# HEAD TEACHERS' TRANSACTIONAL LEADERSHIP STYLE: IT'S INFLUENCE ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN PUBLIC PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN UASIN GISHU COUNTY, KENYA

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**ABSTRACT**

Head teachers should mobilize appropriate human, physical and material resources for the transformation of regular schools into inclusive schools. Inclusion provides dignity and personal empowerment. This study investigated Head Teachers' Transactional Leadership Style and its Influence on the Implementation of Inclusive Education in Public Primary Schools in Uasin Gishu County, Kenya. The study was anchored on Lewin's leadership theory. The study adopted Concurrent triangulation design within the mixed method approach. The target population for the study comprised 4909 teachers in public primary schools and 464 senior teachers totaling up to 5373. The sample size comprised 491 teachers stratified sampled, 10 senior teachers systematically randomly sampled and a sample size of 501 was used. Data collection instruments were questionnaires and interview schedules. Content, construct and face validity was ensured by expert judgment. Reliability was ensured by Cronbach Alpha method and reliability coefficients were all above 0.7. Quantitative data was analyzed by descriptive statistics and inferential statistics such as Spearman Rank correlation and liner regression while Qualitative data was analyzed thematically. The findings revealed that there is a statistically significant positive though weak correlation between the head teachers' transactional leadership style and implementation of inclusive education (n=368; rho =.146; p =.005). The findings of this study would help the Ministry of Education in assessing policies regarding implementation of inclusive education and hence make necessary adjustments that can ensure full implementation. The Kenya Education Management Institute should sensitize head teachers on better leadership practices for primary schools that can enhance the implementation of inclusive education.

**Keywords;** implementation, inclusive, education, transactional, leadership, style

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background to the Study

Hooker (2007) views inclusive education in terms of a diversity of needs and believes it is the process of addressing and responding to the diversity of such needs. But according to Windyz (2010), the term inclusion could be well understood if we reflect on its antonym 'exclusion' where questions like who is excluded will be involved. Within Brazilian context, the researcher identifies various social groups that are at risk of exclusion, the poor, those with disabilities, the black child, and children with terminal illness and thus defines inclusion as a process of identification and removal of barriers that prevent any pupil at risk of exclusion from accessing the curriculum content.

The period between 1900 and 1970's has been typically referred to as the "isolation phase''. Children with disabilities were segregated from their non-disabled peers for centuries (Barton &Tomlinson, 2007). In today's school students with disabilities who receive special education services are included in general education classrooms with their developing peers. Special education is not a place but rather a set of instructional services. It is a philosophy of education that integrates children with disabilities into educational settings in which meaningful learning occurs (Osgood, 2005). The guiding principle of inclusive education is that ordinary schools should accommodate all children regardless of physical, social, emotional, mental and other conditions. Vittelo and Mithaug (2003) argued that inclusion fosters institutional strategies to increase the participation and learning of children who are perceived to vulnerable within existing educational arrangement.

Hardy and Woodcock (2014) revealed a disparate array of approaches to issues of inclusion within and across specific policy context. Moreover, a North American study by Cobb, (2015) indicated that principals face a number of challenges, such as fostering collaboration where perspectives diverge, establishing a cohesive school vision of inclusion and practice that offers differentiated learning experiences, and reducing situations involving litigation and teacher attrition. South Africa has adopted an inclusive education policy in order to address barriers to learning in the education system. However, the government of Ethiopia is committed to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDG's) and Education for All (EFA) goals. The main focus is on providing primary education of good quality for all children by 2015, (UNESCO 2007). However, Tizazu & Beyene (2011) indicated that teachers' attitudes are influenced by the nature and severity of the disabling condition, training of the teacher, experience, gender and availability of support devices. the implementation of this policy is hampered by the lack of teachers' skills and knowledge in differentiating the curriculum to address a wide range of learning needs (Dalton, Kahonde & Mickenzie 2012).

Education for children with disabilities was a matter of concern during the Universal Periodic Review of Uganda in 2011. In a report by the Human Network, a consortium of Non-Governmental Organizations working on human rights, it was noted that while Uganda promoted inclusive education, there were no special needs teachers and limited teaching aids which made it impossible for children with disabilities to get quality education (Okwany, 2011). Moreover, Nyende (2012) indicated that accommodation of children with disabilities in the present implementation of UPE programme in Uganda is far from real.

