Influence Of Principals' Leadership Practices on Collaborative School Culture in Public Secondary Schools in Tiaty East and Tiaty West Sub-Counties, Kenya.

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Abstract

Background: An ideal collaborative school culture in the two sub-counties should entail teacher's collaboration, teacher's involvements in decision making practices, effective open communication and high teacher motivation. The current situation in Tiaty East and Tiaty West sub counties is that the area is plagued by poverty and frequent banditry, this has made the school environment in the areas to be hostile and the safety of both the learner and the teacher is not assured. A hostile school culture of collaboration can cause the problem of poor performance to persist since there are no harmonious relations among teachers, and teachers work in isolation. As a result, the principals' task is to create an enabling school climate towards the creation of a collaborative culture of the school.

Purpose: The purpose of this study was to find out influence of school principals' leadership practices on collaborative school culture in public secondary schools in Tiaty East and Tiaty west sub-counties. The objectives of this study were: to determine influence of principals' mentorship practices on collaborative school culture and to establish how principals' communication practices influence collaborative school culture.

Methods: The research approach was the qualitative research and a cross-cultural study design with two cases and multiple units of analysis within each case . This study was grounded on the perspective that valuable insights about the issue of principal leadership practices and collaborative school culture can be obtained from a target population of 770 comprising of principals (10), teachers (156), support staff (276) and student leaders (328). A sample of 161 respondents; 10 principals, 31 teachers, 56 support staff and 64 student leaders was selected using purposeful sampling. The main instrument for primary data collection was use of interview schedules for principals, teachers and support staff and focus group discussion guides for student leaders. Data analysis was done using Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software (CAQDA); ATLAS. Ti 9.

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Results*: The study found that the principals invited mentors for staff development to improve collaboration, ultimately positively impacting on student outcomes to promote a collaborative secondary school culture. Moreover, on principals communication practices, school meetings and social media especially Whatsapp groups are used to engage the school community in communication.*
Conclusion*: The study concluded that principal's mentorship practices, and principal's communication practices are integral and symbiotic in creating a positive and collaborative school culture.*
Significance*: On building positive collaborative cultures, the study is beneficial to future researchers in the field as they can expound more on other principals' leadership practices and it will also contribute to existing research data. The study recommended that principals should involve teachers and other stakeholders in mentorship process in the schools.*

1: INTRODUCTION

Schools operate within certain limits of beliefs and values, which Fullan (2007) refers to as school culture. Deal and Peterson (2016) observe that school culture enhances improvement through collaborative decision-making, staff professional development, and student learning. According to Deal and Peterson (2016), learners are likely to perform better in positive collaboration environments. School managers should endeavor to improve the learning process, collaboration, shared responsibility, mentoring, conflict resolution, parental engagement, fostering collegial relationships, SMART goals and results, and timely and relevant information (Deal & Peterson, 2016).

Recent studies underscore the significance of collaboration in improving education provision in schools (Fullan & Edwards, 2022; Harris & Jones, 2020; Pinchot & Fullan, 2021). For instance, Harris and Jones (2020) exposed the weaknesses of the learning culture of schools and provided the opportunity for new developments. Fullan and Edwards (2022) and Pinchot and Fullan (2021) agree that the experiences of Covid-19 have provided the occasion for some schools to develop deeper forms of collaboration which may carry over into post-pandemic times. Hargreaves (2019) observes that partial developments of ad hoc collaborative cultures were established in the 1990s but were not sustained, and collaboration has drawn particular interest.

Burnham et al. (2007, 2018) opined that school culture is the personality of the school; hence a quality school culture will be able to show the level of interactions among the school community, management, and leadership involved, principles and rules that are the foundations to the school constitution. A nut-shell school culture contains norms, rules, regulations, ideas, and other things that are accepted by the public and used in a school (Ruhani Mat Min, 2009). Good leaders have the power to change organizations, while better leaders can change people. Changing people can create a positive culture in terms of the development and growth of the school organization (Hoer, 2018). Schein (2017) underscores the need to study leadership practices alongside school culture. Deal and Peterson (2016) claim that associating school culture and leadership positively or negatively influences the former.

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Oxfam (2021) opines that schools of the future need to define new models of education and develop collaborative learning cultures that prepare students from childhood to be supported by their peers, solve problems together, and network and exchange knowledge in an increasingly interconnected world. Fullan and Quinn (2020) observe that the Covid-19 pandemic has revealed the fault lines in traditional educational systems, creating an opportunity to re-think the role of education in societal development. There's consensus that this opportunity may modernize education systems for the 21st century, enabling all children and young people to thrive in this fast-changing world (Arnove, 2020; Darling-Hammond et al., 2020; Fullan et al., 2020; Goodwin, 2020; Tesar, 2021).

