

The Extent to which Transformational Headteachers influence Learner Academic Performance in Catholic Secondary Schools

Dr. Gladys Matandiko

PhD. Educational Research scholar, Academic writer and mentor, IDE. UNZA, Lusaka.

Abstract

This study sought to investigate the extent to which transformational headteachers influence learner academic performance in selected Catholic secondary schools in Zambia. Grounded in transformational leadership theory, the study examined how headteachers articulate a clear vision to their teachers and help them experience the same passion and motivation to fulfil educational goals. These school leaders serve as role models for their teachers. And because teachers trust and respect them, they emulate them and internalise their ideals, which influence academic outcomes. Using a quantitative research approach, data were collected from a sample of Catholic secondary schools across the Central Province of Zambia through surveys among teachers and academic performance records of learners. The findings reveal a significant positive correlation between transformational leadership traits and improved learner achievement in schools where headteachers actively foster a culture of collaboration, high expectations, and moral integrity. The study brought out a unique educational value system that may have shaped Catholic School leadership practices closely aligning them with the Transformational leadership style dimensions of And The study underscored the need for professional development to enhance transformational competencies among school leaders in environments where academic performance was compromised. Implications for policy, transformational leadership training, and future research are recommended.

Keywords: Transformational, idealised influence, Inspirational Motivation, Intellectual Stimulation, Individualised consideration.

1.0 Introduction

Effective leadership is paramount to the success of any organisation, including educational institutions. Among various leadership theories, transformational leadership has emerged as a highly effective approach with the potential to bring significant improvements across various sectors, including education (Lyane, 2023). This study explored the extent to which transformational headteachers influence learner academic performance within a Catholic secondary school context where values-based education and spiritual formation intersect with academic rigour.

Despite ongoing efforts to improve educational outcomes in Catholic secondary schools, learner academic performance continues to vary across institutions. While numerous factors contribute to this disparity, emerging research suggests that leadership style, particularly transformational leadership, may play a critical role in shaping academic success. Transformational headteachers, known for their ability to

inspire, motivate, and foster a shared vision, are believed to influence not only school culture but also teacher motivation and ultimately student achievement.

Catholic secondary schools' operations are unique, balancing their religious ethos with the high demands of the national curriculum. According to Miller (2018), Catholic schools globally are characterised by an integral approach to education to nurture not only academic excellence but also the spiritual, moral, and social growth of learners. The educational philosophy of these schools translates into a strong emphasis on values, character formation, and service to others. Transformational headteachers; those who inspire, motivate, and cultivate a shared vision, are believed to play a pivotal role in shaping school culture, enhancing teacher effectiveness, and ultimately improving student outcomes.

However, the degree to which their leadership style directly impacts academic performance remains an area requiring empirical investigation. In the context of Catholic secondary schools, the extent to which transformational leadership impacts learner academic performance remains underexplored. This study seeks to bridge that gap by examining how transformational leadership practices of individualised consideration, intellectual stimulation, inspirational motivation, and idealised influence manifest within Catholic school settings and contribute to learner achievement. By focusing on this intersection of Transformational leadership dimensions and learner performance, the research aims to provide insights that can inform policy, professional development, and leadership training within faith-based educational institutions.

2.0 Related Literature Reviewed

Studies across various educational systems have shown that transformational leadership positively correlates with learner performance, teacher satisfaction, and school improvement (Baranen, 2020; Branch, 2012; Chiang, 2016; Dhuey, 2018; Grissom 2015; Lainet, 2016; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2000). Additionally, research conducted in Catholic Schools shows the high academic performance in various settings. For instance, a Study in the USA, by Flemming (2018), made a comparison of the post-secondary performance of students who attended public schools and those who attended Catholic schools. The results generated indicated that students who attended Catholic high schools had higher college GPAs and were likely to graduate with a STEM degree in record time. The Catholic school advantage was wide-ranging, benefiting many subgroups of students, including non- white, low-income, urban, and low-achieving students.

Wodon and Tsimpo (2021) conducted a study where they explored some of the factors that affect student academic performance in Catholic schools in Uganda, where the majority of Catholic schools are public schools. Two findings stood out: first, after controlling for a wide range of variables that could affect student learning, students in private Catholic schools tended to perform better than those in public schools, Catholic or not. Second, among those in public schools, there were few differences in student performance, whether Catholic or not. This may be an indication that leadership and resource allocation influence student performance.

Maluma and Banja (2019) set out to identify the factors affecting pupil academic performance in grant-aided schools (faith-based schools, the majority being Catholic schools) in Southern Province in Zambia. The study revealed that the excellent performance in some grant-aided institutions was due to the proprietor's support, competent administrators and adequate infrastructure. While low-performing schools attributed this to incompetent administrators, among others. Many scholars have focused on transformational leadership and its effect on academic performance; Orodho et al. (2015) studied the

effects of principals' leadership styles and found that transformational leadership positively influenced academic performance in Homabay County in Kenya. Igiri et al. (2019) found a positive influence of the head teacher's transformational leadership styles on student performance in the Abi area in the Cross River State of Nigeria. Hence, this study sought to examine the factors of transformational leadership and assess the extent to which they influence LAP. The following section offers a detailed contribution by different scholars, on each of the transformational leadership dimensions.

