



ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY

College of Education and Language Studies

Department of Educational Planning & Management

**A STUDY ON THE IMPLICATION OF SCHOOL LEADERSHIP AND
CHANGE OF OWNERSHIP ON INSTITUTIONAL AND STUDENTS'
PERFORMANCE AT FLIPPER INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL**

MASTER'S THESIS

By: Genet Alemayehu Hunegnaw (GSE/1240/15)

Advisor: Dejene Niguse (PhD)

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DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

This thesis is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other university and that all resources of materials used for the thesis has been duly acknowledged.

Name: Genet Alemayehu

Signature: _____

Date_____

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DEDICATION

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Declaration of Originality	i
Supervisor’s Approval Sheet	ii
Acknowledgements.....	iii
Dedication.....	iv
Chapter One: Introduction	2
1.1 Background of the research project	2
1.2 Statement of the Problem	5
1.3 Purpose and objectives of the Study	6
1.4 The Research Questions	7
1.5 Significance of the Study	8
1.6 Scope of the Study.....	10
1.7 Organization of the study	11
Chapter Two: Literature Review	14
2.1 Leadership and School Performance	14
2.2. Leadership Styles and Their Impact on Student Performance.....	18
2.3. Ownership Transitions and Their Implications on School Stability	22
2.4 Impact of Leadership Changes on Lower Secondary Students in Ethiopia	27
Chapter Three: Research Design and Methodology.....	31
3.1 Research Design	31
3.2 Participants	31
3.4 Data Collection Methods.....	32
3.5 Data Analysis Procedure	33
3.6 Validity and Reliability of Data	33
3.7 Limitations of the Methodology.....	34
3.8 Ethical Considerations.....	35
Chapter Four: Data Presentation, Analysis, and Interpretation.....	36
4.1 Overview of Participants	36
4.2 Major Themes from the Data	37
4.3 Analysis, Discussion and Interpretation of Findings	43
Chapter Five: Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations	48
5.1 Summary of Findings	48
5.2 Conclusions Drawn from the Findings	49
5.3 Recommendations	50
5.4 Final Reflections	52
References	53
Appendices	57

ABSTRACT

This qualitative case study investigated weather leadership changes and ownership transitions on the academic performance and school experience of lower secondary school students at Flipper International School. Over a three-year period (2022/23–2024/25), the school experienced multiple shifts in leadership and ownership, prompting concern about institutional continuity and student outcomes. Data were collected from 17 staff members and 31 students through semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, and document analysis. Thematic analysis revealed eight major themes: leadership instability, operational disruption, declining teacher morale, weakened school culture, academic impact, communication deficits, stakeholder recommendations, and overall institutional effects.

Findings indicated that frequent leadership transitions led to organizational uncertainty, reduced instructional consistency, diminished staff motivation, and student disengagement. Teachers reported experiencing change fatigue and lack of direction, while students expressed confusion and loss of trust in school leadership. Although some transformational leaders had a temporarily positive effect, the overall pattern pointed to negative consequences for the school community. Stakeholders consistently called for greater transparency, strategic planning, and participatory leadership models to mitigate the adverse effects of change.

The study underscores the critical importance of leadership stability in sustaining school performance, enhancing morale, and safeguarding student learning, particularly during periods of institutional transition. It offers practical and policy-oriented recommendations aimed at fostering long-term leadership development and collaborative governance in education.

Keywords: leadership transitions, ownership change, student outcomes, teacher morale, school culture, transformational leadership, qualitative case study, educational leadership.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1. Introduction

The thesis explores the influence of different educational leadership styles on student performance at Flipper International School. It examines how leadership approaches in the school setting impact student outcomes in lower secondary education. The study emphasizes the relationship between leadership strategies and academic success. By analyzing the specific context of lower secondary grade eight students at Flipper International School, the paper provides insights into effective leadership practices. Ultimately, it aims to contribute to the broader understanding of how leadership can shape educational achievement in secondary schools.

1.1 Background of the research project

The leadership style in educational institutions plays a crucial role in shaping both the overall school environment and students' academic performance. Schools, as organizations, require stable leadership to ensure the effective implementation of educational policies, proper resource allocation, and a conducive learning atmosphere.

Leadership in educational settings can significantly affect organizational culture, resource management, and ultimately, student performance. Theories of leadership, such as transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership, offer insights into how leadership style can shape educational outcomes. Transformational leadership, characterized by vision, inspiration, and individual consideration, has been associated with higher levels of school achievement (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2006). In contrast, transactional leadership, which focuses on structured goals, rewards, and punishments, can result in short-term improvements but may lack long-term positive effects (Bass & Avolio, 1994).

In the context of school ownership transitions, the shift in leadership styles can cause disruptions in how educational policies are implemented. Each new leader may bring a different approach to decision-making, goal-setting, and resource allocation, leading

to instability in the school's operations. This instability can affect teachers' morale, their teaching methods, and most importantly, students' academic progress (Hallinger, 2005). Given the importance of a stable and coherent leadership approach, frequent changes in leadership may hinder the school's ability to maintain consistent educational standards.

The ownership structure of a school also plays a vital role in its leadership dynamics. A school that is frequently bought and sold, as in the case of Flipper International School, often experiences shifts not only in its physical resources but also in its management philosophy and priorities. Research has shown that when educational institutions undergo ownership transitions, the new owners often bring different expectations, priorities, and operational styles, which can lead to confusion and uncertainty among staff and students (Bryk, Sebring, Allensworth, Luppescu, & Easton, 2010). For instance, new owners may focus on short-term financial gains or alter the school's strategic vision, which can undermine the long-term academic stability and performance of students (Farkas, Johnson, Folen, & Duffett, 2003).

In the case of Flipper International School, the transfer of ownership multiple times within a short span has likely created an environment where students and staff are faced with inconsistent leadership approaches. This instability can affect the allocation of educational resources, curriculum design, teacher training, and student support services, all of which are essential for fostering an environment conducive to student learning and academic success.

High turnover in school leadership is often detrimental to the organizational culture of the institution. According to studies on organizational change, frequent leadership changes create a sense of unpredictability and can result in a lack of direction for the school community (Grissom & Loeb, 2011). Teachers, students, and parents may struggle to adapt to new leadership styles, leading to lower levels of trust and confidence in the school's ability to deliver quality education. Furthermore, high turnover can disrupt the continuity of professional development for educators, making it challenging to sustain effective teaching practices (Leithwood, Harris, & Hopkins, 2008).

When leadership is unstable, schools may fail to address key areas such as curriculum alignment, resource distribution, and pedagogical strategies. The absence of a clear and consistent vision, as often seen during periods of high turnover, can contribute to a decline in student performance, as teachers may be uncertain about the goals and expectations of the school (Day, 2000). Students, too, can feel the impact of these changes, as frequent shifts in leadership may lead to confusion regarding academic priorities and evaluation standards.

Student performance is influenced by a myriad of factors, including teacher quality, resource availability, and leadership quality. Leadership turnover, as observed in Flipper International School, can exacerbate challenges related to these factors. When leadership changes, the stability of academic programs and the quality of teaching often suffer. For instance, new owners or leaders may prioritize different aspects of the school's operations, such as financial management or marketing, at the expense of pedagogical development and student well-being (Murphy & Hallinger, 1991).

Furthermore, the constant flux in ownership and management can disrupt long-term educational initiatives, such as curriculum development, student support services, and teacher professional development. As a result, students may face reduced access to educational resources, inconsistent teaching methods, and a lack of continuity in their academic experiences. Studies have shown that such disruptions can lead to declines in test scores, graduation rates, and overall student achievement (Hargreaves, 2005).

In summary, the ongoing changes in leadership and ownership at Flipper International School have likely created an environment of instability, which may be affecting both the school culture and the students' academic performance. The impact of leadership style, ownership transitions, and management turnover on school operations has been well-documented in educational research. These changes can disrupt the continuity of educational practices, hinder the effective use of resources, and ultimately, affect student learning outcomes. The objective of this study is to examine these dynamics more closely and assess how leadership style during periods of ownership transition influences students' performance at Flipper International School.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Flipper International School has been grappling with considerable instability in both leadership and ownership over the past three years. Originally founded and managed by two long-term owners who ensured consistent operations, the school has since undergone multiple changes in ownership, leading to frequent turnover among its leadership team. This ongoing cycle of leadership transitions has caused significant disruption, introducing varied management styles and approaches that have affected the overall culture and functioning of the institution. Each time the ownership changes and new leaders have introduced distinct strategies, priorities, and methods of operation, resulting in confusion and a lack of continuity within the school community. This has led to an environment where both students and staff are struggling to adapt to the ever-shifting expectations and priorities set by the leadership.

A key concern arising from this instability is the impact these changes have had on student performance. Inconsistent leadership can result in various challenges, such as inadequate resource allocation, disruptions in teaching practices, and a decline in the quality of support services for students. Furthermore, the varying leadership styles and shifting priorities often create a lack of coherence in educational strategies, leading to misalignment between administrative decisions and classroom needs. Teachers, faced with constantly changing expectations, may experience reduced morale, resulting in diminished instructional effectiveness. As a consequence, students may receive inconsistent guidance, and their academic outcomes could be negatively affected. In particular, the lack of stability in leadership may contribute to lower levels of teacher engagement, decreased student motivation, and a general decline in the school's overall academic performance.

However, in the case of Flipper International School, frequent changes in ownership and leadership over the past three years have raised concerns about the stability of the institution and the subsequent impact on its students' performance. This research explores the link between leadership changes and student outcomes, particularly

focusing on the consequences of frequent leadership turnovers and ownership transitions on academic success.

This research seeks to examine the extent to which the frequent leadership and ownership transitions at Flipper International School have impacted student academic performance. It aims to investigate the relationship between changes in leadership and ownership, and the potential effects these transitions have had on student outcomes. By focusing on the connection between leadership instability and academic achievement, the research will provide valuable insights into the broader consequences of frequent leadership changes in educational institutions. Understanding these dynamics is crucial for developing strategies to mitigate the negative effects of leadership instability and foster an environment conducive to sustained student success.

1.3 Purpose and objectives of the Study

1.3.1. Purpose of the Study

The primary purpose of this study is to examine the impact of frequent leadership changes and ownership transitions on student performance at Flipper International School. Over the past three years, the school has undergone multiple ownership transfers, leading to significant shifts in leadership styles and management practices. This research seeks to explore how these changes have affected the school's overall operations, including resource allocation, curriculum implementation, and teacher-student relationships, all of which play a critical role in shaping students' academic success. By identifying the specific leadership challenges caused by frequent ownership changes, this study aims to offer insights into the broader implications for educational institutions facing similar instability.

In addition, the study aims to assess the relationship between leadership style and student performance in the context of ownership transitions. By examining how different leadership approaches—transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire—have influenced school practices and student outcomes, this research will provide valuable evidence to guide future leadership strategies in schools experiencing frequent changes in ownership. The findings from this study could contribute to a

better understanding of the role of leadership in maintaining educational quality during periods of instability and help inform practices that promote continuity, stability, and improved student achievement in similar educational settings.

1.3.2. Objectives of the Study

1. To examine the implication of leadership changes and ownership transitions on the overall operations of Flipper International School.
2. To assess how shifts in leadership styles have affected resource allocation, curriculum implementation, and teaching practices at the school.
3. To investigate the relationship between leadership transitions and student performance, focusing on academic achievement, test scores, and graduation rates.
4. To identify specific challenges faced by students and staff due to the instability in leadership and ownership at Flipper International School.
5. To evaluate the effects of different leadership styles (transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire) on student outcomes during periods of ownership changes.
6. To provide recommendations for effective leadership practices that can help mitigate the negative impact of frequent ownership and management transitions on student performance.

1.4 The Research Questions

1. How do members of the Flipper International School community describe the influence of frequent leadership and ownership changes—including shifts in leadership style—on the school environment, daily operations, teaching practices, and the use of educational resources?
2. How do teachers, students, and leading's staff describe the effects of leadership instability at Flipper International School on students' academic performance and the continuity and effectiveness of the school's curriculum and academic programs?
3. How do students, teachers, and administrative staff describe the challenges and implications associated with frequent leadership and ownership changes at the

school, particularly in relation to student experiences, professional development, and instructional strategies?

4. How do different leadership styles (transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire) affect the morale and motivation of teachers and students at Flipper International School?
5. What strategies do school leaders, staff, and students suggest could mitigate the negative effects of leadership turnover on student performance?

These questions guided the qualitative analysis, providing insight into the experiences and perceptions of those directly affected by the leadership changes at Flipper International School.

