

**INFLUENCE OF INTELLECTUAL STIMULATION ON STUDENTS' ACADEMIC  
PERFORMANCE IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN WEST POKOT SUB-  
COUNTY, WEST POKOT COUNTY, KENYA**

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**Abstract**

Education plays significant part with the intension to make teaching and learning more effective and to give quality education to students. It is the foundation of national development as well as reagent to maintainable development. Therefore, this research tends to close the bridge by examining influence of intellectual stimulation on students' academic performance in public secondary schools in West Pokot Sub-County. The study objective was influence of intellectual stimulation on students' academic performance in public secondary schools in West Pokot Sub-County. This research was hinged on Transformational Theory. The investigation utilized positivism philosophy and descriptive survey research design. Target population comprised of 458 categories of people selected from 31 county public secondary schools. The study used Krejcie and Morgan table to determine a sample size of 210 participants. The research instrument adopted was a five-point Likert scale questionnaire and interview schedules for data collection. The study recommends more pursuit of transformational leadership style involvement into intellectual stimulation, individualized consideration, inspirational motivation, and idealized influence. School management, government, researchers and academicians will greatly benefit from this study as it provides viable insights that could guide decisions to serve their interests on the critical subject of enhanced students' academic performance. Therefore, basing on the findings, transformational theory and social exchange theory the school management should effectively bundle all the dimensions of transformational leadership style through their policy framework and consistently improve on them to heighten their students' academic performance in public secondary schools in West Pokot Sub-County.

**Keywords;** *Intellectual Stimulation, Academic Performance, Descriptive survey*

**INTRODUCTION**

Education plays significant part with the intension to make teaching and learning more effective and to give quality education to students. It is the foundation of national development as well as reagent to maintainable development. In addition, it is a process whereby skills, knowledge, attitude, and virtues are inculcated in individuals. Most educational experts consider administrators as the driving force and main source of the organizational development and

academic growth of students (Mirkamali, 2005). The successes of an administrator have been the various methods used in their administration process. The administrator's leadership style influences the efficiency and the effectiveness of the organization. There are different types of leadership styles but the interest of the researchers is on transformational leadership style.

Transformational leadership became a major interest globally in 1970s because of two reasons (Hay, 2006). First, from the 1970s to the after World- War ii period of stability, there was economic change around the world. This means that large organization have had to consider some significant changes to how they do business. Several factors such as technological change have resulted in the emergence of unstable and competitive environment thus causing changes in the organization to be imperative. These changes took the toll on the satisfaction of participants therefore breaking the contract long term in return for participants' loyalty (Hay, 2006). Because the organization needed to find solutions of the challenges caused by rapid changes globally and at the same time, building the, morale of the works.

In 1970s, theories about leadership was developed on the basis of exploring traits and behaviors(contingency theories) which failed to explain some leadership qualities (Hay, 2006) and this was an indication that some new style of leadership have developed that has gone beyond the known used styles of leadership like transaction and classical styles, thus calling for reexamination. From middle 1980s, transformational leadership is among the popular approaches to understanding leader effectiveness. Transformative leaders change the beliefs and values of its supporters and they influence them to function past their expectation (Tracey, 1998). According to (Bass, 2006), the leaders inspires participants to be involved with organizational goals and objectives thus enabling participants be committed in the end.

As Maslow's hierarchy of needs demonstrates, transformational leaders raised followers from low level of needs and wants to higher level (Hay, 2006) and also assist their participants to satisfy their human needs by engaging to higher-level needs such as love, learning and leaving a legacy. (Barbuto, 2006) asserts that a transformative leader is believed to create respect, trust and admiration from his supporters. Transformational is founded on self-evaluation of exchangeable beliefs and standards by leaders and their supporters, so they depend on each other to take their raise their success to a level whereby it would have been impossible to do individually (Chekwa, 2001).

Transformational leadership can be defined as increasing the interest of the workers to achieve higher performance through developing the commitments and beliefs in the organization (Bass, 1985). It entails moving people to a common vision by building trust and empowerment (Carlson, 1996). Transformational leaders are motivating, influential, and proactive. They optimize people's development and innovation and convince them to strive for higher levels of achievement (Avolio & Bass, 2004). According to Burns (2008), transformational leaders form a relationship of mutual stimulation and elevation that converts followers into leaders. Daft (2008) defined transformational leadership as characterized by the ability to bring about significant change in followers and the organization. Transformational leadership is conceptualized as *india* a series of behaviours designed to inspire, empower, and motivate others to achieve higher levels of goals and missions (Avolio & Bass, 2004; Hunt, 1999). Bass (1985) introduced four dimensions of transformational leadership styles: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individual consideration. Specifically, transformational leadership can be carried out by providing clear and compelling goals (Kim, 2010), displaying as a role model and motivating followers to accomplish the goals. It is against the background that the

researcher tries to assess the influence of transformational leadership style on students' academic performance in public secondary schools in West Pokot Sub-County, Kenya.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Education plays significant part with the intension to make teaching and learning more effective and to give quality education to students. It is the foundation of national development as well as reagent to maintainable development. In addition, it is a process whereby skills, knowledge, attitude, and virtues are inculcated in individuals. The administrator's leadership style influences the efficiency and also the effectiveness of the organization. There are different types of leadership styles but the interest of the researchers is on transformational leadership style.

