Head Teachers' Transformational Leadership Intervention Strategies on Class Repetition in Primary School Education in Kenya

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Abstract: Statistics on enrolment indicates that, Kenya is experiencing class repetition in primary school education despite the gains earlier made associated with universal access to primary school education. The practice increases the possibility of the pupil to drop out of school. The purpose of this study was to investigate head teachers' transformational leadership intervention strategies on class repetition in primary school education in Kenya. The study was guided by Self-Efficacy theory developed by Bandura Albert and pragmatism philosophy and conducted in Uasin Gishu County in Kenya. The study found out that, pupil academic performance, curriculum instruction, school culture and dynamic leadership are important intervention strategies related to head teachers' transformational leadership that have an influence on class repetition. The study recommends a further study on a situational analysis of transformational leadership training as a new management strategy in primary schools in the 21st century in the country.
Keywords: Class Repetition, Interventions Strategies, Transformational Leadership

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

The Kenyan government since independence has reformed the education sector through commissions, task force and circulars and signing global agreements. Kenya has signed the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights of 1948 and the Jomtien education for all (EFA) of 1990 indicating the country's commitment to education of its citizens and this had an impact on the development of educational policies [1]. Kenya through its Constitution of 2010, provided a commitment to provide universal primary education for all school age going children [2]. In a nutshell, these have contributed in the development of a roadmap of educational policies in Kenya. However, with all these efforts, the country is experiences wastage as learners drop out and repeat classes [3]. UNESCO [4] takes cognizance that Kenya was still facing drop out, class repetition and low transition to secondary schools, though there was Free Primary education in place.

Class repetition depends on the political situation in a country and politically, the implementation of class repetition policy has had unpredictable history, for new government and administrators might maintain the policy or remove it [5]. Muricho and Chang'ach [6], noted that since the attainment of independence, Kenya has attempted to formulate and implement educational reforms, but the recommendations have not served Kenyans adequately. It has been noted of class repetition occurrence in primary schools, as indicated by several circulars since 1999 and 2013 (Circular No. QAS/N/1/22/39, Circular No. MOE/HRS/3/7/4). Despite these circulars and policy in education as regards class repetition, there is still prevalence of class repetition in primary schools within the context of the Free Primary education in Kenya.

Intervention in education, is a way of addressing pupils' academic needs in schools [7] and through the intervention process, pupil academic progress, is observed in order to determine which pupils are not meeting the academic benchmarks. The intervention offered enables pupils to make educational growth and schools accurately identify pupils who may need special attention [8].

The quality of school leadership, is important for any successful organizations and institutions worldwide [9]. Dynamic and effective leadership, makes a school thrive and unique in comparison with an unsuccessful one. Institutions have stated missions, goals, objectives and values that drive it and the

achievement of the goals in any educational institution depends on how effectively leadership is exercised in the institution. Day, Eliot and Kingston [10] opine that, the dynamics in the place of work, divulges on teachers' work commitment, caring and occupational competence. The change in place of work is necessitated by the leadership of the head teacher embedded, in the goals and objectives to be achieved. Teachers play a major role in implementing the curriculum with stated goals, well defined and articulated by the school leadership.

Education Policy
Gacheche [2] argue that governments throughout the world today experience periodic policy failure arising from several and conflicting goals and circumventing policy failure is a delicate issue for governments. Many polices emphasized by governments are not backed by research evidence as Oduol [1] notes that, an evidence-based approach to policy ensures that information is gathered, appraised and used to inform both policy making and professional practice. This reduces opinion-based policy making that relies on the discriminating use of evidence or untested views often inspired by political prejudice or impulsive conjecture. There is need for policy in education to be made within the context of research so as to make well-informed decisions about policies, programs and projects and ease the implementation process and eventual success of a policy.

"The Kenya Education Sector Strategic plan 2003-2007" noted that there was scarcity of stated policy priorities, and targets in important areas; and lack of effective participation by stakeholders in the management of the sector; weak sector monitoring and evaluation systems. These have been some of the issues faced in the management of the education sector in Kenya and thus, this need to be addressed for the development of an effective and efficient education system [11].