Mwangi and Orodho (2014) in Kenya established that there were inadequate specialized teachers to handle special needs education curriculum. Finally, the study indicated that there was several socio- economic and cultural variables that constraints effective teaching and learning in an inclusive classroom.

Moreover, Mutuku (2013) revealed that implementation of Inclusive Education is faced by a couple of challenges ranging from psychological, teacher attitude, curriculum barriers, ministry of education support and teacher training. Wanjiru (2012) adds that, physical facilities in public primary schools are not adequate and appropriate to accommodate learners with special needs. Kabiaru (2013) revealed that school management committee role of procurement of teachings and learning resources was positively impacting on the implementation of inclusive education. The goal of inclusion has been not to erase differences but to enable all students to belong within an educational community that validates and values their individuality (Fakolade, 2009).

Leadership has a direct cause and effect relationship upon organizations' and their success. Leaders determine values culture, change, tolerance and employee's motivation (Giri & Santra, 2010). They shape institutional strategies including their execution and effectiveness. Successful leaders however have one thing in common; they influence those around them in order to reap maximum benefit from the organization's resources (Germano, 2010). Cooke (2012) highlights the relationship between leadership strategies, the impacts leaders have on others and effectiveness in the role. This impact he reiterated has enormous significance in helping understand organizational culture and the role that norms and expectations play in organizational effectiveness. Thus, the way in which a head teacher makes decisions, delegates responsibility and interacts with teachers can affect all programs in the entire school (Root, 2015).

Hence the title of this study, head teachers' transactional leadership style and how it influences implementation of inclusive education in public primary schools in Uasin Gishu County, Kenya.

## 1.2 Statement of the Problem

The Kenyan National Special Needs Education Policy (2009) provided a framework for the planning and implementation of special needs education devoid of all barriers that inhibit access to quality and relevant education. However, Uasin Gishu County still experiences a problem of low access of children with special needs in regular public primary schools. Unpublished report by Uasin Gishu Curriculum Support Officer in charge of Special Needs Education (CSO, SNE), (2015) indicates that there are quite a number of challenged children who are out of school in Uasin Gishu County and this has derailed the achievement of EFA as enshrined in the Sustainable Development Goals that was to be achieved in Kenya by 2015. This indicates that there is low level of implementation of inclusive education in public primary schools in Uasin Gishu County. Most researches done earlier on inclusion have consistently focused on resources, policies and challenges. However, researches on how head teachers' leadership influences the implementation of inclusive education has remained limited hence a research gap exists. It is against this background that the researcher was compelled to investigate the influence of head teachers' transactional leadership style on the implementation of inclusive education in public primary schools in Uasin Gishu County.

## 1.3 Theoretical Framework

The study was also grounded on Theory X and Theory Y of Douglas McGregor's (1950). McGregor's work was rooted in motivation theory alongside the works of Abraham Maslow, who created the hierarchy of needs. The two theories proposed by McGregor describe contrasting models of workforce motivation applied by managers in human resource management, organizational behavior, communication and organizational development.

Theory X explains the importance of heightened supervision, external rewards, and penalties, while Theory Y highlights the motivating role of job satisfaction and encourages workers to approach tasks without direct supervision. Management use of Theory X and Theory Y can affect employee motivation and productivity in different ways, and managers may choose to implement strategies from both theories into their practices. This theory can be compared with transformational and transactional leadership styles. Theory X can be compared with Transactional Leadership where managers need to rule by fear and consequences. In this style and theory, negative behavior is punished and employees are motivated through incentives. Theory Y and Transformational Leadership are found to be similar, because the theory and style supports the idea that managers work to encourage their workers. Leaders assume the best of their employees. They believe them to be trusting, respectful, and self-motivated. The leaders help to supply the followers with tool they need to excel (Odumeru & Ogbonna, 2013). This theory was found relevant for this study as it captures the variables of the study. Transformational leaders raise the bar by appealing to higher ideals and values of followers. In doing so, they may model the values themselves and use charismatic methods to attract people to the values and to the leader (Ayman & Korabik 2010).

