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ADMINISTRATIVE AND LEADERSHIP INNOVATION IN THE 21ST CENTURY: A SECONDARY SCHOOL SUB-SECTOR PERSPECTIVE IN KENYA

Abstract: Studies have indicated that in education, the traditional management paradigm maintains an inward focus with the aim of cutting costs, upholding rules and division of labour. However, the 21st century has ushered in a new revolution in education leadership structures which are less hierarchical, more flattened and more fluid organizations. The purpose of the study was to examine the pressing issue of 21st century leadership skills gap in the secondary school sub-sector in Kenya and explore the way(s) to address it. A case study design was used which enabled the collection of qualitative data from three participants who were purposively sampled. It was guided by two research questions: which leadership skills are practiced in secondary schools in Kenya? What are the leadership skills needed for a secondary school principal in Kenya? The findings established that the secondary school principals in Kenya mainly practice the traditional management approach. They have not incorporated the 21st century leadership skills in the management of schools. These encompass traditional literacies, competencies and character qualities. It is therefore recommended that the secondary school principals in Kenya should embrace lifelong learning and systematic learning opportunities should be created to assist them develop these complex skills.

Keywords: Administration, management, leadership, innovation, skills, paradigm shift, instructional leadership, secondary education sub-sector, traditional management.

1.0 Introduction

In education, the traditional managementparadigm maintains an inward focus with the aim of cutting costs, upholding rules and division of labour. This paradigm is basically hierarchical in nature with emphasis on control, enforced standards, authoritarian with a disciplinarian approach to leadership and the consequence is mechanical orientation to structural designs, high level specialization and rigid departmentalization (Kreitner, 2002). The traditional management approach aims at improvement of productivity and resource utilization in a static and stable technological environment and this worked well when markets, products and technologies remained relatively stable but its weaknesses have been exposed with the ever changing globalization and technological evolution (Khalil, 2000). However, the 21st century has ushered in a new revolution in education leadership structures which have become the occasion of less hierarchical, more flattened and more fluid organizations (Ayiro& Sang, 2010).

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The impact of leadership in education must transcend the immediate institutional society and rightly so, since education is an asset and instrument of the society (Foster, 1989). He further argues that the demand for more accountability in the education system strengthens the view that society needs to set pace and targets for education. In the context of the 21st century society, education management must strive for results based management by means of performance contracting, target setting, open appraisal, strategic development planning and action research. It is desirous, therefore, that education should adopt transformational leadership as a way of enabling managers to respond to demands for reforms and attain desired learning outcomes (Leithwood et al, 1999).

This means that leadership and not just management plays a critical role and therefore there is need to differentiate between management and leadership, where management implies provision and maintenance of order and establishing procedures necessary in running an organization while leadership focuses on coping with change and charting the way forward (Chapman, 2001). Although leadership can be seen as part of management, it requires more than the usual discharge of administrative duties. Thus, transformational leadership requires the leader to:

- Provide inspiration and motivate the workers under them through charisma.
- Focus on individual needs of the workers.
- Provide intellectual stimulation and influence thinking and imagination of the human resource.
- Lead by example through open communication and demonstration of emotional commitment to the vision.

A paradigm shift has emerged creating the need for strategic focusing and visioning with a sense of adaptability and flexibility and a manager in 21st century will inevitably need to be a leader who can keep the high-level goal in sight while at the same time able to track day to day business activities (Marshall, 1995). Such a leader will need to appreciate the needs of the publics and empathize with the stakeholders.

This style of leadership will call for disregard for the top-down hard-nosed direction in preference to flexibility and empathy. This means that the 21st century individual leaders will be expected to revolve around teamwork, communication, collaboration and learning with the aim of value creation, quality, responsiveness, innovation and integration. This is because the 21st cenruty education manager is not only expected to manage the institution but to also provide leadership, thus, they will be expected tobe team players, mentors, facilitators, visionaries and entrepreneurs whocan stimulate creativity, innovation and promote learning (Longenecker & Ariss, 2002). The secondary school of the 21st century therefore, requires a principal who will embrace the 21st century skills to bring about school effectiveness and efficiency.

