Journal of Africana Articles, ISSN 0002-0281 4(49), 1-15, 22th September 2026
https://journalarticles.africanaarticles.co.ke

Citation: Mwangi, R., Koros, P., & Omundi, E. (2026). Influence of heads of institutions transformational leadership practices on parental participation in decision making in private primary schools in Athi River Sub-County, Machakos County, Kenya. *Journal of Africana Articles, 4*(49), 1-15, 22th September 2026. DOI: https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.22903409

Influence of Heads of Institutions Transformational Leadership Practices on Parental Participation in Decision Making in Private Primary Schools in Athi River Sub-County, Machakos County, Kenya

Rahab Mwangi[1], Prof. Peter Koros[2], and Dr Esther Omundi [3]

Corresponding author email address: rayherb80@gmail.com

[1] Master of Education Student Finalist in the Faculty of Education at The Catholic University of Eastern Africa
[2] Dean in the Faculty of Education at the Catholic University of Eastern Africa
[3] Lecturer in the Faculty of Education at the Catholic University of Eastern Africa

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to examine the influence of Heads of Institutions' transformational leadership practices on parental participation in decision-making in private primary schools in Athi River Sub-county, Machakos County, Kenya. The study was guided by the following research questions: To what extent does the idealized practice of school leadership influence parental participation in decision-making in private primary schools in Athi River, Machakos County? To what extent does inspirational motivation influence parental participation in decision-making? How does intellectual stimulation influence parental participation in decision-making? How does individualised consideration influence parental participation in decision-making? Transformational Leadership Theory informed the study. The study adopted a mixed methods approach, employing an explanatory sequential design. The quantitative phase utilised a descriptive cross-sectional survey design, while the qualitative phase employed a phenomenology design. The target population included 25 registered private primary schools, 25 HOIs, 400 teachers, and 460 parents. Stratified sampling was used to select eight private primary schools, stratified purposive sampling to select 8 HOIs, simple random sampling to select 80 teachers, and 120 parents, respectively. Data collection instruments included questionnaires for teachers and parents, interview guides for HOIs and a document analysis. Validity of instruments was established through expert review. Reliability was established by computing pilot testing. Quantitative data was analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics while qualitative data were subjected to thematic content analysis. Ethical considerations were observed. Heads of institutions' transformational leadership practices significantly influence parental participation in decision-making. Inspirational motivation is the strongest and most consistent driver of parental engagement. Idealised practice and intellectual stimulation show significant effects, but affirmation is inconsistent, weak on trust and confidence for idealised influence, and unevenly institutionalised across schools for intellectual stimulation. Individualized consideration is the weakest dimension, with agreement falling below half on responsiveness and recognition of parents' individual needs.

Key Words: Transformational Leadership Practices; Parental Participation in Decision Making; Inspirational Motivation.

Citation: Mwangi, R., Koros, P., & Omundi, E. (2026). Influence of heads of institutions transformational leadership practices on parental participation in decision making in private primary schools in Athi River Sub-County, Machakos County, Kenya. *Journal of Africana Articles, 4*(49), 1-15, 22th September 2026. DOI: https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.22903409

Background to the Study

Parental participation covers the extent to which parents or guardians are involved in their child's learning, from helping with homework to being involved in school leadership (Rashid, 2023). It is a multi-faceted paradigm consisting of six interrelated types parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision-making, and collaborating with the community (Epstein et al., 2018). It is an important collaboration between home and school designed to improve academic achievement, behavior and learning.

Parental participation in decisions has been demonstrated to be significantly affected by leadership styles. A study in the Philippines by Jutara and De Jesus, (2024) revealed a positive relationship between transformational leadership and greater parental participation in governance bodies, consistently across the studies reviewed. In China, (Zhang & Wu, 2025) concluded that principals who strike this balance of transformational leadership have a greater impact on student outcomes, in part because they involve parents in school decision-making. In Israel, Arar et al. (2016) found that principals' leadership styles significantly shaped teachers' perceptions of parental involvement, with transformational leadership positively associated with more teacher-empowering forms of parental involvement in the Arab education system. A recent study in Kenya lends direct support to this pattern. (Sosa, 2026), examining junior secondary schools in Sotik Sub-County, Bomet County, found a strong positive association between parental decision-making involvement and CBC governance effectiveness with parental involvement accounting in governance outcomes underscoring that governance structures which make room for parental voice are closely tied to effective curriculum implementation. Similarly, in South Africa, Mohapi and Chombo (2021), in a study of school governors in rural schools, found that collaboration between principals and parent governors on School Governing Bodies was central to effective governance though this was frequently undermined by principals' failure to support and guide parent governors suggesting that even where policy mandates parental participation, leadership behaviour determines whether that participation is meaningful in practice.