1.5 Significance of the Study

This study holds considerable significance for multiple stakeholders involved in the educational ecosystem at Flipper International School and for broader educational contexts experiencing similar challenges. The findings are expected to offer practical, theoretical, and policy-level insights relevant to school administrators, educators, students, policymakers, and prospective school owners.

1. School Administrators and Leadership Teams:

The study provides school leaders with an in-depth understanding of how leadership transitions impact school operations, staff morale, and student performance. By examining the influence of different leadership styles on resource allocation, instructional practices, and academic outcomes, the research offers valuable guidance for current and future administrators. These insights can support the development of strategic leadership practices that foster institutional stability and academic continuity during periods of transition.

2. Educators and Teaching Staff:

Teachers, as frontline practitioners, are directly affected by shifts in school leadership. This study will help educators contextualize their professional experiences within broader institutional dynamics, shedding light on how leadership instability influences teaching efficacy, professional motivation, and student engagement. The

findings may also support teachers in navigating leadership transitions more effectively, while fostering resilience, collaboration, and a positive school climate.

3. Students:

As the primary recipients of educational services, students stand to benefit directly from this research. The study explores how frequent changes in school leadership affect students' academic experiences, emotional well-being, and overall engagement. By identifying the challenges students face during periods of instability, the research supports the development of targeted strategies to safeguard student learning, enhance motivation, and promote a consistent and supportive learning environment.

4. Policymakers and Educational Authorities:

For decision-makers at local, regional, and national levels, the findings provide empirical evidence on the consequences of leadership instability within schools. This research can inform the formulation of policies aimed at promoting leadership continuity, strengthening institutional governance, and enhancing leadership development programs. Such policies can help mitigate the disruptions caused by frequent administrative turnover, ensuring more stable and effective school management.

5. Prospective School Owners and Investors:

The study offers practical insights for individuals or organizations seeking to acquire or manage educational institutions. It underscores the importance of leadership continuity and stakeholder engagement in sustaining school performance. By illustrating the risks associated with frequent leadership changes, the research provides evidence-based recommendations to help future owners implement leadership structures that support long-term educational goals.

In summary, this study contributes to the growing body of literature on educational leadership by offering a focused analysis of the relationship between leadership transitions and school outcomes. The findings provide critical insights for enhancing leadership practices, supporting teacher development, and improving student experiences in schools undergoing frequent changes in administration or ownership.

1.6 Scope of the Study

This study investigates the impact of leadership changes and ownership transitions at Flipper International School, with a specific emphasis on the academic performance and overall learning experiences of students in the lower secondary division. The scope is delineated by the following key dimensions:

1. **Geographic Scope:** The research is confined to Flipper International School, located in Beklobet, with a targeted focus on its lower secondary section. The study explores how repeated leadership changes have influenced the school environment, particularly within this academic level.

2. **Time Frame:** The investigation covers a three-year period, spanning the 2022/23 to 2024/25 academic years. This timeframe was selected due to the occurrence of multiple leadership and ownership transitions within the school, providing a critical context for examining their effects on academic operations, school climate, and student outcomes.

3. **Target Population – Lower Secondary Students:** The primary subjects of this study are lower secondary students, typically aged 14 to 15. This age group is considered a pivotal stage in educational development. . Upper secondary students (typically aged 16 to 18) are excluded to maintain a focused inquiry on the educational experiences of students in a formative academic stage.

4. **Focus on Leadership and Ownership Transitions:** The study analyzes the effects of various leadership styles—transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire—alongside ownership changes. It examines their impact on key school dynamics, including teaching methodologies, resource distribution, curriculum implementation, and institutional culture. Particular attention is given to how these factors have affected the academic progression and motivation of lower secondary students.

5. **Qualitative Research Approach:** The study employs a purely qualitative methodology to capture the in-depth perspectives of key stakeholders. Data are collected through semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, and observational methods involving administrators, teachers, and students. This

approach facilitates a nuanced understanding of the lived experiences and perceptions of those directly affected by leadership instability.

6. Emphasis on Academic Experience and Learning Environment: Rather than measuring academic outcomes through standardized assessments or quantitative performance metrics, the study explores subjective dimensions such as students' perceptions of classroom atmosphere, instructional quality, support mechanisms, and continuity of learning. These qualitative indicators are used to assess how leadership changes have shaped students' academic engagement and motivation.

7. Exclusion of Quantitative Data: The study deliberately excludes quantitative data such as grades, test scores, and statistical performance indicators. Instead, it focuses on qualitative evidence to explore broader, more holistic effects of leadership transitions on the school experience.

8. Exclusion of Upper Secondary Students: The scope of the study is limited to lower secondary students.

In summary, this research centers on the lower secondary division at Flipper International School, exploring the effects of leadership and ownership transitions over the past three years. By relying on qualitative methodologies, the study seeks to provide a rich, detailed account of how these changes have influenced student performance, classroom experiences, and the broader learning environment.

1.7 Organization of the study

The study on the implications of educational leadership styles on students' performance in lower secondary at Flipper International School is organized into several key sections:

1. Introduction: This section introduces the purpose of the study, providing context on the importance of educational leadership in influencing student performance. It also outlines the objectives of the research, the significance of the study, and its scope.

2. Literature Review: This part reviews existing research on educational leadership styles, such as transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership, and their effects on teaching, learning, and student outcomes.

3. **Research Methodology:** The study outlines the research design, including both qualitative and quantitative methods. Surveys and interviews are used to collect data from school leaders, teachers, and students. This section also describes the sample population and data analysis techniques.

4. **Data presentation, analysis, and interpretation:** The results of the research are presented and analyzed in relation to the leadership styles observed at Flipper International School. This section highlights how different leadership approaches influence student performance and the overall school environment.

5. **Summary, Conclusion and Recommendations:** The study concludes with insights on the most effective leadership styles for improving student performance. Recommendations are made for school leaders to enhance their leadership practices for better academic outcomes.

This structured approach allows the study to comprehensively assess the link between leadership and student achievement at the school.

1.8 Definition of key terms

To ensure clarity and consistency throughout this study, the following key terms are defined as they are used within the context of this research:

- **Leadership Transition:** Refers to the change in school leadership, including the appointment of new principals, vice principals, or administrative heads. In this study, it encompasses both planned and abrupt changes that affect decision-making and school governance.
- **Ownership Transition:** The transfer or restructuring of ownership or management authority within a school, often involving changes in institutional goals, funding structures, and strategic direction. This study examines the educational implications of such transitions at Flipper International School.
- **Transformational Leadership:** A leadership style characterized by inspiring and motivating staff through a shared vision, fostering collaboration, and encouraging professional growth. It emphasizes positive change through involvement and innovation.

- **Transactional Leadership:** A leadership approach focused on routine management, compliance with rules, and performance-based rewards or consequences. It typically emphasizes efficiency and order over long-term vision or innovation.
- **Laissez-Faire Leadership:** A passive leadership style where leaders take a hands-off approach, providing little guidance or feedback. This style is associated with minimal intervention in instructional or operational matters.
- **School Culture:** The set of norms, values, practices, traditions, and relationships that shape the social and emotional environment of a school. It includes both formal policies and informal community dynamics.
- **Student Academic Performance:** Refers to students' achievement and progress in academic areas, assessed in this study through qualitative indicators such as classroom engagement, perceived instructional quality, and overall learning experience.
- **Lower Secondary Students:** Students typically aged 14 to 15, representing an educational level between primary and upper secondary. This group is the central focus of the study due to their developmental sensitivity to school leadership and environmental changes.
- **Teacher Morale:** The emotional and psychological well-being of teaching staff, including job satisfaction, motivation, and perceived support. High morale is linked to better teaching practices and student outcomes.
- **Qualitative Research:** A methodological approach used to explore complex social phenomena through non-numerical data such as interviews, focus groups, and observations. This study uses qualitative methods to understand personal experiences and perceptions.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2. Literature Review

The purpose of this literature review is to explore existing research on the impact of leadership changes and ownership transitions in schools, with a particular focus on how these changes influence lower secondary students' academic performance. Leadership is critical in shaping the educational environment and student outcomes, and frequent leadership changes can create instability that may disrupt teaching and learning processes. This review synthesizes international, national, and local (Ethiopian) studies to understand the effect of leadership transitions on schools and students.

2.1 Leadership and School Performance

Leadership is often recognized as one of the most critical factors in determining the quality of education within schools. The role of effective leadership extends far beyond administrative duties; it serves as the cornerstone for shaping school culture, guiding instructional practices, and fostering an environment that supports student learning. Research consistently shows that leadership, particularly when stable and effective, has a significant impact on teacher performance, student achievement, and the overall success of the school (Leithwood et al., 2004). This detailed analysis will explore the complex relationship between leadership and school performance, examining how leadership influences various facets of education, from school culture to student outcomes.

2.2.1. The Role of Leadership in School Culture

School culture refers to the shared values, beliefs, and norms that shape the behavior and attitudes of everyone within the school community—students, teachers, parents, and administrators. Leithwood and Louis (2012) highlight that leadership is essential in shaping and maintaining school culture. An effective leader sets the tone for the school by fostering a positive and supportive environment where high standards are upheld, and every stakeholder is encouraged to contribute to the school's success.

Leadership influences the school culture by establishing clear expectations, promoting collaboration, and ensuring that all stakeholders share a common vision

for the school. A school leader's ability to create a positive school climate has been linked to higher student achievement, improved teacher morale, and stronger community involvement. According to Leith wood and Louis (2012), a stable leadership team promotes a shared sense of purpose, aligns the efforts of teachers and staff, and ensures that everyone is working toward the same academic and developmental goals for students.

The values established by leadership in a school also extend to the students. When teachers and administrators model positive behaviors and values, these traits are often mirrored by students. Effective leadership, therefore, not only impacts academic performance but also shapes the overall character and demeanor of students. High expectations set by leaders for student behavior, academic performance, and engagement often translate into higher standards of achievement for all.

2.1.2. The Impact of Leadership on Teacher Effectiveness

The relationship between leadership and teacher effectiveness is critical in determining school performance. Teachers are at the heart of student learning, and their success largely depends on the support, guidance, and resources provided by school leadership. Fullan (2001) argues that effective leadership enhances teacher effectiveness by creating conditions where teachers can thrive professionally. This includes offering professional development opportunities, providing constructive feedback, and fostering a collaborative environment where teachers can share best practices and learn from one another.

Leadership also plays a key role in creating an environment where teachers feel supported and valued. When teachers perceive that their leadership team has a clear vision for the school, offers consistent guidance, and prioritizes professional growth, they are more likely to be motivated and committed to their work. A study by Dufour and Marzano (2011) suggests that effective leadership practices, such as setting clear expectations and offering regular feedback, are linked to higher levels of teacher efficacy, which, in turn, translates into improved student outcomes.

Furthermore, leadership can influence the professional development of teachers by ensuring that it is aligned with the needs of the students. Leaders who prioritize data-driven decision-making are better able to assess the strengths and weaknesses of their

teaching staff and provide targeted support. This, according to Fullan (2001), ensures that instructional strategies remain current, evidence-based, and effective in addressing student needs.

2.1.3. The Consequences of Leadership Instability

While effective leadership can have a positive impact on school performance, leadership instability can have the opposite effect. Research consistently shows that schools with frequent leadership turnover face numerous challenges. Harris and Chapman (2002) found that when leadership is unstable, it can lead to fragmented teaching practices, unclear academic expectations, and a lack of direction for both teachers and students. Teachers may struggle to maintain consistent instructional practices when the school's leadership changes regularly, and students may experience disruptions in their learning as programs and priorities shift unpredictably. The consequences of leadership instability are particularly detrimental to students in the lower secondary grades, as they are at a critical stage of academic development. Dufour and Marzano (2011) argue that when leadership is unstable, instructional programs become disjointed, and students lose out on the continuity of instruction that is essential for academic progress. This disruption can create a sense of confusion and uncertainty among students, which can hinder their academic growth.

In schools with high leadership turnover, the sense of trust between students, teachers, and parents often erodes. Teachers may feel demotivated or unsupported, leading to burnout or disengagement. Additionally, parents may become frustrated with the lack of consistency in leadership and may withdraw their support from the school. This lack of trust can lead to a negative school climate, which can further exacerbate challenges in improving school performance.

