

# The Decentralisation of Power within the Total Quality Management (TQM) Paradigm in Classroom Management (DPTQM)

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**ABSTRACT** This paper investigated how the decentralisation of power within the Total Quality Management (TQM) paradigm can be implemented in the classroom so as to enhance the learning process in the educational arena. The success stories of how industries have employed the TQM model in the production of goods and services calls for a revolutionary approach in the educational field in general and classroom in particular. The survey design was used by means of both open and closed ended questionnaires, focused group approach and participant observation. The findings of this case study of a Standard Six class of learners revealed that TQM as a management tool in classroom practice enhances accountability, collective decision making, communication and quality of discipline in the classroom. These were achieved through brainstorming and force field analysis. Contradictory though, learners saw it worthwhile to be called snitchers in the wake of indiscipline as opposed to being silent as both teacher and learners collaborate towards providing a conducive-learning environment.

## INTRODUCTION

Learners and parents in developing countries are becoming informed and know their rights as well. Schools, civil society and success stories in developed countries on how learners and parents can be engaged in the provision of education have enlightened parents and learners in developing countries of their human/ civil rights and responsibilities. In that light, the growing consensus among leadership theorists and practitioners is that in a networked society, with power and information widely distributed, the presumption of "born leaders" along with command and control leadership models are inadequate (Parks 2005). Schools as authors of democratic institutions are being called upon to do away with the autocratic practices of the past regime by involving all stakeholders of whatever description in the education of the learners as they engage on the quality crusade. Quality according to gurus of management lies in the eyes of the beholder. Schools as providers of services are expected to work towards the attainment of quality education if they are to be of any value to the communities they are located in. The demand for quality is more pronounced nowadays as education is becoming expensive and parents want value for their hard earned cash. In that way, schools cannot continue to operate in the manner they have been doing so in the past.

The excess traditional baggage has to be eliminated if not minimised if schools are to continue to be relevant to their communities. The only way to achieve this phenomenon is by embracing the culture of change. Schools can plan for change by adopting the TQM software as a management tool in their classroom practice. In the past, the teacher has been a dominant figure in the execution of lessons; however, the TQM philosophy enables class practitioners to decentralise power by assigning learners leadership positions and tasks in the classroom. The aim of this study therefore is to ascertain how delegated authority to the learners within a decentralised system can enhance the delivery of instruction in the classroom with minimum disruptive behaviour.

## Background to the Research

Primary schools usually choose their prefects from their senior pupils. This can be from standard five upwards, sixes and sevens or sevens only depending on the preferred system. The understanding is that the junior pupils may be immature to comprehend the intricacies of leadership. Leadership has got its own demands. It may divert the attention of the learner to an extent of losing focus if not redirected. Some may be isolated from their friends or labelled nicknames as they go about the business of leader-

ship. Such learners are usually carefully chosen by the teacher body assisted by administration. Different criteria are used for selecting office bearers. Some schools consider the following characteristics or personalities; intelligence, assertiveness, cleanliness/smartness, behaviour, being responsible and to a certain extent the background of the child (Parks 2005). While others, may consider the physical built of the individual as a preferred criterion to choose their would-be leader (Bass 2008). The latter criterion is meant to protect prefects from being bullied by their subordinates. However, what is painful to note here is that, many a time these learners are just thrown into the deep end without exposure or training at all. They are just told that they are the eyes and ears of administration only but not how they become so. To make matters worse, even in the classrooms where these children are chosen, they are not prepared for such a task as many classes are leaderless. It is disheartening for an outsider to walk in a classroom in the absence of the teacher and ask who their class monitor is and find that none exists. One wonders how a big group such as a class of thirty can exist without anybody to control the behaviour of others in the absence of the class teacher. Learners need to be groomed while they are still young so that as they mature they become better leaders by design not accident. The purpose of this paper therefore is to empower teachers with the classroom software they can use to groom leaders for the school and for the future as well using the TQM paradigm. In that way, many behavioural challenges which teachers usually mourn about may be eliminated or minimised