School leadership is well recognized as a key factor in engaging stakeholders and achieving educational outcomes. Transformational leadership is one of the several leadership styles that is gaining attention around the globe for its inspirational, motivational and collaborative impact. Transformational leadership has four dimensions: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration (Bass & Avolio, 1994). Idealized influence enables the HOI to act as a role model with ethical behaviour and shows commitment to values of the institution which builds trust and credibility among parents. Inspirational motivation enables the HOI to communicate the vision of the institution and set high standards while inspiring the parent’s active participation. Intellectual stimulation enables them to encourage creativity and innovation to challenge assumptions while involving parents in giving ideas and solving school challenges. Individualized consideration enables HOIs to pay attention through recognizing and responding to the individual needs of the parents, increasing their willingness to participate in decision making processes. There is evidence from a systematic review by Wilson Heenan et al. (2023) that transformational school leadership has a positive effect on staff motivation, school

Citation: Mwangi, R., Koros, P., & Omundi, E. (2026). Influence of heads of institutions transformational leadership practices on parental participation in decision making in private primary schools in Athi River Sub-County, Machakos County, Kenya. *Journal of Africana Articles, 4*(49), 1-15, 22th September 2026. DOI: https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.22903409

culture, and staff trust in the principal, fostering conditions in which broader collaboration and participation can flourish. Although results are not always consistent, as Barth and Tsemach (2025) discovered that participative and authentic leadership had a significant impact on teachers' positive attitudes towards parent participation; however, transformational leadership did not have a significant impact. This indicates that, worldwide, transformational leadership is identified as an effective but context-specific influence on parental participation. Within private school settings specifically, Abd Rahman and Alias, (2026), studying principals in private primary schools in East Malaysia, found transformational leadership practices to be strongly exhibited, with idealized influence the most pronounced dimension, suggesting the construct is both measurable and relevant in privately governed school contexts. More broadly, the Constitution of Kenya (2010), under Article 43(1)(f) and Article 53(1)(b), establishes education as a fundamental right, while the Basic Education Act (2013) operationalizes this right and specifically designates the Parents Association as the formal structure through which parental participation in school governance is to occur. However, neither instrument, nor Ministry of Education policy documents such as the Kenya Vision 2030 Medium Term Plan II for Education and Training (2013–2018), directly addresses the extent or mechanisms of parental participation specifically within privately owned primary schools, a gap this study addresses.

Along with Kenya's demand for quality assurance, accountability and enhanced school-community relationships in private education, there has been an increasing demand for active parental participation in the private education sector, especially in urban areas like Athi River. Although there has been significant growth of private schools and awareness of the role of stakeholders, consistent and meaningful parental participation in decision-making processes remains limited. Mwarari et al. (2020) found that parents' meaningful engagement in Competency-Based Curriculum implementation across Kenya is frequently constrained by financial pressures, limited familiarity with the curriculum, and time limitations, which together restrict parents to peripheral forms of involvement rather than substantive participation in decision-making. In Machakos County, David (2022) found that while parental involvement in public secondary schools through homework supervision, communication of expectations, and participation in school activities was positively associated with student achievement, many schools lacked a formal policy framework guiding how parents were to be involved, leaving the extent and consistency of participation largely undefined.

Onacha and Guantai (2025), in a study of primary schools in Machakos County, found that structured, consistent family-school engagement shaped the extent of parental participation found that structured, regular family-school contact in Machakos County primary schools helped sustain student attendance and transition, underscoring that where such structures exist, they meaningfully shape parental engagement implying that their absence, as in many private schools, likely constrains it. The results show that structural and cultural obstacles hinder participatory governance and suggest that leadership practices that allow or constrain parental participation in decision-making should be further researched. Similarly, (Kilonzo, 2020) found that principals' transformative leadership behaviours, specifically in providing the direction for schools, were

Citation: Mwangi, R., Koros, P., & Omundi, E. (2026). Influence of heads of institutions transformational leadership practices on parental participation in decision making in private primary schools in Athi River Sub-County, Machakos County, Kenya. *Journal of Africana Articles, 4*(49), 1-15, 22th September 2026. DOI: https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.22903409

highly correlated with better student performance in Machakos County. These local studies have all noted that transformational leadership is practiced in the schools of Machakos and it has a tangible impact, although they have largely been directed towards student achievement and not parental participation. Moreover, these Kenyan studies, including those situated in Machakos County, have been conducted exclusively within public school settings, leaving transformational leadership practice within private primary schools, making the context of the present study unexamined.

This shows that although parental participation is acknowledged as important, it is not used extensively in decision making processes. The dynamics that influence parent participation at private primary schools in Athi River Sub-county are not well understood, as these depend on the type of leadership that is exhibited. This lack of localized evidence creates the need for the present study, which seeks to examine the influence of Heads of Institutions' transformational leadership practices on parental participation in decision making in private primary schools in Athi River, Machakos County.

