

# Secondary School Teachers' Perception of Leadership Competencies of Headteachers who were Forcibly Transferred from their Previous Schools

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## Abstract

The study sought to explore teachers' perception of Leadership competences of forcibly transferred head teachers in the Government aided secondary schools in the central Region of Uganda. This study was based on a phenomenological design where the study participants involved teachers, headteachers and commissioner secondary education and human resource departments of MoES. These participants were purposively selected. Actual number of participants depended on saturation of result Interview guides were the data collection instruments. This data was analyzed using thematic data analysis technique. Results also revealed that headteachers without leadership competencies like initiative self-confidence, who were not accountable, transparent, lacked emotional control among others used to be transferred using forced transfer means. Hence, the study concluded; that headteachers without with leadership competencies (self-awareness, emotional control, transparency, accountability, achieving highly, having high confidence) among others were transferred using by force. The study therefore recommends that relevant stakeholders at MoES, Department of Secondary School Education, Board of Governors to do the following to improve on headteachers transfers: There is need to emphasize the headteachers to reflect on the leadership competencies desired in the current age. This would be done by; Organizing refresher training courses like workshops, study conferences, study leaves to ensure that these headteachers develop desired leadership competencies at school. Secondly there is also need to inform and alert headteachers of leadership incompetencies that could lead to forced transfer from school.

**Key words:** Teachers' perceptions; Leadership competencies; Forced transfer.

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## **1. Background**

With the inception of the first formal secondary schools, transfer of headteachers was done using the Weberian model. This Weberian model is becoming more questionable in the wake of the growing number of conflicts surrounding the head teacher's transfers. Schools today seem to demand a different set of skills than bureaucratic one including personal initiative, customer care, empathy, communication and conflict resolution [1,2]. According to the view of some of MoES officials the transfer of public servants is done to comply with a policy that require teachers and head teacher to be moved every 10 and 5 years respectively. It is also a strategy done to promote bilateral professional growth by letting head teachers and teachers for example, gain experience from varied school environments [3]. However, some head teachers saw transfers as interfering with the flow of school business.

The study will be guided by Goleman's and his colleagues [4] advance four domains of EILCs that are; Self-Awareness, Social Awareness, Self-Management, and Relationship Management, as competencies that enable leaders to accomplish fundamental leadership tasks. Each of the four domains adds a crucial set of skills for resonant leadership. These domains are, closely intertwined, with a dynamic relationship among them. According to the theory, a leader can't manage his/her emotions well if she/he has little or no awareness of them. Also, if a leader's emotions are out of control, his/her ability to handle relationships suffers. In short, self-awareness facilitates both empathy and self-management, and these two, in combination, allow effective relationship management. In line with this model, it was assumed in the current study that if a headteacher fails to apply the domains effectively, then forced transfer sets in accordingly.

Contextually the study will be carried out in the selected secondary school in the central Region of Uganda. According to the 100-page report from IGG 2023 suggested recommendations to MoES to transfer a few headteachers from Kampala Central. This was based on recommendations around maladministration, abuse of office and mismanagement of funds attributed to lose leadership, managing the school without a budget, poor relations with staff and board members. Within the past years some headteachers from Luwero District were rejected by former students due to maladministration[5]. IGG recommends demotion of old Kampala SSS headteacher, recovery of shs 107million. This meant that there were forced transfer of headteachers going on in these schools. However, there was no empirical study carried out to explore secondary school teachers' perception of leadership competencies of headteachers who were forcibly transferred from their previous schools.

