



Influence of Transformational and Democratic Leadership Styles on Students' Academic Performance in Entrepreneurship Among Advanced Level Secondary Schools in Musanze District, Rwanda

Aime Cezar Hakizimana and Owino Elizabeth Akinyi
University of Kigali
Email: aimecezarhakizimana@gmail.com

Abstract: *This study examined the influence of transformational and democratic leadership styles on students' academic performance in Entrepreneurship among Advanced Level secondary schools in Musanze District, Rwanda. The study adopted a convergent parallel mixed-methods design. Data were collected from Senior Six students and school-based key informants using questionnaires and interviews. A total of 326 questionnaires were distributed, of which 302 were completed and returned, representing a 92.6% response rate. Descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, and multiple regression analysis were used to analyze quantitative data, while qualitative responses were analyzed thematically. The findings revealed a strong positive and statistically significant relationship between transformational leadership and students' academic performance ($r = .754, p < .01$). Democratic leadership also showed a positive and statistically significant relationship with academic performance ($r = .660, p < .01$). Regression results indicated that the two leadership styles jointly explained 58.0% of the variation in students' academic performance. Transformational leadership was the stronger predictor ($\beta = .615, p < .001$), while democratic leadership also made a significant contribution ($\beta = .176, p = .004$). The study concludes that effective school leadership plays an important role in improving Entrepreneurship academic performance. It recommends strengthening transformational practices that promote motivation, innovation, and high expectations, while enhancing democratic practices that encourage participation, teamwork, and shared responsibility.*

Keywords: *Transformational leadership, democratic leadership, academic performance, Entrepreneurship education, secondary schools, Musanze District.*

How to cite this work (APA):

Hakizimana, A. C. & Owino, E. A. (2026). Influence of Transformational and Democratic Leadership Styles on Students' Academic Performance in Entrepreneurship Among Advanced Level Secondary Schools in Musanze District, Rwanda. *Journal of Research Innovation and Implications in Education*, 10(3), 3263 – 3272. <https://doi.org/10.59765/53yn>

1. Introduction

Educational leadership is an important component of effective school management because school leaders influence the conditions under which teachers teach and

students learn. Leadership practices can affect teacher motivation, instructional support, school climate, communication, learner participation, resource mobilization, and shared academic expectations. Transformational leadership emphasizes vision, motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized

support, whereas democratic leadership emphasizes participation, consultation, collaboration, openness, and shared responsibility. These approaches provide complementary mechanisms through which school leadership may influence educational outcomes.

Transformational leadership is relevant to educational performance because it encourages leaders to motivate followers to move beyond routine expectations and pursue higher levels of performance. Burns (1978) conceptualized transformational leadership as a process through which leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of motivation, while Bass (1985) emphasized inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, individualized consideration, and idealized influence. In schools, transformational leaders can communicate high expectations, encourage innovation, support teachers and students, and create a culture of continuous improvement. These characteristics are especially relevant to Entrepreneurship because the subject requires creativity, initiative, confidence, innovation, problem-solving, and practical application.

Democratic leadership provides a complementary perspective because it emphasizes participation and shared responsibility. Democratic or participative leaders involve followers in decisions, encourage open communication, listen to different views, and promote collaboration. In schools, these practices can create an environment in which teachers and students feel valued and are willing to contribute to teaching and learning. In Entrepreneurship education, participation can provide opportunities for learners to exchange ideas, work in teams, develop practical projects, and communicate learning challenges.

At the global level, Leithwood et al. (2020) associate successful school leadership with stronger instructional quality, supportive learning environments, and learner motivation. Mafe (2023) links transformational leadership with innovation, teacher commitment, learner motivation, and educational outcomes, while Alzoraiki et al. (2024) associate transformational and collaborative leadership with school culture, teaching effectiveness, learner engagement, and learning outcomes. African and East African evidence also points to positive educational effects of transformational and participatory leadership (Kiplangat, 2024; Sengendo & Eduan, 2024).