Statement of the Problem

The Basic Education Act (2013) recognizes the Parents Association as a key stakeholder structure in school governance, with responsibilities that include participating in school improvement plans, financial planning, and making recommendations on matters affecting learners. The Parents Association represents one formal channel through which parental participation in decision making is expected to occur; however, parental participation as a broader construct extends beyond membership or activity within this structure to encompass the extent to which parents are meaningfully consulted and involved in governance, financial, and academic decisions more generally. Meaningful parental participation, whether exercised through the Parents Association or other channels, is expected to promote accountability, transparency, and collaborative partnerships between schools and families. This expectation has also been reinforced by the High Court in *Mutua & 6 Others v. St. Bakhita Schools Limited & 3 Others* (2024), which held that private schools should uphold principles of fairness, stakeholder consultation, and accountability by involving parents, through their Parents Associations, in decisions affecting learners, including school fees and school governance. Despite these policy and legal expectations, parental participation in decision making remains limited in many private primary schools in Kenya. Mwarari et al. (2020) found that parents' meaningful engagement in school decision-making processes across Kenya is frequently constrained by financial pressures, limited information, and time constraints, leaving many parents in a peripheral rather than substantive role. Similarly, David (2022) established that in Machakos County schools, parental involvement was concentrated in areas such as homework supervision and communicating expectations, with many schools lacking a policy framework for broader parental involvement in decision making. Onacha and Guantai (2025) further reported that structured, consistent family-school engagement in Machakos County shaped the extent of parental participation, implying that where such structures

Citation: Mwangi, R., Koros, P., & Omundi, E. (2026). Influence of heads of institutions transformational leadership practices on parental participation in decision making in private primary schools in Athi River Sub-County, Machakos County, Kenya. *Journal of Africana Articles, 4*(49), 1-15, 22th September 2026. DOI: https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.22903409

are weak, parental involvement in governance remains limited. This situation is reflected in Athi River Sub-County, where the number of private primary schools has grown rapidly and adopted different management styles Matara, (2023). School administrators and parents have, however, been concerned with the level of parental input in key areas of school decision making such as financial planning, program development, and formulating academic policies.

The persistence of this gap despite legal and policy provisions suggests that structural mandates alone are insufficient to guarantee meaningful parental participation, and that leadership behavior may determine whether such participation is realized in practice. Mohapi and Chombo (2021), for instance, found that collaboration between principals and parent governors on School Governing Bodies was central to effective governance, but that this collaboration was frequently undermined by principals' failure to support and guide parent governors, indicating that even where structures for parental involvement exist, the head of institution's leadership practices determine whether that involvement becomes substantive or remains nominal. Transformational leadership, through practices such as building trust and credibility with parents (idealized influence), communicating a shared vision to inspire parental engagement (inspirational motivation), inviting parental ideas in addressing school challenges (intellectual stimulation), and responding to parents' individual concerns (individualized consideration), is theorized to be one such determinant of whether parental participation moves beyond the token compliance documented in the studies above.

Although studies have examined transformational leadership in relation to school and student performance in Kenya, Mwove et al. (2023), Kilonzo (2020), and others have examined parental participation independently, limited empirical evidence exists on how Heads of Institutions' transformational leadership practices specifically influence parental participation in decision making within private primary schools in Athi River Sub-County, Machakos County. This study therefore examined the influence of Heads of Institutions' transformational leadership practices on parental participation in decision making in private primary schools in Athi River, Machakos County.

Research Question

How does the inspirational motivation by Heads of Institutions influence parental participation in decision making in private primary schools in Athi River, Machakos County?

Theoretical Framework

In 1978, James MacGregor Burns was the first to describe transformational leadership theory. He made a distinction between transactional leaders, who prioritized transactions and compliance, and transformational leaders, who motivate their followers to put aside individual interests in order to achieve group objectives. Bass and Avolio (1994) later refined Burn's concept into four dimensions namely: idealized influence**,** inspirational motivation**,** intellectual stimulation and individualized consideration**.** Transformational Leadership Theory explains that leaders influence followers by inspiring a shared vision, trust, encourage innovation and responds to individual needs. Instead of relying on authority or rewards, transformational leaders motivate

Citation: Mwangi, R., Koros, P., & Omundi, E. (2026). Influence of heads of institutions transformational leadership practices on parental participation in decision making in private primary schools in Athi River Sub-County, Machakos County, Kenya. *Journal of Africana Articles, 4*(49), 1-15, 22th September 2026. DOI: https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.22903409

followers to willingly contribute towards achieving organizational goals. In the school context, Heads of Institutions who demonstrate this leadership style are more likely to create an environment that encourages collaboration, shared responsibility, and active parental participation in school decision making. These factors reflect the leader's ability to model the way, articulate a compelling vision, encourage innovation, and meet individuals' needs.

Trust, motivation, and long-term commitment may be increased by transformational leadership. It potentially could foster collaborative governance and school-community connections. Within the context of education, transformational leadership was linked to reform that was based on inclusiveness, cooperation and innovation. Yukl (2013) and Scheerens, (2016) asserted that transformational leaders are especially effective in situations that necessitate change and adaptation by engaging stakeholders in common objectives.

Transformational practices are associated with increased teacher morale, student achievement, and parental engagement in the school context. Trust and collaboration can be developed and fostered when principals have a clear vision and inspire others. In schools, Leithwood and Jantzi (2000) found that transformational leadership positively affected organizational conditions and teachers' engagement that extend to how school leaders engage other stakeholders, including parents, though this was not directly tested in their study. Transformational leadership is aligned with the structures of participatory governance required by the (Basic Education Act ,2013) which promote the participation of parents in boards of management and school committees in Kenya.

