

THE INFLUENCE OF DECOLONIZING LEADERSHIP PRACTICES ON STUDENTS' PERFORMANCE IN SCHOOLS: THE CASE OF LANGALANGA SECONDARY SCHOOL, NAKURU COUNTY- KENYA

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ABSTRACT

Leadership is a critical and core facet in all educational processes particularly in ensuring value added performance in the lives of students. This task is rendered even more onerous given the massive rate of change and turbulence that has clouded particularly educational institutions thus warranting massive overhaul or mandatory wholesome reforms to conform. The technological advancements for instance have not only exposed school children to a wide range of new information and values but have also placed high stakes on production of highly skilled, multi-talented and super motivated workforce that can readily surmount the unique challenges bedeviling this fast paced, information powered society. The onus is thus upon the school heads to provide sound leadership that will help channel the students' energies to useful purposes in conformity with their national and communities' educational goals. This therefore behooves school heads to be more innovative, open minded and flexible enough to adopt new leadership and management practices to counter or withstand the emerging challenges in their schools. The study therefore, was intended to provide a constructive evaluation of the effectiveness of decolonizing leadership and management practices so as to ensure transformative leadership practices which may not only ensure excellent performance in national examinations, but may reduce the conflict and unrest in the Kenyan secondary schools. The first part of the study gives an introductory view of what leadership is and its relationship to management and administration as well as decolonization firstly, by outlining and analyzing some of the key features of colonial management and leadership practices and secondly by relating them to the current management practices in the schools. The second part of the study is dedicated to an evaluation of the leadership and management practices of Langalanga Secondary School, Nakuru County- Kenya, drawing out the benefits accrued from these practices and presenting it as a profound best practice in decolonized leadership and management practices of schools. The study concludes by postulating that a hybrid of transformational and participative leadership styles should be adopted as part of the process of dismantling the colonial mentality in the school management practices. This is backed by a theoretical framework based on the Kaizen management theory. The study was based in Langalanga secondary school, Nakuru County- Kenya, and involved 20 teachers, including the Principal and the two deputy Principals as well as 50 students and 6 support staff bringing the sample size, purposively sampled, to a total of 76. The study was qualitative in nature and adopted the case study research design. Data was collected by the use of structured and semi structured interviews and observations as well as document reviews. The findings indicate that a hybrid of transformative and participative leadership styles is the ideal option to enhance student performance. Based on the findings, it is recommended that school managers make continual and incremental changes towards transformative and participative leadership to enhance student performance in national examinations.

Key words: Leadership, management, performance, Principals, decolonization,

1.0. Introduction

The fervent discourse on how well to improve student performance and ultimately churn out a highly knowledgeable and readily productive citizenry from Kenyan secondary schools cannot be summarily concluded without a judicious review of the leadership and management practices obtaining in the said schools. This is particularly crucial given the barrage of technological advancements and the globalization phenomena which have not only complicated the provision of education to the young generation today, but have also birthed an intense and insatiable quest to internationalize competencies. Educational institutions across the globe therefore have been tersely obliged to devise ingenious methods to effectively contain students while at the same time ensuring a highly educated, open minded, self driven and dynamic student population to easily surmount the mundane hurdles placed in their way by the severely competitive and highly polarized and supple market place.

Although much of the available literature on school leadership including among others (Ross & Gray 2006 and Kruger, Witziers & Slegers (2007) posit that school principals have very minimal direct impact on student achievement, it is evident that by virtue of the unique position they occupy in the intricate school management relationships and networks, they cannot merely escape accountability for student performance under their watch. Certainly, school principals and their deputies find themselves in inimitable positions of power and influence which no doubt portend a profound and inescapable impact on the ultimate student performance and overall institutional progress. Additionally, Johnson, Uline & Perez (2011) also affirmed existence of a significant positive relationship between effective principal leadership and student learning and achievement. Principals therefore have a prime role to play in facilitating and coordinating efforts geared towards overall student performance in their schools.

Jacobson (2010) in fact charges that there has been no single case of a school improving its student achievement record in the absence of talented leadership. Principals for instance make vast and rigorous decisions that ultimately impact student performance. For example, principals enjoy reasonably high stakes of influence in final decision making regarding recruitment and deployment of the teaching and non teaching staff, student selection and admission, negotiating for needed resources and clearly crafting and communicating the school mission as well as securing and inspiring the needed focused commitment and devotion towards achievement of this mission in their stations. It is equally the principal's core function to pave the way and lead the rest in weaving together all diverse elements of a school comprising students, parents, guardians, school management boards, policy makers, immediate surrounding community, sponsors and other stakeholders in to one single unified whole poised towards the pursuit of the set and defined goals.

