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Headteachers' Transformational Leadership and its Influence on Academic Performance: A Case of Public Secondary Schools in Uganda

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Keywords:
Transformational Leadership, Public Secondary Schools, Academic Performance.

Leadership style is an important aspect of students' academic performance in schools. Transformational leadership style is associated with students' academic achievement in Uganda's public secondary schools. The aim of this paper was to examine the influence of transformational leadership attributes on academic performance in public secondary schools in Uganda. Specifically, the study investigated the influence of transformational leadership attributes on academic performance at UCE and UACE in public secondary schools. The research was underpinned by the transformational leadership theory pioneered by James McGregor Burns and supported by Bass. The study was anchored on the positivism philosophy and guided by a correlation survey design with a quantitative research method. A multi-stage sampling technique was used to select 163 public secondary schools from a total sample of 253 public secondary schools, registered with the Ministry of Education and Sports in Uganda's central region. Primary data was collected using structured questionnaires. Data was analysed through descriptive and inferential statistics. Hypothesis testing was done at 5% significance level using the multiple linear regression model. The study established that transformational leadership is a significant predictor of academic performance both at Uganda Certificate Education (Ordinary level) and Uganda Advanced Certificate Education (Advanced level) through idealised influence, intellectual stimulation, individualised consideration, and the control variables. The study concludes that transformational leadership has a significant influence on academic performance. The study recommends that policymakers and strategists in Uganda's Education Ministry should closely monitor the school's alignment with the transformational leadership practices of head teachers for sustainable academic performance in public secondary schools.

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INTRODUCTION

In a Global context, educating a nation remains the most vital strategy for the development of society throughout the developing world (Chang'ach and Muricho 2013). Many studies on human capital development concur that it is the human resources of a nation and not its capital or natural resources that ultimately determine the pace of its economic and social development. The principal institutional mechanism for developing human capital is the formal education system of primary, secondary, and tertiary training (Nsubuga, 2008). In Uganda, Education is liberalised, and hence, there are private and public educators. The Public sector is part of the economy concerned with providing basic government services (Manzoor, 2011). The public sector provides services that benefit all the members of the society rather than just the individual who uses the service (such as public education). From a Ugandan context, an efficient, motivated, and well-trained civil service is expected to be one of the major foundations of a country. Reports on employee performance in Uganda indicate that performance is below expectations (Tumuhimbise, 2017). This stimulated the researcher's interest to venture into the area of performance of public-school administrators on the basis of academic performance.

In Uganda, formal education is based on seven years of primary and six years of secondary education. The education system, particularly secondary education, is still centrally managed by the Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES). Uganda has consistently developed its education system since it liberalised its education sector. After the introduction of the policy of free Universal Primary Education (UPE), enrolment in primary schools increased substantially. The

government of Uganda developed a new policy on post-primary education and training (PPET), which preceded the introduction of universal secondary education (USE) to meet rising demand and increase access to secondary schools and beyond (MoES, 2006).

Mass education at the secondary education level, however, required new leadership approaches in order to enhance efficiency and effectiveness. Research has shown that leadership is most effective when leaders choose more effective styles like transformational leadership (Germano, 2010). The leader, who displays a high level of experience in both the public and private sector, is highly educated, positive, optimistic, and has a general understanding of strong educational practices, also desires high expectations and standards (Hughes, 2014). Idealised influence describes leaders who serve as role models for their followers, allow them to identify with a shared organisational vision, and provide a sense of meaning and achievement (KEMI, 2014). It involves the head teacher leading by example, mentoring, having high expectations, having a best-practices emphasis, and holding students and teachers accountable, among others (Hauserman & Stick, 2013). Globally, effective schools are the key to improved performance, particularly of students in all aspects (Kinyua, 2015).

School performance in Uganda mainly entails teaching consistently with diligence, honesty and regularity orchestrated by increased good academic results from students; setting adequate written and practical exercises; ensuring effective marking; evaluating all exercises promptly and carefully and observing academic regulations and instructions (Uganda Teaching Service Commission Regulations, 1996). Contextually, in Uganda today, there is a desire to ensure that the best school head teachers lead secondary schools

because of the rapid growth in secondary school education orchestrated by the successful implementation of the UPE program, which has grown tremendously since its inception in 1997 (Lewin, 2009). However, alongside quantitative achievement in school enrolment over the years, the qualitative challenges related to student performance have become huge (Verspoor & Bregman, 2007; Lewin, 2009).

For example, in Uganda, the implementation of Universal Primary Education (UPE) has exerted much pressure on secondary education. The tremendous growth in school enrolment at the primary level due to UPE increased the demand for secondary school provision. In a report published by the World Bank on Uganda's post-primary education sector, Liang (2002) noted that primary school enrollment grew rapidly, resulting in a sharp increase in demands for education beyond primary school. NPA (2015) reports that Uganda's primary school enrollment has increased from 2.8 million in 1996 to over 8.4 million in 2015 since the introduction of the UPE in 1997, registering a 300% increase. To meet the demand for secondary education, both public and private sectors have invested heavily in the provision of secondary education (MoES, 2018).

