Effect of transformational leadership style on teacher job satisfaction in public primary schools in Sotik Sub-County, Kenya

Joshua Manduku, Boiyon Edward and Alfred Cheruiyot
University of Kabianga, Kericho, Kenya.

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to investigate the influence of transformational leadership by head teachers in Sotik Sub County and its relationship to teacher job satisfaction. This study was conceived after the realization that there had been increased cases of teacher attrition (transfers and resignation) in the past three years. For example, teachers' transfers had been increasing by 5.2 percent annually while teachers resigning from their jobs had been on a steady increase. The objectives of the study were to establish the extent to which head teachers apply intellectual stimulation approaches and individualized consideration, on teachers’ job satisfaction in Sotik Sub County primary schools. The theoretical framework for this study was based on transformational leadership theory developed by Burns (1978) and elaborated by Bass (1985). The study adopted an ex post facto and descriptive survey research designs. The study was conducted in Sotik Sub County, Sotik County. The target population for the study comprised of 52 head teachers and 667 teachers employed by TSC. The sample size studied comprised of 16 head teachers who were purposively selected and 200 teachers who were selected using stratified and simple random sampling methods. The study collected data using revised MLQ and MSQ questionnaires by Bass and Avolio (1997). The research instruments were tested for validity and reliability prior to being used in the field. The data collected from the field was analyzed using mixed method approaches. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS Version 20) aided in data entry, coding and analysis of quantitative data from questionnaires. In presenting analysed quantitative data, descriptive statistics indicating frequency, percentages, means, and standard deviations were executed to analyze the data quantitatively while inferential statistics: multiple regression analysis and T-test correlation were used to check on the relationship between various transformational leadership strategies and teachers job satisfaction. For qualitative data, themes and sub-themes were used to classify data from interviews. Tables, graphs and pie charts were used for presentation of the analyzed data. The results of the study showed that 58.3% of teachers’ job satisfaction was explained by transformational leadership style exhibited by head teachers in public primary schools in Sotik Sub County. Correlation results on the independent variables showed that there was significant correlation (p<0.01) between; individualised consideration (r=0.613), and intellectual stimulation (r=0.735) and job satisfaction of teachers. The study recommends that head teachers should be role models, they need to be ensuring effective communication between them and teachers, they need to provide and articulate clear vision to teachers and support continuous professional development programmes for teachers in their schools. The study is significant to head teachers, teachers, school board of management, and Ministry of Education and future researchers.

Introduction

Background to the Study

Leadership has roots in the beginning of civilization [1]. [11] Observed that former Egyptian rulers, Greek heroes, and biblical patriarchs all had one thing in common which was leadership. The organizational focus of the leader has evolved over this same period. Early organizations with authoritarian leaders who believed employees were intrinsically lazy transitioned into way to make work environments more conducive to increased productivity rates [11]. Today, organizations are transforming into places where people are empowered, encouraged, and supported in their personal and professional growth throughout their careers [12]. This is because leaders are facing greater challenges than ever before due to the increased environmental complexity and the changing nature of the organization [9]. [12] Suggested that traditional power, derived from a leader’s position in a bureaucratic, hierarchical structure, is becoming obsolete and that effective leader’s work from the “inside out” to transform their organization and workers. [11] indicated that the job of the transformational leaders was not to make every decision within the organization, but to ensure that collaborative decision-making occurs.
Transformational leadership is the kind of leadership required to lead fundamental reform movements and that its absence in our school system more than any factor is the reason behind the slow pace of school reform [10].

[11] wrote that transformational leadership is very consistent with the trends in educational reform, such as teacher empowerment, distributed leadership and organizational learning. Stewart added that this model values the organizational capacity to transform itself through a shared vision, a shared commitment to school change and to support changes in learning. Transformational leadership has been proposed as the means by which large scale educational reform can be implemented at all levels within a school organization [8].

[8] further noted that in this changing and complex era of school reform, transformational leadership has the potential for building commitment, fostering growth in the leadership capacities of teachers, principals and superintendents and creating the conditions for school success. Transformational leadership motivates individuals to work together to change organizations to create sustainable productivity [8]. Transformational leaders look at where the organization should be heading and determine how to handle internal and external change and employee needs to reach that goal.

