Rowing the Boat in the Same Direction: A Must for Transformational Leaders.

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Abstract:*Teamwork is the lubricant that makes the team to work efficiently. This only happens when the team members share and understand their common vision. This study sort to investigate the influence of Principals' transformational leadership characteristic of "Inspiring a shared vision" and academic performance in secondary schools. The study was carried out in Nairobi County, Kenya. Stratified random sampling was used in selection of respondents to ensure that principals from both public and private schools were included in the sample. Transformational leadership was measured using the Leadership Practices Inventory-self developed by Kouzes and Posner (1993). Principal's responses were triangulated usingKouzes and Posner's Leadership Practices Inventory-others on teachers. To test relationships between principals' ratings and teachers' ratings, t-test was used. Results indicated a modest correlation between leadership characteristic of "inspiring a Shared Vision" and students' academic performance. This relationship was statistically significant (r=0.477 n=40 p=0.002). Based on the findings, it is recommended that principals should ensure that all the stakeholders are moving in the same direction by practicing transformational leadership characteristic of "inspiring others to act".*
Key words: Transformational leadership, inspiring a shared vision, Teamwork, Principals, Academic performance

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I. Introduction

Concept of transformational leadership

The concept of transformational leadership was first introduced by James McGregor in 1978. He saw transformational leadership as having a capability of creating a significant change in the life of people and organizations. This is because of its capacity to redesign employees' perceptions, values, expectations and aspirations. He differentiated transformational leadership from transactional leadership by saying that unlike the former which is based on a "give and take" relationship, the transformational leader was able to create a unique. This relationship between the leader and the follower is based on the leaders' personality and his/her ability to bring about change through example and the articulation of a possible desired future.Burns (1978) defined transformational leadership as a process in which leaders and followers help each other to a higher level or morale and motivation. Burn's concept was later taken up by Bass (1985) who propagated that it was possible to measure transformational leadership. This he said could be measured in terms of the amount of influence that the leader has on the followers (Bass & Bass 2008). They posited that a transformational leader is able to create in the followers trust, admiration, loyalty and respect for him/her. This in turn, makes the followers work harder than originally expected. The transformational leader makes the workers work not only for personal gain but also for their own identity since the leader provides them with an inspiring mission and vision. A transformational leader is able to articulate a vision that is appealing and inspiring to followers. He/she challenges the followers with high standards, communicates optimism about future goals and provides meaning for the tasks that they are expected to accomplish. This in turn provides energy that drives the followers forward (Yukl 2013). Black and Porter (2000) posit that a transformational leader is able to draw the follower from seeking their own self-interest and work for the good of the entire organization. This leads to achievement of significant accomplishments to the organizational goals. A transformational leader displays some distinct characteristics. One of these is "inspiring a shared vision. This study sort to establish if this characteristic has any influence on students' academic performance. The study was guided by the following hypothesis

There is no significant relationship between the secondary school principals' Transformational leadership characteristic of "inspiring a shared vision" and students' academic performance.

II. Literature Review

(a) Role of transformational leadership

Researchers have related transformational leadership to effectiveness. In school settings, Berend, Bodilly and Nattaraj (2000) found that effective and supportive principal leaders were most likely to increase and deepen the implementation of school improvement initiatives. This tended to be confirmed in Northouse's (2001) review of 39 studies of transformational literature which found that leaders who exhibited transformational leadership were more effective leaders with better outcomes than others. Studies have also shown that transformational leadership creates a willingness by teachers to give extra effort (Philbin 1997). Followers are able to think more of the greater team, organizational and global goals and less of their own aims and interests (Jandaghi et.al (2009)

In inspiring a shared vision a transformational leader needs to communicate the desired future in such a way as to motivate the followers to work towards its achievement. The leader must utilize charismatic leadership strategies and communication to sell the vision to the entire organization. Although the vision is cooperatively developed by all stakeholders, the leader must articulate it and provide focus (Kouzes&Posner 1995). To share this vision, a transformational leader needs to be able to imagine an exciting and highly attractive future for the organization. Only then would they be able to inspire their followers (Kouzes and Posner 2000). These leaders should also have a strong desire to make something happen and to be able to create a new paradigm which others have not developed before (kouzes& Posner 2002). These leaders must believe that they can make a difference in their organizations by envisioning the future and creating an ideal and unique image of what the organization can become. By doing this the transformational leaders encourage others to envision where they want to be or where they to go in their futures. They also generate enthusiasm and excitement for the common vision from others through their genuiness (Kouzes& Posner, 2002). In a school setting, the teachers and parents must believe that their principal has a clear understanding of their needs and is committed to the interests.

