

Influence of Principals' Idealized Influence on Students' Performance at Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education in Public Secondary Schools, Kenya

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Abstract

Transformational leadership is an ideal attribute for principals in schools and the leadership style gives the students an environment in which to grow. The purpose of this study was to investigate the influence of principals' transformational leadership practices on student academic performance in Kenya Certificate Secondary Examination (K.C.S.E) in Makueni County, Kenya. The objective that guided the study was to: determine the influence of principals' idealized influence on student performance at KCSE in Makueni. The hypothesis was: there is no relationship between principals' idealized influence, inspirational motivation with students' mean scores at Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education Makueni County. The sample comprised of 111 principals, 729 teachers and 12 Ministry of Education officials. Questionnaires and interview guide were used to collect data. Validation of the questionnaires through pre-testing and expert judgment by the supervisors. Reliability was computed using Cronbach's alpha method. The coefficient value was 0.85 at alpha = 0.05. H₀ indicate a negative and strong significant coefficient between the indicators of principals idealize and students means score at K.C.S.E which included ($r=-.213$, $p\text{-value}<0.05$); ($r=.267$, $p\text{-value}<0.01$) respectively. The null hypothesis there is no significant relationship between Idealized influence and students' mean score at Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education would be accepted if $p<0.05$. The null hypothesis was rejected. It was concluded that principals' idealized influence students' academic performance. The following recommendations were made: KEMI to carry out transformational leadership seminars for the principals, as well as carrying out checks on application of the practices by the principals. The Ministry of Education Policy makers should establish policies on transformational leadership. Teacher trainers especially the universities ought to review curriculum to include analysis of school managers and also have simulated situations.

Key Terms: Principals idealized influence, transformational leadership, KCSE scores

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I. Introduction

A country's current and future development is determined by the levels of education of her citizens. Education is a valuable key asset for employment (Gerhard & Hoelscher, 2017; Veeriah, 2017), needed to generate innovative knowledge in order to promote economic development and sustainability (Sumintono, 2015), and in the pursuit of national values and aspirations (Abdul Jaleel, Opere & Yarquah, 2014). Education is also a vital component of transformation. In a school setup, a positive change increases the performance. This is because of the type of leadership skill applied by the leader to the followers. Hughes (2014), advocates that the leader is highly qualified to display positive and strong leadership practices. Some of the practices include teacher strictness on attendance, students discipline, arrival time and learning activities. The principal is the transformational leader whose key responsibility is to lead by example, using the most desirable transformational leadership skill.

Many scholars have shown interest in establishing who a transformational leader is. Transformational leader has the ability to change, inspire and motivate followers to achieve results greater than originally planned. Northouse, (2016) maintains that the work of the transformational leaders is to help transform organizations through different strategies. These leaders are known for reducing uncertainty and affecting a wide range of the outcomes of the individuals in organization (Mokgolo, Mokgolo & Modiba, 2012). Therefore, transformational leaders are highly respected people in the society. Odumeru (2013) suggests that the focus of transformational leadership is to bring change between the leaders and subordinates. The change in the organization is as a result of the leader's attitude, persuasion and passion. This leader motivates followers to

work for transcendental goals instead of short-term self-interest and for achievement and self-actualization instead of security (Anshu&Upadhyay, 2017). A school as an organization has ups and downs which are related to performance, satisfaction and commitment (Hulpia&Devos, 2010). Besides principals' leadership style, teachers' commitment also plays an important role towards achieving school efficiency.

A school principal as the leader should be in a position to adjust goals, direction and mission for practical reasons. The principal should identify what the employee wants and emphasize the pay performance link. If this is not understood, there is likely to be confusion, uncertainty, and minimal transactional impact leader- follower's relationship. Transformational leadership as idealized influence is needed by the transformational leader to manage the change in an organization. Idealized Influence is where the transformational leader serves as a role model for the followers and which allows them to identify organizational vision (KEMI, 2014). Further, the followers tend to trust and respect the leader by emulating the leader behavior and then internalizes (Bass, 2008).