Class Repetition Debate
Class repetition has developed overtime as Brown [12] in a study point out that, its use was widespread in Britain with the introduction of graded classes and was used as a method of correcting academic underperformance. According to Lazarus and Ortega [13], a legislation move indicates, a political decision and government stand on class repetition and a policy directive that influenced on innovation of strategies to improving academic performance among pupils.

Class repetition and social promotion debate is not new in education [14] as social promotion or automatic promotion is viewed as a choice available, with class repetition being an alternative to those who

decide to practice it [15]. The debate between the two policies of intervention being based on standardized tests concerns how repetition or social promotion influences the pupil in the long run as Bushra and Qadir [16] point out that, social promotion is a widespread and controversial educational policy found in many countries. Indeed, proponents of social promotion argue that the practice results are many. However, the critics of class repetition argue that previous research findings indicate that class repetition affects the pupil psychologically [17].

With the remarkable prominence of state standardized tests at each class or level of schooling being the measurement of learner accomplishment and criteria to promote, schools and pupils were expected to improve academic performance and pass the tests respectively as social promotion decreased [5, 18]. Test stores and standardized tests become the basis on which class repetition is decided and as a consequence, more than 70% of pupils have been affected since its inception [15]. In counter contemporary years, Frey [15] and Wu, West and Hughes [18] noted that, the emphasis of accountability placed on schools, teachers, pupils and even education officers has lifted expectations to a higher level and revived the debate on the use of class repetition as an academic intervention strategy.

Intervention Strategies in Education
According to Fletcher and Vaughn, intervention strategies include screening of pupils at risk and providing intervention based on how responsive or unresponsive a pupil is [8]. Whilst there are several effective intervention strategies that can be implemented to assist pupils, the number of approaches that can be used to enhance teacher implementation of these interventions are not plentiful [19]. They suggest that implementing an intervention require that teachers are supplied with the necessary training before the beginning of the intervention measure in the classroom. The lack of intervention in education leads to the need for research to be done to reduce the existing gap.

Shinn [20] any intervention strategies are those processes that are benefiting pupils and ensures that they benefit from the classroom instructions they are receiving and carried out on pupils who are at risk for learning difficulties and repetition and provides an appropriate level of prevention [21]. These links class repetition and intervention strategies for one has to occur for the other to be developed.

Head Teachers' Transformational Leadership
Transforming schools will make them more efficient and productive and is done through making teachers to accept different teaching techniques as they will realign their professional work to the changing

classroom practices and narrow the curriculum [22]. These approaches will make a difference in the teaching and motivation of pupils, thus creating effective schools that will gather for pupil performance.

The school transformational leadership is a condition to encourage the transformation of school culture necessary for school reform and development. School culture is sensed, though undefined, is commanding and difficult to explain about schools, but drives the school to be effective. They are inmate patterns of values, belief and traditions in respect to learning and an important factor on pupil motivation to learn giving each school to have differences on the way a stress is placed on learning goals, purposes and values. The school culture will impact on the pupil learning as they recognize that the school value learning and this shape the goals they will adopt for learning and in turn the quality of learning.

People within a school environment develop a set of values, beliefs and means of operation that will transcend all influences and focus on the central task of learning [23]. The school environment is a critical aspect in transforming it to an effective system and a productive school culture emerges. A productive school culture is important in the achievement of the stated goals specifically pupil academic performance. The school environment which creates the school culture is related to institutional ideology, shared participation and charismatic leadership.