### **Leadership**

Leadership is a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal (Northhouse 2007). Leaders have been there time immemorial. The Bible is littered with such leaders in the form of Kings, prophets and Jesus Himself. While the latter was born a leader as he was endowed with the godly gift, others such as Moses, Samuel, Saul and David were chosen. These were great leaders of their times and continue to inspire nowadays' would-be-leaders. Apart from that, history also has bestowed on society some renowned leaders such as Martin Luther King, Abraham Lincoln and

Mandela who rose to the occasion during their times due to the prevailing crisis. Leaders who emerge in this manner seem to be influenced by the Great Event or Great Man Theory (Bass 2008). Proponents of this theory, claim that a bully may challenge the authority of the designated leader to the amusement of the admirers. Such behaviour if not nipped in the bud; the rebellious learner may have followers who may accept him/her as their informal leader when it comes to challenging those who are officially bestowed with such authority. What this means is that a suitable leader in a particular situation may not be ideal in a different one. It becomes worse in monarchs where one has to be born of royal blood for one to be a leader. The assumption is that for one to be a leader, one must be biologically wired so.

Complementing the Great Event Theory is the personality trait one (Bass 2008). This attaches much emphasis to the physical outlook of a person. However, contemporary scholars refute this observation as they subscribe to the Transformational or Process Leadership Theory which asserts that people can choose to become leaders and can therefore, be taught leadership skills (Bass 2008), thus refuting the earlier theory which borders on 'born leaders'. In that light, the position adopted by the investigator in this paper is that leaders although may possess certain qualities such as intelligence, they may be groomed as well, thus subscribing to the adage which reads as "leaders are not born but can be made". Giles (2006) corroborates this assertion when he posits that teachers with a transformational orientation are "social architects" who collaboratively build the classroom climate by involving learners in pursuit of organisational goals. The purpose of this paper is not to dwell on the broader theories of leadership but to discover how carefully chosen learners can influence the internal dynamics of the classroom for an educative enterprise to take place in a productive manner.

### **Total Quality Management (TQM)**

TQM is a set of management practices used throughout the organisation, geared to ensure that the organisation consistently meets or exceeds customer satisfaction (Algozzine et al. 2005). The tastes, needs and expectations of learners can only be approximated by bringing

all the stakeholders who matter in the educational enterprise of the learners aboard. In that light, the adoption of TQM as a business change strategy in educational institutions enables school authorities and learners respond to new demands promptly and be accountable for their actions to their stakeholders. Schools by their nature are open systems and therefore they need to continuously improve their processes and procedures if they are to continue to attract gifted learners from their respective catchment areas. The assumption here is that, delighted learners would always want to be associated with successful schools by wanting to return back to such institutions or talking about them to friends and relatives. In that way, they become marketing agents and ambassadors of the institutions which produced them. The realisation of such achievements of excellence in this market oriented global economy becomes paramount to any existing school, hence the adoption of the TQM philosophy in classroom practice as a management principle.

Parents as secondary consumers of the education enterprise, yearn for value for their money. Tertiary institutions, society and government included, look forward to recruiting consumable graduates from the school system. In that view, learners cannot be viewed as products which need to be worked on so as to satisfy the tertiary consumers but as human beings who are notoriously non-standard, and bring into educational situations a range of experiences, emotions and opinions which cannot be kept in the background of the operation (Parks 2005). What this boils down to is that the culture of change advocated for by the adoption of the TQM philosophy as a paradigm shift in the way classrooms should be managed needs careful adaptation as the peculiarity and uniqueness of educational arenas and people who populate them do not require an "all size fit it all" type of menu.

#### ***How Schools can Adopt the Total Quality Management Crusade?***

Schools are service providers (Algozzine et al. 2005). It is therefore incumbent upon those who offer the service to try to get things right the first time and every time because once a meal is poor, there is no way it can be replaced (Algozzine et al. 2005). In the same light, learners go

through a learning curve once and cannot be recycled as they mature. Those who are recycled became an extra expense to the financiers as they will be using resources which could have been used for other purposes, more so, in underdeveloped states which are characterised by limited resources due to their shrunk economies. The right things first which need to be got right in the first term are; the ground rules which learners need to follow, the class policy as viewed from the teacher's point of view and the class vision/ mission and the route to follow to accomplish them. If the vision of the classroom is "No child should be left behind" (Patrikakou et al. 2005) then the teacher should spell out how this is going to be put in operation and consequently achieved. This is meant to dispel all the fears learners could be harbouring at this stage as they sail through the rough terrain of a new classroom environment. At this point, the organisational structure and culture to be established to empower both teachers and learners (Giles 2006) in the classroom and how the office bearers are chosen besides the teacher should be delineated as candidly as possible.