Leadership theories and typologies have emerged in the field of education, as well as related fields, which attempt to explicate the leadership process. In the field of leadership studies, transformational leadership has been the theory of choice for the past several decades. The theory originated with [6], was expanded by [2], and has been further refined by [5]. As conceived by [6], the transformational leader asks followers to transcend their own self-interests for the good of the group, organization, or society; to consider their long-term needs to develop themselves, as opposed to their immediate needs; and to become more aware of what is really important. Through this interaction, followers are converted into leaders. [3] concluded that transformational leadership is closer to the ne plus ultra that people have in mind when they describe their ideal leader and is more likely to provide a role model with whom subordinates want to identify with.

Individualized Consideration—refers to head teachers’ acts of treating teachers and other members of staff in the school as special and unique persons, listening to their needs and allocating responsibilities accordingly.

Intellectual Stimulation—refers to head teachers’ ability and behaviour of promoting creativity and innovativeness in their schools which would help in problem solving and decision making process.

Job Satisfaction—refers to teachers’ pleasurable response to conditions surrounding the school environment. These include: recognition, professional development, autonomy, involvement in decision-making and co-worker relationships.

Transformational Leadership—refers to leadership style that builds the leadership capacity of teachers and a unified common interest between the head teacher and teachers by influencing their behaviours, feelings and thoughts to impart personal change in them. This leadership is characterised by the behavioural attributes of charisma, intellectual stimulation and individualized consideration.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Statistics from [13] in Sotik Sub County show that in the past three years (2011-2013) public primary schools had experienced teacher attrition at an alarming rate. For example, 15 teachers left the teaching profession due to death, disciplinary action or promotion to other sectors in the year 2011. The number rose to 19 in the year 2012, while in 2013 a total of 24 teachers left primary school teaching altogether. Moreover, statistics further revealed that teachers transfer rate within the district and outside had increased marginally over the past five years with 42 teachers seeking transfers to schools within the district, while 13 sought transfers outside the district in 2013 [13]. The ideal state according to the Education Policy is that a teacher should serve in a station for five consecutive years before seeking for a transfer, yet among the cases cited above; many of the teachers sought transfers as early as after serving for one year. This perhaps is because head teachers are not applying the right kind of leadership on the teachers.

Performance of schools in the Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE) examinations had also been low with some schools average performance being below 200 marks for the past three years [13]. From the background information it is clear that leadership in schools has a significant influence on teachers’ job satisfaction, commitment and consequently their performance of which will be reflected in learners’ good performance in their KCPE examinations. It has not been ascertained well whether the increased cases of teachers’ attrition: resignation and transfers, could be associated with whether head teachers apply transformational leadership approaches in boosting teacher job satisfaction in Sotik Sub County. There are minimal research findings in the area that have focused on transformational leadership. This study determined the extent to which transformational leadership strategies; intellectual stimulation and individualised consideration determine job satisfaction among teachers in schools.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to establish the influence of transformational leadership style on teacher job satisfaction in public primary schools in Sotik Sub County.

Objectives of the study

The objectives of the study were;

1. To establish the influence of head teachers intellectual stimulation approaches and its effect on teachers’ job satisfaction in Sotik Sub County primary schools.
2. To investigate the influence of head teachers’ individualized consideration approach and its effect on teachers’ job satisfaction in Sotik Sub County primary schools.

Research Questions

The following were the study research questions;

1. How do head teachers’ intellectual stimulation approaches influence teachers’ job satisfaction in Sotik Sub County primary schools?
2. How do head teachers’ individualized considerations influence teachers’ job satisfaction in Sotik Sub County primary schools?

Research Hypothesis

The study had the following null hypotheses:

H0: There is no significant relationship between intellectual stimulation approaches used by head teachers and teachers’ job satisfaction

H0: There is no significant relationship between individualised consideration approaches used by head teachers and teachers’ job satisfaction
Justification of the Study

The rational for conducting this study was based on the principle that leadership is a fundamental aspect of management because it has an important bearing on several activities in an institution that can lead to attainment of educational outcomes. It is for this reason that scholars and practitioners proposed effective leadership in organisations (learning institutions included) in order to propel the wheel of change in ensuring success [14; 12; 14]). With the changing world, there has been demand that leaders should be accountable for their organisations existence and this cannot be exempted to schools. Therefore studying transformational leadership behaviours of head teachers in primary schools towards promoting teachers job satisfaction represent the most effective leadership style and principle contributor to the realisation of satisfaction among teachers in primary schools.