However, secondary education expansion has been undermined by the poor academic performance of schools. Improvement in performance requires that schools are well led by competent school heads. In fact, the MoES posted people of the highest education management qualifications to head schools in the hope that these can better employ the best leadership principles. In addition, the MoES frequently conducted workshops on leadership for head teachers and deputy head teachers in order to help improve their leadership skills. However, despite the above, most public schools' performance is still wanting (Nsubuga, 2008).

However, amidst poor academic performance for many secondary schools, some schools have persistently performed better, while others have emerged. Some traditionally performing public schools have ceased to be good performers at the

expense of some well-financed and managed private secondary schools. An analysis published in the daily monitor of the 2017 UCE UNEB results showed that out of 100 top schools, 59 were privately owned institutions (Ahimbisibwe, 2017). The rise and fall in secondary school performance across the country has raised debate on the determinants of secondary school academic performance. One major school of thought has alluded to the fact that the rise and dominance of some private schools can be attributed to leadership organisation in these private secondary schools (Saleem, 2012). The empirical evidence to support this assumption is lacking. The review of the literature revealed that very few studies had been conducted in Uganda, and even the few studies that have been done have focused largely on leadership or management quality in general and other primary schools' performance (Nsubuga, 2008; Odubaker, 2007; Mpirwe, 2007; Crawford, 2016). This study attempted to examine the effect of transformational leadership attributes on public secondary school academic performance.

Problem Statement

Poor academic performance among secondary schools in Uganda is a concern for both government policymakers and educationalists. For instance, according to the 2018 UNEB report, out of the 98,524 students who sat for the 2018 UACE exams, 1,489 students failed with an F-grade. In 2017, a total of 1,141 students failed out of 101,269 candidates, and in 2016, 1,363 candidates failed out of 104,234 candidates. The situation is not much different at the UCE level, where a significant number of candidates have been ungraded or failed in recent years. This poor performance has prompted the government to take corrective measures, including the renovation, refurbishment, and reequipping of traditional secondary schools with the aim of creating a more conducive learning environment, transfer of head teachers in underperforming schools, and, in extreme cases, even leaving some head teachers undeployed as a punishment, for underperforming. However, this approach is practically considered as addressing the issue of

poor performance from a general leadership perspective, and naturally, the problem has persisted.

Extant literature indicates that no conclusive studies have been conducted in Uganda to examine the role leaders play in running effective secondary schools. Previous studies on leadership in schools have primarily focused on primary education (Odubaker, 2007; Mpirwe, 2007). The only study in the literature review that made an attempt at secondary education in Uganda was conducted by Crawford (2016). This study examined the relationship between school management quality measures and student test scores rather than leadership. The continuous poor performance at the secondary level has a direct impact on the quality of graduates from tertiary institutions and, consequently, the labour force. Therefore, it is crucial to investigate and recommend how leadership, particularly the transformative style, is related to academic performance in public secondary schools.

Hence, this study plays a vital role in examining and understanding the relationship between transformational school leadership and academic performance in public secondary schools, filling the research gap in Uganda's context. By focusing on leadership style rather than general leadership, this research aims to provide insights and recommendations for improving academic performance in public secondary schools.

Purpose of the Study

The study sought to investigate the extent to which transformational leadership attributes of head teachers influence the academic performance of Public secondary schools in Uganda.

Objectives

- To examine the influence of transformational leadership attributes on UCE academic performance of public schools in Uganda.
- To examine the influence of transformational leadership attributes on UACE academic performance of public schools in Uganda.

Research Hypothesis

H_{A1}: There is no relationship between head teachers' transformational leadership attributes and students' UCE academic performance in public secondary schools.

H_{A2}: There is no relationship between headteachers' transformational leadership attributes and students' UACE academic performance in public secondary schools

THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

In education literature, two prominent theoretical frameworks on the role of leadership and school performance have dominated the scholarly literature, and these are the instructional leadership model and the transformational leadership model. In the early and late 1980s, educational researchers predominantly applied the instructional leadership model as the framework to improve low-performing schools. This body of research emphasised that strong and directive leadership focused on curriculum and instruction and was effective in raising student performance (Hallinger, 2003; Harrera, 2010). The conclusion from the studies using the instructional leadership model was that the principal is a crucial and determinant factor in promoting and implementing change in low-performing schools.