2.1.4. Leadership and School-wide Initiatives

Effective leadership is not only important for individual teacher performance but also for the success of school-wide initiatives aimed at improving student achievement. Fullan (2001) emphasizes that long-term academic improvement requires a cohesive and coherent approach to school reform, curriculum development, and teaching strategies. A school with stable leadership is better positioned to implement and

sustain school-wide initiatives, as the leadership team can provide clear direction, allocate resources, and ensure alignment between various efforts.

On the other hand, leadership instability can derail efforts to improve school performance. When leadership changes frequently, there is often a lack of continuity in the implementation of new initiatives, and the focus may shift from one goal to another. This inconsistency can confuse teachers and staff, making it difficult to maintain momentum and measure progress. Schools with stable leadership, however, are more likely to have a consistent approach to reform and can build on previous successes.

Effective leaders are also able to engage all stakeholders—teachers, parents, and students—in school-wide initiatives. This collaborative approach ensures that everyone is working toward the same goals and that efforts to improve school performance are aligned with the needs and expectations of the community. By fostering a sense of ownership and shared responsibility, leaders can create a school culture that is focused on continuous improvement and academic excellence.

2.1.5. The Broader Impact of Leadership on Student Achievement

Ultimately, the impact of leadership on school performance is most evident in student achievement. Research shows that when leadership is effective, student achievement improves. Leithwood and Louis (2012) argue that the actions of school leaders—such as setting clear academic goals, providing instructional guidance, and creating a supportive school culture—directly influence student outcomes. Effective leadership promotes a focus on high expectations, rigorous academic standards, and an emphasis on continuous learning for both students and teachers.

Moreover, school leaders play a key role in ensuring that students are provided with the resources and support they need to succeed. This includes advocating for adequate funding, ensuring that students have access to a safe and supportive learning environment, and providing targeted interventions for students who are struggling academically. Fullan (2001) emphasizes that leadership is essential for creating a school environment where every student has the opportunity to succeed, regardless of their background or challenges.

The link between leadership and student achievement is further reinforced by the role that leaders play in promoting equity and inclusion within the school. Effective leaders work to eliminate barriers to learning, ensuring that all students have access to the same high-quality education. This commitment to equity is particularly important in schools with diverse student populations, where leadership can help address disparities in achievement and create an inclusive school environment.

2.2. Leadership Styles and Their Impact on Student Performance

Leadership within schools is crucial in shaping the educational environment and determining the success of the institution. One key aspect of effective leadership is the style adopted by school leaders, which significantly influences both teacher performance and student outcomes. The relationship between leadership styles and student achievement is complex, as different approaches to leadership can have distinct impacts on school culture, teacher motivation, and student learning. This section explores various leadership styles, particularly transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership, and their impact on student performance. Additionally, we examine how shared leadership and a collaborative approach can enhance teaching practices and student outcomes (Leithwood et al., 2004).

2.2.1. Transformational Leadership and Its Impact on School Performance

Transformational leadership is a leadership style in which leaders inspire and motivate their followers to exceed their own expectations and embrace a collective vision. According to Bass (1990), transformational leaders are visionaries who encourage teachers to go beyond standard expectations and create an environment that fosters innovation, collaboration, and professional growth. In schools, transformational leaders inspire their staff to work toward common goals, encouraging a sense of purpose and belonging among both teachers and students.

Research has consistently shown that transformational leadership is positively correlated with school performance. Leaders who embrace a transformational approach are able to create a culture of excellence and continuous improvement. Bass and Avolio (1994) argue that transformational leaders promote high levels of motivation and job satisfaction among teachers, leading to improved teaching

practices and enhanced student outcomes. When teachers feel empowered and supported by their leaders, they are more likely to engage in innovative teaching strategies, collaborate with colleagues, and take initiative to improve the learning environment.

For students, the benefits of transformational leadership are equally significant. Studies have shown that students in schools with transformational leaders generally experience higher academic achievement. This is attributed to the positive, motivating environment fostered by the leader. Transformational leadership encourages an atmosphere where both teachers and students are motivated to perform at their best, which contributes to better academic outcomes (Leithwood et al., 2006). By setting high expectations, providing support, and promoting a shared vision of success, transformational leaders create an environment where students feel encouraged to reach their full potential.

2.2.2. Transactional Leadership and Its Impact on School Performance

In contrast to transformational leadership, transactional leadership is based on a system of rewards and punishments for completing tasks. Transactional leaders focus on maintaining order, following established procedures, and ensuring that objectives are met within a structured framework. This leadership style emphasizes efficiency and task completion, but it can have limitations when it comes to fostering creativity, teacher innovation, and student engagement.

Bass and Avolio (1994) suggest that transactional leadership can lead to lower levels of teacher innovation and engagement. Teachers working under transactional leaders may be motivated by external rewards or the fear of punishment, rather than intrinsic motivation or a sense of personal achievement. This can create a work environment that is focused more on compliance than on growth, which may hinder the development of creative teaching strategies that are responsive to the needs of students.

For students, transactional leadership can result in lower engagement and motivation, which can negatively impact academic performance. When students are primarily motivated by external rewards, such as grades, rather than a genuine desire to learn, they may struggle to develop a deeper understanding of the material. Moreover,

transactional leadership's emphasis on structure and order can lead to a rigid, unresponsive school environment that does not adapt to the changing needs of students. As a result, students may feel disconnected from the learning process, leading to lower levels of academic achievement and overall school performance.

2.2.3. Laissez-Faire Leadership and Its Impact on School Performance

Laissez-faire leadership, characterized by minimal supervision and a hands-off approach, is another leadership style that has been found to negatively impact school performance. Laissez-faire leaders tend to avoid making decisions or providing guidance, allowing staff members to operate independently without clear direction. While this approach may offer some autonomy to teachers, it can lead to a lack of cohesion, direction, and accountability within the school.

Judge and Piccolo (2004) highlight that laissez-faire leadership is often associated with lower levels of teacher motivation and academic outcomes. Without clear expectations and support from leadership, teachers may feel unsupported and unsure of how to improve their instructional practices. This lack of direction can contribute to low morale and disengagement, both among teachers and students. In schools where laissez-faire leadership prevails, academic achievement may decline due to the absence of guidance, collaboration, and a shared vision for success.

Students in schools led by laissez-faire leaders may also struggle with a lack of structure and support. With minimal direction from school leaders, students may not receive the necessary interventions or guidance to succeed academically. Without clear expectations or a motivating environment, students may become disengaged, leading to a decline in performance.

2.2.4. The Influence of Leadership on Teacher Performance and Student Outcomes

Hallinger (2005) conducted a study that found that leadership style not only affects teacher performance but also has a direct impact on student academic success. In schools where leaders adopt a supportive, transformational style, teachers tend to feel more motivated and capable of delivering effective instruction. This, in turn, results in improved student outcomes. Teachers who are supported by their leaders are more

likely to engage in ongoing professional development, refine their teaching strategies, and collaborate with colleagues, all of which contribute to better student performance. On the other hand, in schools where leadership is transactional or laissez-faire, teacher performance may suffer due to a lack of support, guidance, and professional growth opportunities. Teachers may feel disengaged or demotivated, which can have a direct negative impact on student learning. A lack of alignment between leadership and teaching practices can lead to an inconsistent educational experience for students, resulting in lower academic achievement.

2.2.5. Shared Leadership and Its Impact on School Performance

Shared leadership, an approach that involves teachers and other staff members in decision-making processes, has been found to promote a more collaborative and effective learning environment. Marks and Printy (2003) argue that shared leadership fosters a sense of ownership and accountability among teachers, which can improve both teaching practices and student outcomes. By involving teachers in school management and decision-making, leaders can create a more inclusive environment where everyone has a voice in shaping the direction of the school.

Shared leadership allows for a greater degree of flexibility and responsiveness to the changing needs of students and teachers. In schools experiencing leadership transitions, shared leadership can help maintain continuity and stability by involving teachers in the process of leadership change. This collaborative approach helps ensure that school reforms are implemented effectively and that teachers are supported in their professional development.

The impact of shared leadership on student outcomes is significant. When teachers work together to design and implement instructional strategies, they are more likely to meet the diverse needs of students and improve academic performance. Shared leadership promotes a sense of collective responsibility for student success, creating a school culture that is focused on collaboration, innovation, and continuous improvement.

2.2.6. The Broader Implications of Leadership Styles on School Climate

The impact of leadership styles on school performance extends beyond academic outcomes to include the overall school climate. Transformational leadership, with its emphasis on motivation, collaboration, and professional growth, fosters a positive and supportive school climate. Teachers and students in such environments are more likely to feel valued, respected, and engaged, which contributes to higher levels of satisfaction, lower turnover rates, and stronger community involvement.

In contrast, transactional and laissez-faire leadership can create a more negative or disengaged school climate. Transactional leadership's focus on compliance and external rewards can lead to an atmosphere of rigidity and limited innovation, while laissez-faire leadership's lack of direction can result in confusion and disengagement. Both of these leadership styles can contribute to a negative school climate, which can have long-term effects on teacher and student performance.

2.3. Ownership Transitions and Their Implications on School Stability

Ownership transitions in schools—such as privatization, mergers, acquisitions, or changes in leadership—can have profound implications for the stability of the school environment. These transitions often disrupt the established norms, policies, and practices that underpin the educational experience for both students and staff. As the educational leadership or ownership of a school shifts, it brings new priorities, leadership styles, and administrative structures, often leading to confusion, uncertainty, and instability. In the face of these changes, the school environment can become fragmented, which may ultimately affect student performance and teacher morale.

This section examines the impact of ownership transitions on school stability, focusing on how these transitions disrupt daily operations, educational goals, and long-term reforms. We will explore the research conducted by Bennis (2003), Friedman (2011), Hargreaves and Fullan (2012), and other scholars who have highlighted the consequences of ownership changes in the educational context. Additionally, we will discuss the long-term effects of leadership and ownership

instability on school culture, relationships between students, teachers, and administrators, and academic performance.

2.3.1. Understanding Ownership Transitions in Schools

Ownership transitions in schools typically involve significant changes in the leadership or organizational structure of a school. In the case of private schools, ownership transitions may result from changes in the school's financial structure, such as a new investor or educational management organization (EMO) taking control. In public schools, transitions may occur when the school district undergoes restructuring, which may involve changes in leadership due to policy shifts or mergers with other institutions.

Types of Ownership Transitions:

- 1. Privatization:** This occurs when a publicly funded school is transferred to private ownership or management. Privatization often involves the introduction of new administrative structures and policies, which may not align with the original educational goals of the institution. In some cases, the focus may shift from providing a high-quality educational experience to making a profit, which could compromise the academic standards of the school (Ball, 2007).
- 2. Mergers and Acquisitions:** When multiple schools combine under a single management structure, leadership transitions are inevitable. These mergers can lead to the implementation of new policies, teaching methods, and curricula that may conflict with the traditions or expectations of students and teachers in the former individual institutions (Hargreaves & Fink, 2006).
- 3. Leadership Changes:** Changes in leadership—whether it involves a new principal, headmaster, or superintendent—can have a similar disruptive effect on school operations. Leadership transitions can bring new approaches to decision-making, teaching, and student engagement, which may initially confuse or destabilize the school environment (Fullan, 2001).

While such transitions may bring about positive changes, they often create a turbulent period for staff and students. This is particularly true when there is a lack of clear

communication or when the changes are implemented too quickly, without adequate planning or support.

2.3.2. Disruption of Educational Practices and School Culture

One of the most significant consequences of ownership transitions is the disruption of established educational practices. As new leaders or management teams implement their own policies and strategies, it may be difficult to maintain consistency in the educational experience provided to students.

Bennis (2003) emphasizes that ownership transitions can lead to a loss of continuity in educational practices. For example, changes in leadership may result in shifts in curricular priorities, assessment practices, and teaching methodologies. This disruption can cause confusion among teachers and students, as they may have to adapt to new standards and expectations. Teachers, in particular, may feel uncertain about how to align their teaching practices with the new goals set by the leadership. This misalignment can diminish the effectiveness of instructional practices, ultimately affecting student learning outcomes.

In addition to disrupting teaching practices, ownership transitions often lead to changes in school culture. According to Friedman (2011), a school's culture is shaped by the shared values, beliefs, and practices of its staff and students. When ownership or leadership changes, the previously established school culture may no longer be relevant or may be replaced with a new set of values or priorities. As a result, students and staff may struggle to adjust to the new culture, leading to lower morale, disengagement, and, in some cases, an increase in absenteeism or dropout rates.

Moreover, the introduction of new leadership or ownership may result in policy shifts that are not well received by the school community. For example, new management may impose strict performance metrics on teachers or prioritize standardized testing over holistic student development. These policy shifts can create tension between teachers and leadership, resulting in a fragmented school environment where staff members are less motivated to collaborate and engage in meaningful dialogue about teaching practices.

