that leadership helps staff feel comfortable or understood, with mean scores of 2.58 and 2.91 respectively, highlighting inadequate emotional support and limited responsiveness to staff concerns. Likewise, most respondents expressed dissatisfaction with career development support (mean = 2.88) and perceived insufficient information dissemination for effective job performance (mean = 2.66), underscoring weak leadership communication and mentorship structures.

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Findings further show that staff felt constrained in exercising autonomy (mean = 2.87) and undervalued due to limited appreciation of their efforts (mean = 2.56). While perceptions of support for inexperienced staff were mixed (mean = 2.87), a majority agreed that leaders recognize the needs and feelings of their staff (mean = 3.94), representing one of the few positive aspects of relation-oriented leadership. Overall, with a composite mean score of 2.87, the results suggest that relation-oriented leadership is poorly practiced in secondary schools within the Karamoja sub-region. The findings point to critical areas for improvement particularly in communication, staff support, recognition, and autonomy, to enhance morale, engagement, and leadership effectiveness in managing curriculum change.

4.2.2 Management of curriculum changes

The results in Table 3 indicate that the management of curriculum changes in secondary schools within the Karamoja sub-region was rated moderately effective, with an overall mean of 3.75. This suggests that while schools are making deliberate efforts to implement curriculum reforms, the process remains uneven across key areas of leadership, support, and collaboration. Notably, schools were rated relatively high in making curriculum change a priority ($M = 3.81$) and providing effective leadership to drive change ($M = 3.77$). These findings point to a positive attitude and growing awareness among school leaders of the importance of educational reform. Similarly, aspects related to teamwork promotion and consideration of staff needs scored among the highest, reflecting some relational strength and collective commitment to the reform process.

However, areas related to institutional support, resource provision, and learner engagement scored lower, indicating that the practical mechanisms required for successful implementation are still insufficient. Weaknesses were also noted in staff confidence and the absence of strategies to manage negative perceptions of change, which signal low morale and limited trust in the reform process. The findings suggest that while schools in the Karamoja sub-region demonstrate a fair level of commitment and awareness toward managing curriculum change, their efforts are constrained by limited support structures, inconsistent communication, and inadequate collaboration. Strengthening these operational and relational dimensions of leadership will be essential for fostering a more coherent and sustainable approach to curriculum change management.

Table 3: Descriptive statistics on management of curriculum changes in schools

Management of Curriculum Changes	SD (%)	D (%)	IND (%)	A (%)	SA (%)	Mean	Std. Dev
The school has provided effective leadership to drive curriculum change	0.0	0.0	96.3	0.0	3.7	3.77	.377
The school has made curriculum change a high priority issue	21.1	9.6	14.2	47.7	7.3	3.81	1.307
The school has provided support to achieve success of the curriculum change	57.8	3.7	25.7	12.8	0.0	3.49	1.162
The school has provided resources for effective curriculum change	29.4	6.9	0.0	53.2	10.6	3.69	1.483
The school has ensured that all learners participate in work-related learning as part of their entitlement	42.7	7.3	18.3	25.2	6.4	3.45	1.414
The school has worked to its strength in fielding its best team to participate in new curriculum initiatives	49.5	7.3	0.0	32.6	10.6	3.87	1.593
The school has made use of external partners to achieve successful curriculum change	63.8	3.7	0.0	18.3	14.2	3.81	1.625
The school has created a shared approach as a vehicle for effective change	64.2	3.7	0.0	11.0	21.1	3.71	1.718
The school recognizes/uses staff contributions towards effective curriculum change	67.9	3.7	7.3	11.0	10.1	3.92	1.450
The school has disseminated good practice in fostering curriculum change initiatives	67.9	0.0	3.7	0.0	28.4	3.71	1.802
The school has the confidence of staff in implementing curriculum change	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.76	.000
The school has provided strategies for dealing with negative perceptions of change	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.78	.000
The school has provided for promotion of teamwork in managing curriculum change initiatives	33.0	0.0	13.8	53.2	0.0	3.87	1.358
The school has provided for staff 'wants' /'needs' in managing curriculum change initiatives.	0.0	0.0	13.8	86.2	0.0	3.86	.345
Overall Mean						3.75	

Source: Primary data (2024) 0.0 - 1.0 = Very poorly managed; 1.01 - 2.0 = Poorly managed; 2.01 - 3.0 = Fairly managed; 3.01 - 4.0 = Well managed; and 4.01 - 5.0 = Excellently managed

4.2.3 Effect of relation-oriented leadership behaviour on management of curriculum changes

In order to determine the effect of headteacher related-oriented leadership behavior in management of curriculum changes in the secondary schools in Karamoja sub-region, a linear regression was run using the transformed overall means in *Table 3* (i.e. 3.75) for management of curriculum changes and that in *Table 2* (i.e. 2.87) for the headteachers' related-oriented leadership behavior in the secondary schools. Therefore, the extent or magnitude of effect of one variable on another as measured by the results from the model summary from the regression analysis is presented in *Table 4* below.