#### **CLASS ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE**

At the helm of the hierarchy there is the class teacher who by virtue of his position, age and professional qualifications possesses legitimate ultimate power in the classroom's organisational structure. Second in the chain of command is the class monitor who is also assisted by his/her vice class monitor. After that a legion of group leaders who represent their respective group members follow. These constitute the ideal organisational structure for a classroom set up. However, the number of group leaders is determined by the number of learners in a class.

The previous mark schedule was used to choose the first incumbent leaders in a Standard Six class. The one who took first position was made the Class Monitor, and the second one became the Vice Class Monitor. After that learners were grouped in groups of fives and the fifth one had three members. In the first group, number three was chosen as the Group leader. In the second and subsequent groups, the learners who took position six, eleven, sixteen and twenty-one became group leaders respectively. This criterion was preferred to as compared to that of voting. Attempts were made not to subject elev-

en year olds to voting as it had higher chances of biasing the selection. Observations at this stage are that, learners may succumb to peer pressure and choose pupils they either like or fear. Those from elitist families and the popular ones who do not want to disappoint anybody are usually the preferred choices. To remove all these biases which may come into play due to the human element, the class positions alluded to above were found to be most appropriate. At first pupils seemed to despair but when the criteria was explained, it became a dream which every learner aspired to achieve. Although theories abound on the market claim that leaders are born, this approach was meant to subscribe to the one which asserts that leaders can be groomed. This was ideal in this circumstance as either all or some Standard Sevens at the institution under investigation were made prefects. This became fertile ground to ascertain who would make the grade in the issuing year.

To further cement the criteria used, a Mid-Term Test in all subject areas was given in the first term to either confirm or reject the position holders. As soon as this crop of leaders was chosen and confirmed, they were oriented in the presence of the non-prefect ones. This was meant to induct all and sundry as the leadership race was open to everybody. It was also meant to guard against abuse by those who might want to be overzealous or use these positions in order to settle scores with their foes. The workshop, in this regard, becomes the benchmark on which all future interactions are measured against. Demotions which pupils clamoured for as some of them tumbled were discouraged at all cost. Instead guidance and counseling were favoured. This brought about stability to the organisational structure. The third test to confirm or reject the incumbents was the Mid-Year Exam. This put the post beyond the reach of some aspiring learners as it sealed the bond. Apparently, the prefects up to the end of the year, in the Class of 2012 were the same except two. The reason being that, their performance either ameliorated or deteriorated. The improved learner joined a more challenging group yet the other had an inferior position. However, some guidance and counseling was done to reduce frustrations which come about due to the change of status.

#### **Duties of Class Leaders**

These depend upon the school or class policy. As soon as the incumbents were selected

the onus was upon the class teacher to induct the young leaders so that they were conscious of their responsibilities and rights within this framework of leadership.

#### **The Duties of Class Monitors**

These superintended the classroom when the teacher went on official errands or was attending to some essential issues elsewhere. Offending pupils were first given two verbal warnings by the monitors before they had their names written in the Black Book. In the Black Book, the headings were as follows: the date, name of pupil, offence and punishment. All forms of punishment at this level were the non-physical ones, such as time out, detention, isolation and manual labour depending on the gravity of the offence. These were decided by the teacher in concurrence with the monitors and were not supposed to take more than ten minutes. Manual labour was not excessive either. It entailed either mopping the classroom or cleaning the chalkboard. Attempts were made not to trample on the dignity and integrity of the learners. The class monitors constituted the disciplinary committee chaired by the class teacher.