2.1 Idealised Influence

One factor of transformational leadership is idealised influence, which is split into two factors or attributes, namely, idealised influence-attribution and idealised influence-behaviour (Lyane, 2023). The idealised influence-attribution pertains to the leader's capacity to serve as an example of one set apart, a leader with supernatural attributes of charisma. This factor involves the leaders' moral ascendancy and how idealised they become in the followers' minds and perceptions within the organisation. In the idealised influence-behavioural, the leaders must ensure that their behaviours are ideal for followers of the organisation to emulate.

In line with this, Bayer (2012) stated that the leader must give followers something to inspire them, thus influencing their actions and attitudes for the benefit of the organisation and the organisation's success. Transformational leadership is based on charismatic leadership, granting such leaders unique traits that distinguish them from others. These leaders often appear in times of crisis and convince others to follow them. In line with this, a study by Bayer (2012) focused on this type of leadership in primary schools and one of its findings was that a good percentage of learners transitioning to secondary school clung to the head teachers' transformational leadership competences for them to fit into the new school system, a candid example of idealised influence exhibited by the head teachers in transformational leadership in these schools.

Jebii (2019) observed that Transformational leadership practices were significant and essential in promoting high academic performance by encouraging all stakeholders' participation in improving student learning through idealised influence. Idealised influence described leaders who served as role models for their followers, allowed them to identify with a shared organisational vision, and provided a sense of meaning and achievement (KEMI, 2014). It involved school leaders leading by example, mentoring, having a high expectation, having a best-practices emphasis, holding learners and teachers accountable, among others (Hauserman, 2013).

Kitur et al. (2020) studied the relationship between the idealised influence of principals' transformational leadership style and students' academic performance in the Kenyan Certificate School Examination (KCSE) in Bomet County, Kenya. The descriptive survey design was used for this study, whose target population comprised 130 secondary schools and five Quality Assurance and Standards Officers in Bomet County. The results showed that principals' idealised influence had a robust, significant connection with students' academic performance in KCSE. .

Muriuki et al. (2021) conducted a study in Kirinyaga County, which focused on specific indicators of learner academic performance of high grades in national examinations (KCSE), transition rate and reduced examination malpractices. The study revealed that idealized management practices had significant effects on student academic performance.

2.2 Inspirational Motivation

Barth-Farkas & Vera (2014) observed that transformational leaders created a vision for their followers and guided the change through inspiration and motivation. They were excellent role models, and their

followers emulated many of their actions. They also inspired them through activating follower self-efficacy to believe that they can go beyond expectations. Yang (2013) concluded that head teachers' transformational leadership was critical in school development because a home-school cooperation study emphasised that a principal's transformational leadership could play a vital role during the crucial period of school improvement.

Initially, Avolio (2009) showed that the principal's transformational leadership skills could be seen in informing the ideas, building shared vision, power-sharing, gaining credence, and experiencing success and that the dimensions of inspirational motivation described transformational leaders as leaders who could communicate high expectations, use of symbols to focus on hard work and express important goals. According to Pinder (2014), motivation was a desire within a person that caused the person to take action. Motivation was a psychological process that reflected the interaction between attitudes, needs, perceptions, and decisions that occur in a person. There were two absolute requirements to motivate the work of an employee: the ability to work and the willingness to work. The ability to work, for the leader, might give rewards to the employees based on the capabilities possessed by each employee. The other aspect was the willingness of the leader to try to know the needs or desires of his or her subordinates. Based on the above understanding, it could be concluded that motivation was an activity that resulted, channelled, maintained, and encouraged human behaviour. Head teachers needed to understand why people behave in a certain way, to influence them to work following the wishes of the organisation; referred to as Inspirational motivation.

Ermawati and Amboningtyas (2017) conducted a study on the effect of intrinsic motivation on work performance. The study focused on quantifying the measurement of employee performance by focusing on production staff. Study findings revealed that intrinsic motivation could positively affect employee performance. The study further suggested that leaders could care more about the needs of their employees and keep their communication intense to provide a supportive work environment that could encourage the employees to work.

This is also in agreement with a study undertaken by Weiller (2022), which looked at the influence of intrinsic motivation on the learners' academic success in Australian foundational schools. As findings, the study found that students with more intrinsic motivation drivers were more likely to succeed in enabling education.