## 2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

In Turkey, Avci (2015) investigated transformational and transactional leadership styles of school principals. Descriptive survey model was used in the study. The data was obtained from 1117 teachers working in both public and private schools. Statistical package for social sciences was used to analyze data. The findings indicated that teachers had a high level of positive opinions with regard to transformational and transactional leadership characteristics of school principals. Teachers' perception about transformational and transactional leadership characteristics of school principals did not vary significantly according to gender, state of education and professional seniority. The above reviewed study was conducted in both public and private secondary schools and not primary schools. The current study bridged this gap in literature by focusing in primary schools thereby adding literature to the existing body of knowledge.

Zee and Siebers (2016) investigated the influence of leadership strategies on the inclusion of minority employees in Netherlands. The study adopted explanatory design with a deductive research approach. Non purposive sampling technique was employed to select 500 participants. The results showed that transactional leadership style has no direct effect on uniqueness and belongingness. The above reviewed study reviewed study employed a pure quantitative approach hence it lacked qualitative findings which would have given a detailed account of the problem under investigation. The current study bridged this gap in literature by exploring both quantitative and qualitative aspects thereby adding literature to the existing body of knowledge.

In Israel, Eytan (2015) investigated principal leadership styles and teacher attitudes, concern and competencies regarding inclusion. Participants were 15 principals and 81 classroom teachers in elementary schools. Questionnaire was the only data collection instrument. Three major leadership styles emerged using MLQ Questionnaire, transformational, transactional and laissez-fair. Significant relationships were found between years of in special education and leadership styles. Both principals and their teachers felt that they had major inclusion competencies. The reviewed study collected only quantitative data hence it lacked the rich in-depth information from qualitative data. The current study bridged this gap in literature by collecting both quantitative and qualitative data thereby adding literature to the existing body of knowledge.

In Nigeria, Ogunyinka and Adedoyin (2013) investigated leadership styles and work effectiveness of school principals in local government schools. The design used for the study was a survey research design. The population of the study consisted of teachers in all secondary schools within the study area. There are fourteen (14) public (junior and senior secondary schools) with five hundred and eleven (511) teachers in the junior school and four hundred and thirty eight (438) teachers in senior schools. It was established that there was no leadership style that is superior to one another. It further revealed that male principal leadership styles are more effective than the female principal leadership styles. The above reviewed study focused on secondary schools leaving out primary schools. The current study bridged this gap by conducting a similar study but in primary schools thereby filling gap in literature.

Puni, Ofei and Okoe (2014) in Ghana investigated the effect of leadership styles on firm performance adopted a correlational research design. Multiple regression tests were used to test the hypothesis in the study. The results showed that none of the leadership styles, (democratic, autocratic and laissez-faire) significantly predicted financial performance of the banks. However democratic leadership style was found to account for more variance in financial performance than autocratic and laissez-faire. The above reviewed study explored only quantitative aspect of the study hence lacked the rich in-depth qualitative aspect. The current study bridged this gap by exploring both quantitative and qualitative aspects thereby filling gap in literature.

Moyi, (2012) conducted a study in Uganda to investigate access to education for children with disabilities. The study used a sample size of 9864 households. The data collected was analyzed using descriptive statistics. The study revealed that disabled children are significantly less likely to enroll, attend and complete (Grade 5). The study also found out that the disadvantaged disabled children fate depends on the nature and the extent of the impairment. The findings of the above reviewed study were analyzed through descriptive statistics hence it lacked inferential findings which could allow for generalization. The current study bridged this gap by analyzing data both descriptively and inferentially thereby adding literature to the existing body of knowledge.

Wangai (2015) investigated principals' leadership behaviors and teachers' job satisfaction in public secondary schools in Nairobi County Kenya. The study adopted correlation design, with a sample consisted of 270 comprising 225 teachers and 45 principals. The technique of acquiring sample size included purposive and random sampling and questionnaire was the only tool used to collect data. Results showed that there was positive and significant relationship

between secondary school principals leadership behavior and teachers job satisfaction. The reviewed study collected only quantitative data hence it lacked the rich in-depth information from qualitative data. The current study bridged this gap in literature by collecting both qualitative and quantitative data thereby adding literature to the existing body of knowledge.

