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An Investigation of the factors that influence Staffroom culture and its impact on the Kenya Certificate of Primary Education Performance: a case study of Kianda School

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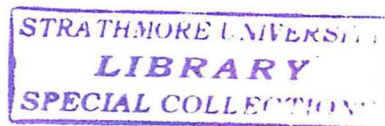
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**An Investigation of the Factors That Influence Staffroom
Culture and Its Impact on the Kenya Certificate Of Primary
Education Performance – A Case Study of Kianda School**

**Prepared by:
Josephine Mikui**



**A Report Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Award of
Post Graduate Diploma in Educational Management
Strathmore University**

2008

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my parents Samuel Mikui and Leah Nyaruai for their selflessness in enabling me attain a good education and for their love and support throughout my study.

Special dedication goes to my late brother and friend, Leonard Wambugu and to little MaryJoy Wangui who are always in my heart.



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I wish to express my appreciation to Miss Margaret Roche, my supervisor, for her guidance during the study. Her comments and words of encouragement kept me going.

I would also like to thank the Academic Council of Kianda School for allowing me to carry out the case study in the school. Special thanks to the principal Miss Joan Odera for showing understanding throughout my studies and for allowing me time off from work whenever it was necessary. I am greatly indebted to my colleagues Emma Mungai and Angela Kariuki for their moral support in stepping in to assist me with my school duties. My gratitude goes to Theodora Ochichi for helping me to administer the questionnaire exercise and to the teachers for their willing response to the questionnaire.

Very special thanks to my friends Lucy Mulli and Maggie Ileri for their moral support and encouragement and to Njoki Kiagiri for typing most of my work.

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ABSTRACT

Teachers play a key role in the development of a country. Teaching is the essential profession, the one that makes all other professions possible. Well qualified, caring and committed teachers are needed in order to ensure that our children are prepared for the challenges and opportunities they will encounter in future.

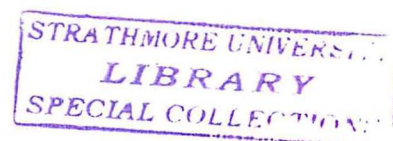
The role of the teaching staff is emphasized by Karugu (1986:7) who notes:

‘Reformers may build schools, make changes in structure and the curricular, recommend and prescribe methods or aids but in the end, everything will depend on the teachers who will be responsible for applying them.’

The morale and effectiveness of a teacher is influenced by the kind of culture he/she finds in the staffroom. This encompasses the way of carrying out teaching and non-teaching duties, the way of relating with one another, attitude towards administration and also the manner in which students are handled. Ultimately all these is likely to impact on students’ performance.

The performance in Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE) in Kianda School has been on the decline for the last three years. The mean score has been going down as a result of poor performance in some of the subjects. It has been noted that working relations and team work between teachers within some subject panels such as Science and Mathematics has also been deteriorating. A negative culture among the staff had begun to develop.

The purpose of this study was to assess the culture in terms of the relationship the teachers have among themselves and how they perceive the school administration. The study sought to establish if the leadership style contributed to the staffroom culture and also to verify if there was a connection between the staffroom culture and students’ performance.



The literature review showed that a lot of research has been done in the area of school culture but not much has been focused on staffroom culture. There has been no specific study relating to the causes of declining performance in Kianda School to poor staffroom culture. The literature reviewed supported the fact that staffroom culture does have an impact on students' performance.

A qualitative research methodology was used as it was ideal considering the number of respondents to be interviewed were few. The methodologies used consisted of observations, interviews and a questionnaire. The questionnaire was administered to 18 teachers. 3 teachers were interviewed basically to supplement the questionnaire for in-depth information.

The major findings of the study were:

- Poor team work and collaboration was noted in the Science and Mathematics subject panels
- Poor leadership at subject panel level.
- Targets given by the school management were sometimes perceived as being unrealistic and therefore not implemented.
- A few older teachers in some cases resisted new ideas and new approaches to doing things e.g. teaching methodology.
- Cliques had formed which made some teachers feel isolated.
- Some teachers felt that their views were not sought before decisions were made by the management.

The major recommendations of the study were:

- Staff induction should be more thorough and a proper and more effective mentoring system should be put in place.
- Give continuous training to the staff on the school's mission and vision so as to build the desired culture among them.
- Build a strong team spirit by organizing activities that help the teachers to bond.

- Leadership style should be more collaborative. Invite views and suggestions from the staff before making serious decisions.
- Allocate more time to the staff meetings and let them be more interactive. Allow the teachers to contribute to the agenda of the meetings so that their concerns are addressed.
- Provide training in leadership skills to the subject panel heads so that they may give better direction to the panels.
- Encourage collaborative culture amongst the staff especially within the panels.

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List of Abbreviations & Acronyms

KCPE	-	Kenya Certificate of Primary Education
SC	-	Section Committee
UNESCO		United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization
CEO		Chief Executive Officer
KNEC		Kenya National Examinations Council
Std.		Standard

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background Information

Culture generally refers to patterns of human activity and the symbolic structures that give such activities significance and importance. Culture can be defined as all the ways of life including arts, beliefs and institutions of a population that is passed down from generation to generation. Culture has been called “the way of life for an entire society” as such it includes codes of manners, dress, language, religion, norms of behaviour such as law and morality and systems of belief.

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) (2002) described culture as follows “Culture should be regarded as a set of distinctive, spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features of society or a social group and that it encompasses lifestyles, ways of living together, value systems, traditions and beliefs.

We can agree therefore that culture is “The set of norms, customs, and rules of behaviour that over time has grown up in an institution. In a school setting, it takes quite a long time for a culture to evolve”. (M.Roche, C.Nyandiere, 2007) Many people refer to the school culture as school tradition. Culture is important because it embodies certain values which should be in harmony with the school mission and vision if the school is to achieve its objectives.

Since culture is dynamic, changes are inevitable if one is to accommodate the variety of ideas brought into the school by different generations of teachers and students. However, it must be remembered that “values that are based on truth should never be allowed to go out of date or be replaced by some new fad. Truth is not dynamic in the sense of fundamental change. It is absolute”. (M. Roche, C. Nyandiere, 2007) Truth should be the pillar on which the underlying values of a school culture are based. A good culture is manifested in the predominant virtues practiced by members of the school community.

One of the major challenges being faced in schools in the current Kenyan society is that too much focus is being put on the students’ academic performance at the cost of other aspects

of the all-round development of the child. In the end, we end up missing the point of what true education of the person really is. We shouldn't lose sight of the fact that holistic education that includes nurturing, caring, giving life skills to the children to ensure that they are prepared for the challenges and opportunities they will encounter in the future, is a great responsibility. Children need an environment with a positive culture that enables them to exploit their talents and bring out the best in them. In a school setting this is where teachers come in.

Teachers form that part of the school community that is the most powerful element in the culture of the school. The norms of behaviour amongst the teachers which is seen in their predominant virtues or vices has a direct impact on the students. For instance if the teachers have a culture of industriousness, this will influence the students positively. The students are inclined towards this virtuous way. On the other hand if the teachers have a culture of apathy, the students will most likely be drowned in the same vice.