2.3 Intellectual Stimulation

Macit (2011) noted that a transformational leader not only stimulates interest among colleagues and followers to view their work as well as problems from new perspectives and new approaches, but also encourages others to use logic and reason to solve organisational problems. The transformational leader encouraged creativity and innovation amongst subordinates by emphasising the need to rethink old assumptions. Transformational leaders served as teachers to mould the beliefs and values of their subordinates.

Whittington et al. (2017) found that the head teacher's intellectual stimulation helped followers to be sure that they were creative and revolutionary. Northouse (2018) noted that head teachers questioned assumptions, took risks, and welcomed views and ideas as well as criticisms, which rewarded inexperienced people and teachers. These concepts generated additional impact on achieving higher-than-expected goals.

According to a study by Ahanger (2009), transformational leaders who use intellectual stimulation could challenge the status quo and stimulate their followers' efforts to be innovative. Slegers & Denessen

(2006) examined intellectual stimulation's impression in transforming teachers' satisfaction, organisational commitment, and organisational citizenship in Tanzanian schools. They found that the mental stimulus was characteristic of a unique approach to leaders, encouraging teachers and their attractiveness for believers' thinking and values. Teachers especially value their school heads in the field of mental traits of transformational leadership.

Khasawneh et al. (2012), in their study confirmed that schools' intellectual stimulation was exhibited when the school principal challenged both teachers and students by high expectations of performance from them. This made teachers strive hard to teach effectively, leading to overall good student academic performance (GSAP) in schools.

2.4 Individualised Consideration

Since the learning of students is the primary function of the school, adequate supervision of teaching is one of the most critical roles of the head teacher. Danielson (2011) argued that if schools are to ensure equal access to high-quality educational programs for all pupils, the head teacher must hold the teacher to account for the provision of appropriate and well-planned programs. These programs include the validity of teaching strategies designed to meet all the diverse needs of students in our complex society. The school head teacher could consider the individual approach to ensuring the curriculum's coverage and establishing and maintaining the quality of teaching and learning.

Burns (1978) stated that transformational leadership raised the levels of maturity of followers and converted them into leaders. Transformational leaders consulted their subordinates and involved them in the processes of defining organisational vision. They helped people not only succeed in their present jobs but also prepare them for their future positions. They created opportunities as learning facilities to convert their subordinates into leaders. Bass (2018) indicated that individualised consideration had two main dimensions. The first was treating followers individually, including paying attention to those who seemed neglected. The second was identifying individuals' weaknesses and strengths and facilitating their development and growth.

Jiang et al. (2017) stated that individual considerations created appropriate and supportive environments in which individual differences and needs were considered, and the followers' thoughts were appreciated. Kamola and Gathumbi (2016) explained that individual considerations arose in which school head teachers provided support, encouragement, and development for teachers, students, and society. Besides, individual considerations included the ability of teachers' bosses to take care of every imitator, that is, teachers and non-teaching staff, giving them personal attention, the head teacher reacted to and appreciated their needs and celebrated achievements. According to Njoroge et al. (2015) individual approach was also the result of continuous commitment and normative engagement. This was a call to offer followers personal attention, on the other hand, to understand the individual words and the differences in adjusting the impact. Khalil and Sahibzadah (2017) stated that leaders possessing individualised consideration fostered a sense of belonging and engagement among employees, leading to improved satisfaction, performance and productivity. Ogola (2017) also noted that individualised inclusion was the first factor in transformational leadership competencies. Individualised opinion leaders were known to show great attention to their supporters, listen to their worries and opinions, know them well, and treat them individually.

Researchers who studied individualised consideration included Shurbagi (2014), who investigated the relationship between individual considerations in transformational leadership and organisational commitment among 227 state oil company staff in Libya. Transformational leadership was assessed with the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ), which consists of five dimensions: mental stimulation,

idealised influence (behaviour), idealised influence-nature (attribute), inspirational motivation, and individualised consideration. The results printed a strong and good relationship between transformational leadership and organisational commitment. High correlations were shown between all dimensions of transformational leadership and organisational commitment. A recent study by Mark et. al. (2025) assessed the relationship between individualised consideration and Succession management in the public sector in Kenya. The study looked at twenty-two ministries in Kenya and concluded that individualised consideration had a notable and positive connection with succession management.

Several studies have focused on the transformational leadership factors contributing to organisational success and commitment (Shurbagi, 2014; Ogola, 2017; Jiang et al, 2017; Jebii, 2019; and Mark et al, 2025), and scholars who have looked at transformational leadership style and its influence on LAP, like Ahanger (2009), Khasawneh (2012), Yang (2013), Pinder (2014), Emawarti & Amboningtyas (2017), Northrise (2018), Kitur et al. (2020), Muriuki et al (2021) and many others, have measured these effects mostly in public schools. This study sought to fill a unique research gap in understanding the extent to which the factors of transformational leadership influence academic performance in Catholic schools in Central Province, Zambia.