Schools that perform poorly in standardized tests require transformation in its leadership as Fullan [24] in his study argued that, low-performing schools require a turnaround leadership for turning around lowly-performing schools to that which is performing to an accepted level measured by pupil achievement on state test. Turnaround intervention combines accountability and capacity-building strategies which shall make things to improve. Furthermore, there are several factors that make school leadership turnaround to improve its efficiency. These include; raising expectation, a focus on improving, new or enhanced leadership by head teachers. Leadership is the most vital component of a head teacher's success and an efficient learning environment as turning around schools depends on the leadership provided by the head teacher as leaders must understand the procedures and processes that create the environment necessary for improvement in the school [25]. Bulach, Booth and Pickett [26] suggested that, effective leadership is critical for improving school environment, which is shaped by actions and behaviors of the school head teacher.

Teacher's involvement in professional development that focuses on particular instructional methods may predict their increased use of the practices with the learners. The instructional behavior of the head teachers brings a strong improvement in instructions and teaching [27]. The behavior of the head teacher determines the integrating efforts of personnel and utilization of available resources in such a way that it promotes effectively the development of human resources within the school to improve the academic performance of poor learners.

Statement Problem

Kenya still experiences class repetition in public primary schools [28] and in 2013, the practice was outlawed by the ministry in charge of education (Circular NO. MOE/HRS/3/7/4). It is documented that 6% of pupils repeat a class among both boys and girls in primary schools in Kenya [28, 29]. In Uasin Gishu County, more pupils are enrolled in class 7 than class 8, an indicator of class repetition occurrence [30]. Unless this inclination is considerably reversed, occurrence of class repetition in primary school education in Kenya will still be faced [28]. Class repetition is a current reform issue in education [31] and less attention has been paid to head teachers' transformational leadership as an intervention strategy on class repetition in public primary school education. The study therefore focused on head teachers' transformational leadership intervention strategies to mitigate on the problem of class repetition in public primary school education in Kenya.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY
1. The assess the influence of academic performance as a head teachers' transformational leadership intervention strategies on class repetition
2. To examine the role of school culture as a head teachers' transformational leadership intervention strategies on class repetition
3. To investigate the relationship between curriculum instructions as head teachers' transformational leadership intervention strategies on class repetition

METHODOLOGICAL SET UP
Theoretical Framework

The theory of self-efficacy developed by Bandura Albert [32], is based on the belief in one's own ability to effectively accomplish something and informs tha,t people usually desire things they believe they can achieve and won't make an attempt on things they believe they will not be successful. They perceive the tasks as challenges to be mastered rather than threats to be avoided [33] and Benson [34], predicts that highly efficacious people will choose to participate in tasks often, spent more effort on challenging tasks and persist more in the face of difficulty.

Class repetition in public primary schools' education indicates lack of efficiency as a result of

many factors and the theory of self-efficacy builds an aspect of effectiveness that teachers, head teachers and even pupils have to embrace for there to be an efficient flow of pupils. Head teachers are the active persons who implement the curriculum and their belief in their efficacy will enable intervention strategies to be developed and implemented. The choices of intervention strategies could be implemented by teachers with the support of head teachers. Thompson and Webber [35], teacher efficacy is a key driver in teacher effectiveness and should be included in any focus in interventions that schools wish to implement as intervention strategies are built on positive self-efficacy beliefs by teachers and school head teachers.

Research Philosophy

Research involves distinct approaches and philosophies in their attempt to investigate the nature of scientific inquiry and build up different schools of thought [36-39]. Gelo [40], research requires a philosophy that provides the basis to the methods and therefore, guides their applications and a researcher should be aware of the philosophical assumptions which guide the research study. Pragmatism stress on the research problem and uses entirely methods available to understand the problem and this makes it suitable as a basis for research approaches intervening into the world and not simply observing the world. This would be the circumstance, if the intervention is on organizational change. According to Feinberg [41] and Holden and Lunch [42] opine that, a good educational research to the pragmatists, is that which arises out of human needs and serves to improve the conditions of the real people. The philosophical foundations for Mixed Methods studies, proposes its significance for focusing interest on the research problem in social science research and using mixed approaches to draw knowledge about the problem [38]. The Mixed Methods endeavor to organize the insights provided by quantitative and qualitative research into practical mix [43].