The hallmark of any school is the staffroom: that is where the teachers exchange ideas, share their challenges, discuss their students' performance and so on. The staffroom can be looked at as a mini organization within a bigger institution. It has its own dynamics, politics, culture, in short a life of its own. A great good or great evil can occur in the staffroom depending on the values embraced by the teachers. It then follows that if a school is to have a strong culture that is necessary for good performance, it is imperative that the staffroom has to have a strong and positive culture too.

The manner in which teachers perform their duties, the way things are done in the staffroom, how teachers relate with one another in the departments, the way teachers express their grievances, the attitude towards the school management all form what we can refer to as staffroom culture.

Staffroom culture is an important influence on any individual teacher's work experience. Inevitably, therefore, the culture among a school staff strongly affects the academic performance of children. Good academic performance in our Kenyan context is measured by the ability of the students who pass the National exams set by Kenya National Examination Council (KNEC) and to qualify for the next level of education. Teachers influence students' performance with their input which may include good lesson

preparation, appropriate teaching methods, good time management, effective classroom techniques and motivation of students and so on.

In their study in 1985, Purkey and Smith note that culture strongly affects the academic performance of children. This culture is composed of values, norms and roles existing within institutionally distinct structures of governance, communication, educational practice and policies. They also note that successful schools are known to have a culture that produces a climate of ethos conducive to learning and teaching.

Over the last three years, the Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE) performance in Kianda School has been on the decline. Prior to this, for at least five years the KCPE mean score ranged between 385 marks to 392 marks out of a possible 500 marks. This enabled the school to earn a reputable name and prestigious position among other top private schools in the city of Nairobi. Strong teamwork and fairly good relations among the teaching staff was tangible during those five or so years. However, in the last three years, the trend has reversed. The KCPE mean score dropped to 378.9 marks in the year 2005, to 375.8 marks in 2006 and finally to 367.6 marks in 2007. Almost simultaneously the quality of relationships between the various members of staff seems to have deteriorated in the last 3 or 4 years. This has led to the speculation that there could be a connection between the declining school performance and the staffroom culture which has obviously been threatened.

The Kianda School philosophy is clearly spelt out in the school motto 'In Opere et Veritate'. It tries to promote the noble ideal of truth in words and deeds. This calls for one to demonstrate that there is harmony between what they do and what they say. Ideally this should lead to a culture of openness and trust among the teachers, between teachers and leadership and between teachers and students. A high level of professionalism, integrity and industriousness is expected among the teachers. The school philosophy also promotes a culture whereby teachers can work with limited supervision.

Human, professional and spiritual formation is an integral part of the school's staff development plan. It is expected that the teacher's conscience should be well formed such that she will carry out all her teaching and non-teaching duties to the best of her capacity. There should be no need to look over the shoulder to check whether the 'boss' is around or not.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Considering that the teachers are the ones who deal with students on a day-to-day basis, it follows that the staffroom culture which influences the individual teachers also impacts directly on the students and hence their performance. Therefore this research looked at the staffroom culture of Kianda School, Upper Primary Section and its impact on the school's academic performance.

There has been a consistent decline in the performance of Kianda School pupils on the KCPE examinations. A decline in performance is an indication of underlying problems within the school and unless the issue is addressed, performance will continue to decline.

It has also been observed that during the same period when performance has declined, there has been a change in the culture amongst the teachers in the school characterized by grumbling, lateness to class, poor team work in the subject panels, failure to meet deadlines in marking books and tests, not putting in extra time after school hours when the need arises, setting sub-standard exams, lack of diligence in carrying out non-teaching duties and so on.

There are indications that this new culture has had a negative impact on the teachers' attitudes, lesson preparation and also their teaching methods. To curb the problem of students' performance there is a need to address the issues the teachers are facing. The remedial strategy needs to be guided with information on what behaviours and attitudes to address and means of addressing them. The intention of this study was therefore to establish the root cause of the negative culture.

The following is a table showing the KCPE performance between the years 2005 and 2007. The table indicates mean scores per subject.

Table i
KCPE ANALYSIS

SUBJECT	2005	2006	2007
ENGLISH	87.9	91.6	90.5
KISWAHILI	70.8	74.5	68.1
MATHS	73.5	73.1	73.3
SCIENCE	72.9	62.9	69.0
SOCIAL STUDIES	73.8	73.7	66.6
TOTAL	378	375.8	367.6



1.3 Purpose of The Study

The purpose of this study was to:

- i. Identify the factors that influence staffroom culture
- ii. Investigate the impact on staffroom culture on performance
- iii. In addition, the study attempted to establish if the leadership style has impact on the staffroom culture.

1.4 Objectives of The Study

General Objective

The purpose of this study is to investigate the factors that influence staffroom culture and its impact on the students' performance.

Specific Objectives

- a) To assess the culture among the teachers and the relationships they have between themselves and with the school administration.
- b) To determine the relationship between the staff culture and the school's academic performance.
- c) To determine the effectiveness of staff induction and mentoring of new teachers in inculcating the appropriate school culture.
- d) To find out the impact the leadership style in the school has on staffroom culture.
- e) To identify factors that have motivated the creation of the current staffroom culture.

- f) To identify possible strategies that will influence staff culture to yield improved students' performance.

1.5 Research Questions

The study tried to answer the following questions:

- a) Is there a significant relationship between leadership style and staffroom culture?
- b) Is there a relationship between staffroom culture and school performance?
- c) Is the staff induction and mentoring of new teachers being done effectively?
- d) What factors have led to the current staffroom culture?

1.6 Basic Assumptions of The Study

The following were used as the basic assumptions:

- i. The respondents would provide truthful and honest responses to the items in the Study
- ii. Staffroom culture has been threatened and is having a negative impact on teachers' effectiveness
- iii. Academic results may improve if the staffroom culture is positive

1.7 Significance of the Study

Although a number of surveys have been done in the school, they have focused on getting teachers' feedback on training programmes implemented and none has focused on staff attitudes and culture. Therefore there is no information available on Kianda school teachers' attitudes and behaviours and how this impacts on school performance.

- o The findings will assist the school management to understand what influences the atmosphere in the staffroom and what can be done about it. The school management invests a lot of money and time in staff development. The findings of this research will enable the management to know which aspects of staff development and personal formation of the teachers need more attention.
- o The study will also create awareness among the teachers of their role in supporting one another and in working towards a more conducive atmosphere in the staffroom. They will also become more aware of how their relationships with each other and with the

school leadership has a direct impact on their performance and consequently of the students' performance. The students' academic performance will improve as a result of better team work among the teachers.

- The study will contribute to existing literature on factors that shape a staffroom culture and how this culture influences school academic performance. It may be useful to other researchers in the field of education who may be interested in this topic.
- The results of the study will be useful to headteachers who want to understand their teachers better and want to promote a good culture among them. Headteachers and teachers may utilize the findings as a basis for identifying the forces that work against them and hinder good examination achievement of pupils.

1.8 Study Limitations

The study only focused on teachers in upper primary section and therefore the results of the study may not be applicable to other sections or schools. It was also not possible to control the attitudes of the respondents, which may affect the validity of the responses. The respondents may at times give

1.9 Delimitation of the Study

The study was conducted in Kianda School Upper Primary section which is only a small section of the primary school. The finding of this study may only be generalized to other schools with caution. This is because the conditions in other schools may be different from those of the setting covered by this study. The study selected Upper Primary teachers because they are the ones who finally prepare the KCPE candidates for the national exams. Consequently a lot of focus is on them and their performance.