### ***1.1 Statement of the Problem***

Over the last two decades, the government of the Republic of Uganda has prioritized quality education as a matter of national urgency. This ideology is dependent on coming up with strategies aimed at making headteachers more competent to live to the expectations of the 21<sup>st</sup> century leadership competencies<sup>[6]</sup>. One of such strategies was to come up with a policy requiring headteachers to have a master's degree in educational management. Alternatively, there is a big deviation from the aforementioned ideology and what is happening on ground as regards implementation of the 21<sup>st</sup> century leadership competencies in public secondary schools in

central Uganda. A case in picture, the 100-page report from IGG 2023 suggested recommendations to MoES to transfer some headteachers in secondary school from Central Uganda. This was based on recommendations around maladministration, abuse of office and mismanagement of funds attributed to lose leadership. Likewise, the IGG Report 2023 isolated cases of Managing school without budgets, rampant strikes, fire settings, poor problem solving and signs of lack of critical thinking. In line with the above within the past years some headteachers from Luwero District were rejected by former students and forcibly transferred. In addition, many of these headteachers were indicated as not innovative, creative and critical in solving problems as they occur. These administrative dilemmas are coupled by failure by these headteachers to effectively do research to have an informed mind before decisions are taken. This in turn leads to poor decision making, exacerbates and puts secondary schools at risks like strikes, fires and above all lowering the quality of secondary school education provided and high wastage in the provision of quality education. It was not known whether or not transfers could be partly responsible to the vice of failures by headteachers to live to the expectations of the 21<sup>st</sup> century administrative competencies. However previous accounts explaining leadership competencies of schools using the emotional leadership competencies model model to establish the influence of headteachers leadership competencies on their forced transfer the public secondary schools in central Region of Uganda.

### ***1.2 Objective of the Study***

To explore secondary school teachers' perception of leadership competencies of headteachers who were forcibly transferred from their previous schools.

## **2. Literature Review**

### ***2.1 Leadership competencies of headteacher whose transfer was forced***

Grissom and Loeb<sup>[7]</sup> showed that involuntary transfers had a positive impact on overall district performance or equity of teaching resources. In addition, involuntary transfers have a positive effect on enhancing efficiency and better performance. However, this study was not specifically on head teacher transfers which was the key independent variable that were related with head teacher competences. Empirically, Olorunsola and Balo<sup>[8]</sup> studied leadership challenges and principal's managerial effectiveness in Ogun state public secondary school. With use of Pearson's Correlation co-efficient index results revealed that there was no significant relationship between incessant teachers and principals' managerial effectiveness. This implies that even if they were highly forced to transfer from one school to another their competence to do work remains constant. However, this current study used simple and multiple linear regression analysis.

Oribhabor and his colleagues [9] showed that involuntary transfer is either initiated by the principal or a ministry administrator. It is also regarded as administrator transfer and is always carried out to move a teacher who is not good or fit for the school or who is performing in satisfactorily. It was added in this aforementioned study teachers' unions and school administrators might agree that nothing affects student's achievements more than the quality of teachers and administrators in schools. Magak<sup>[10]</sup> studied challenges facing head teachers in financial management in public secondary schools in Kisumu East Kenya using data that was qualitatively and

quantitatively analyzed results revealed that teachers were always forced to transfer from schools due to challenges related to incompetence's to audit, inability to prepare books of accounts, high cases of fees transferred head teachers would train and acquire these skills in their new placements. However, this study did not show which correlational techniques were used as was the case with this current proposed study.

Grissom and Loab [7] in a study about strategic involuntary teacher transfers and teacher performance. With use of quantitative techniques that is chi-square analysis technique results revealed that consistent with equity improvement, most involuntary transferred teachers were systematically moved to high performing schools and were generally out performed by teachers who replaced them. It was also revealed in this study that efficiency impacted on these involuntary transfers and that although transferred teachers and head teachers had nearly 2 fewer absences per year in their new schools, transferred teachers continued to have low value added in new schools.

Empirically, Ofoyeru and his colleagues [11] studied the relationship between teachers' attrition, transfers and students' mobility from public to private secondary schools. In Delta state, Nigeria results from the Pearson's correlation co-efficient showed teachers and head teacher's transfers from schools were significantly related with the need to see learners pass examinations. This means that with low achievement as a leadership skill on the side of teachers and the head teacher, chances for forced transfers were more eminent. Nonetheless, Okello[12] revealed a significant positive relationship between forced transfers and achievement or performance. In situations where one fails to achieve as expected, forced transfer is occurs unknowingly.