It is evident how this is connected with parental participation. Transformational leaders inspire parents to rise above financial responsibility and participate in policy, program, and academic agenda decisions. Transformational leaders help parents feel a sense of ownership and accountability by communicating their vision, encouraging parents and providing individualized supports. This approach promotes inclusiveness, allowing parents to make contributions and input in school decision making that will enhance their contribution to the school. Where parents may not be involved, as in the case of Athi River private schools, a transformational leadership can be a pathway to more collaborative governance.

The theory is not without its limitations. It may be a time-consuming process and involves emotional involvement of the parties. Leaders who do not possess a good vision or interpersonal skills might find it difficult to do it right. This method can dis-incentive creativity and innovation, and requires a lot of compliance. It may restrict participation of stakeholders in decision-making, which may result in a lessened space for collaboration and shared vision. If stakeholders are not included in meaningful processes, it may cause disengagement over time. Some critics like (Yukl, 2013), say that transformational leadership might be idealistic because followers are not always willing and able to participate in a higher order goal. In schools with limited resources, leaders might not have the capacity to maintain transformational practice, even if there are financial and cultural obstacles.

The other constraint is that transformational leadership is assumed to lead to inclusivity. Transformative leaders can sometimes fail to successfully engage parents meaningfully, even with

Citation: Mwangi, R., Koros, P., & Omundi, E. (2026). Influence of heads of institutions transformational leadership practices on parental participation in decision making in private primary schools in Athi River Sub-County, Machakos County, Kenya. *Journal of Africana Articles, 4*(49), 1-15, 22th September 2026. DOI: https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.22903409

the aid of empirical evidence, if communication is not strong, or parents are unaware of governance processes. Transformational leadership also assumes that organizational structures and stakeholder willingness support collaborative leadership. When such structures are absent, heads of institutions may experience challenges in promoting meaningful participation. This implies that transformational leadership cannot be the only factor that will enable parental participation by itself, and that there needs to be structures and policies in place to support this.

Transformational Leadership might help parents transcend financial responsibilities and become involved in developing policies and programs. This style can foster parent ownership and responsibility, which can help ensure long-term governance arrangements. Later the concept of transformational leadership was transferred to educational settings as scholars like Leithwood & Jantzi (2000) believed it promotes teacher engagement, student success and improves school-community relationships. This transfer to educational settings is relevant to the present study because it establishes that the theory's core mechanisms extend beyond commercial or industrial organizations to relationships between school leaders and stakeholders, including parents, making it appropriate for examining Heads of Institutions' influence on parental participation specifically. The formulation of the concept and the development of transformational leadership are a transformation of leadership from the managerial style to the visionary and participative style. The early theories of leadership were about control, compliance and efficiency, but Burns expanded the notion that leadership could also raise the values and aspirations of followers. This shift from control-based to participative leadership is directly relevant to the present study because it mirrors the shift the study investigates in schools: from a top-down model, in which parents are informed of decisions already made, toward a participative model in which parents are invited into decision-making itself. The theory became more operational through the contributions of Bass and Avolio, enabling researchers to measure transformational practices in organizations, such as schools. This operationalization is relevant here because it is what makes the four dimensions' measurable constructs rather than abstract ideals, which allowed this study to assess Heads of Institutions' transformational leadership practices empirically rather than only theoretically.

The theory is therefore appropriate for this study because it explains how the four dimensions of transformational leadership — idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration may influence parental participation in decision-making. Specifically, idealized influence is relevant because parents are more likely to engage in decision-making led by a HOI they perceive as trustworthy and ethical which is consistent with Onacha and Guantai's (2025) finding that sustained, structured family-school contact in Machakos County primary schools improves parental engagement and student outcomes. Inspirational motivation is relevant because parents who are inspired by a shared institutional vision are more likely to contribute to academic and strategic matters.

David (2022) found that parental involvement through communicating expectations and setting academic targets, rather than more passive forms of involvement, was significantly associated with students' academic achievement in Machakos County secondary schools. Intellectual stimulation is relevant because it involves actively soliciting parental ideas and

Citation: Mwangi, R., Koros, P., & Omundi, E. (2026). Influence of heads of institutions transformational leadership practices on parental participation in decision making in private primary schools in Athi River Sub-County, Machakos County, Kenya. *Journal of Africana Articles, 4*(49), 1-15, 22th September 2026. DOI: https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.22903409

challenging existing assumptions, linking directly to participation in decision-making rather than mere notification of decisions already made. Individualized consideration is relevant because attending to parents' differing needs can counter the disengagement Mwarari et al. (2020) identified among parents facing financial, informational, and time-related barriers to involvement in Kenya's CBC implementation, by creating channels through which individual parents' concerns are heard.

The applicability of Transformational Leadership Theory to the present study lies in its explanation of how Heads of Institutions can influence stakeholders beyond the immediate instructional environment. In private primary schools, transformational leadership provides a basis for understanding how HOIs' leadership practices may create conditions that encourage parents to move from being recipients of information to active participants in school decision-making. Idealised influence may establish trust in the HOI; inspirational motivation may create a shared sense of purpose; intellectual stimulation may encourage parents to contribute ideas and question existing practices; while individualised consideration may enable HOIs to recognise and respond to parents' differing needs and circumstances. These mechanisms correspond directly with the four dimensions of transformational leadership examined in this study and provide the theoretical link between HOIs' leadership practices and parental participation in decision-making. Thus, the theory is applicable because it provides a framework for examining how the leadership practices of HOIs may influence the extent to which parents participate in decisions affecting the school community.