2.3.3. The Erosion of Trust between Stakeholders

One of the most detrimental effects of ownership transitions is the erosion of trust between students, teachers, and administrators. Trust is the foundation of a positive school environment, and when ownership transitions lead to uncertainty and inconsistency, it can undermine the relationships between key stakeholders.

Hargreaves and Fullan (2012) argue that leadership transitions are particularly disruptive to the relationships that form the basis of a supportive and nurturing school culture. In schools where leadership changes frequently, teachers may feel disconnected from the leadership team, leading to a breakdown in communication and collaboration. Teachers may also feel unsupported or undervalued, which can negatively impact their job satisfaction and professional engagement.

For students, the absence of a stable leadership structure can contribute to feelings of insecurity and lack of direction. When students see frequent changes in school leadership, they may perceive the school as disorganized or chaotic. This lack of stability can undermine students' sense of belonging and engagement, which is essential for their academic success. As a result, students may become disengaged from their learning, leading to a decline in academic performance.

The erosion of trust can also extend to parents and the broader school community. If parents perceive that leadership changes are being handled poorly or that decisions are being made without sufficient consultation, they may become less involved in their children's education. A lack of parental involvement has been shown to negatively affect student achievement, as students are less likely to receive the support they need at home.

2.3.4. Impact on Long-Term Educational Reforms

Ownership transitions often hinder the implementation and sustainability of long-term educational reforms. According to Hargreaves and Fullan (2012), effective school reforms require stability in leadership and a clear vision for the future. When ownership transitions occur, they can derail these efforts by introducing conflicting priorities, shifting goals, and causing the fragmentation of school-wide initiatives.

For example, a new leadership team may choose to abandon or revise previous reforms, which can disrupt ongoing efforts to improve academic performance or enhance the school's infrastructure. In schools with a history of frequent leadership changes, it becomes increasingly difficult to maintain momentum on reform initiatives, as each new leader may have their own agenda or vision for the school. This lack of continuity can lead to confusion among teachers, students, and parents, making it harder to achieve long-term educational goals.

Research shows that sustained efforts to improve teaching quality, curriculum development, and student outcomes require time and consistency. Without stable leadership, schools may find it difficult to maintain the focus necessary for successful reforms. Furthermore, the frequent introduction of new leadership styles and priorities can prevent the school from developing a coherent and consistent approach to educational improvement.

2.3.5. The Impact of Ownership Transitions on Students in Lower Secondary Grades

Ownership transitions are especially disruptive for students in lower secondary grades, where academic development is critical. During these years, students are preparing for higher education and future career paths, making consistency in teaching and support crucial for their success.

Studies have shown that students in schools with unstable leadership or frequent ownership transitions experience more significant academic challenges. Without the consistency of strong, supportive leadership, students may face difficulties in adapting to new curricula, changes in teaching styles, and shifts in academic expectations. Furthermore, the lack of continuity in leadership can affect the relationships between students and their teachers, which are essential for academic success during these formative years.

For example, students may struggle to adjust to new teachers or teaching methods if the school's leadership is in flux. This instability can hinder their ability to engage with the curriculum and perform well academically. Moreover, the emotional and psychological impact of leadership instability can also affect students' motivation and self-esteem, leading to lower levels of academic achievement.

Ownership transitions in schools can lead to significant instability, impacting every facet of the school environment, from leadership and policies to teacher morale and student outcomes. While ownership changes may introduce new ideas and opportunities for growth, they often disrupt the continuity of educational practices, weaken school culture, and erode trust among students, teachers, and administrators. In particular, frequent leadership transitions undermine long-term reforms and diminish the quality of education provided to students, especially those in critical developmental stages such as lower secondary grades.

For schools to successfully navigate ownership transitions, it is essential for leaders to maintain clear communication, establish consistent policies, and prioritize the stability of educational practices. In doing so, they can minimize the negative effects of transitions and create a more stable and supportive environment for both teachers and students (Leithwood et al., 2004).

2.4 Impact of Leadership Changes on Lower Secondary Students in Ethiopia

Leadership stability is a crucial factor in shaping the educational environment and overall academic performance in schools. In Ethiopia, the issue of leadership changes, particularly in lower secondary schools, has been a significant concern in recent years. The rapid turnover of school leadership can disrupt teaching and learning processes, negatively affecting the academic performance of students, especially in rural and underserved areas. This section provides an in-depth examination of the impact of leadership changes on lower secondary students in Ethiopia, drawing on relevant studies and exploring how factors such as socio-economic challenges and inadequate resources exacerbate the negative effects of leadership instability (Mulugeta, 2018).

2.4.1. Overview of the Ethiopian Education System and the Role of Leadership

The Ethiopian education system, like many others in sub-Saharan Africa, faces numerous challenges, particularly in secondary education. Despite improvements in enrollment rates over the past decades, Ethiopia still struggles with issues such as overcrowded classrooms, inadequate infrastructure, and a shortage of qualified teachers (UNESCO, 2020). In this context, the role of leadership in shaping

educational outcomes is even more critical. School leaders are expected to provide clear direction, manage resources effectively, and motivate both teachers and students to achieve academic success (Mulugeta, 2018).

However, leadership turnover in Ethiopian schools, particularly at the secondary level, has been a persistent challenge. The lack of continuity in leadership often leads to disruptions in academic planning, policy implementation, and teacher professional development (Kebede, 2017). These disruptions are particularly detrimental to lower secondary students, who are at a critical stage in their educational development, transitioning from primary school to the demands of secondary education.

2.4.2. Empirical Studies

Tadesse (2014) conducted a study that highlighted the negative effects of leadership changes on secondary education in Ethiopia. His research, which focused on rural secondary schools, found that frequent leadership turnover was a significant contributing factor to poor academic performance among students. In these schools, leadership changes often led to a lack of consistency in academic goals and strategies, which in turn resulted in ineffective teaching and learning processes.

The study indicated that frequent leadership changes hindered the establishment of long-term educational goals and policies. Each new leader brought their own vision, priorities, and strategies, which often conflicted with previous initiatives. As a result, teachers were left confused about the direction of the school and the expectations placed upon them. Without clear and consistent guidance, teachers struggled to effectively implement the curriculum, which led to gaps in students' academic progress, particularly in subjects requiring strong foundational knowledge.

For lower secondary students, this lack of consistency is especially problematic. The transition from primary to secondary school requires a clear and well-structured academic framework to ensure that students are adequately prepared for more advanced subjects. When leadership is unstable, this framework becomes fragmented, and students experience delays in their academic development.

Tessema and Hailemariam (2015) extended the discussion on the impact of leadership turnover by examining the direct effects on student learning outcomes. Their study found that leadership instability in Ethiopian secondary schools created a sense of

confusion among both teachers and students regarding school policies and instructional practices. The constant changes in leadership often resulted in shifts in curricular priorities, teaching methods, and classroom management styles. Teachers found it difficult to adapt to these changes, leading to a disjointed approach to instruction.

For lower secondary students, this inconsistency was particularly damaging. Students at this level require a stable and structured learning environment to build critical academic skills in subjects such as mathematics, science, and languages. The absence of clear guidance from school leaders meant that students were not always receiving the level of support they needed to succeed academically. In many cases, students experienced a decline in motivation and engagement, as the lack of continuity in leadership led to a perception that academic achievement was not being prioritized.

Furthermore, Tessema and Hailemariam noted that the lack of a consistent leadership approach negatively impacted teacher morale and professional development. Teachers in schools with frequent leadership changes were less likely to receive adequate training or professional support, as each new leader introduced their own vision for professional development. As a result, teachers were not equipped with the skills or strategies necessary to address the diverse learning needs of students, further exacerbating the challenges faced by lower secondary students.

2.4.3. Socio-Economic Challenges and Their Amplifying Effect

The socio-economic context in Ethiopia plays a critical role in how leadership changes impact the academic performance of students. Mulu (2017) explored how systemic issues in the Ethiopian education system, such as overcrowded classrooms, limited access to teaching materials, and low teacher salaries, compound the challenges associated with leadership instability.

In many rural areas, where schools face the greatest leadership turnover, these socio-economic issues are particularly pronounced. Overcrowded classrooms make it difficult for teachers to provide individualized attention to students, and the lack of teaching materials further hampers the effectiveness of instruction. In this context, leadership changes only serve to intensify these existing problems. For instance, when a new leader takes charge of a school, they may have different priorities

regarding resource allocation, which can disrupt existing plans to address issues such as overcrowding or the lack of materials. In schools where resources are already stretched thin, leadership turnover creates a constant cycle of instability that prevents teachers from effectively addressing these foundational challenges.

Moreover, low teacher salaries contribute to high turnover rates, as educators are often unable to make a living wage in rural areas. This high turnover rate among teachers, in combination with frequent changes in leadership, creates a compounded effect of instability within the school. Students in lower secondary grades, who are already at a critical stage of academic development, are particularly vulnerable to this instability. The lack of continuity in teaching staff and leadership creates an environment where students are unable to build the foundational skills necessary for academic success in higher grades.

2.4.4. What Psychological and Emotional Implication on Students

In addition to the academic disruptions caused by leadership changes, there are also psychological and emotional consequences for students. Lower secondary students are at a stage in their development where they are becoming more aware of their academic futures and the importance of education. Leadership instability can create a sense of insecurity among students, who may begin to feel that their education is not being taken seriously by the adults responsible for their academic growth.

Students who experience frequent leadership changes may begin to lose trust in the educational system, particularly if they feel that their school leaders are not providing the necessary support to help them succeed. This loss of trust can lead to a decline in motivation and engagement, as students may perceive that their efforts to succeed academically are futile in an environment where leadership is constantly changing.

Furthermore, the lack of a stable school culture, as a result of leadership turnover, can lead to a breakdown in student-teacher relationships. Lower secondary students, who are at a critical stage of social and emotional development, rely on strong, supportive relationships with their teachers to help them navigate academic and personal challenges. When leadership instability disrupts these relationships, students may feel isolated and disconnected from their learning environment, further hindering their academic progress.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3. Research Design and Methodology

This chapter outlines the research design and methodology employed to examine the implication of leadership changes and ownership transitions at Flipper International School on lower secondary students' academic performance and overall school experience. Given the study's focus on understanding the subjective experiences and perceptions of key stakeholders, a qualitative research approach was adopted. Qualitative methods were well-suited for exploring complex phenomena such as leadership transitions, which are difficult to quantify. This chapter details the research design, data collection methods, participants, data analysis procedures, trustworthiness and rigor, ethical considerations, and methodological limitations.

3.1 Research Design

This study employed a qualitative case study design, allowing for an in-depth investigation of leadership and ownership transitions within the context of Flipper International School. Case study methodology was appropriate because it enabled exploration of the phenomenon within its real-life context, producing rich, detailed data (Yin, 2009). Focusing on the lower secondary division facilitated understanding of how leadership instability influenced school operations and student outcomes.

3.2 Participants

Participants were purposefully selected to ensure they had direct experience with leadership transitions at Flipper International School. The sample was intentionally small to enable detailed qualitative analysis:

- **Leading staff:** including principals, vice-principals, and deans a total number of 17.
- **Teachers:** Twelve lower secondary teachers from various disciplines with 1 to 10 years of experience.
- **Students:** Students representing a range of academic levels and backgrounds.

3.3 Data Collection Procedures:

Interviews were conducted with students across three academic years to gather their perspectives on the impact of leadership changes. In the 2022/23 academic year, 8 students were interviewed out of a total of 32. In 2023/24, 8 students were again interviewed, this time from a group of 34. In the most recent academic year, 2024/25, the number of student interviews increased significantly, with 15 students interviewed out of a total of 65.

Focus group discussions were conducted alongside the interviews to gather additional student perspectives. In the 2022/23 academic year, two focus groups were held, each consisting of five participants. In 2023/24, one focus group was conducted with five participants. Similarly, in 2024/25, one focus group was held, also comprising five participants.

3.4 Data Collection Methods

Multiple qualitative data collection methods were used to address the research questions comprehensively:

3.4.1 Semi-Structured Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with school administrators, teachers, and students. This approach provided flexibility while ensuring essential topics were covered (Kvale, 2007). Interviews elicited detailed, open-ended responses regarding the impact of leadership changes.

3.4.2 Focus Groups

Focus group discussions with students allowed exploration of shared experiences and group dynamics related to leadership transitions (Morgan, 1997). These sessions revealed collective perceptions of academic progress, teacher-student relationships, and school engagement.