3.0 Methodology

The study used a quantitative research approach, a survey design and adopted the ‘positivist research philosophy’. This research philosophy is fully premised on a strong claim that the social world can be understood objectively. According to Selvan (2017), positivism assumes a single, objective reality that exists independent of the researcher. Epistemologically, the research took an objective stance based on empirical evidence and the use of scientific methods to gain knowledge. As such, the study used quantitative data collected using validated survey tools to measure the extent of influence through statistical analysis. The Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire short version (MLQ-5x) was purchased for use. This Likert scale survey questionnaire was administered to forty-eight teachers randomly selected from the target Catholic schools to assess perceptions of leadership styles.

An Academic Performance Scale (APS) was used to collect data among grade 11 learners from the selected Catholic school. From a total population of 3,144 learners in grade 11, the researcher used the Yamane (1967) formula to arrive at 255 sample size to whom the questionnaire was distributed. More recently, in the field of academia, notable quantitative researchers who have utilised this famous formula by Yamane (1967) include Wang & Pant (2011), Ikechukwu (2015), Wooten (2017), Biegeleisen (2020), Mu et al. (2021), Capainolo & Chase (2022), and many others.

Table 3: Shows the sample size of the study

Sampled Catholic Secondary Schools	Total Population of Head Teachers	Total Population of Teachers (HODs)	Sample Size of Learners	Study Sample Size
6	6	$8 \times 6 = 48$	255	309

A total of 242 learners completed the questionnaire. Using IBM SPSS version 23, the following statistical tools were used to analyse the two sets of data: descriptive statistics to arrive at means, standard deviations, cross-tabulations and inferential statistics that included Bivariate, regression analyses and correlational coefficients to determine relationships. The study focused on the extent of influence of transformational

leadership aspects on learner performance, to arrive at quantitative conclusions (Vandever 2020), thus ruling out the need to triangulate the study with qualitative data.

The Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ-5X)

The MLQ, also known as the MLQ (5X short) or the standard MLQ, is a tool for positive transformation for leaders. MLQ measures a broad range of leadership types from passive avoidant (Laissez-faire) to leaders who give contingent rewards to their followers (transactional), to leaders who transform their followers into becoming leaders themselves (transformational), all of which are fundamental to leadership effectiveness (Bass, 2008). The MLQ identifies the characteristics of transformational leaders and helps individual leaders discover how they measure up in their own eyes (using the self-form) and in the eyes of those they work with (raters-form). The MLQ tools are developed for either assessment, development, or research (Bass & Avolio, 2004).

The MLQ 5X, mostly used in leadership research, includes nine dimensions. The following are the five dimensions for transformational leadership style:

1. Idealized influence attributed (IIA) representing the attribution of charisma;
2. Idealized influence behaviour (IIB), reflecting the behavioural part of charisma;
3. Inspirational motivation (IM), on the thought-provoking and motivating behaviour of the leader;
4. Intellectual stimulation (IS), expressing/stimulating followers to unconventional and creative thinking;
5. Individualized Consideration (IC), demonstrating genuine interest in each follower's well-being and tending to their individual needs;
6. Then followed by the transactional leadership style dimensions;
7. Contingent reward (CR), representing fair and constructive management processes of rewarding good performance, both financially and psychologically;
8. Active management-by exception (MBEA), reflecting active monitoring of the follower and taking active corrective action whenever necessary.
9. And lastly are the two dimensions under passive avoidant leadership style;
10. Passive management-by-exception (MBEP) describes the leader intervening behaviours upon the occurrence of problems; and
11. Laissez-faire (LF), expressing the absence of leadership or lack of involvement in leading (Bass & Avolio, 2004).

The study used a 5-point Likert type scale ranging from 0 (not at all), 1 (once in a while), 2 (sometimes), 3 (fairly often), to 4 (frequently, if not always).

The Academic Performance Scale (APS)

Carson Birchmeier and others from Saginaw Valley State University created the Academic Performance Scale (APS) as a tool to be administered to the students themselves to measure their academic performance (See the appendices section for details). The tool was primarily used to understand how learners perceive their academic abilities and achievements. It involved a set of eight (8) carefully curated questions designed to delve into the learners' understanding of their academic strengths and weaknesses.

The APS survey was used as a measurement tool for learner academic performance in the current study. Each question answered was scored on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from SA- Strongly Agree, A- Agree, N- neutral, D- Disagree and SD- Strongly Disagree. To score the scale, 'strongly Agree' is scored 5, 'Agree' is 4, 'neutral' is 3, 'Disagree' is 2 and 'Strongly Disagree' is 1. (See the appendices section for the APS scale parameters).

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics were used to analyse the numeric data to understand and explain the results (Ary et al., 2002). Since quantitative research has a goal to determine the relationship between an independent variable and a dependent variable or outcome variable of a population, inferential statistics were used to study the leadership outcomes exhibited by the head teachers as assessed by the MLQ (Hopkins, 2007). A regression analysis was used to determine the cause-and-effect relationship between the variables of leadership styles obtained and their sub-scales as independent variables and the dependent variable of learner academic performance.