#### **The Duties of Group Leaders**

These managed group members. Resources were distributed via them. They collected Exercise Books after completion of written tasks either for submission to the class teacher, marking or placing them in the shelves. They also inspected them to identify those who either had not submitted their previous assignments for marking or those who had not completed or done their homework. Truancy was reduced at this level and cases of non-submission of Exercise Books or those not marked were eliminated. As time went on, simple tasks in homework were pencil marked by group leaders after the answers were discussed on the board and later on remarked by the class teacher for accuracy. This was done to ensure that corrections were done there and then. In the process, the Exercise Books of group leaders and the fifth group which was academically challenged were marked by the class teacher. As time went on and with a bit of training from the class teacher, the group leader of the fifth group was made to mark the work of his/her group members. They also supervised

group discussions during lesson delivery as instructed by the class teacher. In that way, the positions of group leaders were strengthened and they felt that they were part and parcel of the learning process.

Interesting to observe at this level was how class monitors ceased to be leaders during group discussion and became followers as well, thus subscribing to the old adage which asserts that a "good leader is a good follower."

### **The Class Policy**

Since learners had been initiated at the beginning of the year when they were enrolled in the sixth grade, this time around during second term, they had to be involved in the coming up with a Class Policy. They generated as many ideas as they could using the brainstorming strategy. These were submitted for class discussion. The similar ones were collated and the trivial ones were either modified or eliminated at this stage. When all had been said and done, the end product was as given below.

#### ***Standard Six Class Policy***

1. Those with undone homework will re-do it out of the classroom before attending new lessons.
2. Bullying and any other form of violent behaviour must be reported to the nearest teacher.
3. Disruptive behaviour will not be tolerated.
4. Disobedience will be dealt with accordingly.
5. Usage of vulgar language is prohibited.
6. Theft, lying, gossiping and fighting are regarded as serious offences.
7. Eating in the classroom is not allowed.
8. Not paying attention in class is illegal.
9. Non-submission of school work is a serious crime.
10. Accompanying each other to the rest room is not allowed.
11. Always be dressed in proper uniform for the appropriate activity (that is, school and sports uniforms).
12. English remains the official medium of communication in the classroom and School.

As part of the installation process, after the leaders had been chosen and presented to the

class, it was agreed that juvenile delinquents who broke the above rules perpetually would be dealt with accordingly by the disciplinary committee made up of the class monitors and the class teacher.

Both class monitors and group leaders were advised to take the above rules seriously when reporting any unruly behaviour. They were also advised to use their discretion when reporting law breakers. The golden rule adhered to here was two verbal warnings first before further action was taken.

### ***How Conflict Was Resolved?***

The brainstorming strategy and force field analysis were employed. A problem of competition arose. Some members of the groups could not take instructions from the vice monitor. They thought the vice monitor was a snob and he always reported those whom he hated the most. They also complained that the vice class monitor was the major culprit when it came to those who were considered to be noise makers. All these ideas were raised during the brainstorming exercise. The session was chaired by the class teacher. The situation was smoothed by conceding to a number of tradeoffs. A force field analysis was adopted. The opposing forces were identified. They were asked to establish their line of battle without fear and favour. As soon as one of the group members generated a positive comment on the conflict, this opened doors to the 'dos' and 'don'ts' on such a scenario. These live debates were an eye opener. The negatives raised were used to strengthen the position of the vice monitor. Each time he erred, some of these comments were used in the guidance and counseling sessions which were held for that purpose. By the end of the term, the interpersonal relationship between the vice monitor and the class had improved. What was interesting to observe here was that a name of a particular learner who had a score to settle with the vice monitor was raised. This learner was invited for a discussion where he pledged his unwavering support to the monitor. In the process, the names of those who always broke the school rules were also raised. Their opinions were sought and it was discovered that they only did so to attract attention from their peers. However, they were cautioned and advised to cooperate with the class leaders for the sake of progress.

Class leaders were also advised in private to ignore these attention-seekers sometimes.

