TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP AND ITS EFFECT ON SCHOOL CLIMATE IN MERU SOUTH SUBCOUNTY-THARAKA NITHI COUNTY

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ABSTRACT

Leadership is an essential facet for the development of an organization. School leadership therefore, plays a vital role in the development and achievement of school objectives and the goals of an education system as a whole. Transformational leadership has been described as inspiring leadership that creates an environment of trust, hope and motivation in schools. This study sought to determine the effect of transformational leadership style on school climate. The objectives of the study were to determine the effects of idealized influence on school climate, to establish the effects of inspirational motivation on school climate and to examine the effect of intellectual stimulation on school climate. The study was carried out in Meru South Sub County, Tharaka Nithi County which has shown persistent poor performance, coupled with indiscipline among students. The researcher adopted the descriptive survey design. The target population was

54 secondary school principals, 432 teachers and 12562 students in Meru South Sub County. A sample of 16 principals was selected using purposive sampling, while 130 teachers and 100 students were selected using both stratified and simple random sampling techniques. Data was collected using structured questionnaires. A pilot study was carried out using test re-test method to determine the reliability and the validity of the research instruments. Data was collected from teachers and students with the use of self-administered questionnaires, while the principals were interviewed face to face by the researcher. Data was analyzed using descriptive statistics with the help of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20.

Key words: School Academic Climate, Transformational Leadership, Students' academic self-efficacy.

1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Globally, educating a nation remains the most vital strategy for the development of the society throughout the developing world (Aikaman & Unterhalter, 2009). The two researchers concur that it is the human resources of a nation and not its capital or natural resources that ultimately determine the pace of its economic and social development. According to Nsubuga, (2009) the principal institutional mechanism for developing human capital is the formal education system of primary, secondary, and tertiary education and training. Since education is an investment, there is a significant positive correlation between education and economic-social productivity.

When people are educated, their standards of living are likely to improve, since they are empowered to access productive ventures, which will ultimately lead to an improvement in their livelihoods. The role of education therefore, is not just to impart knowledge and skills that enable the beneficiaries to function as economic and social change agents in society, but also to impart values, ideas, attitudes and aspirations important for national development. Leadership in education is therefore, an important aspect of the growth of any economy.

Leadership is a respected and highly valued duty by individuals and organizations. The growth of one's' career is therefore related to his or her personal effectiveness in leading others (Maxwell, 2011). Maxwell (2011) further contended that all people have leadership potentials and that leadership looks different in various situations. This gives an impression that a leader should have concurrence with his/her followers if an organization has to meet its goals and

objectives. A school as an organization requires concurrence in goals and objectives among the school principal, teachers, students, and the school support staff, if it is to effectively achieve its objectives. According to modern theory of leadership, leaders can be classified into transformational, transactional and uninvolved leaders (Burns, 2008). As opposed to transactional leadership, transformational leaders have been found to be effective in motivating followers in carrying out seemingly difficult tasks (Bass, 2008). For instance, Bass (2008) noted that transformational leadership refers to the leader's moving the follower beyond immediate self-interests through idealized influence (charisma), inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, or individualized consideration. Supporting these arguments Leithwood (2009) described transformational leaders as leaders who pay attention to the individual subordinate by understanding and sharing in the subordinate's concerns and developmental needs and treating each subordinate individually.

Transformational leadership has been reported to improve school management and attainment of set goals in education in a number of ways. According to Leithwood (2009) school leaders are constantly striving for three fundamental goals: helping staff members develop and maintain a collaborative and professional school culture; fostering teacher development; and helping them solve problems together more effectively. In his study, Leithwood (2009) noted that school leaders who demonstrate transformational leadership behaviours empower teachers to rise above their personal expectations and help create and encourage belief in common goals. Transformational school managers have the ability to transform and shift teachers' motives from the level of self-interest to the level of common school interest thus creating a more collectivistic belief about their capability among teachers.