1.10 Definition of Key Concepts

Leadership – this is a process whereby an individual influences the behaviour of others or groups regardless of the reason so that the influenced party acts without its own volition. (Blanchard and Hersey, 1982)

Leadership style – this refers to the method used by a leader to influence those under him. The styles are continuum ranging from authoritarian to democratic.

Management – Process of setting and achieving goals through planning, organizing, controlling, staffing, communicating, budgeting, directing in an organization such as a school. The manager has to work with or through people.

Mean score refers to the average mark showing individual or group achievement in examinations.

Schools' Performance – In this context refers to the grades both per subject and over all that the students obtained in KCPE exams.

Culture – A set of customs and rules of behaviour that over time has grown up in an institution.

Upper Primary – in this context refers to Std 5, 6, 7 and 8.

Section Committee – made up of 4 senior teachers charged with the responsibility of running the Upper Primary section.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Staffroom Politics

2.2 School Leadership

2.3 Collaborative Culture

2.4 Concept of School Culture

2.1 Staff-room Politics

An important aspect of life that influences staffroom culture is staffroom politics. Studies that have been carried out demonstrate that staffroom politics greatly affects the dynamics that form the staffroom culture.

In her book 'The Ultimate Teacher's Handbook', Hazel Bennett (2005) compares the staff to a class. 'The staff are like the head's class. An even-handed, kindly and efficient teacher usually has a happy, united and hardworking class and the same applies to the head and the staff. Of course there are many excellent heads who can take a widely differing group of teachers and mould them into a happy, united and effective team.'

Bennett goes on to talk about factions that develop within the staff and points out that this has an effect on the pupils and also divides the staff further. 'When the staffroom has factions in it, not only do the pupils sense it and exploit the situation by getting through the cracks, but the more aggressive and power happy teacher do so as well.'

Formation of cliques comes about because individuals tend to group together depending on what they support and what they oppose. According to Bennett, staffrooms can be divided on issues such as;

- Those who support the head and those who don't
- Those who want the school to use more modern techniques and those who prefer a traditional approach to everything
- Those who encourage more parent power and those who like to marginalize the parents

The fact of holding differing views on issues is not necessarily a bad thing. On the contrary, it can be very enriching for an institution to have individuals with different perspectives coming together to work for a common goal.

As such the different opinions and experiences can complement each other to bring about a united force that leads the institution to success.



The problem comes in when the culture of division is encouraged. Bennett observes that ‘some weak heads feel threatened by a united staff and consciously or unconsciously go about creating divisions which can be classified in three groups’

- Those in favour with the hierarchy
- Those not in favour with the hierarchy
- Those ignored by the hierarchy

Practices that tend to make teachers feel suspicious of one another should be discouraged since such practices only serve to propagate the culture of mistrust. An example of such a practice has been referred to by Bennett as ‘staffroom sneaks’. She explains, ‘Some heads have a teacher who sits in the staffroom quietly listening in on everyone’s conversation and reporting it back to the head.’

Regarding these tendencies that cause divisions and mistrust, Bennet advises the heads ‘Strong heads should keep a staff united by their own even-handedness and refusal to give ears to any teacher criticizing and complaining about another.’

She goes on to suggest ‘A head should try not to be associated with any group especially a clique who are congregating around the head because their friendship is usually shallow and association earns you the distrust of the rest of the staff. It would be advisable for a head to work out who is in each clique but to stay out of them to ensure he has no enemies.’

Bennett continues to point out that teachers may easily end up resenting and isolating any of their colleagues who is seen to be too close to the school head. She says, “Some form personal relationships with the head and take advantage of their new-found status and power therefore are resented. Tension and acrimony erupt and spread like tremors of an earthquake”.

Staffroom politics can get ugly when there is an issue of power shift. This happens when teachers who were in favour with the previous head lose their influence under the new one and suffer the indignity of finding that their status is severely undermined.

Bennett advises that it is important for a school head to manage power shift. “The most difficult time to cope with staff politics is during the first two years of a new head. A

power shift means that some people go up, some go down and someone gets hurt. Some new heads manage to gain the respect and goodwill of their staff within a few weeks. Some drive out most of the staff in two years. Heads who lack confidence begin by populating the staffroom with their own friends from past schools. This often builds up a “them” and “us” atmosphere which can be so severe that teachers leave”.

These observations clearly demonstrate that in order to have a positive culture among the staff, virtues such as openness, trust and loyalty are very important. A school head should be cautious how he handles personal relationships with the teachers. No teacher should be treated with favoritism at the expense of the others.

An important characteristic that may be found in some staffrooms is the ability some teachers have to influence the atmosphere with their attitude. Bennett says that ‘A minute number of teachers have very negative attitudes and are constantly moaning and generating a negative attitude which can grow and spoil a happy atmosphere.’ He refers to this group as ‘doom and gloom lot.’ It is common knowledge that people who always complain about everything sometimes dampen the spirit of those around and depress them. This is likely to lead to a culture of pessimism if left undeterred. Low morale and lack of self-drive may also result from such an atmosphere and consequently students bear the brunt of it all. In order to counteract this kind of atmosphere in the staffroom, Bennett advises ‘Always smile, say good morning and move on. Keeping your morale up is vital to being able to enthuse pupils and stay on top of the job.

2.2 School Leadership

According to Trice and Beyer (1991), 'without an effective and ideologically consistent administrative structure, the social impulse behind any vision or mission will quickly dissipate its energies in all directions or wither for lack of consistent effort.' This statement alludes to the fact that leadership plays a key role in the direction a staff takes and hence contributes to staff culture. A positive culture is a sign there is a clear and consistent vision, proper leadership, team cohesiveness, which yields high productivity, efficiency and good organization.

In a school setting there should be a mission and vision that is shared amongst all staff revealing common values that help the school achieve its goals. As Senge states, 'designing the governing ideas of purpose, vision and core values by which people will live' is a crucial foundation to building a long-lasting culture that permeates the organization (Senge, 1990). Good leadership exceeds simple job oversight, but involves well developed strategies and policies to ensure the organization continues to improve and grow. The process of developing innovative leadership can start with creating appropriate policies, strategies and structures to establish strategic growth (Senge, 1990).

Leaders have an essential role in affecting an organization's culture, especially an innovative and proactive leadership that can invigorate the work culture and propel changes in the work place (Mason, 2004). According to John P Kotter and James L Heskett, authors of 'Corporate Culture and Performance', 'Cultures can have powerful consequences, especially when they are strong. They can enable a group to take rapid and coordinated action against a competitor or for a customer. They also can lead intelligent people to walk in concert off a cliff.'

It therefore follows that in a school, the head or principal should be proactive in propelling the teachers towards a positive culture. In a study done by MacGilchrist et al (1995) he points out that the head teachers are very important in creating culture by their actions, by what they select for praise and encouragement, by what they reward, by decisions they make by materials they select for assemblies, by their relationships, by the encouragement they give to collaborative work by teachers, by the organization of their rooms and so on.

The editor of the journal "Leadership for school culture", Stephen Stolp notes that principal's role in school culture. "The actions of the principal are noticed and interpreted

by others as “what is important”. A principal who acts with care and concern for others is more likely to develop a school culture with similar values. Likewise, the principal who has little time for others places an implicit stamp of approval on selfish behaviours and attitudes.