These among other responsibilities definitely demand significant prowess and dexterity on the part of the school principal's management and leadership style if excellent student performance as well as general institutional success has to be achieved. This is critically so because leaders according to Leithwood et al (2004) have the potential to unleash latent capacities in organizations and hence must create the necessary synergy across all the relevant variables if large effects have to be obtained. Effective principals are therefore according to Leithwood et al (2004) strong educators, anchoring their work on central issues of learning and teaching and continuous school improvement which calls to question their manner of conduct,

leadership and management processes. Strong leadership from high-quality principals is therefore crucially significant in netting high student outcomes and overall institutional triumphs

2.0. Statement of the problem

School principals should foster first rate student learning which should ultimately translate to quality student scores and grades with which to easily pursue their ambitions in higher institutions of learning or be readily absorbed in the employment sector without much bustle. Persistent poor performance in many secondary schools across the country coupled with massive dropouts occasioned by an assortment of preventable causes including among others teenage pregnancies, drug use and abuse as well as general truancy calls to question the existing management and leadership qualities and practices of the school principals and their deputies. Although existing research underscores the importance of deploying and retaining high quality principals to enhance student outcomes, very little rigorous research however exists regarding the significance of restructuring and decolonizing leadership and management practices to conform to the complex challenges bedeviling the education sector and indeed the modern society at large. This has not only contributed to ruining of the destinies of young people but has also largely spelt massive negative repercussions on the general social, economic and political developments of many nations.

This study therefore seeks to provide concrete evidence that by systematically decolonizing and dismantling the ruthlessly rigid, autocratic and traditional bureaucratic leadership and management practices and instead adopting more liberal, flexible and participative leadership approaches not only impacts affirmatively on student performance in schools but can also assist in preparing students academically and intellectually for global competitiveness and productivity. As averred by Koh, Steers & Terborg (1995) cited in Ross & Gray (2006) for instance, schools with higher levels of transformational leadership had higher collective teacher efficacy, greater teacher empowerment and hence commitment to the school mission and school community. Additionally, this will facilitate multiple stakeholder participation in school decisions, collaboration with the surrounding community and ultimate and desirable student results. Adopting such leadership styles as transformational and participative leadership practices therefore is poised to make significant strides towards improved student performance

3.0. Purpose of the study

This study was intended to investigate the effectiveness of decolonizing leadership practices on students' performance in schools. Specifically the study explored the leadership and management practices of Langalanga secondary school to establish a linkage between the flexible and liberalized management and leadership practices and the continuously improving performance of the students in the national Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education examinations. Education for all children is certainly a critical and inalienable right hence research on decolonizing management and leadership practices is paramount to ensure successful and efficient educational practices and student learning. The study thus attempts to make a contributory mark on the efforts geared towards adjusting and reforming leadership and management practices in schools in conformity with the changes and turbulence of modern times in order to increase quality student output.

4.0. Research objectives

- i. To identify patterns and features of colonial leadership and management practices and their influence on improved student performance in Langalanga Secondary school, Nakuru county- Kenya
- ii. To assess areas of decolonized school leadership and management practices and their influence on improved student performance in Langalanga Secondary school, Nakuru county- Kenya

5.0. Literature review

5.1 Leadership and management practices

Leadership and management area focal point of concern in all educational processes. The two concepts however, together with administration, overlap so much so that as contended by Dimmock (1999), attempts to define them separately become confusing. Although often used interchangeably, management as propounded by Card & Krüger (1998) is usually concerned with development of policies and plans geared towards the realization of set goals, vision and mission as well as desired student performance. Leadership on the other hand as elucidated in Northouse (2007) entails a process of influencing a group of individuals to achieve a common goal. Generally therefore leadership solely entails production of movement which is uncompromisingly directed at attainment of clearly set and predetermined goals. Management on the other hand is perceived as the act of maintaining efficiently and effectively current organizational arrangement.

Owing to the complex nature of challenges afflicting the modern day society for instance, Bolman & Deal (1997) for example suggest the significance of merging of both management and leadership. This is so particularly because as purported by Armstrong (2009), leadership and management determine the degree to which engagement and positive performance are achieved. An extensive review of evidence for instance as postulated in Johnson, Uline & Perez (2011) concluded that among all the school-related factors that contribute to student learning leadership was second only to classroom instruction. Effective leaders therefore Johnson Uline & Perez (2011) continue to underscore must work to develop a shared vision of the future, build consensus for relevant short-term goals, offer intellectual support and stimulation and provide models of exemplary practice as well as model important values and beliefs. As averred by Robinson, Lloyd & Rowe (2008) school leaders for instance appear to have the greatest influence on student outcomes when their efforts are instructionally focused.

Elmore (2000) and Hallinger (2003) in fact regard instructional leadership as a vehicle for influencing instruction which ideally is the primary determinant of student performance. Correspondingly, research has also found that transformational leadership encourages dedication and allegiance to organizational values, organizational citizenship, academic achievement, devotion to the school's goal as well as partnerships. Transformational leadership therefore as intimated in Ross & Gray (2006) enhances an organization by raising the values of members, motivating them to go beyond self-interest to embrace organizational goals and redefining their needs to align with organizational preferences. Good leadership and management practices are therefore of cardinal significance to the success of any organization particularly educational institutions. It is therefore incumbent upon all school principals to make

effort to decolonize or dismantle the colonial dictatorial mentalities in management and leadership practices in schools so as to enhance rapid and sustained student performance and achievements.