II: STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

An ideal collaborative school culture in the two sub-counties should comprise of involvement of teachers in decision making practices, high teacher motivation, establishing programs meant to mentor teachers and effective communication. Tiaty East and Tiaty West sub counties are plagued by poverty and banditry, this has made the school environment in the areas to be insecure as the safety of both the learner and the teacher is not assured. Moreover, the school feeding programme in the areas is almost collapsing yet it used to attract many children since most of the families are challenged due to prolonged drought. Schools that have been performing well are no longer adequate to the extent that KNEC accused them of cheating and canceled the examination results of more than 200 students since 2017- 2021. Due to these inadequacies, the government has intervened through employing more teachers in the hard to staff area, re- introducing the school feeding program and enhancing security operations. Teachers in the area have improvised ways of teaching two different classes in the same classroom in order to impart knowledge to a few of the learners who make it to school. However this has not resolved the situation in Tiaty East and Tiaty west sub-counties. A hostile culture of collaboration can cause the problem of poor performance to persist since there are no harmonious relations among teachers, and teacher's work in isolation. Hence Teachers' involvement in making decisions, teacher's high motivation, teacher's mentorship and effective principals' communication practices are possible intervention measures for a negative school culture of collaboration. In negative cultures such as in the 2 sub counties as observed by the researcher, there can be low teacher motivation, and poor communication may exist. A Conducive school environments build teachers and administrators who are positive, organized, outgoing and confident to address the learner's needs. Suppose the situation is left as it is, there will be fewer enrollments and retention of students, high school dropouts, indiscipline, teenage pregnancy, and early marriages will continue in schools. The cause of this negative school culture is the gap this study sought to bridge. Unless a positive culture of collaboration is created, the massive government financial investment in education will go to waste hence the need for this study.

Objectives of the Study

This study sought to:

i. Determine how mentorship practices affects collaborative secondary school culture in Tiaty East and Tiaty West Sub-Counties.

ii. Establish how communication practices influence collaborative secondary school culture in Tiaty East and Tiaty West Sub-Counties.

Research Questions

The following questions were answered:

i. How does mentorship practices influence collaborative secondary school culture in Tiaty East and Tiaty West Sub-Counties?

ii. To what extent do communication practices influence collaborative secondary school culture in Tiaty East and Tiaty West Sub-Counties?

Rationale of the study

Negative collaborative school culture can take many years to improve as a school's specific institutional history influences it. Planned measures and attitudes toward dealing with toxic culture are critical for building a positive culture of collaboration. It is not an overnight process. However, this will come with its worth. Since all cultures are unique, this research needs to be conducted to develop effective principals' leadership practices that foster positive collaborative secondary school culture.

III: LITERATURE REVIEW

Principals' Mentorship and Collaborative School Culture

Mentoring is part of the information shared by organizational learning that promotes collaboration and cooperation of employees (Sabaityte, Davidavicience & Karpoviciute, 2020). Mentoring roles or skills exhibited in different proportions are essential components that shape change and development (Naillioglu Kaymak, 2017; Sowell, 2017; Turpeinen, 2018). Principals think mentoring considerably improves their professional values as school leaders and creates an information-sharing culture that increases self-confidence and practical knowledge of school leadership (Khan et al., 2016). Carrying out mentoring processes and creating a learning culture at school is expected from school principals (Ozdeimer & Sahin, 2020).

Mentoring is valuable for creating a long-term sustainable learning culture (Morgan & Rochford, 2017). However, studies examining the mentoring the school principal offers in developing a collaborative learning culture are pretty limited. Thus this study will also investigate the mentoring roles and behaviors of school administrators in the context of developing a collaborative learning culture in schools. School-based education mentoring is important in creating a school culture that focuses on teacher development (Bakioğlu, Hacıfazlıoğlu, & Özcan, 2013). Mentoring-based learning can be seen as part of the information shared by organizational learning that promotes collaboration and cooperation of employees (Sabaityte, Davidaviciene, & Karpoviciute, 2020). Mentoring changes the teaching and learning method and the relationships of partners (Margolin, 2011). In mentoring, identifying learning

goals, supporting progression and increasing mentees' control over their learning take an important place (Centre for the Use of Research and Evidence in Education [CUREE], 2010). In addition, mentoring roles or skills exhibited in different proportions are essential components that shape change and development (Aguilar Goxiola, 1984; Cohen, 1993, 2003; Galbraith & Cohen, 1997; Hall, Draper, Smith, & Bullough, 2008; Naillioğlu Kaymak, 2017; Sowell, 2017; Turpeinen, 2018).

Mentoring is a useful tool in creating a long-term sustainable learning culture (Morgan & Rochford, 2017). It is enabling learning communities to have a more positive understanding of the role of cooperation in learning (Mullen, 2003; Mullen & Tuten, 2010) and to achieve self-learning (Bennetts, 1995; Lankau & Scandura, 2002; Portner, 2008). It lets mentees to make a change in the self-organized learning from external regulation to guidance-based self-regulation (Schunk & Mullen, 2013). A mentoring practice that includes a systematic co-working culture based on co-learning and development can change the structure, method, and relationships of the partners in the teaching and learning program (Margolin, 2011). School principals' perspective on learning and development is essential in the effective functioning of mentoring programs and in increasing the effectiveness of lifelong learning and teaching (Kutsyuruba, 2012).

