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**Regenerative Leadership Practices in Kenyan Schools**

**BY**

**Christine N. Wanjala**

**Submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

**School of Education and Social Work**

**University of Sussex**

**February 2018**

## **Declaration**

I hereby declare that this Thesis has not been and will not be, submitted in whole or in part to another University for the award of any other degree.

.....  
**Christine N. Wanjala**

## **Dedication**

**To my late Parents:**

**Dad James and Mum Margaret**

You taught me that life is not about being Magnificent but an Exercise of Discretion

Your Wisdom will forever be a Fountain to my life

May your Souls Rest in Eternal Peace!

**To My Family**

**Albert, Faith, Kevin and Sheila**

Thank you for believing in me. Your faith in me provided the momentum to push forward,  
even when it seemed like everything is stuck.

### Acknowledgements

This work came to fruition because of the support, commitment and dedication given to it by professional experts, organisations, critical friends and family members. Indeed, as said by our great fathers, ‘People make a person; it is through people that we become!’ (*A local axiom*). I acknowledge these dedicated people and organisations for supporting and nurturing me into what I have become.

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- Above all, thank you almighty God for your grace that has been sufficient for me throughout this long journey.

**UNIVERSITY OF SUSSEX**  
**Christine N. Wanjala, Doctor of Philosophy**  
**Regenerative Leadership Practices in Kenyan Schools**

**Abstract**

This thesis examines leadership practices in which Kenyan school leaders have engaged to achieve sustainable students' achievement (SSA). Educational reforms focusing on effective school leadership are of major concern in developing economies seeking to improve their educational systems and enhance educational performance. Kenya, a developing economy, considers education to be a powerful driver of development. One of its immediate education reforms accentuated in Kenya-vision 2030 is the introduction of an expanded institutional leadership framework for the effective delivery and management of education. However, socio-political challenges around educational management have been shown to greatly influence school leadership working environments. Accordingly, school leaders persistently struggle with the problem of fluctuations in students' achievement and substantial disparities across schools. Reflecting on SDG4, Uwezo-Kenya report contends that learning outcomes are low and extremely inequitably distributed across geographical, socio-economical and school-type levels. While various factors (students, family, schools) inform student achievement trajectories, this thesis principally focuses on analysing how educational leadership, a school-level factor, is emerging in secondary schools in Kenya. The central aim of this research is to illuminate the school leadership contexts in which SSA might occur. To do so, the study adopted a sequential multi-strategy research design, with quantitative analysis of secondary data preceding the qualitative data collection and analysis. The study involved quantitative secondary analysis of students' achievement data of 300 schools drawn from 3 Counties and qualitative in-depth analysis of data from 9 schools, 9 principals, 92 teachers (holding senior, middle and junior leadership positions), 6 Board of Management and Parents Association chairpersons, 5 Local Education Authority officers.

The overall finding is that context is a powerful mechanism influencing leadership practice in Kenyan schools. Existing contextual mechanisms have implications for school leaders' actions and decisions, which in turn inform teaching and learning activities. Consequently, this thesis argues for regenerative leadership practices as an alternative approach that creates enabling school environments for SSA to occur in challenging contexts, like those faced in Kenya. Regenerative leadership practices that prioritise the building of school system

resilience by recreating structures, cultures, capacities, relations and pedagogical practices might circumvent the socio-political challenges and nurture environments that enhance SSA.

This thesis contributes to existing knowledge by illuminating the importance of the context in educational leadership. Taking a systems perspective, the thesis demonstrates how socio-political demands inform school leadership actions and decisions, which in turn have indirect implications for teaching and learning activities, as well as SSA. Ultimately, justifying claims that encouraging schools to strive for SSA in Kenya and in other similar challenging contexts is complex and requires a comprehensive understanding of both structures and agency. This serves as a reasonable basis for questioning current assumptions about school leadership, which often partially focus on the principal's agency while ignoring the wider socio-political environment. Secondly, this provides grounds to criticise the blind adoption of educational leadership models created in response to these assumptions, such as approaches to leadership preparation programmes in developing contexts. In response to these findings, this thesis proposes an alternative multiple level conceptual model of educational leadership that better responds to complex leadership and learning needs in challenging contexts. This model emphasises the reflexivity that school leaders need to manage, change and counter complex and often unpredictable socio-political factors to achieve sustainability.

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## List of Abbreviations

ASALs	Arid and Semi-Arid Lands
BEA	Basic Education Act
BOM	Board of Management
CDE	County Director of Education
CDF	Constituency Development Fund
CEO	County Education Office
CID	Criminal Investigation Department
DOS	Director of Studies
EFA	Education for All
FGD	Focused Group Discussion
FSE	Free Secondary Education
HOD	Head of Department
ICT	Information Communication Technology
KCSE	Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education
KEMI	Kenya Education Management Institute
KNEC	Kenya National Examinations Council
LEA	Local Education Authority
LST	Longest-Serving Teacher
MGD	Millennium Development Goals
MOE	Ministry of Education
MP	Member of Parliament (National Assembly)
NACOSTI	National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation
NT	New-Teacher
PA	Parents' Association
SAGA	Semi-Autonomous Government Agency
SCEO	Sub-County Education Officer
SCQASO	Sub-County Quality Assurance and Standards Officer
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SSA	Sustainable Students' Achievement
TSC	Teachers' Service Commission

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## Chapter 1 Introduction

### 1.0 Introduction

School reforms focusing on educational leadership are a major concern in developing economies that seek to improve their educational systems and enhance educational performances. Kenya, a developing economy, has woken up to the realisation that education is a powerful driver of development. A current focus of education reforms is the recently expanded institutional leadership framework for the effective delivery and management of education with the aim of enhancing sustainable students' achievement (SSA) (Republic of Kenya 2007a, b; 2010; 2013a, b; KEMI, 2013). The adoption of the 2030 agenda for sustainable development (especially SDG4), of which Kenya is a signatory, has heightened the renewed focus on effective educational leadership as a key parameter requiring committed attention to achieve equitable, quality education and lifelong learning for all (UNESCO, 2016). Reflecting on SDG4, Uwezo-Kenya reports, "learning outcomes *in Kenya (sic)* are low and extremely inequitably distributed across geographic areas, socio-economic strata and types of school" (Uwezo Kenya, 2016, P. iii). Kenya, like other developing countries striving to achieve educational progress, has given precedence to school leadership as one of the key policy priority in realising educational quality and improved learning outcomes.

Key educational development policies in Kenya identify and prioritise effective educational leadership, indicating its important role in facilitating educational growth and SSA (Republic of Kenya, 2005a; 2007b; 2008, 2012, 2013). Expansion of access to secondary schools following increased capitation for free secondary education (FSE), has increased focus on the quality of learning (Republic of Kenya, 2012). The Basic Education Act regulations 2015, for instance, highlight the importance of streamlining leadership and management structures at all levels of education to increase efficiency. The Kenya Education Sector Support Programme (KESSP) illustrate that Kenya has adopted a sector-wide approach to educational leadership, which involves engaging multiple stakeholders to secure and enhance the funding for FSE (Republic of Kenya 2005b). KESSP centres focus on issues of transparency, teamwork, decentralization as well as performance-based accountability. While these policies have advocated for good governance and effective educational leadership, the emphasis has been on financial and resource responsibility (Wasonga, 2013). The effort has been



channelled towards the increased provision of resources through capitation, enhanced external inspection and increased training of school leaders on financial management, budgeting, infrastructural development (Wanzare, 2013, Wasonga, 2013).

However, the quality of learning and achievement remain problematic, especially at the secondary level. Often, students' achievement in final year secondary examinations determines their transition to higher levels of education (Wainana, 2006; Glennester et al, 2011). Persistent low quality of learning outcomes, however, has created a bottleneck transition to tertiary and higher education despite the increased access to secondary education (Republic of Kenya, 2012). The World Bank (2013) report in table 4 below demonstrates low transition rates from primary to secondary and higher education. On average, during transition from primary to secondary, there is a huge drop, only 19% of pupils accessed secondary education. Out of the 19%, on average, only 13.7% boys and 11% girls transited to higher education. This demonstrates that eventually, very few students achieve results that enable them to access tertiary education, which is a praxis for entrance into a career and/or contribute to national development.

**Table 1.1: National Secondary Schools' Achievement and Transition rates from 2010-2013**

	2010		2011		2012		2013*	
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
Enrolment in Primary School '000	4,751.9	4,629.3	4,977.7	4,880.2	5,026.5	4,968.7	5,149.1	5,033.4
Enrolment in Secondary School "	885.5	767.8	948.7	819.0	1,019.0	895.8	1,127.7	976.6
Enrolment in Universities <sup>1</sup> "	107.7	69.9	117.7	80.6	135.4	105.1	193.2	131.4
Enrolment in Other Institutions <sup>2</sup> "	56.4	54.7	68.5	65.3	92.5	66.0	106.1	79.0

<sup>1</sup> Includes students in National Universities and Private accredited Universities and unaccredited universities  
<sup>2</sup> Includes students in Teacher Training Colleges, Polytechnics, Technical Training Institute & Institutions of Science & Technology

**Source: World Bank (2013)**

The 2010-2013 statistics in table 4.1 illustrate the low achievement and transition rates in secondary schools. These trends suggest that without checking on the population transiting from basic to tertiary education, Kenya may fail to achieve the intended social and human capitals outlined in Vision 2030. Further, insufficient transition rates to tertiary education are likely to continue to negatively impact the economy as the benefits of investing in secondary education are unable to be realised. Relatedly, these young people may further pose a

dependency risk to the working population (claiming support), thus, challenging the possibility of Kenya achieving her Vision 2030 on poverty eradication.

Globally, effective educational leadership has persistently received attention as one fundamental school-level factor that enhance improvement in learning outcomes both in research (Leithwood et al., 2006, 2008; Robinson et al. 2008; Hargreaves et al, 2014; Fullan, 2014) and international development policies (OECD, 2013; UNESCO, 2013, 2015, 2016). Findings from a meta-analysis of educational leadership research identify multiple factors influencing students' achievement such as those relating to home life; teacher quality; peer groups; school resources; principal leadership; and student motivation and ability (Leithwood et al, 2006, 2008; Robinson et al. 2008; Hallinger, 2011). This analysis, together with prior large-scale studies, points to school leadership as an important school factor, explaining a quarter of the total effect of all school-related impact (Robinson et al, 2008; Day et al. 2009). Further, the quality of school leadership practice has been shown to indirectly influence students' achievement (Leithwood et al. 2008; Day et al. 2009; Gamage et al 2009; Fullan, 2014; Hargreaves et al. 2014). These studies associate change in students' achievement trajectories with leadership capacity to transform structural and cultural faces of the school: A six-year study, employing mixed-methods approach by Louise et al. (2010) in 9 states, 43 school districts and 180 elementary, middle and secondary schools in the USA concluded that school leadership influences students' learning and achievement. The study suggests that principals' robust collaborative relationships with teachers, clear goals of engagement and distribution of leadership create efficacy and improve teacher working relationships which, valuably contribute to student learning and achievement. Another study of the relationship between school leadership, particularly from the school head and pupil learning outcomes was conducted in England over a period of three years (2003-2005) concluded that there are qualitatively robust associations between school leaders' educational values, dispositions, qualities, strategic actions and improvement in students' achievement (Day et al, 2009). The study suggests that school leaders' educational values, strategic intelligence and leadership strategies shape the school and classroom practices, which inform students' achievement. Moreover, based on 3-years research findings on principals' leadership and students' achievement in the UK, Leithwood et al. (2008) argue that there is no single documented case of a school that has successfully turned around its students' achievement trajectory without effective leadership practices. That notwithstanding, Hargreaves et al.'s (2014) longitudinal study suggest that ensuring the achieved improvement is sustained over time across cohorts

of students remains a difficult task for school leaders to deal with. The effort to sustain students' achievement is undermined by various changes in schools, including leadership succession, teacher turnover and excessive emphasis on heroic leadership among others (Hargreaves et al. 2014; Hargreaves and Fink, 2006).

Beyond school-level factors, in the Kenyan context, just like other developing countries, the challenging socio-political facets of education management hugely influence school leadership working environments, teaching and learning, and subsequent students' achievement (Pont, Nusche, and Moorman, 2008; Wolhuter, van-der-Walt, and Steyn, 2016). The UNESCO post-2015 analysis highlights the changing and complex expectations of school leaders, and the imperative to improve the quality of learning outcomes as presenting new challenges to school leaders (UNESCO, 2016). While existing educational policies and research have focused on streamlining leadership efficiency in resources, infrastructure and inspectional supervision, research that focus on understanding school leadership practice as relates to learning and achievements within this complexity in the Kenyan context remains limited. While there are many ways of explaining undulating students' achievement and trajectories, this thesis focuses on leadership practices as a powerful dominant discourse in Kenya. It is hoped that by providing greater visibility and understanding of school leadership practices, many of the challenges facing schools resulting from difficult socio-political environments might be mitigated and ultimately SSA might be realised.

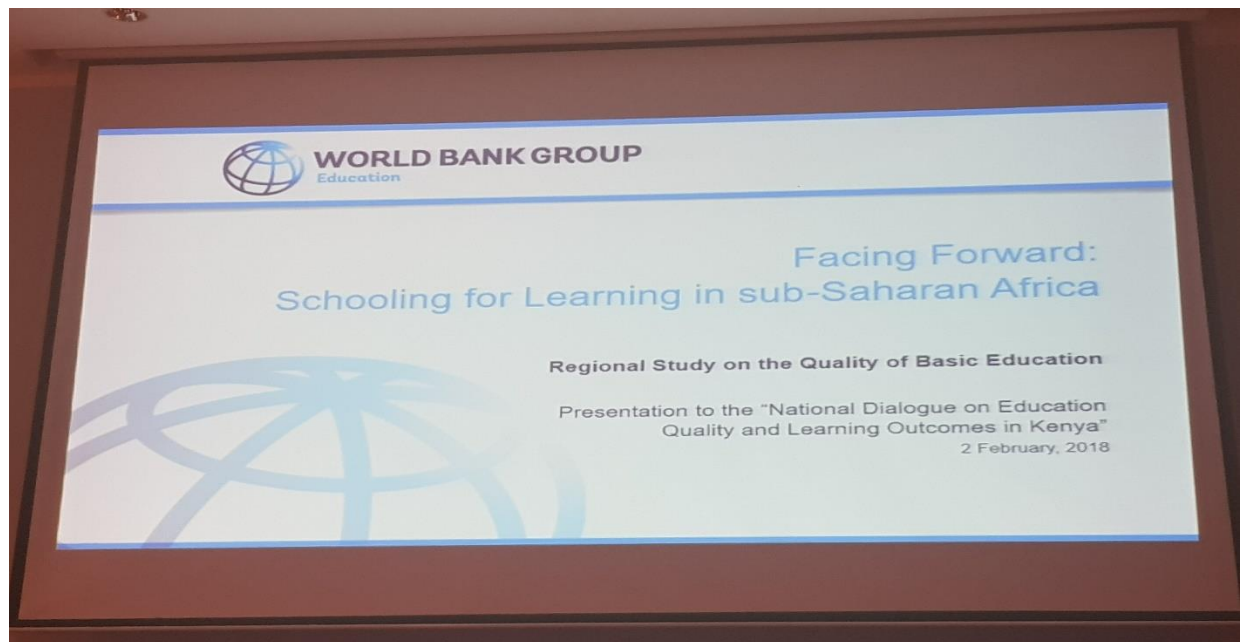
This chapter is the overall introduction of the thesis. It presents the research aim and scope, positionality and motivation for the study, an overview of theoretical framework and location of the study.

