

THE INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF HUMANITIES & SOCIAL STUDIES

Transformational Leadership: Teachers' Idealized Influence on Students' Academic Performance in County Secondary Schools in Kirinyaga, Kenya

Jane Nyaguthii Muriuki

Ph.D. Student, Department of Leadership and Governance,
Pan African Christian University, Nairobi, Kenya

Dr. Edward Nzinga

Senior Lecturer, Department of Leadership and Governance,
Pan African Christian University, Nairobi, Kenya

Dr. Jane Adhiambo Chiroma

Senior Lecturer, Department of Leadership and Governance,
Pan African Christian University, Nairobi, Kenya

Abstract:

Leadership plays an essential role in any education development and quality of students' academic performance. In many parts of the world, including the developed and developing countries, there is the recognition that schools require influential leaders and managers if they are to provide the best possible education for their students. This study explores the relationship between transformational leadership and academic performance of secondary school students in Kirinyaga County. Education plays a vital role in bringing enlightened transformation in society. Therefore, understanding how the administration can improve students' performance in the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) examinations in Kirinyaga County, is central to this study. The study examined teachers' idealized management practices as an essential indicator for a transformative leader on students' academic performance in KCSE. The study adopted an explanatory sequential mixed method research. This approach involved collecting quantitative data first, analyzing it and then developing qualitative interviews to follow the initial findings. The qualitative design focused on phenomenology, to understand how teachers' experienced idealized influence and how it affected their student's academic performance. In the quantitative phase, surveys were used to determine teachers' idealized Management practices (IMP) on Students Academic Performance (SAP). A random sampling of 48 teachers and 359 students were selected to participate in the survey from the total population of 484 teachers and 9,904 students. The researcher interviewed teachers to qualify their transformational leader knowledge on transformational leadership and experience in relation to their students' performance. Besides was a documentary analysis to obtain more information on students' academic performance. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics, analysis frequencies, means, standard deviations and percentages were calculated and presented in tables. Results revealed that IMP has a significant favorable influence on KCSE academic performance of 0.208 at alpha value 0.05 level of significance (2-tailed). Future research may focus on the impact of teachers and transformational leadership on school culture, among other areas of interest, to inform educational officers and other professionals working to support young people through effective transformational leadership around idealized management practices.

Keywords: *Idealized influence, practices, Academic performance, Transformational leadership*

1. Introduction

Education plays a vital role in bringing enlightened transformation in society. It enables the positive change of an individual, organization, economic progress and a nation's development (Blunkett, Chong & Tuckett, 2014). The education reforms aiming at effectiveness and efficiency are top priorities globally and Kenya in particular. Since independence, the education sector has undergone several major reforms to give quality and good performance in schools. School leaders play a significant role in implementing these changes). Leadership plays a tremendous vital role in the efficiency and effectiveness of any organization (Mangin, Fernando, Gabriela & Jean-Pierre, 2014). Teachers' leadership plays a central role in the attainment of the student's performance and implementation of the education policies (David, Wong & Choy, 2015).

Educating a nation remains the most primary strategy for developing society throughout the world (Aikaman & Unterhalter, 2005). Through education, people's living standards are likely to improve as they are empowered to access productive ventures. These will ultimately lead to an improvement in their livelihoods. The role of education is not just to impart knowledge and skills that enable the beneficiaries to function as economies and social change agents in

the society; but also, to impart values, ideas, attitudes and aspirations necessary for holistic development (Nsubuga, 2008). Leadership is most effective when leaders choose more effective styles like transformational leadership (Germano, 2010). It is easy to practice the idealized influence of transformational leadership. It is the best style of leadership in all situations. The leader who displays a high level of experience in both the public and private sectors is highly educated, positive and optimistic. The leader also understands educational solid practices. The leader also desires high expectations and standards (Hughes, 2014). Idealized influence describes leaders that serve as role models for their followers, allowing them to identify with a shared organizational vision and provide a sense of meaning and achievement (KEMI, 2014). It involves the school teacher leading by example, mentoring, having high expectations, a best practices emphasis, holding students and teachers accountable among others (Hauserman& Stick, 2013).