However, in the 1990s, the instructional leadership model was criticised as being paternalistic, archaic, and dependent on docile followers (Nedelcu, 2013). The dissatisfaction with the instructional leadership model and the demands and challenges of modern education systems gave birth to the transformational leadership model as an alternative to explain school performance. The model emerged from the ideology of empowerment, shared leadership, consensus of goals, change agents, organisational learning and distributed leadership that evolved in the early 1990s as a vehicle to reform schools (Harrera, 2010). The emergence of the transformational leadership model shifted the earliest focus of educationists from the dominant

notion of the principal in the 1980s as the instructional leader.

Within the context of a school, transformational leadership replaces the leader as the only one who manages school processes and procedures related to instruction and supervision and demands subordinates to act as change agents. Principals are expected to lead schools through reform. A transformational leader, as an agent of change, emphasises the ingredients of change, for example, ideas, innovation, influence, and consideration for the individual in the process (Botha 2014; Marks and Printy 2003). Transformational leadership focuses on the vision and goals of the organisation, whereas shared instructional leadership is about how members of the organisation work as partners on a daily basis in order to achieve the vision and goals. Leadership no longer depends on the position or role of a single individual but on interactions that are coordinated through the establishment of structures or committees to maintain order in the organisation. Studies have revealed that the use of transformational leadership with high-quality pedagogy helps learners perform academically at a high level (Lumadi, 2014).

Thus, this study adopted the transformational leadership theory pioneered by Bernard Bass in 1985. Bass described transformational leaders as those that exhibit four transformational leadership behaviours/attributes when they interact with their staff or subordinates on a daily basis: these included idealised influence and behaviour, inspirational motivation, individualised consideration, and intellectual stimulation. Gkolia & Belias (2014) provide evidence of the effect that transformational leadership style has on teacher commitment, performance, job satisfaction, and other areas that help facilitate overall school success. Therefore, because of its established positive correlations to employee performance, motivation, and job satisfaction in business organisations, the transformational leadership style is a viable approach for education leaders to test in transforming schools to meet new stakeholder demands.

Conceptually, examining the effect of transformational leadership on school performance faces two conceptual problems. They are related to measurement of leadership from the principal's or head teacher's perspectives; defining academic performance. For example, previous studies have adopted single-dimension measurement approaches focusing on a few isolated personal traits of administrators and ignoring various roles and responsibilities of leaders that impact school performance. This study, however adopted the multidimensional framework that captures various attributes of leaders based on their teachers' perception and assessment of their leaders in a school context. The adopted framework focuses on leadership competencies and behaviour rather than traits inherent in traditional models of leadership. It should be noted that a school's head teacher holds the main position in deciding the way a school works (Gkolia & Belias, 2014).

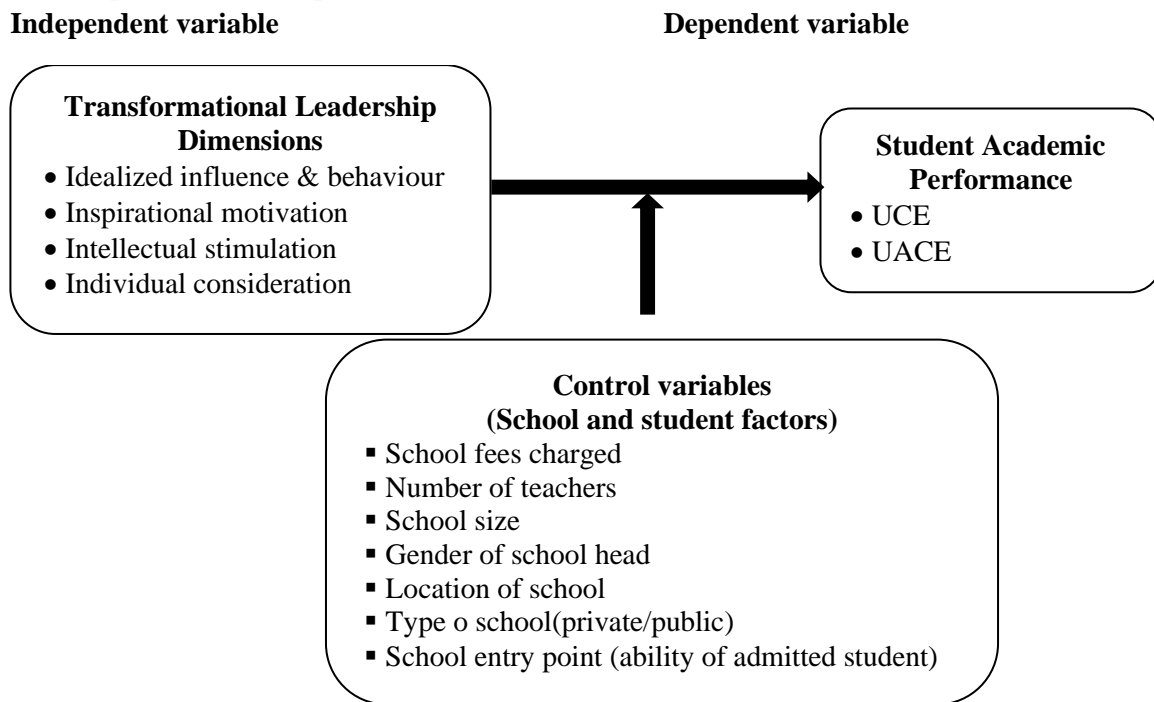
The conceptual model presented below (Figure 1) depicts a direct relationship between transformational school leadership attributes and student academic performance. The conceptual framework suggests that transformational school leadership of the head teacher is described by the four transformational leadership dimensions: (1) *Idealised influence and behaviour*. The dimension entails putting followers' needs first, being a role model for followers, doing the right thing, demonstrating high moral standards, and avoiding the use of power unnecessarily or for personal gain. (2) *Inspirational motivation*. The attribute describes the ways by which leaders motivate and inspire those around them, including practices aimed at creating attractive visions of the future of the organisation, boosting follower goals, and inspiring enthusiasm and optimism. (3) *Intellectual stimulation*. This dimension is aimed at developing followers' capacities to higher levels, and the practices of this process stimulate effort to become more innovative and creative. Leader emphasises actualising creativity and invention and using novel ways of doing work. (4) *Individualised consideration*. This dimension implies paying close attention to the needs and