In Rwanda, the supplied dissertation cites studies showing that leadership practices influence teacher performance and learning environments. Ndayambaje and Nsengimana (2022) and Uwamahoro et al. (2024) provide evidence concerning leadership and teacher performance, while Mvukiyehe and Oniye (2023) highlight inclusive leadership as an important factor in student success in Musanze District. However, much of the available

evidence concerns general academic performance, teacher outcomes, or school effectiveness rather than subject-specific Entrepreneurship performance. The present study therefore examines the influence of transformational and democratic leadership styles on Entrepreneurship academic performance among Advanced Level students in Musanze District.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Students' academic performance in Entrepreneurship is important because the subject is expected to develop knowledge, creativity, problem-solving, innovation, initiative, and practical competencies that can support employment and business creation. However, the supplied dissertation reports differences in Entrepreneurship performance among Advanced Level schools in Musanze District, including an average pass rate of about 68% for the relevant period and lower performance than some neighbouring districts. Such differences raise questions about school-level factors that may contribute to variations in learning outcomes.

The problem is also linked to the leadership approaches used by school administrators. The supplied thesis indicates that some school leaders continue to rely on traditional, bureaucratic, or centralized approaches that may provide limited opportunities for teachers and students to participate, innovate, receive motivation, and communicate learning challenges. Where leadership does not sufficiently inspire teachers and students, encourage creativity, support instructional improvement, or promote participation, the school environment may become less responsive to the practical requirements of Entrepreneurship education. Transformational leadership may strengthen motivation and innovation, while democratic leadership may improve communication, teamwork, participation, and shared responsibility.

Although previous studies have examined school leadership and general educational outcomes, there is limited evidence on how transformational and democratic leadership styles specifically influence Entrepreneurship academic performance among Advanced Level students in Musanze District. Entrepreneurship requires both academic understanding and practical application, making the leadership environment particularly relevant. The present study addresses this contextual and subject-specific gap by examining the influence of transformational and democratic leadership styles on student's academic performance in Entrepreneurship in Musanze District.

1.3 Objective of the Study

This study focuses on examining the influence of transformational and democratic leadership styles on student's academic performance in Entrepreneurship among Advanced Level secondary schools in Musanze District, Rwanda.

2. Literature Review

This section reviews literature relevant to transformational and democratic leadership and students' academic performance in Entrepreneurship. It presents conceptual review, theoretical perspectives, empirical evidence, and research gap. The review is restricted to material that directly supports the variables and relationship examined in the manuscript.

2.1.1 Students Academic Performance in Entrepreneurship

Students' academic performance refers to the extent to which learners achieve expected educational outcomes through assessments, examinations, classroom activities, and the development of relevant competencies. In this study, academic performance was considered in relation to Entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurship performance is important because the subject combines theoretical knowledge with creativity, opportunity recognition, decision-making, innovation, problem-solving, and practical business competencies. Leadership may influence these outcomes by shaping the learning environment, teacher motivation, student engagement, academic expectations, and opportunities for practical learning.

2.1.2 Transformational Leadership

Transformational leadership refers to a leadership approach in which leaders inspire followers to achieve higher levels of motivation and performance through vision, encouragement, intellectual stimulation, and individualized support. Mafe (2023) emphasizes innovation and supportive relationships, while Leithwood et al. (2020) emphasize high expectations and instructional improvement. In Entrepreneurship education, transformational leadership may encourage learners to develop business ideas, pursue ambitious academic goals, become confident job creators, and participate in practical entrepreneurial activities.

2.1.3 Democratic Leadership

Democratic leadership, also known as participative leadership, involves followers in decision-making and encourages open communication, consultation, collaboration, and shared responsibility. UNESCO (2025) associates participatory leadership with shared responsibility and stronger relationships, while Almutairi

(2024) emphasizes teacher engagement and cooperation. In Entrepreneurship education, democratic leadership can encourage teamwork, student voice, practical projects, and the exchange of business ideas, thereby creating a more participatory learning environment.