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This case study examined data collected using participant observation, focused group interviews and questionnaires. The approach was adopted as it was found to be most appropriate as it satisfies the tenets of both the qualitative and quantitative approach in describing, understanding and explaining data in its natural setting, taking into account the relevant context (Henning 2005). The use of triangulation enabled the researcher yield rich data from the participants which was later cross-checked in brainstorming sessions (Gay et al. 2006). Participants comprised a class of twenty-three learners. By observing learners in their natural settings and later engaging them in open discussions, the researcher hoped to capture data that could not be captured using the quantitative method alone (Honcock and Algozzine 2006).

#### Sample

Since this was meant to follow a case study approach at a microscopic level, purposive sampling technique was implored (Creswell 2002). This was meant to use the participants within the jurisdiction of the researcher without disturbing the smooth running of the school, let alone, a private one for that matter. A class of twenty-three young learners chosen was considered information rich and to have elements and characteristics of the bigger population (Schulze 2002). In that view the data collected was considered as valid and representative enough for generalisations to be made on the targeted population.

#### Instruments

##### *a) Questionnaires*

Twenty-three open and closed type questionnaire items were used to collect both quantitative and qualitative data. The questionnaires were administered by the researcher for clarity purposes and to ensure a 100% return rate.

##### *b) Focused Group*

Themes and issues which arose as a result of the study were discussed as a class first for

the purpose of generating a wide range of ideas and further refined by class monitors and group leaders through brainstorming. Questions discussed were unstructured for the purpose of allowing more ideas to be generated in as natural a setting as possible.

##### *c) Observation*

To augment data collected by questionnaires and focused group discussions, non-participant observation was employed (Schulze 2002). The researcher observed learners either in groups or as a class as they went about their business of learning. Data on how monitors and group leaders conducted themselves was collected in this manner and recorded for analysis purposes.

### ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

As observed earlier on, both quantitative and qualitative approaches were implored to develop an indepth understanding of individuals and events in their natural setting. Frequency tables were used to present quantitative data. Qualitative comments from brainstorming sessions and open ended sections of the questionnaire were used to explain some of the trends in the quantitative data.

#### The Black Book

A look at the Black book revealed that most of the cases recorded were of noise makers, particularly when the class teacher had gone for errands. These were considered as minor and ignored. The serious ones which probably arose from peer pressure were those of two learners kissing in the shade area and one ring leader disrespecting prefects. The other act of indiscipline as per school policy was that of learners not submitting their books for marking or failure to complete homework at home. Of interest here was one girl who used the social network to make disparaging remarks on the neck tie which is considered as the status symbol when prefects are installed. The communication between the sixth grade learner and seventh one was discovered by one of the teachers in the Prefects' Committee. The unfortunate girl was summarily demoted by the Committee and some guidance and counseling was instituted as a class.

According to Table 1 the majority of learners (62%) who participated in this research were boys and the rest were girls. Fourteen (66%) were group members. Five (24%) were group leaders and one (5%) being the Class monitor and the second one (5%) the Vice Class monitor. These constituted the leadership structure of the classroom and opinions they made towards that direction were real and valid as they were burdened with the task of leading their classmates using the criteria alluded to above. Although the table above reveals that the majority of learners (57%) were eleven year olds, the calculation of the mean shows that on average the respondents were 11.5 years which gives a rounded off age of twelve and the mode of twelve. What this statistic means therefore is that on average the opinions expressed in this research were those of twelve year olds and should be taken as such.

**Table 1: Biographic data of the respondents N=21**

	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
<i>1.1 Gender</i>		
Males	13	62
Females	8	38
Total	21	100
<i>1.2 Status</i>		
Class monitor	1	5
Vice class monitor	1	5
Group leaders	5	24
Group members	14	66
Total	21	100
<i>1.3 Age</i>		
11	12	57
12	8	38
13	1	5
Total	21	100

Question 2.1 (a-g) captured perceptions of learners towards participation in the classroom activities. Further scrutiny of tabulated data in Table 2 in rank order, reveals that the learners (76%) unanimously agreed that they solved minor individual problems autonomously without involving any adult. When asked to explain how

