INFLUENCE OF PRINCIPALS’ LEADERSHIP STYLES ON ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF STUDENTS IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN NYAMIRA COUNTY, KENYA

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Abstract: Leadership involves authority and responsibility in terms of deciding the way of being held responsible for the success or failure of achieving the agreed objectives. The purpose of this study was to investigate the influence of principals’ leadership styles on academic performance of students in public secondary schools in Nyamira County, Kenya. The objectives of the study were be prevalent leadership styles used by principals and their effect on academic performance of students in public secondary schools; to find out the effect of principals’ democratic leadership style on academic performance of students in public secondary schools; to establish the effect of principals’ transactional leadership style on academic performance of students in public secondary schools and to assess the effect of principals’ transformational leadership style on academic performance of students in public secondary schools in Nyamira County. The study was guided by the contingency theory of leadership, the behavioral theory of leadership and the institutional theory. Mixed methodology was used during the study. The study used concurrent triangulation research design to obtain information regarding leadership styles and their effect on student’s performance. The study targeted all the 188 principals, 188 deputy principals and 188 senior teachers in Nyamira County. This is because they were more informed on the principals’ leadership styles and academic performance of students in public secondary schools. The sample size comprised of 30% principals, deputy principals and senior teachers which translated to 56 principals, 56 deputy principals and 56 senior teachers giving an accessible sample size of 168 respondents. Simple random sampling technique was used to obtain the respondents that participated in the study. The study employed questionnaires and interview schedules to collect data. Content validity and reliability of the tools was determined before data collection. A reliability coefficient of 0.852 was obtained. Quantitative data was analyzed by descriptive statistics and presented by use of frequency tables while inferential statistics was presented with correlation coefficient. The qualitative data was read and categorized into distinct themes as shown by the responses of the respondents and presented in narrative forms. Based on the findings of this study, it was recommended that: principals should be sensitized to employ all the leadership styles with equal measure to for greater academic performance. The principals and all stakeholders should practice and employ the transactional and transformational styles of leadership to change the schools for maximum academic performance. There is need for principals to apply the leadership styles that lead to maximum academic achievement in secondary schools in Nyamira County.

Key Words: Leadership Styles, Academic Performance.

Introduction

Worldwide, leadership styles play a significant role towards determination of academic performance of many learning institutions. In public secondary schools, principals leadership style has got a great influence on overall institution academic performance since principals act as managers/administrators who oversee day to day running of the institution. In many public secondary schools the major leadership styles which are mostly employed by school principals includes; prevalent leadership style, democratic leadership style, transactional leadership style and transformational leadership style. These
leadership styles determine how school principles execute management and administration functions in schools. Secondary schools principals score as managers of the public secondary schools can be arbitrated on the level of management leadership they exhibit.

There is enough of evidence which suggests that management is among important issues in promoting and improving the outcome after the usage of independent teams is linked. According to Johnson and Hackman (2003), a style of leadership described as a method of giving direction, implementing strategy and inspiring people. There is number of leadership that different leaders use which includes: authoritarian, paternalistic, democratic, laissez-faire, transactional and transformational. This research examined a variety of styles of leadership being implemented in secondary schools within Nyamira County, Kenya, by principals. Current global trends aimed at attainment of quality schooling have created heated debate on the competence nature that school principals’, teachers and board of management (BOM) members should have for effective realization of the curriculum, for high quality outcomes (Ibrahim and Orodho, 2014).

Fasasi et al., (2014), argue that quality is a peculiar and essential character of an inherent feature; a gradation of excellence and a distinguished attribute. In a research researched by Clement (2010), it showsthat male principals are less innovative, caring and democratic, while female principals were found less autonomous and decisive in their administration. However, Cunningham and Paul (2009) argue that there are several parameters that impact the educations’ quality and competencies of principals of schools. These comprise the content taught, the educators who deliver the curriculum, and the few leaders who labour with teachers, students, and the community. The evidence is almost standardized consisting initiatives that concentrates solely on governorship and leadership have difficulty in achieving more than a generalized impact on students learning. Rather the task of schools principals has been changed by unexpected economic, demographic, technological, and global change (Levine, 2005). Despite of the fact that principals play a serious function in setting the direction for thriving learning institutions, the current work environment of public school institutions principals is encountered by various impediments.

Competitive principals are effective and efficient in forming and sustaining a competitive school; such principals have to improve and implement strategic school improvement plans and provide instructional guidance to advance the learning environment. Competitive principals’ demands that both educators and learners have decision making role as far as school rules, regulations and programs are concerned. This they do through staff meetings, students’ council, clubs, committees and organizations involved in running the school (Wango, 2006). Principal's competence can be regarded into five major roles which attribute the duties of principal of a school both globally and in Kenya. These includes administering school curriculum, school finances, and business, administering human resource including students discipline, school physical facilities, and the community surrounding school. Wango (2006) and Saitoti (2003) suggests that quality education should shift from mere certification to encompass the progress of analytical, cognitive, motivational and potential creativity of the individual’s including imagination, spiritual and ethical values. This suggests that competence of principals should be aimed at improving value of education centered on the mentioned characteristics.