### **1.1 Research Aim and Scope**

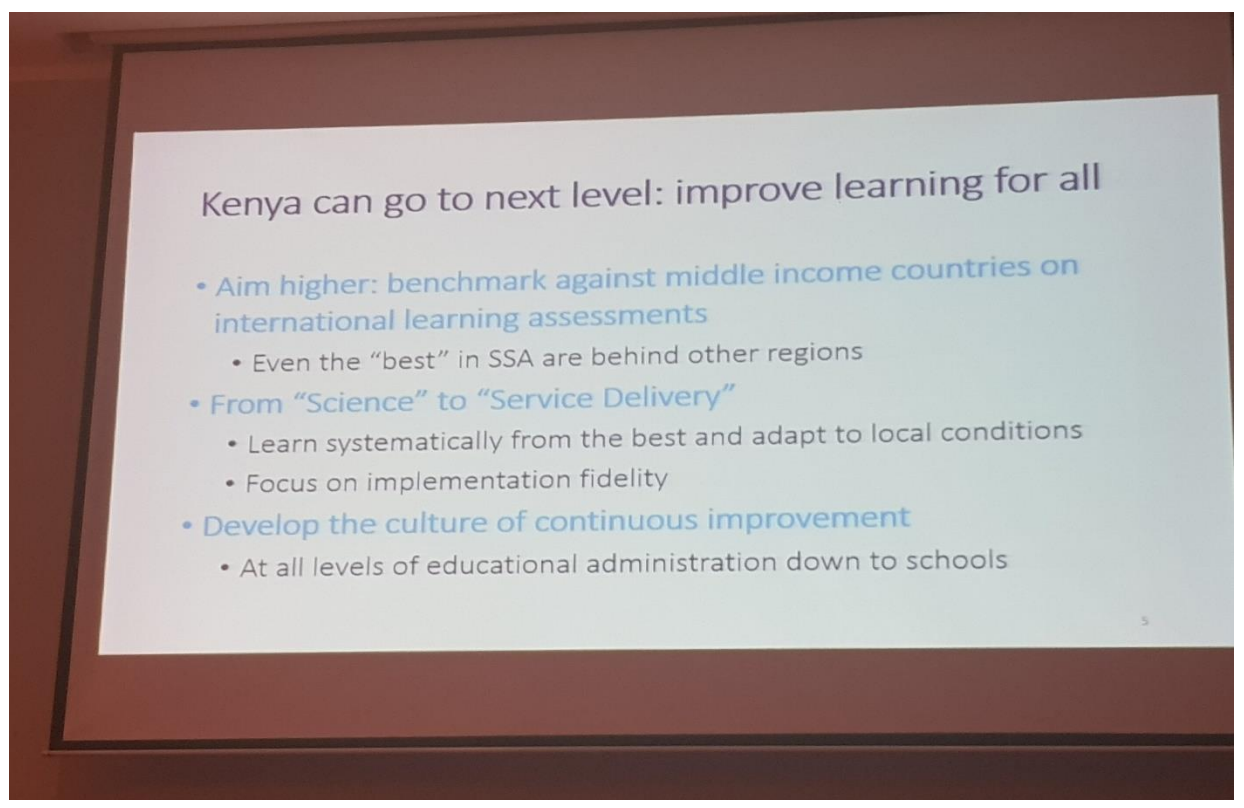
In Kenya, media, policy, international funders and the general public are calling for more leadership accountability for students' learning and achievement (Republic of Kenya 2005, 2007; 2012; Uwezo Kenya, 2010, 2016; World Bank, 2013). The international community which supports, funds or has interest in educational outcomes has consistently questioned the dividends of Kenya's heavy investment in education. In the recent national dialogue on educational quality in Kenya held on the 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2018 (see figure 1.1 below), for instance, the World Bank, other international communities and local stakeholders still questioned Kenya's strategy to improve learning outcomes.

**Figure 1.1 National Dialogue on Education Quality and Learning Outcomes in Kenya**

**A.**



**B**



In figure 1.1, section A demonstrates the existing international debates on the quality of learning and achievement in Kenya. Section B highlights possible areas requiring urgent

focus to realise the improvement in learning outcomes. Categorically, section B underscores the need to develop a culture of sustainable improvement which, these stakeholders suggest is anchored on effective educational leadership. Equally, national media highlights ministerial and community demands for reforms in school leadership to facilitate improvement in learning outcomes, as demonstrated in figure 1.2.

**Figure 1.2 Media extracts**

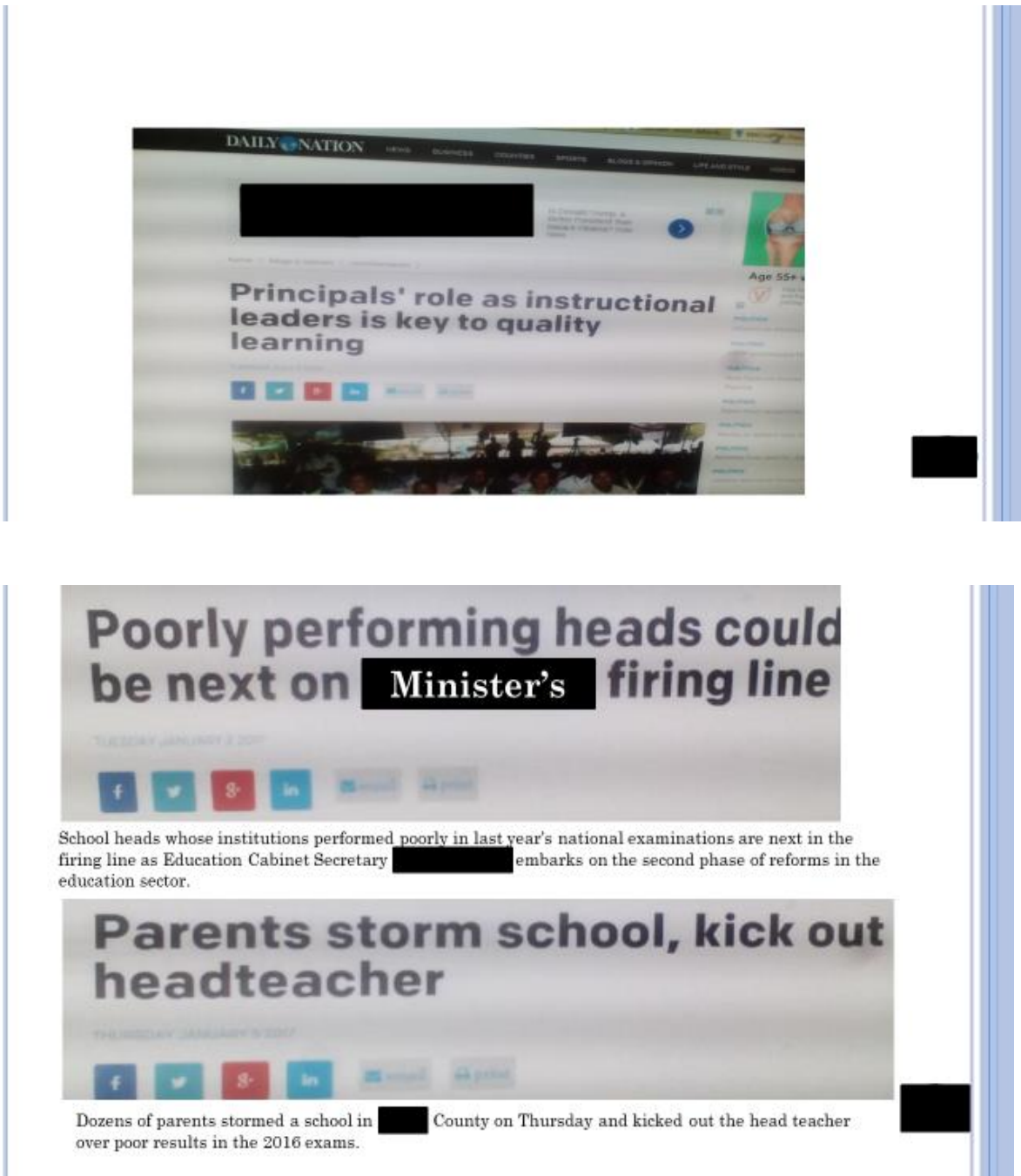


Figure 1.2 demonstrates not only the persistent call for improvement in learning outcomes but also, the pressure school leaders face to account for students' achievements in Kenya. TSC's

(A Teacher Management Commission) recent massive transfer of school principals after 2017 KCSE results accentuates the principal-focused accountability practices in Kenya (See figure 1.3).

*Figure 1.3 An Extract from a National Media Group*

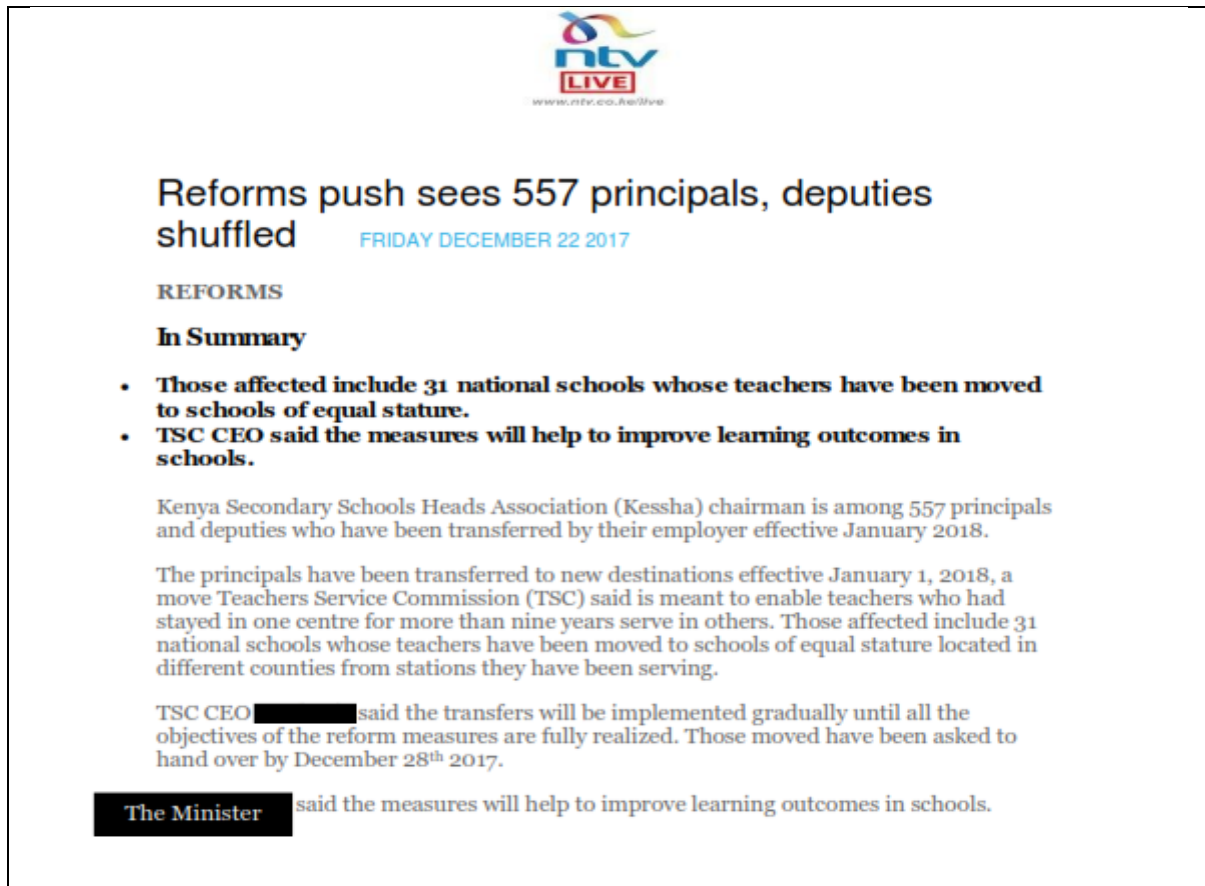


Figure 1.3 demonstrates the close association perceived between school leadership and students' achievement in Kenya. Within the context, test-based accountability is the major form of feedback on school processes and achievements, perhaps reflecting global trends. Scores in standardised national examinations are viewed as important to students and the public in general. This is partly because examination results are associated with a range of positive outcomes prospects for students; better income, employment and health (Mwaka and Njogu, 2014). Moreover, the question of student achievement gaps is closely related to the social justice concepts of equity and equality: Kenya, a developing economy is striving to achieve equal access to learning opportunities and equality of students' achievements and benefits (Republic of Kenya, 2005a, b, 2012; UNDP, 2013). In light of MDGs, EFA and SDGs there is an emergent acknowledgment that the distribution of educational opportunity



plays a key role in shaping students' and society's future development prospects (Marks, 2014). Furthermore, there is increasing recognition that unequal opportunities in education link to the inequalities in income, health and wider life chances (Republic of Kenya, 2005; 2012; UNDP, 2013). Hence, initiatives to improve equal access to basic education are heightened and the introduction of FSE was to curb existing inequalities. Nonetheless, inconsistencies in students' achievement across secondary schools still persist.

A few studies have attempted to analyse leadership responsibility for learning in Kenya, however, they tend to narrowly focus on principals' leadership style (Kirui and Osman, 2012; Nyamboga et al. 2014; Obama et al. 2015). The emphasis on principal's leadership style may be informative, however, it is limited in its ability to provide a wide accountability for learning and achievement. A focus on leadership style is partly informed by the similar prominence given to principals' leadership in some educational leadership literature (Hallinger, 2011; 2012; Elliott and Clifford, 2014). Educational policies in developing contexts further augment this emphasis on principal's leadership; often mandating principals to account for school processes and learning outcomes (Pont et al, 2008; OECD 2013; UNESCO 2016). In Kenya, for instance, policy accountability procedure narrows leadership responsibility to the principal, thereby weakening the contribution of other stakeholders. Despite this requirement, existing socio-political contexts are inflexible, challenging, bureaucratic, thus constraining school principals from enacting leadership (Oplatka, 2004; Bush and Oduro, 2006; Oduro et al, 2007; Ayiro and Sang, 2010). This leadership environments presents a challenge to existing literature from other contexts which assumes certain level of material and socio-political stability: The turn-around leadership literature from the west, that focuses on how principals improve students' achievement trajectories in difficult contexts fall candidate to this critique (Fullan, 2006; Leithwood et al, 2010; Duke, 2015; Young and Crow, 2016).

Hallinger's (2011) systematic synthesis of school leadership research for over 40 years contends that there is huge progress made in identifying the means by which leadership impacts on learning outcomes. However, he notes the difficulty in linking leadership practice identified in the literature to different contexts. Oduro et al. (2007) argue for the context of practice, warning that in difficult and developing contexts like Africa, individual school leaders must apply international research evidence with caution, taking the specific school contexts into account. Oduro and colleagues (ibid) note that leadership practices identified in

literature have been developed and experimented in the developed world where school principals have well-established resource base, structured leadership professional development programmes and high principals' autonomy on school processes. Conversely, school leaders in developing nations in most of Africa work in inflexible, challenging, bureaucratic and hierarchical educational environments that are less resourced, and have little autonomy on teachers' recruitment and discipline (Bush and Oduro, 2006; Oduro et al, 2007; Ayiro and Sang, 2010). In these contexts, school improvement initiatives are further hampered by the insufficient capacity to enact leadership tasks due to little preparation (Onguko et al, 2008; 2012; Nandwa, 2011; Wanjala and Rarieya, 2014). Accordingly, it is problematic to assume a generic and universal application of leadership practices. It is important, therefore, to not only consider what leadership practices work, but also to critically analyse what works, for whom, when and under what circumstances (Pawson and Tilley, 1997).

While a number of studies have looked at leadership reforms for school improvement in the Kenyan context, these have tended to focus on leadership efficiency in utilising material and infrastructural resources (Ndaita, 2015); external supervision of school leadership and learning (Ngware, Wamukuru, and Odebero, 2006; Wanzare, 2012; 2013), and leadership training (Nandwah, 2011; Asuga, Eacott and Scevak, 2015) as measures to improve achievement. These studies tend to ignore important aspects of the internal school systems including leadership practices and organisational ethos that form mediating processes to teaching and learning (Leithwood, 2005; Leithwood et al, 2006; Robinson et al. 2008; Day et al. 2009; Louis et al. 2010); and overlooks nuances of practice which might explain how some school leaders manage to negotiate the existing challenges informed by socio-political working environments to achieve progressive improvement while others struggle. Therefore, beyond leadership efficiency, external supervision, and leadership training, understanding what works, for whom, under what condition requires deeper analysis of structures within which school leaders operate as well as their agency to make leadership decisions and take subsequent actions towards students' learning and achievement. It requires a critical examination of contextual social-political mechanisms and environments shaping school leadership practices and understanding how school leaders conceptualise and respond to these leadership exigencies that eventually inform actions, decisions and practices related to teaching and learning.



This study challenges the overemphasis on material resources and external inspection and supervision as central constituents of school reforms in Kenya. Although resources and inspection are necessary to provide support systems, independently they lack the capacity to enhance school improvement or provide the impetus for SSA. Moreover, the study focuses on school leadership practice in a highly-regulated context, thus contesting the predominant overemphasis on the accountability procedures that hold school principal solely responsible for fluctuations in students' achievement. Often, these procedures ignore the reality that principals work with a host of stakeholders; whose actions and decisions considerably influence students learning and achievement. The study further disputes the practice of addressing school leadership as an individual principal's responsibility, whose task is to react and respond to policies and other political and societal demands. Instead, the study locates the overall purpose of school leadership in the context of school reforms as defined in school effectiveness and improvement research: To initiate change processes, create capacities and nurture conducive teaching and learning environments for improvement in students learning outcomes (Fullani 2002; 2008; Leithwood et al, 2004). The study, therefore, contests scholarship focusing on principals' leadership styles as a choice-free will often, taken out of context. In reality, especially in challenging contexts like Kenya, the principal's style of leadership is embedded within the wider societal confines. While studies focusing on individual principal leadership reductively concentrate on the competing leadership styles and measurement of leadership effects, the interest of this study is the collective mechanisms of structure and agency influencing leadership and learning in schools.