Referring to transformational leadership, Burns (2008) described followers and their leaders as inspiring each other to achieve higher levels of morality and motivation such as justice and equality. Leithwood and Jantzi (2010) indicated that transformational leadership creates bonds between leaders and followers within a collaborative change process thus contributing to the performance of the whole organization. This perception of the leadership the style contains a value judgment where transformational leadership is described more favorably than transactional leadership.

Leithwood and Jantzi (2010) further explained transformational leadership as having four dimensions in relation to the educational settings: enhancing staff development, instructional support, supporting school activities that lead to achievement of school objectives and motivating students and staff by showing direction for change. The two authors have observed that the school principals who succeed in their job use a wide range of mechanisms to motivate and activate their staff to bring about change in their school climate. All the dimensions in an educational institution squarely lie at the hands of the school administrator who in Kenyan school setting is the school principal.

According to Freiberg (2008), quality of education can be enhanced through improved school administration and a more standardized form of management. Freiberg (2008) further notes that a key characteristic of an administrator is professional expertise. This implies that an administrator should have technical or professional knowledge and skills in the area under his or her authority. Thus, a principal of a school, deputy or head of department should be familiar with the duties and responsibilities as assigned. Leaders should have analytical and problem solving abilities, decision making skills and thus deserve the power and authority inherent in the administrative function. Power in authority is not dictatorial, it means that the leader serves steering role in the organization. The administrator is professional in that his or her objective is decisive, innovative and responsible. He enacts the task at hand diligently. This implies that a school principal plays a key role in nurturing a conducive school climate that culminates into effective schools.

Definitions of school climate tend to have a convergence in that those schools characteristics like the students and teachers interactions and the school physical structure, are two dissimilar factors that affect and aid to describe the broad idea of school climate (Marshall, 2008). Various factors that affect school climate have been identified. The number and quality of interactions between adults (teachers) and students in a school explain the school climate (Kuperminc, Leadbeater & Blatt, 2007). According to Johnson, Johnson and Zimmerman (2006), environmental factors (such as the physical buildings, classrooms, and materials used for instruction) and teachers' and students' insight of their school environment are important aspects of the school climate. The feeling of safeness and school size, academic performance, as well as, feelings of trust for students and teachers depict good school climate (Freiberg, 2008)

Based on the above definitions, school climate impacts many individuals, comprising school personnel, students, the community and parents, and is multi-dimensional. Additionally, educational environments can be impacted significantly by the school climate. Freiberg (2008) notes that, "school climate can have positive influence on the health of the learning environment or a significant barrier to learning" (p.22).

According to Hallinger (2013) the school principal is the most important influential individual in a learning institution and his managerial skills set the benchmark direction, tone and tempo and the school learning climate. A school principal who concentrates in setting a happy atmosphere in the school set up by creating qualities of integrity and habits of service in his pupils, teachers and subordinate staff will find that academic success is the hallmark of his institution. This implies that school managers should be concerned about the welfare of fellow teachers, subordinates, the pupils and the surrounding environment.

The above sentiments suggest that the principals' leadership styles is instrumental in setting the school climate which then impacts on school performance. This study aimed at determining the effect of use of transformational leadership style by secondary school principals effects on school climate in Tharaka Nithi County and Meru South Sub County.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

School principals have a significant function in determining the school performance. Various aspects of the school that impact on its performance are greatly influenced by the school principals' leadership style. During the past decade, schools have undertaken fundamental changes in areas such as curriculum development, students' and teachers' roles, and learning strategies. These changes have brought about a shift in the philosophy that dominate the realm of educational leadership.

Due to changes that have occurred in school transformation for the last two decades, schools cannot be effective if the school principal continues functioning as an instructional leader only. Principals are required to convey the visionary guidance to the organization, a duty that has not yet been fully addressed by instructional leaders. Successful school principals use variety mechanisms to activate and motivate their staff to adjust their school climate. Kenyan schools have been rocked with problems ranging from poor performance to indiscipline, with Meru

South Sub County being one of the most affected areas. The school principals have received endless criticisms as failures in their duties for their leadership styles which are seen not to change with the dynamisms of the school setting today. Although this is a burning issue little has been done to establish the transformational leadership style of school principals and its effects on school climate and consequently, school performance.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to assess the use and the effect of transformational leadership style by public secondary school principals on school climate in Tharaka Nithi County and Meru South Sub County.