1.1 The 21st century skills of leadership

A new wave of research on educational leadership has confirmed that the quality of leadership practices in a school can make a significant difference to the learning and achievement of students (Davidson, 2014). This means that the strategies for improving student achievement must include efforts to move principals from primarily managers to instructional leaders. Davidson (2014) further asserts that although the standards of instructional leadership can vary with cultural differences, lessons from around the world

confirm that instructional leaders have common knowledge, attitudes and beliefs. Therefore a student-centred leadership can translate into school effectiveness and a place conducive for leaders to create the conditions required for teaching and learning by setting direction, building relationships and developing people, developing the organization to support desired practices, improving the instructional program and securing accountability.

An effective school leadership, according to Glaze puts students at the centre of a school system and do the following: view education as the ultimate tool of empowerment, have a laser-like focus on student achievement, maintain a sense of urgency about improvement, engage in 'whole person' education, thrive on challenge, use power effectively, demonstrate personal qualities such as empathy, know how to motivate, develop and inspire people and include community outreach and engagement.

Due to technology and innovation according to Wagner (2013), the secondary school leaders need the following 21st century skills:
- Emotional intelligence
- Critical thinking and analytical skills
- Creativity and innovation
- Personal and communication skills
- Technological skills
- Organization skills
- Personal management skills
- Team work and collaboration
- Partnership development
- Community outreach, development and engagement
- Ant-racism, equity and inclusiveness
- Global awareness and understanding

While the students need the following survival skills:
- Critical thinking and problem solving
- Collaboration and leadership
- Agility and adaptability
- Initiative and entrepreneurialism
- Effective oral and written communication
- Accessing and analysing information
- Curiosity and imagination

However, according to Sharratt and Fullan (2012) there are three critical leadership skills. They noted that all lead learners become skilled in the cyclical reflective process of modelling collective capacity for collaboration and empowering each other through shared leadership as they participate as learners and work as 'guides on the side' in working with teachers to make instructional improvements. All these instructional leadership processes are clustered into three leadership areas: know-ability, mobilize-ability and sustain-ability. The defined skill item in each cluster is as follows:
Know-ability cluster include:
- knowledge and understanding of best practices
- having a strong and compelling message
- effective management of resources /accountability

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- effective management of human resources; looks after the wellbeing of the team
- capacity building for collaboration, empowering through shared leadership and recognizes contributions
- Leader as a 'lead learner' questions why this, why now and modelling continuous learning.

Mobilize-ability cluster include:
- instilling collaborative culture and focusing on shared values
- effective communication skills and delivering clear consistent messages
- ability to motivate and inspire others
- being involved and visible in meetings with the data for professional learning

Sustain-ability include
- building and sustaining strong relationships to foster trust
- creating positive environment of trust and encouragement and non-threatening
- Committed to advocate for learners and shared goal that each child's progress is a shared responsibility.

In Kenya very few secondary schools are 'learning organizations', places in which everyone is a learner. By their very nature schools are bureaucratic and hierarchically organized institutions that have a vested interest in maintaining the 'status quo'. Therefore, the embracing of the 21st century leadership skills comes in handy in order to make the schools 'learning organizations'. These skills meet the needs of the 21st century 'market place' and are in three broad categories as follows according to Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD):

- Foundational literaries skills.

These represent how schools leaders apply core skills to everyday tasks. These skills serve as the base upon whichleaders need to build more advanced and equally important competencies and character qualities.

This category includes not only the globally assessed skills of literacy and numeracy but also scientific literacy, ICT literacy, financial literacy, cultural and civic literacy. Acquisition of these skills has been the traditional focus of education around the world. Historically, being able to understand written texts and quantitative relationships was sufficient for entry into the workforce. Now these skills represent just the starting point on the path towards mastering 21st century leadership skills.

- Competencies skills

These include critical thinking, problem solving, creativity, communication and collaboration. Theydescribe how school leaders approach complex challenges. For instance, critical thinking is the ability to identify, analyse and evaluate situations, ideas and information in order to formulate responses to problems. Creativity is the ability to imagine and devise innovative new ways of addressing problems, answering questions or expressing meaning through the application, synthesis or repurposing of knowledge. Communication and collaboration involve working in coordination with others to convey information or tackle problems. Competencies such as these are essential to the 21st century workforce where being able to critically evaluate and convey knowledge as well as work well with a team has become the norm.

