



Effect of Principals' Practices of Transformational Leadership on Management of School Financial Resources in Public Secondary Schools of Trans-Nzoia County, Kenya

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Abstract: *The study investigated how principals' transformational leadership practices impacts on the management of financial resources of public secondary schools of Trans-Nzoia County, Kenya. Theoretical framework was hinged upon Bass' transformational leadership theory. Descriptive research design was utilized in the study. The sample consisted of 30 principals and 322 teachers totaling 352 respondents as determined by Morgan formula. Stratified and simple random sampling techniques were used to sample the required sample size. The instruments used for data collection were questionnaires, focus group discussions and interview schedules. The validity of instruments was ascertained through construct validity technique where the three instruments measured the concept above. A test-retest technique using Spearman rank correlation was undertaken to determine reliability of instruments and was accepted at 0.82. Qualitatively, data was analyzed thematically through content analysis. Quantitative data was analyzed by use of frequencies, percentages, standard deviation, chi-square, and Spearman rank correlation. SPSS version 23 helped in data analysis. Findings revealed that principals' practices of transformational leadership had a significant effect on schools' financial resources management at p value 0.001. This study recommends that principals should adopt transformational leadership practices to help them manage their schools' financial matters well and also initiate income generating activities to bolster schools' finances.*

Keywords: *Financial management, Principals, Budgeting, Embezzlement, Procurement*

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1. Introduction

Uko (2015) affirms that principals play a cardinal role of effectual running of their institutions that entail the management of both the academic and administrative issues. It is often touted that the principals are reminiscent

to the schools they head. This they do by performing both administrative and management functions (Kiprop, 2012).

Hutasuhut (2019) points to the fact that for principals to work well, management ability is paramount. This refers

to the capability of effectively carrying out functions to do with planning, supervision, organisation and implementation to meet set targets. Hutasuht (2019) chooses to refer to Wilson's (2003) managerial skills as management ability. According to Wilson, managerial skills are divided into three categories as described below:-

- (i) Technical skills that entail utilising one's educational knowhow, experience and training to accomplish assigned exercises appropriately.
- (ii) Team building skills that involve effective listening and communication so as to develop and coordinate teams.
- (iii) Drive skills that encompass setting of organisation's aims, upholding professionalism and reviewing performance to achieve optimum yields.

Nyakan, Getange and Onchera (2018) study considered the influence of management competencies of school principals on the instructional supervision in their respective institutions in Homabay County of Kenya. These management competencies of planning, organizing, coordinating, supervising and controlling help move the organization towards achievement of its societal goals. The research outcomes denoted a positive and statistically significant connection between school principals' management competencies and the instructional supervision. Besides, these competencies positively impact on management as a whole finances inclusive.

Sawamura and Sifuna (2008) opine that the principal plays other roles such as: - main public relations officer of the school in which he/she communicates within and without the school to promote the school relations with the outside community, control of school finances upon which all things pertaining the institution revolves, budgeting so as to effectively plan for the income and its expenditure, record keeping to ensure transparency and prudent use of resources and control of school supplies. Previous studies indicate that most principals in Kenyan high schools employ democratic leadership that positively impacts on students' examination outcomes (Kinyanjui & Orodho, 2014; Parale, 2012). However, students cause mayhem in schools because of many unresolved underlying grievances and problems in schools like poor living conditions, poor management, bullying, principals' high-handedness, succession of school administrators, poor facilities and drug abuse (Aduda, 2016; Alunga & Maiyo, 2019; Okayo, 2017; Wanzala & Muinde, 2018).

According to Burns (2003) transformational leadership is evident in a case scenario where leaders and subordinates work together reciprocally with a high sense of trust so as to achieve organization's goals while focusing on long lasting common benefits. Furthermore, Northouse (2016) and Bush (2018) insinuate that transformational leadership is an engagement cause of connection of a leader with people that helps them transcend higher levels in the achievement of set goals. A quantitative study by