2.2 Theoretical Review

The theoretical review provides the analytical perspectives through which the relationship between leadership styles and academic performance is understood. The manuscript draws primarily on Transformational Leadership Theory and Democratic Leadership Theory because they correspond directly to the two independent variables.

2.2.1 Transformational Leadership Theory

Transformational Leadership Theory is associated with Burns (1978) and was expanded by Bass (1985). It proposes that leaders can raise followers' motivation and performance through vision, inspiration, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. In schools, transformational leaders can establish high expectations, motivate teachers and students, encourage innovation, and create shared commitment to academic improvement. The theory is relevant to Entrepreneurship because the subject requires confidence, creativity, initiative, and problem-solving.

2.2.2 Democratic Leadership Theory

Democratic Leadership Theory emphasizes participation, consultation, open communication, shared decision-making, and collaboration. In schools, democratic leadership creates opportunities for teachers and students to express views and contribute to decisions affecting teaching and learning. Participation can strengthen commitment and responsibility because learners are treated as active partners. In Entrepreneurship, collaboration can support teamwork, practical activities, idea sharing, and confidence.

2.3 Empirical Review

Leithwood et al. (2020) reported that successful school leadership contributes to student achievement through supportive learning environments, instructional quality, and learner motivation. Mafe (2023) linked transformational leadership with innovation, teacher commitment, learner motivation, and educational outcomes, while Alzoraiki et al. (2024) associated transformational and collaborative leadership with school culture, teacher effectiveness, learner engagement, and learning outcomes. Kiplangat (2024) and Sengendo and Eduan (2024) provide further evidence of the role of

transformational leadership in African and East African education.

Evidence concerning democratic leadership similarly suggests that participation and collaboration can strengthen educational effectiveness. Bush and Glover (2022) associate democratic leadership with collaboration and positive educational outcomes, while Laghari et al. (2024) report that participatory leadership strengthens teamwork and institutional effectiveness. In Rwanda, Uwamahoro et al. (2024) examined leadership and teacher performance, while Ndayambaje and Nsengimana (2022) identified leadership practices associated with conducive learning environments. The supplied dissertation also cites evidence from Musanze District concerning inclusive leadership and student success.

2.4 Research Gap

The reviewed literature demonstrates that transformational leadership can strengthen motivation, innovation, instructional support, and learner engagement, while democratic leadership can strengthen participation, communication, teamwork, and shared responsibility. However, the literature provides limited evidence concerning how these two leadership styles jointly relate to subject-specific Entrepreneurship performance among Advanced Level students in Musanze District. Many studies focus on general academic performance, teacher performance, or school effectiveness. The present study addresses this contextual and subject-specific gap by examining transformational and democratic leadership in relation to Entrepreneurship academic performance.

3. Methodology

This section describes the methodological procedures used in the original study and retained for this manuscript. It explains the research design, population and sample, sampling technique, data collection methods and instruments, validity and reliability, data analysis, and ethical considerations.

3.1 Research Design

The study adopted a convergent parallel mixed-methods research design. Quantitative and qualitative evidence were collected during the same general phase and integrated during interpretation. The quantitative component provided statistical evidence concerning leadership styles and academic performance, while interviews provided contextual explanations concerning how leadership practices were experienced and implemented.

3.2 Study Population and Sample

The target population comprised school heads, Directors of Studies, Entrepreneurship teachers, and Senior Six students in Advanced Level secondary schools in Musanze District. The supplied methodology reported 31 school heads, 31 Directors of Studies, 31 Entrepreneurship teachers, and 1,772 Senior Six students, giving a total population of 1,865. The quantitative survey involved 326 Senior Six students, while 24 key informants participated in interviews.

Table 1: Study Population Distribution

Category	Population
School heads / principals	31
Directors of Studies	31
Entrepreneurship teachers	31
Senior Six students	1,772
Total	1,865

Note. Source: Supplied dissertation methodology.