- Character qualities skills

These describe how school leaders approach their changing environment. Amid rapidly changing markets, character qualities such as persistence and adaptability ensure greater resilience and success in the face of obstacles. Curiosity and initiative serve as starting points for discovering new concepts and ideas. Leadership and social and cultural awareness involve constructive interactions with others in socially, ethnically and culturally appropriate ways.

To exhibit these 21st century skills, the education leader must be at home with 'lifelong learning' in order to inculcate the same to the lead.

1.2 Statement of the problem

The findings of the study by Kaume (2015) indicatedthat there was high rate of education wastage in secondary schools in Kenya which was attributed among other factors to wanting leadership skills. Some of the reasons for students to drop out of school or repeat a class would have been arrested if the school principals had embraced the 21st century leadership skills and instil the same to the school fraternity. To thrive in a rapidly evolving world, students must not only possess strong skills in areas such language, arts, mathematics and science but they must also be adept at skills such as critical thinking, problem solving, persistence, collaboration and curiosity.

In order to change this trend there is need to initiate innovation in education leadership approach in secondary schools in Kenya- leadership innovation for the 21st century that would inculcate survival skills in secondary school students. This is because to thrive in today's innovation-driven economy, people need a different mix of skills than in the past. In addition to foundational skills such as literacy and numeracy, students need competencies like collaboration, creativity and problem-solving and character qualities like persistence, curiosity and initiative.

The purpose of this study was to examine the pressing issue of 21st century leadership skills gap in the secondary school subsector in Kenya and explore the way(s) to address it.

2.0 Methodology

The study used a case study design which enabled the collection of qualitative data from three respondents who were purposively sampled. These were two principals from a boys' and girls' national secondary schools and a county secondary school heads association chairman who was also a county secondary school principal. These were not only in education leadership in the 21st century in Kenya but they were also the face of secondary school leadership in Kenya.

The study was guided by the following two research questions which were used to prepare the interview schedule for in-depth data collection: which leadership skills are practised in secondary schools in Kenya? What are the leadership skills needed for a secondary school principal in Kenya?

3.0 Findings

The study respondents were a female principal from a girl's national secondary school, a male principal from a boys' national secondary school and a male principal from a county secondary

school and who is also a county secondary school heads association chairman. The pseudonyms for the respondents were: Lynn, Mark and Martin.

Lynn who was a girl's national secondary school principal revealed that she had a master's degree in education and had been in that school for seven years. She also revealed that she did not undergo any training for leadership before she became a secondary school principal. However, after she became a principal she underwent a secondary school management induction course for two weeks which was offered by Kenya Education staff Institute (K.E.S.I) then but changed its name to Kenya Education Management Institute (KEMI). She reported that the training was largely on traditional education management for it was dealing with financial and resource management, "the training emphasized the prudent use of school finances as well the day to day school administration" she asserted. On further probe on the skills she gained from the training she said, "we were encouraged to embrace teamwork in our operations and more so when we are making decisions. This would make such decisions successful for they are inclusive and mutually owned". Lynn also revealed that she has been attending annual principals'conferences which are held right from the sub-county, county and the national level but each of these are forum for the principals to share ideas, "these conferences are meant for principals to exchange ideas on what they deem to be best practices in their schools". She further revealed that KEMI offered a diploma in education management course by distance learning which was examination oriented and an award of a certificate after passing the exams, "ideally not much was gained in terms of roles and responsibilities of a secondary school administrator but a diploma in education management certificate", she revealed.