Research Design and Methodology

In order to methodically gather, evaluate, and interpret data, researchers use study designs, which are particular, organized methods or overall plans (Stangor, 2004). The research topic was comprehensively explored using a mixed method research approach that consisted of quantitative and qualitative research methods. Within this approach, the study employed an explanatory sequential design. The quantitative phase used a descriptive cross sectional survey design and the qualitative phase, phenomenology design.

The explanatory sequential design was appropriate because the study first sought to establish quantitative patterns concerning transformational leadership style and parental participation in decision-making and subsequently sought to explain and elaborate on these findings through qualitative inquiry. In an explanatory sequential design, quantitative data are collected and analysed first, after which the findings inform the qualitative phase, whose purpose is to provide further explanation, interpretation, and contextual understanding of the quantitative results (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2024). This sequence was particularly suitable for the present study because quantitative findings could identify patterns, relationships, or areas requiring further explanation, which could then be explored through qualitative interviews. The quantitative phase employed a descriptive cross-sectional survey design. This design enabled the researcher to collect quantitative data from the study participants at a particular point in time and to describe the prevailing patterns of transformational leadership practices and parental participation in decision-

Citation: Mwangi, R., Koros, P., & Omundi, E. (2026). Influence of heads of institutions transformational leadership practices on parental participation in decision making in private primary schools in Athi River Sub-County, Machakos County, Kenya. *Journal of Africana Articles, 4*(49), 1-15, 22th September 2026. DOI: https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.22903409

making without manipulating the study variables. The quantitative findings therefore provided an empirical basis for identifying patterns and relationships that required further interpretation.
The qualitative phase employed a phenomenological design. This was appropriate because the study sought to obtain an in-depth understanding of the experiences and perceptions of heads of institutions regarding transformational leadership and parental participation in decision-making. Through qualitative interviews, the researcher was able to explore the meanings and experiences underlying the quantitative findings. The two phases were subsequently integrated during interpretation to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the influence of transformational leadership style on parental participation in decision-making.

Presentation, Interpretation, and Discussion of Findings

The second research question sought to find out how inspirational motivation by Heads of Institutions influences parental participation in decision-making in private primary schools in Athi River, Machakos County on a scale of 5 to 1, where 5 = Strongly Agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Uncertain; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly Disagree. The table presents the teachers' responses on the heads of institutions' inspirational motivation influence on parental participation in decision making. The researcher used questionnaires and interview guides and document analysis to collect data. The findings are presented in Table 1 and 2.

Table 1. *Teachers' Responses on Inspirational Motivation Influence on Parental Participation in Decision-Making (n = 78)*

Teachers' Responses	SA	A	N	D	SD	Mean	SD
School leaders clearly communicate the school vision to parents.	20 (25.6%)	30(38 .5%)	20(25. 6%)	6(6.7 %)	2(2.6 %)	4.03	1.04
School leaders motivate parents to support school development programme	21(26.9 %)	28(35 .9%)	19(24. 4%)	7(9.0 %)	3(3.8 %)	3.97	1.14
School leaders encourage parental participation in school activities.	25(32.1 %)	23(29 .5%)	20(25. 6%)	8(10. 3%)	2(2.6 %)	4.05	1.15
School goals are clearly communicated to parents.	21(26.9 %)	27(34 .6%)	17(21. 8%)	10(12 .8%)	3(3.8 %)	3.87	1.2
School leaders inspire parents to support learner achievement.	19(24.4 %)	33(42 .3%)	15(19. 2%)	8(10. 3%)	3(3.8 %)	3.9	1.12
School leaders create enthusiasm among parents for school involvement.	22(28.2 %)	24(30 .8%)	19(24. 4%)	11(14 .1%)	2(2.2 6%)	3.9	1.2
School leaders engage parents in school meetings regularly.	23(29.5 %)	25(32 .1%)	19(24. 4%)	9(11. 5%)	2(2.6 %)	3.98	1.15

Citation: Mwangi, R., Koros, P., & Omundi, E. (2026). Influence of heads of institutions transformational leadership practices on parental participation in decision making in private primary schools in Athi River Sub-County, Machakos County, Kenya. *Journal of Africana Articles, 4*(49), 1-15, 22th September 2026. DOI: https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.22903409

School leaders promote a shared sense of purpose among parents and staff.	19(24.4%)	31(39.7%)	17(21.8%)	7(9.0%)	4(5.1%)	3.89	1.17