It then follows that more often than not; there may be certain traits of the staffroom culture which can trace their origin from the principal’s own behaviour. Teachers are likely to show concern for one another if the principal shows concern for them. Demonstrating such constructive guidance by example contributes significantly to the sustenance of a collaborative culture and to the enhancement of professional development. As Barth (1990:19) observes:

“My experience suggests that as it goes between teacher and principal so shall it go in other relationships. If the teacher-principal relationship can be characterized as helpful, supportive and trusting, revealing of craft knowledge, so too will others. To the extent that teacher-principal interactions are suspicious, guarded, distant, adversarial, acrimonious or judgmental, we are likely to see these traits pervade the school. The relationship between teacher and principal seems to have an extraordinary amplifying effect. It models what all relationships will be”.

In an article written by Chase Le Blanc, area manager for Harborage I Ltd, he comments about how CEOs may influence corporate culture. We can draw some comparisons with a school setting whereby the principal is the school CEO. He says “The belief and most of all, the practices of senior management and the CEO create your culture. “Behaviour is a manifestation of culture, and culture cannot be changed until the top managers change their behaviour”, maintains Cindy Potter, a principal of Prime Process Management, a Minnesota based management consulting firm. “There is a direct correlation between the pace at which cultural change takes place and the effort that top managers put in”.

Chase Le Blanc goes on to comment that the way in which team members are treated by senior executives speaks volumes about a company’s values. He quotes from Michael E Gerber, author of “The E-Myth”. “The way senior management thinks is the way it is. We can apply this idea to a school setting whereby the team members represent the teachers while the senior executives could be the principal or school director.

We can still draw other lessons from Le Blanc's article regarding corporate culture. He quotes from John P Kotter and James L Heskett, authors of "Corporate Culture and Performance". He says that organization's leaders must be the guardians of the corporate culture. "Leaders, especially the CEO, should be spending just under half their time teaching others, and much of what is taught should relate to the culture."

The concept of collaborative leadership has been mentioned as being instrumental in shaping staff culture. The author of 'Transforming schools through collaborative leadership' Helen Telford says that 'collaborative leaders did a great deal of informal reinforcing talk to sustain and develop a collaborative culture, including praising and celebrating teacher's successes. Principals openly recognized and publicly celebrated the achievements of their staff- their innovations, their professionalism, their commitment and effort and they encourage them to value this in each other.

2.3 Collaborative Culture

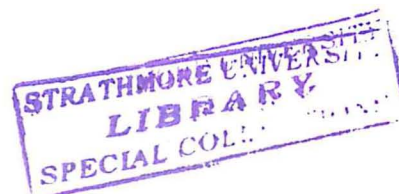
One of the most effective ways of ensuring that a staff has a positive and strong culture is through promoting a collaborative culture through collaborative leadership.

Hellen Telford the author of “Transforming Schools through Collaborative Leadership” observes that “In addition to formal expectations of support, collaborative leaders recognize and give approval to informal networks of support. Support for colleagues is substantial in the collaborative schools”. Telford carries out a study in Clematis Secondary where a student welfare officer comments, “Most of the staff know what each other is up to. We get on well. We enjoy each other’s company. We talk a lot. We share a lot more.– look for help, take advice. This leads to cooperation between staff – who teaches what and how the school operates”.

H Telford also emphasizes that in order for teachers to feel confident enough to face today’s challenges, they need to feel support from their colleagues. It is important for them to feel they are in it together since this promotes a high morale. Telford then quotes from other writers who also talk about collaborative culture. She writes, “In the present unsettling and unpredictable times of relentless educational change at both the school and system level, a collective confidence is often necessary to deal with the pedagogical and organization complexities facing teachers. Fullan and Hargreaves (1991 6-49) clarify their point: “In collaborative cultures, teachers develop the collective confidence to respond to change quickly, selecting and adapting those elements that will not. Informal networks and a spirit of collegiality assist staff in coping effectively and cultivate a sense of camaraderie leading to a positive mood in the school and high teacher morale. Importantly, also a cohesive staff group is engendered. According to Nias, et al (1989:74) “help, support, trust and openness are at the heart of these collaborative relationships”.

H Telford carries out interviews in Clematis Secondary School and gets these opinions regarding the staffroom.

“The Principal of Clematis Secondary School describes the schools staffroom as a ‘central staffroom’- all is one. The student’s welfare officer adds, “It’s a social and a working staffroom – breeding cross fertilization of ideas and reinforcing that view of why we are here.”



Personality differences among teachers if not handled well, can pose a challenge and stand in the way of working as a cohesive staff. But according to Telford what is important is to have a similar educational philosophy and have the students' interests at heart. 'Teachers who share a similar educational philosophy appear to have the potential for a powerful working relationship. Putting aside personality differences to focus on the task at hand with the understanding that the interests of the students override the idiosyncrasies of individual teachers can really make a difference to school success.'

Head teachers or Principals should make a conscious effort to bring the staff together especially by listening to their opinions or involving them in decision making. This promotes a collaborative culture among the teachers. According to Telford, 'Leadership should empower staff to take initiative and responsibility. Participatory decision-making ensures that those responsible for implementing a decision are included in the consultation process. A respect for diversity of opinion leads to a staff who trust each other, bonding together in a spirit of collegiality. Professional collegiality spills over into social domains and strong friendships among staff can develop.'

Other studies carried out by Hangreaves and Fullan (1998) focus on different types of teacher collaboration. They talk about social collaboration which involves activities that meet teachers' gregarious needs for fellowship and belonging. Social collaboration focuses on interpersonal relations rather than intrapersonal relations. It can make teachers feel respected and cared for as individuals by their colleagues and in so doing, can help foster a sense of community and a climate of congeniality among teachers. If successful, social collaboration can help prevent the incidence of rejection, isolation and cliques in the staffrooms.

Other collaborations include:

- Technical collaboration where- teachers provide each other with practical advice and support.
- Collaboration planning – teachers make joint planning decisions.
- Academic collaboration – teachers in this team share educational ideas and philosophies.

- Political and industrial collaboration – teachers provide moral support and a power base for members.
- Joint classroom-based work – teachers in this team act as a source of peer critique, mentoring and modeling of teacher principles and practices.

“High levels of teacher collaboration, however do not necessarily lead to higher levels of teaching. A lot depends on the type of collaboration practiced. Some forms of teacher collaboration can actually be counterproductive in terms of pedagogical reforms. That is, teachers can collaborate to oppose innovation and preserve the status quo (Little, 1990).

As Fullan & Hargreaves (1991, pg.48) state ‘Collaborative cultures are to be found everywhere in the life of the school- in overt praise, recognition and gratitudes.’ Leaders were regularly out in the school particularly the staffroom available talking and establishing an atmosphere where staff felt comfortable to discuss their uncertainties and seek shared solutions in an atmosphere of openness and professional honesty.

2.4 Concept of School Culture

School culture can be defined as the historically transmitted patterns of meaning that include the norms, values, beliefs, ceremonies, rituals, traditions and myths understood maybe in varying degrees, by members of the school community (Stolp and Smith 1994). This system of meaning often shapes what people think and how they act.

In an article written for National Staff Development Council, 2001 by Joan Richardson, she quotes from Kent Peterson, co-author of 'Shaping School Culture' (Jossey-Bass, 1999). "Culture is the accumulation of many individuals, values and norms. It is a consensus about what is important. It is the group's expectation, not just an individual's expectations. It's the way everyone does business", Peterson said.