Mark who was a boys' national secondary school principal had a master's degree as well and had been in the school for four years. He also disclosed that he had no prior training for secondary school leadership by the time he became a principal. However, when he became a principal, he attended both induction and senior education management courses by then Kenya Education Staff Institute (KESI). He revealed that the training was to sharpen the skills for effective school management and it focused on democratic leadership and effective communication. "Among other facets of school management the training instilled in me the need for being democratic when dealing with the students, teachers and non-teaching staff. I use bottom-up, to-down and multi-directional mode of communication and these have served the school well", he concluded confidently. He had also a diploma in education management from Kenya Education Management Institute (KEMI) which he did on distance learning module, "this one I did because we were threatened that it will be used for any future promotion", he said with a sly smile. He disclosed that he attends secondary schools heads conferences organized by their association "but these are mainly our getaways from the school busy schedules". On further probe he revealed that they share a lot of experiences at personal and collective level.

Martin who was a county secondary school heads association chairman and also a county secondary school principal revealed that he had a bachelor's degree in education and had been at the school for three years and for the same years he had been the county secondary school heads association chairman. He reported that he had undergone a distance learning course and awarded a diploma in education management by Kenya Education Management Institute (KEMI) when he was a principal and did not have any other leadership training before he became a principal. As a chairman of the county heads association he reported that conferences are organized right from the sub county, county and to the national level and the

principals' body organize for facilitators and speakers to come and share life experiences with the principals. This enlightens and encourages the principals in their quest for academic excellence in their schools, "in such a forum although each school is unique and has unique challenges one cannot fail to borrow a leaf to improve on their administrative style and academic performance in their schools," he concluded with air of authority.

When the respondents were asked to explain how they ensure as the heads of their institutions that their clients/students are managed well and at the end of the day realize quality education, they had the following to say:

Lynn revealed that she had delegated most of the duties to the deputy principal and the heads of departments. When she was probed further on academic programs in the school she revealed that there was a dean of students who organizes other teachers for extra tuition and internal exams while the heads of departments organizes the coverage of the syllabus in each department. "The deputy principal is in charge of all these programs and reports fortnightly the progress to me. You see it works and it has been working for us", She said with confidence. When she was asked about meeting with the teachers and students she revealed that the teachers held meetings in the beginning and end of the term and also some brief meetings in between when they are necessary and she chairs these meetings. She addresses the students occasionally during their morning assemblies apart from the opening and closing of term assemblies or else "the deputy principal deals with the discipline cases and the guidance and counselling head of department does a sterling job for the school to be what it is", she said with air accomplishment.

Mark revealed that he had also delegated duties to the deputy principal and the head of departments and given them some room to make collective decisions for academic improvement at their levels, "I have given the heads of departments a free hand to make decisions on matters academic and minute the same for my approval and by the way, some of these matters come from the students through the subject and class teachers," he clarified.

Martin decried the lack of time to be actively involved in all school activities due to the demanding nature of the heads association chairmanship and therefore, he had delegated almost all the administrative duties to the deputy principal. However, he revealed that he attends the Monday and Friday morning school assembly to address the school, "and inform them of any new development that might affect them directly or indirectly, positively or negatively and this makes me get a feel of the goings-on in the school", he reported with satisfaction. He further revealed that he sponsors subject teachers to attend subject area workshops whenever they are available.

The respondents were asked to suggest the leadership skills a secondary school principal should have to succeed and they came up with the following.

Lynn, the girls' national secondary school principal suggested that the principal should embrace teamwork in order to involve all the stakeholders and should also coordinate and motivate the school community to have unity of purpose. She further reported that the school principal should mind the wellbeing of all the people under their jurisdiction so as to celebrate or mourn together as the situation dictates. "The principal should always be approachable and use multidirectional communication for efficiency leadership," She asserted.

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Mark, the boys' national secondary school principal indicated that the principal should be democratic in all the operations so as to allow other people's ideas and should also be effective in communicating. Such a principal is expected to have capacity to implement fully the decisions made in democratic meetings. "An ideal effective secondary school principal should be an effective teacher who is always present and punctual and above all ready to lead by example," he concluded.

Martin, the chairman of county secondary schools heads association and a principal of a county secondary school suggested that the principal should be able to create conducive culture for learning for all members of the school community. He further noted that the principal should also be active enough to make partnerships/ collaborations and linkages which can help the school to grow. A good performing principal needs to be knowledgeable and also innovative, "a secondary school principal ought to be a round character," he asserted.