Idealized influence demonstrate a leader's integrity, a life of moral commitment and selfishness to followers. (Barling et al., 2011; Bass, 1985, Bass &Riggio, 2006). These leaders resist shortcuts and remain focus on the long term goal of the organization (Barling et al., 2011; Bass, 1985, Bass &Riggio, 2006). For instance, in Malaysia the government is working towards achieving a goal to prepare "young people to meet the needs of 21st century" (Nurazuraini, Mahzan&Abdul , 2016; Veeriah, 2017) through innovative, productive, skilled, competitive, innovative resistant, and creative education system. In Kenya, academic performance and discipline measure the efficiency of the school (Nderitu, 2012). Secondary school level is a crucial stage in the career choice of young adults all over the world (Munir& Khalil 2016).

This implies that when principals apply the above skills, it is most likely that performance in secondary schools increases. Studies by Kitur, Chege, and Tanui (2020), found that there was a relationship between students' academic achievement and idealized influence characteristics. Idealized influence was mostly used by the leaders thus making the students pass in their examination. Further, the findings by Saxe (2011) are consistent with Muia (2018) that schools need reforms through transformational practices to sustain achievement. One way of evaluating the idealized influence qualities of principals is by analyzing their performance under the current education systems from 2013-2017. Therefore, all secondary school leaders regardless of the sectors are pressured by accountability for better results. Table 1.1 shows KCSE performance 2013 to 2017.

Table 1
An analysis of Makueni, Machakos and Kitui Counties' KCSE mean score for 2013-2017

Year	National MS	Makueni MS	Machakos MS	Kitui MS
2013	5.04	5.04	4.56	4.21
2014	5.30	5.16	4.79	5.07
2015	5.15	5.07	4.72	5.67
2016	5.30	4.78	3.42	4.10
2017	5.38	3.44	3.20	3.32

Source: (County Director of Education, Makueni County statistics section, 2017)

The above table showed that Makueni County based on national mean score was slightly above or below the national mean score. The table shows lower mean score from 2014 to 2017 as compared to national mean score. Machakos and Kitui counties managed lower KCSE mean scores than Makueni except for 2015 when Kitui did better than national score. The closeness of mean scores to the national mean may have been attributed to transformational leadership dimensions'.

Various studies have been done to explain this phenomenon but its relationship between principal's transformational leadership has not yet been done in the entire County. Thus, the study was expected to determine the influence of principals' idealized influence on student performance at Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education in Makueni County.

II. Literature Review

A study done by Hadebe (2013) said that schools should be viewed as business entities which needed leaders who understood their role in school production process. Importantly, any learning environment cannot survive without the engagement of its leaders, who increase students' academic performance and implementation of goals (Hauserman& Stick, 2013). Therefore, the environment must have certain conditions that lead to positive performance for all the people in the organization. These conditions that are brought about by the school leaders help increase motivation and work to the followers (Hoch, et al., 2018; Underwood et al.,

2016). According to Quin, Deris, Bischoff, & Johnson, (2015), positive changes are due to effective leaders whose aim is student achievement.