Another study in Kenya by Budohi (2014) investigated the effects of principals' leadership styles on the academic achievement of students in secondary schools. The study used descriptive survey design. The target population was 18 public secondary schools with a population of 200 teachers. Ten schools which had presented students for Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) exams from 2008 to 2011 were sampled using stratified and purposive sampling technique and thus a total of 10 principals and 40 teachers were sampled. The data collection instruments included questionnaire and document analysis checklist. Data collected was analyzed using descriptive statistics in terms of frequencies, percentages means and standard deviation. The study established that all the three leadership styles that is autocratic, democratic and laissez-faire should be applied in schools based on situations in schools to enhance academic achievements. The above reviewed study adopted a descriptive survey design hence it lacked the qualitative aspect. The current study bridged this gap by employing a mixed method approach thereby adding literature to the existing body of knowledge.

From the reviewed studies, it is evident that most of them were carried out in contexts that were different from the primary school level contexts. Moreover, in majority of studies, the approaches used were either qualitative or quantitative. The present study filled in these gaps in literature.

## 3.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A research design is the arrangement of conditions for collection and analysis of data in a manner that aims to combine relevance to the research purpose with economy in procedure (Kothari, 2011). It is a plan, structure and strategy of investigation conceived so as to obtain answers to research questions. The study adopted concurrent triangulation design within the mixed method approach. The design converges or merges quantitative and qualitative data in order to provide a comprehensive analysis of the research problem. In this design, the investigator typically collects both forms of data at roughly the same time and then integrates the information in the interpretation of the overall results (Creswell, 2014). Contradictions or incongruent findings are explained or further probed in this design. The purpose of this design is to obtain different but complementary data on the same topic. The intent in using this design is to bring together the differing strengths and non-overlapping weaknesses of quantitative methods with those of qualitative methods (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). The design was found appropriate for this study because the study directly compared and contrasted quantitative statistical results with qualitative findings. The design is presented in Figure 3.0
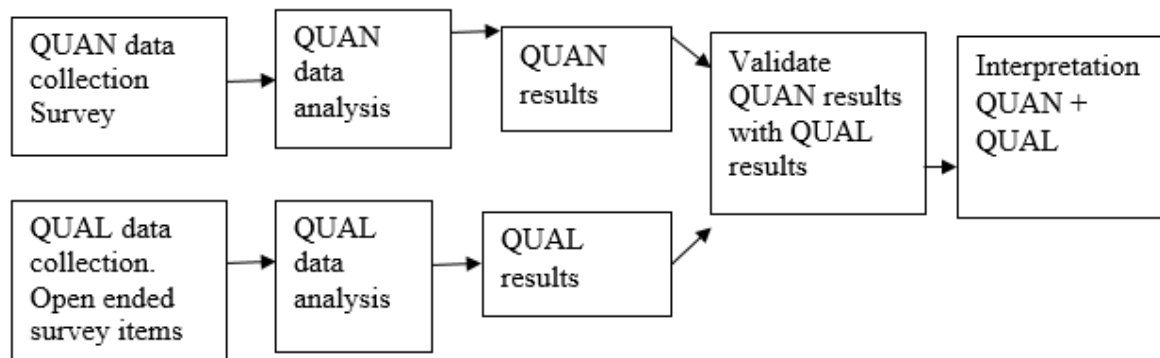
**Figure 3.0: Concurrent Triangulation Design: Source; Creswell, 2014)**

## 3.1 Study Participants

Population means all objects and people who share one or some common quality in a special geographical scale, Cooper and Schindler (2009). It is a complete set of individuals, cases or objects with some common characteristics that differentiate it from other population, while target population is the population to which the researcher wants to generalize the results of the study (Orodho, 2005). The target population for the study was 5373 teachers consisting of 491 primary school teachers and 464 senior teachers in primary schools in Uasin Gishu County, Kenya.