3.5 Data Analysis Procedure

Data were analyzed using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The steps included:

- **Familiarization:** Transcription and repeated reading of interview and focus group data to understand content deeply.
- **Initial Coding:** Systematic coding of data to identify meaningful units related to leadership changes and student experiences.
- **Theme Development:** Grouping codes into preliminary themes reflecting patterns and insights.
- **Theme Refinement:** Reviewing and refining themes to ensure coherence, consistency, and accurate representation of the data.
- **Interpretation:** Integrating themes with relevant literature on leadership transitions, school management, and student outcomes.

Excel was used to assist in organizing and managing the coding process of the qualitative data analysis.

3.6 Validity and Reliability of Data

Ensuring the validity and reliability of qualitative data is essential to maintaining the integrity and trustworthiness of research findings. In this study, several strategies were employed to enhance both the validity and reliability of the data collected through student interviews and focus group discussions.

Validity in qualitative research refers to the credibility and accuracy of the data in representing the participants' experiences and perspectives. To establish validity in this study, triangulation was used by collecting data from multiple sources—individual student interviews and focus groups—across three academic years (2022/23, 2023/24, and 2024/25). This approach enabled a more comprehensive understanding of the impact of leadership changes on student performance by allowing for the comparison and corroboration of data across different contexts and time periods.

In addition, member checking was conducted where feasible. Selected participants were asked to review and confirm the accuracy of the transcripts and preliminary interpretations of their responses. This helped ensure that the data accurately reflected the participants' intended meanings. Furthermore, interview and focus group protocols were developed based on a thorough review of relevant literature, which enhanced the content validity of the research instruments.

Reliability, which refers to the consistency and dependability of the data collection process, was ensured through the use of standardized procedures. All interviews and focus group discussions were conducted using the same semi-structured guides to maintain consistency across sessions. The interviews were audio-recorded (with consent) and transcribed verbatim to preserve the authenticity of responses. Additionally, the coding process for thematic analysis was performed systematically, with recurring themes being cross-checked to ensure consistency and minimize researcher bias.

Finally, detailed documentation of the research process—including sampling procedures, interview protocols, and coding frameworks—was maintained to allow for transparency and potential replication of the study in similar contexts. By applying these measures, the study aimed to achieve a high level of credibility, dependability, and overall trustworthiness in its findings.

3.7 Limitations of the Methodology

Despite its strengths, the methodology had limitations:

- The qualitative design limited the generalizability of findings beyond the specific context of Flipper International School.
- Self-reported data may have been influenced by social desirability or recall bias.
- The small sample size and purposive sampling might not capture all perspectives within the school community.
- Document availability and completeness varied, which could affect contextual understanding.

Nonetheless, the methodology provided rich, nuanced insights into the effects of leadership transitions on student experiences.

3.8 Ethical Considerations

Ethical protocols followed included:

- **Informed Consent:** Participants, including parents for minors, received clear explanations about the study's purpose and voluntarily agreed to participate.
- **Confidentiality:** Identifiers were removed or anonymized in all transcripts and reports, and data were stored securely.
- **Right to Withdraw:** Participants were informed they could withdraw at any time without penalty.
- **Minimizing Harm:** Care was taken to avoid distressing participants during discussions of sensitive topics.

Approval was obtained from the relevant institutional review board before data collection commenced.

CHAPTER FOUR: DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS, AND INTERPRETATION

Introduction

This chapter presents and interprets the qualitative findings of the study, which explored the implications of leadership transitions on school performance, staff morale, and student outcomes at Flipper International School. Data were gathered through four focus group discussions and semi-structured interviews with 17 staff members and 31 students. A thematic analysis approach was used to identify recurring patterns and key issues. The findings are organized into major themes, each presented with supporting evidence from participants' narratives, and interpreted in relation to the study's objectives.

4.1 Overview of Participants

4.1.1 Focus Groups

Four focus groups, each comprising 6–8 participants, included both students and teachers. These groups offered a platform for participants to share and reflect on their experiences with school leadership over time. Each group had varying experiences, but a shared recognition of instability and concern emerged across all.

4.1.2 Staff Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 17 staff members:

- 12 teachers
- 2 vice principals
- 2 deans of students
- 1 principal

Participants had varying tenures, ranging from 1 to over 5 years. This range offered both fresh and long-standing perspectives on leadership and its effects.

4.1.3 Student Interviews

Interviews were also conducted with 31 students. Most had been enrolled at the school since childhood, while a few had joined within the past two years. These

students represented diverse academic backgrounds and grade levels, allowing for a broad view of the student experience.

Table 4.1: Participant Demographics

Participant Group	Number of Participants	Gender Distribution	Years of Experience/Enrollment
Teachers	12	6 Male / 6 Female	1–10 years
Vice Principals	2	1 Male / 1 Female	3–6 years
Deans of Students	2	2 Male	4–8 years
Principal	1	1 Female	2 years
Students	31	14 Male / 17 Female	2–10 years

4.2 Major Themes from the Data

Theme 1: Leadership Instability and Its Perceived Causes

One of the most consistently cited concerns among all participant groups was the instability of leadership at Flipper International School. Leadership transitions were viewed not as strategic or mission-driven but as financially motivated.

- **Focus Groups:** All four groups emphasized that leadership changes were frequent and appeared to serve the interests of investors, rather than the educational needs of the students and staff.
- **Staff Interviews:** Several staff members described leadership transitions as either disruptive or opaque, stating that they were never given clear justifications for the frequent changes. Some also reported abrupt shifts without proper handovers.
 “Leaders came and went so often that we stopped expecting continuity. It felt like we were working for a different institution every year.” – Teacher Interviewee
- **Students:** Thirteen students explicitly stated that leadership had changed **every year** since their enrollment. Most could not recall who was in charge during specific years due to the high turnover.

This instability fostered a culture of uncertainty, undermining long-term planning and consistency in instruction and school management.

Theme 2: Operational Disruption and Resource Scarcity

Another theme that emerged strongly was the disruption of daily school operations and challenges in resource management during leadership transitions.

- **Focus Groups:** All four groups indicated delays in the delivery of resources, such as textbooks and laboratory materials. Extracurricular activities were also reported to be discontinued or deprioritized.

“Every time a new leader comes in, they either change the vendors, the priorities, or the budget – we end up waiting for basic things.” – Focus Group Participant

- **Staff Interviews:** Mixed responses were recorded regarding resource availability. While six participants confirmed reductions in available teaching materials, others noted little to no change, suggesting inconsistent implementation across departments.
- **Students:** A significant number (17 of 31) confirmed that they observed either a lack of extracurricular activities or a decline in classroom resources under different leaderships.

This theme underlines the operational dysfunction that accompanied leadership changes and highlights the strain on both instructional and student support services.

Theme 3: Declining Teacher Morale and Professional Consistency

The morale of teachers and the collaboration among staff were significantly affected by leadership instability.

- **Focus Groups:** Teachers were described as increasingly disengaged and demoralized, with little encouragement or recognition from leadership. Some noted that good teachers were leaving the school due to administrative turnover.
- **Staff Interviews:** Nine of the seventeen interviewees confirmed feeling demotivated as a direct result of leadership transitions. These changes often came with new administrative demands, sometimes contradicting previous instructions or policies.

“We adapt to a new policy only to be told something different three months later. It's exhausting.” – Vice Principal Interviewee

- **Students:** While some students did not directly observe shifts in teacher morale, others described teachers as becoming less approachable, less enthusiastic, or even strict and punitive, especially during leadership changes.

These shifts in morale contributed to a fragmented work environment, weakening team collaboration and reducing innovation in instructional delivery.

Theme 4: School Culture and Sense of Community

Leadership instability was also associated with a deterioration in school culture and identity.

- **Focus Groups:** All groups noted changes in the school’s rules, traditions, and teacher turnover, which contributed to a loss of continuity and institutional memory.
- **Staff Interviews:** Several teachers noted that collaboration among departments declined and that staff meetings became irregular or unfocused under some leaderships.
- **Students:** Six students mentioned that they no longer felt the school had a clear identity or mission. One student described the school as “just a business now,” reflecting the perceived commercialization of school management.

“When teachers leave and leaders change, you don’t feel like you belong to a school—you feel like you’re in a place that’s always changing.” – Student Interviewee

This theme highlights how leadership transitions affect not only processes but also the emotional and cultural fabric of a school.

Theme 5: Academic Impact and Student Motivation

Participants consistently pointed out that leadership transitions negatively impacted student learning outcomes and motivation.

- **Focus Groups:** Students and teachers alike noted that curriculum coverage was incomplete, particularly when leadership changes occurred mid-year.
- **Staff Interviews:** Eleven of the seventeen participants linked leadership instability to declines in student performance. Some pointed to disrupted exam preparations or inconsistent standards for academic expectations.

- **Students:** Of the 31 interviewed, 18 said their academic needs were not met during leadership changes. They also cited decreased motivation, reduced trust in the system, and confusion about assessment methods.

“Sometimes the curriculum gets rushed. We end up preparing for exams without actually learning.” – Student Interviewee

These findings reinforce the need for continuity in academic leadership, as disruptions can leave lasting gaps in student achievement.

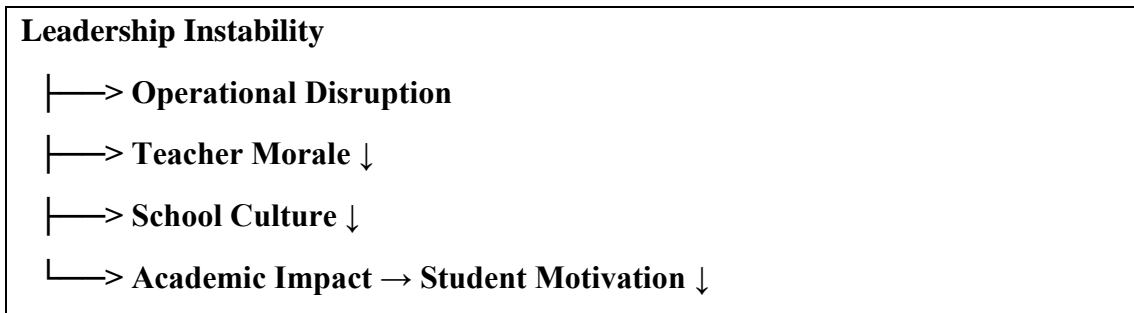


Figure 4.2: Concept Map of Thematic Relationships

Theme 6: Communication and Transparency Deficits

The failure of school leaders to communicate changes effectively emerged as a central grievance across all participant groups.

- **Focus Groups:** Described transitions as sudden, with no explanation or involvement of teachers and students in the process.
- **Staff Interviews:** Only 4 participants said they were adequately informed during transitions. The rest either received minimal communication or none at all.
- **Students:** 25 out of 31 confirmed that they were not informed about leadership changes, learning about them through rumors or indirect notices.

“We just saw a new person at the front of the school and knew something had changed. No one told us why.” – Student Interviewee

This lack of transparency contributed to a loss of trust in leadership and further deepened stakeholder disconnection.

Theme 7: Recommendations for Leadership Stability

When asked how the school could manage leadership changes more effectively, participants across all groups offered practical and insightful suggestions.

- **Focus Groups:** Advocated for greater transparency, qualified hires, and smooth transition planning.
- **Staff:** Recommended a shift toward collaborative leadership, clear policies, and stakeholder engagement in decision-making.
- **Students:** Suggested stronger leader empowerment, policy consistency, and greater visibility of leadership in everyday school life.

“We don’t need someone who’s perfect. We need someone who stays long enough to listen and make a plan.” – Teacher Interviewee

These recommendations highlight a shared desire for strategic continuity and relational leadership.

Theme 8: Overall Impact of Leadership Transitions

Participants unanimously recognized that frequent leadership changes had more negative than positive impacts.

- **Focus Groups:** All groups concluded that leadership instability had eroded the school’s academic integrity and cultural strength.
- **Staff:** 15 of 17 believed that leadership changes were harmful, though a few acknowledged minor improvements during specific tenures.
- **Students:** 20 of 31 felt that the transitions had lasting negative impacts on their school experience and academic outcomes.