The study, therefore, was principally designed to examine the existing leadership practices in schools in Kenya and analyse their expediency for SSAs. Although these explanations are not entirely mutually exclusive nor exhaustive, they do offer a different interpretation of leadership practices in challenging contexts. Kenya and other African countries do experience bureaucratic leadership environments, coupled with various socio-political encounters in which school leaders make decisions. This thesis demonstrates how collective action is organised at school and local educational level to mitigate contextual exigencies to school leadership and learning. The study, therefore, brings in a more nuanced perspective that studies the expanded nature of school leadership practice by considering both structure and agency. It also demonstrates how the focus on procedural principal leadership may not only be creating internal school conflicts but could be obscuring key drivers of SSA.

## **1.2 Positioning and Motivation**

The overarching rationale for this study is underpinned by a broader definition of what constitutes the long-term objectives of education, and the leadership interventions that realise the goal of quality, equitable achievements for all. Research highlights problems in school leadership in Kenya, citing insufficient capacities for strategic direction and change leadership imperative for successful school improvement (Mbugua and Rarieya, 2011, Wambua, 2012; Wasonga, 2013; Wanjala and Rarieya, 2014). Moreover, during leadership professional development, often, pre-survey data highlighted the challenges school leaders face in an attempt to enhance progressive improvement in students' achievement. School leaders have often appeared frustrated because they struggle to meet the demands for SSA from varied quarters. Some leaders fail to cope with the pressure, exiting the system for other career engagements (Yambo, et al. 2012). Students' achievement, especially at secondary level, holds high stakes in Kenya. Partly, as a major accountability indicator for schools and leaders thereby determining their promotion and reward. Partly, because it is associated with positive outcomes; better income, employment and health for students. In the study, therefore, I sought to understand these school leadership and SSA dyad.

Having lived experiences of the Kenyan educational leadership context, but also, adopting a reflexive research stance, I find myself in an insider-outsider position. I had a good understanding of the typical school processes and had established relations with practitioners in this field. The act of research reflexivity that requires stepping out and observing the practices from a critical point of view, which augments the cognizant and understanding of the emergent socio-political properties influencing leadership and learning in Kenyan schools. The focus was understanding why things happen as they do and what informed these actions. As an outsider, I reflected on the observed, written, spoken, and the unspoken mechanisms (rules, policies, power relations) with a view of understanding the deeper meaning associated with them in the Kenyan school setting. While I endeavoured to fix my gaze within the highlighted theoretical framework, I was watchful for emerging critical incidences that spoke otherwise. This is because the ways of knowing about leadership practices and students' achievement are not fixed but flexible.

## **1.3 Theoretical Frameworks Shaping the Study**

The theoretical framework shaping this study is informed by an understanding that school leadership practice does not occur in a vacuum, rather, takes place in social settings that are

complex, dynamic, with multiple forms of engagement and interaction. Pawson and Tilley's extract below summaries this understanding,

'Initiatives and programmes are constituted in complex processes of human understanding and interaction and should be seen as working through a process of reasoning, change, influence, negotiation, *the* battle of wills, persuasion and choice.... Programmes cannot be considered as some kind of external, impinging 'force' to which subjects 'respond'. Rather programmes work if subjects choose to make them work and are placed in the right conditions to enable them to do so.' (Pawson and Tilley, 1997, P. 17)

With this understanding, this study is framed around theories that consider individual actors, the social context informing action as well as the interaction between these two. The study is underpinned by three theoretical foundations: Archer's social realist theory from which I draw the analysis of structure and agency (Archer, 1995). Engestrom's 3<sup>rd</sup> generation activity theory that provides room to analyse the systemic but complex interaction of leadership activities (Engestrom, 1987). Hardman's regenerative leadership theory that guides the analysis of leadership practices and environments that support the sustainability of outcomes (Hardman, 2012). Hardman leadership framework centres on practices that drive change, improvement and suitability of excellent outcomes. Chapter 2 section 2.1 presents a detailed explanation of these analytical theories.

#### **1.4 Overview of the Study Location**

Kenya is a developing country located in East-African region covering an area of 580, 367 km<sup>2</sup>. Geographically Kenya is located 1°00'N 38°00'E, with Nairobi as its capital city. The country is boarded by Tanzania, Uganda, Ethiopia, Somalia, Sudan and South Sudan. Kenya has a population of 48.5 million people (UNESCO 2016). The country is characterised by multi-ethnic and multi-lingual culture; however, English and Swahili form official and national languages respectively. The country has 40,775 ECD centres, 21,877 primary schools, 8,734 secondary schools, 70 universities (Republic of Kenya, 2016). Economically, Kenya is described as a lower middle-income country with GDP of 70.53 billion US dollars (2016). Kenya's administrative structure is devolved into 47 counties, three of which formed research sites for this study (*See chapter 4*).

#### **1.5 The Structure of the Thesis**

This study is organised around 8 chapters. Chapter 1, is the introduction to the thesis outlining the aim and scope of the study, positionality and motivation, an overview of theoretical frameworks, an overview of the study location and the structure of the thesis. Chapter 2 presents the review of the literature, highlighting theoretical and conceptual

frameworks underpinning the study. Chapter 3 is the methodology chapter outlining ontological and epistemological foundations framing the study, research approaches, data collection and analysis. Chapter 4 presents the context of study drawing from literature, document analysis and the quantitative analysis of secondary data (students' achievement data in national examinations). It also responds to research question one that explored the emerging patterns of KCSE student achievement trends in Kenyan schools. Chapter 5 is the analysis of findings 1, responding to research question 2 that examined the existing leadership practices in study schools. The chapter outlines leaders and teachers' experiences of existing leadership practices and their possible implications for teaching and learning. Chapter 6 is the analysis of findings 11, responding to research question 3 that analysed and exemplified the socio-political context influencing school leadership practice. Chapter seven is the analysis of findings 111, responding to research question 4 that analysed the emerging leadership practices that C3 schools adopted to navigate the existing socio-political hindrances to achieve SSA. Chapter 8 presents the discussion of findings, interpretation and overall contribution of the study. Furthermore, it presents implications for policy, practice and future research, limitations of the study and final conclusion.

## **Chapter 2 Educational Leadership Practice and Learning**

### **2.0 Introduction**

This thesis set out to examine leadership practices that school leaders have engaged in for SSA; conjecturing that school leadership practices might explain the differentiated achievement trends and trajectories in Kenyan schools. This chapter presents a review of literature for the study; first, it introduces core theoretical frameworks guiding the study. Secondly, it presents theories and concepts of school leadership and its mediating relationship in schools; assessing how the mediating relationship informs the sustainability of students' learning and achievement. The review examines the feasibility and utility of existing leadership models for the uptake of sustainable students' achievement across contexts. Finally, I present the focus and research questions guiding the study.

### **2.1 Theoretical Framework**

Fruitfully examining leadership practices for sustainable students' achievement from an educational reform's perspective requires philosophical and theoretical frameworks that analyse the context of practice, the holistic view of a school as a system and the reflexivity within which expansions and transformations occur to inform the regeneration of social change. A number of theories and analytical frameworks, therefore, guided this study. Archer's (1995) morphogenetic theory provided a framework for thinking about the context of interaction between structure and agency in educational leadership in general and school leadership in particular (explaining how individual leaders' decisions are influenced and informed by existing socio-structural and cultural environments and how leaders manipulate these structures to their advantage). Engestrom's (1987) socio-cultural activity theory and Hardman's (2012) regenerative leadership model provide a framework for analysing processes that influence, and within which actors make leadership and learning decisions. The two theories highlight interactive processes and intersections where sustainability takes place. Together these theories provide a more subtle and comprehensive way of understanding why some leaders are able to sustain students' achievement over time while others fail within the specific school and local context.

### ***2.1.1 Archer's Morphogenesis Theory***

Archer's sociological theory of morphogenesis advances the idea of the stratified nature of reality (Archer, 1995). That reality is layered along structure and agency; neither of them is privileged over the other. Archer proposes the concept of analytical dualism as appropriate in theorising the interaction between structure and agency. Analytical because the two are interdependent and dualism because each possesses its own emerging powers. Archer argues that social structures are distinct from and irreducible to the agency (Archer, 2003). However, she suggests structural properties are emergent in nature and are dependent on human activity; but once they have emerged they have irreducible causal powers (Archer, 1995). Archer's principles of analytical dualism highlight the importance of studying the interplay between structure and agency without conflating them; proposing the reflexivity act as the core mediator between them (Rafiee et al. 2014).

In school systems, structural properties have powers to confront leaders with situations that provide both possibilities and constraints to the capacity to sustain students' achievement. Social realism asserts that such situations have an objective existence regardless of the perceptions and experiences of school leaders and other stakeholders (Bhaskar, 1979). That notwithstanding, perceptions and experiences form part of school system reality, hence, important in leadership analysis. Accordingly, agency and structure occur as distinct entities entangled in a social reality, separately focusing on one, therefore, fails to exhaust all possibilities of understanding phenomena under study (Archer, 1995). This implies that analysing leadership practices requires a collective understanding of both structure and agency: disentangling both emergent powers and properties is fundamental for enabling school system change, transformations and sustainability. This entangling must happen within specific school contexts.

In the context of this study, I define agency and structure in educational leadership perspectives: Agency as the creative role of school leaders and their capability to choose to use their emergent powers of reflexivity to address students' achievement issues (Archer, 2003). The structure as a network of internal and external social relations in a school system that define communicative interactions and provide actors with reasons for pursuing change or stability in the context of sustainability (Archer, 1995). Resources, positions and responsibilities, as well as the communicative networks between them, are things defining actors' social relations in school leadership systems (Archer, 1985). Archer separates socio-

structural and cultural systems (Zeuner, 1999). In the study, however, I use a collective but inclusive term socio-political mechanism, which captures the complexity of both structure and culture. It is beyond the scope of this thesis to engage in deep philosophical differentiation between the two.

The concept of morphogenesis, therefore, provides ontological lenses for analysing and explaining leadership practices in school settings; schools as social systems influenced by both structures (internal and external) and agency. In this study, the concept of morphogenesis is particularly important in understanding the emergence of school leadership practices that enhance sustainability. The idea that social change with respect to realising sustainability is only accomplished when cultural and structural factors are modified in a school system. However, a change in structure and culture entails changing people's assumptions and values within the school system with an open mind to alternatives (Fullan, 2002, 2005; Anderson and Wenderoth, 2007). The change further calls for in-depth individual and group consciousness that develops mutual relations in the school system (Archer, 2010; Hardman, 2012). Archer theorises the development of mutuality in the concept of reflective conversations in which she advances a framework for analysing communicative networks and interrelationships within school systems and their implications on resultant leadership practices (see Archer, 1999, 2003). This implies that cultural change is essential in realising sustainability in a school system; however, a change in school culture is dependent on changes in people's ideas, assumptions and beliefs. Changes in these dispositions aid in changing unpleasant relationships that hinder sustainability objectives.

### **2.1.2 3<sup>rd</sup> Generation Activity Theory**

Engestrom's activity theory (AT) is a theoretical framework that analyses the interaction of human activities (and processes) and their interrelationships in a social context (Activity system). Lev Vygotsky founded the first-generation AT, which considered human action as mediated by culture, identifying human artefacts as important in overcoming human action. The first-generation AT was criticised for centrally focusing on the individual (Engestrom, 2001). Leont'ev and Luria further developed Vygotsky's AT to include the historical, cultural and societal (CHAT) perspectives into accounting for human actions (Bakhurst, 2009). The incorporation of historical and social dimensions indicated an expansion of the unit of analysis from an individual to a collective activity system. Human activity as understood and embedded in the context. Engestroms 3<sup>rd</sup> generation further expounded the unit of analysis to

consider multiple activity systems in an effort to demonstrate the complex social systems shaping and informing human actions. Engestrom's AT focuses on the interaction between two or more interconnected activity systems; in doing so, the attention is not only on meanings within the system, but also, at the point of intersection with other systems; referred to as a zone of expansion (Engestrom, 1999, 2001).

Educational researchers using AT identify a school as a complex activity system with multiple activities embedded but also networked with other external multiple activity systems within the context of operation (Bakhurst, 2009; Feldman and Weiss, 2010; Beswick et al. 2010). In this study, AT is used to provides a holistic and ecological perspective on leadership as a human activity; facilitating the analysis of human action and interactions with and through artefacts within a socio-cultural context. Engestrom argues that activity cannot be analysed outside the context in which it occurs since the activity is socially and culturally mediated (Engeström and Kerosuo, 2007). AT seeks to explain actions in a real-world context, by relating them to the socio-cultural context in which the activity is taking place. In doing so, AT is, therefore, an important theoretical basis for studying different forms of human practices as developmental processes; with both individual and social levels interlinked at the same time (Uden, Valderas et al. 2008). This study framed the analysis of leadership practices within specific study schools as activity systems. Not only recognising the mutuality of the individual and the environment but also viewing leadership activity as an interactive web of actors, structures, cultures and artefacts (Engestrom 1999), illustrated below.

**Figure 2.1: 3<sup>rd</sup> Generation Activity Theory (Adapted from Engestrom, 1987, 2001)**

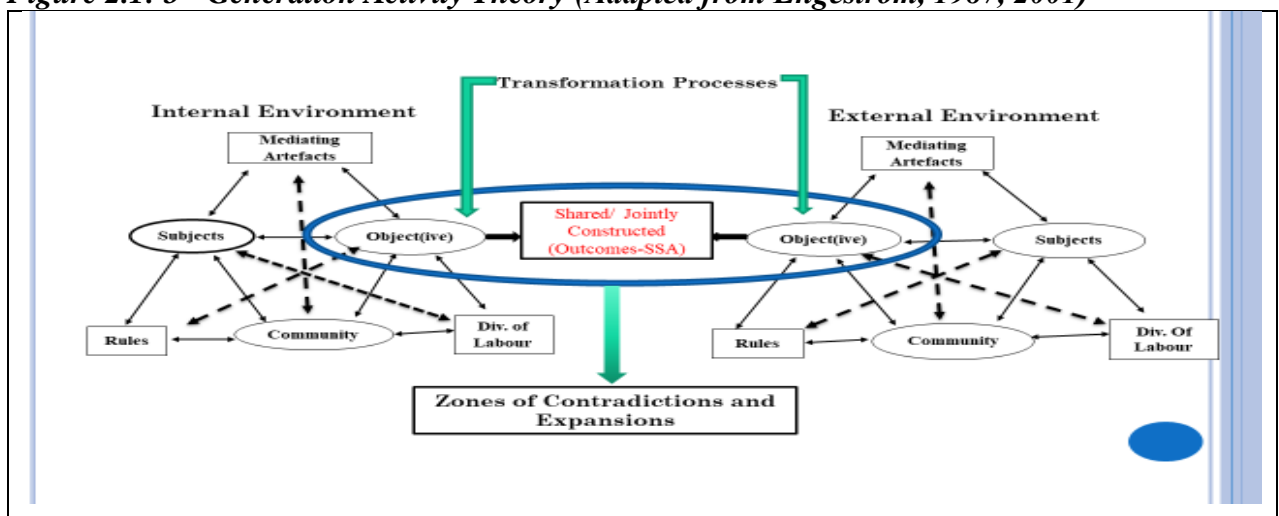




Figure 2.1 illustrates Engeström's AT adapted for this study. The activity (leadership practice) is, therefore, an action directed at an object (sustainable student's achievement) within single and multiple systems. The figure shows that relations between the object and subjects is not direct but mediated through artefacts, community, rules and the division of labour. The multiple directed arrows between components in the system illustrate dynamic and continuously interacting relations, which define the activity system as a whole unit and not its segments. In keeping with AT underpinnings, the analysis of school leadership practice in this study focused on leaders' thinking and action in situ; the systemic analysis of leadership practice within social contexts of schools that situate leaders' activities. The appropriate unit of analysis was not leaders or what they do but leadership activities within specific structural and cultural contexts. This shifted the unit of analysis from individual actors or group of actors to the web of leaders, stakeholders and situation that gives leadership activity its form, in a community of practice (Wenger, 1998). AT theory facilitated the analysis of how the social and situational contexts enable and constrain leadership practices (see the analysis in chapter six). The assumption that recognition of the socio-political contexts as constitutive elements of leadership practices is integral for a change to occur in students' learning and achievement. Moreover, the ability to reflect on and transform these socio-cultural structures for sustainable students' achievement is framed in leaders' agential capacity (knowledge, attitudes, values and dispositions) as well as their interconnectedness and interrelationships with other school stakeholders in a COP and the situation at hand.