**Table 2: Classroom activities respondents participated in N=21**

<i>2.1 Activity</i>	<i>Fre- que- ncy</i>	<i>Per- cen- tage</i>	<i>Total N-21</i>
a) Supervising group work	10	48	100
b) Decision making	14	67	100
c) Reporting offenders	12	57	100
d) Punishing offenders	8	38	100
e) Guidance and counselling	10	48	100
f) Choice of learning material	10	48	100
g) Solving minor problems	16	76	100

they achieved this phenomenon through question 2.2 which was meant to seek an opinion on the attribute they had chosen, they claimed that each time they were in a quandary; they would debate the predicament first before reaching a consensus on the issue. Seven (67%) of these believed that the teacher involved them in making decisions in the classroom, particularly in deciding who had broken the Class Policy and how the delinquent should be punished as this was by common consent. Some of them (57%) claimed that their role was significant when it came to reporting offending learners to the Class Teacher. Noise makers topped the list on this attribute. When it came to supervision of group work (48%), guiding and counseling (48%) of group members and choice of learning materials (48%), the ratings were at equilibrium. They claimed that these attributes were realised when group members were made to generate appropriate responses to tasks allocated promptly, empathising with and consoling their classmates who would have undergone some form of punishment and deciding on which subject matter to either study or discuss as either as a group or class in the absence of the teacher respectively. Lastly, the four (38%) who asserted that they participated in the punishment of the juvenile delinquents could be any of these: the Class monitor, Vice Class monitor and those who were once upon a time group leaders. Sometimes when manual work or running laps at the football

**Table 3: Best ways of solving problems N=21**

<i>Attribute</i>	<i>Yes</i>		<i>No</i>		<i>Total N-21</i>
	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>	
Solving problems among ourselves	16	76	5	24	100
Reporting to the class teacher	13	62	8	38	100
Keeping quiet	1	5	20	95	100

ground were prescribed as appropriate punishment for offending learners, the leaders named above were requested to supervise the culprits.

Since eight (see Table 2) learners had indicated that they were involved in solving minor problems, there was need to find out which then was the best way of solving individual problems through question 2.3 and the results are displayed in Table 3.

The bulk of the learners (76%) believe that the best way of solving problems is by solving them themselves. However, after they had exhausted all avenues of trying to solve their grievances, they found it essential to romp in the Class teacher (62%) depending on the magnitude of the problem. Twenty (95%) never minded being labeled snitchers as they condemned keeping quiet as a way of trying to solve teething problems at hand. When the latter issue was further probed using focused groups, an element of bullying was intimated by those who were suspected to be snitching. Such culprits according to learners are usually isolated from friends or peer groups they belong to.

At this point, there was need therefore to ask those in leadership positions question 2.4 so as to ascertain their mental and physical readiness to assume the roles they were assigned to and the results are shown in Table 4.

On average, most of the leaders (57%) chosen claimed that they were well inducted for the task and had confidence (100%) in the decisions they made. Although they encountered challenges (86%) here and there, they still thought that they could make better leaders (86%) if given the second chance, thus confirming the TQM tenet of "continuous improvement." When probed further through question number 2.5 as to why they thought that way, the following reasons were advanced: They claimed that the induction rendered empowered them with the adequate technology needed to deal with their subordinates and most of the decisions they

made were never challenged. These findings serve to confirm the school of thought which claims that leaders after being carefully selected can be trained as alluded to in the literature reviewed. However, the major challenge they got was that of being disrespected by some of their classmates who never accepted their authority and decisions made. Despite that, they all concurred that the stint gave them the much needed experience for future endeavours.

Finally, ideas were sought from learners through question 2.6 which was open ended as to how they thought they could be involved in the school business and the following varied responses were advanced in their order of priority. Learners seem to be conscious of their rights. They want to be involved in all decisional issues which concern them if their needs, wants, aspirations and demands are to be met as demanded by the TQM philosophy. They also want to be involved in the preparation of fund raising activities and selling as well if stalls are mounted for that purpose. When it actually comes to the business of learning, they yearn for a hands-on approach which entails projects and experiments. They also preferred to vote for their prefects in a transparent manner, not for teachers to impose leaders on them. Above all, they opted to be taught how to solve their problems without any adult intervention. The implication of these findings from a TQM perspective is that learners shun being passive participants in the learning process if their concerns are to be approximated or realised in any learning enterprise. In that view contemporary teachers need to put in their classrooms systems in place to accommodate learners' aspirations at all times if the classroom atmosphere is to be conducive to fruitful learning.