“When leadership changes all the time, it’s the students who suffer most. We are the ones left behind when decisions are made without thinking of us.” – Student Interviewee

Table 4.2: Summary of Thematic Impacts by Domain

Theme	Operational Impact	Staff Morale	Student Outcomes	Culture & Identity
Leadership Instability	High	High	High	High
Operational Disruption	High	Moderate	Moderate	Low
Teacher Morale	Moderate	High	Moderate	Moderate
Academic Impact	Moderate	Low	High	Low
Communication Deficits	High	Moderate	High	Moderate
Recommendations/Responses	Solution-Oriented	Solution-Oriented	Solution-Oriented	Solution-Oriented

Figure 4.1: Frequency of Emergent Themes across Participant Groups

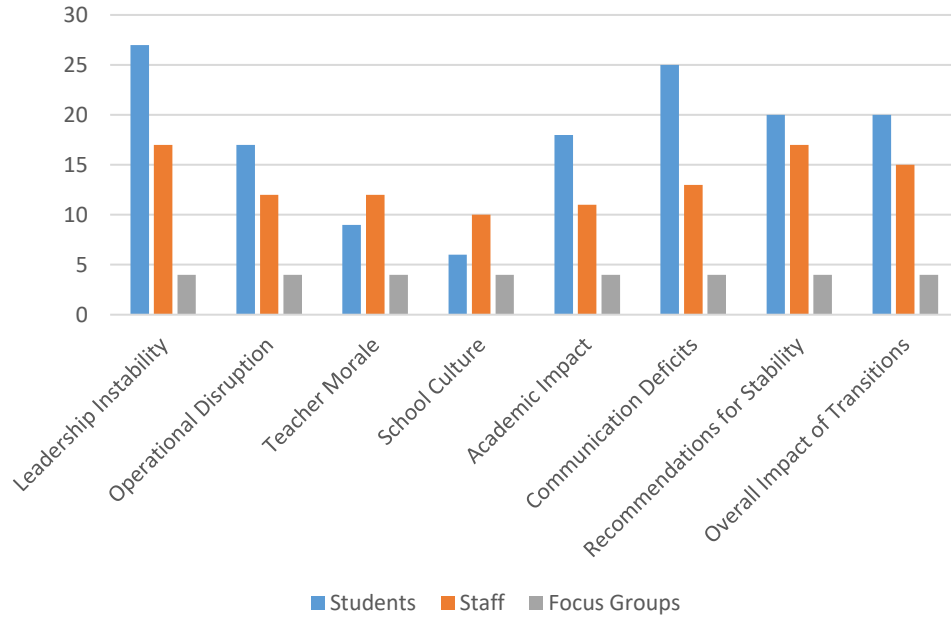


Figure 4.3: Leadership Transitions – A Snapshot of Impacts



4.3 Analysis, Discussion and Interpretation of Findings

4.3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a comprehensive analysis, discussion, and interpretation of findings related to the effects of frequent leadership changes and ownership transitions at Flipper International School. Drawing on qualitative data from interviews and focus groups, supported by scholarly literature and theoretical frameworks, the chapter examines the impacts of leadership instability on school operations, teaching practices, student outcomes, and stakeholder perceptions. Themes are aligned with the research questions and framed within relevant educational leadership and change theories.

4.3.2 Organizational Impact of Leadership and Ownership Changes

4.3.2.1 Disruption in Organizational Stability

Participants reported that leadership and ownership transitions led to disjointed governance, policy inconsistency, and confusion around strategic direction. These disruptions caused delays in decision-making, conflicting management priorities, and diminished organizational coherence. Leithwood et al. (2004) emphasize the importance of sustained leadership for maintaining school stability—an assertion clearly supported by this study.

4.3.2.2 School Culture and Staff Morale

Leadership instability negatively influenced school culture, with staff and students expressing feelings of uncertainty, diminished trust, and decreased morale. This aligns with Fullan's (2001) concept of "change fatigue," whereby repeated leadership shifts reduce motivation and engagement across the school community.

4.3.3 Leadership Styles and Their Impacts

4.3.3.1 Leadership Styles Observed

Three primary leadership styles emerged: transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire. Transformational leaders were perceived as visionaries who empowered staff and encouraged collaboration. In contrast, transactional leaders focused on

compliance and performance management, while laissez-faire leaders appeared disengaged or indecisive.

4.3.3.2 Influence on Teaching and Resource Allocation

Under transformational leadership, teachers experienced greater support for curriculum innovation and equitable resource distribution. Conversely, during periods of transactional or laissez-faire leadership, participants reported inconsistent teaching guidance, unclear expectations, and fragmented curriculum implementation. These findings affirm Hallinger and Heck's (1998) argument that leadership style significantly shapes instructional quality and resource management.

4.3.3.3 Effects on Morale and Motivation

Teachers described higher morale and a stronger sense of purpose under transformational leaders, echoing Bass and Riggio's (2006) framework, which links this style to improved engagement and performance. Transactional and laissez-faire leadership, by contrast, led to disengagement, mistrust, and weakened school unity.

4.3.4 Student Academic Performance and Wellbeing

4.3.4.1 Academic Trends and Learning Continuity

Qualitative data indicated that leadership instability coincided with perceived declines in student performance, particularly in standardized assessments and course completion. Teachers and parents cited curriculum inconsistencies and a lack of clear academic vision as contributing factors. This supports Robinson et al. (2008), who argue that effective leadership is crucial for setting academic goals and maintaining focus.

4.3.4.2 Student Motivation and Engagement

Students described feelings of anxiety and detachment during leadership transitions, attributing these emotions to inconsistent communication and shifting academic expectations. The absence of reliable leadership structures eroded their academic confidence and trust in the school's direction.

4.3.5 Challenges Experienced by Students and Staff

4.3.5.1 Student Challenges

Students faced uncertainty regarding academic programs, extracurricular activities, and support services. The instability contributed to feelings of neglect, disengagement, and confusion about academic expectations.

4.3.5.2 Staff Challenges

Teachers reported frustration over a lack of instructional support, unclear leadership communication, and inconsistent professional development opportunities. These conditions led to professional stagnation and feelings of being undervalued. Fullan's (2001) notion of "change fatigue" was consistently echoed in staff narratives.

4.3.6 Curriculum Continuity and Instructional Strategy

4.3.6.1 Disruption in Curriculum Delivery

Frequent leadership changes disrupted curriculum planning and academic continuity. Participants cited frequent shifts in priorities and instructional goals, leading to fragmented program delivery. Day et al. (2009) stress that sustained instructional leadership is necessary to maintain curriculum coherence and academic rigor.

4.3.6.2 Impact on Professional Development

Teachers noted inconsistent access to professional development, with training programs often suspended during leadership transitions. This limited their ability to adopt innovative strategies and collaborate effectively. The data supports Day et al.'s (2009) view that consistent leadership is essential for fostering ongoing teacher growth.

4.3.7 Stakeholder Perceptions and Recommendations

4.3.7.1 Perceptions of Commercialization

An unexpected finding was students' perception that the school increasingly prioritized financial outcomes over educational quality. This sentiment was particularly strong during ownership transitions and reflects concerns about the commercialization of private education.

4.3.7.2 Disconnection between Leadership and Staff

Teachers described a pervasive sense of exclusion and a breakdown in communication with leadership. While staff turnover was anticipated, the extent of emotional and professional disengagement revealed a deeper disconnect between governance and day-to-day practice.

4.3.7.3 Stakeholder Recommendations

Participants proposed several strategies to mitigate the effects of leadership instability:

- Promote longer leadership tenures and clearer succession planning.
- Implement distributed leadership models (Harris, 2008) to decentralize decision-making and promote continuity.
- Enhance transparent and consistent communication.
- Institutionalize staff development programs independent of leadership transitions.

4.3.8 Theoretical and Practical Implications

4.3.8.1 Theoretical Implications

This study reinforces several leadership and change management theories:

- Transformational Leadership (Bass & Riggio, 2006) is validated through positive outcomes reported during such tenures.
- Fullan's Change Theory (2001) is supported by widespread "change fatigue" among staff and students.
- Kotter's Change Management Model (1996) emphasizes the role of communication and vision—both frequently absent at Flipper.

4.3.8.2 Practical Implications

- Schools must develop robust succession plans to minimize disruption.
- Distributed leadership structures can maintain operational continuity.
- Transparent communication fosters stakeholder trust.
- Professional development should be embedded in school policy, not leader-dependent.
- Student support systems must be protected from governance fluctuations.

4.3.9 Summary

This chapter compiled the analysis and interpretation of findings into a unified discussion of the multifaceted impacts of leadership and ownership instability at Flipper International School. Drawing from participant narratives and existing theory, it is evident that instability disrupts school performance, staff morale, student motivation, and curriculum integrity. While transformational leadership showed promise in restoring cohesion and progress, the broader trend was one of organizational disruption and reduced educational quality.

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions and Recommendations

5.1 Summary of Findings

This study explored the impact of leadership transitions on school performance, staff morale, and student outcomes at Flipper International School, a private institution that had experienced frequent leadership and ownership changes over several years. The research was guided by questions related to how leadership instability affects school operations, teaching quality, student performance, and overall school culture.

Data were collected through four focus group discussions and semi-structured interviews with 17 staff members and 31 students. Using a thematic analysis approach, eight major themes were identified, including leadership instability, operational disruption, teacher morale, academic impact, and communication deficits.

Below is a summary of findings for each research question:

The findings reveal that frequent leadership and ownership changes significantly disrupted organizational stability at Flipper International School. Participants described disjointed governance, inconsistent policies, and a lack of strategic direction. These disruptions affected school culture, diminished trust, and contributed to staff demoralization. Teaching practices and resource allocation were also inconsistently managed, with positive impacts observed only under transformational leadership. This instability undermined the coherence of instructional goals and strategic planning across the institution.

Leadership instability was associated with declines in student academic performance, particularly in assessments and curriculum continuity. Teachers and parents cited frequent curriculum changes and inconsistent academic expectations as contributing factors. Instructional delivery was fragmented, and academic planning lacked consistency. Students reported confusion and disengagement, highlighting the absence of a stable academic vision and reliable instructional support. The disruption

of professional development further weakened the implementation of effective teaching strategies.

Both students and staff experienced considerable challenges. Students noted uncertainty about academic programs, emotional distress, and reduced motivation. Teachers expressed frustration due to unclear communication, lack of professional development, and shifting instructional priorities. These conditions led to “change fatigue,” professional stagnation, and decreased engagement. Instructional strategies were inconsistently applied, and staff felt excluded from decision-making processes, compounding the challenges posed by leadership turnover.

The findings highlighted stark contrasts between leadership styles. Transformational leaders were associated with higher morale, greater collaboration, and increased motivation among staff and students. Teachers under transformational leadership reported feeling supported and empowered. In contrast, transactional leadership resulted in compliance-focused management with limited emotional engagement. Laissez-faire leadership was linked to disengagement, lack of direction, and confusion. Overall, leadership style played a crucial role in shaping staff morale and student motivation.

Participants proposed several strategies to mitigate the negative impact of leadership turnover. Key recommendations included promoting leadership continuity through better succession planning, implementing distributed leadership models to share responsibility, and ensuring transparent, consistent communication. Institutionalizing professional development independent of leadership changes was also emphasized. Additionally, participants stressed the need for stronger student support systems and a renewed focus on educational quality over commercial interests.

5.2 Conclusions Drawn from the Findings

The findings reveal that frequent changes in leadership and ownership significantly disrupted the institution’s effectiveness, creating a climate of instability and mistrust. This instability had a cascading effect across the school community, leading to operational inefficiencies and a weakened sense of direction. Teachers, in particular, faced emotional fatigue and a loss of professional identity, often driven by unclear

expectations and a lack of consistent recognition, prompting some of the most capable staff to leave. As a result, instructional quality and student support suffered. Students also experienced a noticeable decline in both academic performance and motivation, largely due to program disruptions, loss of familiar staff, and a general sense of neglect. In contrast, instances where transformational leadership emerged brought temporary improvement through stronger morale, clearer vision, and more cohesive collaboration. However, these benefits were short-lived due to leadership turnover. Additionally, poor communication about transitions and policy changes deepened the sense of exclusion and frustration among both staff and students, compounding the negative effects of instability.

5.3 Recommendations

5.3.1 Recommendations for Practice

1. Implement Leadership Succession Plans

Flipper International School should establish formal succession plans to ensure smooth transitions, including structured handovers and overlap periods between outgoing and incoming leaders.

2. Promote Distributed Leadership Models

Empower middle-level leaders—such as department heads, deans, and vice principals—to provide continuity during transitions. This creates resilience in leadership structures and reduces dependency on top leadership alone.

3. Strengthen Internal Communication Protocols

Develop transparent communication strategies that keep all stakeholders informed of leadership changes, policy shifts, and strategic directions. Communication should be timely, honest, and inclusive.