interests of the organisation's members. The dimension represents the leader's own attention to subordinates and treating them in the best way possible (Hayat la, 2014; Afsharietal, 2012; Geisel et al., 2003).

In the conceptual framework, the researcher also acknowledges that the effect of transformational leadership attributes on student academic performance is conditioned by other school factors (Branch et al., 2013). Therefore,

controlling for these school factors is important in ascertaining the effect of transformational school leadership attributes or traits on academic performance. For instance, value-added studies that adjust for student prior performance in UCE examinations in Uganda have revealed that students' prior attainment (PLE - primary leaving exams) explains nearly half (48%) of the variation in test scores at the secondary level (Crawford, 2015; Elks, 2016).

Figure 1: Conceptual framework showing the relationship between transformational school leadership and academic performance of the school



EMPIRICAL STUDIES

Globally, effective schools are the key to improved performance, particularly of students in all aspects (Kinyua, 2015). School administrators can manage diversity in school in a more effective manner by adopting transformational leadership behaviours (Veysel, 2014). Since the 1980s, transformational leadership has been recognised as one of the current approaches to leadership that has been the focus of much research (Achieng, 2013). Principals' overall responsibility is to facilitate teaching and learning designed to enhance student achievement (Cooper, 2011). School leaders must mould the culture of the

school in order to create an environment conducive to learning (Moffitt, 2007). The leadership dimension that is most strongly associated with positive student outcomes is that of promoting and participating in teacher learning and development (Robinson, Llyod & Rowe, 2008). The leadership style has to be exercised by principals always for quality results in the school. Transformational leadership is crucial (Ogalo, 2013). It is a definite advantage for everyone involved in the school (Cashin, 2000). And it is widely believed to be the most effective leadership style (Jess, 2014). Transformational leaders are perceived to have facilitated positive

changes, such as increased student achievement (Denmark, 2012).

A study by Vidoni et al. (2008) focused on the school leadership question and its effect on student results in 18 nations. The findings revealed that in more centrally controlled school systems, a managerial focus by the headteacher is effective in reducing the achievement gap related to students' socioeconomic status. On the other hand, in more decentralised systems, leadership specialisation is more beneficial. The study also highlighted that school systems characterised by local control or in transition present a mixed picture.

Krasnoff (2015) emphasised the changing role of school leadership, stating that principals are no longer just building managers but need to be instructional leaders who can develop effective teaching teams. Effective instructional leadership is crucial for creating and sustaining a high-quality learning environment. Krasnoff also noted that challenging schools are often led by inexperienced and ineffective principals, while effective principals tend to stay longer in challenging schools. The study recommended that principals receive training, acquire skills, and gain experience in instructional leadership to improve student learning outcomes.

Branch et al. (2013) conducted a study titled "School Leaders Matter" that estimated the individual contributions of principals to student achievement. The study found that highly effective principals can increase a student's achievement by up to seven months in a single school year, while ineffective principals can have the same opposite effect. The study also highlighted the influence of principals on student achievement through mechanisms such as teacher turnover.

Gkolia and Belias (2014) examined the impact of transformational leadership on teacher job satisfaction in Greek schools. Their study revealed that principals with transformational characteristics can improve the relationship between the principal, students, and teachers, as

well as foster positive relationships among colleagues. These principals can also create a conducive educational environment that enhances teachers' working conditions.

Mehndroo and Vandana (2020) investigated the impact of motivation on academic achievement and found a significant correlation between inspirational motivation indicators and student academic achievement. Similarly, Wentzel and Wigfield (2014) conducted a study on academic and social motivational influences on student achievement. Their findings highlighted the positive influence of inspirational motivation by head teachers on student performance.