Mentoring also has various contributions to executives who take the role of educational leaders. Training leaders see mentoring sessions as information sharing sessions between mentees and mentors. In order to help teachers achieve the goals and objectives of the school, practical experience is significant (Tahir et al., 2016). Besides, mentoring activities support the learning culture of an organization and increase the sense of professionalism. Therefore, the benefit for schools involved in mentoring practice is the transferability of mentoring skills to other aspects of school settings. A school staff, enriched with mentoring experience and managed by senior mentors, is likely to provide more natural change and improvement. When mentoring and coaching approaches are 'harmonized' to the context and ethos of an organization, the impacts may be more significant, especially around collaborative learning culture. Therefore, mentoring and coaching training for school leaders can be incredibly efficient in influencing and changing school culture (Lord et al., 2008).

Mentors personally benefit from the mentoring process. One of the important benefits of mentoring for mentors is increased personal satisfaction (Ragins & Verbos, 2007). In particular, mentors' personal satisfaction increases when they think they help others improve their job performance (Schechter & Firuz, 2015) and when they present and share personal experiences that are considered to be beneficial for their colleagues (Crow, 2006). Similarly, Bolam, McMahon, Pocklington and Weindling (1995) reported four benefits of mentoring for mentors as interacting with colleagues and adapting new knowledge, learning about good and bad leadership practices, networking with colleagues, and gaining opportunities to continue professional development. One of the benefits that mentorship provides to the mentor is the personal satisfaction and job satisfaction of seeing that prospective teachers/students achieve something, increased enthusiasm, motivation, and energy to teach (Botha, 2012).

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Principals' Communication Practices and Collaborative School Culture

Communication is important in bringing out issues that touch on the students as well as teachers. The issues can be solved before their escalation leading to picketing, strikes and go slow. School heads interact with students, staff, and parents from time to time and he is the uniting factor. A study showed that successful principals are communicating one hundred percent of the time by listening, speaking, writing, and reading McEwen (2003). A study in Nyando District by Achieng (2005) sought to find out head teachers' communication strategies and the relationship between academic performances in public secondary schools. The research results indicated that effective communication from head teachers created free atmosphere for teaching and learning to take place thus impacting positively on academic performance.

Collaborative leadership is built through effective leadership in institutions of learning which connects their institutional systems to the people with whom they work, one individual at a time, learning enough about the individual and the group to lead systemic change by influencing people collectively and individually according to Rubin (2002). The head teachers who are collaborative seeks opinions from the teachers and learners to draw clear goals which all aim to achieve and thus to succeed in their performance by taking collective responsibility. Some virtues in the principal like how the principal listens, transmits information, makes decisions and leads dialogues will affect leadership and communication processes and ultimately the school outcomes (Kowalski, Petersen, & Fusarelli, 2007). The principal's way of communicating affects how she is perceived and her ability to pursue change which is needed. The different techniques and how individual skills are used in conversations can reveal the communicator's pre-understanding, values, knowledge and preparation.