5.2. Decolonizing leadership practices

Decolonization as extrapolated in Ogot & Ochieng (1995) does not merely entail the transfer of alien power to sovereign nationhood but a liberation of the cultural and spiritual world as well as the economic and political facets of a people as well. This precisely is so because as Gatimu (2007) and Kanu (2006) contend, colonialism involved the control of the mind of the subject people in an imperative to civilize and keep them in a perpetual state of psychological subordination and unless they systematically and forcibly shake off these shackles of captivity, true decolonization will not effectively happen. In the mid nineteenth century for instance, the European powers swiftly and ruthlessly overran African countries with such relative ease so much so that by the end of the mostly bloody processes of the scramble and partition of Africa in early 1900s, they had not only brutally managed to subdue African societies but had also succeeded to intensely transform whole African world views and thought patterns. In their wake, they had also additionally meted severe and untold havoc and plunder to sacred institutions that had hitherto served African communities so effectively for centuries.

This in effect, rendered Africans subjects at the mercy of the colonial master with life in its broadest sense, effectively defined and dictated from the narrow and parochial Eurocentric viewpoints. The white masters similarly determined to dominate the everyday life of the African so much so that decolonization in all its aspects has never fully occurred and probably never will. Vickers, Roy, Ogot & Ochieng (1995) for instance charge that as long as the rift between the elite and the masses continues to widen and political leaders stop racing for aid from the western countries, decolonization of Kenya for example may never truly materialize. Fanon (1986) as cited in Gatimu (2007) for instance rightly faulted African leaders who took the reins of power after independence for inadvertently interpreting the colonial education system as a neutral tool for enlightening people hence, seeing no need to critically rethink schools as sites for liberating the minds of natives from colonial hegemonies and from a pathological sense of longing and admiration in Africans for things European.

Kanu (2006) cited in Gatimu (2007) equally lamented that while the physical controls of territories may have ended after independence, the process of colonial cultural production and psychologization had persisted and continued to water down efforts towards the African sense of pride and patriotism. To defeat the colonial cultural reproduction therefore, Smith (1999) as cited in Gatimu (2007) for instance suggested a need for indigenous people to decolonize their minds, recover themselves and claim space in which to develop their sense of authentic humanity. Against this confounding altruism therefore, there is certainly no hope for a decisive sense of closure regarding colonialism and its debilitating upshots on the African peoples. Smith (1999) as cited in Gatimu (2007) for instance argues that the African continent can neither be wholly explained nor utterly understood without first unraveling the continent's colonial experience. Ngugi (1986) and Shengold (1989) as cited in Gatimu (2007) for instance observed that Kenyans lived not only with the scars of colonialism, but also with the story of pre-colonial modalities that inform habits and existence as a distinct people.

Against this backdrop therefore most colonial leadership practices and prejudices still persist unperturbed in Kenyan schools and with detrimental effects not just to the teachers and pupils but to the surrounding communities and by extension the entire country as well. The problem however is that educational institutions particularly secondary schools are first and foremost charged with the prime and sacrosanct role of molding young minds and careers hence, poor leadership and management styles or lack thereof may spell huge potential and lasting negative repercussions as students' lives, dreams, values and aspirations are either irredeemably altered or permanently destroyed. Young teachers joining the teaching service with great prospects of an illustrious career ahead, fruitful relationship with the already serving teachers and tremendous time with students easily get disillusioned as their dreams, innovative and mostly dynamic and progressive ideas are ruthlessly thrashed or thwarted all in the name of unpalatable leadership and management practices. Sound leadership and management practices are therefore a fundamental and absolute core aspect of a school's everyday life particularly because their impact is painstakingly intergenerational and devastatingly long lasting.

It is incumbent upon every individual aspiring for any school management or leadership position therefore to shun the negative colonial leadership mentalities, and strive to adopt favorable, modern and hybrid management and leadership practices that will go a long way to assure every member of the school community a favorable working environment and for the students a rich learning and productive environment. Decolonization however as explicated elsewhere in the study does not just happen in a fleeting spur or impulse rather as reiterated by Fanon (1986) progresses through gradual stages of transformation each either offered or fought for. School leaders therefore must endeavor to constantly make a deliberate shift away from autocratic leadership and management practices brewed from colonial overtones towards more humane and palatable practices commensurate with the changes of modern times

5.2. Features of colonial leadership and management practices

Sium, Desai & Ritskes (2012) advocate the worth of historicizing the political legacy of colonialism and the way in which it manifested and continues to manifest today in order to make efficient sense of it. Mohanram (1999) cited in Sium, Desai & Ritskes (2012) additionally asserts that decolonization does not exist without a framework that centers and privileges indigenous life, community and epistemology and hence it is important to recognize the local settler colonial contexts, history of colonialism, and subsequent interruption of sovereignty and its general effects on African communities in order to effectively counteract it.

5.2.1. Task master - task bearer relationships

Of the litany of factors that motivated European powers to invade and colonize Africa in the mid nineteenth century, economic factors such as the search for cheap raw materials, new areas for investment and protection of European merchants among others, have generally been voted the greatest pushers. This consequently necessitated the brutal, autocratic and totalitarian measures that were exerted on Africans to make them at all costs, deliver the needed raw materials for the then thriving European industries often at no compensation for Africans at all. This was replicated in every sphere of life including military exploitations, education, health and political developments with the Europeans taking supervisory roles over the Africans. It is thus not uncommon in Kenya schools today to witness such scenarios where school managers wield absolute power and authority over teachers, students, support staff and the community. They are

often whipped to work in silence and usually beyond their humanly possible capabilities to deliver targets which mostly are set in total disregard of their involvement or participation and if they materialize at all, the school managers hog all the credit and glory.