The concept of transformational leadership (TL) is a kind of leadership that involves changes as contrasted with leadership that retains the status quo. Transformational leadership is a process of inspiring change and empowering followers to achieve greater heights of organizations' success that result in increased productivity. TL stimulates motivation and commitment of followers in organizations resulting in enhanced organizations' performance. Transformational leadership practices (TLP) are done through a variety of practices. Transformational leadership is highly effective in producing positive effects for individuals, groups and organizational performance (Burns, 1978; Bass & Avolio, 1999).

TL could be a form of leadership within which interactions among interested parties square measure organized around a collective vision that remodels, motivates and enhances the follower's actions and ethical aspirations (Simola, Barling& Turner 2002). Burns (1978) first used transformational leadership on political tones. Focusing on political leadership, Burns (1978) stated that transformational leaders aim to reform followers and institutions by teaching moral values. The concept of transformational leadership spread among managers to include organizational leaders (Bass, 1985). Transformational leadership is a process that brings about change in individuals. It is an influence that causes followers to accomplish more than what is expected of them. Transformational leadership style leads to a positive transformation and change of followers through the impact on an organization's structure and strategy (Northouse, 2004). Education is a leading instrument for economic growth. The cognitive skill of the population rather than mere school attainment is related to economic growth (Elsiever, 2010). Education and training are the tools to develop the country. Examination performance cannot be overlooked. KCSE in Kenya was first held in 1989 and had at least 10 subjects that were reviewed twice to seven. Candidates are graded using Mathematics, at least two Sciences, at least two Languages, Humanity and a Technical. Academic performance determines whether the students will proceed to the university and other tertiary institutions. Secondary education in Kenya has been included as a basic (Lezotte, 2002). Kirinyaga County is in the former central province of Kenya. Its capital is Kerugoya town. County schools were chosen for the majority of Kenyan children are absorbed in public schools. Other counties were not inclusive. The primary and private schools were exempted. The purpose of the study was to find out how teachers' idealized influence affects study performance in county schools in Kirinyaga. The study adopted an explanatory sequential mixed method research. This approach involved collecting quantitative data first, analyzing it and then developing qualitative interviews to follow the initial findings.

Theoretical Framework of the Research

A theoretical framework refers to the theory that researchers select to guide their research. A theoretical framework can also be seen as applying a theory or a set of concepts drawn from the same theory to explain an event or shed some light on a phenomenon or research problem (Imenda, 2014.) In the theoretical framework, the Transformational leadership practices of teachers, as explained in the theories, seem like they influence students' academic performance as illustrated in the conceptual framework. Through modeling, coaching, inspirational motivation, clear vision, and enthusiasm, students learn values, skills, and attitudes, which later become key skills that help them develop and live. The study's theoretical underpinnings were informed by transformational leadership theory, transactional leadership theory, servant leadership theory, and authentic leadership theory. Additional theories adopted in the current study are learning theories such as Path goal theory, Walberg's, Maslow's and behavioral theories of education. The indicators of teachers' transformational leadership practices and those of students' successful academic performance were to be identified. The relationship between the Independent variable (Transformational Leadership practices) and the dependent variable (successful academic performance) is presented in the conceptual framework. The chapter also includes a summary of the discussions and arguments presented. An overview of the gaps identified is also presented at the end of this paper.

2. Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework is defined as a result of bringing together a few related concepts to explain or predict a given event or provide a broader understanding of the phenomenon of interest or research problem (Imenda, 2014). The process of arriving at a conceptual framework is an inductive one in which individual concepts are combined to form a bigger picture of possible relationships (Imenda, 2014). In other words, a conceptual framework shows how the variables involved in the research relate to each other.

The conceptual framework for this research establishes how Transformational leadership practices (TL) by teachers relate to students' academic performance (SAP). TL has four dimensions; idealized management practices, individualized consideration, inspirational motivation, and intellectual stimulation. The teacher is expected to practice, which is assumed to influence the students' academic performance. Students' academic performance (SAP) is the dependent variable, indicators such as high grades in KCSE, High students' transition rate, reduced KCSE examination malpractices, an exhibition of knowledge, skills, and values. The current study measured students' academic performance

based on high grades in KCSE, reduced KCSE examination malpractices, and high student transition rate, an exhibition of positive attitude and values.