Consequently, principals practicing idealized influence to emphasize on effective team work, develop vision, keep competitive and make the organizations able to take competitive advantage. A study done by (Hauserman & Stick, 2013) shows that idealized influence of transformational leadership when used by the school principals effectively results to success. Some of the additional practices include; mentoring, having best-practices, and being accountable. Further, these leaders are responsible to admire respect, trust, and to avoid use of power for their own interests (Deveshvar & Aneja, 2014). Avolio and Bass, (2004) indicate that leaders who positively attract their followers are the ones who practice idealized influence behaviors for example the followers need first. These leaders have determination and ready to take risks using the capabilities in different areas. Moreover, they are ready to show moral conduct and exercise high ethical standards (Bass & Riggio, 2006). A study by Veysel (2014) assert that school principals who use Idealized Influence dimension, create a healthy environment for the learners thus promote academic excellence in school. Also according Ngunyi and Ndurumo (2019), the idealized influence greatly impacted students' academic performance by showing an increase in the students' performance in different subjects. Studies by Kitur, Chege and Tanui (2020), found that there was a significant relationship between idealized influence characteristics as perceive by director of studies and secondary students' academic performance in KCSE with a P- value of 0.005. Therefore, idealized influence of transformational leadership must be enhanced in school leadership for positive learner outcomes in the KCSE examinations. Moreover, the principals who use idealized influence attributes have a responsibility to ensure that students perform in KCSE examinations. Most importantly, the principals must exhibit idealized influence practices to make the teachers be moved toward the success of the organization.

III. Theoretical framework

Transformational leadership theory which focuses on the leader's behaviours, where change in the followers is observed and interests of the group are taken care of informed this study (Warrillow, 2012). The concept of transformational leadership is a reflection of Bass seminal works where transformational leadership contributed quite a number of benefits to the follower and the organization in terms of its effectiveness (Bass, 1985). Kolzow (2014), further comment that a transformational leader is a leader engages followers by demonstrating integrity and trust. The leader's role is to transform the followers sense of purpose, vision, goals and finally model the following into a single team.

Bass (1985) puts it clearly that transformational leadership has to be grounded in moral foundations that are usually based on four components: individual consideration, intellectual stimulation, inspiration and idealized influenced. These aspects are important to the transformational leader who in turn exhibits them through the followers for the purpose of bringing about desired outcomes (Bass & Riggio, 2006). Based upon this theory, this study seeks to determine the influence of principals' idealized influence on student performance at Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education. The main hypothesis was idealized influence has no significant relationship with students' mean scores at KCSE.



Figure 1. Source: Adopted from Mojgan et al, (2012).

IV. Research Methodology

According to Kothari & Garg (2014), a design arranges data analysis in a conceptualized structure in research. This study adopted correlational method which examines a significant relationship between two or more variables that were obtained through a statistical procedure (Osebo & Ifeakor, 2011). The total number of respondents was 111 principals, 12 Ministry of Education officials and 729 teachers. The researcher used purposive approach to select all the schools' heads and MoE officials. Simple random sampling method was applied to the teachers. The data for the study was collected by using two types of instruments namely: questionnaires and interviews. O' Leary (2014) assert that a questionnaire uses survey method. Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, (2013) assert that a questionnaire instrument collects primary data. There were two types of

questionnaires: principals' and teachers. Each questionnaire contained statements relating to the influence of the principals; transformational leadership on students' academic performance.

The analysis was done by descriptive statistics using Statistical Package for Social Sciences version 21.0. In addition, Pearson's correlation analysis and regression analysis were used to establish the relationship between the study variables. The study took place in Makueni County with Principals as the main respondents. Others were the teachers and key informants from the ministry of education at the county. A sample of 111 principals drawn from a population of 388, 729 teachers were sampled from 2121 and finally 12 respondents from the Ministry of Education participated in the study. The samples provided the data for analysis in order to determine the idealized practice of leadership.

V. Results and Discussion

4.1 Questionnaires Return Rate

The researcher sought to establish the rate of return for the questionnaires. The researcher distributed questionnaires to the principals and teachers respectively in the Makueni County. Microsoft excel sheet and SPSS 21.0 was used to analyze the results. Table 2 shows the questionnaires return rate of the principals and teachers.

Table 2
Questionnaires return rate of the principals and teachers

Respondents	Returned	Not Returned	% return rate
Principals	106	5	95.5%
Teachers	623	96	85.4%

Table 2 indicates that response rate of the principals was 95.5 percent and the teachers was 85.4 percent. This response depicted a good enough response rate reliable for representing the population under study. A study by Fryrear (2015) argues that a response rate of 80 percent and above is preferable and high enough from internally conducted surveys whereas external surveys may yield much less or higher depending on the method used.

