

ABSTRACT

In Kenya, Principal's leadership greatly predicts institutional performance. They are responsible for the overall management of their institutions. A majority of schools continue to report management challenges resulting in poor performance. The teachers' employer, the Teachers Service Commission introduced the policy of delocalization of school Principals with the aim of improving institutional management and ultimately performance. However, data that could help illustrate the extents to which implementation of the policy has contributed to improved institutional management and ultimately performance remained limited. This study therefore sought to contribute in bridging the existing research gap by establishing the relationship between delocalized principals' transformational leadership, personal characteristics and institutional performance among public secondary schools in lower Eastern region of Kenya. The study adopted transformational leadership theory, path-goal theory and contingency theories. A descriptive survey and correlational research designs were utilized. Multistage sampling was used to select 144 principals, 144 senior teachers and 6 educational officials from 1086 subjects comprising of 540 delocalized principals, 540 senior teachers, 3 County Quality Assurance and Standards Officers and 3 Kenya Secondary Schools Heads Association Chairpersons. Questionnaires and interview schedules were used to collect data. The instruments were pre-tested in Embu County and results obtained used to estimate reliability using Cronbach's Alpha and Exploratory Factor Analysis, where a coefficient of 0.785 and a KMO of 0.778 were taken and deemed acceptable. Validity of the instruments was ascertained through face, content and construct validity techniques. Qualitative data was analyzed thematically while quantitative data was cleaned coded and analyzed descriptively and inferentially with the aid of the Statistical Packages for Social Sciences program version 26.0 computer software. Frequency and percentages were used to describe the existing relationship between the variables while hypothesis were tested using simple and multiple regression analysis at 0.05 level of significance. The study established that there is a positive and significant relationship between transformational leadership and institutional performance. Findings also established that principal's experience partially mediates while type of school moderates the relationship between transformational leadership and institutional performance. It is therefore recommended that TSC should formulate and implement best practices of delocalization to enable education stakeholders reap its inherent benefits. Ministry of Education should organize training workshops for principals on best practices for implementation of transformational leadership.