### **3. Methodology**

This study was based on a phenomenological design where the study participants involved teachers, headteachers and commissioner secondary education and human resource departments of MoES. These participants were purposively selected. Actual number of participants depended on saturation of result Interview guides were the data collection instruments. This data was analyzed using thematic data analysis technique.

### **4. Results**

The third objective of the study was to examine leadership competences of headteachers transferred using forced transfer in government aided secondary schools in central Uganda. Here participants teachers, headteachers and Ministry of Education and Sports officials showed that leadership competencies if once not applied effectively can lead to forced transfer of some headteachers in the government aided secondary schools in central Uganda.

Teachers who participated in the study were asked how initiative influences on forced transfer of headteachers in the selected government aided secondary. Results revealed that headteachers who lack a sense of initiative on the job always lose trust of the subordinates and colleagues leading to forced transfer. Specifically, one of the teacher interviewees BT2 in the study stated that;

There are forced transfers of headteachers who lack initiative to device means of resolving problems as they emerge. Such headteachers are not creative and are transferred using forced transfer, before the recommended

five years.

This suggested that initiative is a vital asset or determinant that always leads to forced transfer of these headteachers who lack creative and innovative skills on the job. This hence implied further with a low sense of initiative on the job headteachers forced transfer is more viable.

Meanwhile, another teacher VT3 from the schools where the study was done indicated that;

Initiative failure on the side of headteachers creates a sense of dissatisfaction from the stake holders. Stakeholders are keen and observant of whatever that is going on. Failure to initiate new ideas like coming up with school development programs to meet the competitive demand creates room for forced transfer of headteachers on the job.

This implied that failure to be creative and initiative new ideas creates a sense of low satisfaction from teachers and the entire school fraternity leading to forced transfer.

Similarly, one of the participants from the Department of Secondary education stated that;

Headteachers who lack a sense of initiative and creativity on the job are forced out of the system. Such headteachers are always not focused on creating opportunities for improving on the status of the school. Their schools are lagging behind due to failure to come up with something new. They remain in power and realizing that they don't have any new ideas, their subordinates force them out of the system as has always been the case with most of the headteachers in central region.

These findings implied that lack of initiative is a strong factor which leads to forced transfer of some headteachers in the central region of Uganda.

#### ***4.1 Theme: Accountability and forced transfer of headteachers***

Participants in the study were asked how accountability leads to forced transfer of some headteachers in the selected government aided secondary schools in the central region Uganda.

Results on this question revealed that headteachers who fail to give accountability to their stakeholders are always forced out their schools. Results also revealed that failure to execute the role of making accountabilities on behalf of the headteacher as the chief accounting officer automatically leads to forced transfer from their respective schools. Participant NT1 who was a teacher revealed that;

When the headteacher fails to make accountability for school resources and materials, some headteachers in the selected secondary schools in the central region have been always transferred by force due to this anomaly where they can't account properly for finances. Before the previous headteacher was transferred to another school, the IGG had identified that over 100 million shillings had not been accounted for, putting the school in serious financial dilemma. Thus, the board of governors together with other members of the school community

had to force him out of school.

This hence suggests that failure to give accountability in previous school was partly responsible for forced transfer. In circumstances where there are no visible evidence of accountability for funds, the headteacher had to be forced out of school and was transferred to another school.

In line with the above, another teacher VT1 stressed that;

My headteacher was transferred from this secondary school to another using forced transfer. This headteacher was not organizing meetings and would hardly make reports and submit them for the key members of the school.

These results implied that with failure to make accountability in government aided secondary schools, government and other stakeholders have to intervene by forcibly transferring the culprit headteacher from one secondary school to another.

These results implied further that with failure to make accountability on the side of the headteacher, one ought to be forcibly transferred from one secondary school to another.