Studies conducted in Brazil, the United States, and China have also shown the positive effects of school leadership on student outcomes. For example, Oliveira and Carvalho (2018) found that principal leadership promotes an improved institutional climate, which leads to improved student performance in Brazilian schools. In the United States, Jacobson (2010) examined the effects of principal leadership on student achievement and found that successful principals exhibit practices such as direction setting, developing people, and redesigning the organisation. Hahm and Sun (2020) explored the individualised consideration of professors and its impact on the personal growth of Chinese students studying abroad in Korea. The study found that individualised consideration positively influenced students' personal growth, and perceived school support strengthened this influence.

In Africa, limited studies have explored the relationship between school leadership and performance. However, evidence from studies conducted in Nigeria, South Africa, Kenya, and Uganda aligns with findings from developed countries. For instance, Akinola et al. (2013) found that the leadership skills possessed by principals in Nigeria were positively related to school effectiveness in terms of student academic achievement. Similarly, another study conducted by Ogbonnaya et al. (2020) discovered a positive relationship between transformational leadership style and students' academic achievement.

The four transformational leadership behaviours are more effective than constructive transactional leadership (Avolia, 2010). Transformational leadership has grown in its recognition and popularity because of its seemingly ubiquitous application. It involves four factors: inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, idealised influence, and individualised consideration (Hughes, 2014). Such behaviours are positively related to better performance (Balyer, 2012). Transformational leadership practices are significant and essential in promoting high academic performance by encouraging the participation of all stakeholders in focusing on improving student learning through idealised influence (Jebii, 2019).

Modern demands for educational reforms have made school leaders look for an alternative. A recent theory that has been embraced by many school leaders is transformational leadership. Also, Valmarie (2012) asserts that school principals' leadership is key to successful school reform, as it increase student achievement. Also, Marks and Printy (2003) confirms in their study that transformational leadership emerged as the model needed by principals to lead schools through reform. Anderson (2017) concluded that, educating, training, and developing of school leaders should be geared towards application of the transformational leadership style. Leadership styles and approaches are explored in order to strengthen education leaders' ability to manage and lead schools in this new era and this is logical and necessary. As Cited by Jebii (2019), researchers in the recent past have established that transformational leadership is an effective leadership strategy that enables leaders to guide followers to successfully implement change within their organisations (Hassan & Hatmaker, 2014).

Hence, the theory suited the study since the transformational leadership style was a vehicle through which the national educational reforms could be implemented at the school level in Uganda. Alam (2017) concluded that there is a need to revisit the traditional approaches of

leadership and align them towards more productive lines. Majority of the studies reviewed concentrate on leadership of the school which encompasses a wide area of school management and not specifically headteachers' role, more so, the studies generalise student achievement and are not specific to academic performance in exams. Some of the studies address some of the transformational leadership attributes in relation to the overall teaching environment and leave out the crucial academic performance which ultimately the goal of studies at all levels. This necessitates a study that would bring to the fore the best leadership practices of headteacher and how this relates to secondary school students' learning outcomes. Also, according to the studies, strengthening transformational leadership leads to the improvement of learning outcomes however this is not a given. In this study, the influence of the head teacher's transformational leadership attributes on academic performance will come into focus most especially in Uganda where there is no extant literature related to the study.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a quantitative research methodology using a survey research design. According to Leapley-Portscheller (2008), a survey research design enables a researcher to gather data about two or more characteristics for a particular group of people, and the data in the form of numbers reflects specific measurements of the characteristics in question.

The population of the study consisted of all public secondary schools in Uganda, and therefore, the school was the unit of analysis. According to Mugenda & Mugenda (1999), a population is an entire group of individuals, events or objects having common observable characteristics. Official statistics from Uganda's Ministry of Education and Sports and Uganda Bureau of Statistics indicate that as of 2020, there were 1033 public secondary schools across the country, with the central region where this study was conducted accounting for 253 public secondary schools. This is close to a third of the total population of the schools. This region was selected for the study

because it has a mix of high, medium, and low-performing schools, located in rural, semi-urban and urban settings. These formed the target population from which a random sample of secondary schools was selected.

In order to determine the sample size, Yamane's (1967) simplified sample size formula was used. Out of 253 public secondary schools represent all public secondary schools in central Uganda. However, since studies of this nature are usually associated with low response rates, the sample size was adjusted to cater for non-response rate. Evidence shows that oversampling of between 40%-50% is recommended (Hashim, 2010; Salkind, 1997). The 155-sample size was adjusted to 5% to cater for the anticipated non-response rate. Therefore, a total of 163 secondary schools were targeted.