Research Design

Creswell [37], a research design is a procedure for collecting, analyzing and reporting the research study and provide a plan for how to thoroughly conduct a study to meet the study objectives [44]. A research design is embraced by a researcher to provide the instruments of the study from assessing the general philosophical ideas behind the investigation to the detailed data collection and analysis techniques. Creswell [37], point out that, a researcher brings to the selection of a research design, traditions about knowledge claims arising out of multiple research approaches that have surfaced in the recent past which researchers have many choices.

Onwuegbuzie and Leech [35] and Plano, Catherine, Churchill, Green and Amanda [36], says that, Mixed Methods research is a type of research in which a researcher combines elements of quantitative and qualitative research approaches for purposes of scope and strength of understanding the research problem and validation than either approach by itself. The study adopted the Concurrent design within the Mixed Methods approach. The purpose of the Mixed Methods research, in this study was triangulation, hence a concurrent design being adopted such that, the quantitative and qualitative data can be triangulated and interpreted to provide findings of the study. Creswell, *et al.*, [44] noted that in concurrently collecting both forms of data at the same time, the researcher gets to contrast both varieties of data to search for compatible outcomes. The researcher compares the themes pinpointed in the qualitative data with the statistical results in the quantitative analysis.

STUDY FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

From the study, 169 (65.5%) and 46 (17.7%) of the respondents strongly agree and agree respectively, that quality school leadership improves academic performance as a head teachers' transformational leadership intervention strategy on class repetition. School leadership has a pivotal role to play as regards academic performance in schools and weak leadership has been related to stuck schools and inefficiency. Head teachers' transformational leadership has an effect on class repetition and any new approach can be effective in handling the problem. Schools have been changed by head teachers through new approaches being initiated and implemented collectively with teachers by the head teacher [7]. Most of the respondents say that head teachers are the pillars of quality in schools as they pointed out that;

"Schools perform depending on the head teachers' effort since there is difference in schools when a new head teacher is brought in. there are head teachers who take their work seriously and make teachers to teach and work better in improving learning. The head teacher makes a difference in a school even with meagre resources and very few teachers."

From the study, 91.5 % agree that school leadership influences pupil performance as an indicator of transformational leadership strategy on class repetition. The majority of the respondents holding this view indicate that, head teachers are key players in academic performance among pupils and a change in performance is related to leadership of the head teachers who are supposed to create and support the teachers in their teaching work and proper management of the available resources for purposes of production and eventual efficiency of the schools. It is therefore, the head teachers' transformational leadership that can

influence improvement in academic performance of pupils, mitigating class repetition [24]. This study therefore finds that head teachers need to create and support teachers in their teaching work.

From the study, 146(56.6%) and 80 (31%) of the respondents agreed and strongly agreed respectively that, school leadership develops and enhances values and means of operation, while 18 (7%) disagreed. Development and enhancement of values by having a participatory approach with teachers in its formulation and implementations in any institution is crucial leading to development of school culture. Values have driven institutions to achieve internal efficiency in most cases and head teachers can enhance them through school culture established through head teachers' leadership that should be transformative in nature and embedded in core values of the institution. Poor performing schools can be changed by development of school culture under the guidance of the head teacher [23, 25, 26].

The study further found out that, 155 (60.1%) and 61 (23.6%) of the respondents agree and strongly agree respectively that, poor performing schools can be changed through transformational leadership which influences class repetition. Poor performance is related to leadership, as head teachers can improve schools or not, for class repetition has been linked to poor performance by pupils and non-performing schools have been changed by transformative leaders who create good management of the available human and material resources for purposes of production in terms of improved academic performance. Day, Eliot and Kingston [23] found out that, turn around leadership improves institutions that have been under-performing in most cases.