Valentine and Prater (2011) revealed that the principal's ability of being visionary and proactive which are tenets of a transformational leader had the greatest bearing in the students' outcome in public high schools. In accordance to Litz and Scott (2017), this augurs well with the transformational leadership principals who bring reforms and institute positive change that helps improve students' outcomes in national examinations. Northouse (2016) notes that a transformative leader is the one who is proactive, exudes positive charisma, leads by example and exalts workers above selfish aims through the avenues of idealized influence, inspiration, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. It is hoped that application of transformational leadership in schools' management by principals will eliminate management challenges experienced and help turn them around.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Principals play a fundamental role of ensuring all school activities are accomplished in a manner that helps to attain the various school goals and objectives. They work with and through others to ensure learning institutions operate optimally for the benefit of learners. Thus principals' leadership is a great determinant of insuring quality in schools for the benefit of all stakeholders. In spite of their very fundamental role, they are primarily prepared for classroom management and not necessarily school management which makes them to experience challenges in the course of their working.

The management challenges faced by the principals of public secondary schools of Trans-Nzoia County include:- misuse of school funds, money embezzlement, ineffective monitoring and supervision of staff, erratic fees payment, students' dropout as a result of poverty and pregnancy, and indiscipline by students. Earlier studies and Trans-Nzoia QASIR 2018 and 2019 reports point to such problems faced by the principals (Alunga & Maiyo, 2019; Barasa, Wamocha & Poipoi, 2017; Mwaria, Namusonge, Makokha & Nyagechi, 2016; Okayo, 2017). The management problems if not well dealt with often lead to poor performance in national examinations. To forestall such it behoves of the principals to exercise and adhere to prudent management practices. Likewise, the fund management systems of most public secondary schools in Kenya are bedeviled with management challenges like funds embezzlement, cooked fees arrears for exploitation purposes, and schools' hiking fees by creating fictitious fees balances of students in the system due to adoption of poor financial accounting systems (Manei & Omagwa, 2019; Muthanga & Odipo, 2017). Consequently, Muthanga and Odipo recommend adoption of a computerised accounting system as a remedy in enhancing sound financial management in public secondary schools.

It is therefore imperative that a paradigm shift be instituted in the way secondary schools are run in a bid to forestall the numerous management challenges experienced by

school principals. The current study relying on previous studies and reports pointing towards principals' mismanagement of schools in Trans-Nzoia County and elsewhere would like to present a premise that school principals need to change and adopt leadership modes like transformational leadership for positive change to be realized in their schools. The study sought to investigate the effect of principals' practices of transformational leadership on management of financial resources in public secondary schools of Trans-Nzoia County. This was accomplished through testing of a null hypothesis at an alpha level of significance of 0.05 and which states:

H₀₁: There is no significant effect between principals' transformational leadership practices and management of financial resources in public secondary schools in Trans-Nzoia County.

1.2 Significance of the Study

It is hoped that the study findings will be useful to principals' who may change their administrative styles in favour of transformational leadership style and thereby start income generating activities to boost schools' financial base.

1.3 Theoretical Framework

The study was anchored on Bass' 1985 transformational leadership theory that goes out at length to elucidate how leaders can achieve greater heights of development in their institutions against the odds. Such leaders exert unparalleled influence that inspires team members to realize extraordinary outcomes that exceed expectations (Northouse, 2016; Reza, 2019).

2. Literature Review

2.1 Effect of Principals' Transformational Leadership Practices on the Management of School Financial Resources

Bass (as cited in Northouse, 2016) supposes that transformational leadership is a mutual engagement that entails superiors and followers exalting each other to higher levels of morality and motivation. Alqatawenah (2018) opines that transformational leadership's tenets of idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation and empowerment otherwise called individualized consideration greatly impacts on leadership and change in organizations.

The study adopted Wango and Gatere's (2012) definition of financial management as the undertaking geared towards prudent planning and efficiency in the utilization of school funds in a manner that does not contravene set regulations and procedures. Ocak and Ozturk's (2018) study on Turkey firms showed that managers'

transformational leadership behaviors positively affected the corporate entrepreneurship behaviors and organizations' financial performance. Additionally, it indicated that corporate entrepreneurship behaviors likewise affected financial performance of organizations. The study's findings are in congruence with the current study's findings albeit its conduction in manufacturing firms.