Table 3.2: Showing Leadership Reliability with Cronbach's Alpha

Item-Total Statistics				
	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP STYLE	17.1096	4.580	.997	.861
Builds Trust (IIA)	17.0712	4.203	.736	.897
Acts with Integrity (IIB)	17.115	5.418	.566	.913
Encourages Others (IM)	16.885	4.873	.788	.886
Encourages Innovative Thinking (IS)	17.309	4.625	.668	.903
Coaches & amp; Develops People (IC)	17.154	4.259	.829	.877
TRANSACTIONAL LEADERSHIP STYLE	4.550	1.961	1.000	.852
Rewards achievement (CR)	3.642	2.963	.587	.927
Monitors Deviations & amp; mistakes (MBEA)	5.458	1.394	.775	.844
PASSIVE AVOIDANT LEADERSHIP STYLE	.800	.771	1.000	.832
Fights Fires (MBEP)	.629	.766	.514	.873
Avoids Involvement (LF)	.929	.971	.546	.900

Table 3.3: Showing the reliability of the Academic Performance Scale

Reliability Statistics for the APS Scale			
Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Std Items	Mean	Number of Items
0.721	0.701	4.067	8

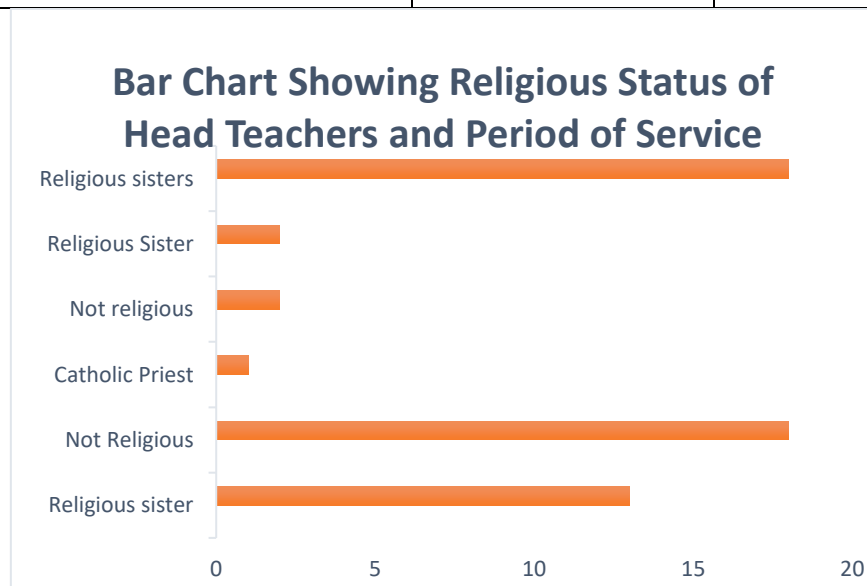
4.0 Presentation of findings

Table 4.1: Shows Demographic Characteristics of Learner Respondents

Variable	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Learner respondents/School		
1	42	17.4
2	72	29.8
3	34	14.0
4	34	14.0
5	30	12.4
6	30	12.4
Total	242	100

Table 4.2: Demographic Characteristics of Teacher Respondents

Teachers (HODs)	Frequency	
Gender		
Male	25	48.1
Female	27	51.9
Education Level		
Bachelor's	45	86.5
Master's	7	13.5
Teaching Experience		
3-9 years	35	67.3
10-16years	15	28.8
17-24 years	2	3.9
Religious (Catholics)		
Yes	23	44.2
No	29	55.8



4.1 Findings on the most prevalent leadership Style Among Head teachers in Catholic Secondary Schools?

Table 4.3: Summary of Leadership Styles Prevalent Among Head Teachers in the Six Schools

Leadership Style / Subscale	Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (SD)	Score Range	Interpretation
Transformational Leadership	9.7871	1.405	High (9–15)	Most prevalent style
Inspirational Motivation (Subscale)	14.6224	1.95481	High (9-15)	Highest perceived trait
Transactional Leadership	8.756	2.01808	Moderate (5–9)	Second most prevalent
Passive Avoidant Leadership	5.3940	4.02976	Moderate (5–9)	Least prevalent style
MBE-Passive (Subscale)	1.0624	1.65469	Low (0-4)	Lowest perceived trait

(Full table attached in the appendices)

4.2 The Null Hypotheses

The null hypotheses were formulated to aid in the assessment of the relationship between the independent variables of leadership styles and the dependent variable of LAP, which stated that;

H₀₁ Transformational leadership style does not significantly influence LAP.

H₀₂ Transactional leadership style does not significantly influence LAP.

H₀₃ Passive avoidant leadership style does not significantly influence LAP.

The hypotheses were tested inferentially using Multiple Linear Regression and Bivariate analysis.