Significance of the Study

It is expected that the findings of the study might be significant to head teachers, teachers, Ministry of Education officials, the TSC, and future researchers. At first, results of this study may contribute towards better training of head teachers in leadership skills and therefore enhance their leadership strategies. The head teachers will also see the relevance of attending to individual needs of teachers, developing the teachers’ talents and allocating responsibilities according to their individual differences. Secondly, the policy makers in the Ministry of Education, the Directorate of Quality Assurance and Standards and Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD) will use the relevance of transformational leadership strategy to improve job satisfaction of employees and performance at large. Lastly, this study will generate a lot of literature for future and ongoing studies in this area.

Theoretical Framework

The study was based on a theory developed by [6] and elaborated by [2]. Burns identified two types of leadership styles either transformational or transactional. Burns transformational leader construct was based on a qualitative analysis of biographies of various political leaders. Burns argued that leadership styles could be placed on a continuum in terms of leader pro-activity and effectiveness. At the bottom end of this continuum is laissez-faire or avoidant leadership with transactional leadership behaviour in the middle range and transformational leadership at the top [3; 7].

Top range implied that transformational leadership was more proactive and ultimately more effective than transactional, corrective or avoidant leadership in terms of motivating followers to achieve higher performance. Found on this idea, the transformational-transactional theory was developed. The theory has undergone several revisions and recent version identified three dimensions of transactional, four dimensions of transformational leadership and a no leadership form (Laissez-faire).

The four dimensions of transformational leadership identified by Bass were: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation and individualized consideration. Out of these four dimensions, this study will focus on the last two i.e intellectual stimulation and individualized consideration. [8] conceptualized leadership along eight dimensions: building school vision, establishing school goals, providing intellectual stimulation, offering individualized support, modelling best practices and important organizational values, demonstrating high performance expectations, productive school culture and developing structures to foster participation in school decisions.

Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework illustrated the relationship between variables in the study according to the researcher’s conceptualization. Figure 1.1 shows the conceptual model showing the relationship between independent variables (transformational leadership approaches) and dependent variables (teachers’ job satisfaction).

**Independent Variables**

- Intellectual stimulation
- Individualised consideration

**Dependent Variables**

- Teachers’ job satisfaction
- Interacting variables
  - Fair treatment
  - Personalised attention
  - Allocating responsibilities

The main independent variable for the study was transformational leadership style. There were two predictors of independent variable; intellectual stimulation and individualised consideration. For example, intellectual stimulation action of head teachers was shown by them involving all stakeholders in the school in the decision making process and promoting creativity and innovation among all stakeholders in the school. The two predictors of independent variable had a significant effect on the dependent variable denoted by teachers’ job satisfaction.

Methodology

The study utilised the mixed methods approach where both quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection were used and employed an ex-post facto and descriptive survey research designs. The target population size 677 teachers and 52 head teachers of 52 public primary schools in the Sub County. A sample of 16 head teachers and 200 teachers representing 30% of the target population were selected purposively and through simple random sampling respectively as respondents. Validity and reliability of instruments were ascertained. After the test-retest, the instruments attained a reliability coefficient of 0.70 using the Cronbach alpha coefficient which was considered high enough to continue with data collection.

Head teachers’ Application of Intellectual Stimulation Approaches and its Effect on Teachers’ Job Satisfaction

The first objective of the study sought to establish the extent to which head teachers in primary schools in Sotik Sub County applied intellectual stimulation approaches in improving job satisfaction of teachers. The teachers’ responses are given in Table 1.
It was seen that majority of respondents 67 (42.9%) agreed while 42 (26.9%) strongly agreed that the head teachers involved teachers in decision making on matters affecting the school, only 7 (4.5%) strongly disagreed and 25 (16%) disagreed with the statement. On the second statement, more than half 83 (53.25%) agreed and 34 (21.8%) strongly agreed that head teachers involved fellow teachers in solving problems through collaboration with 8 (5.1%) strongly disagreeing and 19 (12.2%) disagreeing with the statement. This showed that three quarters 117 (75.05%) of teachers agreed with the statement, while 27 (17.3%) strongly disagreed with the statement. On the third statement, 82 (52.6%) agreed and 56 (35.9%) strongly agreed that their heads encouraged information sharing from those who attended professional development forums like workshops, seminars and conferences, few 5 (3.2%) strongly disagreed and 4 (2.6%) disagreed with the statement. This showed that head teachers promoted information sharing as an intellectual approach in improving teachers’ job performance.