According to Usman (2016) financial resources are the monetary resources needed for the smooth running of a learning institution and whose deficiency leads to collapse of its operations. Finances are crucial in payment of salaries, procurement of goods and services and settling current liabilities and expenditures. Effective financial management entails:- compliance to all financial regulations and procedures; ensuring accuracy in recording of financial transactions; effecting controls to regulate on expenditure within acceptable limits; only incurring the authorized expenditures. Prudent financial management in schools is a key responsibility of principals and entails school managers carrying out the following:- allocating finances to various vote heads as per the budget; authorization for the disbursement of school finances; coming up with a school budget while involving other stakeholders; facilitating procurement of goods and services; stores management; and ensuring school funds are put to diligent use (Asuga & Eacott, 2012; Kasoa, 2012; Wango & Gatere, 2012).

Principals ensure judicious financial use in schools and are accountable to governing bodies in South Africa and Boards of Management (BOM) in Kenya (Mestry, 2018; Republic of Kenya, 2013). Mestry's (2018) South African study found out that South African schools involve their governing bodies in budgetary preparations. However, they were devoid of the necessary financial and entrepreneurial know-how necessary for their effective working. The current study roots for continued financial training of principals and equipping them with transformational leadership skills which are crucial for effective financial management in institutions of learning. Mogeni's (2017) study in Migori's Rongo constituency noted that the budget making process is paramount as it guides resource allocation and all activities in schools. Findings indicated that the school budgets were prepared in line with the schools' annual plans and overall goals; school boards of management sanctioned all school projects expenditures through board minutes; school funds received from diverse sources were recorded and official receipts issued for answerability purposes; and finally budget implementation stakeholders took stock of how their actions affected achievement of set school targets to ensure they never lost focus.

A study by Imam (2017) disclosed that judicious utilization of financial resources in schools by principals impacted positively on students' academic performance in public secondary schools of Zaria and Giwa zones

domiciled in Nigeria’s Kaduna state. This entailed principals being on the forefront to ensure prudent use of institutional financial resources, adherence to standard public procurement rules, and timely audit of school accounts. However, Imam’s study does not capture key facets of the budgetary process, involvement of parents in matters school fees, fees acquisition, and income generating activities as investigated in the current study encompassing Trans-Nzoia County public secondary schools.

Manei and Omagwa’s (2019) study findings indicated a positive and significant relationship between each of the variables of record keeping, internal financial control and budgeting with financial performance of Makeni County public secondary schools. This implied a sound financial performance. Moreover, the adoption of transformative leadership practices by principals positively affected the financial management in the Trans-Nzoia County’s public secondary schools.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

The study embraced descriptive survey design with a mixed methods approach. The design was preferred for the study since it is a field study undertaken in a natural setting in schools where teachers filled questionnaires, participated in focus group discussions and principals were interviewed to yield qualitative data that entailed description of phenomena. The use of questionnaires with close ended questions provided quantitative data that informed the incorporation of the mixed methods approach which allows for collection of both qualitative and quantitative data (Creswell, 2013).

3.2 Population and Sample size

Simple random and purposive samplings were used to arrive at a sample of 352 respondents of which 30 were principals and 322 teachers from a population of 240 principals and 2400 teachers as determined by Morgan’s table and formula. See table 1.

Table 1 Sample Distribution of Principals and Teachers per Sub County and School Category

Sub County	National		Extra County		County		Sub County	
	Principal	Teacher	Principal	Teacher	Principal	Teacher	Principal	Teacher
Saboti	1	15	2	28	2	28	2	12
T/N East-	-	2	28		2	28	2	12
Kwanza -	-	2	28		2	28	2	12
Kiminini	1	15	2	28	2	28	2	12
Endebess	-	-	1	14	1	14	2	10
Total	2	30	9	126	9	108	10	58

Source: Researchers’ Field Data (2020)

Krejcie and Morgan’s formula used to generate the Morgan table is:

$$S = \frac{X^2NP}{(1 - P) + d^2(N-1) + X^2P(1-P)}$$

Where **S** = required sample size **d**= the degree of accuracy expressed as a proportion of 0.05

X² = table value of chi-square for 1 degree of freedom

N= the population size

P= Population proportion assumed at 0.05 to provide maximum sample size

The Morgan table was preferred since it provides a representative statistical sample for empirical research and for easy reference.