4.2.1 Multiple Linear Regression & Bivariate Analysis

A Multiple Regression Analysis showed that transformational leadership style had a positive and statistically significant influence on learner academic performance ($\beta = 0.294$, CI= 0.035, 1.941, $p=0.031$). Bivariate analysis also showed a positive and significant influence of transformational leadership style on academic performance ($\beta = 0.276$, CI= 1.838, 0.008, $p=0.042$), at a 95% confidence interval. Hence, the transformational leadership style did positively influence learner academic performance. The analysis showed no significant relationship between transactional leadership style and learner academic performance ($\beta = 0.089$, CI= 0.888, 1.126, $p=0.545$). The results also confirmed the relationship between passive avoidant leadership style and learner academic performance, not statistically significant ($\beta = -0.012$, CI= -0.803, 0.714, $p=0.906$), as its p -value >0.05 , indicating that passive avoidant leadership style did not positively influence learner academic performance.

Table 4.4: Shows the Relationship between Transformational, Transactional, and Passive Avoidant Leadership Styles and (LAP)

Variable	Bivariate Analysis			Multiple Linear Regression		
	β Coef.	95% CI	p -value	β Coef.	95% CI	p -value
Transformational	0.276*	1.838, 0.008	0.042	0.294*	0.035, 1.941	0.031
Transactional	0.024	-0.604, 0.717	0.864	0.089	0.888, 1.126	0.545
Passive Avoidant	-0.012	-0.714, 0.778	0.932	-0.017	-0.803, 0.714	0.906

4.3 Findings on the influence of Transformational leadership subscales and LAP

Bivariate and Multiple Linear Regression Analysis were employed to assess the influence of traits of transformational leadership style on academic performance at a 95% Confidence level (See Table 4.5). The analysis met the assumption of multicollinearity, given that the tolerance values ranged from 0.89 to 1.10, while the variance inflation factor (VIF) ranged from 1.10 to 1.21, indicating that multicollinearity was not a problem in this study. The Multiple Linear Regression Model was not significant, $F(8,43) = 1.663$, $p > 0.05$, Adjusted $R^2 = 0.153$, R^2 change = 0.061. Despite the non-significant overall model, the analysis showed that the Individual Consideration sub-scale of transformational leadership style positively influenced learner academic performance ($\beta = 0.358$, CI = 0.060, 1.930, $p = 0.041$). Similarly, the Inspirational motivation subscale of transformational leadership style had a positive influence on learner academic performance ($\beta = 0.220$, CI = 0.522, 1.582, $p = 0.040$). Idealised Influence-Behaviour, Idealised Influence-Attribute, and Intellectual stimulation did not significantly influence learner academic performance as evidenced in Table 4.5.

Table 4.5: Shows the Relationship between Transformational Leadership Sub-Scales and Learner Academic Performance (LAP)

Transformational subscales	β Coef.	95% CI	<i>p-value</i>	β Coef.	95% CI	<i>p-value</i>
Inspirational Motivational	0.275	0.04, 1.660	0.049*	0.220	0.522, 1.582	0.040*
Intellectual stimulation	0.129	-1.060, 0.395	0.363	.262	-.411, 1.765	0.217
Individual Consideration	0.314	0.115, 1.52	0.024*	0.358	0.060, 1.930	0.041*
Idealised Influence Attribute	0.205	-1.247, 0.18	0.144	0.063	-1.013, 1.341	0.781
Idealised Influence Behaviour	0.223	0.11, -0.15	0.113	-.123	-1.642, 0.871	0.540

* Significant at $p < 0.05$ @ 95% confidence level

Therefore, the Null Hypothesis, H_{01} on transformational leadership style, was rejected as the results were significant at a 95% confidence level with a P-value of 0.041, which is < 0.05 . The study failed to reject hypothesis H_{02} on transactional leadership style and H_{03} on passive-avoidant leadership style because the results gave insignificant P-values > 0.05 at a 95% level of confidence.

5.0 Discussion of Findings

These high perceptions on the prevalence of transformational leadership style in Catholic schools' understudy indicated that transformational leadership played a crucial role in Catholic schools through leaders' inspiration, motivation, and development of the staff and learners. Transformation leaders create a positive and transformative learning environment that is aligned with the school's Catholic mission, as attested to by Carmody (2016), when he argued that Catholic school leaders often have a clear and inspiring vision rooted in the school's Catholic identity. This is supported by the works of Quin et al.

(2015), who concluded that the three leadership practices from Kouzes & Posner (2017) in the theory were frequently identified in high-performing schools. Furman (2012), Fitzgerald (2015), Hambulo (2016), and Lynch (2019) confirm that the transformational leadership style helped to enforce a positive educational environment grounded in Catholic values.

In this study, transformational leadership style had a statistically significant influence on learner academic performance, with a p -value < 0.05 . This study is similar to the findings of Osagie & Momoh (2015), Obama (2015), Gogo (2019), and Igiri et al (2019), all of whom found a positive effect of transformational leadership on LAP.