4.2 Demographic information

This study provides the findings of descriptive statistics of the sampled population of the principals, and ministry of education officials.

Table 3
Gender of respondents

	Principals		Teachers	
	f	%	f	%
Male	47	42.3	270	37.0
Female	64	57.7	459	63.0
Total	111	100.0	729	100.0

Table 3 shows that majority of the principals were female (57.7 percent) while 42.3 percent were male. Demographic information of the female teachers was 63.0 percent while male teachers were 37.0 percent. The female teachers (63.0 percent) were also more than female principals (57.7 percent) hence they were able to impact the school outcomes. Also women empowerment policies have increased the number of female principals in Makueni County. The findings also contradicted a research by Ayiro (2014) whose male representative for the principals was more than their female counterparts hence more males understood leadership skills. The results also contradict findings by Muia (2018), where male teachers were more than female teachers. Similarly, a study by Veeriah (2017) on the relationship between principal transformational leadership practices, teacher organizational commitment, and school culture showed more female teachers than the male teachers. These studies reveal that both male and female teachers were in leadership positions.

4.3 K.C.S. E Performance Makueni County

The study also indicated that the mean score for the five years was 5.27 C-. There were 111 schools, 14 of which managed to attain C+ and above qualified to join university over the four years. This implied that quite a good number of students in the 14 schools joined universities. The performance was attributed to availability of facilities, lab equipment, appropriate resources and textbooks. The principals and MoE officials utilized transformational practices. 23 schools scored C Plain, 55 had C- and 19 schools scored D+. Majority of the schools (55) had a mean grade above C-. This implied that most students performed in K.C.S.E. The subsequent analysis related idealized influence on academic performance.

4.4 Idealized influence and academic performance

Idealized influence (II) has characteristics that are helpful and can be emulated by teachers and students hence increased school performance. Studies by Gomes, (2014); Ngaithe, K'Aol, Lewa&Ndwiga, (2016), assert that idealized influence is equated with charismatic leadership. Idealized influence and charismatic leadership act as role models to the followers. Idealized influence leaders are associated with charisma, is ethical and communicates effectively the vision of the organization to the followers (Ngaitheet *al.*, 2016). These leaders have strong values that make them look different from the other leaders. In addition, they display images that are positive to their followers (Gomes, 2014).

Further, idealized influence leaders possess distinct behaviours such as communicating competently and inspiring vision to followers in an understandable and credible manner. They actually do this so as to attain the objectives by the followers.

(Avolio&Yammarino, 2012). Idealized influence leaders involved the followers in reinforcing systems in order to establish the vision of the organization (Ngaitheet *al.*, 2016). Gomes (2014), posit that the reinforcement is through motivation and reward Through reward procedures.

4.4.1 Principals responses on idealized influence and academic performance

The researcher sought to find out principals' use of idealized influence dimension toward students KCSE performance. Idealized influence (II) has characteristics that are helpful and can be emulated by teachers and students hence increased school performance. Some of these characteristics include; instilling pride in students, being a role model by doing what is expected of them, making personal visits, appreciating followers and going beyond self-interest for the sake of the group among others. The objective was evaluated by considering the items (in a scale of 1-5) on the principal's idealized influence on academic performance. The table is presented in two parts; A is the perception of the principals' idealized influence while B is the Likert scale rating by the school principals' leadership influence on their performance. Table 4.3 show item i to xi measuring idealized influence on a five scale Likert scale where 1 = Strongly Disagree SD, 2 = Disagree D, 3 = Neutral N, 4 = Agree A and 5 = strongly Agree SA. Table 4 shows principals responses on idealized influence and academic performance