J Richardson comments further that "Teachers are especially important in influencing the direction of a school's culture. Teachers connect with other teachers with their students, and with the parents of their students. When teachers are sending a shared cultural message, that message reverberates throughout the entire school community.

J Richardson also quotes the principal of Briar Glen School in Wheaton, Joan Vydra, saying "As a veteran principal, Vydra believes no school can improve unless it has a culture that supports improvement and collaboration and a shared vision for what it wants to achieve. She also believes fervently that a school will improve only if it has a culture of caring. "If teachers don't feel cared about, they cannot perform at optimum levels. If I care about teachers, they will pass that on to the kids", she said.

An article from Eric Digest 91 June 1994 by Stephen Stolp talks about the importance of school culture. He notes that researchers have compiled some impression evidence on school culture. Healthy and sound school cultures correlate strongly with increased student achievement and motivation, and with teacher productivity and satisfaction. Stolp continues to say:

Consider several recent studies. Leslie J Fyans, Jr. and Martin L Maehr (1990) looked at the effects of five dimensions of school culture: academic challenges, comparative achievement, recognition for achievement, school community, and perception of school goals. In a survey of 16,310 fourth-, sixth-, eighth-, and tenth-grade students from 820

public schools in Illinois, they found support for the proposition that students are more motivated to learn in schools with strong cultures.

In a project directed at improving elementary student test scores, Jerry L Thacker and William D McInerney (1992) looked at the effects of school culture on student achievement. The project they studied focused on creating a new mission statement, goals based on outcomes for students, curriculum alignment corresponding with those goals, staff development, and building level decision-making. The results were significant. The number of students who failed an annual statewide test dropped by as much as 10 percent. •

These results are consistent with other findings that suggest the implementation of a clear mission statement, shared vision, and school wide goals promote increased student achievement.

School culture also correlates with teachers' attitudes toward their work. In a study that profiled effective and ineffective organizational cultures, Yin Cheong Cheng (1993) found stronger school cultures had better motivated teachers. In an environment with strong organizational ideology, shared participation, charismatic leadership, and intimacy, teachers experienced higher job satisfaction and increased productivity.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Study Design

The proposed study sought to conduct an in-depth analysis of Kianda School. Therefore a descriptive research methodology was used. Descriptive research is the process of collecting data in order to answer questions concerning the current status of the subjects of the study. Descriptive research determines and reports the way things are.

The methodology used for this study consisted of a case study of Kianda Upper Primary School. A qualitative research methodology was used as it was ideal because the number of respondents to be interviewed were few. In addition, qualitative research allows in-depth probing of issues under investigation hence allowed the researcher to understand the issue in-depth. The qualitative methodologies used consisted of observations, in-depth interviews and self-completion questionnaires. The questionnaire had both open and close-ended items. Open ended items were supposed to give the respondents more freedom to express their opinions and also make suggestions. The closed-ended questions guided the respondents to give specific responses required by the researcher.

3.2 Target Population

The study population included teachers in the Upper Primary section as they represent the segment involved in preparing students for KCPE. The study included old teachers and also those teachers who had recently joined the school and have recently undergone the induction process.

Other target populations for this study were members from the school administration. This target group is well placed to give a perspective of managing the teachers in the school.

3.3 Sample Design

At Kianda there are a total of 18 teachers in upper primary and all of them completed the questionnaire for this study. Of these 12 were old teacher whilst 6 were those who had joined the school within the last 2 years.

3.4 Sampling Procedure

The teachers were invited to a central venue (i.e. staff room) and given self completion questionnaires to complete. No one objected. The researcher gave clear instructions to the teachers on how to complete the questionnaire. The session took about 20 minutes.

3.5 Procedures for Observations

The researchers observed the teachers' behaviour in terms of lesson assessment in class and also attended the staff meetings and took down notes on reactions she observed.

3.6 Quality Control

Ensuring anonymity of response – teachers were not required to write their names and were assured all the information would be kept confidential

Pre-testing of questionnaire - The questionnaire was administered amongst 2 teachers in lower primary section. The lower primary teachers were ideal for the pilot as they work at the same school and also experience similar environments. Also the number of upper primary teacher were few and there was need to avoid pre-testing the questionnaire on them and then coming back to ask them to fill questionnaire again. The required adjustments were made then administered amongst upper primary staff.

3.7 Data Management

The questionnaire sought to get demographic information regarding the 17 respondents. It revealed that:

None are between the ages of 18 and 24

8 are between the ages of 24 and 30

None are between the ages of 31 and 34

3 are between the ages of 35 and 40

2 are between the ages of 40 and 45

3 are between the ages of 45 and 50

1 is above 50

We can see that 61.1% of the staff ranges between the ages of 24 and 40 years.

This is relatively a youthful group and therefore has the advantage of having the energy required to forge a strong culture that should take the upper primary section to greater height.

Regarding educational background and qualification, the data collected showed that:

4 teachers are graduates of Teachers Diploma Colleges

12 teachers are University Graduates

1 teacher is already in a Masters Degree Programme

We can conclude therefore that the teachers in upper primary section have the right qualifications.

The questionnaire also sought to find out how many years the respondents have worked in the school. The findings were as follows:

Less than one year **5**

1 to 2 years **3**

3 to 5 years **3**

6 to 10 years **4**

Over 10 years **2**

This shows that 50% of the teachers have been in the school for less than 2 years. The researcher had to keep this fact in mind when getting views and making observations of the

teachers. These relatively new teachers have found a culture that was formed by some of the teachers who have left in the last couple of years. Their input into the existing culture therefore is likely to be minimal as they are still learning how things are done in the school.

The following table shows the summary of how the respondents perceive different aspects of the school.

Table ii

Statement Indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements regarding your school's vision & mission	Response/Number of Respondents			
	SA	A	D	SD
(a) The school has a mission	10	6		
(b) The school has clear missions and values	11	4	1	
(c) The school has clearly communicated its vision/ mission/ values	6	8	2	
(d) The school has set targets for pupil academic performance	8	8		
(e) The school has an action plan in place which can get us to our vision/ Targets	7	8	2	
(f) The schools review their action plans/ strategies on a regular basis	7	8	2	

KEY

- SA- Strongly Agree
- A- Agree
- D- Disagree
- SD- Strongly Disagree

The response indicates a positive perception of the teachers regarding their school's mission and vision. 35.2% of the respondents strongly agreed that the school has a clear mission and vision and has communicated it clearly and 47% agreed. They also agreed that the school has set targets for pupils' academic performance and has an action plan in place to achieve the targets. Only 11.7% of the respondents disagreed with these statements.

The questionnaire also sought to find out teachers' opinions regarding values. 75% of the respondents strongly agreed that the following values were important for ensuring the school achieves its vision: Team work amongst teachers, integrity, hard work, piety, spirit of service, order and neatness. The other 25% ticked under Agree. There was no score under Disagree or Strongly Disagree.

This indicates that the teachers hold these values in high esteem and recognize them as being important for building a positive culture that will lead the school to success.