To achieve quality education, the school manager must be competent in his mastery of the teacher’s role and must always be ready and keen to work with the teacher. The principal must be highly competent and skilled person, human relations, a delegation of responsibility and communication (Fasasi et al., 2014). These are the main gears towards quality education. As late as 1980, no nation possessed a clearly defined national policy on the training standards for heads of schools. The only
century that several countries have become aware of the significance of self-training for school leaders (Bush, Kiggundu & Moorosi, 2011; Bush, 2008) is the 21st century. In before there have been many transformations in the society which has brought significant change is in the education structure (Warfield, 2009). Now the school’s principal must possess multiple forms of expertise to advance their effectiveness.

Harris (2005) argues that the quality and school’s level for a given nation is affected by how the interior processes work to improve its performance constantly. One of the processes involves leadership where the school principal as the central school figure to continuously articulate the school’s decisions hinge on the following styles leadership which include democratic, autocratic and laissez-faire (Yuk, 2005). School principals and would-be managers need to become recognizable with headship as a discipline to enhance so they can promote leadership which better fits their circumstances and works meticulously to perfect and implement the cultures that will enhance improvement.

Kenya is not left behind in the expedition of attaining the aims and objectives of Vision 2030 and Education For All (EFA) (World’s competitiveness report, 2009). The performance of learning institutions in attaining the aims and objectives of Kenya education depend greatly on the governance that runs the institutions. Notably, many schools still perform dismally due to poor leadership besides inadequate funds and poor physical infrastructure. In this regard, this research is aimed at looking at the effect of principals’ leadership on scholars’ score in KCSE in Nyamira County, Kenya. According to the county educational officer’s office the Nyamira County, Kenya (2013-2015) report, dismal positive index of +1.356 have been there. For the previous last four years, a slight positive trend in KCSE results in the Nyamira County, Kenya, has been seen. This research tried to add to the knowledge base by exploring the leadership school principals use and the strategies they employ in the delivery of quality education among secondary schools in the Nyamira County, Kenya.

The day to day running of the public school institution is vested on the principal. The principal monitors, supervise and then evaluates the curriculum implementation at the institute level. To undertake these duties, the principal may adopt diverse leadership. In a bid to increase performance, some principals become too firm in the applications on leadership while some become less strict. This has effects on the schooling atmosphere that will finally affect performance. Reports from the county director education office indicate that in most institutes, the principals use force and dictatorial tactics in the daily running of the schools. This has triggered many students opposed to the institute leadership, thus leading to strikes and subsequently spreads out to academic performance. The Nyamira County, Kenya, for ten years has been lowly ranked nationally in KCSE performance. Following the above scenario, the researcher wanted to identify if the low performance of the public schools in the Nyamira County, Kenya, is linked to the method used by principals run the schools.

The purpose of this study was to investigate the influence of principals’ leadership on academic performance in public schools in Nyamira County, Kenya. The study specifically aimed to; examine the influence of prevalent leadership used by school principals on academic performance in public secondary schools in the Nyamira County, Kenya; establish the influence of principals’ democratic leadership on academic performance in public secondary schools in the Nyamira County, Kenya; establish the influence of principals’ transactional leadership on scholars’ academic score in public secondary schools in Nyamira County, Kenya and to assess the influence of principals’ transformational leadership on academic performance in public secondary schools in the Nyamira County, Kenya.
Literature Review

The Concept of styles of Leadership and Students’ Performance

Leadership is a process in which members of a group or organization influence the interpretation of internal and external events, choice of goals and desired events, organization of chores, individual motivation and abilities, power relations and shared orientation leadership is seen as having both rational and emotional elements with no assumption about the purpose or outcome of its influence effort (Yuki, 2002). Miskel and Hoy (2008) see leaders as the people who help a group attain objectives through maximum application of its capabilities; such people inspire the group to accomplish the organizational goals. Miskel and Hoy (2008) contend that there’s no clear cut link between students achievement and school administration. As many such studies need to continue being conducted, have a clear cut view of this link. The studies so far conducted are silent on which processes that need restructuring and which structure that needs to be created to produce success, Miskel and Hoy (2008) in Bossert (1988).