*Table 4
Principals responses on idealized influence and academic performance*

<i>As a principal I;</i>	<i>SD</i>		<i>D</i>		<i>N</i>		<i>A</i>		<i>SA</i>	
	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>
Seek for respect from of teachers and stude students	5	4.5	8	7.2	64	57.7	0	0.0	34	30.6
Instill pride in students	3	2.7	6	5.4	3	2.7	33	29.7	66	59.5
Pay personal visits to students homes to show support	4	3.6	7	6.3	19	17.1	24	21.6	57	51.4
Am a model to staff and students?	0	0.0	2	1.8	2	1.8	29	26.1	78	70.3
Bother about welfare of individual members of the school	0	0.0	1	0.9	2	1.8	32	28.8	76	68.5
Have confidence that staff will perform highly as I expect.	0	0.0	0	0.0	4	3.6	48	43.2	59	53.2
Inspire staff and students to try harder.	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	33	29.7	78	70.3
Repeat the vision to my subordinates	0	0.0	0	0.0	6	5.4	45	40.5	60	54.5
Go beyond individual self interest for the sake of the group	0	0.0	1	0.9	0	0.0	40	36.0	70	63.1

Reassure followers that they can overcome obstacles	0	0.9	1	0.9	2	1.8	33	29.7	75	67.6
Appreciate the followers by giving them gifts.	3	2.7	3	2.7	7	6.3	31	27.9	67	60.4

N denotes Number of respondents M denotes mean

AM means average mean

f denotes frequencies

% denotes percent

On Seek for respect from teachers and students, 57.7 percent of the principals Agreed that they sought respect from teachers and students while 30.6 percent Strongly Agreed and 7.2 percent Disagreed. On Instill pride in students' majority 59.5 percent of the principals Strongly Agreed that instilling pride among students leads to a high proportion while 29.7 percent Agreed and 5.4 Disagreed.

On Pay personal visits to students homes to show support majority 51.4 percent of the principals Strongly Agreed that principals pay personal visits to students homes to show support while 21.6 percent Agreed and 17.1 were Neutral respectively. This finding is interpreted that the students who emulated their principals excelled in KCSE. On Am a model to staff and students majority 70.3 percent of the principals Strongly Agreed that they are a model to staff and students while 26.1 Agreed.

Bother about welfare of individual members of the school majority 68.5 percent of the principals Strongly Agreed that they bother about welfare of individual members of the school while 28.8 percent Agreed and 1.8 percent were Neutral respectively. The findings imply that the staff worked hard aiming to score high marks in KCSE. On Have confidence that staff will perform highly as I expect majority 53.2 percent of the principals Strongly Agreed that principals have confidence that staff will perform highly as expected while 43.2 percent Agreed.

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On Appreciate the followers by giving them gifts majority 60.4 percent of the principals Strongly Agreed that they appreciate the followers by giving them gifts while 27.9 percent Agreed and 6.3 percent were Neutral respectively. This could imply that rewards were associated with performance. The relationship between idealized influence and academic performance at KCSE was that the principals were able to practice role modelling, instill pride, inspired teachers and students to work hard among others that focused on students overall performance. This helped the students to put more effort in their work since learning was encouraged.

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However, Ayacko (2016) reported, idealized influence had slightly a lower variation ($M=3.43$, $SD=0.565$). But it emerged to be the most practiced since the staff had complete trust in the leaders. This finding indicate that there was a relationship between dependent and independent variable similar to results reported by Mbithi (2014).