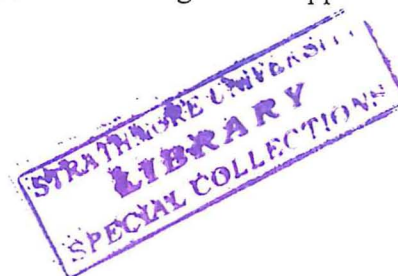
The researcher observed that although all the teachers agreed that teamwork was essential, some of the teachers were not actually good team players in their subject panels. This was revealed by the Head of Studies in an interview when she had this to say:

“As the Head of Studies, I need to have first hand information on what goes on in the panel meetings and so I attend meetings periodically. I am quite concerned by the Science panel, which is made up of five teachers. The Science are simply not working as a team. To begin with, they don’t start the meetings punctually and sometimes not all members attend the meeting. They argue a lot about things like who should set which exam and how to approach different topics. The quality of exams they have been setting is of low standard because the teachers just don’t seem to agree on the way to moderate them.”

On being asked what she proposed could be a remedy to this problem the Head of Studies responded:

“The teachers need to take the panel meeting more seriously. The panel head should stop treating the matter casually and organize her team better. She should insist that all teachers attend the meeting and corrective action should be taken against those who don’t. She shouldn’t allow them to take the meetings lightly because that amounts to taking their colleagues for granted. Being the most experienced Science teacher in the group, she is in a better position to direct the Science teachers. The teachers should come to the meeting ready to share ideas and learn from each other instead of squabbling. They should take time to interpret the new syllabus accurately and change their teaching methods. They must get out of the culture of doing things in the same old way, giving the same old notes as this has resulted to poor performance in Science in the last 2 years.” The mean score in Science was at 72.9% in the year 2005, then a drastic drop to 62.9% in the year 2006 and finally picked up slightly in 2007 to 69%.

The researcher sought to find out how the teachers viewed the school management, specifically the Section Committee that is responsible for the running of the Upper Primary section.



The questionnaire had both closed questions and open ended questions. The summary of the closed questions was as follows:

Perceived behavior rating by teachers on school management.

Table iii

Statement	Response/Number of Respondents			
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements regarding your school's vision & mission				
(a) The section committee is accessible to the parents	7	10		
(b) The section committee is accessible to staff	12	5		
(c) The section committee is accessible to pupils	9	7	1	
(d) The head of section goes out of her way to help teachers	14	2	1	
(e) The teachers in this section have faith in the integrity of the school's management	12	3	2	
(f) The school's management is flexible and open to change	4	7	6	
(g) My opinion is sought regularly during the decision making process	5	5	4	1
(h) The section committee tells me when I do my work well	4	8	3	
(i) The section committee tells me when my work needs improvement	8	8	1	
(j) The Head of section doesn't tell teachers what is really going on.		2	8	8
(k) The school's management is unresponsive to teachers' concerns		2	6	9
(l) The Head of section rules with an iron fist		1	6	10
(m) The school's management listens to and accepts teachers' suggestions	4	8	4	1
(n) The Head of section treats teachers as equals	6	9	1	1
(o) The school's management compliments teachers	8	7	2	
(p) The section committee supervises teachers closely	5	11	1	
(q) The section committee does too much policing		2	15	

From these responses, the researcher was able to establish some strengths of the Section Committee and the areas that need improvement as deemed by the teachers. In general almost all the teachers regarded the Section Committee favourably and expressed that the Section Committee was approachable and concerned about their welfare. At least 88.2% indicated that the Head of Section treated teachers as equals and went out of her way to help them. Only 11% of the respondents disagreed with these statements.

The respondents however pointed out areas that they felt could be improved by the Section Committee.



In the open ended section of the questionnaire, some of the suggestions from the respondents have been tabulated as follows:

Table iv

The SC should be more flexible and open to change	35.2%
The SC should seek teachers' opinions and incorporate their suggestions before making decisions	29.4%
The staff meetings should be more interactive, give ample time for brainstorming sessions.	35%
The SC should improve channels of communication and pass messages promptly.	29.4%
The SC should be realistic when giving deadlines to avoid teachers working under duress.	35.2%
The SC should find ways of reducing teachers' duties, since routine duties interfered with the job of teaching.	47%

The researcher concludes that the lack of involving the teachers in decision making could have led to some teachers distancing themselves from the Section Committee. The researcher had noted that a feeling of 'us' and 'them' had been created among the teachers with regards to their relations with the Section Committee. For instance she was aware of three teachers who often said to students, "The directive from above is that you should do....." This clearly shows that they distanced themselves from an indication passed or agreed upon in a staff meeting. This could easily lead the students to sense the lack of unity between those teachers and the leadership. This definitely has a negative impact on students' performance.

The researcher also attended several staff meetings to observe how the teachers participated or whether they contributed positively. The meetings were held on Monday mornings from 7.25am to 7.45am. The researcher noted that the meetings were too brief and hence teachers who may have wanted to contribute a point did not get a chance to do so. With time the teachers got used to being passive and hence a culture of laid-back approach among the teachers. In the meetings, a member of the Section Committee would make general announcements or observations and the teachers would listen passively. Hardly were the teachers involved in decision making. This observation is supported by comments made in the open-ended questionnaire. 35% of the respondents suggested that the meetings

should be more interactive and that time should be allocated for brain storming sessions to get views from the teachers.

In an interview with a Science teacher, information gathered showed that more improvement was needed in the area of communication:

“It is very disconcerting when the Section Committee does not give us information on various things promptly. Sometimes I feel harassed when I’m given short notice to work on a task or hand in a report. Instructions should be given to us with enough notice and also they should be clear. Last term I felt harassed quite a few times and this affected the way I performed my teaching duties.”

Another observation was made by 35.2% of the respondents who felt that teachers work under duress as they have too many other duties and many deadlines to meet. The researcher thinks that this could easily contribute to teachers feeling bogged down most of the time. In the staffroom, the more vocal teachers would grumble and complain that they had too much work. This ended up having a negative impact on their attitude towards lesson preparation, marking of books, punctuality to class and so on. This apathy has resulted to poor lesson delivery, little commitment to giving remedial classes and consequently poor performance of the students. The Researcher took time to sit in four classes to assess the teachers. She observed that 50% of the teachers went to class without having spent quality time on preparing their lessons. The common excuse given for this is that the teachers had too many other non-teaching duties to attend to.

Changes that have taken place in school setting include basis for promotion. In the Kenyan context, traditionally, the classroom was where promotion was at. Emphasis was laid on ability to make the pupils get good grades and pass national examinations. This is not the case anymore. Other skills and abilities are also given weight such as cross-curricular initiatives, coordinating, team work, consulting and so on. In Kianda, several internal promotions have been given to younger teachers, who are in their 20’s and 30’s, and not necessarily the older ones who have been in the institution longer. The Section Committee that is charged with the task of running the upper primary is made up of four relatively younger teachers. At least 17% of the respondents have suggested that the Section Committee should have mixed age groups, that is, young and old. This came up in the suggestions given in the questionnaire.

The researcher had observed that a small clique made up of the older teachers had slowly been forming and was creating a degree of subversion. A feeling of mistrust for those in authority seems to have developed. In the staffroom teachers who were deemed to be loyal to the school administration were treated with suspicion and consequently isolated.

One way of isolating them would be by the rest speaking in mother tongue. One of the teachers commented to the researcher that sometimes when she walked into the staffroom a certain clique of teachers would abruptly end their conversation hence making her feel out of place.