Maslow's theory, Skinner's theory, Walberg's theory identifies all students' potential to perform well academically. In contrast, TL theories create a conducive environment for learning, in which the followers are motivated to achieve the laid down goals. Path goal learning theory was used to support the learning and transformational leadership theories concerning how students interact with the faculty in their learning process in and out of classrooms. Path goal theory suggests that academic success or performance is largely influenced by faculty interactions. To find to what extent the Transformational leadership practices of teachers' influences students' academic performance, all other factors that moderate the students' academic success were held constant.

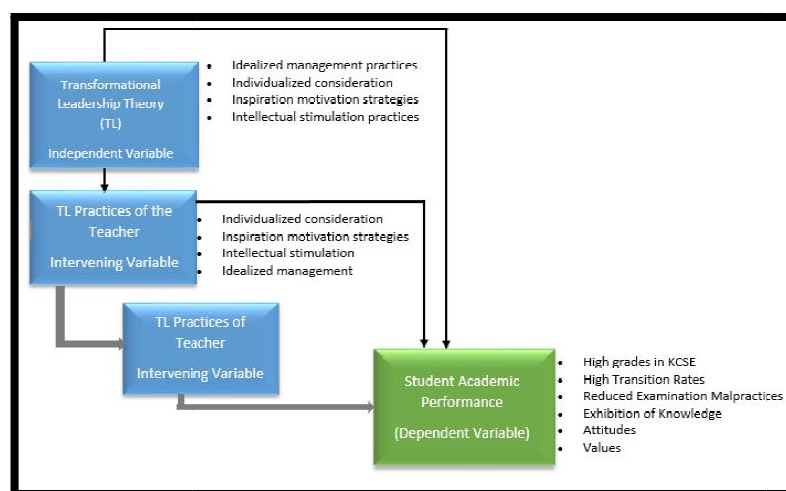


Figure 1

3. Idealized Influence

Idealized influence is the behavior of a leader who inspires trust, admiration and respect among a team to the extent that members emulate him/her. It entails leading by example in all aspects that influence and shape the opinions of followers. A transformational leader exhibits idealized influence (Lim & Ployhart, 2014). These may not be limited to public manifestations but private action (Yukl, 2010). The what and how a leader exists in the personal space saliently impacts his leadership influence in general. It is noteworthy that a leader's private space stability is directly related to his leadership effectiveness in the public arena, particularly for transformational leadership (Conger, 2014). Idealized influence describes the leader's ability to lead by example through their actions, thus becoming role models for the followers. The leaders exhibit good and ethical behaviors in their actions, consequently instilling a sense of pride in followers while also commanding trust and respect through their actions and behaviors (Bono & Judge, 2004). Idealized influence is evaluated by the leader's ability to stimulate admiration, instill trust and respect among followers in a manner that causes the followers to emulate them. It encompasses leadership by example throughout the various aspects that shape followers' opinions. Idealized influence is a critical leadership trait in transformative leaders (Lim & Ployhart, 2014). The current study evaluates the influence of idealized influence by teachers on academic performance. Idealized influence is evaluated by the leader's ability to stimulate admiration, instill trust and respect among followers in a manner that causes them to desire to emulate them (Bono & Judge, 2004). Idealized influence and inspirational motivation are combined to infer to charisma. Armstrong & Cummins (2009) assert that charismatic leaders can positively impact their followers by influencing their self-focus. Consequently, the subordinates are more willing to participate and make sacrifices for the vision (House & Howell, 1992), thereby enhancing their organizational achievement, for this case, academic performance. Through idealized influence, the leader provides role modeling for high ethical behavior and instills pride in their follower; thereby, they gain the respect and trust of such followers (Yukl, 2010). This attribute of a leader motivates subordinates to contribute their best at work, leading to organizational performance.