When the respondents were asked to explain how secondary school principals in Kenya can acquire the leaderships skills each one has mentioned, Lynn revealed that they only need to be exposed to these skills through intensive in-service training for principals and brainstorming workshops. Mark revealed that the principals need to change their attitude towards learning and create curiosity to learn new things and more so in this era of technology, "one has to cultivate a positive attitude for continuous learning and especially via the internet and for sure the principals will keep on filling their baskets with the appropriate leadership skills," he advised. Martin suggested that principals' workshops would be ideal fora to disseminate the leadership skills. He also contends that benchmarking with the best practices in other schools comes in handy for a secondary school principal to acquire leadership skills.

3.1 Conclusion

- The interviewed secondary school principals have been found to have a bachelors and master's degree in education and these are appropriate qualification for a principal in Kenyan secondary schools. The study revealed that none of these principals had undergone any training for leadership skills despite heading national schools in Kenya. Therefore pre-service or in-service training for principals to acquire leadership skills are non-existent in Kenya and school leaders use their own initiatives to acquire some.
- It has been revealed that the secondary school principals interviewed delegate duties to their deputy principals and heads of departments. The closer scrutiny of the nature of delegation of duties borders on abdication of responsibility by the principals which could be as a result shortage of leadership skills. The principals are not seen at the centre of the learning activities but always at the periphery, hence, lack of leadership skills. Secondary school principals in Kenya can be said to be doing administration and management but not leadership. This could mean that as administrators they formulate polices, implement them and delegate duties, as managers they supervise to ensure that the status quo is maintained but they fail to be leaders to influence (direct, guide and inspire the lead) to get out of this vicious circle of weak education outcomes.
- Leadership skills a secondary school principal needs to have were revealed as follows:
  - Embrace teamwork
  - Motivate teaching, non-teaching and students

- Coordinate all the school fraternity
- Have wellbeing of teaching, non-teaching and students
- Involve stakeholders and students in decision making
- Have capacity to implement fully the decisions made
- Be democratic
- Have effective communication
- Create conducive culture for learning
- Have partnership /collaboration and linkages
- Be approachable
- Use multi-directional communication mode
- Be innovative
- Be an effective teacher
- Be always present and punctual
- Be knowledgeable
- Lead by example

These are mainly for 'traditional management approach' as opposed tothe 21st century leadership skills which encompass foundational literacies, competencies and character qualities.

- A secondary school principal in Kenya was said to acquire leadership skills through intensive training and workshops, creating curiosity for learning, fostering the right attitude to continuous learning and benchmarking for best practices.

3.2 Recommendations

- In order to acquire the 21st century leadership skills the secondary school principals in Kenya should strive to develop those skills, capabilities and attitudes that would enable them to walk the talk in leadership by embracing lifelong learning.
- The systematic learning opportunities should be created for the principals to help them develop these complex skills needed in order to lead and transform contemporary schools.
- The Kenyan secondary school principals should consider getting opportunities for global networking and dialogue to realize improvement/progress in leadership.
- The principals should develop "professional capital" by sharing and learning the best practices from each other by benchmarking both internally and globally.

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Interview schedule

Biography information
1. Respondent's sex _____
2. Academic qualifications _____
3. Number of years at the school _____

Section I: The leadership skills practiced in secondary schools in Kenya
4. Did you undergo some training before or after you became a principal to prepare you for the leadership role in a secondary school?
5. How do you execute your duties as a principal of the school?

Section II: The leadership skills needed for a secondary school principal in Kenya
6. In your informed opinion which leadership skills do you think a secondary school principal needs to have to be effective?
7. How can secondary school principals in Kenya acquire these leadership skills?

Thank you

Biographical notes:

PhD Regina Kaume-Mwinzi is a seasoned secondary school teacher of English and literature in Kenya, East Africa who has risen from a classroom teacher to a secondary school principal and she is currently a university lecturer. She did her Bachelor of Education (Arts) degree at Kenyatta University, Master's in Education at Catholic University of Eastern Africa and Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Education at University of Eastern Africa, Baraton.