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RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DELOCALIZED PRINCIPALS' TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP AND INSTITUTIONAL PERFORMANCE AMONG PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN THE LOWER EASTERN REGION, KENYA

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Citation:

Mawira, M. S., Jagero, N., Ogembo, O. J., & Kimanthi, P. (2024). Relationship between delocalized principals' transformational leadership and institutional performance among public secondary schools in the Lower Eastern region, Kenya. In: Mutembei Henry, Nduru Gilbert, Munyiri Shelmith, Gathungu Geoffrey, Kiboro Christopher, Otiso Wycliffe, Rithaa Jafford, Miriti Gilbert, Gichumbi Joel, Mwachhi David, Gitonga Lucy, Nanua Jackin, Kahindi Roseline, Jonathan Kathenge & Muthui Zipporah (Eds.). *Proceedings of the Chuka University Tenth Annual International Research Conference held in Chuka University, Chuka, Kenya from 5th to 6th October, 2023. 42-46 pp.*

ABSTRACT

The study determined the relationship between the delocalized principals' transformational leadership and institutional performance in public secondary schools in the lower Eastern region Kenya. It was informed by the need to illustrate the extent to which implementation of delocalization policy has contributed to improved institutional performance. Transformational leadership theory, path-goal theory and contingency theories provided theoretical underpinnings of the study. It adopted descriptive cross sectional survey design and correlational research design. Multistage sampling was used to select 144 Principals, 144 senior teachers and 6 educational officials from 1086 subjects. Questionnaires and interview schedules were used to collect data from sampled respondents. Qualitative data obtained was analyzed thematically while quantitative data was cleaned coded and analyzed descriptively and inferentially with the aid of the Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 26.0 computer software. Frequency and percentages were used to describe the existing relationship between the variables while hypothesis were tested using regression analysis at 95% level of significance. The study established that there is a positive and significant relationship between idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation as well as individualized considerations and institutional performance. Ultimately, study illustrated that there exists a positive and significant relationship between transformational leadership as implemented by the delocalized Principals and institutional performance of their schools. 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 (MOE) should organize training workshops for Principals on best practices for implementation of transformational leadership.

Keywords: Transformational leadership, Idealized Influence, Inspirational motivation, Intellectual stimulation, Individualized consideration & Institutional performance

INTRODUCTION

Education is widely considered crucial for the survival and success of individuals and communities in emerging economies globally. It has been associated with personal, social, political, economic or cultural development of individuals and communities (Beyene, 2016). As a matter of fact, education touches every aspect of learners' lives paving the way for their logistics development and ultimately that of the society. Consequently, Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) on education emphasizes

on the need for quality education for boys and girls (UWESCO- GEM 2015) in an attempt to better their future career prospects as well their lives generally. In an attempt to achieve this important goal and thus provide quality education, countries all over the world are increasingly spending a significant proportion of their recurrent budget on financing education in an effort to improve the quality of education for their populace (Itigi, 2016). Educational institutions and their managers in such countries therefore face immense pressure from stakeholders who continue to demand educational outcome commensurate to the massive investment.

In the United States, Allen, Grigsby and Peters (2015) undertook a correlational study meant to underscore the relationship among transformational leadership, school climate and student's achievements. The study which sought to assess whether leadership matter which was undertaken in a small sub urban school district in South East Texas established that a Principal who exhibits mutual trusts with his teachers and treated them as professionals motivated them to perform well in classrooms, hence providing exceptional instructions to all students. The study emphasized on individualized consideration by insisting that school leaders should interact with followers in a manner that will provide the necessary opportunities to impact students' achievements.

In Subang jaya, Malaysia, a comparative study on the relationship between transformational and transactional leadership on teachers' job satisfaction and secondary student performance concluded that Principals' demographics such as age, experience and amount of time spent working as well as qualifications had no huge relationship to teacher's work fulfilment (Nazlina Marimuthu 2021). The study established that job satisfaction varies with schools and that there is a strong relationship between leadership style and job satisfaction with transformational leadership style contributing more significantly to higher job satisfaction than transactional leadership style. The study did not specifically focus on the relationship between leadership styles and institutional performance. Additionally, delocalization policy was not embedded in the study as the current study sought to.

In Africa, Shava (2021) investigated the integration of instructional and transformational models of leadership in sustaining school improvement. The study used qualitative research approach to arrive at an in-depth understanding of integrating instructional and transformational leadership in enhancing school performance. Data was collected through semi-structured interviews with Principals in one educational province. Purposive sampling techniques were used to select participants for the study. Findings from the study established that integrating the two models had the potential to enhance learner performance. This study has shown that the integration of instructional and transformational leadership models led to a climate that promotes a culture of teaching and learning, hence increasing quality learning outcomes. The study was qualitative in nature yielding subjective findings which are not transferable. Its findings therefore may not be applicable in situations similar to the current study.