Idealized influence as a demonstration of TL involves leading by example in all aspects; both public and private manifestations, which influence or shape followers' opinions (Bono & Judge, 2004). The private existence of a leader saliently impacts the capacity to influence followers as evident in the followers' response to the influence. A leader's space stability correlates to the quality of leadership extended in the public arena, predominantly for transformational Leadership (Conger, 2014). Through role modeling, the leader's values and achievements influence the followers to achieve personal and organizational goals. Supporting the observation, Shamir et al. (2013) expound those values are certainly not relative because naturally, society is aware of the idea of moral practice. Therefore, it is incumbent that the transformational leader avows on own values by promoting abiding by them always (Fenwick & Gayle, 2014). Whenever followers (students) are motivated to enhance their performance, they become confident and develop a sense of pride and belonging in the organizations (school). Teachers same way, they develop a stronger sense of commitment towards their teaching practice and their engagement with the organization, thus enhancing academic achievement.

Leaders with idealized influence traits exhibit a sense of selflessness, integrity and a moral commitment to subordinates. They focus on subordinates' collective good, are ethical and remain committed to the organization's long-

term success and the well-being of their followers (Barling, 2011; Bass & Bass, 2008; Riggio, 2006). Teachers who exhibit transformational traits instill pride in followers, a sense of power, confidence and emphasize a collective mission. Empirical findings by Ross & Gray (2006) assessing the relationship between school leadership and students' achievement revealed that transformational leadership is consistent with broadly based trends of teacher empowerment and stakeholder involvement in school decision making. Berends, Bodilly & Nattaraj (2002) affirm that leaders who support their followers and influence them successfully are most prospectively able to increase school improvement initiatives. Transformational leadership style is attributed to establishing a positive school culture in which teachers are more interested and involved in schools' day-to-day exchanges (Darling-Hammond, 2003; Kanter, 2003). Teachers with the ability to display idealized influence reassure learners, inculcate confidence and enable students to overcome academic related obstacles (Bass & Riggio, 2006). According to Yulk (2002), teachers with ability to exhibit idealized management practices expresses their beliefs and appeals to followers on an emotional level to transform and motivate followers to overcome the status quo and achieve expected results to the vision and mission of the institution. Wanjiru & Wasike (2015) believe that idealized managers lead by example, are positive and optimistic hence create a school culture where learners strive to achieve their educational goals. Thus, transformational leadership may be suitable in a school setting.

This article targets teachers' transformational leadership behavior by determining their idealized influence on students' academic performance. Teachers who display idealized influence reassure learners, inculcate confidence and enable students to overcome academic related obstacles (Bass & Riggio, 2006). A leader who exhibits idealized management practices expresses his/her beliefs and appeals to followers on an emotional level in such a way that transforms and motivates followers to overcome the status quo and achieve expected results according to the vision and mission of the institution (Yukl, 2010). Idealized managers lead by example. They are positive and optimistic. They create a school culture where learners strive to achieve their educational goals. Transformational leadership may be suitable in a school setting (Wanjiku & Wasike, 2015).

Idealized leaders are extemporary role models for their groups who are committed and concerned about their followers' welfare. Leaders with idealized traits exhibit the ability to treat their followers with respect. They create a shared vision. In a classroom setting, leaders who display idealized features demonstrate enthusiasm, care and respect for students leading to high academic achievement (Garner, 2013).

4. Academic Performance of Students

Successful academic performance is one of the goals of any educational organization. Students' academic success is multifaceted and complex. Within this complexity, several arguments point out the complexities of measuring academic success. Academic performance is the outcome of education. It is the extent to which a student, teacher or institution has achieved its educational goals. The academic performance of a student is the observable and measurable behavior in a particular situation. For example, a student's academic performance in social studies includes observable and measurable behavior of a student at any point in time during a course (Zafar, 2013).

According to Litz & Scott (2011), a successful academic performance can be measured by the percentage of students that complete the school cycle and the extent to which an institution has achieved its short- and long-term goals. This contrasted the findings of Bloom (2015), who pointed out that the academic performance of students can be determined by the extent to which a student exhibits improvement in test scores and positive behavior during and after completing schools. The above findings agree with Akojee (2007) who asserted that school performance in South Africa is measured by transition rate, competency in students and overall performance in standard examinations.

Accordingly, academic performance can be measured by various parameters ranging from: student test score in standard exams, personal skills, transition rate, observable behavior, conduct, the extent to which an institution has achieved its short- and long-term goals and the mean score in a standard examination. The current study measured successful academic performance by looking at transition rate, reduced exam malpractices and students' average academic performance. Besides, many scholars investigated other factors that lead to quality academic performance. It seems that limited studies have been conducted on the implication of a teacher's transformational leadership practices on students' academic performance and almost none in county secondary schools in Kirinyaga. This study focused on high grades in KCSE, the high transition rate of students from one level to the next and reduced examination malpractices as indicators of successful academic performance among students in Kirinyaga County.