3.3 Instruments of Data Collection

Three instruments of data collection were put to use and these were questionnaires for teachers, focused group discussions for teachers and interviews for principals. The researchers used questionnaires and focus group discussion instruments on teachers so as to facilitate triangulation and which in turn enhances the validity of instruments by reaching inferences that are accurate (Schreiber & Asner-self, 2011).

3.4 Validity and Reliability

The study used construct validity to ascertain validity where the researchers constructed three different instruments to measure the same concept of effect of principals' transformational leadership practices on management of schools' financial resources. A test-retest method was then conducted by the researchers to judge the extent of reliability of instruments and was accepted at 0.82 for the questionnaires. For interviews and focus group discussions reliability was enhanced by asking clear and specific questions.

3.5 Data Collection Procedures

The researchers sought and obtained necessary permits and authorisations to conduct research followed by seeking of permission from principals of the sampled schools prior to commencement of the data collection exercise. The researchers sought and got informed consent from the respondents prior to the administration of the three instruments of data collection and assured them that confidentiality would be upheld. The researchers then conducted the study by administering questionnaires to teachers of the sampled public secondary schools of Trans-Nzoia County and carrying out five focus group discussions with 35 teachers.

The researchers clustered the County into 7 clusters followed by identification and picking of 5 randomly selected teachers per cluster from public secondary schools who were requested to meet at given schools at specified dates for focus group discussions. The school principals were subjected to an in-depth interview in the cause of the research process. Questionnaires were dispensed to 322 teachers from the sampled schools of

Trans-Nzoia County for filling and collected thereafter with a response rate of 94.72% for questionnaires and 100% for both interviews and focus group discussions. The data collection exercise lasted for one month.

3.6 Methods of Data Analysis

The study yielded both qualitative and quantitative data. The collected qualitative data was screened, sorted, coded and put under themes consistent with the research objective and then analyzed thematically using content analysis. It entails text selection, text unitizing, coding and finally analysis of coded data to reveal extent of relationships between themes. Quantitatively data was analyzed by SPSS version 23 descriptive and inferential statistics of frequencies, mean, standard deviation, chi-square, and Spearman rank correlation. Respect for intellectual property was adhered to by ensuring the study's plagiarism levels were in the accepted levels of below 19% as per the university requirements when subjected to Turnitin plagiarism software by the supervisors. Furthermore, proper acknowledgement of cited works was also made.

4. Results and Discussion

The study investigated the effect of principals' practices of transformational leadership practices on schools financial resources in public secondary schools of Trans-Nzoia County using questionnaires tailored on a five-point Likert scale. In the scale 1=SD-strongly disagree; 2=D-disagree; 3=NS-not sure; 4=A-agree; 5=SA-strongly agree. The findings are as shown in table 2.

Table 2: Effect of Principals' Transformational Leadership Practices (TLP) on Management of Schools' Financial Resources

As a transformative leader the		N=305	SD	D	NS	A	SA	Mean	SD
Principal upholds the standard procurement process	F	2	14	59	159	71	3.93	0.816	
	%	0.7	4.6	19.3	52.1	23.3			
Principal ensures that school fees is deposited in designated school account and no cash payment is accepted in school	F	2	2	12	139	150	4.42	0.665	
	%	0.7	0.7	3.9	45.6	49.2			
Principal holds frequent meetings with parents to sensitize on fee payment modalities	F	6	25	22	148	104	4.05	0.959	
	%	2	8.2	7.2	48.5	34.1			
Principal deals directly with parents on fees issues and doesn't send away students for fees	F	10	81	44	115	55	3.41	1.155	
	%	3.3	26.6	14.4	37.7	18			
Principal accepts fees in kind form by accepting material goods	F	11	8	50	155	81	3.94	0.926	
	%	3.6	2.6	16.4	50.8	26.6			
Principal facilitates acquisition of bursaries for poor and orphaned students	F	9	14	46	130	106	4.02	0.975	
	%	3	4.6	15.1	42.6	34.8			
Principal initiates income generating activities in schools to supplement collected fees	F	13	55	48	120	69	3.58	1.147	
	%	4.3	18	15.7	39.3	22.6			
Principal involves the BOM and teachers in the budgetary process	F	27	54	39	97	88	3.54	1.310	
	%	8.9	17.7	12.8	31.8	28.9			
Principal ensures that suppliers are paid in good time after delivery of goods and services	F	3	18	120	89	75	3.70	0.938	
	%	1.0	5.9	39.3	29.2	24.6			