Studies have been carried out to ascertain the relationship between leadership of principals and students’ performance. Achieng (2000) found that principals rated as being democratic had high mean score than autocratic principals. The findings agree with Kimacia (2007) who observes a correlation between students score in national examinations and notes and leadership that principals’ democratic leadership had higher score than autocratic principals. Huka (2003) contradicts by noting that principals who are rated most democratic had the lowest mean score while autocratic principals had a higher mean score. Muli (2005) and Wangui (2007) had the same conclusions. Kimacia (2007) found no important difference between principal’s age and leadership. This contradicts with Achieng (2000) in her research that leadership are on account of age. Principals within 41-45 years old range are democratic. Kimacia (2007) established that age does not influence educators in ranking principals’ leadership. Huka (2003) who notes that teachers aged more than 40 years rated principals as being democratic while those within 20-25 years rated them as autocratic contradicts this.

Gacanja (2007) found that female principals practice high consideration structure, which concurs with Ndegwa (2002) findings that female principals practice high consideration structure whereas male principals practice high initiating structure. Achieng (2000) found that female principals are found to be more autocratic while male ones as democratic. This finding agrees with Gacanja (2007) but contradicts with Wangui (2007) findings that male principals are regarded as being more autocratic while their female more counterparts as democratic. Huka (2003) found out that there is a correlation between principal leadership and professional experience. Principals with experience of more than 16 years were regarded higher on consideration behaviour. This concurs with Achieng (2000) that principals with administration experience of between 11-15 years are democratic than those with less administrative experience. This supports the Wangui (2007) but contradicts Kimacia (2007) who says there is no any relationship between administrative experience and leadership. A lot has been written about leadership concerning academic performance of scholars in secondary schools. However, this has not been undertaken in the Nyamira County, Kenya, in particular. This has therefore necessitated this research.

Prevalent styles of Leadership of Principals in Secondary Schools

Educators require to be provided with the training, teaching tools, and the support they require to help all students reach high performance levels. Specifically, teachers need access to, textbooks curriculum guides, or specific training connected to the school curriculum. Fred (2010) argues that teachers need
training on the use of assessment results to diagnose learning gaps. They must know how each scholar scored on every multiple-choice item and other queries on the assessment measure. The training needs to be in the educators’ subject areas so that they are prepared to help scholars achieve at high levels.

Fred (2010) further argues that principals are to guarantee that assessment of students is aligned with both the school’s curriculum and teachers’ instruction. When they are well built and implemented, assessment can tilt the nature of teaching and learning. They can cause more affluent, more demanding curriculum; foster discussion and collaboration among teachers within and across schools; create more creative conversations amongst teachers and parents; and focus stakeholders’ attention on increasing student achievement.

One of the several techniques used in attaining educational objectives is supervision of instructions. It’s a process of activity by which an individual helps to improve teaching and learning situations in educational institutions (Babatope et al., 2013). Management is directed towards both retaining and refining the teaching and learning process in the school. Omoregie (2002) views instructional supervision as an interval process in a school and maintenance of lines of action that promotes productivity. The principal as the school manager should, therefore, perform the school supervisory role in institutional improvement and the evaluation of education. The head should assist teachers in determining the right method, teaching facilities, physical settings, classroom attributes that are probable to promote effective learning in school for better results.

Situational leadership links the success of leaders to the current work atmosphere is referred. Situational leadership allows the school principals to change their leadership as conditions warrant. It stresses the need for adapting the leadership anchored in the developmental level of the institution, teachers or students; hence it’s expected to have an effect on scholars’ performance. Avolio and Bass, (2002), offered full range leadership theory according to which three leadership known as transactional, transformational, Laissez-faire were identified. The authoritarian leadership keeps main stress on the characteristic of the authoritarian leader as well as their followers, these types of leaders make certain to only create advergent professional relationship between them and their staff. Direct control is what they believe to be the key to maintaining a successful environment and followership (Schultz et al., 2010). According to Moses et al., (2015), the authoritarian public leadership is used by leaders who tell their employees what they want to be done and how they want it achieved, without getting the advice of their followers. This style ends up in the group members reacting assertively and apathetically in the work environment. However, there are suggestions that authoritarian style should only be used on rare occasions as it often results in continuous industrial disputes in an organization hence affecting the accomplishment of the overall aims and objectives.

When all the power and right to make decisions is fully given to the worker is known as ‘The laissez-faire leadership’ The laissez-faire leadership laissez-faire leadership, which was first described by Lewin, Lippitt, and White (1938), along with the autocratic leadership and the democratic leadership s. Laissez-faire leaders allow followers to have complete freedom to make decisions about the completion of their work. It allows followers independence, while at the same time offering guidance and support when requested (Woods, 2010). There are no rules and leadership grant complete freedom to a group decision. This style gives the subordinates a high degree of independence in their operations. Subordinates set their goals and the way of achieving them (Weihrich & Koontz, 2007). The followers are only aided by supplying them with the required information. The leaders in this case act as the contact person with the group’s external environment. Very little power is used.
Laissez-faire leadership theory has been seen an increased use in organizations over the years (Northouse, 2001). However, the laissez-faire model does not clearly address the role of group leadership, nor have time-based issues been sufficiently addressed within the model. Regarding group performance, study illustrates that effective groups display relatively higher levels of group efficacy than those who are less effective at a given task (Gibson et al., 2000).