The study examined the extent of influence of transformational leadership attributes on learner academic performance in Catholic secondary schools in the Central Province of Zambia. Study findings indicated that transformational leadership style attributes of Individualised Consideration ($p=0.041$) and Inspirational Motivation ($p=0.040$) were positive and statistically significant influencers of learner academic performance. This meant that the head teachers' individualised consideration and inspirational motivation behaviours greatly influenced LAP in Catholic secondary schools in the Central Province of Zambia. In addition, the standardised Beta (β) coefficients of individualised consideration ($\beta=0.220$) indicated that a unit increase in the use of individualised consideration trait increased LAP by 22.0%, suggesting that the head teachers' consideration of the teachers' and learners' individual needs before their own influenced the learners' academic performance. Ogola (2017) found similar results. In support, Kamola and Gathumbi (2016) explained that individual considerations arose in which school head teachers provided support, encouragement, and development for teachers, students, and society. This study continues to support research by Shurbagi (2014), Ogola (2017), Jiang et al (2017), Jebii (2019), and Mark et al (2025) who related individual consideration dimension and high performance.

The inspirational motivation showed a standardised beta Coefficient of ($\beta= 0.358$), which meant that a unit increase in the inspirational motivation trait increased LAP by 35.8%. This study revealed that when head teachers inspired and motivated both teachers and learners, academic performance increased. This is also in agreement with Yang (2013), Barth-Farkas & Vera (2014), Ermawati and Amboningtyas (2017), and Weiller (2022), who looked at the influence of intrinsic motivation on the learners' academic success and found that students with more intrinsic motivation drivers were more likely to succeed in enabling educational settings.

Idealised Influence-Behaviour ($p=0.540$), Idealised Influence-Attribute ($p=0.781$) and Intellectual Stimulation ($p=0.217$) showed no statistically significant influence on learner academic performance as attested by their P -values > 0.05 . This finding is contrary to the findings of previous research in Africa that had shown a positive relationship with LAP in all five subscales of transformational leadership style. Studies such as the one conducted by Ogbonnaya et al. (2020), Kitur et al. (2020), Musyoki et al. (2012), and Ngunyi (2018). The findings are contrary to Leithwood et al. (2014) & Day et al (2014), who purported that all transformational leadership traits are associated with high learner performance. These findings suggest that a more structured and goal-oriented approach to leadership may be effective in sustaining learner academic performance in Catholic secondary schools. There is a close relationship between practice and policy in Catholic secondary schools, as evidenced by the findings of the study.

6.0 Conclusion

This study concludes that the transformational leadership style has a high prevalence in Catholic secondary schools in Central Province in Zambia. It also concludes that Transformational leadership has a high,

positive, and statistically significant effect on LAP and to a large extent influences LAP through inspirational motivation and individualised consideration traits. The study recommends an integration of inspiration, motivation, and individual consideration factors in leadership training for school leaders.

References

1. Akinyi, E. (2016). Principals' Leadership Style and Student Academic Performance in Public Secondary Schools in Homabay County in Kenya.
2. Avolio, B. W. (2009). "Leadership: Current Theories, Research, And Future Directions" *Annual Review of Psychology*.
3. Balyer, A. (2012). Transformational Leadership Behaviours of School Principals: A Qualitative Research Based on Teacher Perceptions. *International Online Journal of Educational Sciences*, Vol. 3, 581-591.
4. Baranen, B. (2020). Principal Quality and Student Attendance. *Educational Researcher*, 49(2), PP101-113.
5. Balyer, A. (2012). Transformational Leadership Behaviours of School Principals: A Qualitative Research Based on Teacher Perceptions. *International Online Journal of Educational Sciences*, Vol. 3, 581-591.
6. Boateng, A. A. (2021). Headteachers' Leadership Styles and Student Academic Performance in Selected Schools in The Ahafo-Ano South District in Ghana. *South Asia Journal of Social Sciences & Humanities*, pp 20-29.
7. Branch, G. F. (2012). Estimating The Effect of Leadership on Public Sector Productivity: The Case of School Principals. *National Bureau of Economic Research*, W17803.
8. Carmody, B. (2016). Catholic Education in Zambia: Mission Integrity and Politics. *Journal of the History of Education Society*, 621-637.
9. Chiang, H., L., S. (2016). Is School Value-added Indicative of Principal Quality? *Educational Finance and Policy*, 11(3), PP 283-309.
10. Choge Kitur, J. J. (2020). Relationship Between Principals' Transformational Leadership Style and Secondary School Students' Academic Performance in Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education in Bomet County, Kenya. *Universal Journal of Educational Research*, 8(2) pp 402-409.
11. Dhuey, E. &. (2018). How School Principals Influence Student Learning. *Empirical Economics*, 54(2) PP 851-882.
12. Ermawati, Y. (2017). Pengaruh Motivasi Intrinsik, *Journal of Management*, 3 (3).
13. Fitzgerald, G. W. (2015). 'Leading With Faith: The Role of Transformational Leadership in Catholic Schools'. *Journal Of Catholic Education*, 19(2), 74-98.
14. Fleming, D. E. (2018). High School Options and Post-Secondary Student Success: The Catholic School Advantage. *Journal Of Catholic Education*, Vol. 21, Issue. 2.
15. Furman, G. C. (2012). 'Social Justice Leadership: A Framework for Action in Catholic Schools'. *International Journal of Leadership in Education*, 15(3), 283-306.
16. Grissom, J. A.; Egalite, A.; & Lindsay, J. (2021). *How Principals affect Students and Schools: A Systematic Synthesis of Two Decades of Research*. New York: The Wallace Foundation.
17. Hambulo, F. (2016). Catholic Secondary Education and Identity Reformation in Zambia's Southern Province. Unpublished PhD Dissertation. University of South Africa.