Marzano and Waters (2005) found that effective principals establish strong lines of two-way communication. Deal and Bolman (2002) argued that the principal has to ask questions, be truthful and encourage feedback from school community members. Leithwood and Rishi (2005) established the duties of principals in building productive relationships with parents and districts and making decisions that promote the smooth running of the school. The principal should have good listening skills, be open-minded and give room for dialogue and open communication to keep off vices (Ubben et al., 2001).
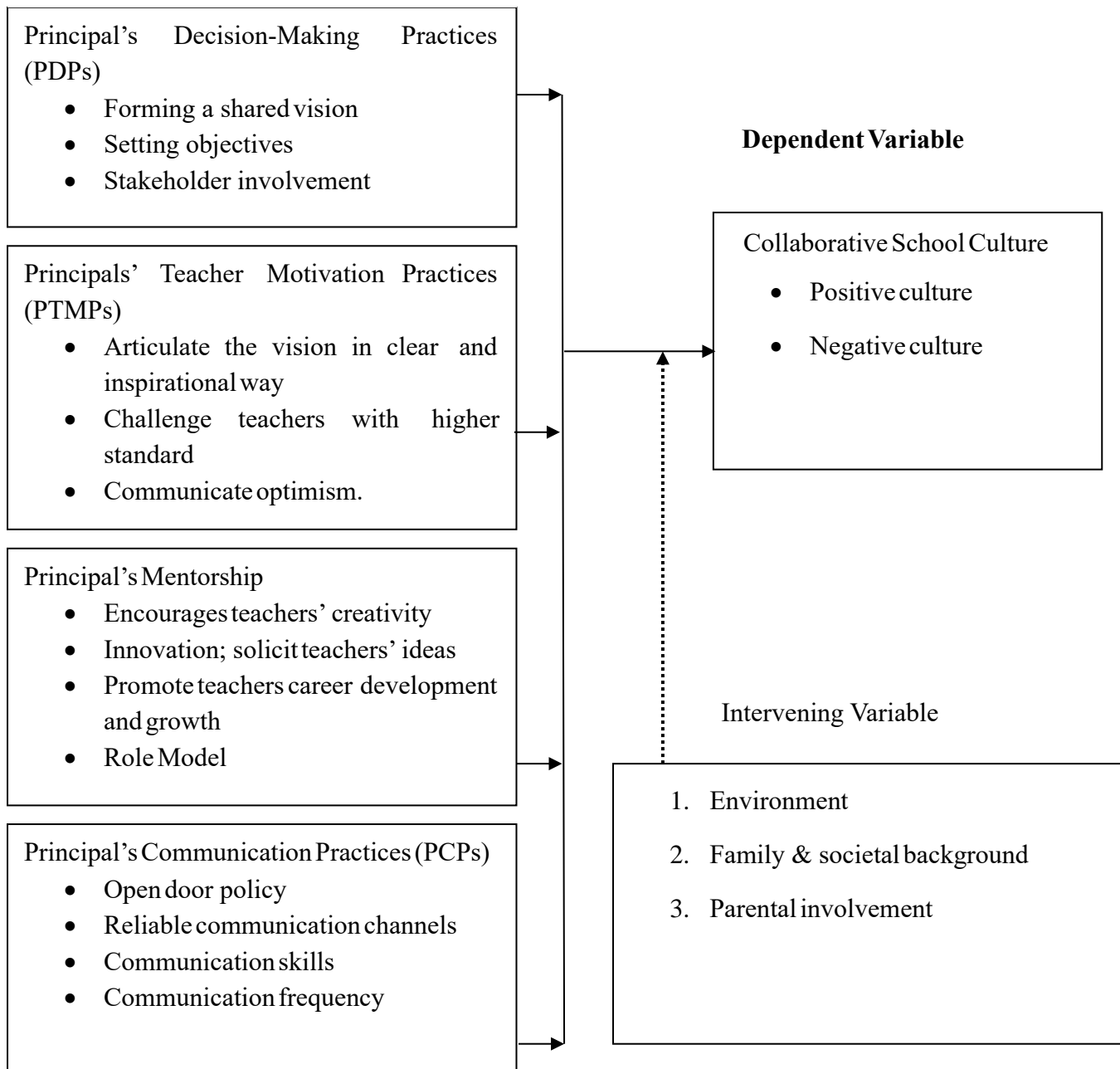
Communication and culture are closely connected. Communication is the medium where the culture becomes visible. Communicating some values and emphasizing certain aspects reveals what is accepted in a school. Culture emerges and is sustained through the communication process, and at the same time, communication is the only process that can identify the invisible patterns in schools (Kowalski et al., 2007). Communication is essential in creating a supportive environment wherein staff members feel comfortable approaching leaders. Principals can encourage communication by informing staff how, when, and where they can communicate concerns (Stickle & Scott, 2016).

Conceptual framework

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Imenda (2014), as cited by Shikalepo (2020), states that a conceptual framework results from bringing together several related concepts to explain and give a broader understanding of the phenomena under research.

Independent Variables

Principal's Decision-Making Practices (PDPs) • Forming a shared vision • Setting objectives • Stakeholder involvement		**Dependent Variable**

Principal's Decision-Making Practices (PDPs)
- Forming a shared vision
- Setting objectives
- Stakeholder involvement

Dependent Variable

Principals' Teacher Motivation Practices (PTMPs)
- Articulate the vision in clear and inspirational way
- Challenge teachers with higher standard
- Communicate optimism.

Collaborative School Culture
- Positive culture
- Negative culture

Principal's Mentorship
- Encourages teachers' creativity
- Innovation; solicit teachers' ideas
- Promote teachers career development and growth
- Role Model

Intervening Variable

Principal's Communication Practices (PCPs)
- Open door policy
- Reliable communication channels
- Communication skills
- Communication frequency

1. Environment
2. Family & societal background
3. Parental involvement

Source: Researcher 2023

The figure above shows the concepts of the study that investigated the relationship between the independent variable on the dependent one. The researcher is aiming to determine whether the independent variable: Principals' leadership practices, does in any way affect the dependent variable: collaborative school culture. Intervening variables are parental engagement, the learning environment, and family background.

Theoretical Framework

Two theories form the basis for this study: the transformational leadership theory (Bass, 2017) and the Stakeholders' Theory (Freeman, 1984).

The Transformational Leadership Theory, Bass (1985, 2017)

Bass describes the leader's involvement in changing the attitude of the workers in order to increase their commitment to the organization. This school of thought pays more attention to relationships at work intimately connected with the actual behavior and attitude of the leaders. Bass (1985, 2017) asserts that leaders show empathy towards the workers, exercise less supervision and encourage participation. The worker, in turn, perceives the leader from an inspirational angle with loyalty and enthusiasm.