Delegative or free reign is where the leader gives freedom to the employees to make the decisions. This is done when employees can scrutinize the situation and determine what to be done and how to do it (Moses et al., 2015). The Laissez-faire leadership, according to Moses et al., (2015), is where a leader succumbs to theory Y. The research says that people are innately motivated, naturally, like to do work and therefore since everybody has an inborn sense of responsibility there are no rules used. However, this leadership may result in disruptive behaviour due to non-enforcement of rules and regulations in a school leading to poor and low performance in KCSE examinations. This style is considered as the least effective which represent the absence of avoidance of leadership. Uris, (1964) concluded in his research that members in Laissez-faire group progressed haphazardly and took more time in arguments and discussion mostly on the purely personal basis. In a school situation, a principal stays in the office and engages the HODs and students as little as possible.

Huka (2003) steered a research of principals; styles of management and score of KCSE examination in Mandera County. The research revealed that principals who are rated most democratic had the lowest mean score while autocratic principals had a higher mean score. The research also found out that there was a relationship between principal leadership and professional experience. This research would like to find out the principals’ leadership on the scholars’ academic score in public learning institutions within Nyamira County, Kenya.

Democratic style of Leadership and Students Performance in Secondary Schools

A democratic style is characterized by coordination, co-operate and by collaboration. (Yuk, (2005), discovered that laisse-fair which is also well referred as Free-rein leadership empowers subordinate to minister with freedom and free-will. Sammons et al. did the research. (2011) found that leadership effect directly and indirectly on a difference in school and classroom processes and effects indirectly on improvement in learning academic results. Weihrich and Koontz (2007) do state that this leadership is participative. The leader consults with followers/subordinate on proposed activities and decision. The leader gets incorporated in policy formulation but does not dominate group action. The supporters are reinvigorated to participate, and no action without their convenience may take place, or the decision may only be taken after consultation. The democratic leadership consists of the frontrunner getting involved in the decision-making abilities of group members by encouraging the interests of the collective members and by active social equality. The boundaries of democratic involvement tend to be restricted to the organization or the collective needs and the influential value of people's attributes (skills, attitudes, etc.). The democratic leadership encompasses the view that everyone, by due to their human status, should play a part in the collective's decisions (Woods, 2010).

A research in Uganda by Nsubuga (2009) identified that the consultative or democratic form of leadership was most used and found to be effective in government schools within the country. It was also found that most headteachers in Uganda used this leadership to develop ownership. The findings of the study as well showed that in schools of one leadership was used. Though the most preferred style was democratic style, depending on situations in schools; it was found that, leaders mostly use the various leadership and at a time and often use other leadership. It was found that where the
democratic leadership was practiced, the school was likely to achieve good overall school performance.

Ngugi (2006) found headteachers who implemented democratic leadership had a high exam result and there was no significant relationship discovered between the autocratic leadership and academic score in government A level institutions in Kiambu District, Kenya. Onyango (2008) stated that good academic results in K.C.S.E were seen in schools whose headteachers were having a mixture of Task-oriented behaviour and relationship oriented behaviour. From the studies above, it was yet not clear whether a particular leadership resulted in the most effective form of organizational behaviour. In the relationship-oriented behavior leadership, the workers were incorporated in making decision hence promoted high morale among the workers was seen.

Okoth (2000) carried out a study on the effect of leadership on scholars’ score in KCSE in Nairobi sub-county, Kenya, and found out that principals regarded as being democratic had high mean score index than autocratic principal. Huka (2003), brings a point of difference by noting that the most rated democratic principals had the lowest mean scores, while autocratic principals had higher mean scores.

Njuguna (1998) asserts that democratic head teachers are rated to have high academic performance than autocratic head teachers. Although Democratic leadership being described as the most successful leadership, it has some perspective downsides. In situations where roles are not clear or time is an important factor, democratic leadership can lead to uncompleted projects and communication failures. In some and most cases, group members may not have the enough knowledge or expertise to make quality contributions to the decision making process. Democratic leadership works better where members are skilled and ready to share knowledge and ideas and when there is enough time.

**Transactional Leadership and Students Performance in Secondary Schools**

This type of leaders focus on their leadership on motivating followers through a system of rewards and punishments. The two factors which form the basis for this system are; Contingent Reward and management-by-exception. Contingent Reward Provides rewards, materialistic for effort, and recognizes good score. Management-by-exception gives the leader the power to maintain the status quo (Liu et al., 2011). Transactional leadership is the leadership that is often used by many companies and organizations including institutions of learning. Transactional leadership believes that reward and punishment motivate people. The same leadership also assumes that when people agree to do a particular work, one of that agreement is to give up all authority to their boss. The leader has control and power over the subordinates. The main mission of the employee is to follow the orders and rules of their supervisors. The clue is that when a subordinate takes up a task, he or she agrees to obey their supervisors completely. The ‘transaction’ is the cash or any other method of a award that the company gives to its subordinates for their determination and compliance. Comparing the relationship between subordinate and the leader becomes transactional. In transactional leadership, the leading light has the right to discipline his or her subordinates if their score is not according to the determined standard.