The table show that idealized influence mean score and standard deviations. The findings indicate the principals had a grand mean of (4.36) and standard deviation of (0.41). which implied that there was excellent performance rate in examinations. which implied that there was excellent performance rate in examinations. which implied that there was excellent performance rate in examinations. The table 5 shows Teachers perception on principals' performance

Table 5
Teachers perception on the principals performance

<i>Item</i>	<i>My principal,</i>	<i>SD</i>		<i>D</i>		<i>N</i>		<i>A</i>		<i>SA</i>	
		<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>
Rarely plays out the individual level		67	9.2	78	10.7	175	24.0	191	26.2	218	29.9
Has increased use of teams		27	3.7	59	8.1	54	7.4	270	37.0	319	43.8
Ensure innovation adaptability		20	2.7	85	11.7	51	7.0	278	38.1	295	40.5
Involves teachers in the development process		21	2.9	77	10.6	60	8.2	391	53.6	180	24.7
Fosters trust and respect in teachers		49	6.7	25	3.4	72	9.9	349	47.9	234	32.1
Utilizes diverse skills and expertise		39	5.3	24	3.3	101	13.9	251	34.4	314	43.1
Addresses issues touching on ethical issues		16	2.2	49	6.7	62	8.5	261	35.8	341	46.8
Speaks and stands for his or her words		25	3.4	53	7.3	84	11.5	199	27.3	368	50.5
Displays high morals and clear set of values		26	3.6	44	6.0	84	11.5	179	24.6	396	54.3
Has a strong relationship with the teachers		55	7.5	35	4.8	77	10.6	233	32.0	329	45.1
Exercises high expectation		38	5.2	20	2.7	88	12.1	223	30.6	360	49.4
Use symbols to encourage the followers		49	6.7	32	4.4	149	20.4	376	51.6	123	16.9
Confidently allows teacher to express their ideas		56	7.7	25	3.4	82	11.2	322	44.2	244	33.5

On Rarely plays out the individual level majority 29.9 percent of the teachers Strongly Agreed that principals rarely plays out the individual level while 26.2 Agreed and 24.0 percent were Neutral. On Has increased use of teams majority 43.8 percent of the teachers Strongly Agreed that principals has increased use of teams while 37.0 percent Agreed and 8.1 percent Disagreed. The results from teachers imply that their principals use of teams increased KCSE performance

On Ensure innovation adaptability majority 40.5 percent of the teachers Strongly Agreed that principals ensures innovation adaptability while 38.1 percent Agreed and 11.7 percent Disagreed respectively. The results imply that KCSE performance increased due to the principals' spirit of adapting innovation.

On Involves teachers in the development process majority 53.6 percent of the teachers Agreed that principals involve teachers in development process teachers while 24.7 percent Strongly Agreed and 10.6 percent Disagreed respectively. This imply that academic plans of the school moved easily hence student had humble time to read.

On Fosters trust and respect in teachers majority 47.9 percent of the teachers Agreed that principals fosters trust and respect in teachers while 32.1 percent Strongly Agreed and 6.7 Strongly Disagreed. This finding implied that teachers were free to share issues that pertains students performance without any.

On Utilizes diverse skills and expertise majority 43.1 percent of the teachers Strongly Agreed that principals utilizes diverse and expertise while 34.4 percent Agreed and 13.9 percent were Neutral respectively. The result imply that use of teachers skills and other expertise helped improve academic performance.

On Addresses issues touching on ethical issues majority 46.8 percent of the teachers Strongly Agreed that principals Addresses issues touching on ethical issues while 35.8 percent Agreed and 8.5 percent were Neutral respectively..

On Speaks and stands for his or her words 50.5 percent of the teachers Strongly Agreed that principals Speaks and stands for his or her words while 27.3 percent Agreed and 11.5 percent were Neutral respectively. On Displays high morals and clear set of values 54.3 percent of the teachers Strongly Agreed that principals Displays high morals and clear set of values Has a strong relationship with the teachers while 24.6 percent Agreed and 11.5 percent were Neutral respectively.

On Has a strong relationship with the teachers 45.1 percent of the teachers Strongly Agreed that principals exercises high expectation Has a strong relationship with the teachers while 32.0 percent Agreed and 10.6 were Neutral respectively. On Exercises high expectation 49.4 percent of the teachers Strongly Agreed that principals Exercises high expectation while 30.6 percent Agreed and 12.1 were Neutral respectively. This finding implied that this demotivated the followers to work hard. On Use symbols to encourage the followers 51.6 percent of the teachers Agreed that principals Use symbols to encourage the followers while 20.4 percent were Neutral and 16.9 percent Strongly Agreed. This finding is interpreted that the students who emulated their principals excelled in KCSE.