5.2.2. Orders, decrees and threats

Colonial leadership and management practices were punctuated by orders, decrees and threats in order to get Africans to accomplish certain tasks. There was little or no regard of dialogue at all and neither were they accorded opportunities to question authority. Any attempt towards this attracted instant ruthless repression including death hence the Africans worked and lived in constant fear and brutal silence. The logic behind this was that the Africans had no intellectual capacity to comprehend things for themselves thus the only language they understood was violence. Ian Smith, for instance, the onetime hard line racist Prime minister of Colonial Zimbabwe, declared that power sharing with Africans was a recipe for instant chaos, UNESCO (1981). Such unfortunate utterances were carelessly prefaced on the racist and largely twisted Darwinist ideologies and white hegemonic denotations that might was right and that in the struggle for existence, the stronger dominate the weaker.

Sadly, management and leadership in some schools today is still a one man show. Such school managers derive pleasure in sending staff and students scampering around the compound and confuse this fear for effective management. Fear, needless to say is one of the most debilitating, destructive, paralyzing and talent mutilating force that must be poignantly resisted particularly in an education environment as it devastatingly locks up people in numbing and unproductive cocoons that ultimately exterminate raw talents and potentials. Such fear laced working environments can never yield maximum output. Chrispeels, Burke, Johnson & Daly (2008) for instance assert that leadership cannot be a one man show particularly in a school set up because of the intricacy of issues involved thus requiring a wide range of skills which can only be possible through participative leadership as stakeholders perform as coordinated units of change. In fact, Chrispeels et al (2008) charge that leadership must be shared across a wide spectrum of stakeholders and system-wide capacity developed to get sustainable results.

5.2.3. Blatant oppression, suppression and exploitation of the Africans

Colonial leadership and management practices smacked of unprecedented magnitude levels of oppression and exploitation of the African work force. Studies such as Boahen (1981) reveal astronomical levels of brutal and uncompensated forced labor, heavy and unfair taxes levied on the Africans' meagre earnings such as the poll, hut and breast taxes which were not only collected with insurmountable brutality, but also milked Africans dry thus effectively relegating them to the lowest positions of poverty, misery and wretchedness in all the pyramids of life. This ultimately disenfranchised Africans of their basic fundamental human rights leaving them a thoroughly oppressed and severely helpless lot. Walia (2012) for instance lamented that the conquest in Canada was designed to ensure forced displacement of indigenous peoples from their territories, destruction of their autonomy and self-determination in indigenous self-governance as well as assimilation of Indigenous peoples' cultures and traditions. Consequently, Wali (2012) continues to lament that North America's state and corporate wealth was largely based on the subsidies provided by the theft of Indigenous lands and resources.

It however freakingly astonishes that such oppressive and exploitative practices still persist in the leadership and management practices of most schools in Kenya today. Teacher brutality as

detailed in such reports as the Kenya Human Rights Watch (1999), Njagi & Ogutu (2004) and Kenya Law Reports (2005) is unashamedly still a frequently reported daily occurrence particularly manifesting in the form of excessive punishment including corporal punishment which has left many school children either permanently maimed or simply dead. Teachers too, often get a backlash or are threatened and even accosted by their principals if they do not deliver. Reports abound of school managers who force teachers to take extra lessons beyond normal school hours with a promise of some monetary reward which never comes to fruition. Promises of school trips and other goodies in case of satisfactory performance are sometimes not honored and teachers many times, feel cheated out of their hard labor and contributions. This, more often than not, explains strained relations between most school managers and staff. It is common knowledge that service that does not proceed from mutual agreement and respect means it is rendered as a duty and not out of love or passion and therein lays a huge problem as the quality of this kind of service will always principally remain inferior

5.2.4. Segregated society

The colonial leadership and management practices promoted a society keenly stratified according to race where the whites occupied the higher echelons in society enjoying luxurious facilities and treatment while Africans lived in squalid conditions at best, subjects at the whim of the colonialist. This also ensured inequalities in access to facilities particularly educational institutions. Although many African societies 'especially traditional monarchical systems such as the Buganda kingdom in modern day Uganda and the Wanga kingdom in Western Kenya did have stratified societies, these were however unduly magnified during the colonial period. Wynter (2003) and Smith (2006) as cited in Sium, Desai & Ritskes (2012) for instance grieve over the way Europeans defined and classified people as human and non-human and then used this as a basis to conquer land and subjugate populations through enslaving, indenturing in labor, genociding and warring. Unfortunately, many elements of social stratification still exist in many schools in Kenya today. For example, the support staffs in most schools are looked down upon by teachers and interactions are limited. When this happens, the support staff in their usual characteristic and often small ways frequently retaliate by scuttling or even frustrating the teachers' and students' efforts often with damning consequences.