5. Methodology

Following the epistemological choice, the current research employed a mixed-method design. It utilized qualitative and quantitative analysis (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). A cross-sectional survey was employed to determine teachers' Idealized Influence on students' academic performance. Kothari (2008) notes that it is appropriate to make causal relationships between the independent and dependent variables. Hypothesis testing used quantitative data. A cross-sectional survey was chosen in this study since it was the best in finding out the prevalence of occurrence, situation, problem, attitude or issue. Mixed-methods data collection approach was employed to concurrently collect qualitative and quantitative data in the same phase of the research process, thus saving time and other resources (Creswell, 2014). In this study, quantitative data was collected using structured questionnaires where both close-ended and open-ended questionnaires gathered primary data from teachers and students. The questionnaire was structured in line with the study objectives as outlined by Bryman (2012). Open-ended questions allowed the participants to be flexible in responding to questions without limited restrictions (Yin, 2014) and gain insights from the participants' experiences (Jacob & Fugerson, 2012). The authors posited that Open-ended questions encourage participants to share effective leadership practices,

processes, and procedures used to sustain student academic achievement. The steps that were followed in developing a questionnaire includes: Specifying the information needed in line with the objectives, defining the target population that is the teachers and students, Specifying the interviewing methods, which in this case was face to face, determining the content of the questions and structure which in this case was both open-ended and closed questions, determining the order of the questions; and the questions were arranged per objective as stated by Yin (2014). The qualitative design focused on phenomenology, to understand how teachers' experienced idealized influence and how it affected their student's academic performance (Manen, 2014, p. 28). It sought to understand the teachers' idealized influence leadership role on the students' academic performance, the experience of the students on the teachers' idealized influence leadership the researcher concurrently conducted qualitative and quantitative data in the same phase of the research process, weighed the methods equally, analyzed the two components equally, and interpreted the result together, thus saving time and other resources (Creswell & Clark, 2011). Reliability in research is concerned with the replication of results. Since the study was performed in a particular setting with unique participants, it was impossible to attain the commonly understood reliability in experimental research. Rather than the consideration of qualitative research in a traditional approach, its reliability should be more of an internal measure whereby the findings of the study are judged as reasonable given the data. The question then is not whether findings will be found again but whether the results are consistent with the data collected (Patton, 2015). The researcher's expectations to deliver a complete description of how the research study was conducted to provide critically, valuable information helped guide other similar studies in the future regarding unique settings.

The researcher constantly informed and reminded participants that there would be no monetary or other incentives for their participation throughout the study. They were assured that no repercussions were resulting from not participating in the study while there were no incentives. It was expected that the intrinsic satisfaction potentially gained that often motivates participation in a project such as this would be sufficient, given that this was a project that aimed to further educators' understanding of effective school practices.

The data instruments used in the study included questionnaires, interviews, and researcher's reflective note-taking. The researcher, upon completion of sessions, did the note-taking. It enabled the researcher to reflect upon interview contributions and general themes and questions that emerged from the interviews. Researchers often fail to set aside time to reflect on things heard, seen or experienced and thus struggle to make sense of the collected data. By embracing the opportunity to reflect and synthesize the collected data, the researcher could make sense of the data. The data received from the questionnaires was used to "triangulate" the data by comparing responses to the data obtained through interviews.

Simple random sampling was used to select each element of the target population to ensure that they had an equal chance of being selected (Kothari, 2008). The researcher assigned a number to each potential respondent on the list. The researcher also used a table of random numbers, which was constructed so that each entry had an equal probability for selection. The study's sample size was determined at a 95% confidence level, i.e., the scientifically acceptable degree of accuracy. The Cochran (1963) formula was used to get a sample size. It is quite flexible in dealing with a finite population. Where n is the sample size, e is the desired level of precision, and p is the (estimated) proportion of the population.

$$n_0 = \frac{Z^2 pq}{e^2}$$

Roberts (2015) describes ethical and logistical issues as all the processes or activities a researcher must observe or adhere to ensure the research project's integrity and successful completion. Ethical considerations were observed throughout the research process, proper citations for the empirical studies, validity and reliability were upheld throughout the study through a pilot study and use of triangulation as noted by Patton (2015). Ethical standards were applicable in all areas, including data collection, interviewing participants, presenting the research findings, and ensuring accuracy when reporting the research information (Gibson, Benson & Brand, 2013).