Muia (2018) examined the influence of principals' transformational leadership practices (TLP) on academic performance in KCSE in Mbooni West Sub-county, Kenya. The study was guided by six objectives. The dependent variable was academic performance in KCSE while the independent variables were principals transformational leadership practices. Study sample included 266 teachers and Principal selected using simple random sampling technique. Instruments used were questionnaires, focus groups discussion guide, interview guides, and documentary analyses. Data was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Findings showed that TLP have positive significant influence on academic performance in KCSE with Inspirational Motivation (0.194); Intellectual Stimulation (0.198) and Idealized Influence (0.178) at alpha value 0.01 level of significance (2-tailed). The best transformational leadership practice predictor for KCSE examinations was Intellectual Stimulation (IS) with (0.198). Findings though useful fell short of focusing on institutional performance which is the focus of this study.

A majority of public secondary schools however continue to face performance challenges attributed to leadership. For instance, Lokuruka (2017) in his study reported that Head Teachers are faced with various challenges in the management of the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education performance.

Consequently, the Teachers Service Commission (TSC) in an attempt to enhance institutional management through improved leadership proposed and implemented the delocalization policy since 2017. Also referred to as transfer of Principals from their native counties to other counties (Munyiri, Ogembo & Kinyua, 2022; Nyarima, 2019), delocalization policy was adopted by TSC with the aim of ensuring that Principals devote maximum time and effort in management of their institutions thus enhancing the schools' performance. This was in response to the belief that effectiveness of a majority of Principals leadership qualities were compromised by overstay in one station or when they worked closer to their native counties (Amollo et al., 2019). Implementation of delocalization policy would thus by taking them to new stations away from their home counties provide them with ample time and opportunity to discharge quality leadership and thus enhance school's performance. However, since inception, there is minimal data on the extent to which implementation of the policy predicts Principals leadership qualities and ultimately institutional performance. This study therefore sought to contribute in bridging the existing knowledge gap by establishing the relationship

between delocalized Principals transformational leadership and Institutional performance with a specific focus on delocalized Principals in Counties in lower Eastern Kenya.

Transformational Leadership and Institutional Performance

Transformational leadership is defined as a leadership approach that causes change in individuals and social systems (Sifat, 2019). In its ideal form, it creates valuable and positive change in the followers with the end goal of developing followers into leaders. Since change management is a strength of transformational leaders, it has been claimed that transformational leadership is the best leadership style for principals of schools considering significant reform (Bellibaş, Kiliñç & Polatcan, 2021). Transformational leadership style is an important aspect in students' academic achievement in schools. Therefore, principals' practice of transformational leadership behaviours is critical in enhancing institutional performance. In Kenya, principals are held accountable for quality education which is associated with getting quality grades by students in KCSE examinations. The KCSE examinations play a crucial role in student's life since it determines progression to higher education, training and job placement. Therefore, it ignites public pressure on school administrators and teachers to improve institutional performance. Emphasis on transformational leadership skills would mitigate the pursuit of ever increasing institutional performance. Hence, there is clear need to interrogate practices of individualized consideration, intellectual stimulation, idealized influence and inspirational motivation transformational leadership style used by secondary school principals in an attempt to gain more insights into how these influences students' academic performance. To achieve this, the current study hypothesized that transformational leadership of principals does not significantly influence the academic performance of students in public high schools. To determine the extent of influence of transformational leadership on institutional performance, the data collected was subjected to regression analysis.

Extant empirical evidence suggests that there is a relationship between transformational leadership style and students' academic success in higher education (Jackson, 2016). The results of Jackson (2016) study in Lynchburg, Virginia revealed that there is a statistically significant relationship between transformational leadership style (independent variables idealized attributes, idealized behaviors, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation and individualized consideration) and students' academic success. It can be induced that the behaviors improve academic performance. Chen (2014) reported there was no significant effect between transformational leadership and student learning outcomes in California State Assessment. Leveraging on these mixed findings, this current study aimed to contribute to extant school leadership literature by seeking to understand the influence of transformational leadership on institutional performance and the applicability of leadership theories to the Kenyan secondary schools' context.

In their study that investigated the impact of transformational leadership as idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation and individualized consideration on teachers' commitment towards organization, teaching profession and students' learning in Malaysia, Ling and Ibrahim (2013) found that inspirational motivation, individualized consideration, and intellectual stimulation were the factors contributing towards teachers' commitment to teaching profession, and there was no dominant factor influencing commitment to students' learning. They concluded that the results of the study indicate the necessity for leadership development of school leaders so that they could systematically acquire and internalize the effective transformational leadership qualities that are crucial in changing teachers' attitude and improving their commitment towards their profession. Something that needed to be studied and unearthed is whether transformational leadership is linked to enhanced performance in KCSE results in lower eastern region, Kenya.