5.2.5. Divide and rule tactics

The colonial government delighted itself and often thrived on pitting African tribes one against another thus instigating war and friction between and among communities for example the Shona and the Ndebele kingdoms of modern day Zimbabwe as asserted in Kiruthu, Kapiyo & Kimori (2004). While Africans were going for each others' necks, the colonialists busied themselves with grabbing African lands and implementing multiple selfish schemes that heavily exploited and continued to divide Africans. Today, the seemingly unending eruptions of violent tribal clashes and ethnic cleansing in many African countries are viewed as a horrid reproduction of such callous acts by European colonial powers. Mamdani (1996) as cited in Gatimu (2007) equally noted that the distrust and suspicion that was embedded in the daily lives of the colonized people did not suddenly disappear after independence especially because there were no social structures put in place to interrogate and critically think about relationships between different ethnic groups hence divisions and suspicions simmered and seethed to the extent that today they inform social and political contexts.

Mamdani (2001) therefore laments that although the colonial world was turned upside down it wasn't changed. Often in most Kenyan secondary schools today, it is not infrequent to find staffrooms divided along status lines, levels of academic achievements, seniority of positions held and so forth. Some schools even have the 'lower and upper houses' each characterized by their own distinct and unique ideologies and culture and in many cases, school principals exploit this to their advantage thus fuelling rather than toning down the divisions. Mamdani (1996) cited in Gatimu (2007) for instance laments that neglecting the level of hatred produced by the divide and rule policies did not bode well for the new nation-states as it has become increasingly clear that psychological and sometimes physical boundaries are enduring and are revived time and time again in the politics of the African nation-states

5.2.6. Spying mechanisms

Owing to strained relations between the colonialists and Africans arising mainly from the fearless determination of the Africans to overthrow white rule, European powers felt so insecure that they resorted to mundane acts such as infiltrating African movements or even families to gather information that would help them crush their real or perceived enemies. House helps for instance were paid to betray their bosses while home guards- the native police force mooted to camp down African resistance, village elders and chiefs were bribed to spy on nationalist activities. Most Kenyan nationalist resistance movements such as Mau Mau for instance were, according to Kiruthu et al, (2004) felled in such manner. Unfortunately, most principals of Kenyan schools still regard and frequently exploit this mechanism as a leadership strategy which often has had the appalling impacts of fuelling infighting and divisions among the staff thus impeding constructive teamwork and high student performance

5.2.7. Violation of African norms and customs

African communities had certain known and acceptable values, norms and moral codes that defined behavior, observance of which was praised and rewarded while vices and contrary behavior were not only detested and frowned upon, but attracted severe penalties including death. European powers on the other hand had no regard for such African cultural institutions. Researchers in African history for example Kiruthu et al (2004) have documented such abominable acts promoted by European powers like rape of African women, desecration of sacred places and disrespect to the elders. Since they were in position of power, nothing could be done to them but this formed one of the central grievances that contributed to the struggle for independence by African Communities. Warli (2012) for instance lamented that indigenous knowledges were callously and variously depicted as primitive, barbaric and backward yet, the modern society including learning institutions have not done much to reverse these mindsets

Today, the media is awash with similar reports of existence of abominable acts in schools propagated by teachers, parents and even school managers for example the Kenya Law Reports (2005). Many of sexual offence cases among pupils and underage students and teachers still abound in many schools across the country. Most school managers and even teachers have additionally helplessly and sometimes cunningly looked on as young school children are enticed and lured into societal vices including pornography, drug peddling, criminal gangs and other undesirable acts. Alfred (2009b) as cited in Sium, Desai & Ritskes (2012) therefore suggests that decolonization can only be achieved through the resurgence of an indigenous consciousness. Additionally, Sium, Desai & Ritskes also equally assert that indigenous knowledges are the starting

point for resurgence and decolonization, the medium through which to engage in the present and the possibility of an indigenous future and hence, without this significant power base, decolonization becomes a domesticated industry of ideas.

5.3. Decolonizing leadership practices on students' performance

Decolonization at whatever level as intimated in Sium, Desai & Ritskes (2012) must entail active and unrelenting opposition to colonial mentalities, labels and stereotypes mainly through an unprecedented process of mutual dialogue and discussion. As Walia (2012) charges failure to recognize decolonization and or even colonization, can negatively impact every aspect of life hence a need to continuously challenge and question dehumanizing practices in society. This is particularly crucial for secondary schools where students' upcoming talents, dispositions and aptitudes are at stake. Walia (2012) for instance charges that there is need to confront and discard the shackles of colonial repression and suppression at all levels if decolonizing has to be taken seriously rather than picking and choosing which struggles to engage in. The kind of problems school leaders and managers encounter today in their daily educational functions for instance are severely multifaceted, complex and obviously insurmountable given the effects of the fast paced, information jammed modern day society. This certainly requires a radical shift in leadership and management approaches to effectively counteract and enhance exceptional student performance.