In one of the interviews the researcher carried out, the respondent commented, "Some of the older teachers prefer to continue doing things in the same old fashion and are resistant to new ideas. They continue to teach using the same old methods and continue to give the same old class notes to their students that they gave ten years ago. These same teachers are subject panel heads and because of their age and teaching experience, they have a great deal of influence regarding the direction their subject panels would take."

This could have led to some teachers feeling they were no longer part of a similar culture. This was evident for instance in the lack of team work within subject panels.

Another respondent, a Kiswahili teacher, said she felt confused because one of the older teachers in her panel was going against a certain indication that was given by the Section Committee. The Section Committee had instructed that Kiswahili teachers should give an Insha to students once every week and mark it promptly. However, when the Kiswahili panel met, the older teacher in the panel insisted that the target was unrealistic and they should give Insha fortnightly instead.

The respondent who was a much younger teacher, explained, "I know it wasn't an impossible target and told my colleagues as much. I tried to insist that all we needed to do was to organize our time better. The older teacher however asserted herself and made the rest of us feel intimidated. So now we don't have uniformity in the way we do things. Half of the panel gives Inshas weekly while the other half gives fortnightly. As a result the quality of teaching is compromised."

Poor collaboration was also noted in the Mathematics panel. The researcher observed that the leadership in the panel was wanting. The panel head did not give clear direction on interpretation of the syllabus. The minutes recorded in the meetings indicated that not all teachers attended all the Mathematics panel meetings that were scheduled for twice or thrice a term. This information was not passed to the Section committee.

One of the teachers in the panel had this to say, “For some reason we don’t seem to get along in the meetings. We argue about setting and moderation of exams, some members lack punctuality to the meetings, we don’t share ideas on teaching methodology, and the panel head just needs to be tougher. In fact the exams she sets herself have the most errors and this really disconcerts the students and leads to poor performance.”

The researcher noted that a more collaborative culture was needed urgently if teachers were to be more effective. In the questionnaire many strengths in the teachers’ collaborative behaviours were highlighted. The responses have been tabulated as follows:

Table v

The teachers are friendly and show concern for each other.	70%
The teachers show concern for their students	88.2%
The teachers are proud of their school	76.4%
The teachers have spirit of service and easily step in for each other.	75%

However 75% of the respondents agreed that more team work was needed in the following areas:

- Correct syllabus interpretation and teaching methodology.
- Sharing classroom techniques.
- Assess each others lessons and give constructive criticism.
- Demand the same quality of work and discipline from the students.
- Punctuality to class.
- Punctuality in meeting deadlines.

Another area that was tackled in the questionnaire is that of staff induction. 47% of the teachers felt that a lot could be done to improve the induction. One teacher commented, "There is always so much we are doing, there is hardly any time to teach the new teachers what is expected of them." 17% of the respondents suggested that, "The induction seminar should not take place just once. They should have it beginning and end of term. There should be continuous mentoring of the new teachers so that they can get into the school culture as soon as possible."

One of the teachers being interviewed was asked how she coped with the shortcomings of her colleagues and whether she offered them constructive criticism face to face. She had this to say:

"Actually I find it very hard to point out to my colleagues their shortcomings. I know I should have the courage to do so but I always think I will hurt their feelings so I opt to keep things to myself. However, I must admit that sometimes I get so vexed I complain and gossip behind their back. I'm not the only one who gossips. A few of us do it in the staffroom."

FINDINGS

1. The Upper Primary School staff comprises of relatively young teachers. 61.1% of them range between the ages of 24 to 40 years.
2. All of them are well qualified to teach the Upper Primary section and therefore to prepare candidates adequately for the KCPE examinations. 72.2% of them are University graduates having attained Bachelor of Education Degree.
3. Half of the staff are relatively new in the school, having been there for less than 2 years while the other half have worked in Kianda for between 3 to more than 10 years.
4. A high majority of the teachers have high regard for the school. They believe the school has a clear mission and vision and have clearly communicated it.
5. All the teachers agree that values such as integrity, hard work, spirit of service, order, neatness, piety are important and should be integrated within their lessons. All of them also agreed that Team work among the teachers was essential.
6. Poor teamwork and collaboration has been observed in the Science and Mathematics Panels. The teachers who teach Mathematics are also the ones who teach Science. These 2 subjects have had declining performance in the last 3 years thus indicating that poor collaboration among teachers can lead to poor students' performance.
7. Targets given by the Section Committee are sometimes regarded as unrealistic and therefore not implemented. This has resulted to a culture of non compliance in some instances. For example the Kiswahili teachers are meant to give weekly Insha practice to the students. Not all the teachers have been implementing this target. The grades in Kiswahili have also dropped.
8. The older teachers are more assertive and so they influence how things are done within their subject panels. Some of them resist new ideas and new approaches to

doing things. For instance, although the syllabus has been reviewed in the last five years, the notes given to the students are pretty much the same as those given five years ago. Some of the teachers also have tended to give the same exams that were set before the syllabus changed.

9. A high majority of the teachers feel that the Section Committee is approachable and concerned about their welfare. However, at least 29% of them feel that the Section Committee should involve the teachers more in decision making and be flexible and open to change.
10. Teachers have sometimes felt isolated when those who form cliques speak in mother tongue in the staffroom. There have also been incidents whereby constructive criticism was not given to a colleague but rather gossiping behind her back took place thus weakening the trust between colleagues. This has contributed to a culture of mistrust among specific teachers.
11. Several teachers felt that their views were not sought before decisions were made by the school management. The staff meetings were too brief and did not allow time for brain storming sessions. This has led to a culture of passivity and laid-back approach.
12. On several occasions the communication from Section Committee to the teachers was not done promptly and instructions given were not very clear. This has led to some teachers feeling unsure of themselves.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Kianda School upper primary staff would benefit from building a positive work culture that fosters greater collaboration, initiative and efficiency. To support the process of cultural innovation and developing new cultural formations, I recommend:

1. Offering staff a mission and vision that inspires higher levels of performance. The upper primary should have a mission and vision that is shared amongst all teachers revealing common values that help the school work towards a common goal.

A shared vision helps bind values and ideology to drive progress from where the organization exists to where its future might be (Bolman & Deal, 2003)

“Designing the governing ideas of purpose, vision and core values by which people will live is a crucial foundation to building a long lasting culture that promotes the organization” (Senge, 1990).

2. Build Team Spirit

Though strong leadership is an essential component of a good organizational culture, high functioning organizations should be able to function productively and efficiently even in the absence of a leader. Team building in which informal roles and group norms are established, increases a group’s effectiveness (Bolman & Deal, 2003)

Creating opportunities for people to congregate and hosting regular social gatherings builds an atmosphere of social integration, reinvigorates commitment to the organization and supports development of normative cultural understandings (Trice & Beyer, 1991).

I recommend that the weekly staff meetings should be allocated more time, at least 40 minutes, and should be scheduled at a time that is convenient for all the staff. 4.00 p.m. is likely to be a more suitable time than 7.25 a.m. The meeting should be used as a forum to share both positive and negative feedback regarding the upper primary section. This will help develop cultural customs of feedback and work expectations, while also developing a cultural value of teamwork and accountability.

3. Leadership style should be more collaborative

Before making any serious decisions, the section committee should invite ideas and suggestions from the staff. This can be done in the weekly meetings whereby the teachers can brainstorm issues in smaller groups then present to the rest of the staff. This will allow each one to express their opinions more freely and will enhance a sense of belonging.