The researcher obtained an authorization permit from the National Commission for Science, Technology, and Innovation (NACOSTI). A copy was presented to the County Director of Education in Kirinyaga County before the study. The researcher also obtained a letter from Pan Africa Christian University, Faculty of Postgraduate Studies, attached to the questionnaire. The researcher also sought permission from the various county schools in Kirinyaga before collecting the data. Further, the researcher considered getting informed consent from the respondents before interviewing them by communicating the study's purpose. Confidentiality was maintained throughout the study period and afterward. The respondents were informed about their rights to withdraw from the study if they didn't wish to continue. To ensure that the respondents were comfortable while responding to the questions, the researcher explained to each of the respondents the purpose of the research that it was purely academic.

6. Results and Discussion

This study sought to assess the influence of idealized influence on students' performance in Kirinyaga County. Table 1 below shows that the study sample size targeted was 407; comprising 48 teachers and 359 students. However, 36 teachers represented 75 per cent and 319 students representing 89 per cent participated in this study, giving a total of 355 participants, a representative of 87 per cent of the targeted population. A large representative sample gives a study on external validity. Therefore, this study deemed sufficient for inference. Over 50% response rate is adequate for analysis. Over 70% is rated as a very good response rate (Pagano & Marcovic, 2007). Based on this assumption, the 87% response rate was considered as very good and suitable for the analysis.

	Targeted Frequency	Actual Frequency	Return Percentage
Teachers	48	36	100
Students	359	319	89
Total	407	355	87

Table 1: Return Rate of Respondents

7. Idealized Management Practices

Table 2 below illustrates how teachers perceived they practice idealized management practices in the schools. The majority of teachers strongly agreed that a clear school vision promotes student academic performance with a mean of 1.53. With the same magnitude, teachers concerned with examination integrity reduce examination malpractices among students with a mean of 1.61. This was followed by respondents agreeing that teachers who serve as role models to their students encourage their academic success with a mean of 1.89.

Subsequently, teachers who display ethical behavior to students foster their academic success. Most teachers agreed that idealized management practices are well demonstrated in schools with all its items with a mean below 2.0 scores and an average mean of 1.72. The standard deviations lay between 0.56-0.79. According to these results, the practice of idealized influence in schools is high and strong. The study outcomes reveal that most schools' teachers model high integrity of professional practices that promote good moral values in the school learning environment to enhance students' academic performance.

	Questions	Mean (M)	Std. Dev.
i.	Clear school vision promotes student academic performance	1.53	0.56
ii.	The constant emphasis on school mission upholds student academic performance	1.72	0.70
iii.	Teachers who serve as role models to their students encourage their academic success	1.89	0.79
iv.	Teachers who display ethical behavior to students foster their academic success	1.89	0.71
V	Teachers who are concerned with examination integrity reduce examination malpractices among students	1.61	0.69
	Idealized Management Practices (IMP)	1.72	(Agree)

Table 2: Teachers' Perception of Idealized Management Practices

For the students' perception of the teachers' idealized management practices, the mean range was from (M=1.59 to M=1.92; collectively being (M=1.77), which is an average score on the Likert scale. This score is important to the study. It indicates that most of the students agreed that their teachers exhibited high levels of idealized management practices concerning school mission, vision, serving as their role model, observing ethical behaviour in teaching, and having policies that uphold examination integrity. All the parameters measured had a mean ranging between 0.84 and 1.08, indicating solid performance for all the questions. The results are shown in Table 3 below.