However, despite the importance of education to nation building, students' academic performance in public secondary schools in West Pokot Sub-County has been below expectations. Some of the factors that have contributed to this low academic achievement include; Leadership styles, lack of cooperation by the stakeholders, social background of the children and students' indiscipline.

Transformational leaders are motivating, influential, and proactive. They optimize people's development and innovation and convince them to strive for higher levels of achievement (Avolio & Bass, 2004). According to Burns (2008), transformational leaders form a relationship of mutual stimulation and elevation that converts followers into leaders. Hence, there is need to establish whether leadership styles and in particular transformational leadership style may assist to improve the problem of low students' academic performance especially in public secondary schools in West Pokot Sub-County. Waithiegeni, (2013) notes that the performance of the learners greatly depends on various factors which vary from one school to another depending on the dynamics. Top on the list of these factors is leadership styles of the school administrators of such schools. Nyaboga (2011) agrees with this observation by noting that good performance in school's achievement is relatively equivalent to good administration.

### **Empirical Literature**

Research into gender leadership styles has found that women are slightly stronger in relationship-oriented supportive styles, while men score higher in transformational leadership styles (Fennell, 2005; Kruger 1996, 2008). Eagly, Johannesen-Schmidt, and Van Engen (2003), for example, offered a quantitative synthesis of 45 studies on transformational leadership comparing women and men. They found that women scored higher than men did in transformational leadership and women produced considerably better outcomes than men on all of the three outcome measures that the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire investigated.

Kent, Blair, Rudd and Schuele (2010) found no difference in transformational leadership practices among transformational leaders. Balasubramanian and Krishnan (2012) found that women bank managers in India are more practicing transformational leadership than male managers did. Kythreotis and Pashiardis (2006) also found that female school principals showed transformational leadership style than male school principals. They argue that interpersonal relations constitute a more central point of reference of the managerial style of women and allow them to exhibit a more democratic and participative style (Coleman, 1998). Therefore, the study intends to investigate the impact of transformational leadership styles and pupils' academic achievement.

Organizational performance is an examination of how the organization is performing in certain areas such as employee productivity and morale (Fwaya, 2006). A key focus of the Transformational style of leadership is essential for amendments that was beneficial to both the leaders and their organizations. Such leader develops a motivating vision for their organization

and those who follow him to achieve organizational goals. According to (Hartog, 2015), he asserts that, as an agent of change, transformational leaders will influence their followers to align in his direction, he/she will raise the interest, norms and values of their followers to enable them carry out their duties beyond expectation thus fulfilling the goals of the organization.

Empirical literature points directly the connection between transformational style of leadership and organizational performance (macey, 2008). Customer satisfaction, increased sales (macey, 2008) and positive extra role behavior (Podsakoff, 2006) Research done by (Ahmed, 2018) on Tea Company in Nandi County was all about finding out about the impact of visionary leadership, the roles of leaders as managers and also to examine how effective transformational leadership style is. The research found out that factors that enhance company performance in that county was visionary leadership and transformational leadership.

Conclusions made by (Minja, 2012) stated that failure of companies in Kenya to achieve their visions and missions is because of lack of effective leaders who fails to inspire and convince the sub-ordinates to be loyal to the company and to be passionate in achieving organizational the goals and objectives. For short and long-term organizational goals and decisions, leaders are expected to lead effectively, effective leaders comes up with a workable plan and implement it fully so as to be able to get appropriate results. (Ahmad, 2017)

Study carried out by (Kazungu, 2018) on the performance of private tourist companies in Kenya found out that organized direction positively affected the performance of organization as middle level and top level managers supervised a lot of work that goes hand in hand with offering organized direction in the agencies.