### ***2.1.3 Hardman's Regenerative Leadership Framework***

There is an increased call for educational leadership suitable for and responsive to the 21<sup>st</sup> century ever-changing and complex learning environments and the need to scale up sustainability in educational settings (UNESCO, 2016). While fields of environment and climate change, business, urbanisation and industry have advanced research related to sustainability, the field of education in general and school leadership, in particular, is still in infancy stage; yet to make advanced strides in theorising the concept of sustainability in education terms. It is widely acknowledged that education, as a social pillar to development is generally political, volatile and dynamic following changes in socio-political and economic systems. The concern for sustainability in education provision, sustainable achievement and long-life learning remains central to global development as well as the pursuit of equity, diversity and social justice. In educational leadership, specifically, studies have attempted to theorise sustainability in terms of leadership succession; raising debates about the moral

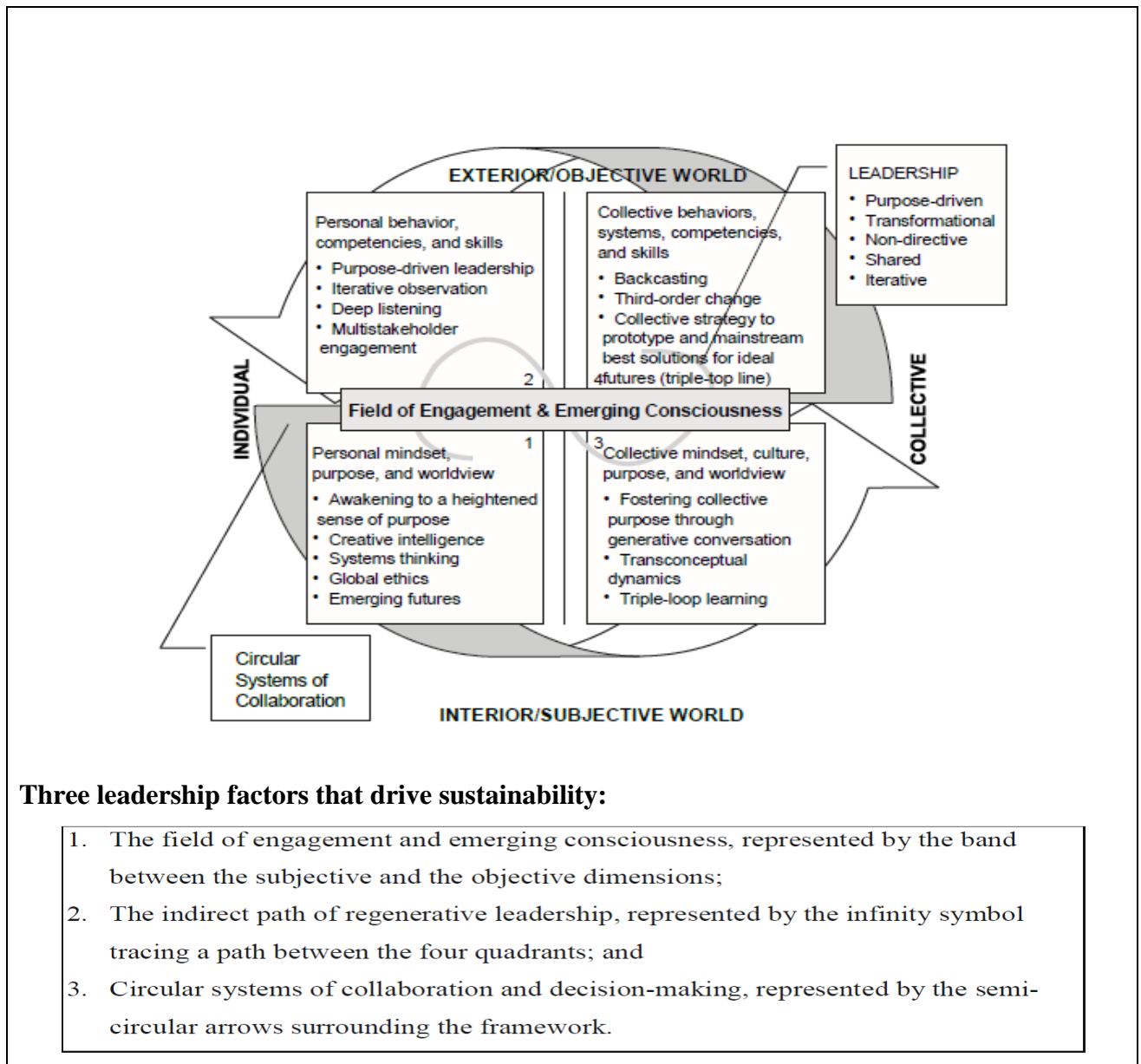
purpose and sustainable leadership (Fullan, 2001, 2005; Hargreaves and Fink, 2005, 2014). While these studies significantly illuminate the progression of leadership over time, they fall short of theorising the mediating role of leadership in engendering sustainable students' achievement. The over-emphasis on the distributed leadership framework overlooks the idea that leadership practice occurs in wider social contexts and distribution of leadership grounded in the division of labour in itself is basic and fails to account for other hegemonic forces influencing leadership practice and sustainable students' achievement (*further review in section 2.2*). Alternatively, the work of John Hardman (2012) proposes a subtler framework that considers both aspects of leadership succession but with the substantial focus on outcomes; how sustainable are the outcomes and the role of leadership in realising it.

Hardman criticises the traditional linear change management theories to sustainability that focuses on balancing the leader-follower relationship (raising a significant criticism of transformational leadership theories). He suggests that 21<sup>st</sup> Century educational environments are too complex, ambiguous and uncertain raising unanticipated problems that such models are too limited to resolve (Hardman, 2010). Hardman proposes a multi-dimensional organisational system thinking that engenders the connection, interaction and engagement with local actions following natural patterns of behaviour; suggesting this approach is likely to promote the resilience and sustainability of education and school systems.

From this perspective, leadership is no longer a position, nor is it limited to a single person or team symbolically located at the top of an organizational chart. Leadership is, therefore, the natural behaviour of every leader in a self-organizing system that is inherently too complex, too unstable, and unpredictable for any one individual to control (Hardman, 2012; p.3)

Inherent in Hardman's framework is the emphasis on leadership as emergent behaviour with multiple components and actors within an educational ecology. The concept of educational ecology according to Hardman is the agential and collective consciousness of a system of 'the unpredictable nature of reality' (p.4). Within such an ecology, school leaders face various dilemmas that are complex and challenging with conflicting expectations, actions and reactions. In his view, such unpredictable leadership environments require conscious risk-taking rooted in inquiry and learning with the aim of recreating, regenerating and reproducing new capacities, interactions, connections and actions responsive to the prevailing emergent state (illustrated in figure 2.2).

**Figure 2.2: Hardman's Regenerative Leadership Framework**



**Source: Hardman (2012; p.6, 15)**

In this study, I draw on Hardman (2012; p.16) three leadership factors that drive sustainability; High levels of consciousness, the indirect leadership path and the circular system of collaboration and decision-making.

### ***High levels of consciousness***

Drawing on Scharmer's (2007) theory U, Hardman centres high levels of consciousness in regenerative leadership practice. He suggests consciousness as an interface between individual and collective cognizance, which he presents as an emerging mediating space between individual and collective realities. This interface forms a fertile ground for reflective

conversations that advance new and innovative mind-sets that awaken creativity, high sense of purpose and emerging futures (Hardman, 2010, 2012; Waite and Bogotch, 2017). This suggests that a regenerative leadership practice creates forums of reflection on practice, in practice as well as on contexts surrounding practice. The collective aspect (organisational) goes beyond individual's immediate environment to understand other aspects (structural and cultural) within the system that have implications on practice.

### ***The Indirect Leadership***

Hardman presents regenerative leadership as an iterative process interconnecting individual and organisational values. He illustrates an indirect change process that not only focuses on technical and procedural change management but also, considers leaders dispositions; assumptions, beliefs, values (suggesting that acting on dispositions foster empowerment and engagement). Central to this indirect process is the focus on vision (purpose) and building the capacity of others towards achieving this purpose. This process calls for the adoption of symbolic tools that have the capacity to influence individual and collective values and practices in ways that do not directly draw on contractual appraisals and code of conducts: approaches that appear empowering and engaging rather than seeking for compliance (Hardman and Hardman, 2014; Waite and Bogotch, 2017).

### ***Circular System of Collaboration and Decision-making***

Hardman presents regenerative leadership as heterarchical; a leadership approach that balances power by encouraging multiple voices to emerge within the system (Murphy, 2008). The purpose of heterarchy is not only to distribute leadership (considering how leadership is spread to multiple leaders – a technical operation) but going beyond to promote interdependence in decision-making and allowing multi-level and multi-system collaborations within and without the school (Hardman, 2010, 2012). This multi-level leadership approach only works successfully in environments that value all stakeholders. Stakeholders are actively and authentically included in reflective conversations about achieving the organisational vision. In the context of schools, therefore, circular systems of collaborations draw on stakeholders within and without schools: not only attending and responding to their needs, but also, allowing them to productively engage with and contribute to the accomplishment of the objective of learning and achievement (Bogotch and Shields, 2014; Waite and Bogotch, 2017).

## **2.2 Conceptual Framing**

This section reviews the literature on the concept of school leadership (and management) in specific ways to research and practice contexts: Identifying the current preference for leadership over management, particularly in school leadership research. The review further analyses the development in educational research speaking directly to school leadership, and examining the various models of leadership practice over time. Finally, I examine the concept of SSA and the mediating role of school leadership in realising its sustainability.

### ***2.2.1 The Concept of School Leadership and Management***

The recent global conceptualisation of leadership is heavily influenced by the rise of democracy, which has caused a shift in the use of power in organisations in the 21<sup>st</sup> century (Bolden, 2011). Researchers increasingly construct leadership as a process of learning within and among organizational members geared towards achieving specified goals. Spillane (2006) defines leadership as “...all those activities that attempt to influence the knowledge, and affect the practice and motivation of other organizational members in the service of the organization’s core work” (p. 11). This description takes leadership practice beyond task orientation (organizational position) to include the affective; appealing to people’s emotions and getting them deeply engaged in organizational activities for sustained improvement. In this sense, the emphasis is not on the leader, but on “the outcome of the interaction process between leaders, followers and the situation” (Liljenberg 2014; p. 2). In the context of this study, I define leadership as the process of providing direction and exercising influence on others and the situation at hand with intentions of taking action that bring about positive change to achieve specific objectives.

Leadership and management are concepts often used interchangeably in educational literature, however, the two differ. Northouse (2013) states that “to manage is to accomplish activities and master routines while to lead means to influence others and create visions for change” (p.13). This suggests that the overarching function of management is to provide order and consistency to organisations for stability. In education, management is the organisation and coordination of activities of an institution in accordance with certain policies to achieve clearly defined objectives. While management seeks stability, leadership strives to produce change and improve situations (Yukl, 2010). Leadership centres on organisational change, performance and improvement. It entails the establishment of worthwhile direction for an organisation, and the core issue is pushing people to move in this direction (Bush,

2010). In this sense, leadership is an interactive process of influence between leaders and followers manifested through power relations as argued by Northouse (2013) who states that “power is the capacity or potential to influence...people have power when they have the ability to affect others’ beliefs, attitudes and courses of actions” (p.9). Accordingly, leadership is an exercise of power and influence involving taking intentional action to bring about adaptive and constructive change.

School leadership involves both leadership and management. However, there is a current shift in both literature and practice in favour of leadership (Hallinger, 2011). The shift originates from the belief that school leadership requires potential to unleash latent capabilities for improved outcomes (Harris, 2005; Spillane, 2006; Hargreaves et al, 2014). The underpinning assumption is that the principal’s role is not only to give direction and manage routine school programmes, rather, strategically think about how to get teachers and other stakeholders involved in actualising the school vision and drive institutional improvement. School leadership is, therefore, about creating synergy across relevant variables and actors within the school system to obtain a large effect on students’ achievement (Mintzberg, 2006). As such, teachers are encouraged to take on the leadership of their professional practice and make informed decisions on the pedagogical process, which they account for (Day et al, 2009). Accordingly, school leadership is conceptualised as a shared social influence of teachers, administrators and other associate stakeholders purposely to improve teaching and learning.

### ***2.2.2 School Leadership Research***

The concern for effective school leadership practices that advance improvement in learning outcomes in both emerging and developed economies persist even with substantial research output over the years (Murphy, 2008; Hallinger, 2011; UNESCO, 2016). There has been a major output of leadership research, however, largely north-centric. A six-year study which employed mixed methods approach by Louis et al. (2010) in nine states, 43 school districts and 180 elementary, middle and secondary schools in the USA concluded that school leadership influences students’ learning and achievement. Another study of the relationship between school leadership, particularly from the school head and pupil learning outcomes was conducted in England over a period of three years (2003-2005) concluding that there are statistically significant empirical and qualitatively robust associations between school leaders’ educational values, dispositions, qualities, strategic actions and improvement in students’ achievement (Day et al, 2009). The study argues that educational values, strategic

intelligence and leadership strategies of school leaders shape the school and classroom processes and practices, in turn, affecting students' achievement.

Furthermore, based on three years' research findings on principals' leadership and students' achievement in the UK, Leithwood and colleagues argue that, "there is not a single documented case of a school successfully turning around its pupil achievement trajectory in the absence of talented leadership" (Leithwood et al. 2008, p.5). Nonetheless, this study focuses on the turn-around leadership centring it in changing schools' achievement trajectory. Turnaround leadership research draws the focus on certain charismatic leaders, who are identified for this undertaking. However, these research mentions little about sustaining of the achieved progress over time as these leaders, often, quickly get promoted after the achievement is realised (Heck and Hallinger, 2009; Leithwood et al. 2010). In a multi-sectoral and multi-organisational longitudinal study involving 200 interviews and 18 projects over three years in UK, Canada and Singapore, Hargreaves et al. (2014) conclude that ensuring the achieved improvement is sustained over time across cohorts of students remains a difficult task for school leaders to deal with. Hargreaves and colleague note that various changes in schools, including leadership succession, teacher turnover and excessive emphasis on heroic leadership among others might undermine the effort to sustain students' achievement.

These studies describe school leadership practices as the application of various models and styles of leadership to drive change and achieve desired objectives (Darroch, 2006). Leadership style refers to a pattern of prominence, indicated by the frequency or intensity of specific leadership behaviour or attitudes, which a leader displays at different leadership functions (Johnson, and Klee, 2008). Leadership model refers to not only the behaviours but also, the philosophical underpinnings defining the whole approach to leadership; assumptions and expectations. Research on leadership practices in the western context highlights various models of leadership perceived to have varied effects on students' achievement. Major models discussed in the educational literature include instructional leadership (Hallinger and Heck, 1998), transactional leadership, transformational leadership (Burns, 1978), and distributed leadership (Gronn, 2000; Spillane et al, 2004). These models have evolved over time as prominent paradigms of school leadership practices (Lynch, 2011).

Instructional leadership centres on teaching and learning, with the school principals as the pacesetter in curriculum implementation. The principal oversees teaching and learning processes, evaluates teachers' practice, sets goals and ensure their achievement (Hallinger, 2012). This approach, however, is known to have less effect on the sustainability of outcomes because it adopts a heroic model in which the burden of students' achievement chiefly falls to the principal (Hallinger, 2005). Researchers argue that it is challenging for one person to bear the burden of a whole system as they may burn out (Burns, 1978, 1985; Marks and Printy, 2003). A recent development at the University of Cambridge has seen the advancement of leadership for learning framework (MacBeath et al. 2006; MacBeath and Dempster, 2009). This framework advances something similar to instructional leadership, however, with a greater re-focus on the learning process as a complex activity intertwining a tripartite engagement of student, professional and organisational learning (Swaffield, 2014, p.3).

Transactional leadership is characterised by give-and-take leadership relations; using various material and non-material rewards to attract employee commitment (Frazier, 2006). A leadership that promises rewards for high performance and reprimand subordinates for mistakes and substandard performance. Sometimes referred to as management practices, transactional leadership involves clearly outlining subordinates' expectations and subsequent punishments and rewards for not meeting or meeting established expectations respectively (Lynch, 2011). The practice of transactional leadership appears straightforward and easy to understand by both the leader and the constituents following a hierarchical structure with a clear chain of command. The clear structure helps the subordinates to understand employer (leader) expectations of them. Leaders commonly reward following of orders and completion of objectives with something of value; otherwise, actors suffer consequences for failure to comply (Mulford, 2008). There is a strong belief in punishment as a way of ensuring compliance and dealing with deviation from the expected behaviour; leaders assume that rewards and promises of rewards would yield more effort by subordinates (Amanchukwu et al. 2015; Huber and Muijs, 2010). Fiore (2004) identifies rewards in the form of material gains, promotions, verbal praise and public recognition as contributing to staff commitment. The success of transactional leadership, however, depends on the availability of rewards. Moreover, whether the leader has control over other factors outside the school. Burns (1978) argue against transactional leadership asserting continued reliance on punishment and rewards appear to achieve short-lived relationships. However, with long-term erosion of



institutional loyalty, employee commitment and team spirit. Burns proposed transformational leadership as a better alternative (Burns, 1978, 1985).