Such leadership must adopt, as Crowther et al., (2000) recommend, a collaborative and participative stance since student outcomes are more likely to improve when leadership cascades down through open, accountable and recognized hierarchies and gradations with both teachers and other stakeholders being brought on board. School leaders therefore need to create a sense of coordinated purpose within their schools, and ensure provision of the necessary resources and appropriate motivation to enable particularly the staff to develop the skills necessary for their collective undertaking for excellent results. Transformational leadership therefore is designated ideal and effective for exceptional school management and ultimate improved performance. This is particularly so because transformational leadership is more idyllically suited and efficiently poised to alter and revolutionize individual behavior and thought patterns through empowering them as well as facilitating and boosting workers' inspiration, morale and performance as they work through common purpose target groups. This will ultimately help to effectively meet students' needs while enhancing personal growth in a genuinely supportive and hospitable environment

6.0. Research methodology

The study adopted the qualitative research methodology, which according to Shutteworth (2008) is used extensively by scientists and researchers studying human behavior and habits. According to Orodho (2009) for instance, the qualitative methodology is most appropriate for explanatory depth as well as yielding more authentic, plausible and rigorous findings. The study subsequently adopted the case study research design which as Yin (2003) purports, are advantageous in that they allow researchers to explore individuals and organizations ultimately enabling effective reconstruction of various phenomena. Data was collected by the use of interview schedules with the teachers, support staff and students. Observations and document reviews were also extensively done to gather information on the school operations. The total population of the study comprised 921 students, 31 teachers and 13 support staff making a total of 963

(Principal, Langalanga Secondary School, 2014). The sample used for the evaluation included 20 teachers, 6 support staff and 50 students thus making a sample of 76 sampled from among school prefects.

Mugenda & Mugenda (2003) also affirm that most qualitative studies use non-probability samples because the focus is on in-depth information rather than making inferences or generalizations. Consequently, purposive and theoretical sampling techniques were used thus producing maximum variation within the sample. Theoretical sampling on the other hand is where, according to Orodho (2009), researchers sample incidents and not persons because the main concern is on what people do or not do as well as the range of conditions that give rise to such variations. Data obtained was analyzed by streamlining the data into definite themes, patterns, models and concepts in line with Savin & Major (2013)'s and Orodho (2009)'s suggestions. Data was then presented in the form of tables as postulated by Chenail (1995) who proposed the quantitative informed method in which data are presented according to strategies commonly found in quantitative or statistical studies such as central tendencies, ranges, clusters and frequencies as well as from most important to least important or from major to minor where the most important findings are presented first and the minor discoveries come last.

7.0 Theoretical framework

The study is based on the Kaizen management theory. Kaizen, a Japanese phrase comprising two words *Kai* meaning change and *Zen* meaning to become good entails improvement or change for the best. Tozawa (1995) described Kaizen as a concept for incremental or gradual and continuous change or improvement. Kaizen therefore does not necessarily entail drastic changes or innovations but advocates for small incremental improvements that involve the efforts of everyone, ultimately producing bigger effects over a period of time. In a school set up, this will portend involving the students, parents and guardians, teachers, Boards of Management, the community and other stakeholders in mapping out an excellent strategy towards improved student performance through establishment of cordial relationships that enhance a humanizing and delightful working environment. This is so because as Wiley (2010) observes, the Kaizen method is effectively founded on and grounded in joint efforts, personal discipline, improved morale, quality circles and suggestions for improvement. Similarly Kaizen works more effectively when, according to Feldman (1992), it incorporates the Six Sigma and Lean principles which advocate adoption of a workable and well defined mission statement, objectives and start and end points for the achievement of results.

8.0 Research findings and discussion

8.1. Decolonized Leadership and Management Practices

Although most schools register the presence of many colonial mentality leadership and management practices as enumerated elsewhere in the study, some schools have made drastic and well intentioned strides away from them such as Langalanga Secondary school in Nakuru County-Kenya. Over the years, the school has made little steps towards dismantling such colonial tendencies and cannot be described as a best practice of modern day management practices to be supported and emulated by other school managers. As Anderson (2010) for instance affirms, qualitative research findings can be transferable to another setting. In recent

years, Langalanga secondary school has attracted attention that has seen it entertain whole staffs of visiting schools from all parts of the country for bench marking purposes such as Kisii, Kakamega, Bungoma and many others from the vicinity.

Langalanga secondary school is a mixedday secondary school which started in 1983 as an offshoot of a neighboring school. It has since grown by leaps and bounds both in terms of enrolment as well as performance. The school has had four principals since its establishment with the current principal serving since 2002. The school has a student population of 916 with a teaching staff of 31 and 13 support staff. The facilities in the school can only be described as average but in spite of this, the school has made tremendous strides in academic performance in the county of Nakuru, a phenomenon chiefly attributed to the style of leadership and management style of the school principal which percolates down to the deputies, Heads of Departments and the rest of the teaching and non teaching staff as well as the students

8.1.1. The Principal's management style

In an interview, the principal confessed, "I save all my teachers' phone numbers in my phonebook and note book and keep them always with me. I personally attend every event involving my staff, be it birth of a new born, birthday celebration, graduation, sickness or other misfortunes unless I am away but will always make up to them when I return". This indicated a leader who is in touch and personally involved in the life of the staff. Additionally, the principal visits each of the staffrooms and teachers' offices frequently during which visits, first hand information from teachers, Heads of department and other support staff relating to all manner of issues ranging from academic to personal are brought to the fore.