## 3.2 Research Instruments

Both Questionnaire and Interviews were used to collect data. A Questionnaire was used to collect quantitative data. The questionnaires were administered to the primary school teachers since they are directly involved in the implementation of inclusive education in classroom. Likert's scale was used where the respondents were asked to make a choice based on their opinion whether they Strongly Agreed, Agree, Neutral Disagree or Strongly Disagree based on the question asked. The questionnaires had two parts; the first with closed questions which sought to gather demographic information, and the second with closed questions which sought to establish opinions from respondents and gather more of the quantitative data about head teachers' democratic leadership style and its influence on implementation of inclusive education in primary schools.

In addition, semi structured interviews were used to collect qualitative data from some senior teachers. This was because the number that was sampled under this group was manageable. The interview schedule was appropriate for the study as it provided in-depth information and a detailed understanding of the issue under research. The information on the interview schedule was tape recorded for validity purposes. The researcher ensured validity of questionnaires through expert judgment that is with the help of experts from Masinde Muliro University. Moreover, the items in the questionnaire were made clearer and also arranged from simple to complex. Reliability of the questionnaire was tested using Cronbach's alpha. In the interpretation of the reliability results, the closer Cronbach's alpha coefficient is to 1.0, the greater the internal consistency of the items in the scale. According to (Oso and Onen, 2014), a questionnaire has good internal consistency if the Cronbach's alpha coefficient of a scale is

above 0.6 but not more than .9. All the subscales reached a threshold and were within the range and therefore considered reliable.

The study examined head teachers' transactional leadership style and how it influences implementation of inclusive education. A Likert scaled transactional leadership indicators questionnaire was used to seek opinions of the teacher respondents on leadership style of their head teacher. Using the responses; Strongly Agree (5), Agree (4), Undecided (3), Disagree (2) or Strongly Disagree (1) they rated the items based on their agreement to the statements of the items. Therefore, the teacher's level of transactional leadership was rated in the scale of 1 to 5, with higher rating implying higher transactional leadership style and vice versa.

Spearman rank order correlation coefficient was computed to test null hypotheses that, "there is no significant influence of head teachers' Transactional leadership style on implementation of inclusive education in public primary schools". The level of the head teacher's transactional leadership orientation is the independent variables and the level of inclusive education implementation is dependent variable. Transactional leadership scale was measured in ordinal scale computed from the teachers' ratings on transformational leadership orientation. Equally, the level of implementation of inclusive education was measured in ordinal scale, in the continuum of 1 to 5. The SPSS output Table 4.0 shows the correlation results.

**Table 4.0: Correlation between the Level of Transactional Leadership Orientation and the Level of Implementation.**

| | | | Transactional Leadership | Implementation of Inclusive Education |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Spearman's rho | Transactional Leadership | Correlation Coefficient | 1.000 | .146** |
| | | Sig. (2-tailed) | . | .005 |
| | | N | 368 | 368 |
| | Implementation of Inclusive Education | Correlation Coefficient | .146** | 1.000 |
| | | Sig. (2-tailed) | .005 | . |
| | | N | 368 | 368 |

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

It is evident from the output that there is a statistically significant positive though weak correlation between the head teachers' transactional leadership style and implementation of inclusive education (n=368; rho =.146; p =.005). Since the p-value was less than .05, the null hypothesis which stated that "There is no statistically significant relationship between the level of transactional leadership style and implementation of inclusive education" was rejected. It is therefore concluded that there is significant positive relationship between the level of transactional leadership style and the level of implementation of inclusive education, with increased level of transactional leadership associated with higher level of implementation of inclusive education in primary schools and vice versa. This finding agrees with Mwape (2013) in Zambia whose findings revealed that most head teachers employed either transactional or directive leadership styles in daily operations

Qualitative sought to ascertain the influence of transactional leadership style on the implementation of inclusive education indicated that senior teachers believed that head teachers who manage their schools well, who focuses on supervision, organization and who rewards good performance are likely to succeed in the implementation of inclusive education. As reiterated by one study informants;

> "*There are no rewards for teachers who embrace inclusive education, we are expected to do this because it is a government policy. But if at all there can be a way in which our little efforts towards implementation of inclusive education can be appreciated, then it can be very possible"*............ (SNR TR. 10)