18. Igiri, C. E., Ojiekpo, Achigbe, and Ogri, J. (2019). *Headteachers' Leadership Style and Secondary School Students' Academic Performance in Abi, Local Government Area of Cross River State in Nigeria*. Lagos: Unpublished Thesis.
19. KEMI. (2014). *Diploma In Education Management, Transforming Education*. Nairobi: Distance Learning Course.
20. Khasawneh, F. M. (2012). *Vocabulary Learning Strategies: A Case of Science and Technology*. Jordan: King Khalid University.
21. Kuloba. (2010). *Leadership Styles and Teacher Performance in Secondary Schools in Nakaseke District*. Kampala: Doctoral Dissertation, Makerere University.
22. Leithwood, E.-A. (2009). How Successful Leadership Influences Student Learning? The Second Instalment of a Longer Story. *Leadership Journal*, DOI: 10.1007/978-90-481-2660-6 35.
23. Lynch, K. (2019). Transformational Leadership and Its Relationship to School Climate in Catholic High Schools. *International Studies in Educational Administration*, 47(2),55-72.
24. Macit, M. (2011). Leadership and Bass' Transactional and Transformational Theory. *Published Dissertation*.
25. Maluma, P. and Banja, M. K. (2019). Factors Affecting Pupil Academic Performance at Grade Twelve Level of Selected Grant-Aided Secondary Schools in Zambia. *Multidisciplinary Journal of Languages and Social Sciences Education*. 2 (2), 95-118.
26. Mark et al. (2025). Relationship between Individualised Consideration and Succession Management of Employees in the Public Sector in Kenya. *African Journal of Empirical Research*. <https://doi.org/10.51867/ajert.6.1.39>
27. Miller, M. T. (2018). *A Catholic Philosophy of Education: The Church and Two Philosophers; Mario O. Dsouza*. Montreal: Mc-Gill-Queen University Press.
28. Muriuki, J. et al. (2021). Transformational Leadership: Teachers Idealised Influence on Student Academic Performance in County Schools in Kirinyaga, Kenya. *International Journal Humanities and Social Sciences*, doi:1024940/ijhss/2021/V9/I4/HS2104-027
29. Northouse, P. (2016). *Leadership: Theory And Practice*. CA: Age Publications, Thousand Oaks.
30. Obonyo, M. P., Onyango, A. G., & Nyerere, J. (2017). Leadership Styles Practiced by Principals in Public Secondary Schools in Siaya, Kisumu and Kajiado Counties, Kenya. *European Journal of Education Studies*, Volume 3, Issue 9.
31. Orodho, O. M., Eunice, A., & Aluko, J. (2015). *Effects Of Principals' Leadership Styles on Student Academic Performance in Public Secondary Schools in Homa Bay County, Kenya*. Nairobi: Kenyatta University.
32. Pinder, C. C. (2014). *Work Motivation in Organizational Behaviour*. East Sussex.
33. Shurbagi, A. A. (2014). The Relationship Between Organisational Culture and Organizational Commitment in National Oil Corporation of Libya. In *2nd International Conference on Research in Science, Engineering and Technology*, PP 212-218.
34. Sullivan, J. J. (2013). The Role of the Catholic Schools Principal in Transformational Leadership. *Catholic Education: A Journal of Inquiry and Practice*, 17(3) 385-408.
35. Wodon, Q. (2021). *Education Pluralism, Learning Poverty, And the Right to Education*. Washington D.C.: Global Catholic Education Report: OIEC, IFCU, OMAEC, UMEC-WUCT.
36. Yamane, T. (1967). *Statistics: An Introductory Analysis, 2nd Edition*. New York: Harper and Row.

37. Yang, Y. (2013). Principals' Transformational Leadership in School Improvement. *Journal Of Academic Administration in Higher Education*, 1 (1), 77-83.