The leader's personal qualities persuade and influence his subordinates into working towards shared goals and vision of the organization. They use their charisma, skills, knowledge, and principles to transform and reform all those around them into willing followers. This theory applies to this study as it seeks a compromise between stressing the achievement of school goals and objectives and individual needs (Blanchard & Hearsay, 1988). The transformational leadership style of the principal influences teachers and stakeholders' perception of school climate and culture to that of a safe and secure place where they feel valued and wanted and hence is committed to the achievement of the institutional goals.

Stakeholders' Theory

The proponent of the Stakeholders' Theory is Freeman (1984). According to Freeman (2010), this theory states that the stakeholders' ecosystem comprises anybody that either affects or is affected by the organization. Freeman (2010) defines a stakeholder as "any individual or group of people who have an interest in a particular issue and whose interests are believed to affect or be affected by the achievement of the organization" (p. 25).

The rationale for the adoption of the Stakeholders' Theory in this investigation was to gain an understanding of the extent of the implementation of the stakeholders' participation in school management. Besides, stakeholders' participation in school management is the National policy for Education reform (Educational Act, 2008) whose implementation was believed to either affect or be affected by many stakeholders. The application of this theory in education management maintains that Education for All is the obligation of all. The theory clarifies the responsibility for all education stakeholders to carry out their obligations in the attainment of the objectives of education (Harrison, 2019).

Research gaps:

Several studies have been conducted in relation to leadership practices. They include Kinyua (2018); Okoth (2016); Wambua, Kalai and Okoth (2017); Kariuki (2016). These studies presented contextual, methodological, geographical and conceptual gaps which the current study seeks to fill. This study

therefore aims to assess the principals' leadership practices and how they influence collaborative secondary school culture in Tiaty East & TiatyWest Sub-counties.

V: METHODOLOGY:

The qualitative research methodology was adopted. It formulates a problem for a more thorough investigation to discover ideas, predictions, and insights. It is a great way to explore more complex information and explore people's thoughts and behavior (Bhandhari, 2020, as cited by Scribbr, 2020).The cross-cultural research design was employed with four cases and multiple units of analysis within each case. The cross-cultural design allowed the researcher to focus on processes rather than outcomes to gain an in-depth understanding of a situation in four separate cases and allows for how and why questions (Yin, 2009). The unit of analysis rather than the topic of the investigation was the focal point of this comparative case study (Merriam, 2009). The unit of analysis was the leader and his specific school's organizational collaborative culture practices.

Study Locale

Tiaty East and Tiaty West Sub-counties were the study locale. It was the ideal location because the researcher was able to get important information, different ideas, and distinct opinions from diverse real-life experiences and cultures aimed at assessing the influence of principals' leadership practices on collaborative school culture to establish whether the principals' leadership practices part of it is the cause of either positive or negative collaborative school culture.

Target Population, sample and sample size

The population of this study was 770, comprising ten school principals, 156 teachers, 276 subordinate staff, and 328 student leader. Purposeful sampling technique was used, Saunders & Thornhill(2012) **Table1***; Sample size of the study*

categories	Target population	Sample size	Sampling Technique
Principals	10	10	Purposeful sampling
Teachers	156	31	
Support	276	56	
staff	328	64	
Student	770	16	
leaders			
Total			

Construction of Research Instruments

A research instrument is a tool used to obtain, measure, and analyze data from subjects around the research topic (as cited by Editage Insights 2020)

Interview schedules

The interview schedules were administered to principals, teachers and support staff. They contained unstructured questions. These questions covered the four objectives of the study. Interviews are advantageous since they offer in-depth information about the matter, and the researcher can ask more questions than the formulated (Jwan, 2010). The discussions were structured from the influence of principals' leadership practices on school culture items in research questions. This enabled the researcher to hear and get meaningful information beyond words put down in writing (Oso & Onen, 2009).

3.7.2 Focus group discussion guides

Focus group discussion enabled the researcher to gain control over the line of questioning and discussion (Kruger & Casey, 2009). This enabled the researcher to have meaningful information beyond words put down in writing (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003). The group had six student prefect participants (Kruger & Casey, 2009) from form two to form four who have been in the school for more than one year. There were gender considerations in mixed schools, thus a boy and a girl in each class.

3.8 Testing for credibility and dependability

Piloting was done in two schools, which was not included in the study sample from the Gilgil sub-county, Nakuru County. The schools were randomly picked. Piloting was necessary to determine if the respondents found the instruments clear, precise, and comprehensive. This enhanced reliability.