(b) Transformational leadership and teamwork

There has been a lot of concern on team work in many organizations. This is because of the advantages that are related to team work. Teamwork is associated with high production because the team is likely to perform well because teamwork creates synergy. This is where the combined effect of the team is greater than the sum of individual efforts. Different individuals possess diverse talents, communication skill and other strengths. When these are put into working on a common goal, the organization can achieve success. There is need to encourage teamwork in all ways possible.

Researches have been done to investigate if there is anything that leaders can do to bring about the synergy. Yukl (2002) stated that employees' work behavious are strongly affected by their leaders. Bass et al. (2003), assert that transformational leaders are able to inspire their followers to transcend self-interest and perceptions of their own weaknesses and limitations and to become more effective in pursuing collective goals. Transformational leaders do this through articulation of collective goals that the subordinates are willing to support and work towards their achievement.

Other researches have also established that the style of leadership plays a key determinant on performance (Jung 2001). One area of study has been on the role of transformational leadership on team performance. Performance beyond expectations is linked to transformational leadership. At a team level, transformational leadership is positively related to team potency which in turn leads to an improvement in team performance (DuBrin, 2009).

Malla (2011) also carried out a study to investigate if there was a relationship between transformational leadership and team performance. In the study 162 respondents from 39 different software teams were studied. Correlational and regression analysis indicated a positive relationship between transformational leadership and team performance. It was concluded that transformational leadership is associated with effectiveness, extra effort and satisfaction. Wojtara-Perry (2016) also carried a similar study but with Global Virtue teams. The study sort to find out if there was a relationship between transformational leadership on teams, productivity and job satisfaction. The study found a positive relationship between transformational leadership, employee productive and leadership effectiveness in Global Virtue Teams

A transformational leader is likely to influence the team in various ways. They provide clear directions to their followers, understand and empathize with their followers' needs and motivate them to achieve better outcomes (Bass &Riggio, 2006). These leaders also enable their followers to perform beyond the status quo and achieve remarkable results. The transformational leaders are aware of the followers needs and help them to develop and achieve their fullest potential (Northouse, 2009).

Through transformational leadership, the leader is able to gain trust, admiration, confidence and respect of other team members by his demonstration extraordinary characteristics of leadership. These leaders put the

needs of their followers before their own and display high standards of ethical and moral behavior that results in a high percentage of trust (Wojtara-Perry 2016). Schaubroeck et al. (2007) discovered that transformational leadership influenced team performance through the mediating effect of team potency.

The team leader plays a central role in determining group performance. For example, the research commissioned by Project Management Institute (PMI) reported that the project leadership style is a key success factor to project team performance (Turner & Müller, 2005).

Other studies have linked transformational leadership with collective efficacy (Walumbwa et al., 2004, Zhang et al., 2011) trust and team performance. Kane et.al (2002) reposts that the primary responsibility of team leaders is to raise the collective efficacy of the team. This team is likely to achieve their goals more effectively when they believe that they are capable (Zaccaro et al, 1995). A transformational leader is able to motivate the members to work hard and do well. They are able to fuse each member's personal goals with the team or organizational mission (House & Shamir, 1993).

For a team to perform exemplarily there is need to integrate their individual actions. This is because their individual performance contributes to the whole. This means that when the team performance is poor, it is because of their collective failure to coordinate and synchronize their individual performance. A transformative team leader is important for this coordination and to make the individuals work harder in their individual roles contributing to the whole. This leader is likely to bring about high cohesiveness. This cohesiveness is likely to be a function of members' beliefs that together they can effectively accomplish the tasks they need to for their team to be successful. These beliefs are called collective efficacy (bandura, 1986). A transformational leader is able to make the members feel more confident in their team capabilities and become more motivated to work hard for the team, persist in the face of collective obstacles and be willing to accept more difficult challenges (Weldon &Weingart, 1993)

Dirk and Skarlicki (2004) also found that a team leader with effective transformational leadership style was beneficial to gain subordinates' trust. They suggested that a team leader not only takes action to build the team's trust in the team leader but also fosters the development of trust among the team members necessary to perform a given task effectively. Transformational leaders have also been associated with the level of creative output generated by team members. (Sosik, Avolio and kahai ,1997). This implies that transformational leaders can facilitate interdependent work among group members and encourage members to work together, help members to establish a sense of cognitive trust and foster positive feelings among themselves.