Source: *Field Data, 2026*

Table 1 shows that majority of teachers 50(64.1%) agreed that the school leaders clearly communicate the school vision to parents, 20(25.6%) teachers were uncertain and 8(9.3%) teachers disagreed on the statement, communicate school vision to parents has (M=4.03, SD=1.04), this shows strong agreement, though the SD indicates some teachers still hold divergent views, suggesting vision communication is where teachers see the clearest evidence of inspirational motivation in practice. More than half of the teachers 49(62.8%) also agreed that school leaders motivate parents to support school development programme, 19(24.4%) teacher were uncertain and 10(12.8%) teachers disagreed with the statement, motivate parents to support development programmes has (M=3.97, SD=1.14), this indicate that there is strong agreement but relatively high variability, suggesting this practice is inconsistently experienced across schools or leaders. More than half of the teachers 48(61.6%) agreed that school leaders encourage parental participation in school activities, 20(25.6%) teachers were uncertain, and 10(12.9%) teachers disagreed, encourage parental participation in activities (M=4.05, SD=1.15), this mean indicate a strong average agreement undercut by notable disagreement among individual teachers, 48(61.6%) teachers agreed that school goals are clearly communicated to parents, 17(21.8%) teachers were uncertain and 13(16.6%) disagreed with the statement, school goals clearly communicated has (M=3.87, SD=1.20), this suggests goal communication is the weakest and least consistent aspect of inspirational motivation as perceived by teachers. This is notable given that vision communication scored a higher mean where teachers appear to distinguish between leaders articulating a broad vision and translating that vision into concrete, specific goals, with the latter perceived as weaker. Majority of the teacher 52(66.7%) of the teachers agree that school leaders inspire parents to support learner achievement, 15(19.2%) teachers were uncertain and 11(14.1%) disagreed that school leaders inspire parents to support learner achievement which has (M=3.90, SD=1.12), this is moderately high agreement with continued notable spread in responses, 46(59%) of the teachers indicated that they agree with the statement that school leaders create enthusiasm among parents for school involvement, 19(24.4%) teachers were uncertain and 13(16.7%) teachers disagrees with the assertion that school leaders create enthusiasm among parents for school involvement, create enthusiasm for school involvement has (M=3.90, SD=1.20), this is moderately high but among the more variable items, indicating uneven success in generating parental enthusiasm. 48(61.6%) teachers agree that school leaders engage parents in school meetings regularly, 19(24.4%) were uncertain and 11(14.1%) teachers disagreed, engage parents in school meetings regularly has (M=3.98, SD=1.15), this shows strong agreement, consistent with the broader pattern of moderate-to-high variability, and lastly, more than half of the teachers 50(64.1%) agreed that school leaders promote a shared sense of purpose among parents and staff, 17(21.8%) teachers were uncertain and only 11(14.1%) teachers disagreed, promote shared sense

Citation: Mwangi, R., Koros, P., & Omundi, E. (2026). Influence of heads of institutions transformational leadership practices on parental participation in decision making in private primary schools in Athi River Sub-County, Machakos County, Kenya. *Journal of Africana Articles, 4*(49), 1-15, 22th September 2026. DOI: https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.22903409

of purpose has (M=3.89, SD=1.17), this indicate moderate high agreement with typical variability. These results show that the majority of the teachers agree that the heads of institutions' inspirational motivation influence parental participation in decision-making.

Table 2. *Parents' Responses on Inspirational Motivation Influence on Parental Participation in Decision-Making (n = 114)*

Statement	SA	A	N	D	SD	Mean	SD
I regularly attend school meetings.	12 (10.5%)	49 (43.0%)	36 (31.6%)	14 (12.3%)	3 (2.6%)	3.46	0.93
I participate in PTA/BOM meetings.	11 (9.6%)	41 (36.0%)	39 (34.2%)	21 (18.4%)	2 (1.8%)	3.33	0.95
I contribute to school policy discussions.	15 (13.2%)	34 (29.8%)	37 (32.5%)	25 (21.9%)	3 (2.6%)	3.29	1.04
I provide feedback to school leadership.	13 (11.4%)	45 (39.5%)	33 (28.9%)	20 (17.5%)	3 (2.6%)	3.39	0.99
I participate in school planning activities.	13 (11.4%)	42 (36.8%)	39 (34.2%)	16 (14.0%)	4 (3.5%)	3.39	0.98
My opinions are considered in school decisions.	12 (10.5%)	39 (34.2%)	39 (34.2%)	22 (19.3%)	2 (1.8%)	3.32	0.96
I actively support school improvement initiatives.	19 (16.7%)	36 (31.6%)	37 (32.5%)	17 (14.9%)	5 (4.4%)	3.41	1.07
I participate in school decision-making processes.	14 (12.3%)	38 (33.3%)	36 (31.6%)	23 (20.2%)	3 (2.6%)	3.32	1.02

Source: Field Data, 2026

Table 2 shows that more than half of the parents 61(53.5%) agreed that they regularly attend school meetings, 36(31.6%) parents were uncertain and 17(14.9%) parents disagreed with the statement, regularly attend school meetings has (M=3.46, SD=0.93), this shows moderate agreement with the least variability among all items, suggesting meeting attendance is the most consistent form of parental participation. Less than half 52(45.6%) of parents agreed to participating in parent teacher association (PTA) and board of management (BOM) meetings, 39(34.2%) parents were uncertain and 23(20.2%) parents disagreed with the statement, participate in parent teacher association (PTA) and board of management (BOM) meetings has (M=3.33, SD=0.95), this indicates