### **Intellectual Stimulation and Students' Academic Performance**

Through intellectual stimulation, leaders stimulate their followers to solve organizational problems in a creative way and approaching old problems using new ways (Bass, 2006). Transformational leaders welcome ideas and creativity from his followers thus, including them when solving problems. According to Sundi, 2013, he asserts that intellectual stimulation is an important part of transformational style of leadership. Intellectual stimulation enables transformational leaders to motivate their followers in order to self-evaluate themselves about individual beliefs and values that may be inappropriate or even outdated when solving present problems. Intellectual stimulation increases the commitment of the employee to the given organization thus enabling the organization attain its goals and objectives (Anjali, 2015). According to (Stone, 2003), through intellectual stimulation, transformational leaders stimulate frequent revalidation of the organization culture; stimulate amendments in the way of solving organization problems. Intellectual stimulation involves promoting followers' curiosity, problem-solving, and novel ways of thinking by stimulating followers' intelligence. According to Daft (2014), "people admire leaders who awaken their curiosity, challenge them to think and learn, and encourage openness to new, inspiring ideas and alternatives. Transformational leaders recognize all types of issues and problems and help followers to solve problems in creative and innovative ways.

Study conducted by Bass, (2006) he explains that, through intellectual stimulation that a transformational leader concentrate and articulate to his followers the privileges and challenges that are facing organization, thus welcoming the idea or creativity of the follower, to come up with the best way of dealing with the existing problems.

According to Ogola, (2017) he asserts that through intellectual stimulation, transformative leaders demonstrate how much they inspire their followers to creatively solve old situations in new ways; he is expected to provide an enabling environment and support his followers to

challenge individual values and beliefs about a given organization. Core responsibility of the leader is to solve problems, that is, a leader must be of courage to solve problems before situations forces them to.

Study conducted by Yunus, (2012), he reported that leaders in a highly performed organization understands that creativity and innovation is the key to development in the organization as this element in transformational leadership stimulate followers creativity and drives them to be committed to their work and according to Afshari, (2012) he asserts that, through intellectual stimulation, transformative leaders motivates their supporters to be creative thinkers, analyze existing problems from different angles and look for better and convenient way of solving the problems.

### **Theoretical Framework**

This research is guided by Transformational leadership theory. In this theory, leaders, managers and their followers assist one another to develop to a high degree of motivation. (Adams, 2018) It refers to the process of a leader changing and emphasizing the values and beliefs of his followers where by organization goals, visions and objectives are achieved and performance increases.

According to Bass, (2006), he identified 4 elements of transformational leadership namely; Idealized influence of leaders, the state of being a positive role model while demonstrating personalities that are charismatic leading to those you lead desires to be like you. Idealized influence is served through leaders who take risk and are ethical in any decisions he/she makes. Inspirational motivation; that is, leaders' ability to instill self-confidence, sense of belonging and to be able to motivate his followers. Intellectual stimulation and creation; Transformational leaders are supposed to stimulate and support his followers in their creativity and innovativeness and should also include them in decision making process. Individualized consideration; Transformational leaders should identify different needs and desires of followers as every individual is motivated by different things, one can be money and the other one change of environment.

Several studies have found several relationships between the performance of organizations and transformational leadership styles. Study conducted by (Oni-Ojo, 2014), Examined the relation between transformational and the performance of the organization in Nigeria and found out that the style of leadership chosen by the leader has excessive impact on organizational performance. According to (Ojokuku, 2012) He found out that the efficiency and performance of the organization on banks in Nigeria was because of transformational and democratic leadership. According to (Mbith, 2014) the efficiency on the performance of the participants in Kenya universities on how to respond to reforms was that transformation type of leadership was practiced.

One major critics of transformational theory is on one of its elements; Idealized influence as some transformational leaders with charismatic characteristics may end up misusing their authority and privileges and may start neglecting and manipulating their participants. According to Yuki (2012; Gilbert, (2012), transformational leaders have negative outcomes like minimal critics by followers, increase in excessive confidence and optimism. According to (Nye, 2008), the leaders can create inspiration and unity in their followers but the outcomes and morality can suffer. Transformational leaders creates strong bong between them and their participants which can cause participants to be manipulated .The danger starts when participants ignores the manipulations because of the strong bond and emotional connection they have with their leaders (Stone, 2004)

### **METHODOLOGY**



Descriptive survey research design was used in this research as it shows description of a given phenomenon. The target population of the study was 7 CSO's, 31 county public secondary school principals, 113 and 307 randomly selected TCS teachers and learners from 31 county public secondary school giving a total of 458. A target population of 458 gave a sample size of 210.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### *Response Rate*

The response rate is the number of people who answered the survey divided by the number of people in the sample. The study distributed 210 questionnaires from which 149 questionnaires were satisfactorily filled and returned. This represented a response rate of 71%, which was considered sufficient to make conclusions as per the study objectives. A survey response rate of 50% or higher should be considered excellent in most circumstances (Hendra & Hill, 2019).