Transformational leadership emphasises individual senior leaders' charisma, inspiration and motivation. Transformational leaders are seen to involve intellectual stimulation, being visionary, having individualised considerations and encouraging empowering cultures in schools (Bass, 1997; Gosling et al, 2003; Harris, 2005). Central in this approach is the concern for relationships and engagements of individual stakeholders purposely to build a unified interest. Leithwood (1999) contends that transformational leadership is about the internal state of schools, where staff welfare is cited as significant to their performance. However, critics argue that transformational leadership in itself does not guarantee sustainable students' achievement because it emphasises the charisma of the leader and mentions little about the role of staff (Hargreaves and Fink, 2006; Robinson et al, 2008; Leithwood and Jingping, 2012). Leithwood and Jingping (2012) argue, "Teacher practices, for example, must often change in specified ways if student achievement is to improve" (p.391). Hargreaves and Fink (2006) contend that transformational leadership still exalts the principal, "it is still the principal who, quietly or dramatically, inspires and motivates others .... the principal still (*sic*) manages and even manipulates others' emotions so that their leadership will, within the principal's parameters, eventually come forward" (p.59). If that is the case, the central positioning of the principal in transformational leadership becomes problematic. When the charismatic leader leaves the system, it is bound to relapse back to complacency that is exhibited on the unsustainability of the system and ineffective leadership. This complacency compromises the effort towards students' achievement. The shortcomings in transformational leadership led to the development of distributed leadership.

Distributed leadership has attracted attention as a panacea to sustainable students' achievement in the UK, USA and Asian countries (Hallinger, 2012; Hargreaves et al, 2014; Fullan, 2014). Distributed leadership is described as a fluid and emergent type of leadership whereby authority to lead is multi-sourced according to expertise rather than originating from only one or few individuals in formal leadership positions (Day et al, 2009). It emphasises a collaborative and shared approach to leadership responsibility among all stakeholder (Spillane, 2006). There is a consensus among scholars, especially from the west concerning the effectiveness of distributed leadership in enhancing sustainable students' achievement. Partly, because it gives prominence to teacher leadership (Crowther, 2009; Fullan; 2014;

Hargreaves et al. 2014). The development of teachers' as leaders', and the uplifting teachers' leadership capacity to actively participate in school curriculum practices are prioritised. Subsequently, recent school reform efforts in the west have urged the development and practice of leadership shared and distributed across members of staff with presumed assumptions of a sustained leadership and improvement in achievements (Gronn, 2003; Harris, 2005; Spillane, 2006, 2015; Leithwood et al, 2008; Day et al, 2009;).

Researchers argue that distributed leadership provides a conceptual foundation for teacher leadership (Muijs and Harris, 2003), suggesting mobilising teachers to perform instructional work becomes accomplished by multiple leaders holding different formal and informal positions in the school. Hallinger (2012) avers that distributed leadership builds the academic capacity of the schools when used as a means of improving students' achievement. Other research findings from a qualitative case study of three schools in Sweden suggest that distributed leadership practices encourage building collaborative structures, sharing responsibility and common learning among teachers and leaders (Liljenberg, 2015). Liljenberg examined the influence of distributed leadership in establishing developing and learning school organisations affirms that greater involvement of teachers in decision-making improves organizational cohesion and productivity. Moreover, other research findings from a longitudinal study by Spillane and Sherer (2004) seem to indicate that distributed leadership assures effective leadership succession and sustainability. Other writers suggest, "one of the best ways to secure successful succession is to stretch and spread leadership across people... to distribute and develop leadership so that successors will emerge more readily and take over more easily. ... develop capacity in others, so they can become as gifted as those who lead them and can build on their achievements" (Hargreaves and Fink 2005, p. 140).

That notwithstanding, distributed leadership has been profoundly critiqued for presenting dilemmas to principals especially due to high policy accountability demands (Ball et al. 2012). Some authors argue that there is lack of agreement on what is to be distributed, when to distribute, how to distribute, and how much power principals should distribute to teachers since there are no clear guidelines (Hargreaves and Fink, 2006; Donaldson et al, 2010). These criticism suggest that the enactment of distributed leadership can have challenges. Moreover, while some researchers still aver that ambiguity in distributed leadership makes it complex for institutionalisation (Liljenberg, 2015), others question the possibility of achieving a truly distributed leadership since there is a lack of discussion about power. These scholars argue

that although leadership is distributed, power and control remain centralised (Hartley, 2009). Hartley (2009) further contends that achieving democracy is questionable since distributed leaders are appointed and not elected. Consequently, democracy within the concept is considered vague (Woods, 2004; Harley, 2009). Admittedly, what remains clear, therefore, is the uncertainty of whether distributed leadership does offer a genuine solution to the problem of sustainable students' achievement. Alternatively, could the evolvement of distributed leadership simply be a response to the current demands of the global society for participatory and democratic organisational engagements for a greater sense of equity and purpose?

### **2.3 Conceptualising Sustainable Students' Achievement**

Despite the proliferation of literature on students' achievement and its sustainability, these concepts remain difficult to define. According to the online encyclopaedia, achievement is the worth realised after striving to undertake something good but difficult. In educational literature, there is no consensus among scholars on what exactly defines students' achievement (Bates et al, 2013; Guskey, 2013). These concepts can be regarded as essentially contested, given that they predictably involve endless disputes about their proper use in education. However, it is undesirable to look for universal descriptions of concepts in this study; rather, I conceptualise them from a social justice perspective (Yu, 2007; Barrett, 2009, 2011; Novelli, Lopes Cardozo and Smith, 2014).

Researchers in educational leadership addressing the question of students' achievement often (albeit intentionally) do not define it. However, researchers often address academic achievements instead; basing this on quantitative indicators from standardised national tests (Schneider, 2011). Academic achievement is measured using students' scores on assessments in specific content areas of cognitive learning. Bates et al. (2013) describe academic achievement as "the determination of students' academic competencies in relation to content areas and abilities necessary to succeed in school and real-world context" (p. 7). This description reflects what Barrett (2011) describes as the human capital perspective of students' achievement, where achievements are viewed in terms of benefits for future life. This human capital perspective stems from the neoliberal market-driven global education goals and testing that put countries into league tables. The human capital perspective is good in providing large-scale information on quantifiable achievements statistically measured through standardised examinations. However, "concentrating on quantifiable targets focused on acquiring basic skills could overlook the intrinsic positional and instrumental benefits that

are not readily quantifiable... qualitative indicators are hard to measure but contribute more to promote inclusion and balanced range of achievement” (Barrett, 2011; p.127).

Accordingly, in this study, I conceptualised sustainable students’ achievement from a social justice perspective. The analysis of students’ achievement goes beyond academic achievement (the cognitive aspect) to encompass what learners understand and/or are able to demonstrate after completing a process of learning. However, some researchers argue that the affective and psychomotor goals are assumed as enabling traits or behaviour that facilitate students’ achievement of cognitive outcomes; therefore, not independent (McMillan, 2001). Nonetheless, I argue that students’ achievement should include everything exhibited in students’ behaviour from observable performance and products to invisible processes of change within the school and after school. The change process should involve interrelated dimensions of students’ development; cognitive, affective, behavioural, psychological and social. Students’ achievement, therefore, is the actual results (educational objectives) that students either achieve or fail to achieve during schooling or later on in life.

In light of the FSE 2008 policy in Kenya, the analysis of SSA from a social justice perspective focus on academic achievement in national examinations as well as students’ ability to participate in particular social contexts within and outside of school. The later involves the analysis of inclusion; whether all learners could achieve specified learning outcomes irrespective of their socio-economic, gender, regional differences. Secondly, the analysis of relevance; whether what students have achieved as learning outcomes are meaningful for all learners, valued by their communities and consistent with national development priorities in a changing global context. Thirdly, the analysis of progression rates; checking on how many are transiting to higher education or job market and finally, checking on achievement gaps across students of different cohorts especially from disadvantaged backgrounds (Tikly and Barrent, 2013; Novelli et al. 2014). Intrinsic values of education, the quality of education processes, equity of access and achievement; inclusion, relevance and democratic participation are issues Kenya as a country is struggling to achieve (Republic of Kenya, 2005a, 2012, Republic of Kenya, 2007b). Students’ achievement is, therefore, perceived an important indicator of access, inclusion and progression from basic to post-basic education in Kenya (Wasonga, 2013).

The examination of sustainable students' achievement highlighted above is in congruence with Nancy Fraser's (2008) three principals of global social justice; redistribution, recognition, representation. Novelli et al (2014) further develop Fraser's principles of social justice to include reconciliation. This reconciliation principle is significant in understanding how school leaders reconcile students' learning needs, staff and associate stakeholders' individual and professional needs. In Kenya, students' achievement in national examinations is seen as the core outcome of schooling (Mwangi, 2009). Improved students' achievement, measured by test scores in national examinations is often linked to effective school leadership (Ngware, Wamukuru and Odebero, 2006). National examinations are "high stake" since they are used to inform decisions about students' eligibility to progress to tertiary education, schools' resources allocation and personnel (teachers' and principals') reward and promotion. However, this accountability assessment generally fails to provide sufficient diagnostic information for leadership and teachers practices that enhance or inhibit sustainable students' achievement. While the social justice framework is not a substantive theory underpinning this study, these principles provide a useful framework for analysing school leadership contexts in which sustainable students' achievement occur (Tikly and Barrent, 2013; Novelli et al, 2014).

Sustainable students' achievement is about the time dimension of the changes in students' learning outcomes: Concerns the lasting benefits of the achieved success within and beyond school life (Hargreaves et al, 2014). Fullan (2005) describes sustainability as "the capacity of a system to engage in the complexities of continuous improvement consistent with deep values of human purpose" (p. 37). Fullan's description compares well with other scholars, who address the concept of sustainable students' achievement in twofold; change management and moral purpose (Fullan, 2002; 2005; 2007; Hargreaves and Fink, 2005; 2012; Hargreaves et al, 2014). Fullan argues that sustainability is the duty of the principal; to improve the capacity of teachers' individual and group learning in view of succession planning. He states that "we should be selecting leaders in terms of their capacity to create the conditions under which other leaders will flourish, leaving a continuing effect beyond their term" (Fullan, 2005; p. 7). This view is shared by Hargreaves and Fink (2005) who contend that the solution to sustainable achievement lies in sustainable leadership. They argue that if leadership succession is not well handled, it negatively impacts on students' achievement. In their view, leaders can only leave a legacy of sustained achievement when they ensure that others share and develop their vision.

Besides leadership succession, Hargreaves and Fink (2005) connect the aspect of sustainable leadership to social justice by arguing that sustainable leadership is one that benefits all students and staff; not just chosen few while others are ignored. The aspect of social justice is further developed in Hargreaves and Fink (2012) who contend that sustainability is rooted in four values; sharing knowledge and skills, empathy of caring for all whose leaders' actions and choices affect, having a collective responsibility and non-competitiveness. Hargreaves et al. (2014) state that "sustainable improvement begins with a strong unswerving sense of moral purpose...the core meaning of sustain is to hold up, bear the weight of, be able to bear without collapse" (p.60). In sample studies of Finish education, Hargreaves and colleagues suggest practices that promote sustainable students' achievement; creativity, innovation, inclusive and inspiring education. They propose that sustainable students' achievement has three dimensions; depth, breathe and length. Depth is concerned with deep and broad learning that engages both students and teachers to achieve the goals of education. Breathe is about distributing (not delegating) leadership over staff, arguing that successful leaders depend on the leadership of others stakeholders. Length is about endurance, succession, being visionary, persistent and replicability of best practices. They conclude that "sustainable and distributed leadership inspires staff members and students, parents to seek, create and exploit leadership opportunities that contribute to deep and broad learning for all students" (p.141).

## **2.4 Mediating Relations of School Leadership and SSA**

A substantial body of research acknowledges the indirect relationship between effective leadership practice and students' achievement (Leithwood et al, 2004, 2006, 2008; Day et al, 2009; Louis et al. 2010; Hendriks and Scheerens, 2013). International systematic synthesis and meta-analysis suggest that successful school leaders improve teaching and learning indirectly, but most powerfully through their support and influence on staff motivation, commitment and working conditions (Leithwood et al., 2008; Robinson et al, 2008; Hallinger, 2011). Scholars argue that school improvement rarely occurs in the absence of effective leadership and that school leadership accounts up to 27% of the variation in students' learning outcomes, second only to classroom teaching (Leithwood et al., 2006; Robinson et al. 2008). The evidence of profound but indirect leadership influence has sparked a renewed focus on school leadership research. Scholars have persistently sought to identify the indirect leadership practices that fundamentally influence student learning and achievement, with some measuring the indirect effect (Hallinger, 2011; Hendriks and Scheerens, 2013).

A six-year study which employed mixed methods approach by Louis et al. (2010) in 9 states, 43 school districts and 180 elementary, middle and secondary schools in the USA concluded that school leadership influences students' learning and achievement. Furthermore, based on three-years research findings on principals' leadership and students' achievement in the UK, Leithwood and colleagues argue, "There is not a single documented case of a school successfully turning around its pupil achievement trajectory in the absence of talented leadership" (Leithwood et al. 2008, P.5). Another study of the relationship between school leadership, particularly from the school head and pupil learning outcomes was conducted in England over a period of three years (2003-2005) concluding that there are statistically significant empirical and qualitatively robust associations between school leaders' educational values, dispositions, qualities, strategic actions and improvement in students' achievement (Day et al, 2009). The study argues that educational values, strategic intelligence and leadership strategies of school leaders shape the school and classroom processes and practices, in turn, affecting students' achievement. In their own words, Day and colleagues assert,

Heads in more effective schools are successful in improving pupil outcomes through; (1) who they are; their values, virtues dispositions, attributes and competence. (2) The strategies they use. (3) The specific combination and timely implementation and management of these strategies in the unique contexts in which they work. ...for those aiming to improve schools, the challenge is to create 'synergistic effects' - the accumulations of small effects in the same direction. Successful leaders' contributions to student learning, therefore, is traced to the synergistic effects they create within their organisation (Day et al. 2009; p.1).

Day et al.'s view above is consistent with Bryk et al. (2010) who indicate that the success of school leadership depends on the leaders' ability to spin the wheel of change, provide sustained impetus and motivation for staff, to support improvement initiatives through building on their strength. Most researchers agree that successful school leaders with the ability to turn around school improvement draw on similar 'repertoire of basic leadership practices' (Leithwood and Riehl, 2003; Hallinger, 2003; Leithwood et.al, 2004; Waters, Marzano and McNulty, 2006). Day et al.'s (2009) study established four categories of leadership practices that are part of the repertoire of successful leaders in most contexts. 'Setting directions', 'developing people', 'redesigning the organisation' and 'Managing the teaching and learning' programme (p.10). Researchers focusing on pre-and ongoing principal development programmes, echo these four as critical in developing leadership practices that promote sustainable school improvement (Darling-Hammond et al. 2007; Mitgang, 2013; Mendels and Mitgang, 2013).

*Setting directions* includes identifying and articulating a vision; creating shared meanings; creating high-performance expectations; fostering the acceptance of group goals; monitoring performance and communicating the vision clearly and convincingly (Leithwood and Riehl, 2003). Evidence suggests that those leadership practices included in setting direction account for the largest proportion of a leader's impact; that goals motivate people if they find them personally compelling, challenging, and achievable (Leithwood et.al, 2004).

*Developing people* includes offering intellectual stimulation: Providing information and resources on the appropriate models of best practice and providing individualised support. The support includes respecting staff, providing incentives, providing opportunities for continuous learning and monitoring progress. Developing people also implies providing an appropriate model for staff and others to follow that are consistent with the schools' values and goals.

*Developing and redesigning the organisation* is about strengthening school cultures, which sets the tone and context within which people work. Modifying organisational structures include how tasks are assigned and performed, the use of time and space, resource allocation and all the of the routine operating procedures of the school. It also involves building collaborative processes such as sharing power and distributing leadership tasks to enhance staff and parents' participation in decision-making (Leithwood and Riehl, 2003; Leithwood et.al, 2004).

*Managing teaching and learning* is about redefining pedagogical processes and approaches to improve the teaching and learning process. It entails the collection and use of monitoring and evaluation data to inform progress, practice and identify areas of need. This process needs to focus on the development of the whole child in social, emotional, cross-curricular activities. Crucial to SSA, therefore, is prioritising staff professional development to meet individual and organisational needs; creating a physical environment in which people feel inspired to work; establishing effective students' behaviour and discipline policy; allowing teachers to have power and authority to take charge as leaders in their own classrooms. These practices create an environment that encourage risks-taking, creativity and modelling of pedagogical processes by teachers as lead learners.



Some studies contend that students have better outcomes in schools where principals and teachers collaborate to create a challenging and supportive learning environment (Coleman, 2006; Fullan, 2006). Coleman (2006) argues that improved achievement in a school helps in harmonizing groups' mind of what is important in an institution, driven by the concern for creating democratic values. Fullan (2006) states that sustainable achievement hinges on interdependency among stakeholders and the need to pool strength to build capacity for improved outcomes. The process, therefore, cannot be an individual or a few people in the school but has to involve all those affected directly or indirectly. The purpose is not to involve for involvement sake, but to develop a common vocabulary and a shared understanding of what the school intends to achieve. Anderson and Wenderoth (2007) further argue that the success of collaborative approaches to improvement calls for engagement rules that are clear, fair and consistently applied. It then implies that students' achievement is enhanced when all stakeholders (teachers, students and parents) take part in decision-making processes and are held accountable for doing their part.