1.4 Objective of the Study

To establish the effect of transformational leadership on school academic climate in Meru South Sub-county, Tharaka-Nithi County

1.5 Significance of the Study

School management is an issue that has raised concern from stakeholders for a long time. The findings of this study would highlight the transformational leadership techniques used by school principals. The knowledge gained from this study could be used by the Ministry of Education in designing curriculum for school administrative trainings that can be adopted for improvement of schools climate. The results also highlights the discrepancies and shortcomings of the school administrators paving way for advisory trainings that can improve their performance. The findings of the research will contribute to important literature adding to the existing body of knowledge on the subject matter.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 School Climate

Due to its significant effects on educational outcomes, school climate for many years has been researched and is still examined and redefined. However, the definitions of school climate tend to concur that those characteristics of schools, such as the physical structures such as school buildings, the interactions between students and teachers and the subordinate staff are the two diverse factors that describe the broad concept of school climate (Marshall, 2008).

Various factors that affect school climate have been identified. The number and quality of interactions between adults (teachers) and students in a school explain the school climate (Kuperminc, Lead beater & Blatt, 2007). According to Johnson, Johnson and Zimmerman (2006), environmental factors (such as the physical buildings, classrooms and materials used for instruction) students' and teachers' perception of their school environment, or the school's personality are important aspects of the school climate. The feeling of safeness and school size, academic performance, as well as, feelings of trust in students and teachers depict good school climate (Freiberg, 2008).

Clearly, school climate effects many individuals, including school personnel, students, the community and parents, and is multi-dimensional. In addition, educational environments can be impacted significantly by the school climate. Freiberg (2008) notes that school climate can influence the learning environment positively or be a significant obstacle to learning. These sentiments are supported by many other school climate researchers (Kuperminc et al., 2007; Haynes & Comer, 2009; Haynes, 2010). For example, a positive school climate has been associated with fewer behavioural and emotional problems for students (Kuperminc et al., 2007). Additionally, specific research on school climate in high-risk urban environments indicates that a positive, supportive, and culturally conscious school climate can significantly shape the degree of academic success experienced by urban students (Haynes & Comer, 2009). In a another study Haynes (2010) found that positive school climate perceptions are protective factors for boys and may supply high-risk students with a supportive learning environment yielding healthy development, as well as, preventing antisocial behaviour (Haynes, 2010).

School climate research suggests that positive interpersonal relationships and optimal learning opportunities for students in all demographic environments can increase achievement levels and reduce maladaptive behaviour (McEvoy & Welker, 2010). Regarding the roles of teachers and administrators, Taylor and Tashakkori (2005) found that a positive school climate is associated with increased job satisfaction for school personnel. Finally, student perspectives are important during the transition from one school level to another. Attending a new school can be frightening for students and this apprehension can adversely affect students' perceptions of their school's climate and learning outcomes.

According to Macneil and Maclin (2005) school climate is the beliefs and attitudes about the way in which various things or situations are handled in a given school. A positive school climate constitutes a school culture that is nurturing to all school members. School culture regards perceptions, general attitudes and relationships within a school. A school principal should thus create a culture that everyone believes all students are potential learners, that is optimistic and nurturing and where it is intellectually challenging fun and safe. By so doing, students identify with school, feel challenged to promote the school, improve on their self-esteem and self-efficacy. Tableman & Herron (2004) asserts that a positive school climate is one in which the feelings and attitudes about a school expressed by students, teachers, staff and parents allows them to identify with school.

2.2 Components of School Climate

In this study school climate will be conceptualized in two dimensions: the social and the academic dimension. According to Alexandra (2007) the social aspect of school climate comprises various aspects which include, quality of interpersonal relationships between and among students, teachers, and non-teaching staff; fair treatment of students by teachers and non-teaching staff. Other aspects include, degree of competition and social comparison between students; and the degree to which students, teachers, and staff contribute to decision-making at the school.