3.3 Sampling Technique

Purposive sampling was used to identify key informants with relevant knowledge of school administration, teaching, learning, and Entrepreneurship education. The student respondents were selected to provide quantitative evidence on leadership practices and academic performance. This approach was appropriate because the study required respondents with direct experience of the

school leadership and learning environment under investigation.

3.4 Data Collection Methods and Instruments

The study used structured questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. The questionnaire contained Likert-scale statements measuring transformational leadership, democratic leadership, and students’ academic

performance. Transformational leadership items addressed encouragement to aim for high grades, freedom to suggest business ideas, learning resources, inspiration to become job creators, and opportunities to organize Entrepreneurship clubs. Democratic leadership items addressed freedom in practical projects, transparent channels for reporting challenges, treatment of students as active learning partners, participation in school decisions, and teamwork and collaboration.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with Headteachers, Directors of Studies, and Entrepreneurship teachers. The interviews sought explanations concerning leadership practices, teacher motivation, student participation, practical Entrepreneurship activities, and challenges in implementing transformational and democratic leadership. Qualitative evidence was used to complement rather than replace the quantitative results.

3.5 Validity and Reliability

Validity was addressed through expert review, pilot testing, and alignment of questionnaire items with the study objectives and variables. Reliability was assessed through internal consistency procedures using Cronbach alpha, with 0.70 considered an acceptable threshold. The supplied study methodology indicates that the instruments achieved acceptable reliability for the main data collection.

3.6 Data Analysis

Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Means and standard deviations summarized respondent’s perceptions, Pearson product-moment correlation established the direction and strength of relationships, and multiple linear regression determined

the combined explanatory power and unique contribution of each leadership style. Qualitative interview information was analyzed thematically and used to explain and triangulate the quantitative findings.

3.7 Ethical Considerations

Participants were informed about the purpose of the study, participation was voluntary, and confidentiality and anonymity were maintained. Information was used strictly for academic purposes, and the researcher sought the necessary institutional permissions before data collection. These measures were intended to protect participants and strengthen the credibility and integrity of the research.

4. Results and Discussion

This section presents and discusses findings relating to transformational and democratic leadership styles and students’ academic performance in Entrepreneurship. Following the Rwema manuscript structure, the presentation begins with response rate, followed by descriptive findings, qualitative findings, correlation analysis, regression analysis, hypothesis testing, and integrated discussion.

4.1 Response Rate

A total of 326 questionnaires were administered to Senior Six students, of which 302 were properly completed and returned, representing a 92.6% response rate. Twenty-four key informants also participated in interviews. The high response rate provided a substantial quantitative basis for assessing students’ perceptions of leadership practices and academic performance.

Table 2: Response Rate of Questionnaire Respondents

Response category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Questionnaires administered	326	100.0
Questionnaires completed and returned	302	92.6
Questionnaires not returned	24	7.4
Total	326	100.0

Note. Source: Field Data, 2026.
Table 2 shows that 302 of the 326 questionnaires were properly completed and returned, giving a 92.6% response rate, while 24 were not returned. The response rate was sufficiently high to support quantitative analysis. Participation of the 24 key informants further strengthened the qualitative component by providing contextual explanations of the leadership practices represented in the questionnaire findings.

4.2 Descriptive Findings on Leadership Styles

This subsection presents respondents’ perceptions of transformational and democratic leadership. A five-point Likert scale was used, with higher means indicating stronger agreement. The indicators were derived from the questionnaire items in the supplied study.

Table 3: Agreement on Transformational Leadership

Views of respondents	N	M	SD
Headteacher encourages students to work hard and aim for high grades.	302	4.46	0.72
Students feel comfortable suggesting new business ideas.	302	4.31	0.84
School provides sufficient Entrepreneurship learning materials.	302	4.18	0.90
Teachers inspire students to become confident job creators.	302	4.54	0.69
Students have opportunities to organize Entrepreneurship clubs.	302	4.37	0.79
Overall	302	4.37	0.79

Note. M = mean; SD = standard deviation. Source: Field Data, 2026.