4. Institutionalize Professional Development

Regardless of leadership changes, professional development must be embedded in the school's long-term strategy to support teacher growth, innovation, and morale.

5. Establish a Student Engagement Framework

Students should have formal channels for expressing their concerns and participating in school improvement dialogues. This can foster a stronger sense of ownership and belonging.

5.3.2 Recommendations for Policy

1. Enforce Leadership Tenure Guidelines

School boards and investors should develop policies that prioritize leadership stability. Minimum tenure expectations should be established to discourage abrupt exits or frequent replacements.

2. Introduce Oversight Mechanisms for Ownership Transitions

Policy guidelines should be developed at the governance level to regulate changes in ownership or executive leadership, ensuring educational integrity is maintained.

3. Prioritize Educational Outcomes Over Financial Metrics

Decision-makers should balance financial considerations with pedagogical goals to prevent the over-commercialization of school operations, as perceived by students.

5.3.3 Recommendations for Future Research

1. Comparative Case Studies

Future research could compare Flipper's experience with other schools undergoing similar leadership transitions to identify broader patterns or exceptions.

2. Quantitative Validation

Integrating academic performance data (e.g., test scores, GPA trends) can offer more empirical evidence of the impact leadership transitions have on student achievement.

3. Longitudinal Studies

Following a school over a period of time through multiple leadership cycles would offer insights into long-term effects and recovery trajectories.

4. Board-Level Perspectives

Future studies should include perspectives from board members, investors, or school owners to understand their motivations and expectations during leadership transitions.

5.4 Final Reflections

This research journey has illuminated the complex, multifaceted nature of educational leadership, particularly in contexts marked by instability. While schools are often measured by test scores and performance indicators, this study reveals how leadership continuity and vision are foundational to every other outcome—from staff morale to student success to school culture.

As a researcher, this process has been both intellectually rigorous and personally enlightening. It reaffirmed that education is inherently relational it thrives on trust, stability, and shared purpose. The voices of students and teachers captured in this study are not merely data points but testimonials of resilience and hope. Addressing the issues surfaced here will require more than new policies it will require a genuine recommitment to people-centered leadership in schools.

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APPENDICES

A. Interview Guide / Survey Instruments

I. Focus Group Discussions

General Questions about Leadership Changes

Purpose of the Study:

This study aims to explore the impact of leadership and ownership changes at Flipper International School on student performance and overall academic experience.

1. Can anyone of you share your thoughts or experiences on the leadership changes at the school over the past few years? What do you think were the main reasons for these transitions?

2. How do you think these leadership changes have affected the day-to-day operations of the school? (*Share specific examples.*)

3. In your opinion, what were the most noticeable impacts of these leadership transitions on the school culture and community?

Impact on Teaching and Learning

4. How have you seen leadership changes affecting teaching practices here at the school?

(*Changes in classroom management, lesson delivery, etc.*)

5. Do you think leadership transitions have influenced the availability of resources (like textbooks, technology, or special programs) for teachers or students? In what way?

6. Have you noticed any changes in the curriculum or academic standards due to leadership shifts? How has this impacted student performance or motivation?

Impact on Student Performance and Morale

7. What Impact do you think leadership instability has had on student performance and academic outcomes? Do you think students have been affected by the frequent changes in leadership?

8. How would you describe the relationship between students and teachers during times of leadership transition? Has it changed at all, and if so, in what ways?

9. Has leadership instability affected student morale or engagement with schoolwork? Can anyone share specific examples or observations?

Impact on Teacher and Staff performance

10. Do you feel that the teachers are more or less motivated because of the leadership changes? How has the change in leadership impacted their ability to focus on teaching and student success?

11. Have you observed any changes in collaboration or communication among staff members because of leadership transitions? How has this impacted the work environment?

Communication and Support

13. How well has communication been from school leadership during these transitions? Do you feel like staff and students were kept informed, or was there confusion or lack of transparency?

14. What kind of support (if any) do you feel the school leadership has provided to help teachers, students, and parents navigate through these leadership changes?

15. Do you feel that leadership changes were handled in a way that kept the school community united? How could communication and support have been improved during these transitions?

Suggestions for Improvement

16. What strategies or actions do you think the school could take to ensure leadership stability and better support students and staff moving forward?

17. What kind of leadership qualities do you believe would best help improve the school environment and academic outcomes in the future?

18. If leadership changes continue to happen, what do you think could be done to minimize its impact on students, teachers, and the school community as a whole?

Final Reflection

19. Overall, do you think frequent leadership changes have had more positive or negative impacts on the school and its students? Why?

20. If you could give advice to future school leaders about how to manage leadership transitions, what would you tell them?

II. Semi-Structured Interview for staff: Leadership Transitions and Impact on Student Performance at Flipper International School

- **Greeting & Purpose:**

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this interview. The purpose of this conversation is to explore the Impacts of leadership transitions at Flipper International School, particularly how these changes may have influenced the school's culture, operations, and, most importantly, student performance. Your insights will help us understand the broader impact of these leadership shifts.

- **Confidentiality:**

Your responses will remain confidential and will be used solely for the purpose of this research. If you feel uncomfortable with any question, feel free to skip it.

Background Information (Contextual Questions)

1. Can you briefly describe your role at Flipper International School and how long you've been with the school?

(How long have you been in this role? What has been your general experience at the school?)

2. What was the general atmosphere like at the school when you first joined? Was there stability or were there already signs of leadership changes?

(What was the leadership like when you started? Did you notice any signs of instability early on?)

Leadership Transitions

3. Over the past three years, Flipper International School has experienced multiple changes in leadership. How would you describe these transitions?

(How frequent were these transitions? How did the school community respond each time a change occurred?)

4. How have you personally experienced the leadership changes? Can you recall any particular transition that stood out to you?

(What was your reaction to the leadership changes? Were there any noticeable differences in the way the school operated during different leadership periods?)

5. In your opinion, how would you describe the leadership styles of the different leaders who have come and gone?

(Were there stark differences in leadership approaches (e.g., more authoritative, collaborative, hands-off)? How did these shifts affect the school environment?)

Impact on School Operations and Culture

6. What impact have these leadership changes had on the overall school culture? Have you noticed any shifts in attitudes or behaviors among staff, students, or parents?

(Have there been any changes in how staff members interact with each other or how they engage with students? Have these changes affected morale?)

7. Has there been any consistency in school policies or priorities despite the leadership changes?

(How were priorities set by different leadership teams? Were there any conflicting priorities or strategies that confused staff or students?)

8. How do you feel about the communication surrounding leadership transitions? Were you adequately informed each time there was a change?

(How did the school communicate leadership changes? Did you feel you had enough information to adapt?)

Impact on Academic Outcomes and Student Performance

9. From your perspective, how have the leadership changes affected student performance at the school? Can you provide specific examples?

(Have you seen any direct link between leadership shifts and student outcomes, whether positive or negative?)

10. Have the leadership changes impacted the resources available for students (e.g., teaching materials, support services)? If so, how?

(Were there any resources that were added, reduced, or redistributed during leadership transitions? How did this impact students' learning experience?)

11. How consistent have teaching strategies been under the different leadership teams? Have you observed any disruption in teaching practices?

(Were teachers able to continue with the same methods, or were they asked to adopt new approaches frequently?)

12. In your opinion, how have leadership changes influenced teacher morale and the overall effectiveness of instruction?

(Have teachers felt supported or demotivated? How has this affected student engagement or performance?)

Reflection on Stability and Future Leadership

13. Do you believe that leadership stability would improve student performance at Flipper International School? Why or why not?

(What role do you think leadership consistency plays in supporting academic achievement and overall school success?)

14. What leadership qualities or approaches do you think are necessary for fostering a more stable and effective educational environment?

(Are there specific strategies you believe a new leader should focus on? What changes would you like to see in terms of leadership?)

15. What recommendations would you offer to the current or future leadership at Flipper International School to better support students and staff?

(If you had the opportunity to guide new leadership, what steps would you suggest they take to reduce disruption and improve student outcomes?)

16. Is there anything else you would like to share regarding the leadership changes at Flipper International School and their impact on the school community?

(Is there something important that we haven't touched on yet? Any personal reflections or experiences?)

Thank you very much for sharing your insights today. Your responses are incredibly valuable and will contribute greatly to understanding the impact of leadership transitions on student performance at Flipper International School. If you have any questions or would like to share additional thoughts later, feel free to reach out.

III. Semi-Structured Interview for students: Leadership Transitions and Impact on Student Performance at Flipper International School

- **Greeting & Purpose:**

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this interview. The purpose of this conversation is to explore the Impacts of leadership transitions at Flipper International School, particularly how these changes may have influenced the school's culture, operations, and, most importantly, student performance. Your insights will help us understand the broader impact of these leadership shifts.

- **Confidentiality:**

Your responses will remain confidential and will be used solely for the purpose of this research. If you feel uncomfortable with any question, feel free to skip it.

Background Questions (Establish context and general information)

1. Can you tell me about your time at Flipper International School? How long have you been attending this school?

2. How would you describe the general atmosphere or culture of the school? Has it changed at all during your time here?

Leadership and Ownership Changes

3. Have you noticed any changes in the leadership or management of the school since you've been here? How frequently has the leadership changed during your time at the school?

4. How do you think the changes in ownership and leadership have affected the way the school is run? Can you describe any differences in how the school was managed at different times?

Impact on School Environment

5. How have these leadership changes impacted your day-to-day experience at school? Do you feel that things have been inconsistent or confusing at times?

-
-
6. Have you observed any changes in the school environment, such as the quality of resources, teaching methods, or extracurricular activities, with each new leadership transition?

Impact on Academic Performance

7. In what ways do you think the changes in leadership have affected your academic performance or your motivation to learn?

-
-
8. Have you noticed any differences in how teachers have been supported or how they teach, depending on the leadership in place at the time?

-
-
9. Can you think of any instances where you felt that your academic needs were not being met or that there was a lack of continuity in your education due to changes in leadership?

Teacher Support and Morale

10. How would you describe the relationship between students and teachers at Flipper International School? Have you noticed any changes in how teachers engage with students during periods of leadership change?

11. Do you think the changes in leadership have affected teacher morale? How does this, in turn, impact your learning experience?

School Communication and Leadership Priorities

12. Do you feel that the leadership has clearly communicated their priorities or changes to the students? How well do you think students are informed about the reasons for leadership changes?

13. How transparent do you think the leadership has been about changes and their impact on school policies or academic programs?

Student Perspective on Improvement

14. If you could suggest any changes to help improve the stability or effectiveness of leadership at the school, what would they be?

15. How do you think the school could better support students during times of leadership change to ensure there's minimal impact on their academic experience?

Conclusion/Final Thoughts

16. Overall, how would you describe the Impact of leadership changes on your experience at Flipper International School?

17. Do you feel that these leadership transitions have had a lasting Impact on your academic progress or overall school experience?

Thank you very much for sharing your insights today. Your responses are incredibly valuable and will contribute greatly to understanding the impact of leadership transitions on student performance at Flipper International School. If you have any questions or would like to share additional thoughts later, feel free to reach out

B. Participant Information Sheet and Consent Forms

Parent/Guardian Consent Form for Student Participation in Interview

Study Title: The Implication of Leadership and Ownership Changes on Student Performance and Overall Academic Experience in the Lower Secondary School: The Case Flipper International School.

Researcher: Genet Alemayehu

Contact Information:

Email: genetalemayehu4@gmail.com

Phone: 0911- 940959

Purpose of the Study:

This study aims to explore the impact of leadership and ownership changes at Flipper International School on student performance and overall academic experience. We are seeking your permission for your child to participate in an interview that will help us better understand the impact of leadership transitions on students' learning experiences.

Study Procedures:

If you agree to allow your child to participate in this study, they will be asked to take part in an individual interview lasting approximately 20-30 minutes. During the interview, they will be asked about their experiences at Flipper International School, specifically focusing on how leadership changes may have affected their academic experience and the school environment. The interview will be audio-recorded for transcription purposes, and all responses will remain confidential.

Voluntary Participation:

Participation in this study is completely voluntary. Your child is free to decline participation or to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty or negative consequences. If they choose to withdraw, any data collected from them will be discarded and not included in the study.

Confidentiality:

All information collected from your child will be kept strictly confidential. Their

responses will be anonymized, and any identifying information will not be included in any reports or publications resulting from the study. Only the researcher and authorized individuals will have access to the interview recordings and data. The data will be stored securely and will be destroyed after the study is completed.