A multi-stage sampling technique was used to select 163 public secondary schools from a total sample of 253 schools. In the first stage, the secondary schools in the central region were stratified into public and private schools. In the second stage, within each category, schools were randomly selected proportional to the size of the category. In the third stage, in each selected school, between 3 and 7 teachers were randomly selected to answer the school leadership part of the questionnaire. At the school, a list of teachers present was generated, and a random sample of 3-7 teachers was selected using simple random sampling. In cases where the teachers on the day we visited the school were found to be fewer than the required sample size, a minimum of 3 teachers was selected; otherwise, 7 teachers were the target for each school. The other parts of the questionnaire on academic performance of schools and other school-related factors were answered by the school Director of Studies (DOS).

The study used a Questionnaire as an instrument for data collection. A Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire developed by Bass & Avolio (2004) was used. However, for this study, only the specific questions on transformational leadership attributes were used. In the questionnaire, the

leaders' transformational leadership attributes were assessed based on 20 items measured on a five-point Likert scale from 0 (not at all) to 4 (frequently, if not always). These are inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individual consideration, each with four (4) question items. The idealised influence has eight (8) questions. Unlike other studies, this study was anchored on the work of Oliveira & Carvalho (2018), that recommend the use of teachers' ratings of head teachers. The teachers' answers for each school were aggregated, and an average index of teachers' perceptions about their head teachers' transformational leadership qualities was computed. The Uganda Certificate of Education (UCE) and Uganda Advanced Certificate of Education (UACE) results for the previous three (3) years preceding this study period were collected at the school level. Academic performance for UCE was measured using the 4th grade as the minimum academic achievement and a Score of two (2) principal passes as the minimum academic achievement for UACE.

To find out the internal consistency of the questionnaire, Cronbach's coefficient Alpha, which is a general form of the Kuder-Richardson (K-R) 20 formula, was employed. Cronbach's coefficient Alpha is used to determine how items correlate among themselves. The results yielded an Alpha of 0.70. The result implies that the items correlated highly among them, i.e. there was consistency among the items in measuring the concept of our interest (Mugenda & Mukenda, 2003). Therefore, the instrument was reliable and acceptable for the study.

After the data was collected, a Multiple Linear Regression (MLR) analysis was conducted to determine the relationship between transformational Leadership and Academic performance while controlling for the influence of other control variables. The analysis was computer-assisted using the SPSS version 23.0.

RESULTS

Descriptive Statistics

The responses regarding transformational leadership attributes were obtained using a Likert scale ranging from 1 to 5. The findings in *Table 1* demonstrate that all four constructs scored a mean higher than the average of 2.5. that is, Idealized

influence and behaviour had a mean score of 3.01, Inspirational motivation scored 2.95, Intellectual stimulation scored 2.91, and Individualized consideration scored 2.84. These high mean scores indicate that respondents agreed that head teachers often demonstrated transformational leadership behaviours to impact school performance at UCE.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics for UCE school performance

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Idealised influence and behaviour	391	3.0134	.81791
Inspirational motivation	391	2.9514	.92449
Intellectual stimulation	391	2.9092	.90657
Individualized consideration	391	2.8389	.92435
Valid N (listwise)	391		

Regarding UACE school performance, the findings in *Table 2* demonstrate that all four constructs scored a mean higher than the average of 2.5. That is, Idealized influence and behaviour had a mean score of 3.06, Inspirational motivation scored 3.01, Intellectual stimulation scored 2.95,

and Individualized consideration scored 2.87. These high mean scores indicate that respondents agreed that head teachers often demonstrated transformational leadership behaviors to impact school performance at UACE.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics for UACE school performance

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Idealised influence and behaviour	362	3.0625	.75959
Inspirational motivation	362	3.0131	.86862
Intellectual stimulation	362	2.9517	.86986
Individualized consideration	362	2.8743	.89149
Valid N (listwise)	362		

The results of the multiple linear regression in *Table 3* demonstrate an R Square value of 0.251, indicating that the combined effects of school entry levels, gender of the school head, school fees paid, number of teachers involved, and school entry points account for 25.1% of the variance in UCE performance in public schools. Combined with transformational leadership attributes, the R Square value increased to 0.282 (28.2%), indicating that these variables collectively explain an additional 3.1% of the variance in UCE performance. This suggests that the head teacher's transformational leadership attributes are significant predictors of UCE school performance in public secondary schools (P=0.03).

points and school fees paid were 0.153 and 0.443, suggesting that holding all other factors constant, a unit increase in school entry points and school fees results in 0.153 and 0.443 increase in UCE performance in public schools in Uganda thus the statistical significance of P<0.001 and P=0.004 which is less than 0.05 significance level. Further, the standardised beta coefficients for the gender of the school head and school entry levels were -0.184 and -0.245. This entails that a unit increase in gender of school head and school entry levels results in a decrease in performance at UCE by -0.184 and -0.245 in public schools in Uganda correspondingly. The results show a statistical significance of P<0.001, which is less than 0.05 significance level.