Results from the department of secondary school education MoES revealed that;

As a ministry, there is a policy that headteachers must effectively account for everything that happens at school. However, there are headteachers in the selected secondary school in central Uganda who were forcibly transferred after school strikes where part of the school property was destroyed. Likewise, with headteachers failure to reduce anomalies like teacher and student strikes which cost negatively on the sustenance of the school. Such headteachers have been always forcibly transferred to save the school from unaccountable behavior.

Such findings revealed that headteachers who are not accountable on their job are more prone to face forced transfer from their respective schools as a strategy to remind them that even in schools where they are transferred they should be accountable for their doings.

#### ***4.2 Theme: Transparency and forced transfer of headteachers***

Findings of the study revealed that lack of transparency lead to forced transfer of headteachers in the selected government aided secondary schools in the central region of Uganda.

One of the teachers TT2 who participated in the study revealed that;

My former headteacher was transferred from this school because he lacked transparency in the way he did things. There were over exaggeration of figures for purchases made by the headteacher and his team. Finally, it was revealed that whatever was reported by the headteacher was the opposite of the reality. Consequently, some of the concerned members of this school had to request ministry to force the headteacher out of this school.

Consequently, Ministry of Education and Sports had to force this headteacher from this school to another secondary school.

These results implied that inability by some headteachers in the selected government aided secondary schools to be transparent in the way they do things leads to forced transfer of these headteachers. Headteachers who fail to report things accurately according to allocations and utilization procedures are automatically forced out of the school system.

Another teacher VT3 stressed that;

Transparency is lacking in many headteachers posted here, they rarely give details of what is happening. When you question some of the issues going on, the headteacher is too arrogant and always fires who questions on whatever that is happening. However, when teachers and students strike, such headteachers are fired to failure to be transparent on the job.

These results meant that transparency is a key factor that is needed on the side of the headteacher. Those who are not transparent always create resistance from teachers and students through strikes always leads to forced transfer of these headteachers from the job.

Findings from commissioner secondary school education revealed that;

There are cases of forced transfer of headteacher in the selected secondary schools in the central region of Uganda. Such headteachers always have problems of failing to be fully transparent on the job leading to forced transfer as a strategy to calm down the situation.

These results showed that lack of transparency on the side of headteachers may at times create resistance from the key stakeholders of the school leading to forced transfer. As one is entrusted with authority the next most important aspect is to keep transparent in your dealings with others, failure to do so, leads to ones forced transfer.

These results were collaborated with those from one of the headteachers HT Benz who emphatically stated that;

Transparency is an important tool for any headteacher in government aided secondary schools. Headteachers who have failed to be transparent on all decisions and activities they engage in are more likely to arouse criticism. Once many stakeholders criticize you as not being transparent with the way you spend money, utilize the resources and equipments in place, together with ones dealing with staff, the next step is to force this headteacher out of office. However, once this happens, the headteacher in question is at times transferred to another school.

This thus implied that with failure to be transparent in the way one headteachers does things and conduct him or herself, forced transfer becomes highly eminent.

#### **4.3 Theme: Achievement and Forced Transfer of Headteachers**

Study participants were asked how achievement leads to forced transfer of headteachers in the selected government aided secondary schools in the central region of Uganda. On this question, participants revealed that with failure to achieve some headteachers are forced to be transferred from one secondary school to another. One of the teachers VT1 who participated in the study revealed that;

In secondary schools where headteachers have been performing poorly, their stay has been at stake. Many of these headteachers have been forced to be transferred from one school to another. I have observed and experienced over three headteachers who have been forced to be transferred from one secondary school to another due to poor academic achievement. In the previous UNEB results UCE, UACE students over three headteachers were forced to transfer from their schools due to poor academic achievement.

These results depicted that with low academic achievement headteachers are forced to transfer from one secondary school to another. Achievement has been enormously linked with headteachers forced transfer. Headteachers who always have their students failing to achieve as expected end up in a big dilemma of strong resistance as many want to see outcomes at the end of the year.