Fourthly, study results showed that 73 (46.8%) agreed and 54 (34.6%) strongly agreed that heads usually encouraged teachers to share new ideas amongst themselves, a little 9 (5.8%) strongly disagreed and 12 (7.7%) disagreed with the questionnaire item. This showed that head teachers created an atmosphere in their schools through which teachers could share new ideas for the purpose of improving school academic excellence. Lastly, the study findings showed that 79 (50.6%) agreed and 39 (25.0%) strongly agreed that their heads were always eager to learn and were usually flexible enough to implement new ways in teaching, 16 (10.3%) were undecided, 14 (9.0%) strongly disagreed while 8 (5.1%) disagreed with the statement. This showed that head teachers were ready to learn and were not bureaucratic in leading their schools.

Descriptive mean ranking of the results above revealed that head teachers encouraged sharing of information from conferences and seminars higher (M=4.153 and SD=0.88) and least involvement of teachers in decision making on matters affecting the school (M=3.71 and SD=1.15). When one sample statistics was computed with a test value of 2.5, all the results were significant (p<0.05) at 95% confidence interval of the difference. This suggests that head teachers’ value intellectual growth of teachers through promoting information sharing.

**Teachers Views on Whether Head Teachers Support their CPDs**

Also under this objective, the researcher wanted to find out the perceptions that teachers held on whether their head teachers supported their continuous professional development programmes. The results are given in Figure 2.

---

**Table 1. Head teachers’ application of intellectual stimulation approaches and its effect on teachers’ job satisfaction.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Idealised influence approaches</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>U</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>SA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The head teacher involves teachers in decision making on matters affecting the school</td>
<td>7(4.5%)</td>
<td>25(16.0%)</td>
<td>15(9.6%)</td>
<td>67(42.9%)</td>
<td>42(26.9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The head teacher involves teachers in solving problems through collaboration</td>
<td>8(5.1%)</td>
<td>19(12.2%)</td>
<td>12(7.7%)</td>
<td>83(53.25)</td>
<td>34(21.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The head teacher encourages sharing of information from workshops, seminars and conferences</td>
<td>5(3.2%)</td>
<td>4(2.6%)</td>
<td>9(5.8%)</td>
<td>82(52.6%)</td>
<td>56(35.9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The encourages sharing of new ideas and information among the teachers</td>
<td>9(5.8%)</td>
<td>12(7.7%)</td>
<td>8(5.1%)</td>
<td>73(46.8%)</td>
<td>54(34.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The head teacher is eager to learn and flexible enough to implement new ways in teaching</td>
<td>14(9.0%)</td>
<td>8(5.1%)</td>
<td>16(10.3%)</td>
<td>79(50.6%)</td>
<td>39(25.0%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

**Figure 2. Perception of teachers as to whether H/Ts support them in CPDs.**

Results showed that majority 101 (64.7%) of teachers were always supported by their head teachers in professional development programmes, 38 (24.4%) were found to be somewhat supported while 17 (10.9%) said that their head teachers never supported them. The results justified the findings in the above section that head teachers promoted intellectual stimulation as one method of applying transformational leadership on job satisfaction of teachers in public primary schools in Sotik Sub County.

**Influence of Head teachers’ Individualized Consideration Approach and its Effect on Teachers’ Job Satisfaction in Sotik Sub County Public Primary Schools.**

The second objective of the study sought to investigate the influence of head teachers’ individualised consideration approach and its effect on teachers’ job satisfaction in Sotik Sub County Primary Schools. Through a Likert scale of five; 1-strongly disagree, 2-disagree, 3-undecided, 4-agree to 5-strongly agree, the teachers were asked to give their views on how individualised consideration leadership practices were applied in their schools. Their responses are given in Table 1.