It can be deduced from the results of the study that learners feel that they are actively involved in the core learning activities of classroom practice in line with the TQM philosophy.

**Table 4: The Leaders' state of preparedness**

Attribute	Yes		No		Total N-21
	f	%	f	%	
Were you well-trained for the post?	4	57	3	43	100
Did you have confidence in the decisions you made?	7	100	0	0	100
Did you meet any problems in carrying out your duties?	6	86	1	14	100
Do you think you can now make a better leader?	6	86	1	14	100



Consider, for instance how learners claimed to be involved in key issues such as: solving problems independently, decision making, and bringing the juvenile delinquents to book. Interesting to observe though, was the fact that learners do not mind being labelled snitchers as compared to keeping quiet on pertinent issues concerning the classroom climate and culture. However, this observation could suggest that there exists silent bullying when it comes to reporting culprits which needs to be further investigated. Those who were privileged to be in leadership roles considered themselves to be wiser than before as their past defects would cement their moral fabric. They further claimed that the fountain of experiences acquired would be adequate software to be used to unravel real or imagined further predicaments. What is needed, perhaps, are classroom practitioners who will be armed with the TQM philosophy, so as to expose learners to such a phenomenon which will enable them mature in leadership functions and wisdom. On the contrary, some learners argued that although the current system in place of appointing monitors and group leaders is motivational and transparent, schools as democratic institutions which claim to observe their fundamental rights should allow them to select their leaders by voting. The latter finding serves to suggest that learners no longer want to be on the periphery of any core business of the educational enterprise. A grey area which needs further exploration at this level.

### CONCLUSION

Several conclusions may be derived from this empirical investigation. The fact that learners assigned leadership positions admitted that they learnt a great deal from this exposure, confirms the school of thought which claims that leaders although they may be born to a certain extent, leadership as a discipline can be learned thus, subscribing to the Transformational or Process Leadership Theory alluded to in this research. This finding puts to rest the adage which has been dominant for life immemorial which claims that "leaders are born not made."

Finally, for teachers to tap grassroots opinions at class or school level, a well defined organisational structure and communication system needs to exist. The pyramid needs to be turned upside down if the teacher is to be acces-

sible at the point of operation. Constant meetings involving the "collaboration of minds" in making decisions should be held with class leaders and the class openly and candidly if they are to be trained to do the like on their own. To generate more ideas at such brainstorming sessions, irrelevant opinions must not be discarded in their totality; neither should the initiator be berated for that. Instead, the idea should be refined or merged with others to trigger futuristic contributions.

However, the results of this investigation need to be interpreted with caution as it was confined to a case study of one class only. A similar study is recommended either with more classes or at a comparative level if these findings are to be confirmed or refuted.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

Going by the empirical findings observed above, workshops, seminars or staff development courses need to be mounted where classroom practitioners could be empowered on how to involve learners in any educative enterprise. The adoption of the TQM software as a change strategy in the classroom should be the mainstay of such conferences which can be held either at micro or macro level. Resource persons at such workshops should be teachers who are conversant with the practice and should be locally based to avoid conflict of ideas and theorising the revolution as classrooms undergo some form of metamorphosis.

Similarly, there is need to make it mandatory for schools to have clearly delineated prefect systems at both class and school level if leaders are to be groomed as suggested by this empirical research. To enforce the idea of having leaders at both levels, there is need for both internal and external supervisors to encompass such elements on their evaluation forms so as to ascertain the existence of a legally organised prefect system at such levels as they conduct the school business. Where there is non-compliance, the same evaluation form can be used at a later date to identify teachers who need to be inducted along those lines. In that way, the open anarchy which usually characterises some classrooms or schools climate may be minimised or eliminated. Even the submersion of young learners when appointed as leaders at whatever level, in bottomless deep ends without the much needed exposure may be done away with.

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