In line with this, teacher NT1 stated that;

There is no way the headteacher can keep here with poor grades of learners from UCE and UACE. This school has been traditionally known for having super grade learners and is ranked among the historical best performing. Any headteacher who fails to mention this standard ends up facing strong resistance and is forced out of the school in favour of that who can keep the standard of the school high. This forced transfer has happened on two headteachers since I joined this school. I also hear other cases of forced transfer of some other headteachers who fail to achieve as expected. In other secondary schools in the central region and other parts of Uganda.

These results suggested that forced transfer is always experienced in many government aided secondary schools in the central part of Uganda. This is primarily due to failure to achieve more in terms of performance first as this is the primary end of the schools existence.

Whereas one of the headteachers Toyota SS HT who participated in the study stated that;

I as an individual have never been forced out of school since my first appointment. However, I have been experiencing fellow headteachers forced transfer over low achievement. This poor achievement is not only in academics but also in other areas. If the secondary school where the headteacher is serving is church funded. One has to achieve in terms of church goals and government goals where academic achievement is core. If you fail to achieve on either side you might end up being forced out of the school.

These results thus implied that achievement is a strong factor which can lead to one's forced transfer on the job. One has to carefully achieve to the expectations of the foundation body and other stakeholders in the school. However, in circumstances individuals detect low achievement rates, thus in turn leads to forced transfer on the



job.

In line with these findings, one headteacher from one secondary school, Nisan SS HT stated that;

Headteachers who fail to achieve as expected receive a lot of criticism from students and teachers. As concerned administrators, we cannot keep quite with high complaints of stakeholders. What we do is to implement their will by transferring such headteachers to other schools where their services can be accommodated. Therefore, we have to transfer these headteachers to schools where low grades and achievement can be tolerated.

These findings therefore implied that headteachers who cannot achieve in academics and other achievement tasks are forced to transfer from one secondary school to another. This low achievement is primarily in academics, infrastructure and other core values of the school.

Further, another participant from the department of secondary school education revealed that;

There are cases of lazy headteachers identified in secondary schools in central region. Such headteachers are always not at school station, do not follow what is going on at school and are identified as lazy to the task. This state of laziness is linked with high forced transfer of such headteachers who are lazy and not committed to their core achievement ends.

Hence these results implied that headteachers who are not committed to their tasks who abscond from duty and are not fully committed to their work end up facing forced transfer as these are typical signs that their achievement rates are low.

#### ***4.4 Theme: Optimism and Forced Transfer of Headteachers***

Participants in the study were asked how optimism leads to forced transfer of headteachers in the selected government aided secondary schools in central Uganda.

Results on this theme revealed that headteachers who lack optimistic ideas on the status of the school in the near future always face strong resistance and always end up being forced out of the school system. It was identified that with low optimist ideas, the school can survive and achieve more. Thus, as this is realized the headteacher in question is forced out of the system in favour of that with good ideas for the school.

In line with the above, one of the teacher BT3 stated that;

None optimistic teachers are not needed in this school, once a none optimistic headteacher is posted in this school there is a collective effort of all concerned stakeholders to see that such a headteacher is forced out of the school. Such a none optimistic headteachers would not bather to create a strategic plan for the school. This puts the school into a serious dilemma where it is not possible to achieve desired goals.

These results revealed that a none optimistic headteacher without a clear strategy and with good vision. Thus, without a clear strategy for the school the headteacher is likely to be forced out of the school and transferred to

another school where his or her services would be entertained.

Meanwhile, another teacher participant TT2 stressed that;

A headteacher who is not optimistic attracts criticism from the key stakeholders of the school. Such a headteacher is always considered as a failure due to his inability to deal and create optimistic ways that would lead to school success. This lack of optimistic choices implies that the school would remain static and that headteachers of this nature have been always transferred using forced transfer mode.

This further shows that optimism was a strange factor for once chances to be transferred using forced transfer. Failure to have hope of success in the future automatically implies that the headteacher has serious loopholes that would require serious criticism and forced transfer of the said headteacher.