A school with a positive school social climate therefore, boasts of good interpersonal relationships among its members, feelings of equal treatment of the students by the teachers and staff and appreciation and involvement of the students into school decision making affairs, where possible. A positive social environment in a school can therefore, create high motivation among students, a sense of belonging in the students' fraternity and develop the students' academic self-efficacy. The social dimension in this study shall be evaluated in terms of the student's perception of the school environment, as well as, the students' academic self-efficacy. On academic dimension, Alexandra (2007) noted that it consists of quality of instruction, teacher expectations for student achievement; and monitoring student progress and promptly, and availability of instructional materials.

2.3 School academic climate

School academic climate refers to the learning and teaching atmosphere with the areas where teaching and learning is taking place. A good school academic climate is the one whose physical facilities facilitate effective learning in that they are safe and comfortable for learners.

The school academic climate is usually measured as school learning environment. According to UNESCO (2012), "school learning environment is the complete physical, social and pedagogical context in which learning is intended to occur. The term most often refers to school classrooms but may include any designated place of learning such as science laboratories, distance learning contexts, libraries, tutoring centres, teachers' lounges, gymnasiums and non-formal learning spaces" (p. 12). In this study learning environment is conceptualized as the environmental conditions such as, learning areas or facilities are availed to the learner during learning or the factors embedded in the shared physical and social learning environment of the school or classroom that influence learning processes. These include (but not limited to) health and safety features, social and pedagogical interactions, time limitations and sequencing of learning events, space, furniture, light, sound, temperature and access to learning resources.

Studies about students' academic achievements and building conditions conclude that the quality of the physical environment significantly affects students achievement. For instance, Bunting (2004) asserted that "today's schools must create spaces that students want to go to, similar to the way cafes attract people, rather than the space being purely functional" (p.12). Similarly, a study on effect of learning environment on teaching and learning showed that significant improvements in the learning environment were attributed to the better attitudes to teaching and learning the improvements in the physical environment created amongst all users (Higgins et al. 2005). It is worth noting that decent facilities make additional contributions to teachers work. It reduces the tasks to be performed by the teacher, spares him energy while allowing for adequate and constructive interaction between the teacher and the learners. Siegel (2009) found that there was a direct relationship between architecture and the collaboration of teachers. He noted that, the arrangement of space has immediate and far reaching consequences for teacher's ability to effectively and efficiently accomplish daily activities, the formation of social and professional relationships, and the sharing of information and knowledge (Siegel, 2009). Humble space, and good sitting arrangement will not only allow teacher/student interaction but also learner freedom

for interaction with the different resources within the class creating interest and motivation in the learner.

On the other hand, the physical conditions of the teaching spaces such as seating, furnishings, spatial density, privacy, noise and acoustics, climate and thermal control, air quality, windowless classrooms, vandalism and play-yards, light and colour have effects on students' engagement, attainment, attendance and wellbeing (Earthman, 2004). It should be noted that for a learner to conceptualize ideas in class, the class situation must allow for adequate comfort that could enhance listening, attentiveness, and maintain concentration for the stipulated period of time. Excessive high temperatures are disturbing, while coldness is unhealthy for any learner to be able to concentrate. Dull classes may not be appealing to the students, while many decorations in the class may distract their attention.

The social aspect of the class cannot be overlooked. The teacher/student relationship in class is also an important aspect of the school academic climate. Teachers should create an atmosphere that is friendly and captivating for all the learners bearing in mind the individual differences among the learners in his/her class. According to Willingham (2009) it is the role of the teacher to create a caring atmosphere in the class that stimulates the cognitive attention of all the learners and guides the cognitive development of the learners throughout the lesson. This requires understanding of the teacher, involving all the students in the study through active participation and interaction between the teacher and the learners, and among the learners. Giving positive feedback for wrong and right answers, as well as, acknowledging the efforts of all the students. As such, a teacher must therefore, be motivated, have good attitude and be psychologically prepared before staring a lesson.