Transactional leadership states clearly what is expected and required from their subordinates. Transactional leadership also indicates that subordinates will get an award if they follow the orders to the letter. Sometimes consequences are not mentioned, but they are understood. In the initial stages of transactional leadership, the subordinate is in the course of negotiating the contract. The contract stipulates fixed pay and the accrued benefits that will be agreed to the subordinate. Rewards are given to subordinates staff for applied effort. Some organization use incentives to encourage their
subordinates for greater yield. Transactional leadership helps on improving the score of its subordinates by giving those rewards.

Transactional leadership is also called a ‘trueleadership since it concentrates on short term achievements instead of long term achievements. In Transactional leadership, when the leader allocates task to its subordinates, then it is the work of the subordinate to warrant that the assigned work is finished on time. If the assigned work is yet completed as agreed or if something, then penalty is done due to their failure. But if they finish the task as agreed then the subordinates are given a reward for successfully completing the task. Subordinates are also given an award and applauded for exceeding expectations. A subordinate whose score is below expectation is punished, and some action is taken to increase his or her score.

Transactional leadership has more of a ‘telling style.’ Transactional leadership is based on the truth that punishment or reward depends on the achieved results. Even though learners (researchers) has indicated its shortcomings, transactional leadership is still used by many employers. Most companies are adopting transactional leadership to increase the score of its employees. This approach is prevalent in the real workplace.

Kimacia (2007) carried out a study on the relationship between leadership of headteachers and female student score in K.C.S.E in public government secondary learning institutions in Narok County. The research found out that there is no relationship between administrative experience and leadership. The research also further found that there is a correlation between leadership and students score in national examinations and noted that principals’ democratic leadership had higher score than autocratic principals. However, this research would like to establish the effect of principals’ leadership on the academic score of all students in public schools institutions in within Nyamira County, Kenya, irrespective of gender.

**Transformational style of Leadership and Students Performance in Secondary Schools**

Transformational leadership starts with the development of vision, a view of the future that will excite and convert potential followers. The main goal may be built by the leader, by the senior team, or may emerge from a broad series of discussions. An essential factor is the leader buys into it, hook, line and sinker (Bass & Bass, 2008). According to Bass & Bass (2008), the next step, which in fact never stops, is to sell the vision constantly. This takes commitment and energy, as a small group of people will automatically go for a radical vision idea, and some will join the show much more slowly than others. The Transformed Leader, therefore, takes every chance and will use whatsoever works to convince others to climb on board the bandwagon. In collaboration with the selling, activity is seeking the next accurate move. The research by Miskel and Hoy (2008), on transformational leadership, shows that are proactive, bring about the awareness levels of followers on encouraging collective interests and assist followers in achieving unusually higher performance outcomes.

Bass and Riggio (2006) concluded on a theory of four I s, motivational inspiration, stimulation of intellectual, idealized influence and consideration of individualized. Influence of idealized is caused up by the great conviction on significant matters by the leader, high ethical and moral standard set, setting and attaining goals and sharing of risks as well as bearing in mind the needs of others over own. And because of this, the leader is given respect, admired much and also trusted by the followers.

Inspiration drive is based on the followers’ take that the system of government problems can be resolved as stated by Atwater and Bass (1994) in Mikel and Hoy (2008). The followers are energized
by projecting an attractive and optimistic vision for the organization. The followers are made to believe that the vision is attainable. In so doing, enthusiasm, optimism, team spirit, goal commitment and a shared vision arise. Atwater and Bass (1994) in Miskel and Hoy (2008) further contend that intellectual stimulation is nurtured through the culture of questioning old assumptions, traditions and beliefs, reframing problems and approaching old situations in new ways. Followers are challenged to do things creatively and in an innovative way. As Avolio (1999) in Miskel and Hoy (2008) posts, there’s nothing that is too fixed, too good, too political or too bureaucratic that cannot be contested, changed or cleared out.

Individualized consideration revolves around the matter of the wants and capability of others such as Atwater and Bass (1994) in Miskel and Hoy (2008) politics. In the same way followers develop to the successfully higher level of potential while taking responsibility for their development Avolio (1994) in Miskel and Hoy (2008). New learning opportunities are created in a supportive climate while at the same time recognizing individual differences.