Credibility of the Research Instruments

The credibility of an instrument refers to how well it measures what it was supposed to measure (Yin, 2017). The study assessed the credibility by looking at the instrument's content. To enhance credibility, the interview schedule instrument was appraised by the supervisor, who is the authority in the study area. The content of the interview schedule was collected according to the supervisors' guidance and structured in simple language understandable to the respondents. There was also a one-to-one correspondence between interview questions asked and underlying competency. Other metrics included getting supervisors' input to verify if constructs were being assessed correctly. The items in the instruments were examined by the same panel of experts for appropriateness and clarity for content validity.

Dependability of the instruments

According to Drost (2011), dependability is important to trustworthiness because it establishes the research study's findings as consistent and repeatable. To ensure the dependability of the study, the researcher will provide as many details concerning the methodology used as possible. Major themes, as well as sub-themes, will be described and interpreted. This research used the test-retest method to detect random errors due to inaccurate coding, ambiguous subject instructions, interview fatigue, and

interviewer bias. The same interview schedule content was administered to the same subject in the same conditions twice a week.

Data Collection Methods and Procedures

The study lasted around five months and was overseen by academic supervisors. Following the approval of the study proposal, the researcher submitted for research clearance through the Mount Kenya University Board of Postgraduate Studies to the National Commission of Science, Technology, and Innovation (NACOSTI). The researcher subsequently submitted an introduction letter to the Tiaty Sub County Education Office, detailing the research's goals, in order to receive additional approval from the Tiaty Sub County Director of Education. The principals and parents of students under the age of 18 also gave their approval to the researcher. The researcher distributed research instruments to administrators, instructors, and students after getting authorization. The interviews took place over the phone for those who were far and face to face for those who were physically available. These sessions were recorded. The information was then coded and saved in a password-protected computer file.

VI: RESULTS AND DICUSSIONS

Return Rate

Two data collection tools were used for this study; Principals, teachers and support staff interview schedules and focused group for student leaders .While 97 interviews were intended, only 71 interviewees were present which yielded a response rate of 73.3%. This was over the 50% threshold set by Marshall and Rossman (2011) for statistical significance. The 71 interviewees comprised of 8 secondary school principals, 24 teachers and 39 members of the support staff. The focused group guides for student leaders had a 96.9 % response rate.

Table 2: Return Rate

	Principals	Teachers	Student Leaders	Support Staff	Total
Sample	10	31	64	56	161
Response	8	24	62	39	133
Response rate	**80.0%**	**77.4%**	**96.9%**	**69.6%**	**82.6%**

Source: Researchers own collection

Demographic Data of Respondents

In this area, respondents were asked to provide demographic information such as their gender and length of stay in the current station. The researcher used tables to display this aggregate data.

Gender of Interviewees

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One goal of the research was to identify the gender of the people who took part in the interview.
Accordingly, the interviewees were prompted to identify themselves by gender. The results are
reported in table 3.

Table 3: Gender of the interviewees

	Principals	Teachers	Student Leaders	Support Staff	Total
Female	3	12	32	19	66
male	5	12	30	20	67
total	**8**	**24**	**62**	**39**	**133**

Source: Researchers own collection

Table 3: Gender of the Respondents

Table 1 shows that 50.4% of the interviewees were male while 49.6% were female. This demonstrates
that the researcher made an effort to collect data from interviewees of both sexes. This shows that the
researcher considered all interviewees irrespective of the gender to obtain reliable information
concerning the subject under study.

Level of Education of the Interviewees

The interviewees were asked to indicate their highest level of education. Their responses were
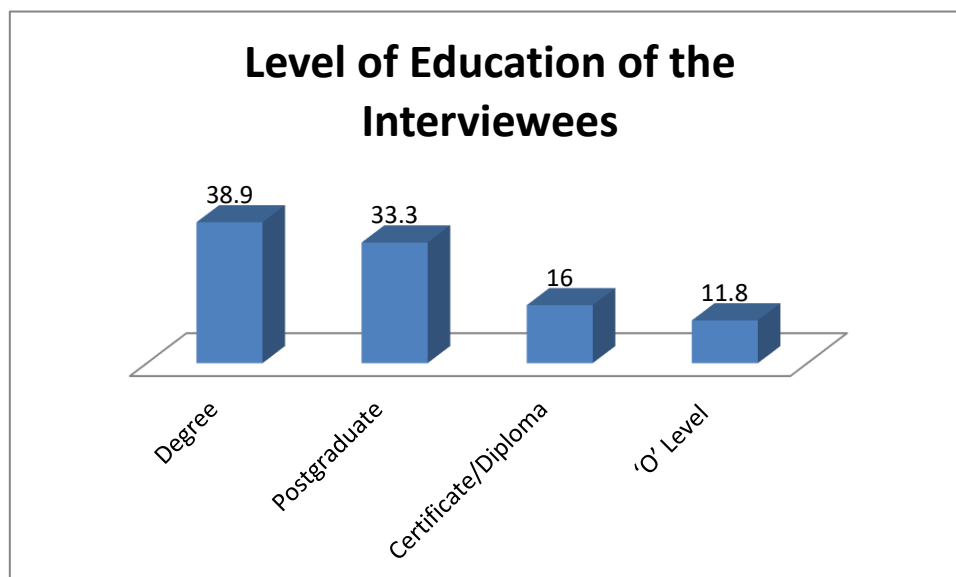presented in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Level of Education of the Interviewees

From the findings, majority of the interviewees as shown by 38.9% had attained a Degree, 33.3% had
attained a postgraduate, 16.0% had attained a Certificate/Diploma while 11.8% had reached the 'O' level.