One notable observation was that the principal, one teacher and the school watchman were the only ones from a different ethnic group whilst almost 85% of the rest of the staff belonged to one different ethnic group. Asked whether this did not disturb him, the principal quickly retorts "you are the one telling me, I don't even notice it. I don't even think of it." It takes a true leader and manager to summon such confidence and security in a country where ethnic suspicions and tensions are almost often rife. In the interactions with teachers, students and support staff, there seemed to be no sign of feelings of fear of discrimination or subjugation based on any differences, ethnic or otherwise. Obviously the exuding confidence and sense of trust emanated from the fact that the working environment is absolutely cordial and satisfyingly human

8.1.2. The Principal's Leadership Skills

The researcher sought to establish the feelings of the staff regarding the principal's leadership skills which created a good learning and working environment and hence improved student performance. Varied descriptions were advanced and were transformed in to thematic headlines that were ranked from the most cited to the least cited as summed up in table 8.1 as follows;

Table 8.1. The Principal's Leadership Skills

Leadership skill description	Rank
Humaneness and concern for ethics, ideals and values	1
Recognition and celebration of teachers' input/employee voice	2
Bench marking for best practices and strategies	3

Staff development for leadership capabilities	4
Mutual problem solving	5
Open communication lines	6
Effective team and consensus building	7
Data-driven decision making	
Collaboration with stakeholders in the school improvement process	9
Frequent consultation with staff and stakeholders	10
Commitment to school plan, vision and mission	11

The findings reveal that teachers immensely value leaders who respect and are concerned about their well being. Almost all teachers interviewed indicated that what they liked most in their principal was the singleness of heart towards them stating he was sensitive, thoughtful and understanding in dealing with teachers and even students. Teachers reminisced delightfully of how the principal had quietly and patiently sat, listened and empathized with them during difficult times and how sometimes they shared deep personal matters with the principal.

The fact that they never heard about those matters discussed from any other member of the school was particularly significant since it indicated that the principal was absolutely trustworthy and could be held in confidence, a factor that many respondents were totally proud of and satisfied with. Closely connected to this was the principal's ability to value teachers' contributions and input. Many teachers interviewed confessed to being hugged many times by the principal for good results in both academic and extra-curricular activities. Monetary tokens, school trips, special meals and among other actions were mentioned as indicative that the principal valued and recognized the teachers' contributions and input

8.2. Decolonizing Leadership and Management Practices and Students' Performance in Langalanga Secondary School

Decolonized leadership actions which may ultimately contribute to good student performance as intimated in (Lee, Buck & Midgely, 1992, Chester & Beaudin, 1996, Hoy & Woolfolk, 1993 and Center for Collaborative Education, 2003) include among others the ability of a leader to enhance teacher efficacy through acknowledging teachers' competence by incorporating them in high level open and honest communication and decision making processes. Rowan (1990) and Miller & Rowan (2006) for instance propose adoption of collective leadership which corresponds to organic management in which a network pattern of control is embraced. According to Jacobson & Bezzina (2008) for instance, principals who led effective schools worked tenaciously to create safe and orderly learning environments; set clear instructional objectives, expected high performance from teachers and students through increased time on task and developed positive home-school relations.

8.2.1. Student Performance in KCSE examinations

From the document reviews, the researcher compiled the students' performance in the KCSE examinations including the enrolment rate, mean score, improvement index and the number of

students who scored a C+ and above thus qualifying for university admission. The results are presented in Table 8.2 as follows;

Table 8.2.Langalanga secondary school's academic Performance in National Examinations

Year	Enrolment	Mean Score	Improvement Index	C+ and above
2005	142	5.964	-	47
2006	127	5.913	-0.051	41
2007	153	6.131	+218	61
2008	125	6.016	-0.115	43
2009	154	6.344	+0.328	66
2010	132	7.000	+0.656	96
2011	160	7.263	+0.263	96
2012	162	7.722	+0.459	121
2013	149	7.772	+0.05	109
2014	190	7.426	-0.04	130

It is clear from the findings that the school has registered considerably stable, consistent and tremendous improvement in the national examination performance especially in the past five years as well as an increasing KCSE enrolment and students who qualify for university admission. Much of this is mainly attributed to existence of an enabling teaching and learning environment that is as a result of friendly management practices. The researcher therefore delved in to a study to establish the leadership and management practices put in place to enhance student performance in national examinations in Langalanga secondary school in Nakuru County. Through observations, interview schedules and document reviews, several practices were highlighted and are summarized as following;

8.2.2. Strong guidance and counselling department

The guidance and counseling department is headed by an extremely qualified and passionate teacher/counsellor who is also keen to raise young people that are not just academic giants but are well equipped with skills, values and attitudes that prepare them for the challenges ahead ranging from those arising out of the adolescent stage as well as for the future adult life, careers and interrelationships. The teacher in charge facilitates the election of a great team of peer counselors who are usually students of proven high moral character and influence over other students. The teacher works hand in hand with them to ensure a student community that is morally upright, emotionally and psychologically well balanced and pursuing superior academic excellence as the ultimate goal of their school life.