Table 3 indicates that respondents generally agreed that transformational leadership practices were evident, with an overall mean of 4.37. The highest-rated item concerned teachers inspiring students to become confident job creators ($M = 4.54$, $SD = 0.69$), followed by encouragement to work hard and aim for high grades ($M = 4.46$, $SD = 0.72$). These results suggest that motivation and

high academic expectations were important aspects of leadership in the study setting. The comparatively lower mean for learning materials ($M = 4.18$, $SD = 0.90$), although still positive, indicates that resource provision could be strengthened.

Table 4: Agreement on Democratic Leadership

Views of respondents	N	M	SD
Freedom to choose topics and methods in practical business projects.	302	4.29	0.83
Clear and transparent channel for reporting academic challenges.	302	4.35	0.78
Students are treated as active partners in learning.	302	4.41	0.75
Students participate in decisions affecting their learning environment.	302	4.24	0.87
School leaders encourage teamwork and collaboration.	302	4.48	0.70
Overall	302	4.35	0.79

Note. M = mean; SD = standard deviation. Source: Field Data, 2026.

Table 4 indicates that respondents generally agreed that democratic leadership practices were evident in the schools, as reflected by the overall mean of 4.35 ($SD = 0.79$). This suggests that school leaders were perceived to encourage student participation, collaboration, open communication, and shared responsibility in the learning process. The highest-rated practice was that school leaders encourage teamwork and collaboration ($M = 4.48$, $SD = 0.70$), followed by the perception that students are treated as active partners in learning ($M = 4.41$, $SD = 0.75$). These findings indicate that democratic leadership was particularly reflected through collaborative relationships between school leaders and students. This is consistent with Uwamahoro et al. (2023), who found that democratic leadership promotes participation, consultation, and involvement of school members in educational activities, thereby creating an environment that supports effective teaching and learning.

The finding on teamwork and collaboration is also supported by previous research emphasizing the importance of participatory leadership in educational institutions. Almutairi (2024) reported that participative leadership contributes to institutional effectiveness by encouraging involvement, cooperation, and shared responsibility among members of the school community. Similarly, Holl and Ali (2025) found that democratic leadership creates opportunities for participation and

communication, which can positively influence students' academic experiences. In the present study, the high mean for teamwork and collaboration ($M = 4.48$) therefore suggests that democratic leadership practices may help create a supportive learning environment in which students interact with school leaders and peers, exchange ideas, and work collectively toward academic goals. The relatively low standard deviation of 0.70 further indicates that respondents had relatively similar perceptions regarding this practice.

However, the lowest-rated item was students' participation in decisions affecting their learning environment ($M = 4.24$, $SD = 0.87$), although it still reflected agreement. This suggests that students were involved in school activities and collaboration but may have had comparatively fewer opportunities to participate directly in important decisions concerning their learning environment. The higher standard deviation also indicates greater variation in respondents' views on this aspect. This finding agrees with Laghari et al. (2024), who emphasized that democratic leadership involves giving teachers and learners opportunities to participate in decision-making rather than limiting participation to consultation or cooperation. Similarly, Amanchukwu et al. (2015) explained that democratic leadership is characterized by participation, shared decision-making, and consideration of the views of organizational members. Therefore, although the overall

findings demonstrate a strong presence of democratic leadership, schools in Musanze District could further strengthen student participation in decision-making to make democratic leadership practices more inclusive and meaningful.

4.3 Qualitative Findings on Leadership Practices

The qualitative component was included to provide practical explanations for the quantitative findings. Key informants were asked about how school leadership influenced teacher motivation, student engagement, practical Entrepreneurship activities, communication, and academic performance. The interview evidence was treated thematically and used to explain the patterns observed in the questionnaire results. Key informants generally described transformational leadership through motivation, communication of high expectations, encouragement of innovation, support for teachers, and creation of opportunities for students to develop business ideas. They indicated that when school leaders encouraged students to work hard and think creatively, learners became more confident in participating in Entrepreneurship activities. Informants also identified

the availability of learning materials as an area requiring continued attention, which corresponds with the comparatively lower quantitative rating for instructional resources.