This implies that majority of the interviewees were learned enough to understand the subject under study and give reliable information.

Number of Years the Interviewees Worked in the schools

The research also aimed to determine how long the participants had worked in the current stations. The results are shown in Figure 3.

Number of Years the Interviewees Worked in the school

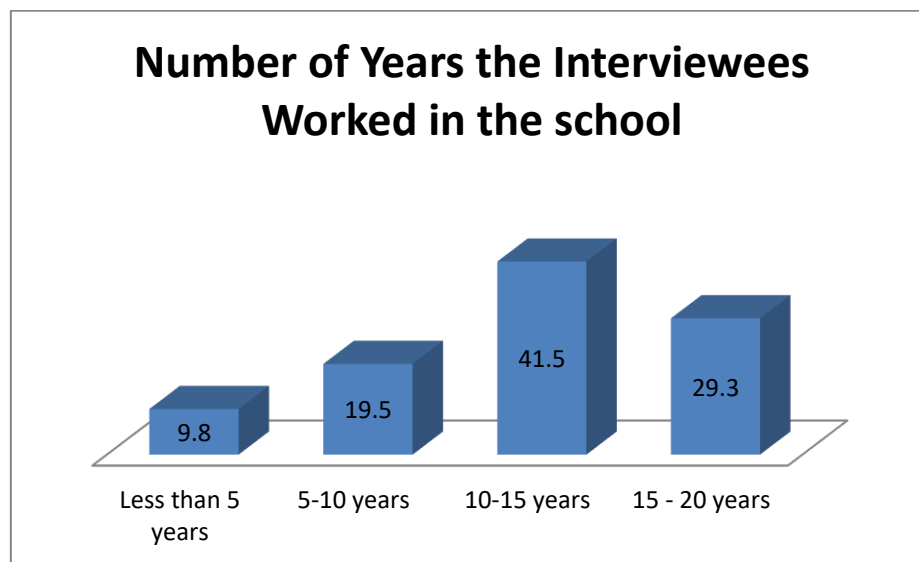|			
9.8	19.5	41.5	29.3
Less than 5 years	5-10 years	10-15 years	15 - 20 years

Figure 3: Number of Years the Interviewees Worked in the school

Figure 4 shows that 41.5 percent of interviewees had worked in the school for 10-15 years, 29.3 percent had worked for 15 - 20 years, 19.5 percent had worked for 5-10 years, and 9.8 percent have worked for less than 5 years. As a result, it can be concluded that the vast majority of interviewees had worked in the same station for a sufficient length of time to provide reliable data on the topic. Therefore, this suggests that they were all be able to offer insightful replies to the interview guide.

Pilot study observations

The pilot subjects were interviewed, artifact analysis was conducted and one adjustment was made to the protocol: the initial software for analyzing sentiment within the transcripts of human language was eliminated because it didn't significantly add to the themes that emerged and were examined using Atlas ti. Additionally, the objectives and research questions were adequately reflected in the focus group guide questions. Table 4.3 lists the analysis order of artifacts, the primary audience for each artifact and key observations from the study of each artifact made by the researcher in the pilot study.

Qualitative responses from interviews

Principal's Mentorship Practices and Collaborative School Culture

The research aimed to determine how mentorship practices affects collaborative secondary school culture in Tiaty East and Tiaty West Sub-Counties. The researcher required the interviewee to indicate

the mentorship practices that have had a major impact in promoting a collaborative secondary school culture. A common theme in this question was inviting mentors. Principal 19 mentioned,

> "*Mentorship programme like allowing teachers to go for the trainings when the chances are there. For teachers of languages they can go for the NES trainings. We also have the roles between the school and the communities so they come together and try as much as possible to assist each other.*"

Principal 1 noted that,

> "*... Mentoring is another way to encourage new principals, teachers as well as support staff as it helps accustom their profession. For incoming principals, it provides a greater knowledge of what is necessary to succeed in their position and how it is different in the role you are leaving. It offers opportunities to become familiar with their new school cultures and information that the new administrator did not previously have.*"

According to the support staff 33,

> "*Mentoring supports professional development in that it develops their skills; also it helps determine what would be of importance to their school and the success of their schools. It significantly aids them in setting priorities for professional growth that will have a favorable impact to their school culture. Through mentoring the mentor can support the mentees critical thinking.*"

These results implied that principals who invite mentors to promote a collaborative secondary school culture play a vital role in fostering a supportive and growth-oriented environment. By carefully structuring and supporting mentorship programs, schools can enhance teacher and support staff development, improve collaboration, and ultimately positively impact student outcomes.