Generally, the findings show that the majority of the teachers as respondents were in agreement that principals' transformational leadership practices positively impact on:-

1. The principals upholding of the standard procurement process. Contrarily, Mobegi (2017) found out that most principals flout procurement processes resulting to inadequate school facilities.
2. Ensuring parents deposit fees in designated school accounts.
3. Accepting fees in form of kind and not sending away children for fees. This is in agreement with Muriithi (2015) whose findings indicated that 64.7% of respondents agreed that parents pledge and honor their pledges on fees payment.
4. Facilitating acquisition of bursaries for poor and orphaned students. This is in congruence with Muriithi (2015) findings that bursaries in turn

help needy students continue with their studies undisturbed.

5. Initiating income generating activities.
6. Involving BOM and teachers in the budgetary process. The findings are in tandem with those of Mestry (2018) and Mogeni (2017) who found out that school governing bodies and BOMs in South and Kenya respectively are involved in the budgetary process.
7. Ensuring that suppliers are paid in good time after delivery of goods and services.

The researchers conducted a focused group discussion on how principals' TLP affects effective management of financial resources in schools' and in which the respondents made various comments. The researchers then rated their comments through a yes and no poll and their responses are as presented in table 3.

Table 3: Focus Group Discussion Results of Principals' TLP on Effective Management of Financial Resources in Schools

Strategy	F (N=35)	Percentage (100%)
Does the principal use and uphold the standard procurement process?	33	94.28
Is school fees paid through a designated bank account?	33	94.28
Are students sent home for school fees or the principal deals directly with parents?	12	34.28
Does the principal accept school fees in form of kind?	21	60
Does the principal initiate and carry out income generating activities in school?	10	28.57
Does the principal facilitate acquisition of bursaries for poor and orphaned students?	12	34.28
Does the principal involve the BOM and teachers in the budgetary process?	21	60
Does the principal ensure prompt payment of suppliers after delivery of goods and services?	15	42.86

Source: Researchers' Field Data (2020)

From table 3 it can be noted that principals use and uphold standard procurement standards 33 (94.28%) and ensure fees are paid through the designated banks 33 (94.28%) respectively. Similarly, teachers claimed that principals sent students home for fees 12 (34.28%) though they also facilitated the acquisition of bursaries for the poor and orphaned students 12 (34.28%) respectively. The respondents 21 (60%) also indicated that principals accept school fees in form of kind and also involve the BOM and teachers in the budgetary process respectively while 15 (42.86%) concurred that prompt payment of suppliers after delivery of goods and services takes place. However, focus group discussions in Mobegi's (2017) study point a bleak picture of the principals' undertaking on matters financial management as they utterly flout standard procurement procedures. This results in horrendous

acquisition of substandard goods and services by principals. Generally, the school plant encompassing buildings, furniture, playgrounds, and school fences are in dire state and physical facilities in school are not enough to cater for the entire student population.

Qualitative findings from the interviews showed that most principals ensured students paid their fees through the designated accounts. They claimed

'Parents and students are sensitized on the importance of depositing fees money in designated accounts. This occurs during Annual General Meetings (AGMs) and academic days and that official receipts are issued by the bursar after payment.'

With regard to sending the students home for school fees, one principal P02 argued;

‘Most of the time, I deal with the parents. I inform the class teachers to call the parents of students with fee arrears and then discuss with them on how they will clear the fee...for the parents who are unable to raise the fee, I work with them to obtain bursary.’

Another principal P13 opined that initiating and carrying out income generating activities in the school is crucial in supplementing the money from school fees. He claimed

‘Through tree nurseries, pig and rabbit farming, formation of needy students kitty and

encouraging successful alumni to donate, I am able to assist the needy students by undertaking projects to finance the physical and material needs of my school.’