Some Transformed Leaders know the way, and simply want others to follow them. Others do not have a ready strategy, but will happily lead the exploration of possible routes to the Promised Land (Aziz, 2009). The route forwards may not be obvious and may not be plotted in details, but with a clear vision, the direction will always be defined. Thus finding the way forward can be an ongoing process of course correction and the Transformed Leader will accept that there will be failures and blind gorges along the way. As long as they feel progress is being made, they will be happy. Riggio (2009) asserts that the ultimate stage is to remain up-front and central during the action. Leaders that are transformed are always noticeable and always stand to be counted instead of hiding behind their troops. They express by their actions and attitudes on how each one else should behave. They also make continued efforts to encourage and rally their followers, repetitively doing the rounds and listening, and enthusing and soothing.

Antonakis, Avolio, & Sivasubramaniam (2003) further argue that it is their unswerving commitment as much as anything else that keeps people going, particularly through the bad times when some may query if the vision can ever be achieved or not. If the people do not believe that they can succeed, then their efforts will flag. The Transformational Leader seeks to infect and re-infect their followers with a high level of obligation to the vision. According to Alimo-Metcalfe & Alban-Metcalfe (2001), in one of the methods the Transformed Leader uses to sustain motivation is in the usage of ceremonies, rituals and other cultural symbolism. Small alterations get big hurrahs, increasing their significance as indicators of real progress. Overall, they balance their attention between action that creates progress and the mental state of their followers. Perhaps more than other approaches, they are people-oriented and believe that success preceeds everything else and last through deep and sustained commitment.

Bass & Riggio (2006) observe that while the Transformed Leader seeks overtly to transform the organization, there is also a tacit promise to followers that they also will be transformed in some way, perhaps to be more like this wonderful leader. In some respects, then, the followers are the product of the transformation. Transformational Leaders are often charismatic but are not as narcissistic as pure Charismatic Leaders, who succeed through a belief in themselves rather than a belief in others. According to Kotlyar & Karakowsky (2007), one of the traps of Transformed Leadership is that passion and confidence can easily be mistaken for truth and reality. Whileit is factual that great things have been attained through enthusiastic leadership, it is also factual that many passionate people have led the charge right over the cliff and into a bottomless chasm. Just because someone believes they are right, it does not mean they are right. Kotlyar & Karakowsky (2006) argue that paradoxically, the energy that gets people going also cause them to give up.
Transformed Leaders often have huge amounts of enthusiasm which, if uncompromisingly applied, can wear out their followers. Transformational Leaders also tend to see the big picture, but not the details, where the devil often lurks. If they do not have people to take care of this level of information, then they are usually doomed to fail. Finally, transformational leaders, by definition, seek to transform. When the organization does not need transforming, and people are happy as they are, then such a leader will be frustrated. Like wartime leaders, however, given the right situation, they come into their own and can be personally responsible for saving entire companies (Nissinen, 2006). This research sought to establish the effect of the transformational leadership of the principal on the scholars’ academic score as to boost performance.

Theoretical Literature Review

This study was based on two theories: the Contingency Theory of Leadership, the behavioural theory of leadership and the institutional Theory.

The Contingency Theory of Leadership

The Contingency Theory of Leadership was developed by Fiedler (1964) cited in Cole, (2002) which suggests that ability of a leader to lead is contingent upon several situational factors, which includes the leader’s favored style, the capabilities and behaviours of followers and also various other situational factors. According to Northouse, (2007), Fiedler developed contingency theory by analysing different leader’s styles who worked in different contexts, primarily military organizations.

According to Chance and Chance (2002), contingency theory produces a practical application for school leaders. The Chances’ believed that understanding contingency theory would help school leaders in several ways. First, this theory helps to identify outside variables that impact a school. Secondly, contingency theory helps to appraise the impact of school’s organization structure on responses to external pressures and demands. Most importantly, contingency theory matches leaderships among teachers’ personalities and attitudes Chance & Chance, (2002). According to Hoy, (2006), the contingency theory states that leadership effectiveness is said to be dependent upon many variables. Therefore the theory argues that a specific trait under a particular situation makes a particular leader effective. The same trait in another situation may make the leader ineffective. Contingency theories are a class of behavioral theory that claims that no one better way of leading and that of leadership that is effective in some situation may not be successful in some situations. The contingency theory, therefore, conforms to the researcher’s target population in selecting principals who have been in a school for a minimum of two years as the entire teaching population will be able to make perception of the leadership and its effect on the scholars’ academic score.

Behavioral Theory of Leadership

The study was guided by the behavioral theory of leadership which focuses more on patterns of leadership behavior than on the individual leader. It suggests that certain behavioral patterns may be identified as a leadership. Applications of behavioral theory promote the value of leadership with an emphasis on concern for people and participative decision making, encouraging collaboration and team development by supporting individual needs and aligning individual and group objectives. Behavioral leadership theory is a response to the early criticisms of the trait approach; theorists began to research leadership as a set of behaviors. They evaluated what successful leaders did, developed a taxonomy of actions, and identified broad patterns that indicated different leadership. Behavioral theory also incorporates B.F. Skinner’s theory of behavior modification, which takes into account the effect of
reward and punishment on changing behaviour. An example of this theory in action is a manager or leader who motivates desired behaviour by rebuking employees who arrive late to meetings and showing appreciation when they are on time. This in a way may enhance students’ score in public secondary schools.