Group work and class discussions bring about collegiality among the students, fastens the students social and academic relationship creating a friendly climate that enhances self-esteem while improving active consultations among learners. This peer consultation improves confidence and brings about positive challenges to weak students which may in turn result into attitude change, making learning interesting (Sylwester, 2013). The school principal plays important roles in cultivating such a relationship between the teachers and learners. He/she is instrumental in bringing about teacher and learner motivation through creative leadership techniques that sets the climate within the school.

2.4 Theory of School Climate

According to Alexandra (2007), school climate refers to those characteristics of schools, such as the physical structures, the interactions between school managers, students, teachers and the subordinate staff as expressed by all school members. School climate has three dimensions: social, academic and the physical dimension.

The physical dimension of school climate includes, appearance of the school buildings and its classrooms, school size and ratio of students to teachers in the classroom; order and organization of classrooms in the school, the availability of resources, and safety and comfort of the facilities within the school.

The social dimension includes quality of interpersonal relationships between and among students, teachers, and subordinate staff; fair treatment of students by teachers and subordinate staff, degree of competition and social comparison between students, and the degree to which students, teachers, and subordinate staff contribute to decision-making in the school. The academic dimension includes quality of instruction, teacher expectations for student achievement, and monitoring student progress and promptly reporting results to students and parents. This study will limit itself the social and academic dimensions of school climate.

This theory of school climate was found appropriate for the study because it captures all the aspects of the school that affect performance and the general well being of teachers and students in the school. The theory of transformational leadership was found suitable because the school principal plays a key role in ensuring that conducive atmosphere exists in the school.

3.0 Research Design

This research used descriptive survey research design. The rationale for choosing this was that surveys are capable of obtaining information from large samples of the population within a short period of time. They are also well suited for gathering demographic data that describe the composition of the sample (McIntyre, 2012). According to McIntyre (2012), surveys can also elicit information about attitudes that are otherwise difficult to measure using observational techniques. The study used survey instruments to gather information from a large group of teachers and learners about their feelings on school social and academic climate, as well as the

students self-efficacy and use of transformational leadership style by principals, which cannot be measured directly.

4.0 Findings of the Study

4.1Effect of Transformational Leadership on School Academic Climate

The school academic climate was measured by assessing the perceptions of the students on the conduciveness of school learning environment. It is a measure of how good the studying environment is for students to achieve their academic goals.
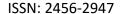
The students evaluated the school learning environment on a five point Likert scale with the choices: Never (N), Sometimes (ST), Uncertain (U), Mostly (M), and Always (A). The choices were awarded scores as follows: Never = 0, sometimes =1, uncertain = 2, mostly =3, and always = 4. Eighteen items were formulated such that higher scores indicated a better school academic climate.

The Likert scores were analysed per school in order to give the level of conduciveness of the school academic climate in each school, which was compared with the extent of use of transformational leadership by the school principal. The Likert scores were used to compute the average percentage score for every school using equation 2 (Page 54). The results are presented in Table 2

Table 2 Likert Scores for School Academic Climate

School	Never		Sometimes		Uncertain		Mostly		Always		Average Score
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	%
1	19	22.2	24	28.3	23	26.9	16	18.3	4	4.2	38.5%
2	16	18.8	25	29.6	19	22.8	13	15.7	11	13.0	43.6%
3	21	25.1	30	35.4	18	20.8	10	12.3	5	6.4	34.9%
4	29	34.3	37	43.5	10	12.3	7	7.7	2	2.2	25.0%
5	4	4.6	13	14.8	26	30.2	41	47.8	2	2.5	57.2%
6	31	9.6	75	23.1	108	33.3	93	28.7	17	5.2	49.2%

7	19	22.8	28	32.4	25	29.0	10	11.7	3	4.0	35.4%
8	11	12.6	17	19.9	15	17.3	32	37.7	11	12.6	54.5%
9	26	30.4	37	43.3	11	13.2	6	7.6	5	5.6	28.7%
10	9	10.1	24	28.8	23	26.8	19	21.9	11	12.4	49.4%
11	8	9.4	19	22.8	26	30.1	18	21.1	14	16.7	53.2%
12	5	5.6	11	12.7	27	31.8	20	24.1	22	25.9	63.0%
13	25	29.3	32	37.3	21	25.0	6	6.8	1	1.5	28.5%
14	8	9.4	22	25.4	33	38.9	15	17.5	7	8.8	47.7%
15	6	7.1	8	9.6	11	13.3	28	33.0	31	37.0	70.8%