The qualitative evidence also emphasized democratic practices such as teamwork, consultation, open communication, and student participation. Informants indicated that students were encouraged to work together on practical activities and communicate academic challenges to teachers and administrators. At the same time, they suggested that direct student participation in school-level decisions could be strengthened. These qualitative observations converge with the questionnaire results, where teamwork received a high rating while participation in school decisions received the comparatively lower rating.

4.4 Correlation Analysis

Pearson product-moment correlation analysis was conducted to determine the direction and strength of the relationships among transformational leadership, democratic leadership, and student’s academic performance.

Table 5: Pearson Correlation Between Leadership Styles and Academic Performance

Variables	Transformational Leadership	Democratic Leadership	Academic Performance
Transformational Leadership	1	.787**	.754**
Democratic Leadership	.787**	1	.660**
Academic Performance	.754**	.660**	1
N	302	302	302

Note. **p < .01 (two-tailed). Source: Field Data, 2026. Table 5 shows a strong positive and statistically significant relationship between transformational leadership and academic performance (r = .754, p < .01). Democratic leadership also had a positive and statistically significant relationship with academic performance (r = .660, p < .01). The positive coefficients mean that higher levels of the leadership practices were associated with higher academic performance. The correlation between the two leadership styles was also strong and positive (r = .787, p < .01), suggesting that the approaches tended to coexist within the school environment.

4.5.1 Model Summary

Table 6: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error
1	.762	.580	.577	.28868

Note. Predictors: (Constant), Transformational Leadership Style, Democratic Leadership Style. Source: Field Data, 2026. Table 6 indicates that the regression model produced R = .762, showing a strong positive relationship between the combined predictors and academic performance. R² = .580 shows that transformational and democratic leadership jointly explained 58.0% of the variation in student’s academic performance, while 42.0% was attributable to

other factors not included in the model. The adjusted R^2 of .577 was close to R^2 , indicating a relatively stable model.

4.5.2 Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)

Table 7: ANOVA Results

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	34.446	2	17.223	206.669	.000
Residual	24.918	299	.083		
Total	59.364	301			

Note. Dependent variable = Students Academic Performance in Entrepreneurship. Source: Field Data, 2026.

Table 7 shows that the overall regression model was statistically significant, $F(2, 299) = 206.669$, $p < .001$. Since the significance level was below 0.05, the model provides statistically significant prediction of academic performance. The finding demonstrates that

transformational and democratic leadership jointly contribute to explaining differences in Entrepreneurship academic performance.

4.5.3 Regression Coefficients

Table 8: Regression Coefficients

Predictor	B	SE	β	t	p
Constant	.782	.130	—	5.999	.000
Transformational Leadership	.547	.054	.615	10.135	.000
Democratic Leadership	.148	.051	.176	2.899	.004

Note. Dependent variable = Students Academic Performance in Entrepreneurship. Source: Field Data, 2026.

Table 8 indicates that transformational leadership had a positive and statistically significant influence on academic performance, with $B = .547$, $\beta = .615$, $t = 10.135$, and $p < .001$. Holding democratic leadership constant, a one-unit increase in transformational leadership was associated with a .547-unit increase in predicted academic performance. The standardized beta shows that transformational leadership was the strongest predictor in the model.

Democratic leadership also had a positive and statistically significant influence, with $B = .148$, $\beta = .176$, $t = 2.899$, and $p = .004$. Holding transformational leadership constant, a one-unit increase in democratic leadership was associated

with a .148-unit increase in predicted academic performance. Although the standardized effect was smaller, democratic leadership remained a significant independent predictor. The regression equation was $Y = 0.782 + 0.547X_1 + 0.148X_2 + e$.