On Confidently allows teacher to express their ideas 44.2 percent of the teachers Agreed that principals confidently allow teachers to express their ideas while 33.5 percent Strongly Agreed and 11.2 percent were Neutral. The findings implied that due to principals use of idealized influence practices, this could have enhanced performance in schools. Idealized influence had a positive effect since it was perceived highly ($M=3.99$, $SD= 0.85$), hence performance at KCSE was realized.

The ministry of education officers in Makueni county were very resourceful. They reported that the most of the principals were aware of the idealized influence practices. They said that the principals were a role model to the teachers and students hence this encouraged the spirit of working hard so as to increase performance. The CEO of Kibwezi had this inspiring experience to share,

“As the administrator of the sub- county, My principals in this sub-county lead by example. When they assumed office, it was in a pathetic condition. They renovated it and ensured the compound was well managed in order to give it a new face. As a result, other principals from other sub-counties emulated and had their schools renovated. My principals are always enthusiastic, open, fair and consistent, excellent listeners to teachers. They ensured academic performance vision was conveyed to the teachers always”

These responses concur with the principals idealized influence response that they were a role model to the staff and students (96.4 percent). In addition, the MoE confirmed with principals idealized influence response that they repeated vision (94.6 percent). This implies that principals role modelling to the followers and repeating of the vision were associated with academic performance.

In addition, KI7 had this to say in determining the achievement of academic vision.

“My principals analyzed results. They were interested in knowing when school-based exam is done. This helps evaluate if the student has any vision for a better performance and see if there were challenges they encounter and how they solve them in preparedness to the KCSE.” My principals worked extra time in pursuit of the set goals for their schools and involved teachers on academic matters.

This response can be confirmed with the opinion of the principals in their feedback to the questionnaire that they inspired the staff and students to try work harder (100.0 percent). Further the MoE response concurred with the principals questionnaire that the principals always involved and interacted with the teachers in academic committees (77.8 percent: 76.2 percent) so as to strategize on academic matters, such as sensitizing the students on behavioral change and academic performance. This implies that due to principals interaction with the teachers and students, and sensitization on behavior, performance at KCSE increased.

4.4.3 Hypothesis testing

HO₁ Idealized influence has no significant relationship with students' mean score at KCSE
 Pearson correlation was used to test the relationship between principals' idealized influence and student academic performance at an alpha value 0.05 level of significance.

Table 6
Correlation between principals' idealized influence and student mean score at KCSE

Statement	Performance		N
	Pearson correlation	Sig.(2-tailed)	
Seek for respect from of teachers and students	-.015	.878	111
Instill pride in students	-.213*	.025	111
Pay personal visits to students homes to show respect	-.267**	.005	111
Am a model to staff and students	.052	.589	111
Bother about welfare of individual members of the school	.027	.782	111
Have confidence that staff will perform highly as I expect	.052	.586	111
Inspire staff and students to try harder	.071	.461	111
Repeat the vision to my subordinates	-.083	.384	111
Go beyond individual self interest for the sake of the group	.073	.445	111
Reassure followers that they can overcome obstacles	.057	.552	111
Appreciate the follower by giving them gifts	-.073	.447	111

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05level (2-tailed)

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

The correlation results in Table 6 indicate a negative and strong significant coefficient between the indicators of principals idealize and students means score at K.C.S.E. This implied the less principals were idealized the more students means score at K.C.S.E improved. The indicators of principals idealized include (r=-.213, p-value<0.05); (r=.267, p-value<0.01) respectively. The null hypothesis states that there is no significant relationship between Idealized influence and students' mean score at Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education would be accepted if p<0.05. The null hypothesis was rejected. It was concluded that principals idealized influence improved students academic performance.