Mean Score for all the items   45.29%

The results presented in Table 2 show that school learning environments were fairly conducive on average with an average percentage score of 45.29%. However, there was a huge variation among schools with a range of 25.0% to 70.8%. This implies that there were various differences in the factors that influence school academic climate. However, whereas the highest rating was 70.8% out of 15 items, only 5 were rated above 50% indicating the relatively low influence of transformational leadership on the school academic climate. This low rating of the influence of transformational leadership on the school academic climate could be attributed to the low use of the style of the leadership (40.65%) by the 12 principals whose schools were considered.

The preceeding indicates that the schools in Meru South Sub County to quite an extent, did not benefit from the advantages of the transformational leadership style that include idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation and individualized consideration.

Principals, through their idealized influence create an environment of trust between them and the learners. When this trust grows, learners are motivated to work towards school goals that are clearly articulated by their principal thus a school environment that allows learning through free consultation. Similarly, transformational leaders through their inspirational motivation focus on

the growth of their followers. Principals who are proponents of transformational leadership, therefore, focus on growing a school climate of trust where all the needs of the learners and the teachers are taken care of, making a school academic climate more conducive. The views of Bass (2008) resonate with the findings of this study in that he acknowledges the role of transformational leaders in creating supportive organizational climate where individual needs and differences are respected.

The school principals, as the school managers, set the tone and the tempo of the school. When principals are charismatic in their leadership, not only students but also teachers identify with them, becoming transformational leaders to their students. The key role player in the class is the teacher who has direct link and interaction with students. The teachers thus create a climate of trust and cater for individual needs of their students in all areas of their study greatly improving the school academic climate. Supporting the observations, Dansereau, Yammarino, and Markham (2005) noted that transformational leaders have explicit focus in the personal development of their followers.

Good school academic climate implies that the school atmosphere allows learners to contribute to the way they study and have a say in what to study during free time. When a school principal applies his intellectual stimulation to learners, learners discover their potentials; they become creative and innovative in devising ways of achieving their educational goals which the school principal and teachers support. This in turn, provides a learning environment that all learners perceive to be good, thus, high levels of conduciveness of the school academic climate. The findings of this study concur with findings of a study by Haynes (2010) who noted that when the school leadership provides an environment of consultation between teachers and learners, a learning environment that is perceived by learners as healthy is created. Bass (2008) further noted that school managers are role models to their teachers and students, they should relate with their students personally in a way that improves the study comfort of the learners in school.

In the school setting, a principal who uses individualized consideration has the potential of improving the motivation and sense of belonging of both learners and teachers. Individualized consideration occurs in a school when school managers treat each student as an individual with different needs, aspirations and abilities. The school principal thus handles students individually in a manner that encourages them to work towards achieving their personal goals in academics.

This constitutes a favorable school academic climate. School principals' individualized consideration may have indirect impact on learners' perception of the school academic climate. This occurs when the school principal influences teachers and academic support staff to treat these learners as individuals and help them attain their goals. Learners are followers of teachers whose learning squarely lies on the hands of the teacher. The teacher, therefore, directly influences the learning environment in his/her class thus improved school academic climate. These sentiments agree with what was reported by Haynes (2010) who asserted that at the centre of a good study environment is the classroom teacher who guides the students through learning.