Table 4: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
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1	.478 ^a	.229	.225	.656
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a. Predictors: (Constant), Relation-Oriented Leadership

To examine the relationship between headteachers' relation-oriented leadership behaviour and the management of curriculum changes in secondary schools in the Karamoja sub-region, a Pearson correlation analysis was conducted using the overall mean scores for leadership behaviour ($M = 2.87$) and curriculum management ($M = 3.75$). The results indicated a strong positive and statistically significant correlation, $r(216) = .478$, $p < .001$. This suggests that schools where leaders exhibit higher levels of relation-oriented leadership tend to have more effective management of curriculum changes. The coefficient of determination ($r^2 = .229$) indicates that approximately 22.9% of the variance in curriculum change management can be explained by relation-oriented leadership behaviour.

These findings support the alternative hypothesis that relation-oriented leadership behaviour significantly influences the management of curriculum changes in secondary schools in the Karamoja sub-region. In practical terms, this implies that enhancing relation-oriented leadership among school leaders could meaningfully improve the effectiveness of curriculum change initiatives. To determine whether such a change causes a significant effect (hypothesis testing), the ANOVA results in *Table 5* were considered.

Table 5: Effect of relation-oriented leadership behaviour in management of curriculum changes in secondary schools (ANOVA)

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	27.568	1	27.568	63.992	.000 ^b
	Residual	93.055	216	.431		
	Total	120.624	217			

a. Dependent Variable: Management of Curriculum Changes
b. Predictors: (Constant), Relation-Oriented Leadership

The results in Table 5 show that relation-oriented leadership behaviour had a statistically significant effect on the management of curriculum changes, $F(1, 216) = 63.99$, $p < .001$, $R^2 = .229$. The p-value was less than the conventional alpha level of .05, indicating that relation-oriented leadership meaningfully contributes to the effectiveness of curriculum change management in secondary schools within the Karamoja sub-region. Consequently, the null hypothesis stating that "*there is no significant effect of relation-oriented leadership behaviour on the management of curriculum changes in lower secondary schools in the Karamoja Region*" was rejected. The alternative hypothesis was therefore accepted, confirming that relation-oriented leadership behaviour has a strong and significant positive effect on the management of curriculum changes in the region.

Qualitative data collected through face-to-face interviews with key informants revealed closely related information with data from the completed self-administered questionnaires. For instance, one of the key informants (KI-01) said;

“As far as relation-oriented leadership is concerned, one of the effects is that it leads to a proper implementation of the curriculum. Once the information is relayed well to the teachers, so the curriculum will be implemented well. Once there is that close contact of the management or the supervisors with the subordinates, it also leads to good implementation of the curriculum. However, if there is that gap between the teachers and the administration, there comes a loophole. Challenges may crop in, like the pedagogy that is not supposed to be used in the curriculum will be smuggled in. Some of the materials that are not relevant in the implementation will be brought in, and in the end, the desired outcome of the curriculum will not be realized.” (KI-01, 2024)

In another face-to-face interview, another key informant (KI-02) admittedly said;

“Yeah, as a leader in the management of this curriculum, one, so that you don't understand the curriculum, then there is no way I am going to enforce the implementation, the management of this curriculum. So, as a leader, I need to show and give to the teachers my input, my understanding of the curriculum, the pedagogy that is supposed to be used. I am supposed to monitor, do the observation of lessons, and guide the teachers where is possible. So that's why I am able to give them the right thing. I am able to see that they are doing the right thing. However, if I am not involved, when I don't understand the curriculum itself, then in total, there is nothing that is going to be achieved in the lower secondary curriculum.” (KI-02, 2024)

Similarly, in another face-to-face interview, key informant KI-03 said;

“Now, the effects would be positive if the relationship has been made well. Like, if the leaders are relating the curriculum well, then would realize positive in the curriculum. Because if what has been communicated has been received in good faith, then it has implementation also come in the good will that is how I feel.” (KI-03, 2024)