Potential Risks and Benefits:

There are no significant risks to your child for participating in this study. The interviewer will offer to pause the interview or stop the session entirely if your child feels uncomfortable. There are no direct benefits to your child for participating, but the findings may contribute to a better understanding of how leadership changes affect students' academic experiences and could influence future educational practices at the school.

Right to Ask Questions:

If you or your child have any questions or concerns about the study, please feel free to contact the researcher at the contact information provided above. If you have questions about your rights as a participant or concerns about the study, you may also contact EDPM's department head of Addis Ababa University.

Consent to Participate

By signing below, I, the parent/guardian of the student named below, give my consent for them to participate in the interview as described in this consent form. I understand that my child's participation is voluntary, and they may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. I acknowledge that I have been provided with sufficient information about the study and the consent process.

Student's Name: _____

Parent/Guardian Name: _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____

Date: _____

Contact Information (if different from above):

Phone: _____

Email: _____

C. Codebook or Thematic Analysis Framework

NO	Role at FIS	years of service	General Atmosphere	how frequent the change	reaction to the /ship changes	leadership approach	Impact of /ship change	Priorities & consistency	How did the school communicate	Leadership shifts & students' outcome Positi	Resource availability	able to continue with same methods	Teachers' moral	Leadership stability improve	What quality should leaders have	Opportunity to guide new leadership	Impacts on the school community
1	Dean of student	2 not stable	No idea	one leader change	Authoritative	Affected	consistency	Well Informed	Positive change	Not seen	Not constant	Motivated	Improved	resilience	Decision maker	Has impact	
2	Principal	3 Stable	No idea	noticeable d/c	Authoritative	less affected	No consistency	Not informed	Negative change	Not reduced	Not constant	Motivated	Improved	collaborative	Collaborative	Don't have impact	
3	Teacher	1 Stable	can't describe	didn't see	Authoritative	Affected	No consistency	Informed	Negative change	Not reduced	Not constant	Demotivate	Improved	collaborative	Collaborative	Has impact	
4	Teacher	4 not stable	No idea	didn't see	collaborative	Highly affected	consistency	Informed	Positive change	Not reduced	Not constant	Demotivate	Improved	resilience	Decision maker	Don't have impact	
5	Teacher	2 stable	More disruptive	shoking	Authoritative	Affected	No consistency	Well informed	Negative change	Not reduced	Not constant	Demotivate	Improved	collaborative	Decision maker	Has impact	
6	Teacher	5 not stable	every 4 years	didn't see	Authoritative	Highly affected	No consistency	Not informed	Negative change	Not reduced	Not constant	Motivated	Improved	collaborative	Collaborative	Has impact	
7	Teacher	1 Very stable	No idea	didn't see	collaborative	Highly affected	No consistency	Well Informed	Negative change	Reduced	Not constant	Motivated	Improved	collaborative	Decision maker	Has impact	
8	Teacher	2 not stable	More disruptive	noticeable d/c	Hands on	less affected	consistency	Informed	Not sure	Reduced	Not constant	Motivated	Improved	collaborative	Collaborative	Has impact	
9	Teacher	5 Stable	affects the system	hoping improvement	collaborative	Nothing	consistency	Informed	Positive change	Reduced	Not constant	Motivated	Improved	resilience	Decision maker	Has impact	
10	Teacher	2 not stable	affects the system	didn't see	Different	Affected	confusion	Not Informed	Negative change	Not seen	Constant	Motivated	Improved	collaborative	Collaborative	Has impact	
11	Teacher	6 Very stable	affects the system	noticeable d/c	Authoritative	Highly affected	confusion	Not Informed	Negative change	Not seen	Constant	Demotivate	Improved	collaborative	Decision maker	Has impact	
12	Teacher	5 Very stable	More disruptive	Three leader change	Different	Highly affected	No consistency	Not informed	Positive change	Reduced	Not constant	Demotivate	Improved	collaborative	Collaborative	Has impact	
13	Teacher	1 Very stable	can't describe	one leader change	Authoritative	Highly affected	No consistency	Not informed	Not sure	Not seen	Constant	Demotivate	Improved	collaborative	Collaborative	Don't have impact	
14	Dean of student	4 not stable	encourging	smooth	Authoritative	Affected	No consistency	Informed	Negative change	Not reduced	Constant	Demotivate	Improved	collaborative	Collaborative	Don't have impact	
15	Teacher	1 not stable	More disruptive	two /ship change	collaborative	Affected	No consistency	Not Informed	Negative change	Not seen	Constant	Demotivate	Improved	resilience	Decision maker	Has impact	
16	VP	2 Stable	affects the system	didn't see	collaborative	Highly affected	No consistency	Informed	Negative change	Reduced	Not constant	Motivated	Improved	resilience	Collaborative	Has impact	
17	VP	5 Very stable	More disruptive	needs consultation	Authoritative	Highly affected	No consistency	Well Informed	Negative change	Reduced	Not constant	Demotivate	Improved	collaborative	Collaborative	Has impact	

No	How long at FIS	General atmosphere	How frequent the change	Describe any difference in how school manages	How /ship change impacted day to day work	Change in school env/16	Academic performance	How teachers support the student when the leaders in place 17	Did academic needs meet or not 18	How teachers are engaged with students 19	How does the teachers morale impacted on learning 20	The leadership change properly communicated with the community 21	How transparent the leadership change 22	How to improve the stability or impactiveness leadership 24	How to ensure minimal impact on their academics 25	How would you describe the impact 26	How would describe the lasting impact of leadership change 27
2	Since childhood	Changed	Three	Affected	Inconsistent	Quality of resource	Affect on academic performance	Different	Don't meet accordingly	Didn't engage	Not impactful	Informed	Transparent	Impower the leader	Have clear policy	Impactful	Yes
3	Since childhood	not that much	Every year	Affected	Consistent	All	Affect on motivation to learn	No difference	Don't meet accordingly	Didn't engage	Impactful	Not informed	Transparent	Impower the leader	Active engagement of other leader	Impactful	Yes
6	Since childhood	Changed	Three	Affected	Consistent	Extracurriculum actiview	don't affect	Different	Meet accordingly	Engage	Not impactful	Don't informed	Transparent	Clear policy and procedure	Active engagement of other leader	Impactful	Yes
7	Since childhood	not that much	Three	Affected	Consistent	Teaching method	don't affect	No difference	Don't meet accordingly	Didn't engage	Not impactful	Don't informed	Transparent	Impower the leader	Have clear policy	Impactful	Yes
8	Since childhood	Changed	Three	Affected	Inconsistent	Teaching method	Affected on motivation to learn	Different	Don't meet accordingly	Didn't engage	Impactful	Don't informed	Not transparent	Impower the leader	Have clear policy	Impactful	Yes
9	Since childhood	Changed	Three	Affected	Inconsistent	Quality of resource	don't affect	No difference	Meet accordingly	Engage	Not impactful	Don't informed	Not transparent	Clear policy and procedure	Have clear policy	Not impactful	Yes
12	Since childhood	Unchanged	two	Affected	Consistent	Teaching method	don't affect	Different	Meet accordingly	Didn't engage	Not impactful	Informed	Not transparent	Impower the leader	Active engagement of other leader	Not impactful	Yes
15	Since childhood	not that much	Four	Affected	Consistent	All	Affected on motivation to learn	No difference	Don't meet accordingly	Didn't engage	Impactful	Don't informed	Not transparent	Clear policy and procedure	Active engagement of other leader	Impactful	Yes
18	Since childhood	not that much	Three	Affected	Consistent	Extracurriculum actiview	Affected si motivation to learn	Different	Don't meet accordingly	Didn't engage	Not impactful	Informed	Not transparent	Clear policy and procedure	Active engagement of other leader	Impactful	Yes
19	Since childhood	Unchanged	Four	Affected	Inconsistent	Extracurriculum actiview	Affect on academic performance	No difference	Don't meet accordingly	Engage	Not impactful	Informed	Not transparent	Clear policy and procedure	Have clear policy	Impactful	Yes
20	Since childhood	not that much	Don't know	Affected	Inconsistent	Teaching method	don't affect	Different	Don't meet accordingly	Didn't engage	Impactful	Don't informed	Not transparent	Impower the leader	Have clear policy	Not impactful	Yes
21	Two years	Changed	Every year	Affected	Inconsistent	All	Affect on academic performance	No difference	Don't meet accordingly	Engage	Impactful	Informed	Not transparent	Impower the leader	Have clear policy	Impactful	Yes
22	Three years	Changed	Don't know	Not affected	Consistent	Extracurriculum actiview	Affected on academic performance	Different	Meet accordingly	Didn't engage	Not impactful	Don't informed	Not transparent	Impower the leader	Active engagement of other leader	Impactful	Yes
23	one Years	Changed	Every year	Affected	Consistent	Quality of resource	Affect on academic performance	Different	Don't meet accordingly	Engage	Impactful	Don't informed	Not transparent	Impower the leader	Active engagement of other leader	Not impactful	Yes
24	Since childhood	Unchanged	Every year	Affected	Inconsistent	Quality of resource	Affect on academic performance	No difference	Meet accordingly	Didn't engage	Not impactful	Don't informed	Not transparent	Clear policy and procedure	Active engagement of other leader	Not impactful	Yes
27	Since childhood	Changed	Don't know	Affected	Inconsistent	Teaching method	don't affect	No difference	Don't meet accordingly	Engage	Not impactful	Informed	Transparent	Impower the leader	Have clear policy	Not impactful	Yes
29	Since childhood	Unchanged	Don't know	Affected	Consistent	Extracurriculum actiview	Affected on motivation to learn	Different	Meet accordingly	Didn't engage	Impactful	Informed	Not transparent	Impower the leader	Have clear policy	Impactful	Yes
30	Six years	Changed	Three	Affected	Consistent	Quality of resource	don't affect	No difference	Meet accordingly	Engage	Not impactful	Don't informed	Not transparent	Clear policy and procedure	Active engagement of other leader	Impactful	Yes
31	Since childhood	Changed	Every year	Affected	Inconsistent	Quality of resource	don't affect	Different	Meet accordingly	Didn't engage	Not impactful	Informed	Not transparent	Clear policy and procedure	Active engagement of other leader	Not impactful	Yes

No	Leadership change over the past few years 11	how have affected the day to day operations 2	Noticeable impact 3	Change in class room management 4	leadership transition have influenced 5	noticeable changes 6	Impact of leadership instability 7	Relationship b/n teachers and students 8	Students moral 9	Teachers' motivation 10	Communicatio n among staff members 11	Communicatio n about the change 12	Shook's support during transition 13	Unity of school community 14	Suggestion of school support on moving forward 15	leadership qualitie's 16	Action to be taken to reduce the impact of transition 17	Impact of the change and reason 18	Advice for the future 19
1	instability ,interest of investors	delay of delivery of resources	Impacted	Affected	Has influenced	lack of extra curricular activities and students motivation is decreased	leads to confusion on teachers	Teachers do not communicate with students	New teachers has been hired and difficult to communicate	Less motivated and it impacts their focus.	Not noticed	Confusion and lack of transparency	No support at all	The school did not do to keep the community united.	The school should be transparent with students and staff	The teachers should be collaborative with students.	Smooth transition	negative impact due to culture change	Be transparent
2	instability ,interest of investors	the dean of student becomes more authoritative	Not impacted	Affected	has'nt influenced	Teachers' moral are decreased	Teachers became demotivated	Physical abuse against scho's rule	Some leaders are biased and it affects students' moral	Less motivated	complain for no reason	Confusion and lack of transparency	No support at all	The school did not do to keep the community united.	The school should be transparent with students and staff	The school should be transparent	informed on time	negative impact due to overall	Extra-ricular activities
3	instability ,interest of investors	the teachers do not cover the curriculum	Not impacted	Affected	Has influenced	Lack of resources	the quality of the school become downhill	The teachers lose their moral to teach.	Leadership instability makes the curriculum has not been covered as planned and the students become pressured due to urgency to cover.	Less motivated	I don't know	Confusion and lack of transparency	No support at all	The school did not do to keep the community united.	The school should hire competent teachers	The school should be transparent	Smooth transition	negative impact due to overall change	Better staff and resources
4	instability ,interest of investors	lack of extra curricular activities	Impacted	Affected	Has influenced	Lack of resources	Teachers became demotivated	The teachers lose their moral to teach.	It makes students' moral declined	Less motivated and it impacts their focus.	Changes	Confusion and lack of transparency	No support at all	The school did not do to keep the community united.	The school should hire competent teachers	The school should provide a better infrastructure	Smooth transition	negative impact due to overall change	Better staff and resources

D. Sample Transcripts