School academic climate refers to the learning and teaching atmosphere with the areas where teaching and learning is taking place. A good school academic climate is the one whose physical facilities facilitate effective learning in that they are safe and comfortable for learners. Transformational principals try to create enabling environment for learners to achieve their goals and the global goals of the school, thus they provide habitable structures and learning space. When school principals adopt inspirational motivation to the teachers, the teachers devise ways of motivating students to exchange freely in class leading to enhanced conduciveness of school academic climate. These sentiments concur with the findings of Higgins et al. (2005) who asserted that significant improvements in the learning environment were attributed to the better attitudes to teaching and learning improvements in physical environment created amongst all users. This indicates that when school principals create good working environment for the teacher and good classroom interaction between teacher and students is also created thus good school academic climate. Supporting these arguments Siegel (2009) noted that good classroom atmosphere reduces the tasks to be performed by the teacher, spares him energy, while allowing for adequate and constructive interaction between the teacher and the learners. All these culminate into a conducive school academic climate.

4.2 Summary of the Findings

The researcher selected a sample size of 246 subjects composed of 16 principals, 130 teachers and 100 students. Out of these, 12 principals, 98 teachers and 85 students (79%) effectively participated in the study. Of the 98 teacher 83 had five years and above of teaching experience. The teachers had varied specializations with the majority (36) being specialized in Science and Mathematics. The two subjects are very essential for the realization of Vision 2030.

The study investigated the level of use of transformational leadership by secondary school principals. The level of use of transformational leadership among principals was generally low with the average scores for transformational leadership attributes being: intellectual stimulation (33.70%), idealized influence (37.30%), inspirational motivation (43.70%), and the highest being individualized consideration with a score 49.70%. It was found that principals applied transformational leadership in varying ways and extents with the average application rating score of 40.65%, and the individual principals' scores ranging from 29.2% to 58.7%.

The first objective was concerned with an investigation on the effect of transformational leadership on school social climate. The percentage scores for conduciveness of school social climate indicated that the school social climate was fairly conducive with an average score per school being 43.54%. The conduciveness of the school social climate varied widely with a range of 27.8% to 65.5%. This could be attributed to the limited use (40.65%) of transformational leadership. This restricted the schools in Meru South Sub County from reaping the benefits of schools social climate such as hard work, as results of identifying themselves with the school mission and vision. Consequently, low application of transformational leadership overall percentage rating of the school social climate (43.54) could not confidentially be attributed to the use of transformational leadership style.

The second objective assessed the school academic climate and investigated the influence of transformational leadership on school academic climate. The conduciveness of school academic climate was found to be below average with a mean percentage score of 45.29% and a range of 25.0% to 70.8%. The use of transformational leadership was found to increase the conduciveness of school academic climate, but to a limited extent due to the many principals not committed to the use of transformational leadership either because they ignored it or they had not mastered how to apply it.

The third objective was on the extent to which use of transformational leadership influences students' academic self-efficacy. The level of students' academic self-efficacy was found to be low with an average of 45.79% and a range of 25.7% to 67.0%. Since the principals' use of transformational leadership was rated low, it did not contribute significantly to the students' academic self-efficacy. This led to low self-confidence and therefore, poor assertion to quality academic output.

4.3 Conclusions

Principals' extent of use of transformational leadership was quite low (40.65%). The use of transformational leadership increases the level of conduciveness of school social climate, conduciveness of school academic climate and students' self-efficacy. As a result of not using or limited use of transformational leadership by principals in Meru South Sub County, Students did not benefit from inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, individualized consideration, as well as, idealized leadership. These four aspects of transformational leadership are very essential to the overall teachers and students performance (School performance), generally indicated by academic performance of the respective schools. No wonder the schools in the Sub County of concern have generally continued to perform poorly not only in academics but also in other aspects including indiscipline in the schools in the Sub County and in the whole county. Consequently, as a result of low application of transformational leadership, the overall percentage rating of the school climate (40.65%) could not be confidently be attributed to the use of transformational leadership style.

4.4 Suggestions for Further Research

i.   This study investigated the use of transformational leadership by school principals. However, teachers being leaders in their schools have an impact on the students. Therefore, study on use of transformational leadership by teachers is also necessary

ii.   The study should be replicated in a wider scale to involve more than half of the country's schools in order to get a clear picture on the use of transformational leadership.

iii.   A comparative study needs to be done on various leadership styles so as to systematize the effectiveness of repetitive leadership styles.

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