This means that schools whose head teachers apply higher levels of transactional leadership style are likely to have superior implementation of inclusive education than the schools whose head teachers practice lower transactional leadership style, when other factors are assumed constant. This finding is contrary to Aunga and Masare (2017) in Tanzania which indicated that there is a significant relationship between transactional and transformational leadership styles and teachers' performance. However, to further illustrate this relationship, a scatter plot was generated as shown in Figure 4.0
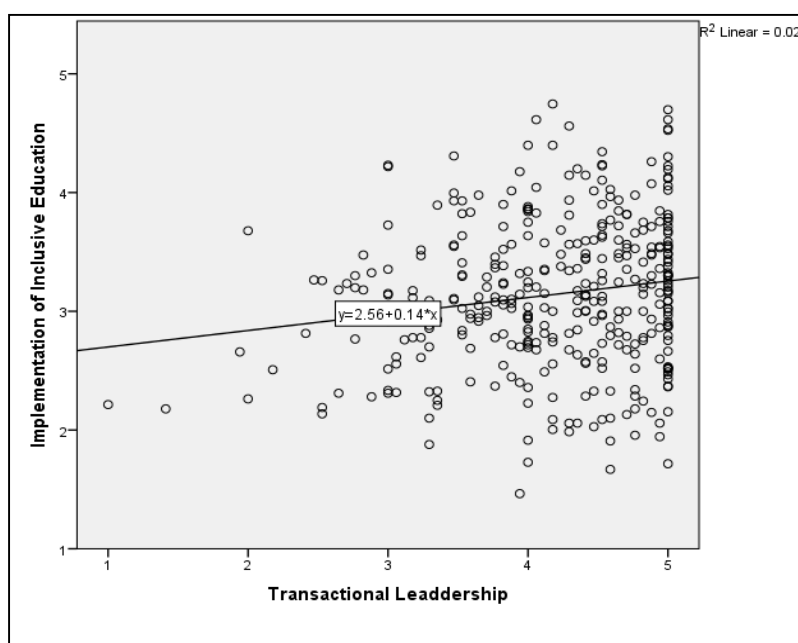


**Figure 4.0: Scatter plot graph: Relationship between the level of Transactional leadership style and implementation of inclusive education.**

The scatter plot shows that there was though weak, some positive correlation between the level of transactional leadership style and implementation of inclusive education. The pattern of the dots do not have clear slope indicating a positive correlation between the two variables. However, the line of best fit seems to slope from lower left to upper right signifying positive

relationship between the two variables. This finding is contrary to Chebonye (2016) in Kenya whose findings indicated that transactional leadership style and its components enhance service delivery and monitoring should be at a level that does not affect autonomy of the staff.

However, to estimate the level of influence of the level of transactional leadership style on implementation of inclusive education, a coefficient of determination was computed. This was done using of a regression analysis and the results were as shown in Table 4.1.

**Table 4.1: Model Summary on Regression Analysis-Level of Transactional Leadership Style and Implementation of Inclusive Education**

| Model | R | R Square | Adjusted R Square | Std. Error of the Estimate |
|-------|-----|----------|-------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 | .164[a] | .027 | .021 | .45580 |

a. Predictors: (Constant), Transactional Leadership Score

The model shows that the Level of Transactional Leadership Style of the head teacher accounted for 2.7% of the variation in the level of implementation of inclusive education, as signified by R Square.

## 5.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study examined head teachers' transactional leadership and how it influences implementation of inclusive education in public primary schools in Uasin Gishu County, Kenya.

It was concluded that transactional leadership style was generally low among the primary school head teachers in Uasin Gishu County. But head teachers who practice transactional leadership style enhance the implementation of inclusive education. The finding also indicated that there is a statistically significant positive though weak correlation between the head teachers' transactional leadership style and implementation of inclusive education. The findings of this study would help the Ministry of Education in assessing policies regarding implementation of inclusive education and hence make necessary adjustments that can ensure full implementation. The Kenya Education Management Institute should sensitize head teachers on better leadership practices for primary schools that can enhance the implementation of inclusive education.

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