Institutional theory

The theory had its origin from the work of theorists thousands of years ago. The institutionalization of habits was regarded as an outcome and as a process reflecting the power of organized interests and the actors who mobilized those interests (Covaleski et al, 2003). The theory considered processes by which structures including schemes, rules, norms and routines became established as authoritative guidelines for social behaviour and extended to explain economic interactions between several units of analysis. Different components of institutional theory explained how those elements were created, diffused, adopted and adapted over space and time and how they fell into decline and disuse. Schools are regarded as institutions which require resources which they need to account for. These resources are acquired and used within rules established as authoritative guidelines for the school by relevant stakeholders like boards of management and ministry of education. All these resources need to be channeled to enhance students’ performance.

Conceptual Framework

The study was also guided by a conceptual framework in which the independent variables (I.Vs) are: the prevalent leadership democratic leadership, transformational leadership and transactional leadership used by principals in secondary schools. These are important variables as the researcher hopes that through them the researcher will be able to govern their effect on scholars’ academic score in public schools. In this case, students’ academic score becomes the dependent variable (D.V). However, the following intervening variables have been noted in the research, but control of intervening variables which is taken care of during the construction of the study instruments. These include the teaching methods, training of the teachers, government policy, security, work environment, working conditions and parents’ attitude towards administration.

Methodology

Mixed methodology was used during the study. The study used concurrent triangulation research design to obtain information regarding leadership styles and their effect on student’s performance. The study targeted all the 188 principals, 188 deputy principals and 188 senior teachers in Nyamira County. This is because they were more informed on the principals’ leadership styles and academic performance of students in public secondary schools. The sample size comprised of 30% principals, deputy principals and senior teachers which translated to 56 principals, 56 deputy principals and 56 senior teachers giving an accessible sample size of 168 respondents. Simple random sampling technique was used to obtain the respondents that participated in the study. The study employed questionnaires and interview schedules to collect data. Content validity and reliability of the tools was determined before data collection. A reliability coefficient of 0.852 was obtained. Quantitative data was analyzed by descriptive statistics and presented by use of frequency tables while inferential statistics was presented with correlation coefficient. The qualitative data was read and categorized into distinct themes as shown by the responses of the respondents and presented in narrative forms.
Results and Discussion

Principals’ Prevalent styles of leadership in Secondary Schools

Objective one of this study was to establish the prevalent leadership used by principals in secondary learning institutions within the Nyamira County, Kenya. It was established by 10.7% senior teachers and 12.5% of principal assistants that autocratic leadership is commonly used in their secondary learning institutions within the Nyamira County, Kenya. Concerning the use of democratic leadership, it was established by majority 78.6% senior teachers and 71.4% of the principal assistants confirmed that the leadership was prevalent in their schools. It was further established by 71% senior teachers and 5.4% of the principal assistants that laissez-faire leadership is used in most learning institutions within the Nyamira County, Kenya. On the use of transformational leadership, it was established by minority 1.8% senior teachers and 8.9% of the principal assistants that this leadership was less commonly used in secondary learning institutions within the Nyamira County, Kenya. Finally, it was established by 1.8% senior tutors and a similar percentage of principal assistants that transactional leadership was used in secondary learning institutions within the Nyamira County, Kenya.

It was established that 33.9% of the principals who indicated that they commonly employ autocratic leadership had an average mean standard score of 3.952 (mean grade of D+ (plus)) while 21.4% of the principals that applied democratic leadership quite often had an average mean standard score of 4.676 (mean grade of C- (minus)) at the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education for the past five years. It was further established that 21.4% of the principals that employ laissez-faire leadership quite often had an average mean standard score of 3.631 (mean grade of D+ (plus)) while 10.7% of the principals that commonly use transformational leadership had an average mean standard score of 6.362 (mean grade of C (plain)) at the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education for the past five years. Finally, it was established that 7.2% of the principals who indicated that they commonly employ transactional leadership had an average mean standard score of 6.933 (which is a mean of mean grade C+ (plus)) at the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education for the past five years.

Principals’ Democratic style of leadership on Academic Performance

The other research objective and the second one was to identify the effect of principals’ democratic leadership on academic students score in public secondary institutions within the Nyamira County, Kenya. It established by majority 78.6% senior teachers and majority of the principal assistants that in their schools they work as one to develop and articulate a shared purpose and a clear educational vision focused on learning. Concerning the reality that the principals take shared responsibility for school practices and outcomes, it was established by majority 80.4% senior teachers and majority 96.4% of the principal assistants that the principals take shared responsibility for school practices and outcomes. It was further established by majority 80.3% of the senior teachers and 78.5% principal assistants that the principals emphasize power through people rather than power over people. It was established by majority 89.3% of the senior teachers and majority 98.2% principal assistants that the principals allow tutors to have substantial autonomy and discretion to strategies curriculum and organize learning instruction within an overall framework.