In a mixed-method longitudinal study on sustaining performance in fifteen private and public organizations including schools, Hargreaves et al, (2014) further established that a good knowledge background is a key to sustaining achievement. They emphasise continuous professional development through communities of practice (COP) as vital in building social and professional capital imperative in enhancing and sustaining students' achievement. Their findings resonate well with other researchers who contend that schools can improve and sustain performance when developed as inclusive COPs that support collaborative learning and problem-solving in order to address internal challenges more effectively (Oswald and Engelbrecht, 2013). Day and Sammons (2013) contend that the best way to develop effective COP is through effective school system leadership; leadership that not only promotes but also directly participates with teachers in formal or informal professional learning. Professional development, therefore, becomes a collective venture which is realized through the evaluation of practice purposefully to provide subsequent learning opportunities (Wenger, 1998). This type of learning entails development of human capital to facilitate schools become caring, focused and inquiring communities within which teachers work together as members of a COP (Retallick, 2005; Servage, 2008). Leadership for teaching and learning, therefore, involves recognition of principals and teachers as vital agents in developing social and academic capital for students and intellectual and professional capital for teachers. A successfully built COP is imperative in developing self-efficacy, collaboration, collective

vision, building a strong sense of commitment and providing a better learning environment to learners with opportunities to exploit their fullest potential (Wenger, 2003; Watkin, 2005).

## **2.5 A Summary of Key Insights from Literature**

There is a persistent call for school leadership that goes beyond administrative and managerial routines to not only inspire and motivate stakeholders but also, distribute leadership tasks and encourages higher participation. Conceptualising leadership as providing direction and exercising influence to other leaders and situations is particularly encouraged by proponents of distributed leadership. Moreover, most leadership models identify collaborative approaches as important in generating capacities for leadership and learning.

Notably, there is a mixed consensus about the effects of existing leadership models on students' achievement, especially from various meta-analysis. However, it is worth noting that some leadership practices between these models do overlap. Perhaps the difference between models should be viewed as a process of development in educational leadership practices. Considering new models as building on preceding ones in an attempt to identify practices with a greater capacity to improve students' achievement. Some scholars argue that school leaders may have a higher influence on the teaching and learning process if they combine more than one model, like the concept of hybridisation (Hallinger, 2003; Marks and Printy, 2003; Printy, 2008; Gronn, 2009). Conversely, other scholars that emphasise quantitative dimensions argue that when put on a weighing scale measuring leadership effects on students' achievement, some models have a higher impact than others (Robinson et al, 2008). Although distributed leadership has recently received heightened focus, it fails to clearly address some conflicting issues of school organisation like sharing power. The model is silent on the socio-political environment that does influence the leadership practice in schools. That notwithstanding, distributed leadership enhances the development of teachers' capacities through collaborative and shared responsibility.

The review further identifies and analyses the concept of sustainable students' achievement in scholarly debates of change management and social justice. The review identifies these debates as important to understanding and realising sustainability in schools. Some scholars have focused on leadership succession as a process of change management advocating for sustainable leadership (the sharing and development of the school vision to build a sustainable legacy). Others, however, arguing from a moral imperative, centres students as

core beneficiaries of the schooling process. The review further demonstrates the politicisation of students' achievement; as the accountability measures for school leaders and teachers. These result-based accountability perspectives have led to 'high stakes' examinations. However, whether achievement in 'high stakes' examinations holds as students' achievement needs to be reconsidered. Researchers with a bias to social justice dimensions contend that conceptualising students' achievement should reflect educational goals of a nation and aim to develop a holistic individual in terms of educational quality and future benefits for all students. Remarkably, there is growing attention to quality, equity and equality of access and achievement grounded in social justice.

A number of gaps can be identified from the review. First, most studies analyse leadership practice with assumptions of obvious autonomy among practitioners, and often taken out of the context of practice. In real situations, school leadership practice is not only embedded in socio-political contexts but also, more of the purpose of leadership rather than just the technical style. Hallinger's (2011, 2017) systematic reviews conclude that there is huge progress made in identifying the means by which leadership impacts on learning and achievement, however, questions whether the existing evidence universally applies to all contexts. In African contexts, for instance, the autonomy of leaders is constrained by social, political, cultural and economic forces (Oduro et al. 2007; Mescht and Tyala, 2008; Mafora, 2013; Bhengu and Myende, 2016).

Secondly, while most studies on education and school leadership make effort to understand how leadership practice inform students' achievement, few specifically focus on sustainability of achievement over time. The few that attempt to do so tend to narrowly focus on leadership succession, centring on leadership sharing and distribution. While sustainable leadership achieves schools' smooth progression, succession and cohesion, on its own, may not necessarily translate into SSA. Anderson and Wenderoth (2007) argue that the success of collaborative approaches in improving learning outcomes calls for engagement rules that are clear, fair and consistently applied, which is rarely apparent in some educational settings because of policy bureaucracies (Gu and Johansson, 2012; Johnson and Dempster 2016; Mulford, 2008) and Socio-political preferences on the other (Bush and Oduro, 2006; Thylefors et. al. 2007; Mathews, 2009; Wasonga, 2013; Bhengu and Myende, 2016).

Thirdly, proponents of distributed leadership make huge assumptions of a wide-spread expertise that informs decision-making in schools: of equal capacities and opportunities to engage in decision-making and other leadership functions. Hallinger's (2017) review on leadership in Africa identifies a wide range of leadership variables that do inform leadership practice specific in this context. He argues that contextual aspects related to gaps in capacities in governance reforms, leadership and preparation training and school educational contexts take a cumulative 30% prevalence. While Hallinger did not analyse the cause-effect of these variables, these statistics do illuminate on issues informing leadership practice in the context.

This thesis, therefore, set out to illuminate on leadership practices in changing and challenging contexts like Kenya. The study attempted to analyse the holistic picture of leadership practices necessary for SSA to occur in Kenya schools. The analysis located the overall purpose of leadership in the context of educational (school) reforms, as defined in school effectiveness and improvement research (Fullani 2002, 2008; Leithwood et al, 2004). Thus, analysing educational leadership practices in a highly regulated context like Kenya, with various socio-political influences. The study was based on the premise that sustained reforms in educational systems are context-specific and dependent on practitioners within the system taking the lead. This premise is informed by the idea of identifying not just what works, but, what works, for who, when and under what conditions (Pawson and Tilley, 1997, Pawson 2006; Hammersley, 2005, 2013). This review concludes that leadership practices that achieve SSA is a complex mix and balance of strategies, capacities and mechanisms often rooted in, and specific to the context of practice. To unravel this complexity, it is imperative to understand leadership processes and practices that enhance changes in socio-political settings, nurture within school capacities and mediate the leadership and learning environments to inform sustainable achievement.

## **2.6 The Conceptual Framework**

From the review of the literature, I conceptualise the relationship between leadership practices and SSA as indirect, mediated and complex. The relationship is further informed by both structural and agential aspects originating from the external (Macro and Meso policies, regulations and systems of material and human resource provision and management) and the internal (School micro-politics and capacities). These sources present a complex multi-level stakeholder engagement with emerging leadership practices at every level. The various levels are not exclusive of each other, rather, have overlapping points of interaction, which

Engestrom (1987) describes as zones of contradiction and expansions. The management of these zones does influence whether SSA is realised. Managing these zones of interaction and contradictions, however, requires a triple-reflection mechanism (Hardman, 2012), a gear that school leaders must engage to navigate between the external and internal. Thus, the lever of balancing this complex mix lies within school leadership processes and practices including: (1) levels of consciousness about this complexity; (2) responsive leadership practices; (3) the capacity to appreciate and manage the multi-level leadership engagements; (4) reflections not only on ways to overcome contradictions but also, on ways to achieve expansions and realise sustainability. The question, therefore, is how school leaders navigate this complexity. What specific leadership practices best circumvent this complexity to realise SSA, especially in challenging contexts like Kenya.

## **2.7 Main Research Question**

What leadership practices do school leaders engage in to achieve sustainable students' achievement in Kenya?

### ***Subsidiary Questions***

1. What are the emerging patterns of KCSE student achievement trends in Kenyan schools?
2. What leadership practices exist in study schools having different achievement trends?
3. What factors influence school leadership capacity to enhance (or not enhance) SSA?
4. What specific leadership practices best circumvent the existing socio-political hindrances to enhance the achievement of SSA?

This thesis addresses each of these questions in separate chapters. Chapter four responds to question 1; it analyses the context of the study and presents a longitudinal analysis of seven years students' achievement secondary data. Chapter five responds to question 2; it analyses the existing leadership practices and experiences in nine schools sampled for in-depth qualitative study. Chapter six responds to question 3; it analyses the socio-political context of school leadership and students' achievement in Kenya. Finally, chapter seven examines and presents the emerging leadership practices in C3 schools that have realised the progressive improvement in students' achievement over time despite identified challenges. The following chapter presents the methodology and methods adopted in this study.

## Chapter 3 Methodology and Methods

### 3.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the overall methodology adopted in this study. The chapter begins by explaining philosophical and methodological underpinnings of the study, providing justification for the choice of research approaches and methods. Then I describe sampling procedures and methods of data collection. Finally, I address issues of trustworthiness, reliability and validity as well as ethical considerations along with data analysis procedures.

### 3.1 Philosophical and Theoretical Underpinnings

Educational scholars argue that individual worldviews do inform methodologies and methods adopted in research (Dunne, Pryor and Yates, 2005). Scholars researching school leadership and achievement have adopted various methodologies (Leithwood et al, 2008; Hallinger, 2011, 2012; Briggs et al. 2012; Brundrett and Rhodes, 2014; Day et al, 2011; Eacott, 2015). Some, grounded in interpretive worldviews have prioritised leaders' agency. Using qualitative research designs, they have sought the meaning leaders give to their practices (Normore and Brooks, 2015). Others, underpinned by post-positivist worldviews have adopted quantitative research designs; trying to offer explanatory, causal or correlational factors between leadership and achievement (Leithwood, Pattern and Jantzi, 2010). Others, informed by critical realist stance have used multi-strategy research designs (also called mixed methods), applying both quantitative and qualitative approaches to understand leadership practices and students' achievement in its complexity (Day et al. 2009; Louis et al. 2010). This study adopted a critical realist ontology, with a focus on understanding the mechanism informing leadership practices for sustainable students' achievement.

#### 3.1.1 Critical Realist Ontology

A critical realist ontology is concerned with the understanding and identification of the dynamic interplay between the practice, actors and their context; seeking to ascertain mechanisms that do operate in the context and inform practice (Pawson, 2006). Realists take an ontological stand of a stratified reality; viewing reality as characterised by a dynamic interaction between agency and structure. This dynamism not only shapes the adoption of certain practices but also presents a complex reality with various mechanisms at play depending on the context. For instance, researchers describe the interaction between leadership practice and students' achievement as indirect and mediated (Leithwood et al.

2008; Day and Sammons, 2013). Leithwood and colleagues assert that school leadership practices contribute to the improvement in students' achievement indirectly and most powerfully through their influence on staff motivation, commitment and working conditions. Additionally, arguing from a South African context, Naicker et al. (2016) contend that African leadership contexts are dynamic, multifaceted and complex; as such rarely would similar leadership practices employed in the developed work in comparable ways in this context. They argue that adopting a realist approach provides evidence that focuses on understanding mechanisms by which certain leadership approaches may work (not work) in African settings. These arguments suggest a complex relationship, implicitly centring actors' interaction and adaptation to contextual circumstances disparate to the universalistic leadership view presented in existing literature. A realist approach, therefore, provided tools to analyse the complex social mechanisms and offered an explanatory analysis of how and why certain leadership practices work or do not work in particular contexts or settings.

### ***3.1.2 Pragmatist Epistemology***

A critical realist worldview appreciates a stratified reality in its natural-real form; considering its natural order as well as the discourses affecting the phenomena (Alvesson and Skoldberg, 2009). In this sense, critical realists are against the binary between the post-positivists and interpretive, rather they are of the view that the two are sturdily associated (Robson, 2011). Robson arguing from a practical real-world perspective avers that critical realism and pragmatism have much to offer real-world researchers, and provides a stance for mixed methods research. Researchers in educational leadership suggest there is a philosophical agreement between critical realism ontology and pragmatism epistemology (Bryman, 2006a; Creswell and Piano Clark, 2011; Robson, 2011); a position supported by Lipcomb (2008) and McEvoy and Richards (2006) who further perceive critical realism as a natural partner for multi-strategy research design. Realist pragmatism subsumes the monolithic traditions of qualitative and quantitative methods, arguing for compatibility and mixing of methods for more fruitful research (Lipcomb, 2008).

Mixing of research designs and approaches in one study has gained prominence in social sciences research since its inception in late 20<sup>th</sup> Century (Johnson, Onwuegbuzie, and Turner, 2007). The process of inclusive inquiry pays little tribute to the debate of whether reality is subjective or objective. Rather it appreciates a mixture of approaches to reality using methods (Descombe, 2014). Some describe it as the mixed-methods approach (Tashakkori and

Teddle, 2003); some multi-methods design (Morse 2003) while others refer to it as multi-strategy design (Bryman, 2004; Robson, 2011). The outstanding aspect is the dialectical approach to research is the engagement of both quantitative (from the post-positivist tradition) and qualitative methods (from the interpretive tradition); as opposed to the traditional mono-methods approach (Robson, 2011; Descombe, 2014). I preferred the terminology ‘multi-strategy research design’ over mixed-methods; strategically identifying each design to play a specific role rather than just mixing the methods (Robson, 2011).

This study examined leadership practice in schools in Kenya, seeking an understanding of the practice itself (how leaders experienced it) and ways in which these practices are informed by the socio-political context of the operation. I grounded the multi-strategy research design in critical realism ontology and pragmatic epistemology; making assumptions that pragmatism episteme allows consideration of different types of reality -a position supported by critical ontology (Lodico et. al, 2010; Descombe, 2014). Pragmatists assume that finding answers to study questions is the most important aspect of research; encouraging the adoption of a flexible approach that does not subscribe to the paradigm divide rather embraces the ‘mixing’ of research designs without privileging any one of them (Robson, 2011; Creswell and Plano Clark, 2011; Bryman, 2012; Descombe, 2014; Creswell, 2014). Instead of centring on the methods, the emphasis is on the research problem. Researchers, therefore, use all the available approaches to understand the problem (Patton, 1990; Tashakkori and Teddlie, 2010a). Thus, pragmatism provided an epistemological basis for the multi-strategy research design adopted in this study (Johnson et al. 2007; Morgan, 2007).

Pragmatism is criticised for loosely and shallowly defining research approaches and ignoring the deeper philosophical implications of research outcomes; thus, creating an impression of ‘anything goes’ (Hall 2012). For instance, Hall argues that it is difficult to determine what works, as this can only happen at the end of a study. Hall accuses pragmatism of failing to provide the rationale for the mixing of methods. Nonetheless, this criticism arises from conceptualising pragmatism from the typical meaning of the word, rather than as a philosophical perspective (Descombe, 2014). The philosophical perspective of pragmatism that asks the question, ‘what evidence do we use to make sense of our social world’ (Lodico et. al, 2010; Descombe, 2014), therefore, is the stand taken in this study.



The study did not seek causative and deterministic cause and effect relationships; rather the interest was to understand ideas and insights that might explain school leadership practices where sustainable students' achievement occurs. Realist approach and pragmatism approaches in this study were most suitable because they accounted for the complexity of the context and the outcomes. These approaches provided room for not only engaging in flexible thinking about leadership, learning and achievement but also, for interrogating the complexity of causations between these phenomena in the study context; drawing more pragmatic and feasible conclusions.

### **3.2 A Sequential Multi-Strategy Research Design**

Scholars argue that research questions, the purpose of the study and context of research dictate the choice of research methodology (Johnson et al. 2007; Bryman, 2012, 2016). This study set out to respond to the research question: *'What leadership practices do school leaders engage in to achieve sustainable students' achievement in Kenya?* The study was concerned with leadership practices (agential aspects as well as structural and organizational factors influencing these practices) and students' achievement (the quantitative attainment scores and the qualitative value they achieve from schooling). The study adopted a sequential multi-strategy research design in which quantitative data analysis preceded, informed and fed into qualitative data collection and analysis (Robson, 2011; Hampden-Thompson et al. 2011). Bryman (2012) describes the quantitative approach as a scientific method of collecting, measuring and testing numerical data purposely to build theories and generalise facts. Denzin and Lincoln (2011) on the other hand, describe qualitative research as a type of social inquiry that focuses on the way people interpret and make sense of their experiences and the world surrounding them. The rationale for 'mixing' designs stemmed from a pragmatic episteme that neither quantitative nor qualitative methods are sufficient by themselves to capture the trends and details of the situation, such as the complex, mediated and interconnected issues of school leadership practices and sustainable students' achievement (Burgess and Newton, 2015). In this regard, I sought to capture the achievement trends and trajectories arising from secondary attainment data in schools, while at the same time trying to understand why they appear so. Using the two designs provided a complementary strength and allowed a complete analysis of phenomena in this study (Lipcomb, 2008). It was 'sequential' because one method led to the other and not concurrent (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2011). It is noteworthy to mention that I did the secondary analysis of students' achievement data to aid in the sampling processes and identify study schools for qualitative data collection. Thus, the study does not

represent a true robust mixed-design that has a distinct quantitative and qualitative substance, rather, provide the schools to focus on. Subsequently, this thesis does not present an independent chapter of the secondary data analysis.