	Questions	Mean (M)	Std. Dev.
i.	The teacher constantly emphasizes on school vision	1.59	0.84
ii.	Teachers constantly remind you about the school mission	1.72	0.92
iii.	Your teachers serve as your role model	1.92	1.08
iv.	Your teachers observe ethical behaviour in teaching	1.89	0.95
v.	Teachers have a policy that upholds examination integrity	1.71	0.99
	Idealized Management Practices (IMP)	1.77	(Agree)

Table 3: Students, Perception of the Teachers' Idealized Management Practices

These results agree with Bekele&Darshan (2011) findings, which emphasized that leaders who exercise idealized practices management set high standards for workplace conduct and are role models for those standards. Khasawneh, Omari & Abu-Tineh (2009) found that idealized management practices were moderately practiced and applied by the Jordanian school management. All these researchers' findings concurred with the teachers' and students' focus groups discussion results that idealized management practices were moderately practiced by teachers in public secondary schools in Kirinyaga County.

8. Regression Model

The section sought to find out the teacher's idealized management practices influence the students' academic performance. This influence was evaluated based on the null hypothesis:

- H_01 : There is no significant influence of idealized teacher influences on the students' academic performance in Kirinyaga County secondary schools.

- H_{A2}: There is a significant influence of idealized teacher influences on the students' academic performance in Kirinyaga County secondary schools.

Pearson R test generated through a simple linear regression was used for testing whether relationships exist or do not exist and the strength of the relationship between teachers' transformational leadership practice of idealized management practices and students' performance in secondary schools at 90 % or 95 % level of significance (Orodho, 2005; Orodho, Khatete&Mugiraneza, 2016). The findings are shown in Table 4 below.

Model Summary					
Model	R	R square	Adjusted R square	Std. An Error of the Estimate	
1	0.121a	0.015	0.011	0.58284	
ANOVAa					
Model	Sum of squares	Df.	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	1.348	1	1.348	3.968	0.047b
Residual	90.360	266	0.340		
Total	91.708	267			
Coefficientsa					
Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficient	T	Sig
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	1.556	0.120		12.942	0.000
IMP	0.139	0.070	0.121	1.992	0.047

Table 4: Idealized Teacher Influence on Students' Academic Performance

The results in Table 4 above designate that teachers idealized influence on students' academic performance is statistically significant ($p < 0.05$). The results further show that change in teachers idealized influence moderately correlates with students' academic performance, with an R-value of 0.121 reflecting a weak positive relationship. R squared depicts that change leadership explains a 1.5 % variation in academic performance. The remaining 98.5 % is explained by other factors not considered in this model. This proportion explained by teachers idealized influence resources was statistically significant ($F = 3.968$, $p < 0.05$). Based on these results, H₀₁ is not supported. The study rejects the hypothesis. The coefficient of IMP is positive, denoting that a unit change in teachers idealized influence results in a positive increase by 0.121 on students' academic performance. The overall conclusion of these results is that IMP positively enhances students' academic performance in KCSE examinations for Kirinyaga County secondary schools. These findings are in line with Khasawneh, Omari & Abu-Tineh (2009), who found out that idealized influence had a positive and significant relationship in secondary schools in Jordan. Studies also support these study findings by Leithwood&Jantzi (2008) and Nderitu (2012), who advocated that schools' principals who practice idealized influence set a personal example of what is expected from teachers and students.

9. Conclusion

Findings on the influence of idealized influence on teachers' job commitment showed that teachers had an idealized influence on students' academic performance in their schools. The results revealed a significant and positive relationship between teachers' idealized influence and students' academic performance. The study results indicate that IPM has a positive and significant relationship at an alpha value of 0.05 level of significance ($r = 0.121$, $P < 0.05$). This implies that IMP practice by secondary schools' teachers is a proven strategy to enhance students' academic performance.

The null hypothesis was rejected. The alternative hypothesis was adopted. Williams (1999) stresses that students are priceless assets and the essential elements in any educational system. There is a need to have effective school headteachers to raise students' academic performance standards in the schools. This study's findings in Kirinyaga County concur with Nderitu's (2012) results in Nairobi County that ineffective leadership practices in public secondary schools contribute to low mean grades in KCSE examinations. This study suggests that Secondary school teachers adopt transformational leadership practices associated with successful schools to change public secondary schools to be centres of educational excellence. In summary, owing to the study results, it can be concluded that teachers' IMP had some influence on students' academic performance within Kirinyaga County Secondary Schools. The study also suggests that this study can be extended to other Counties in Kenya.

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