A similar research was undertaken by Osagie and Mumo (2016) on the principal's leadership, and it showed that the five characteristics of transformational leadership and students' performance in the SSCE supported the researchers' hypotheses. According to the report, transformational leadership is a crucial component of school reform. A descriptive research approach and the transformational multifactor leadership questionnaire, version 5, were employed in this study. The Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire measures a broad range of leadership types from passive leaders, to leaders who give contingent rewards to followers, to leaders who transform their followers into becoming leaders themselves. However, de Rooij and Weeda (2020) have shown that the MLQ is not a validity and reliable measure of leadership behaviors with followers. The questionnaire does not provide sufficient distinctions between the leadership factors that are measured. To bridge this inadequacy, the current study assessed the efficacy of transformational leadership in influencing Institutional performance using a 5-point Likert-type scale questionnaire ranging from 1(not at all) to 5 (frequently used) on the following five dimensions of transformational leadership: idealized influence behavior, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, individualized consideration.

In Kenya, Nderitu et al (2013) explored the relationship between transformational leadership characteristics of secondary school principals' and students' academic performance in KCSE. The study was carried out in Nairobi County, Kenya. Correlational research design was employed. They recommended that all practicing school principals should learn and practice transformational

leadership for effective learning and teaching in their schools. In contrast, this study used transformational leadership practices instead of the transformational leadership characteristics. The research gap identified in the literature review is that although empirical research supports principals' transformational leadership influence on learners' outcomes; there are limited studies in Kenya with scanty evidence of such studies in the lower eastern region in Kenya. Therefore, this study addressed this paucity. Furthermore, studies on student achievement in Kenya have primarily focused on teachers' classroom practices neglecting the potential influence of school leadership. The current study addressed this lacuna too.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design and correlational research design. The target population was 1086 participants including 540 delocalized principals, 540 senior teachers, 3 Cqasos and 3 Kessha chairpersons. The sample size was 294. Data was collected using questionnaires and interview guide. Quantitative data was analyzed descriptively and inferentially while the qualitative data was analyzed thematically.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

i) There is no statistically significant relationship between delocalized principals' idealized influenced and institutional performance among public secondary schools in the lower eastern region, Kenya.

The correlation was ($R= 0.48$). The findings indicated that 23.0% of the total variance in institutional performance ($R^2= 0.230$) could be attributed to idealized influence as implemented by the delocalized principals. The relationship was statistically significant $F(1.143)= 42.489, P<0.001$. The regression model established that institutional performance = $0.796+ 0.823X_1, p=0.000$.

This illustrates that institutional performance would increase by 0.823 with every unit increase in idealized influence. Thus there exist a positive and significant relationship between the delocalized principals idealized influence and institutional performance ($t=6.515, P<0.001$). Therefore, the above sub-hypothesis was rejected. ii) There is no statistically significant relationship between delocalized principals' inspirational motivation and institutional performance among public secondary schools in the lower eastern region, Kenya.

Regression- analysis established a significant positive relationship ($t=4.710, P<0.001$) between inspirational motivation and institutional performance. Regression model established that institutional performance = $1.385 + 0.697 X_1, P=0.000$. This illustrated that institutional performance would increase by 0.697 with every unit increase in inspirational motivation. Thus the sub-hypothesis was rejected. iii) There is no statistically significant relationship between delocalized principals' intellectual stimulation and institutional performance among public secondary schools in the lower eastern region, Kenya.

Finding indicates a significant positive relationship ($t=2.752, P=0.007$) between delocalized principals intellectual stimulation and institutional performance. Regression model found out that institutional performance = $2.504 + 0.447X_1, P=0.000$, illustrating that institutional performance would increase by 0.447 with every unit increase intellectual stimulation. The sub-hypothesis was therefore rejected.

iv) There is no statistically significant relationship between delocalized principals' individualized consideration and institutional performance among public secondary schools in the lower eastern region, Kenya. Regression analysis established a positive and significant relationship ($t=3.63, P=0.001$) between delocalized principals individualized consideration and institutional performance. The Regression model established that the institutional performance = $2.561 + 0.417X_1, P=0.000$. This illustrated that institutional performance would increase by 0.417 for every unit increase in individualized consideration. Therefore the sub hypothesis above was rejected.

CONCLUSION

Descriptive statistics established that delocalized principals adopted transformational leadership attributes in the management of their schools.

Inferential analysis illustrated existence of positive and significant relationship between idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation as well as individualized consideration and institutional performance.

Qualitative findings established that delocalized principals adopted transformational leadership attributes for the good of their schools.

RECOMMENDATION

i) The Ministry of Education through Kenya Educational Management Institute to organize training workshops for Principals on best practices for implementation of transformational leadership strategies.

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