Peer counsellors observe fellow students and suggest to the Guidance and counseling teacher, those who require help. The teacher confidentially keeps good records of the students who seek help and this helps in the following up exercise. Peer counsellors undergo training by professional counsellors, an exercise that is facilitated by the school management. Guest speakers are also usually invited every Wednesday after classes to speak with all the students. Since the school is a day school, the teacher organizes for sanitary towels and extra skirts for the girls who accidentally soil their clothing. Peer counselors play an excellent rapid role here seeing

to it that girls have the immediate help they need and are made to feel that there is nothing to fear or be embarrassed about. This caring environment contributes to girls' retention as well as optimum class attendance and participation

Common Guidance and Counseling Cases dealt with

Interviews and document reviews carried out here indicated that cases dealing with relationships were absolutely rampant. They include students' relationships with their parents, fellow students, teachers, members of the opposite sex as well as church members and leaders. Pornography, though on a small scale was a concern since the school is right in Nakuru town. Although financing is a major problem coupled with uncooperative parents when need arises for them to meet with the Guidance teacher, it is obvious that the department has its place in the school and the management is totally supportive of the department's activities which ultimately help shape the students' behavior and focus their energies to good academic performance.

8.2. 3. A child friendly disciplinary committee

In an interview with the school's discipline master, it was evident that the disciplinary committee, made up of eight teachers representing different departments and chaired by the deputy principals, is directly student friendly that students prescribe their own punishments once their cases have been heard and confirmed and are also given an opportunity to request the committee on how they can be helped for future good behavior. The committee usually meets twice a week whether or not there is a disciplinary issue. When handling a student's case, they usually start by analyzing the student's file with a tooth comb looking for any possible clues and background causes of the disciplinary case in question.

The teachers scrutinize the student's Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE) certificate, transfer history in cases of students who transfer from other schools, report forms and prior disciplinary cases and actions among others. Students found guilty of the allegations are firstly required to write an apology letter in which they also promise better academic performance by setting targets which are followed up by the class teacher. The letter is also a lesson in English or Kiswahili where the concerned teachers check for grammatical errors and insist they make the corrections after which the letter is filed. To minimize cases connected with school games, the Games master ensures that only high performing students in both academics and behavior are allowed to participate.

Since most students love to engage in Games and Sports, they have no choice but shun unpalatable behavior. Besides, Games are only held on Wednesdays and Friday evenings and are supervised by the Games teacher or Teacher on Duty. Prefects are also empowered and heavily backed by the administration. Any insubordination is instantly punished. The school principal handles difficult cases and usually backs the disciplinary committee to the hilt. This is crucially significant since any lapse in the chain of discipline could have irrecoverable consequences both to the school and the students as well.

Although sometimes faced by the challenge of uncooperative parents, the disciplinary committee is so firm that discipline cases are quite minimal indeed. The school schedules and culture as well play a big role of reducing the discipline cases. Caning or what is commonly referred to as corporal punishment is very rarely administered and only to severe cases such as drug use which are also very rare. Fighting and other serious cases witnessed in many schools are severely suppressed in this school. Again, this is attributed to the good but equally stern management practices in the school.

9.0. Conclusions

The findings reveal a liberalized management and leadership style that can only be described as hybrid of transformational and participative leadership styles. Transformational or charismatic leadership style was so highly exhibited so that while the principal sought the high agenda of needs- the optimum student performance- he clearly did not step all over the teaching and non teaching staff bullying and haranguing them to deliver, rather was concerned about the needs and feelings of others hence acting as an effective visionary change agent as postulated in IAAP (2009). Elements of participative leadership including emphasis of shared leadership and involvement of teachers in decision making were also quite evident.

Collective leadership no doubt had a stronger and profound influence on student achievement as the whole Langalanga community felt part and parcel of the principal's innermost circle of confidence to achieve goals thus achieving collective purpose. As a result of this relaxed leadership and management attitude, the principal spends very little time on discipline cases either of teachers, support staff or even students. Leadership therefore is the ultimate feature at the center of student success and good performance in national examinations. Besides, the longevity of the principal in the school was a huge added advantage for good student performance. The principal has been in the school since 2002 thus having ample time to stamp his authority and also establish a stable school culture that celebrates hard work.

Studies by Macmillan (2000) and Fink & Brayman (2006) demonstrate the devastating effects of rapid principal succession, especially on initiatives intended to increase student learning. This usually destabilizes a school and ultimately impacts adversely on school performance. The principal also evidently demonstrated instructional leadership which impacted positively on student achievement particularly through initiation and sustainability of satisfactory motivation mechanisms for teachers and creation of a humanizing delightful working environment (Marks and Louis, 1999, Giles et al., 2007) for instance avow that sustaining success requires an ongoing effort to support and reward organizational learning through self-renewal and personal and collective professional development.

10. 0. Recommendations

Following the findings, the following recommendations were made:

- Need for leaders to develop transformational and participative leadership styles so as to enhance performance effectiveness.
- Important for school managers to inspire people skills and provide resources to achieve effective performance in national examinations
- School leaders need to increase consideration of people so as to reduce teacher turn over and absenteeism
- School leaders and managers need to empower others to make significant decisions which not only removes cynicism and feelings of betrayal but facilitates a sense of ownership of the strategies adopted thus working to attain them
- School managers need to move away from the traditional control-oriented approaches by giving teachers and the students broader responsibilities, encouraging contributions and helping them to achieve satisfaction in their work.
- School leaders need to be always visible and stand up to be counted rather than showing up only to complain after results have been announced
- School leaders need to make continued efforts to motivate, rally and energize their staff and students for better student achievement

- School leaders to sustain teacher and student motivation by the use of school ceremonies and functions and other cultural symbolism so as to enhance performance
- Leaders to model the way and share in the sorrows and joys with their teachers and students

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