4. Encourage Collaborative culture amongst the staff especially within subject panels.

The teachers should prepare their schemes together and have joint classroom-based work. They should provide each other with technical advice and support. Arrange that teachers act as peer critiques by sitting in each others classes to assess lesson delivery and classroom management. They should also set and moderate exams together as a panel.

According to Telford, “Participatory decision making ensures that those responsible for implementing a decision are included in the consultation process. A respect for diversity of opinion leads to a staff who trust each other, bonding together in a spirit of collegiality.”

5. Create more opportunities and time for the teachers to bond in an informal way.

I recommend that once a month, the Monday staff meeting should be dedicated purely to team building activities whereby the staff can enjoy doing things together in a relaxed atmosphere. This will help them let off steam and at the same time bond.

6. Induction and training of new teachers should be thorough and on-going.

Rather than have only one seminar for them, consider having a series of training sessions throughout the year. In these sessions, the mission and vision of Kianda School should be made clear and the values a Kianda teacher should have should be spelt out. Consider changing the name of the sessions from ‘Staff Talk’ to ‘Staff Training Course’ to give it a more corporate sound. The older teachers should also have refresher courses on school mission, vision and values.

7. Put in place an appraisal system which allows the staff to evaluate their performance with the school management and set targets together.

The teachers should be assessed in areas such as how well they participate in team work, how well they have incorporated the school values into their professional work and relationships within school.

8. Train and empower the different subject panel heads in leadership skills so that they may be more effective in directing the panels to achieve common goals.

9. Encourage an open door policy whereby the teachers should feel free to discuss anything with a member of the SC. Members of the SC should spend several hours of the day working in the staffroom so that they are more accessible to the staff.

10. Ensure that the staffroom has a conducive atmosphere for serious work. Distracters such as music and radios, students walking in and out, should be banned. Speaking in mother tongue in the staffroom should be discouraged.

5.0 SUMMARY & CONCLUSIONS

We have seen that culture is part and parcel of any community and it influences the individuals very directly. In a school situation the culture a teacher finds in the staffroom is likely to affect how he/she carries out his/her responsibilities. If the culture is positive it will encourage the teacher to develop positive attributes in her professional work hence leading to good students' performance.

If on the other hand the culture is marked with negative traits, it will impact negatively on the teacher who will in turn not be very effective in the classroom hence leading to poor students' performance.

More collaborative culture should be encouraged in the school whereby the teachers all make an effort to be good team players. The subject panels should work towards a common goal in order for the school to meet its objectives. All panel members should support each other so as to impact more positively on the students' performance. If each subject's mean score meets its target then the overall mean score of the school will be high.

More collaboration between the teachers and the Section Committee should be encouraged. The Section Committee should make an effort to involve the teachers in decision making. Once the teachers feel that they own the ideas then they will be more committed to see to their fruition.

Finally, staff induction and continuous staff training plays a major role in contributing towards a more cohesive staff. More should be invested to see to it that all teachers, new and old, understand and embrace the school mission and vision so as to work towards the school's success.

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- 17 Yin Cheong Cheng (1993) Profiles of Educational Culture Effective Schools.

6.0 APPENDICES

Teachers Questionnaire

A small survey is being carried out by a teacher who is studying Educational Management. The school management is aware of this study and will use the results of this study to identify areas of strengths, weaknesses and priorities for improvement.

Please note that your views in form of answers to these questions will be treated confidentially and will go a long way in assisting your school to improve. Also note that there is no right or wrong answers.

Background Information

1(a) Age:

18 to 24 years	40 - 45 years
24 to 30	45 - 50
31 to 34	Above 50
35 to 40	

(b) Highest education level attained:

- Secondary education
- Teachers college diploma
- University degree
- Post Graduate

(c) How many years have you worked in this school?

- Less than one year
- 1 to 2 years
- 3 to 5 years
- 6 to 10 years
- Over 10 years

The School's Mission And Vision

1. Please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements on the vision, mission of your school. [TICK AS APPROPRIATE]

	Agree	Strongly agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
(a) The school has a mission				
(b) The school has clear missions and values				
(c) The school has clearly communicated its vision/mission/values				
(d) The school has set targets for pupil academic performance				
(e) The school has an action plan in place which can get us to our vision/targets				
(f) The schools review their action plans/strategies on a regular basis.				

2. Please indicate the extent to which you agree with the **following values** as being important for ensuring the school achieves its vision/targets. [TICK AS APPROPRIATE]

	Agree	Strongly agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
(a) Team work amongst teachers				
(b) Integrity				
(c) Hard work				
(d) Piety of teachers influences piety of students				
(e) Spirit of service of both staff and students				
(f) Teaching human standards such as order and neatness should be incorporated in the lesson				

School's Management

3. Please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements regarding management in your section. Management refers to the Section Committee.

	Agree	Strongly agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
(a) The section committee is accessible to the parents				
(b) The section committee is accessible to staff				
(c) The section committee is accessible to pupils				
(d) The head of section goes out of her way to help teachers				
(e) The teachers in this section have faith in the integrity of the school's management				
(f) The school's management is flexible and open to change				
(g) My opinion is sought regularly during the decision making process				
(h) The section committee tells me when I do my work well				
(i) The section committee tells me when my work needs improvement				
(j) The Head of section doesn't tell teachers what is really going on.				
(k) The school's management is unresponsive to teachers' concerns				
(l) The Head of section rules with an iron fist				
(m) The school's management listens to and accepts teachers' suggestions				
(n) The Head of section treats teachers as equals				
(o) The school's management compliments teachers				
(p) The section committee supervises teachers closely				
(q) The section committee does too much policing				

4. What are **three things** you like about the school's management?

- a)
- b)
- c)

5. What are three things that you feel management needs to improve on?

- a)
- b)
- c)

Teachers' (Collaboration) Behavior

The following are statements about teachers' collaboration. Please indicate the extent to which you agree with each statement.

	Agree	Strongly agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
(a) Teachers in this section believe in each other				
(b) Teachers in this section do their jobs well				
(c) Teachers in this section show concern for their students				
(d) There is a minority group of teachers who oppose the majority				
(e) Teachers have fun socializing together during school time				
(f) Teachers help and support each other				
(g) Teachers know the family background of other staff members				
(h) Teachers are proud of their school				
(i) Administrative paperwork is burdensome at this school				
(j) I think teachers in this school are given unrealistic targets				
(k) I find my work interesting				
(l) I feel that my abilities are well utilized in this school				
(m) I enjoy marking exercise books				
(n) New teachers are readily accepted by colleagues				
(o) Routine duties interfere with the job of teaching				
(p) Teachers in this school offer each other constructive criticism.				

6. What are **three things** you like about the teachers at Kianda School?

- a)
- b)
- c)

7. What are the three things that you the teacher at Kianda need to improve on in order to create a good work atmosphere?

- a)
- b)
- c)

8. The following are statements about new teachers' induction. Please indicate the extent to which you agree with each statement.

	Agree	Strongly agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
a) The school has comprehensive induction programme for teachers				
b) New teachers feel intimidated by older teachers				
c) New teachers feel their ideas are appreciated in the panel and staff meetings				
d) New teachers take long to settle in the section				

9. What are three things that the school need to improve on in-order to be make the induction of new teachers better?

- a)
- b)
- c)