Further the study found that, 156 (60.5%) and 54 (20.9%) of the respondents agreed and fairly agreed respectively, that curriculum instructions are guided by the head teachers' leadership, while 18.6% (48) disagreed. Curriculum implementation is at the center of any learning, forming the road map for schools. Head teachers are the supervisors of the curriculum implementation; therefore, they are supposed to provide guidance and support to teachers. Good curriculum implementation and supervision can introduce changes that affect performance of pupils, hence mitigating class repetition among pupils in primary schools. The findings go along with those of Pingle and Cox (2007) and Bulach, Booth and Picket [26] who stated that, leadership guides school planning and decision making in most schools, especially curriculum execution and that occurrence of class repetition has been influenced by the type of curriculum instructions and pedagogical approaches used by teachers (Beebe-Frankenberg, et al., (2004).

The study respondents indicated that, 147 (57%) and 71 (27.5%) strongly agree and agree respectively that, dynamics in the head teachers' leadership improves teachers' work environment and competencies and is vital in mitigating class repetition within the head teachers' transformational strategy. Working environment is critical in any institution of learning for purposes of efficiency and it is imperative therefore, that head teachers have a role in improving teachers' working environment which shall have an effect on teaching and learning environment. For any effective teacher related intervention strategy, head teachers have to create conducive work environment for implementers of the curriculum and competence is built by head teachers supporting the teaching staff who are the core production factor in the learning process in learning [23, 24, 47]. School environment is a salient factor which should be considered in the transformational leadership in primary schools.

From the study, 142 (55%) and 60 (23.3%) of the respondents agreed and strongly agreed respectively that, curriculum instructional changes occur with material support and professional development implemented by the head teachers, while 21.7% (56) disagreed on the same. Teaching and learning in schools, are based on availability of learning materials effectively utilized by teachers, who have the support from the head teacher. New curriculum approaches and teaching-learning materials being managed by teachers who undergo regular in-service supported by the head teacher who need to support development of new curriculum instructional approaches. Performing schools have been changed by transformative leaders who initiate good management of curriculum and professional development [19].

From the study, 186 (72.1%) and 51 (19.8%) of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed that, new trends are effectively managed by head teachers' transformational leadership, while 8.1% (21) disagreed. The education system is dynamic and the need to be managed well for success to be attained as head teachers' approaches to new changes can have certain long lasting influence on schools. The success of every school in inculcating new changes that are either internal or external determines the future state of the school and may influence class repetition. The way the head teacher handles change therefore can be an intervention strategy for class repetition in most schools experiencing it. For effective implementation of any intervention strategy, schools are required to provide targeted, intense and continual training, collaboration, and support and administrative follow up [27].

CONCLUSIONS
The study sought to investigate the head teachers' transformational leadership intervention

strategies on class repetition and several objectives were used. Several findings were therefore found as pertains to this study.

From the study, it is concluded that, quality school leadership improves academic performance as a head teachers' transformational leadership intervention strategy on class repetition. School leadership has an essential role to play as regards academic performance in schools. Poor leadership has been related to inefficiency in schools for schools have been changed by head teachers through new approaches being initiated and implemented collectively with teachers. Schools have been changed by transformative leaders and therefore, leadership by head teachers can be an intervention strategy for class repetition in schools.

It is further concluded that, dynamic head teachers' leadership improves teachers' work environment and competencies and is fundamental in mitigating class repetition within the head teachers' transformational leadership strategy. Working environment is critical in any institution of learning, for purposes of efficiency and maximum utilization of human and material resource capacities based on the head teacher's dynamic leadership. It is imperative, therefore, that head teachers have a role in improving teachers' working environment, which shall have an effect on teaching and learning environment. Dynamic leadership has an influence in improving teachers' work environment within schools and contribute to improvement in learning, hence pupil's academic performance.

It was concluded that, a change in performance is related to leadership of the head teachers. Head teachers are supposed to create and support the teachers in their teaching work and proper management of the available resources for purposes of production and eventual efficiency of the schools. The management styles of institutional leaders have an influence on production which is measured by the academic performance of pupils in most cases and progression to the next class or level of education. The head teachers' transformational leadership has an influence on the improvement of pupils in academic performance.