**Table 1: Response Rate**

	Frequency	Percentage
Returned Questionnaires	149	71.0
Not Returned Questionnaires	61	29.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source:** Field Data, (2023)

### **Intellectual Stimulation and Students' Academic Performance**

The researcher sought to establish the level of agreement to various aspects of intellectual stimulation on students' academic performance in public secondary schools. Five response items were used to examine the prevailing status of intellectual stimulation on students' academic performance in public secondary schools in West Pokot Sub-County.

**Table 2: Intellectual Stimulation and Students' Academic Performance**

Responses	SD %	D%	UD%	A%	SA%	MEAN	SD
That my leader views problems at a different angle	2.7	10.7	10.1	41.6	34.9	3.95	1.061
My leader finds out different way of solving problems	4.7	20.1	8.1	18.1	49.0	3.87	1.339
Our leaders empower their followers to solve organizational problems in a creative way	0.0	6.0	20.1	24.8	49.0	4.17	.954
That my leader revises critical decisions to see if they was suitable	3.4	4.7	26.2	24.8	40.9	3.95	1.080
That our leaders are innovative and creative especially in making some important decisions.	0.0	4.7	16.8	41.6	36.9	4.11	.847

**Source:** Field Data, (2023)

According to the findings presented in Table 9, 76.5% of the respondents agreed and strongly agreed that my leader views problems at a different angle (M=3.95 SD=1.061), 13.4 % were in disagreement and 10.1% were undecided. In addition, 67.1% of the respondents both agreed and strongly agreed that my leader finds out different way of solving problems (M=3.87 SD=1.331)

while 24.8% and 8.1% were in disagreement and undecided respectively. Besides, a majority of the participants both agreed and strongly agreed (73.8%) that our leaders empower their followers to solve organizational problems in a creative way ( $M=4.17$   $SD=.954$ ), 6.0 % disagreed while 20.1% were undecided. In addition, 65.7% of the respondents agreed that my leader revises critical decisions to see if they was suitable ( $M=3.95$   $SD=1.080$ ), 8.1% were in disagreement while 26.2% undecided. Lastly, 78.5% respondents agreed and strongly agreed that our leaders are innovative and creative especially in making some important decisions. ( $M=4.11$   $SD=.847$ ), 4.7% disagreed while 16.8% were undecided.

The findings are in agreement with Stone, (2013) who through intellectual stimulation, transformational leaders stimulate frequent revalidation of the organization culture; stimulate amendments in the way of solving organization problems. Intellectual stimulation involves promoting followers' curiosity, problem-solving, and novel ways of thinking by stimulating followers' intelligence. According to Daft (2014), "people admire leaders who awaken their curiosity, challenge them to think and learn, and encourage openness to new, inspiring ideas and alternatives. Transformational leaders recognize all types of issues and problems and help followers to solve problems in creative and innovative ways.

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Yunus, (2012) reported that leaders in a highly performed organization understands that creativity and innovation is the key to development in the organization as this element in transformational leadership stimulate followers creativity and drives them to be committed to their work and (Afshari, 2012) asserts that, through intellectual stimulation, transformative leaders motivates their supporters to be creative thinkers, analyze existing problems from different angles and look for better and convenient way of solving the problems.

### **Conclusion**

From the study findings, intellectual stimulation was found to have a positive and significant effect on students' academic performance in public secondary schools. This led to the rejection of the null hypothesis hence it can be concluded that intellectual stimulation significantly affects students' academic performance in public secondary schools. Thus, an increase in intellectual stimulation makes students' academic performance in public secondary schools to increase. The implications of this result is that the public secondary schools may acquire better performance by enhancing intellectual stimulation. The efficacy of intellectual stimulation in significantly affecting students' academic performance in public secondary schools is premised on theory of transformational. Therefore, to realize maximal performance in the public secondary schools there is need to invest in the contributors of individualized consideration (innovation and creativity, informative and empowerment).

## Recommendations

In view of the findings of this study and the guidance from literature review, it is apparent that strengthening the transformational leadership style in the public secondary schools is important ingredient for eliciting students' academic performance in public secondary schools. While there are other factors crucial for students' academic performance in public secondary schools, the overall variance in a firm's performance is stimulated by its transformational leadership style. From the results, it remains extremely necessary for public secondary schools to analyze their strategic orientations and pay more attention in addressing the transformational leadership style as intellectual stimulation, individualized consideration, inspirational motivation and idealized influence for purposes of increasing their performance. This is because when students recognize, understand and connect with public secondary schools, performance goes up in this regard; the current study makes the following recommendations:

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