These findings did concur with the findings by Muia (2018), which show that idealized influence had a positive and significant relationship between the principals' transformational leadership and students' KCSE performance. The study had a correlation of 0.178, p<5.00 making the null hypothesis accepted. Similarly, the findings by Kitur, Choge and Tanui who Chi square value = 10.55, p-value =0.005 found that there was a statistical significant relationship (p-value was below 0.005). Hence, the principals' idealized influence had an association with students' KCSE performance. According to (Chen, 2014), idealized influence had a positive correlation with r = 0.525 at a significant level of p < 0.05. Studies by (Ayacko, 2016) show that correlation analysis between idealized influence and staff performance indicated that the variables had a positive correlation. Further in a study conducted by Aruzie, Adjei, Mensah, Irene & Anorkyewaa, (2018), they found out that school administrator who are the key factors provide the most valuable leadership by enhancing performance and student achievement. These leaders are knowledgeable, visionary and experts in their leadership. Consequently, the followers are deeply rooted to the leaders behaviour even when they retire from the leadership position (Buenvinida & Ramos 2019). Table 7 summarizes the descriptive statistics of idealized influence.

Table 7: Principals descriptive statistics on idealized influence

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Mean	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis

				S	Std. Error	S	Std. Error
Idealized Influence	111	4.36	.41	-.79	.23	.11	.46

Table 7 indicates that idealized influence was utilized by the principals because the mean was significantly positive (M= 4.36 SD=41).

VI. Conclusion

Transformational leadership is critical in the 21st century. Transformational leaders only purpose to transform their followers when they develop to practice the transformational skills hence improve academic performance. This is evident due to the relationship between the academic performance and the principals' in Makeni County. Idealized influence showed a constant of 6.664 and standard error of 1.888 and standardized coefficients -.220, T-test was 1.590 and Sig. .115. Based on correlation analysis, idealized influence correlated to academic performance. 83.6 percent of idealized influence had relationship with the dependent variable, K.C.S.E academic performance in Makeni County.

The coefficient gave the exact relationship between each independent variable and the dependent variable. For example, idealized influence was statistically significant at 0.000. According to the teachers, most of their principals had increased use of team work, utilized diverse skills and expertise, worked within set expectations and had strong relationships with the teachers a way of using idealized influence. The study revealed that Principal's in Makeni County embraced idealized influence dimension through inspiring staff and students to try to work hard. The instant drop in the K.C.S.E performance in the 2016 and 2017 years could be as a result of failure to incorporate all the idealized influence leadership attributes.

VII. Recommendations

The objective of this study was to determine the influence of principals' idealized influence on student performance at KCSE. Principals and teachers being the main players in the school management, transformational leadership is a mandatory. The principals are the main custodians of the school. It is important to attend seminars so that they can well be versed with transformational leadership skills so as to come up with a better performance. When they attend these training agencies like KEMI, they get the quality transformational leadership. Also ensure that principals are well versed with the characteristics and responsibilities of a good teacher. This will result to positive academic performance because of the transformational leadership skills.

School principals are encouraged to use idealized influence leadership attributes in order to create a good learning environment to the teachers and students. increase academic performance. The principals as key leaders must engage themselves in formulating new ways of strongly embracing idealized influence ideas so as to dictate news ways of improving performance. The study thus recommends to the ministry of education to constantly carry out transformational leadership seminars and trainings to the Principals as well as quality checks and reviews on the implementation strategies by the Principals. The ministry of education should have exchange programs of the all principals in the county so as to learn more on inspiring staff and students to work hard.

They should embrace on more of idealized influence attributes whereby their aim is to inspire and be role model to the followers. The principals are the transformative leadership in public secondary schools in Kenya. Therefore, a study should be conducted on how principal's leadership affects academic performance in different counties.

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