***Secondary Data Analysis Design*** addressed the first subsidiary research question: *What are the patterns of KCSE student achievement trends in Kenyan schools?* The question sought to generate data on schools' current state of students' achievement trends and trajectories in the context of the study.

***The Qualitative Research Design:*** Addressed subsidiary questions 2-4: (2) *What leadership practices exist in study schools with different achievement trends?* (3) *What factors influence school leadership capacity to enhance (or not enhance) SSA?* (4) *What specific leadership practices best circumvent the existing socio-political hindrances to enhance the achievement of SSA?* Question 2 sought in-depth qualitative data on the existing leadership practices and experiences in sampled schools. Question 3 drew on qualitative data to examine the socio-political context of school leadership in Kenya. Finally, Question 4 qualitatively evaluated emerging leadership practices in schools, imperative in realising the progressive improvement in students' achievement over time despite identified challenges. Multiple qualitative research methods (*see section 3.4*) facilitated the collection and analysis of in-depth data from the nine sampled schools to examine the differences in their leadership practices (Denzin and Lincoln, 2008). Including more than one study site and methods of data collection aimed at juxtaposing data from different sites to get a clear understanding of the phenomenon (Creswell, 2009). These different data methods and sources from multiple sites yielded diverse information that gave a holistic and comprehensible picture of the phenomena (Cohen, Manion, and Morrison, 2006; Stake, 2006; Denzin and Lincoln, 2008; Yin, 2013).

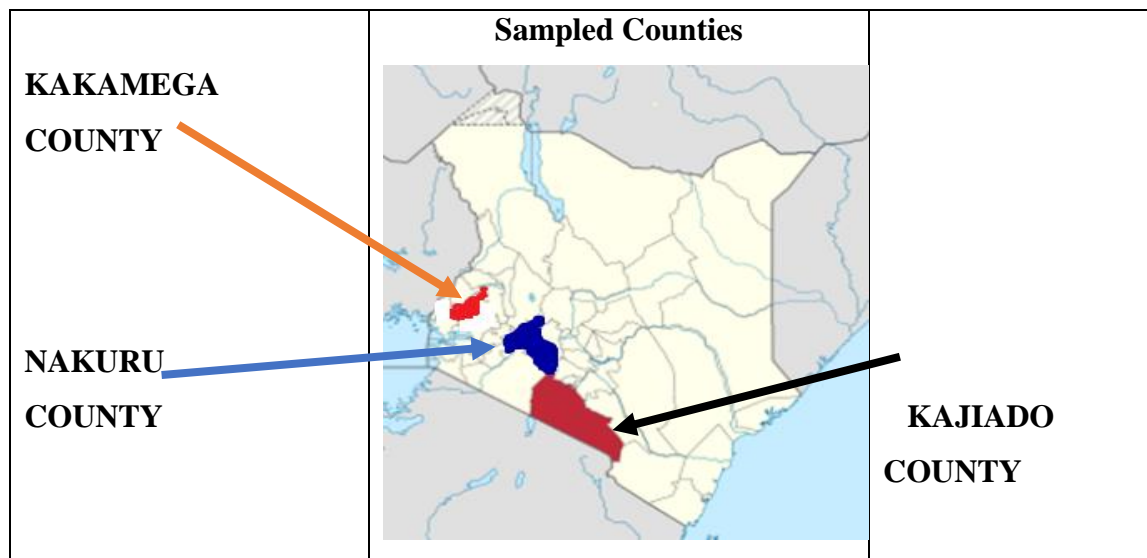
### **3.3 The Two-Stage Cluster Sampling Strategy**

It was obviously challenging to collect and analyse data from all schools in Kenya. To narrow down to manageable numbers, the study applied a two-stage cluster sampling. This process involved purposefully selecting a sample in at least two stages. In the first stage, I conveniently sampled 3 counties out of the 47 counties. Secondary students' achievement data from all schools in these 3 counties were quantitatively analysed (forming the population). Second stage sampling drew from the analysed students' achievement data. I stratified schools in clusters of achievement trends (C3-Thriving; C2-Oscillating; C1-

Dipping). C3 schools (thriving) are those whose achievement trends have progressively improved over time. C2 schools (Oscillating)) are those struggling to gain stable achievement progress; neither improving nor dipping. C1 schools (Dipping) are those whose achievement trends are regressively dipping over time. From these clusters, I purposefully sampled the final nine schools for in-depth qualitative study (3 schools from each cluster). The objective of this sampling process was to identify a manageable number of schools for qualitative data collection and analysis. The idea behind analysing achievement data was to help stratify and get categories of schools. The quantitative analysis, therefore, was used to categorise, and help determine schools for in-depth qualitative study. Scholars find this sampling strategy effective because it allows multiple criteria focused sampling process that builds rigor and credibility, increasing validity and reliability of the study (Teddlie and Yu, 2007; Agresti and Finlay, 2008). In this study, two-stage sampling was useful in narrowing down the sample; the population of schools from the three counties was too large. Secondly, within the population, many schools lay in the outlined strata of C1, C2 and C3, yet only a small sample of the population was required for the study. The sampling strategy assisted in avoiding the use of all sample units in all selected clusters; important in avoiding the large sample, and perhaps unnecessary costs and time requirement associated with it.

### ***3.3.1 Research Site***

The study purposively identified 3 counties for secondary quantitative data analysis; Kakamega, Nakuru and Kajiado as shown in figure 3.1. Kakamega County is in a rural setting. Nakuru County is an urban setting. Kajiado country is a sub-urban but also a metropolitan setting bordering the capital city. The three counties' location is significant in showing the variation or similarities in not only the practice but also, in identifying the various mechanisms specific to contexts of school leadership practice (Hammersley, 2005).

*Figure 3.1: Research Sites*

### 3.3.2 Stage 1: Sample Clusters

The three Counties had 350 public schools, however, after data cleaning only achievement data from 300 schools qualified for quantitative analysis. The cleaning involved identifying schools with full seven-year continuous achievement data. Schools with missing data were excluded from the analysis. These schools were stratified along two identifiers; type (National, County and Sub-County) and achievement trends (C1-Dipping; C2-Oscillating; C3-Thriving). The latter identified after secondary analysis of students' achievement data. Stage 1 sampling resulted in sample clusters shown in table 3.1 below.

*Table 3.1: Sample Clusters (All school names are Pseudonyms)*

Type of School	C3 Schools (Thriving)	C2 Schools (Oscillating)	C1 Schools (Dipping)
<b>National</b>	1.Bakeko H.S. <b>2. Nabeko H. S</b> 3.Kikuba H.S.	<b>1.Sideki H.S.</b> 2.Makisia H.S. 3.Wengeti H.S.	1.Sameki H.S. 2.Limuka H.S. <b>3. Bageno H. S</b>
<b>County</b>	1.Mubindi H.S. 2.Kokoiko H.S. <b>3. Mubari H.S.</b>	1.Koshere H.S. 2.Wiwa H.S. <b>3. Bagamu H.S.</b>	<b>1. Lidude H.S.</b> 2.Dosita H.S. 3.Gegombe H.S.
<b>Sub-County</b>	<b>1. Nabibo H.S.</b> 2.Sembe H.S. 3.Shikuyo H.S.	<b>1. Luguyo H.S.</b> 2. Finyago H.S. 3.Hutwesa H.S.	1.Nodete H.S. <b>2. Bidobe H.S.</b> 3.Temba H.S.

### 3.3.3 Stage 2: Final Study Schools

The final 9 schools sampled for in-depth qualitative data collection and analysis were drawn from sample clusters in table 3.1. The nine schools were conveniently selected and access to

schools sought. CEO facilitated the access to school principals prior to the start of data collection. Where the principal denied access, I dropped the sampled school and picked another from the sample cluster. The final 9 sampled schools from the sampling frame were reached after a written consent was provided by the school principal. Through this robust sampling procedure, 9 schools (3 from each cluster) were finally identified for in-depth qualitative study (*See detailed secondary data analysis in chapter 4 section 4.2*).

**Table 3.2. Sampled schools for Qualitative Data Collection**

<b>C3 (Thriving)</b>	<b>C2 (Oscillating)</b>	<b>C1 (Dipping)</b>
Nabeko H.S.	Sideki H.S.	Bageno H.S.
Mubari H.S.	Bagamu H.S.	Lidude H.S.
Nabibo H.S.	Luguyo H.S.	BidobE H.S.

### **3.3.4 Research Participants**

Having identified study schools, I purposively sampled research participants. Within schools, I sampled school Principals, Deputy Principals (Academic and Curriculum), Form Principals, Director of Studies (DOS), Strategic Leaders, Long-serving teachers (LST), New-teachers (NT), Board of Management and Parent Association (BOM and PA) chairpersons and Heads of Departments (HODs). In the local education authority (LEA), I sampled the Sub-County Education officer (SCEO) and the Sub-County quality assurance and standards officer (SCQASO). Thus, 9 schools, 9 principals, 92 teachers (holding senior, middle and junior leadership positions), 6 BOM/PA chairpersons, 5 LEA officers formed qualitative data sources. Table 3.3 (A, B, C, D) summarise descriptive details of research participants in this study. These leaders were most suitable for the study because they practice leadership within schools and LEA settings (Day et al, 2009), and their experiences importantly informed resultant study findings.

**Table 3.3 A, B, C and D: Participant Profiles****A. C1 Schools****BAGENO**

Leadership Position	Years of service		Cumulative Leadership Experience
	General	This School	
Principal	16	16	10
Deputy	18	4	7
HODs	5-30	1-14	1-13
NT	3	1	None

**LIDUDE**

Leadership Position	Years of service		Cumulative Leadership Experience
	General	This School	
Principal	12	2	6
Deputy	8	2	5
DOS	9	1	4
LST	18	18	5
NT	1	1	None
HODs	1-21	1-21	1-10

Leadership Position	Years of service		Cumulative Leadership Experience
	General	This School	
Principal	21	11	15
Deputy	25	1	16
HODs	4-22	3-6	1-10
NT	4	1	2

**BIDOBÉ****B. C2 Schools****SIDEKI**

Leadership Position	Years of service		Cumulative Leadership Experience
	General	This School	
Principal	30	10	20
DOS	20	20	13
HODs	14-30	5-30	6-11
NT	15	1	5
PA Chair	4	4	4

**BAGAMU**

Leadership Position	Years of service		Cumulative Leadership Experience
	General	This School	
Principal	25	2	15
Deputy	21	15	7
DOS	11	7	5
HODs	15-25	7-14	1-10
LST	33	17	10
NT	3	1	None
PA Chair	3	3	3

Leadership Position	Years of service		Cumulative Leadership Experience
	General	This School	
Principal	21	10	13
Deputy	30	6	6
DOS	23	8	8
HODs	2-15	1-7	1-11
BOM Chair	6	6	6
PA Chair	1	1	1

**LUGUYO**

**B. C3 Schools**

<b>NABEKO</b>				<b>MUBARI</b>			
Leadership Position	Years of service		Cumulative Leadership Experience	Leadership Position	Years of service		Cumulative Leadership Experience
	General	This School			General	This School	
Principal	27	9	15	Principal	20	4	13
Deputy. A.	26	6	10	Deputy. C.	27	18	14
Deputy. C.	20	7	9	DOS	10	10	8
Strategic Leader	21	9	13	Form P.F3	12	6	7
LST	27	10	8	HODs	8-27	3-13	5-12
NT	1	1	5 months	NT	2	1	1
				BOM		9	30
				PA		6	26

Leadership Position	Years of service		Cumulative Leadership Experience
	General	This School	
Principal	30	7	30
Deputy	15	7	7
DOS	13	8	5
Strategic Leader	12	6	7
HODs	15-35	7-13	4-10

**NABIBO****LEA OFFICERS**

5 LEA officers participated in the study; 2 SCEO and 3 SCQASO. LEA form part of the MOE policy implementers on the ground and they oversee school systems activities including school leadership practices within their designated sub-counties. They contribute to and do influence school leadership practices within their sub-counties.

Form principals, strategic leader and DOS are non-official leadership position (Not recognised by TSC), however, created in schools by senior leadership to enhance system functionality.

**3.4 Data Collection process and Methods**

The study adopted a sequential data collection process starting with secondary data analysis of students' achievement data, followed by qualitative data collection and analysis.

Qualitative data collection methods included semi-structured interviews, Focused-group discussions, observation and document analysis. Qualitative methods were used concurrently during data collection in schools. I collected data between June 2015 and January 2016.

Accessing secondary data took 2 months because of bureaucracies involved. During this time, while following up on students' achievement data, I spent the month of June piloting research instruments; interview, FGD, observation and document analysis schedules in other schools

not included in the sample (*more details on piloting are illustrated in section 3.5 on quality and trustworthiness*). School visits for qualitative data collection started in July to November; schools closed for December Holidays. I used this holiday period to analyse qualitative data and I visited study schools in January to follow up on issues that required further exploring, clarification, more data or participants' member check of collected data.

### ***3.4.1 Secondary Data collection***

Initially, I sought students' achievement data directly from the Kenya national examinations council (KNEC) but was denied access to this data. With support from MOE officers, I approached the CEO for raw data sets often supplied annually to counties by KNEC. I accessed both hard and soft copies of data sets, having various types of data and organized per year. Some data sets had columns showing previous year's school mean scores and the deviation of the mean from the current year's achievement per school. Types of data in the data sets included the gender of schools, type of school, region, year and annual mean score. The analysis of this seven years' students' achievement data aided in the stratification of schools into clusters, from which nine schools were identified for in-depth qualitative data collection. The analysis further exemplified the status of students' achievement in the Kenyan contexts, laying bare the evidence of unequal achievement, underachievement and the differentiated achievement across schools even within similar categories. Moreover, the evidence justified the rationale for this study that focused on understanding existing leadership mechanisms in schools and ways in which they could inform differentiated achievements.

### ***3.4.2 Semi-Structured Interviews***

I considered semi-structured interviews best suited for this study because they are thematic centred but with fluid and flexible structures that permit probing and modifying questions for clarity. As Bryman (2008) argues, semi-structured interviews are appropriate for social scientists' studies like leadership as they provide room for depths and richness while at the same time maintaining the focus of study. In the study, semi-structured interviews were imperative in presenting the opportunity for the emergence of the social mechanism influencing school leadership practices through participants' accounts. They further facilitated the evaluation of the sufficiency of informants competing accounts of the social mechanism; and importantly, exposing the layered and complex reality of school leadership practices (Robson, 2011; Bryman, 2015; 2016).



Following a thorough review of the literature, I formulated semi-structured interview questions focused on participants' experiences of school leadership and student learning and achievement. These questions sought participants' own conceptions and idealised understanding of leadership: existing practice of leadership in schools, their perceptions of these practices, participants' views concerning dominant leadership norms and role expectations within their schools. I constructed an interview schedule consisting of open questions focusing on these aspects (*Appendix 1*). In the month of June, I piloted these questions to school leaders, different from sampled study schools; from which I finetuned interview questions to keep the conversation illuminatingly focusing on existing leadership practices. Sample questions included; what do you do as a leader and why? How do you and others accomplish leadership activities in this school? What has been challenging to deal with as a leader? Do you think leadership has played a role in the changing patterns of students' achievement? If so, what are some of the leadership factors that have played a role? In what ways have they done so? What are some of the challenges you have faced as a school? How have you tried to resolve these challenges, especially those related to students' achievement? Semi-structured interviews, therefore, was a form of dialogue connecting the researcher and interviewee, whose perspective on sought issues was mandatory in building a holistic picture of the phenomena at hand (Stake, 2006). I particularly targeted elite LEA officers, school principals and other senior leaders in the school as well as BOM and PA chairpersons for semi-structured interviews because it was challenging to bring them together in focused group discussions (FGD). A total of 50 interviews were conducted. School principals had more than one interview session to follow up on issues requiring clarification. With participants consent, I recorded interview conversations and transcribed later into text. This recording aided in either identifying issues and questions missed out in field notes or those that require follow-up (Lodico et al. 2010).