Concerning the truth that teachers share information and make decisions together in their own schools, it was established by slightly more than half 53.6% of the senior teachers and majority 60.7% of the principal assistants were of the opinion in their schools they share information and make decisions together as a staff. Finally, it was established by majority 82.1% of the senior teachers and majority 94.6% principal assistants that most of the resolutions are agreed in the staff meetings. This implies
that most of the principals in secondary learning institutions within the Nyamira County, Kenya, allow
tutors to deliberate the agenda fully in staff meetings and build consensus together. This is health for
the students score and the growth of the school in all spheres.

**Principals’ style of leadership on Academic Performance**

The third aim of this study was to find out the effect of principals’ transactional leadership on academic score of scholars in secondary school institutes within the Nyamira County, Kenya. It was established by majority 87.5% senior teachers and majority 80.3% of the principal assistants that the principals allow time and support professional development that improves curriculum, instruction, and scholar learning. It was further established that 48.2% senior teachers and majority 87.5% of the principal assistants that the principals have forged partnerships with the community. From the findings, it was established by majority 87.5% of the senior teachers and majority 98.2% of principal assistants that the principals have created an atmosphere of trust and respect among staff, students, and the school community. The Information on the truth that departments are fully functional and autonomous in decision making showed that more than half 53.6% senior teachers and majority 60.7% of the principal assistants that their principals have allowed the departments to be fully functional and autonomous in decision making. Finally, from the findings, it was further established that majority 89.3% senior teachers and majority 94.6% of the principal assistants were of the view that the staff members have regular staff meetings/briefs with the principals to discuss issues arising.

**Principals’ Transformational style of leadership on Academic Performance**

The fourth aim of this study was to assess the outcome of principals’ transformational leadership on academic students score in secondary learning institutions within the Nyamira County, Kenya. It was established by majority 84.0% senior teachers, and more than half 57.1% of the principal assistants were of the opinion that in their schools, principals base authority more on professional information and capability than on position and rules. Concerning the truth that the principals facilitate and guide the staff members to adopt practices that advance student performance, it was established by majority 78.5% senior teachers and majority 92.8% of principal assistants that the principals do facilitate and guide the staff members to adopt practices that advance student performance. The findings further revealed that majority 85.7% senior teachers and majority 76.8% of the principal assistants were of the opinion that the principals communicate their passion for learning by challenging ineffective practices and teachers.

It was further established by majority 87.5% senior teachers and majority 91.1% of the principal assistants that the principals provide formal and informal means for staff and scholars to raise and solve problems. Concerning the truth that principals accept conflict as normal and use them as a stimulus for change, it was established by majority 78.6% senior teachers and majority 91.1% of the principal assistants were of the opinion that in their principals accept clash as usual and use them as an incentive for change. Finally, from the findings, it was established by majority 85.7% senior teachers and majority 82.1% of principal assistants were of the opinion that principals encourage the use of teams to plan and implement school improvement. This implies that most of the heads in secondary education within the Nyamira County, Kenya, promote the use of teams from among the stakeholders to plan and implement school improvement.
Conclusions

Based on the results of this research, it can be settled that the most prevalent leadership used by the management of secondary learning institutions within the Nyamira County, Kenya, are: autocratic, democratic and laissez-faire leadership, while the least used, are the transactional and transformational leadership. These two are participatory leadership that are expected in the 21st Century for the aim of achieving the SDGs and vision 2030 in education.

It can also be concluded that transformational and transactional leadership has not been practiced in the secondary schools. This was confirmed by the tutors and principal assistants as these leadership are action oriented and need to be felt by all the stakeholders. Finally, it can be concluded that the type of principals’ leadership has a bearing on academic performance. The principals should, therefore, use the transactional and transformational leadership for greater achievement in academic performance.

Recommendations for Practice

Grounded on the findings of this research, the following recommendations are made: The principals should be sensitized to employ all the leadership with equal measure to for greater academic performance. Sensitization should be done through the County Education Directorate of the Nyamira County, Kenya. The principals and all stakeholders should practice and employ the transactional and transformational leadership to change the schools for maximum academic performance. Given that the principals’ leadership affects academic performance, there is need of application of the leadership that lead to maximum academic achievement in secondary learning institutions within the Nyamira County, Kenya.

Recommendations for Further Research

To fill up existing gap, more gaps emerged which need to be filled. The following are the areas that require further research: Reading on the relationship between principals’ leadership and working conditions of the staff in public schools should be carried out and the results tested by use of inferential statistical techniques. A study on the parents’ attitude towards the principals’ leadership in public schools should be conducted.

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