Principal's Communication Practices and Collaborative School Culture

The research sought to establish how communication practices influence collaborative secondary school culture in Tiaty East and Tiaty West Sub-Counties. The interviewees were required to state how the principal engages the school community in courageous communication practices about school culture reform. A recurring theme in this question was school meetings and social media especially Whatsapp groups. Principal 7 said,

> "*Our community is part of the school because within the community, they try as much as possible to know what is happening and how best they can help us.in the occasion where we have issues, they come in and assist us. They are the watchdog of our school. They are part of us.*"

Teacher 24 mentioned,

> "*Through communication, we make sure that you update us with any information daily. We normally have WhatsApp groups where the principal communicates with us regarding the school activities and maybe changes made and activities coming up so that the communication is smooth.*"

Teacher 10 said,

> *"Everything is positive and open. Everything is discussed and posed in an open-ended or a non-confidential manner. Although everyone has different opinions, they are always treated with respect. Although we don't always agree, it has never become physical. It never happens in the secret the secret. It's constantly accessible and everyone participates. Everyone is appreciated and given attention."*

The support staff 17 said,

> *"I believe that having a vision of what he wants to happen is the most crucial thing he does. He creates a framework for the vision to manifest. He delegates it as well so that the experts can assist advancing it. He presents his initiatives to the school committee who work to maintain the balance and carry them out."*

The responses implied that the principal's proactive engagement with the school community through courageous communication practices like school meetings and social media, especially WhatsApp groups, can have a transformative effect on promoting a collaborative secondary school culture. It creates a sense of unity, transparency, and shared purpose that benefits students, teachers, parents, and all stakeholders in the educational process.

VII: SUMMARRY CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary of the Findings

The research aimed to determine how mentorship practices affects collaborative secondary school culture in Tiaty East and Tiaty West Sub-Counties. The study found out that:

1. The principals invited mentors for staff development, improve collaboration, and ultimately positively impact student outcomes to promote a collaborative secondary school culture. The study also found that time was a big challenge that affected the extent to which principals allowed mentors or mentorship programs in the school due to the daily schedules.

The research sought to establish how communication practices influence collaborative secondary school culture in Tiaty East and Tiaty West Sub-Counties. The study found that:

2. School meetings and social media especially Whatsapp groups are used to engage the school community in courageous communication practices about school culture reform. The study found also that some principals could not effectively communicate hence there was a negative collaborative culture in the schools. The principals who excelled at communication created the most collaborative and positive school cultures.

Conclusions

The study deduced that;

(i) the relationship between a principal's mentorship practices and the collaborative school culture is a positive and significant one.

(ii) Effective mentorship practices, when implemented by a principal, can contribute significantly to the development and sustenance of a collaborative school culture.

(iii) The research concluded that when principals invest in mentorship programs that provide guidance, support, and opportunities for professional growth, they foster an environment where educators are more inclined to collaborate, communicate, and work together effectively toward common goals.

(iv) The study concluded that the relationship between a principal's communication practices and a collaborative school culture is integral and symbiotic.

(v) Effective communication by principals can significantly influence and shape the collaborative culture within a school.

(vi) Effective communication practices set the tone for collaboration, trust, and shared objectives within the school community.

(vii) Conversely, a collaborative culture can be nurtured and sustained through consistent, transparent, and inclusive communication from school leaders. These two elements are interdependent and essential for creating a positive and thriving school environment. Effective communication was related and a big contributory factor for effective decision making practices, high teacher motivation, promoted mentorship practices and eventually schools which had open communication practices had positive collaborative school cultures.

Recommendations

On building collaborative cultures, the study recommends that

1. educational management courses offered by education and career providers to incorporates units on building positive collaborative school cultures, mentoring process in schools,educational innovation and be taught as courses so that they are able to develop new and unique ways to solve common educational problems that they encounter every day.

2. The principals should make a regular practice and introduce mentorship programmes since if this was in the study it's an indicator the discipline turn round will be within reach. Induction to be enhanced as the role of guest speakers and the alumni enhance the competitiveness among the students, principals to make it more less a routine for guest speakers to address students on varying current challenges facing the students. The successful alumni will motivate and encourage the students do well and in the process discipline issues such as defiance to authority, sneaking from school, drugs and substance abuse missing lessons will be forgotten. This should be made mandatory in all schools in the county.

Recommendation for Further Research

The study recommends that other principals' leadership practices not looked at in this study should be considered in future studies. There is need to replicate this study in other parts of the country. Such studies may consider using a bigger population, difference sampling techniques and different approaches to data collection than the ones used in this study.

Influence Of Principals' Leadership Practices on Collaborative School Culture in Public Secondary Schools in Tiaty East and Tiaty West Sub-Counties, Kenya.

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