Walumbwa et al., (2004) demonstrated that collective efficacy emerges from the team development and mediates the impact of transformational leadership on work outcomes. When individuals hold strong collective efficacy, they are likely to devote more effort to achieving goals (Bandura, 1986)

(c). Criticisms of transformational leadership
Transformational leadership has however been reported to have some shortcomings. For instance, Hall, Johnson, Wysocki and Kepner (2002) criticize transformational leadership that it has potential for the abuse of power. These leaders have also been reported as having a powerful influence over the followers who offer total trust and respect. Stone, Russel and Patterson, (2003) report that personal identification with the leader may result to submission and unquestioning loyalty. Some subordinates may also have dependent characters and form strong and unfortunate bonds with their leaders.

In a school setting, there is fear that the staff will reach a "plateau" once they have been able to achieve the school goals through transformational leadership (lashway, 2006). Lashway, (2006) however suggest ways of sustaining continued synergy among the teachers. This is through continued provision of role models and intellectual stimulation which are part of transformational leadership characteristics

III.   Research Methodology
The study employed the correlational research design. This enabled the researchers to determine if there was a relationship between the study variables. The study targeted 72 public schools and 139 private schools in Nairobi County. All the principals in the target schools were studied. A total of 1210 teachers in public schools and 1500 from private schools formed the target population. A total of 43 schools were randomly selected. Cochran (1977) formula was used to select the number of teachers which gave a total of 387 teachers.

The study used Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI)) to measure transformational leadership behaviours of practicing leaders. The LPI was designed to measure leadership qualities. It consists of two components: the Leadership Practices Inventory-Self, which can be used singularly or in conjunction with the Leadership Practices Inventory-Observer. Self and observer forms of the LPI were used in this study. LPI self was used on the Principals while LPI-others was used on the teachers. An interview schedule was used for triangulation purposes. This was used with the secondary school principals. Kenya National examinations statistics were also used to validate the information provided on students' academic performance.

Document analysis guide was also used to gather information on performance of students. This was gotten from the Kenya National examination records. The study also carried out some interviews with the 42 school principals.

IV.   Findings

Correlation between LPI scores for Inspiring a shared vision is shown in Table 1.1. Transformational leadership practices are indicated by IASV and student performance as measured by the percent of all KCSE passed.

Table 4.1.: Mean and Standard deviations of Above C+ schools and Below C+ schools based on "Inspiring a shared vision" characteristic

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
IASV	50.7000	7.76646	40
KCSE	6.6500	2.13097	40

The mean score for Inspiring a Shared vision was 50.7. The mean score for students' academic performance was 6.65 as indicated in Table 4.1. Further analysis of correlation was done and the results indicated in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2: Pearson Correlations analysis of inspiring a Shared Vision (ISV)

		ISV	KCSE
ISV	Pearson Correlation	1	.477(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.002
	N	40	40
	Pearson Correlation	.477(**)	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.002	.
	N	40	40

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

There was a modest correlation between leadership characteristic "inspiring a Shared Vision and students' academic performance. The Pearson r = 0.477. Transformational leadership in terms of "Inspiring a Shared Vision was therefore modestly correlated with students' academic performance. There was therefore a statistically significant relationship between the two variables r=0.477 n=40 p=0.002).

The investigation on the relationship between inspiring a shared vision and academic performance showed a positive correlation. This means that the higher the principals displayed this characteristic, the better their students performed. The Null hypothesis that stated that there is no significant relationship between the secondary school Principals' transformational leadership characteristic in terms of "Inspiring a shared vision" and students' academic performance was rejected. The Alternative hypothesis was therefore accepted. There was indeed a correlation between secondary school Principals' transformational leadership characteristic in terms of "inspiring a shared vision" and students' academic performance. These findings are similar to Brent's (2007). In transformational leadership characteristic Inspire a Shared Vision (ISV) and student performance as measured by the percent of all TAKS tests passed, the Pearson r = -.313 and r^2= .10. The significance value = .019 revealed a statistically significant correlation.

V.   Conclusions

The study found a correlation between inspiring a shared vision characteristic of transformational leadership and academic performance. This performance is as a result of the team spirit among the teachers, students and their school principals. A vision provides a roadmap meaning and enthusiasm among teams that make them work towards a common goal. It is however advisable that the leaders make the objectives realizable so as not to kill the morale among the team members. Unattainable goals may leave the teams frustrated and demotivated. It is also recommended that the managers consider teachers characteristics prior to promoting them to the level of principals for better results in their schools

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