The researchers then conducted a Spearman’s rank correlation test to find out association between principals’ transformational leadership practices and the management of financial resources as well as the strength and direction of the relationship using the null hypothesis H_{01} : There is no significant effect between Principals’ transformational leadership practices and management of financial resources in public secondary schools in Trans-Nzoia County. See table 4.

Table 4: Correlations on Principals’ Transformational Leadership Practices and Financial Management of Resources

		Transformational	Financial management
Spearman's rho		Correlation Coefficient 1.000	.690
	Transformational	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001
		N	305
		Correlation Coefficient .690	1.000
	Financial management	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001
		N	305

Source: Researchers’ Field Data (2020)

Table 4 shows a mildly strong positive association $\rho=0.690>0$ between the principals’ transformational leadership practices and the schools’ financial management of resources. This association was also statistically significant at p value $0.001<0.05$. Consequently, the null hypothesis H_{01} : There is no significant effect between Principals’ transformational leadership practices and management of financial resources in public secondary schools in Trans-Nzoia County was rejected. Thus the alternative hypothesis H_{a1} :

There is significant effect between Principals’ transformational leadership practices and management of financial resources in public secondary schools in Trans-Nzoia County was upheld.

The researchers then conducted a chi-square goodness of fit test on the principals’ transformational leadership practices and management of schools’ financial resources to test the first null hypothesis using 305 teachers as respondents. The results are as displayed in table 5.

Table 5: Chi-square Test Results on Principals' Transformational Leadership Practices and Management of Financial of Resources

Transformational leadership practices	Financial Management				P value
		N=305	Yes	No	
Acts as a role model to all workers	Yes	F	49	48	0.001
		%	16.07	15.74	
	No	F	13	195	0.036
		%	4.26	63.93	
Attends to individual needs of workers and ensures they are comfortable	Yes	F	48	46	0.036
		%	15.74	15.08	
	No	F	13	198	0.008
		%	4.26	64.92	
Expresses optimism that schools goals will be achieved	Yes	F	54	29	0.008
		%	17.70	9.51	
	No	F	29	215	0.000
		%	9.51	70.49	
Encourages workers to be creative and innovative	Yes	F	54	44	0.000
		%	17.70	14.43	
	No	F	17	190	0.000
		%	5.57	62.3	
Creates vision to guide school operations	Yes	F	54	7	0.000
		%	17.7	2.30	
	No	F	28	216	0.010
		%	9.18	70.82	
Models and communicates the vision	Yes	F	56	15	0.010
		%	18.36	4.92	
	No	F	46	188	0.038
		%	15.08	61.64	
Creates commitment to the vision	Yes	F	51	10	0.038
		%	16.72	3.28	
	No	F	22	222	
		%	7.21	72.79	

Source: Researchers' Field Data (2020)

Generally, the findings show that transformational leadership practices have a statistically significant effect on the financial management of resources. This is notable in principals' transformational leadership practices like idealized influence ($p=0.001<0.05$), individualized consideration ($p=0.036<0.05$), inspirational motivation ($p=0.008<0.05$), intellectual stimulation ($p=0.000<0.05$), creating vision ($p=0.000<0.05$), modelling and communicating vision ($p=0.010<0.05$) and committing to the vision ($p=0.038<0.05$) which had a significant influence on the management of financial resources in

public secondary schools. Therefore, the null hypothesis H_{01} : There is no significant effect between Principals' transformational leadership practices and management of financial resources in public secondary schools in Trans-Nzoia County was rejected. Thus the alternative hypothesis H_{a1} : There is significant effect between Principals' transformational leadership practices and management of financial resources in public secondary schools in Trans-Nzoia County was upheld.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusion

Based on the study findings, it is evident that the principals' practices of transformational leadership have a significant effect on the management of schools' financial resources in public secondary schools of Trans-Nzoia County. Thus, when the principals' transformational leadership practices increase, so would the management of schools' financial resources.

5.2 Recommendations

The listed recommendations were made based on the study findings:

1. Government through Ministry of Education (MoE) to come up with institutional administrators' training policies to equip them with school management skills especially matters financial management.
2. Principals to explore and implement income generating activities in schools so as to supplement the income from the students' school fees.

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