Finally, another key informant (KI-004) has this to say;

“It is very important that the way we relate with our teachers, and with our learners, makes the implementation of this new lower secondary curriculum more effective. I am saying that because this curriculum involves a lot of sharing and you cannot share effectively if your relationship is not good. So the relationship should be good so that you can handle this curriculum effectively.” (KI-04, 2024)

4.3 Discussion

The findings from the current study indicate that relationship-oriented leadership behavior among head teachers has a significant positive effect on the management of curriculum changes in lower

secondary schools in the Karamoja region ($p = .000 < .05$). This finding contrasts with Latsch's (2017) study, which found a significant positive correlation between autocratic leadership styles and curriculum management, where strict enforcement of rules had a detrimental impact on curriculum management. The current study's focus on relationship-oriented leadership diverges from Latsch's emphasis on autocratic leadership, suggesting that fostering positive relationships and collaboration is more effective in managing curriculum changes than strict, top-down enforcement. This supports the notion that a more flexible and inclusive leadership style can enhance curriculum management, aligning with Abubakar, Singh, and Mohammed's (2018) findings that leadership behavior is crucial in implementing curriculum changes, although their study was conducted in a different context (Ghanaian high schools).

The current study's findings also resonate with Transformational Leadership Theory, as developed by Bass (1980). Transformational leadership emphasizes the role of leaders in inspiring and motivating their followers to work collaboratively towards shared organizational goals. In the context of curriculum changes, transformational leaders would focus on building strong relationships, fostering innovation, and recognizing the individual strengths of their followers. The relationship-oriented leadership observed in the Karamoja region aligns with these components of transformational leadership, particularly in how headteachers inspire a shared vision for curriculum changes and provide the necessary support and guidance to their teams.

Musaiwa's (2022) research on the impact of different leadership styles in Malawian schools provides additional context. While both autocratic and democratic styles had mixed effects on student discipline, the current study's findings emphasize the effectiveness of a relationship-oriented approach specifically for curriculum management, highlighting a potential gap in Musaiwa's study. The current study suggests that the transformational aspect of leadership, focused on relationships and collaboration, is particularly beneficial in the context of curriculum change, addressing a gap in Musaiwa's findings where the impact of transformational leadership was unclear. This also contrasts with Igwe and Chidi's (2017) study, which suggested that autocratic leadership could improve student academic performance, a finding that may not be directly applicable to curriculum management. The findings of this study strongly support the idea that relationship-oriented leadership behavior significantly enhances the management of curriculum changes in lower secondary schools. This contrasts with previous studies that either focused on the benefits of autocratic leadership or examined leadership styles in different contexts, such as student discipline or academic performance. The current study fills a critical gap by highlighting the importance of positive, relationship-driven leadership in the specific area of curriculum management.

Based on these findings, training programs for head teachers in the Karamoja region and potentially in similar contexts emphasize the development of relationship-oriented leadership skills. This includes fostering collaboration, effective communication, and involvement of all stakeholders in decision-making processes related to curriculum changes. Additionally, further research could explore the long-term effects of relationship-oriented leadership on curriculum outcomes and student performance, potentially expanding the scope to include other regions and educational contexts.

5.0 Conclusions and recommendations

5.1 Conclusions

From the study findings and the corresponding discussions, the study concluded that despite the challenges hitherto observed in the schools, head teacher relation-oriented leadership behaviour is fairly exercised in the secondary schools in Karamoja sub-region, management of curriculum changes are well managed. The head teacher relation-oriented leadership behaviour accounts for almost 25% of the management of curriculum changes which further indicated that there is a significant effect of the headteacher relation-oriented leadership behaviour on management of curriculum changes of the lower secondary curriculum in the secondary schools in Karamoja sub-region in Uganda.

5.2 Recommendations

The study recommends that:

- i. The Ministry of Education and Sports should consider and implement training programs for headteachers in the Karamoja region and potentially in similar contexts to empower the headteachers in the execution of their mandate.
- ii. The Ministry of Education and Sports should also emphasize the development of relationship-oriented leadership skills. This includes fostering collaboration, effective communication, and involvement of all stakeholders in decision-making processes related to curriculum changes.
- iii. Additionally, further research could explore the long-term effects of relationship-oriented leadership on curriculum outcomes and student performance, potentially expanding the scope to include other regions and educational contexts.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.