Results from *Table 4* demonstrate that the standardised beta coefficients for school entry

Table 3: Influence of transformational leadership attributes on UCE performance in public schools

Model Summary									
Model	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	Std. Err of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R ² Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.501 ^a	.251	.241	.01262	.251	25.825	5	385	.000
2	.531 ^b	.282	.265	.01243	.031	4.045	4	381	.003

a. School admission levels, gender of school head, school fees, number of teachers involved, and school entry points are all constant predictors.

b. School admission levels, gender of the school head, school fees, number of teachers involved, school entry points, individualised consideration, inspiring motivation, intellectual stimulation, idealised influence, and behaviour are all predictors.

c. UCE Performance is a dependent variable.

Table 4: Coefficients for determining UCE performance in public schools

Coefficients								
Model		Unstandardised Coefficients		Standardised Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	1.988	.005		411.554	.000		
	School entry points	.000	.000	.184	3.513	.000	.709	1.410
	School Fees paid	3.263E-8	.000	.465	9.853	.000	.872	1.147
	Gender of school head	-.004	.001	-.118	-2.623	.009	.967	1.034
	Number of Teachers Involved	3.904E-5	.000	.058	1.140	.255	.749	1.336
	School entry levels	-.008	.001	-.254	-5.255	.000	.830	1.205
2	(Constant)	1.985	.005		406.281	.000		
	School entry points	.000	.000	.153	2.905	.004	.683	1.465
	School Fees paid	3.108E-8	.000	.443	9.202	.000	.812	1.231
	Gender of school head	-.006	.002	-.184	-3.810	.000	.812	1.232
	Number of Teachers Involved	1.833E-5	.000	.027	.526	.599	.700	1.428
	School entry levels	-.007	.001	-.245	-5.066	.000	.808	1.238
	idealised	.003	.001	.191	2.355	.019	.286	3.497
	inspirational	.000	.001	-.013	-.178	.859	.367	2.725
	intellectual	.001	.001	.045	.639	.523	.382	2.617
	individual	-.001	.001	-.078	-1.415	.158	.618	1.619

a. UCE Performance is a dependent variable.

Regarding the relationship between transformational leadership attributes and UCE performance, the results show that the standardised beta coefficient for Idealised influence and behaviour was 0.191, suggesting that a unit increase in Idealised influence and behaviour increases academic performance at UCE by 19.1% in public schools in Uganda. The study also found that the P-value for Idealised influence and behaviour was $P=0.019$, which is less than the significance level of 0.05. This implies that idealised influence and behaviour are significant predictors of UCE performance in public schools in Uganda.

The results, as presented in *Table 5*, demonstrate that organisational factors predict academic performance at UACE to 25.5% (R Square value is 0.255) in public schools. The inclusion of head teachers' transformational leadership attributes (individualised consideration, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, idealised influence and behaviour) in model 2 increased the R Square value to 0.343 (34.3%), indicating that the variables in the model account for a higher percentage of the variance in UACE performance of public schools.

The total change in R Square between the two models indicates that the addition of transformational leadership attributes contributes an additional 8.7% of the variance in UACE performance beyond what is accounted for by the control factors. In both models 1 and 2, the independent variables were statistically significant predictors of UACE performance ($P<0.005$).

The results presented in *Table 6* demonstrate the nature of the relationship between individual independent variables and the dependent variable. The model results show that the standardised beta coefficients for school entry points, gender of school head and number of teachers were 0.106, 0.131 and 0.250 suggesting that holding all other factors constant, a unit increase in school entry points, gender of school head and number of teachers results to 10.6%, 13.1% and 25.0% increase in UACE performance in public schools

in Uganda thus the statistical significance of $P=0.045$, $P=0.007$ and $P<0.001$ which are less than 0.05 significance level.

Further, the standardised beta coefficients for school fees paid and school entry levels were -0.357 and -0.154, respectively. This entails that a unit increase in school fees paid and School entry levels results in the decrease in performance at UACE by -0.357 and -0.154 in public schools in Uganda correspondingly. The results show a statistical significance of $P<0.001$ and $P=0.001$, respectively, which is less than 0.05 significance level.

The results further demonstrate that the standardised beta coefficients for Individualised influence and idealised influence were 0.124 and 0.144, suggesting that a unit increase in Individualised influence and idealised influence increases academic performance at UACE by 12.4% and 14.4%, respectively, in public schools in Uganda. The study also found that the P-value for Individualised influence was $P=0.016$ and $P=0.05$ are, less than the significance level of 0.05. This implies that Individualised influence and idealised influence have a significant relationship with UACE performance in public schools in Uganda.

Table 5: Transformational leadership attributes influence UACE performance in public schools

Model Summary										
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change	
1	.505 ^a	.255	.245	.17390	.255	25.038	5	365	.000	
2	.585 ^b	.343	.326	.16429	.087	11.991	4	361	.000	

a. School admission levels, gender of school head, school fees, number of teachers involved, and school entry points are all constant predictors.

b. School admission levels, gender of the school head, school fees, number of teachers involved, school entry points, individualised consideration, inspiring motivation, intellectual stimulation, idealised influence, and behaviour are all predictors.

c. UACE Performance is a dependent variable.