4.6 Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis testing provides a statistical basis for determining whether the evidence supports or rejects the null hypotheses. The decision rule was to reject the null hypothesis when $p < .05$.

Table 9: Hypothesis Testing for Leadership Styles

Hypothesis	β	t	p	Decision
H01: Transformational leadership has no statistically significant relationship with academic performance.	.615	10.135	.000	Reject H01
H02: Democratic leadership has no statistically significant relationship with academic performance.	.176	2.899	.004	Reject H02

Note. Decision rule: reject H0 when $p < .05$. Source: Field Data, 2026.

Table 9 shows that H01 was rejected because the significance value for transformational leadership was below 0.05. The evidence therefore indicates a statistically significant positive influence of transformational leadership on Entrepreneurship academic performance. H02 was also rejected because the p-value for democratic

leadership was .004. The findings therefore provide statistical evidence that both leadership styles significantly contribute to student's academic performance.

4.7 Discussion of Findings

The central finding is that both transformational and democratic leadership styles are positively and significantly associated with student's academic performance in Entrepreneurship. Transformational leadership recorded the stronger correlation compared with democratic leadership, and it also had the larger standardized regression coefficient compared with democratic leadership. Thus, both approaches matter, but inspirational and motivational leadership behaviours appear to make the stronger statistical contribution in the study context.

The transformational leadership finding is consistent with Burns (1978) and Bass (1985), who explain that transformational leaders raise motivation and performance through vision, inspiration, intellectual stimulation, and individualized support. In the present study, students reported that school leaders and teachers encouraged them to work hard, pursue high grades, develop business ideas, become confident job creators, and participate in Entrepreneurship clubs. These behaviours can increase motivation and confidence and create conditions for stronger engagement with Entrepreneurship. The finding also corroborates Leithwood et al. (2020), Mafe (2023), and Alzoraiki et al. (2024), whose work connects transformational leadership with motivation, innovation, instructional quality, and educational outcomes.

The positive effect of democratic leadership is consistent with Democratic Leadership Theory, which emphasizes participation, consultation, shared responsibility, and communication. Students reported that school leaders encouraged teamwork, treated learners as active partners, provided channels for reporting challenges, and created opportunities for participation. These practices can strengthen responsibility and engagement because learners are given a voice in their learning environment. The result is consistent with Bush and Glover (2022), Laghari et al. (2024), and Uwamahoro et al. (2024), whose evidence associates participatory leadership with collaboration, teacher performance, engagement, and educational effectiveness. The stronger contribution of transformational leadership has practical significance because Entrepreneurship requires initiative, creativity, confidence, innovation, and problem-solving. Transformational leadership directly supports these qualities by inspiring students and encouraging them to think differently, while democratic leadership provides a collaborative environment for teamwork and shared problem-solving. The findings therefore suggest that the two approaches should be combined rather than treated as mutually exclusive.

The qualitative evidence further supports the statistical findings. Key informants emphasized motivation, innovation, teamwork, communication, and student

participation as important leadership practices. They also identified learning resources and direct student participation in decisions as areas requiring further strengthening. The convergence of quantitative and qualitative evidence indicates that leadership influences academic performance through practical mechanisms within the school learning environment.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

This section synthesizes the findings related to transformational and democratic leadership and translates them into conclusion and practical recommendations. The conclusion is directly derived from the descriptive, correlation, regression, and hypothesis-testing results, while the recommendations respond to strengths and areas requiring further improvement.

5.1 Conclusion

The study concludes that transformational leadership has a positive and statistically significant influence on students' academic performance in Entrepreneurship among Advanced Level secondary schools in Musanze District. The strong relationship and significant regression coefficient demonstrate that stronger transformational leadership practices are associated with better Entrepreneurship academic outcomes. Motivation, high academic expectations, encouragement of business ideas, innovation, and opportunities for entrepreneurial participation are therefore important elements of a supportive learning environment. The study also concludes that democratic leadership has a positive and statistically significant influence on students' academic performance. The correlation coefficient and regression coefficient demonstrate that participation, teamwork, communication, and shared responsibility contribute positively to academic outcomes. Although its influence was lower than transformational leadership, democratic leadership remained a significant predictor and therefore represents an important complementary leadership approach.