Another participant from the department of secondary school education, Ministry of Education and Sports identified that;

None optimistic headteachers do not fit some high caliber schools. Traditionally, there are secondary schools that have made their names and are known for excellence. If a lazy and none optimistic headteacher is posted there, they don't live to the expectations of parents. Consequently, due to mismatch between the expectations of schools in line with headteachers expectations, they are deemed as none optimistic and this leads to forced transfer of these headteachers from such schools to where they can fit.

This implied that none optimistic headteachers were likely to arouse criticism as not equally footing to the expectations of these schools leading to forced transfer.

#### ***4.5 Theme: Self Confidence and Forced Transfer***

Participants were asked how self-confidence leads to forced transfer of headteachers in the selected government aided secondary schools in the central region of Uganda.

Results here revealed that headteachers with low self-confidence were more prone to forced transfer from their secondary school to other schools where their services would be welcomed. One of the study participants on this teacher NT1 stated that;

A headteacher who lacks self-confidence is likely to make mistakes. Some schools have high caliber students, teachers and parents. For instance, I know of a secondary school where all the board members are professors, doctors and other highly skilled and educated intellectuals. A headteacher who without a high sense of confidence on the job is likely not to deliver to the expectations and many of such headteachers have been forced to transfer to schools where they fit.

These results thus indicated that headteachers who lack a sense of self confidence on the job are likely to be considered as weak and some have been always transferred using forced transfer.

These findings were somehow related with those of one headteacher Volvo SS HT who stated that;

Lack of self confidence among fellow headteachers has always been primarily responsible for forced transfer of many headteachers in the central region. Such headteachers are mistrusted and considered lazy at one point. Thus, those who are not confidently alert are forced out of the system as many situations call for a leader who has confidence on the job.

This hence suggests that self-confidence is a key factor and headteachers without it are more likely to be transferred using forced transfer. The general finding on this objective was that those headteachers who show incompetencies on the job are always transferred using forced transfer mode.

## **5. Discussions, Conclusions and Recommendations**

The objective of this study was to explore secondary school teacher's perception of leadership competences of head teachers who were forcibly transferred from their previous schools. Results acquired from this objective revealed that Leadership competences of such head teachers forcibly transferred lacked basic aspects of the current contemporary leader. Such head teachers lacked accountability transparency, a sense of confidence on the job. Similarly, these head teachers were indicated as non-optimistic and lacked initiative and a sense of emotional and self-awareness and low achievement as regards school goals and objectives leading to forced transfer. Such findings were in direct support of earlier studies findings. For instance, Olorunsola and Balo<sup>[8]</sup> in line with the study findings revealed that there was no significant relationship between incessant teachers and principals' managerial effectiveness. This implies that even if they were highly forced to transfer from one school to another their competence to do work remains constant. Thus, leadership competencies like self-confidence, emotional stability, accountability, transparency once not effectively applied one's force transfer is eminent.

The finding of the study on this objective were in direct study of Oribhabor and his colleagues [9] who showed that involuntary transfer is either initiated by the principal or a ministry administrator. It is also regarded as administrator transfer and is always carried out to move a teacher who is not good or fit for the school or who is performing in satisfactorily. It was added in this aforementioned study teachers' unions and school administrators might agree that nothing affects student's achievements more than the quality of teachers and administrators in schools.

Findings of the study revealed that failure to account for financial resources of the school contributes to forced transfer of headteachers. These findings resonated well with Magak<sup>[10]</sup> whose results revealed that teachers were always forced to transfer from schools due to challenges related to incompetence's to audit, inability to prepare books of accounts, high cases of fees transferred head teachers would train and acquire these skills in their new placements. In conclusion, head teachers who were less the leadership competencies of a twenty first century leader were forcibly transferred from one Government Aided Secondary School to another. The study concluded that headteachers who lacked leadership competences, achievement, self-awareness, emotional awareness achieved less not accountable, not transparent were transferred forcibly from their schools.

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