Table 6: Coefficients for Determining UACE performance in public schools

Coefficients								
Model		Unstandardised Coefficients		Standardised Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	1.853	.091		20.409	.000		
	School entry points	.004	.002	.137	2.482	.014	.670	1.492
	School Fees	-3.084E-7	.000	-.315	-6.385	.000	.838	1.193
	Gender of school head	.100	.020	.231	4.982	.000	.953	1.049
	Number of Teachers Involved	.003	.000	.292	5.613	.000	.752	1.330
	School entry levels	-.097	.028	-.169	-3.459	.001	.857	1.167
2	(Constant)	1.666	.091		18.391	.000		
	School entry points	.003	.002	.106	2.016	.045	.655	1.527
	School Fees	-3.496E-7	.000	-.357	-7.477	.000	.798	1.253
	Gender of school head	.057	.021	.131	2.730	.007	.794	1.259
	Number of Teachers Involved	.002	.000	.250	4.915	.000	.706	1.416
	School entry levels	-.088	.027	-.154	-3.308	.001	.835	1.197
	Idealised	.038	.020	.144	1.919	.050	.325	3.076
	Inspirational	.015	.015	.065	.968	.334	.408	2.449
	Intellectual	.011	.015	.049	.758	.449	.428	2.338
	Individual	.028	.012	.124	2.418	.016	.688	1.454

a. UACE Performance is a dependent variable.

DISCUSSION

The findings, as presented in *Tables 1* and *2*, revealed that transformational leadership attributes significantly influenced ($P=0.003$) UCE academic performance in public schools. Consequently, the findings reject the null hypothesis and support the existence of a relationship between academic achievement and transformational leadership attributes. Furthermore, the findings revealed that Idealised Influence and Behaviour ($P=0.019$) exert a strong influence on academic achievement at the UCE level, unlike Inspirational Motivation, Individualised Consideration, and Intellectual Stimulation. However, when considered collectively, these attributes still hold significant influence over UCE academic achievement. These findings are consistent with previous scholars such as Ogonnaya et al. (2020), Kitur et al. (2020), Musyoki et al. (2021), and Ngunyi (2018) in their studies conducted in Nigeria and Kenya. These studies also found a positive and statistically significant relationship between transformational leadership attributes and student performance in public schools.

Regarding academic achievement at the UACE level in public secondary schools, the results of the multiple regression analysis (*Table 3*) demonstrated that head teachers' transformational leadership attributes account for variance in UACE performance of public schools by 8.7% with strong statistical significance ($P<0.005$). Furthermore, the null hypothesis is rejected, confirming the existence of a significant relationship between head teachers' transformational leadership traits and UACE academic achievement in public secondary schools. These findings provided further evidence that transformational leadership, as pioneered by Bernard Bass in 1985, positively impacts academic performance by exhibiting four transformational leadership behaviours/attributes during daily interactions with staff or subordinates. This aligns with the literature review, which indicates that the transformational leadership theory is widely used to explain academic performance, as highlighted by

Anderson (2017) and Gkolia & Belias (2014), who emphasise the positive impact of transformational leadership on teacher commitment, performance, job satisfaction, and overall school success. The findings are also consistent with recent research, such as that conducted by Musyoki et al. (2021), who found a positive and statistically significant influence of the principal's transformational traits, particularly individualised consideration, on students' academic performance in Kenya's KCSE in public secondary schools. Similarly, Ngunyi (2018) discovered a statistically significant positive correlation between the principals' individual consideration and the academic performance of public secondary school students in Lari Sub-County, Kiambu County.

Moreover, it is important to note that grouped transformational leadership traits and control factors scores partially explain academic achievement. The findings reveal that 28.2% and 34.3% (*Tables 1 and 3*) of the variance in academic achievement at UCE and UACE, respectively, is explained by transformational leadership variables and control factors. Therefore, the findings acknowledge the influence of other factors driving academic achievement in public secondary schools. This is consistent with Branch et al. (2013), who state that alongside transformational leadership attributes, other school factors also influence student academic performance. Controlling for these factors is crucial in determining the impact of transformational school leadership attributes on academic performance.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The findings revealed that there was a significant relationship between head teachers' transformational leadership attributes and academic performance in public secondary schools, both at the Uganda Certificate of Education (UCE) and Uganda Advanced Certificate of Education (UACE) levels. It was also found that organisational factors greatly influence academic achievement. In conclusion, transformational leadership and organisational factors are imperative for the academic

performance of public secondary schools in Uganda. The researcher recommends that school head teachers adopt a transformational leadership style in the management of public secondary schools.

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