Citation: Mwangi, R., Koros, P., & Omundi, E. (2026). Influence of heads of institutions transformational leadership practices on parental participation in decision making in private primary schools in Athi River Sub-County, Machakos County, Kenya. *Journal of Africana Articles, 4*(49), 1-15, 22th September 2026. DOI: https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.22903409

moderate agreement but with a notably high proportion of undecided responses, suggesting inconsistent engagement in formal governance structures. Less than half of the parents 49(43.0%) agreed that they contribute to school policy discussions, 37(32.5%) parents were uncertain and 28(24.5%) parents disagreed with the statement, contribute to school policy discussions has (M=3.29, SD=1.04), this is the lowest mean and highest variability among all items, suggesting that involvement in policy-level discussions is the weakest and least consistent dimension of parental participation. Half of the parents 58(50.9%) agreed that they provide feedback to school leadership, 33(28.9%) parents were uncertain, and 23(20.1%) parents disagreed with the statement, providing feedback to school leadership (M=3.39, SD=0.99). This shows moderate agreement with relatively contained variability, indicating fairly consistent feedback practices among parents. Less than half, 55(48.2%) of parents agreed to participation in school planning activities, 39(34.2%) parents were uncertain about their participation, and 20(17.5%) parents disagreed with the statement. The mean of (M=3.39, SD=0.98) indicates a moderate agreement by parents on participation in school planning activities, which is consistent with the broader pattern of cautious but positive parental involvement. Less than half of the parents 51(44.7%) agreed that their opinions are considered in school decisions, 39(34.2%) parents were uncertain, and 24(21.1%) parents disagreed with the statement. The mean opinion score considered in school decisions has (M=3.32, SD=0.96), which suggests that parents feel only moderately confident that their input carries weight in decision-making. Slightly less than half of the parents 55(48.3%) agreed that they actively support school improvement initiatives, 37(32.5%) parents were uncertain and 22(19.3%) parents disagreed with the statement, actively support school improvement initiatives was 3.41 (M=3.41, SD=1.07), which indicates that there is moderate agreement but with high variability, this suggests an uneven levels of active support across parents. Lastly, less than half of the parents 52(45.6%) agreed that they participate in school decision-making processes, 36(31.6%) parents were uncertain and 26(22.8%) parents disagreed with the statement, participate in school decision-making processes has (M=3.32, SD=1.02), this shows moderate agreement with considerable variability, reinforcing that direct participation in decision-making remains an area where parental engagement is inconsistent. These results show that compared to strong agreement by teachers on inspirational motivation influencing participation, parents' self-reported participation in decision-making is moderate, and their attendance is based largely on their involvement being more consistent over substantive engagement.

HOIs clarified, "*communicating the school vision through banners, newsletters, assemblies, and storytelling to parents and staff.*" According to the respondent HOI reported *"I communicate the school vision by sharing it during the first assembly meetings of the year and constantly weaving it into our school newsletter and notices. The vision is reflected in our strategic plan for the year"* (Personal correspondence, 2026). HOIs clarified, "*frequently invoking communal ideals such as "harambee" and "stakeholder" motivate parents to participate in school activities and decision-making.*"

Citation: Mwangi, R., Koros, P., & Omundi, E. (2026). Influence of heads of institutions transformational leadership practices on parental participation in decision making in private primary schools in Athi River Sub-County, Machakos County, Kenya. *Journal of Africana Articles, 4*(49), 1-15, 22th September 2026. DOI: https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.22903409

This indicates that heads of institutions place heavy emphasis on the narrative dimension of motivation, giving parents a story and an identity to belong to as their principal motivational tool. This suggests that HOIs' storytelling-based methods are registering with their intended effect, at least as far as teachers can observe. Five respondents clarified, recognizing and demonstrating impact by (1) honouring rolls, (2) appreciating and thanking volunteers, and (3) showcasing success stories motivate parents to participate in decision making. HOIs inspire shared sense of purpose among parents and staff through strong articulation an appealing shared vision to the parents and staff over systematic reinforcement of behaviours supporting it. This emphasis on articulating vision over reinforcing behaviour offers a plausible explanation for the pattern in the quantitative data while goal communication which depends more on follow-through and systematic reinforcement than on the initial articulation of an idea.

H_{02}: There is no statistically significant influence of inspirational motivation by Heads of Institutions on parental participation in decision making.

Testing the hypothesis "*H_{02}: There is no statistically significant influence of inspirational motivation by Heads of Institutions on parental participation in decision making in private primary schools in Athi River Sub-County, Machakos County*" the study found that at $\alpha = 0.05$, the p-value of the test was < 0.001. This led to rejection of the hypothesis with p-value < 0.001 and concluded that there is statistically significant influence of inspirational motivation by Heads of Institutions on parental participation in decision making.

The study findings suggest that inspirational motivation, as practiced by heads of institutions, is stronger on the communication (articulating vision, invoking shared identity) than on the operational follow-through of translating that vision into clearly communicated goals and systematically reinforced behaviour. The statistically significant result supports a relationship between inspirational motivation and parental participation but communication indicates its influence may currently rest more on inspiration rather than on structure. The statistically significant result supports a relationship between inspirational motivation and parental participation, but the comparative communication suggests this influence currently rests more on inspiration than on structure. Table 2 suggests that inspirational motivation, as practiced by heads of institutions, is stronger on the communicative dimension than on the operational follow-through of translating that vision into clearly communicated goals. This is consistent with Yulianti (2022), which found that school leaders who regularly communicate a clear school vision are more likely to engage parents in their children's education, lending support to the present finding that vision communication was the most strongly and consistently endorsed item in this table.