It was further concluded that, school leadership should develop and enhances values and means of operation which are necessary in any institution. Values have been major determinants in institutions to achieve internal efficiency and require a participatory approach with teachers in its formulation and implementation. Values are embedded in school culture and have been known to drive learning institutions to greater heights and transformation for it sets out the goals and how to achieve them individually and collectively in schools. School culture is fundamental and is established through head teachers' leadership that should be transformative in nature and embedded in core values of the institution. The study finds out that school culture when developed and nurtured well by the head teacher can turn around those poor performing schools.

The study further concluded that, most poor performing schools can be changed through transformational leadership. In most cases, poor performance has been linked to leadership and class repetition has been associated with poor performance by pupils and this can be lowered or eliminated by head teachers' transformational leadership, has schools are changed by their leaders to achieve productivity. Non-performing schools, have been changed by transformative leaders by creating good management, for exploitation of human and material resources, for purposes of production in terms of improved academic performance, hence internal efficiency. Turn around leadership improves institutions that have been under-performing.

The study concluded that, Curriculum instructions are guided by the head teachers' leadership and is the basis in which schools' function. The implementation of the curriculum, is at the center of any learning forming the blueprint for schools. Head teachers' roles, are that of being the supervisors of the curriculum implementation and evaluation; therefore, they are supposed to provide guidance and support to teachers. Good curriculum implementation and supervision can introduce changes that affect performance of pupils, hence mitigating class repetition among pupils in primary schools. Head teachers' transformative leadership provides guidance to school planning and decision making in regard to curriculum implementation and evaluation.

Curriculum instructional changes occur with material support and professional development implemented by the head teachers. Teaching and learning in schools, are established on curriculum instructional approaches and changes occur within the context of the availability of teaching and learning materials and professional development. These play a key role in empowering the teacher on proper utilization of new curriculum instructional approaches and resources. Teachers can effectively utilize them with the support from the head teacher who provides them when required and also training. New curriculum instructional approaches can be managed by teachers who undergo regular in-service training which can be supported by the head teacher.

The study findings enhance the conclusion that, new trends are effectively managed by head teachers' transformational leadership. The education

system is dynamic and new changes need to be managed well. Head teachers' approaches to new changes have certain influence on schools and the ability of every school in inculcating new changes determines the future state of the school and may influence class repetition. Such changes may arise from pupils' experiences like class repetition which need to be addressed by schools with the head teachers' guidance or even government policy as regards the same. Head teachers need to provide professional guidance and be at the forefront in developing strategies to mitigate the new changes. In 2013, there was a policy guideline on class repetition from the Ministry of Education outlining government policy on class repetition and head teachers were to provide guidance on the new change in policy to teachers, pupils and parents for they are policy implementers.

RECOMMENDATIONS
Pupil academic performance has a strong relationship with head teachers' transformational leadership on class repetition intervention strategies. The head teachers' leadership has an influence on quality academic performance among pupils, which is an important contributory factor to class repetition. The head teachers should provide leadership that, leads to improvement in teachers' work environment and development of competencies, which can turn around the school. Head teachers are responsible for creating and supporting teachers in their teaching work and managing the available resources for the betterment of the school. Head teachers' management of both the human and material resources contributes immensely to intervention strategies on class repetition.

Head teachers' transformational leadership is within the curriculum implementation as they are supposed to provide guidance to teachers and introduce instructional changes and professional development. Schools can be improved by head teachers through providing leadership that can embrace change by supporting the professional capabilities of teachers who are the implementers of curriculum in schools through professional development.

Head teachers have a role to play in managing new trends in education for there are new challenges and trends that need to be managed for schools to be successful. The head teachers should provide leadership that is transformational in nature so as to change their schools. Transformational leadership has been found to change schools that were inefficient to efficiency. Head teachers should therefore act as agents and catalysts of change and innovation in their schools.

Any institutions' or organizations' success depends on its culture. Head teachers, are behind the establishment of school culture, that will be the cornerstone of the school success. Values that schools operate on become the driving force behind the work of teachers and pupils, to create an efficient system.

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