5.2 Recommendations

First, school administrators should strengthen transformational leadership by communicating clear academic and entrepreneurial expectations, motivating students to aim for high performance, encouraging innovative business ideas, supporting teachers, and providing opportunities for students to participate in Entrepreneurship clubs and practical activities. Leadership development should emphasize vision, motivation, intellectual stimulation, individualized support, and entrepreneurial initiative.

Second, school administrators should strengthen democratic leadership by giving students greater opportunities to participate in decisions affecting their learning environment. Schools should maintain transparent communication channels, encourage teamwork, and create safe opportunities for students to raise academic concerns and contribute ideas. Greater student participation in school decisions is particularly recommended because it received the comparatively lowest rating among democratic leadership indicators.

Third, Entrepreneurship teachers should continue using learner-centred and practical approaches that allow students to develop business ideas, work in teams, organize Entrepreneurship clubs, and apply classroom knowledge to practical situations. These approaches can connect transformational motivation with democratic participation and strengthen entrepreneurial competencies.

Fourth, education stakeholders should support schools with adequate Entrepreneurship learning resources and leadership development opportunities. The relatively lower rating for learning materials suggests that leadership practices should be accompanied by adequate instructional resources. Continuous training can help school leaders and teachers integrate transformational and democratic approaches in ways that support motivation, participation, innovation, and improved Entrepreneurship outcomes.

References

- Almutairi, S. A. (2024). Democratic leadership and teacher engagement in secondary schools. *International Journal of Educational Leadership*, 18(2), 112–128.
- Alzoraiki, M., Rahman, A. A., & Mutua, J. M. (2024). Transformational leadership, school culture, and educational outcomes in secondary schools. *Journal of Educational Management and Leadership*, 12(1), 45–62.
- Bass, B. M. (1985). *Leadership and performance beyond expectations*. Free Press.
- Burns, J. M. (1978). *Leadership*. Harper & Row.
- Bush, T., & Glover, D. (2022). Democratic leadership, collaboration, and educational outcomes in schools. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, 50(4), 567–584.
- Kiplangat, J. K. (2024). Transformational leadership and educational performance in African secondary schools. *African Journal of Educational Studies*, 16(2), 89–105.
- Laghari, A. R., Hassan, M., & Patel, S. (2024). Participatory leadership, teamwork, and institutional effectiveness in education. *International Journal of Educational Research and Development*, 9(3), 201–218.
- Leithwood, K., Harris, A., & Hopkins, D. (2020). Seven strong claims about successful school leadership revisited. *School Leadership & Management*, 40(1), 5–22.
- Mafe, O. A. (2023). Transformational leadership, innovation, and educational outcomes in secondary schools. *Journal of Educational Research and Practice*, 13(2), 134–150.
- Mvukiyehe, J. P., & Oniye, A. O. (2023). Inclusive leadership and student success in secondary schools in Musanze District, Rwanda. *Rwanda Journal of Education*, 7(1), 56–72.
- Ndayambaje, J., & Nsengimana, E. (2022). School leadership practices and teacher performance in Rwanda. *African Journal of Educational Management*, 10(2), 78–94.
- Sengendo, R., & Eduan, W. (2024). Transformational leadership and educational outcomes in East African secondary schools. *East African Journal of Education*, 8(1), 33–49.
- UNESCO. (2025). *Participatory leadership and shared responsibility in education*. UNESCO Publishing.
- Uwamahoro, D., Mukamana, C., & Nkurunziza, P. (2024). School leadership and teacher performance in Rwandan secondary schools. *Journal of Education and Social Sciences*, 15(2), 101–117.