Results showed that majority 122 (78.2%) of teachers agreed that their head teachers did allocate responsibilities and duties based on their talents and skills, 29 (18.6%) disagreed with the statement while 5 (3.2%) remained undecided. This showed that head teachers delegated some of the duties to teachers as a way of practicing transformational leadership in primary schools. Also, 98 (62.8%) tended to agree, 38 (24.4%), disagreed while 20 (12.8) undecided on the statement that their head teachers found out what they wanted. Findings further revealed that 106 (67.9%) of teachers agreed with the statement that head teachers had personalised attention and interaction with teachers, 28 (17.9%) disagreed and 22 (14.1%) remained neutral on the same. This showed that majority of head teachers did take personalised attention when interacting with teachers in their schools as observed by [1].
Moreover, the study observed that at least half 88 (56.4%) of teachers agreed that head teachers gave personal attention to teachers who looked neglected, lonely and kept away from the company of other teachers. A considerable number 47 (30.1%) disagreed with the statement, while 21 (13.5%) remained undecided. Lastly, the teachers also strongly agreed 112 (71.8%) that their head teachers treated each one of them as individuals with different needs, abilities and aspirations, 22 (14.1%) disagreed while the same proportion of teachers remained neutral on the statement. The teachers were also asked whether head teachers respected teachers work and praised their efforts. The results are given in Table 2.

**Table 2. Teachers responses on the influence of head teachers Individualised Consideration on their Job Satisfaction.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Undecided</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The head teacher allocates responsibilities and duties basing on their talents and skills</td>
<td>29 18.6 %</td>
<td>5 3.2 %</td>
<td>122 78.2 %</td>
<td>156 100.0 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The head teacher finds out what I want and he/she tries to help me get</td>
<td>38 24.4 %</td>
<td>20 12.8 %</td>
<td>98 62.8 %</td>
<td>156 100.0 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The head teacher has personalised attention and interaction with teachers</td>
<td>28 17.9 %</td>
<td>22 14.1 %</td>
<td>106 67.9 %</td>
<td>156 100.0 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The head teacher gives personal attention to teachers who look neglected, lonely and keep away from the company of other teachers</td>
<td>47 30.1 %</td>
<td>21 13.5 %</td>
<td>88 56.4 %</td>
<td>156 100.0 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The head teacher treats each teacher as an individual with different needs abilities and aspirations</td>
<td>22 14.1 %</td>
<td>22 14.1 %</td>
<td>112 71.8 %</td>
<td>156 100.0 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The correlation analysis of the variables; intellectual stimulation and individualised consideration showed a significant relationship across teachers’ job satisfaction index. The study found out that coefficient of transformational leadership on teachers job satisfaction in Sotik public primary schools was positive and the p-value obtained (p<0.01). The two null hypotheses for the study were rejected (p<0.01). This meant that head teachers who were more transformational in their leadership style lend greater job satisfaction to their teachers. The statistics revealed that there was actually a less than 1/1000 probability that this relationship could be due to chance. The equation was

$$teachers\text{ job satisfaction} = 1.140 + 0.7 (\text{transformational leadership})$$

The coefficient was 0.583 which helped the study to deduct that statistically job satisfaction increases by a marginal (59.4% of a unit) with a unit increase in transformational leadership. The adjusted R-square yielded a value of 0.583 which meant that 58.3% of the variation in teachers job satisfaction in Sotik Sub County public primary schools could be explained by the variation in transformational leadership as reflected by teachers who participated in the research. This represented the extent to which transformational leadership influenced on job satisfaction of teachers in Sotik Sub County public primary schools. The study however understands that there are other factors (100-58.3=41.7%) causing variations in teachers job satisfaction that were not focused in this study.

**Conclusion**

The second null hypothesis for the study was rejected (p<0.01). This meant that head teachers who were more transformational in their leadership style lend greater job satisfaction to their teachers. The head teachers should be open to constructivism by respecting everybody’s opinion and valuing their inputs towards improving schools. This will reduce stress and boost job satisfaction and morale.

(ii) To encourage intellectual stimulation approaches in schools, head teachers in schools should create and provide opportunities for teachers to further their education. They also need to consider teachers as partners in schools and therefore give them room for decision making process.
References