Conclusion

Inspirational motivation significantly influenced parental participation in decision-making. Teachers most strongly agreed that school leaders clearly communicate the school vision and encourage parental participation in school activities, with school goals also reported as clearly

Citation: Mwangi, R., Koros, P., & Omundi, E. (2026). Influence of heads of institutions transformational leadership practices on parental participation in decision making in private primary schools in Athi River Sub-County, Machakos County, Kenya. *Journal of Africana Articles, 4*(49), 1-15, 22th September 2026. DOI: https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.22903409

communicated to parents. Slightly more than half of teachers agreed that leaders motivate parents to support school development programmes, create enthusiasm for parental involvement, and engage parents regularly in school meetings. A majority of teachers (52 of 78) agreed that leaders inspire parents to support learner achievement, while half of teachers (50 of 78) agreed that leaders promote a shared sense of purpose among parents and staff. Overall, these findings indicate that teachers broadly perceive Heads of Institutions' inspirational motivation as a significant influence on parental participation in decision-making.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the study made the following recommendations. The Ministry of Education and school boards should incorporate transformational leadership competencies, and schools should strengthen existing formal structures, including the parent-teacher association (PTA), board of management (BOM), and communication channels such as WhatsApp groups and suggestion boxes. The Kenya Private Schools Association (KPSA) should ensure that heads of institutions formalize ways of building parental trust and confidence in leadership decisions, including regular feedback sessions and transparent reporting on how parental input is used, while also sustaining and further institutionalizing inspirational motivation practices, standardizing processes for soliciting and acting on parental and teacher ideas, and strengthening individualized consideration through training leaders in responsive, timely communication and in recognizing the differentiated needs of parents. The Kenya Education Management Institute (KEMI) should train on the documentation and reinforcement of informal, relationship-based leadership practices so that these are not dependent on individual leaders and can be sustained across leadership transitions.

References

Bass, B. M. (1994). *Improving organizational effectiveness through transformational leadership*. SAGE Publications.

Burns, J. M. (1978). *Leadership*. Harper & Row.

Creswell, J. W. (2023). *Research design*. SAGE Publications.

Creswell, J. W. (2024). *Designing and conducting mixed methods research*. SAGE Publications.

Epstein, J. L. (2018). *School, family, and community partnerships: Preparing educators and improving schools*. Routledge.

Field, A. (2022). *Discovering statistics using IBM SPSS Statistics* (5th ed.). SAGE Publications.

Citation: Mwangi, R., Koros, P., & Omundi, E. (2026). Influence of heads of institutions transformational leadership practices on parental participation in decision making in private primary schools in Athi River Sub-County, Machakos County, Kenya. *Journal of Africana Articles, 4*(49), 1-15, 22th September 2026. DOI: https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.22903409

Gyansah, et. Al. (2020). Effect of school heads' inspirational motivation leadership practices on students' academic achievement in public high schools in Kumasi Metropolitan, Ghana. *Journal of Education and Practice*.

Jutara, P. (2024). *Transformational leadership and parental engagement: A systematic review*. *Journal of Educational Leadership Studies*.

Kilonzo, et al. (2020). Transformational leadership practices and student performance in Machakos County. *International Journal of Education and Research*.

Kenya, Republic of. (2013). *The Basic Education Act, No. 14 of 2013*. Government Printer.

Leithwood, et al. (2000). The effects of transformational leadership on organizational conditions and student engagement with school. *Journal of Educational Administration, 38*(2), 112–129.

Mugenda, A., & Mugenda O. (2003). *Research methods: Quantitative and qualitative approaches*. Acts Press.

Mwarari et al. (2020). *(Reference details should be added from the complete reference list if available).*

Mwove, P. N. (2023). Influence of principals' transformational leadership styles on students' academic performance in Mwala Sub-County. *International Journal of Education and Research, 11*(3), 45–59.

Onacha (2024). Parental involvement and transition rates in Machakos County primary schools. *East African Journal of Education Studies*, *15*(1), 55–70.

Rashid, M. H. (2023). *Role of parental involvement in education*. Library & Information Management.

Scheerens, J. (2016). *Educational effectiveness and ineffectiveness: A critical review of the knowledge base*. Springer.

Stangor, C. (2004). *Research methods for the behavioral sciences*. Houghton Mifflin.

Taber, K. S. (2021). *Research methods in education and social sciences*. Cambridge University Press.

Tsemach, B. (2025). *Leadership styles and parental involvement: A comparative study*. *International Journal of Educational Research*.

Yukl, G. A. (2013). *Leadership in organizations* (8th ed.). Pearson Education.

Yulianti, K., Denessen, E., Droop, M., & Veerman, G. J. (2022). School efforts to promote parental involvement: The contributions of school leaders and teachers. *Educational Studies*, *48*(1), 98–113.

Zhang, S. (2025). School leadership, parental involvement, and student achievement: A comparative analysis of principal and teacher perspectives. *Education Sciences*, *15*(6), 767.