### ***3.4.3 Focus Group Discussions***

It would have been challenging and time-consuming to interview all teachers in the middle and junior leadership positions individually. I, therefore, chose to use FGD as a data collection method which, I considered not only less time-consuming but also flexible and offered breath in response to research items. Moreover, FGD provided an accommodating and non-threatening environment for participants, especially teachers to express themselves freely on a topic like leadership that could be considered sensitive in school settings

(Liamputtong, 2008). Following a similar process of thorough literature review, I constructed a FGD schedule with question items focusing on the practice of leadership within study schools (*Appendix 11*). FGD questions solicited middle and junior leaders' own conceptions of leadership as well as their perceptions and experiences of existing leadership practices within study schools. Sample questions that elicited both individual and collective response from FGD included; What motivated you to consider becoming a leader? How do you define effective school leadership? What do you do as a leader and why? How do you and others accomplish leadership activities in this school? What has been challenging to deal with as a leader? The unstructured, free-flowing nature of FGD was advantageous in allowing participants to discuss leadership practices in schools, sometimes spontaneously. New and un-thought of ideas emerged in discussions throwing new weight in the matter under discussion, and drawing and entangling participants into deeper engagements and reflections. FGD in the study targeted teachers in middle (HODs) and junior (subject heads) leadership, who, because of their numbers study-time could not accommodate individual interviews. FGD took place in common places like staffroom, school boardrooms or other meeting rooms. FGD lasted between 45 minutes to one hour each. During FGD, I recorded important and emerging issues on school leadership as short field notes and audio-recorded the discussion, which I transcribed later. Although I intended to conduct nine FGDs, thus, one in each school, I only managed eight FGD because teachers in Nabeko school did not consent to this discussion. To compensate, I conducted more one-on-one interviews with middle leaders in Nabeko school.

#### **3.4.4 Observation**

I used observation as one way of accessing authentic leadership practices. The intention was to enter the life-world of school leaders and analyse the consistency between their perceptions and actions. Observing leadership practices, however, is not easy because is not openly exhibited similar to other educational practices like teaching and learning. First, I informed participants about my intention and sought consent to observe the day to day leadership activities. Despite being granted consent, I made effort to minimise anxiety and avoided observation practices that might make me a hostile researcher. Therefore, I adopted unobtrusive observation methods following Bryman (2015) argument that tactical, intentional and sometimes modest observation is necessary to understand actual leadership practice in schools. CEO had introduced me to school leaders as a university student learning about leadership. Within schools, principals introduced me to staff and other community members

in a similar way. Adopting an identity of a student minimised the power imbalance between principals, other leaders, teachers and myself. With this modest identity, I inconspicuously observed certain leadership scenarios during school assemblies, staff meetings, briefings and organised shadowing of school principals. The observation was semi-structured since it focused on identified scenarios, however, I was keen to observe emerging and unexpected critical incidents within school settings (Bryman, 2015)

Observation focused on the actual leadership practices in schools. The division of labour in schools was one important area of focus in which I sought to understand the various relational activities like; who was doing what? At what time? What was new or out of the ordinary within particular school settings? What were the day to day activities of the system, routines and the reflection of the school vision? Within the division of labour, reception of external and internal ideas was a point of interest: Whose ideas were readily accepted? Whose ideas mattered most and why? Who decided on what matters and why? (see the observation schedule in appendix XI). During this process, I made short field notes on issues observed, which comprised of dialogues, the sequence of meetings, observation of protocols and priorities of engagement and contribution. At the end of the day, I reflected on events observed and prepared a comprehensive summary notes of observed scenarios which formed my raw observation data (see a sample in appendix 111).

One aspect of observation was organised shadowing of school principals. Prior to shadowing, I spent considerable time with school principals and developed relationships, which, made them feel comfortable with my presence. The shadowing focused on observing activities principals thought demonstrated their leadership practices. I shadowed principals during staff briefings and meetings; I observed the climate of engagement within the school; thus, the space of engagement, freedom of engagement and contribution to decision making. I observed how middle and junior leaders are positioned in relation to senior leaders; the culture of doing things, whether individual or collaborative. I also observed the positioning of teaching and learning amidst other leadership issues. Finally, I was keen on school leaders' sources of reference; what informed their discussions and decisions? whether the internal or external policy, vision and mission or core values? And whether these sources informed or influenced their leadership priorities and undertakings. The semi-structured observation was adopted with an iterative process of data collection. Discussions in these meetings centred on teaching and learning, time management, accomplishments and expectations in students' final

assessments, interrelationships within schools, new policies from government among others. I captured observation data in short field notes. After spending some time with the principal, I put down some key highlights that had to do with the leadership style and practice which I wrote in comprehensive observation notes later. Shadowing allowed me to explore principals' experiences and the interpretation from their perspectives. I picked on critical incidents in the school that required their judgment especially if this related to matters concerning relationships, teaching and learning. All these aspects contributed to the understanding of the working climate and culture within school settings and illuminated more on how leaders exercised power and authority as well as the sharing of responsibilities (Spillane, 2006). These aspects are important in explicating organisational cultures of schools, their importance in terms of achievement and its sustainability over time (Bush, 2010).

### **3.4.5 Document Reviews**

In addition to primary data sources, I reviewed several schools' and MOE policy documents related to educational leadership and management. The objective of doing document reviews was to understand the Kenyan educational management context in general and the context of school leadership in particular. Ministerial policy documents included TSC school leadership policy, MOE strategic plan, KEMI leadership training programme, Kenya Vision 2030, The Basic education act 2013 among others. School documents included strategic plans, School vision and mission, school charter, minutes of staff and BOM meetings, quality assurance reports and students' achievement data among others. Documents from LEA included school inspection reports, County and Sub-County achievement reports and minutes of meetings with sampled schools. The CEO exclusively provided documented schools' achievement data for seven years (the period 2008 - 2014) that was used in secondary data analysis (*see chapter 4, section 4.5*). Data captured in document reviews included policies on school organisational structures, policies on recruitment and deployment of school leaders, MOE organisation structures, the responsibility of various leaders in the school system, MOE national strategy for educational management, and continuous students' achievement data for seven years. Data emerging from document reviews were recorded in form of short field notes, much of which forms part of the story in the context of study (chapter 4).

However, it is important to point out that sometimes the documentation and filing system in school and LEA was inefficient and non-satisfactory. Moreover, some leaders within school settings and LEA were unwilling to share some documentary information terming it as

confidential for the school and county. That notwithstanding, documents collected and reviewed provided interesting insights on the organisation of educational management in Kenya (see chapter 4, section 4.2, 4.3) and enabled the understanding of policies and mechanisms informing leadership practices in schools and LEA. Specifically, the analysis of secondary data obtained from CEO's facilitated the identification of sample schools for the in-depth qualitative analysis (See chapter 4, section, 4.4, 4.5). Subsequently, this thesis does not have a chapter on quantitative analysis, rather, quantitative secondary data is part of the documentary review of students' achievement data, which helped to identify schools for qualitative study.

### **3.5 Data Analysis Procedures**

Data were analysed in two phases, with secondary data analysis preceding qualitative data collection and analysis.

#### ***3.5.1 Phase 1: Secondary Data Analysis***

This study makes a case about undulations in students' achievement in Kenya, the evidence of which was not readily available during this study. It was important therefore to carry out the quantitative analysis of secondary (students' achievements) data to clearly provide the evidence of existing undulation. Secondary data analysis in this study achieved three purposes. First, provided the contextual information about students' achievement trends in the Kenyan context. Secondly, helped in sampling purposes not only to focus where the qualitative data will come from but also, to enable the comparisons. Thirdly, helped in identifying the three categories of schools to focus my qualitative study on and understand deeply the leadership in these environments.

Longitudinal secondary data drawn from Counties' KCSE achievement datasets were analysed using Ms-Excel and SPSS software. The analysis involved a total of 300 public schools' achievement data for a period of seven years (2008-2014). I entered student achievement data into Ms-Excel spreadsheet and later exported to IBM SPSS statistics 23 that aided in the analysis (*Appendix V*). Ms-Excel software pertinently aided in organising data sets in various categories like type of schools and regions. The SPSS mixed ANOVA design analysis established various trends and trajectories in students' achievement across schools. The analysis sought to identify patterns of achievement across schools over terms (*see chapter 4 section 4.4*). This analysis generated the evidence on the fluctuations in

students' achievement over time and demonstrated disparities of achievement across schools. This data provided a general picture of the state of affairs on the ground, specifically illuminating more on, and aiding in the clarification of the research problem as sought in the study. The justification for focusing on SSA, therefore, became evident with the various trends exhibited in different schools. More so, secondary data analysis facilitated a comparison of, and classification of sample schools into different clusters of achievement, facilitating successfully sampling of the nine schools for in-depth qualitative study. The clusters of schools emerging from the analysis of secondary data lend themselves to a comparative approach to the research problem (*see the analysis in chapter 5*).

Conventionally, in mixed-methods research, quantitative data analysis comes as an independent chapter. However, because of the rationale for secondary data analysis provided above, this thesis does not present an independent chapter of the same. Secondary data analysis, therefore, appears in the context chapter four. The substance of the work in this thesis comes from the qualitative analysis chapters five, six and seven.

### ***3.5.2 Phase 11: Qualitative Data Analysis***

Phase two involved the analysis of qualitative data that emerged from interviews, observation and document analysis. Qualitative data analysis was iterative and ongoing throughout the study. At the end of each day, I reflected on the day's events observed, read through short notes made from interviews, observation and document review and prepared a detailed description of emerging issues in the research journal. Largely informed by Braun and Clarke (2005), Bryman (2016), Gray (2014) and Onwuegbuzie and colleagues (2009), the study adopted thematic analysis procedures. Thematic analysis is an approach in which the researcher identifies emerging patterns; then describe, interpret and explain what they mean (Gray 2014). First, I actively reviewed field notes and transcripts to be acquainted with the data. Reading interviews and FGD transcribed data as well as observation and document analysis field notes, I identified codes. Then, I collated codes into patterns that formed sub-themes (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Finally, I combined and transformed related sub-themes into main themes. Figure 3.2 demonstrates how themes emerged from the analysis of data. It is the analysis of C3 school leaders' response to the question seeking their conception of 'good leadership'.

**Figure 3.2: Sample Thematic analysis process**

Theme	Sub-Theme	Codes	Raw Data
The Conception of Good Leadership	Visionary Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Developing good vision</li> <li>Inspiring, motivating and involving stakeholders in decision making to achieve the vision</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Know the way, show the way, lead the way</li> <li>2. Get others to support the vision</li> <li>3. Has a goal, vision and dream</li> <li>4. A guide to achieving school objective</li> </ol>
	Democratic Collective Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Accommodative, Engaging and inclusive</li> <li>Freedom of expression and sharing</li> <li>Involvement in decision-making</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Everyone has a role to play</li> <li>2. Including others in put</li> <li>3. Understanding situations</li> <li>4. A leadership whose presence does not instil fear.</li> <li>5. You run with people and give them an open ear</li> </ol>
	Regenerating Capacities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Influencing positive change and improvement</li> <li>Transform people and situations</li> <li>Facilitate professional growth and development</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Influence situations for the better</li> <li>2. Change of practice and heart</li> <li>3. Strategies for improving and moving forward</li> <li>4. Encourage people to view work positively</li> <li>5. Boosting teachers self-esteem</li> <li>6. Get others to change and look for new ways to push results forward</li> </ol>

This thematic analysis identified core themes and provided the evidence for the emerging themes (*See the analysis in chapter five, six and seven*).

### 3.5 Quality and Trustworthiness

To ensure quality, this study observed a number of issues. First, the piloting process in which initial data collected informed the review of data collection instruments to ensure they collected relevant data that sufficiently respond to the research question. The FGD schedule, for instance, appeared too detailed and some questions shifting the conversation away from the focus. Semi-structured interview questions too appeared repetitive with various sub-questions asking similar or related issues. In the real initial interview situation, I realised some of those questions would emerge in subsequent probes and therefore did not have to stand on their own. Piloting, therefore, provided preliminary findings that facilitated the checking on the feasibility, reliability of research instruments (Ritchie et al. 2014).

Secondly, this study involved the collection of data from various sources, using multiple methods, which, enhanced the quality of study findings (Creswell 2009; Franklin, 2012;

Ritchie et al. 2014). The various sources and methods of data collection facilitated the analysis of participant-differentiated perspectives within and across schools (Pring, 2004; Denzin and Lincoln, 2011). This analysis not only evidenced the different approaches to leadership practice but also, facilitated a deeper understanding of the multiple generative mechanisms influencing leadership practice and students' learning and achievement. Juxtaposing sources and methods also helped in checking the validity and reliability of information sources, determining whether claims made are subjective views or widely acknowledged in the school (Cohen et al. 2006; Denzin and Lincoln, 2011). The latter increased the trustworthiness of data collected (Miles and Huberman 1994; Guba and Lincoln, 2005; Brundrett and Rhodes, 2012; Silverman, 2013).

Finally, this thesis provides a detailed description of the research process explicitly explaining the context of the study, sampling procedures, research participants as well as methods, processes and procedures for data collection and analysis. This detailed description provides room for readers to make the judgment whether these findings are applicable to their contexts. These details further provide an opportunity for researchers to consider replicating this study in the same or different context; which may lead to either similar or different result depending on the situation during the replication period (Miles and Huberman, 1994).

### **3.6 Reflexivity and Positionality**

Although I had lived and worked in schools within the Kenyan context, all sampled schools were new to me. Moreover, the ongoing national teachers' strike during fieldwork affected my access to schools. Thus, I sought help from MOE and CEO, who facilitated my access to study schools. These two aspects positioned me as an outsider. That notwithstanding, my experience of working in Kenyan schools, engaging with teachers and leaders for 10 years certainly countered this positioning. Coming from a background of a teacher, a teacher educator, a leader and a professional development tutor of practicing teachers and leaders as well as a researcher in educational leadership and management, I identified with teachers and school leaders as one of them. I was familiar with school routines, activities as well as leadership engagements and structures within the school settings and with the local educational authorities. Moreover, having taught in schools in different counties and my engagement with secondary school teachers and leaders in sports and games certainly affirms my insider position.



Throughout data collection process, I consciously reflected on my insider-outsider position being mindful of my biases from experience of, and knowledge on school leadership. My outsider positioning epitomised the act of reflexivity that required stepping out and observing the practices from a critical point of view, cognizant of the emergent structural and cultural properties influencing leadership practices within the school activity system and other networking activity systems (Acher, 1995; Engestrom 1999). The purpose was to understand why things were happening as they were, and what informed those actions. As an outsider, I reflected on the observed, written, spoken, and the unspoken (rules, policies, power relations) with a view of understanding the deeper meaning associated with them in relation to theoretical background and contextual setting (Engestrom, 2001).

While I endeavoured to fix my gaze within the highlighted theoretical frameworks, I was watchful for emerging patterns, outliers and critical incidences that spoke otherwise. This was because the ways of knowing are not fixed but flexible (Louis et al, 2010). For instance, through my experience, I conceptualized that change of principal was not a solution to school improvement; rather I prioritised professional development as a remedy. However, it emerged from the study that sometimes change of the principal is a starting point for establishing positive change and kick-starting improvement initiatives. While other times, change of principal had no effect at all as established in some C2 schools (*see the analysis in chapter 5 and 6*). This challenged me to expand my gaze and seek for all the relevant data that speak to the research problem and combine various sources of information from the school activity system and all other networking activity systems for a comprehensive understanding of the phenomena (Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2009; Robson, 2011).

Other ethical issues centred on clearance and consent for data collection. I sought ethical clearance from the University of Sussex Ethical Review Committee (*Appendix VI*) and the national research council in Kenya (*Appendix VII*). On the site, using the information sheet (*Appendix VIII*), I shared the research purpose and related research activities with CDE, LEA and school principals prior to the study and sought their permission to access schools and participants (*Appendix IX*). To gain informed consent from the participants, I shared the purpose of the study with participants informing them of their voluntary participation as well as their right to withdraw from the study at will (*Appendix X*). I assured participants of their anonymity through use of pseudonyms (Creswell, 2007). Only then did they sign the consent forms to participate in the study. For confidentiality, all information from the study was

safely stored; locked all hard copies of interview transcripts and observation and field notes in a safe cabinet and saved soft copies using a secret computer password. To reciprocate for being allowed to conduct the study, a promise was made to principals that upon completion of the study, the report on the research would be shared the schools and counties.

## **Chapter 4 The Context of Study**

### **4.0 Introduction**

This chapter presents a discussion on the context of the study. The chapter presents information on educational development over time, educational system organisation, the management structure of public secondary education, the background of study schools and the analysis of KCSE students' achievement data. Conventionally, in mixed-methods research, quantitative data does not appear in the context of the study, rather, comes as an independent chapter. However, this study talks about undulations in students' achievement in Kenyan schools, the evidence of which was not readily available during this study. Secondary data analysis, therefore, basically provides the necessary background information on students' achievements in Kenyan schools. Section 4.5 provides the evidence of undulation in students' achievement, thus, the rationale for having secondary data analysis in the context chapter. Subsequently, this thesis does not present an independent chapter of secondary data analysis, rather, the substance of the work comes from the qualitative analysis.

### **4.1 Educational Development in Kenya**

Kenya is a developing country in Sub-Saharan Africa whose management of education is undergoing a transition following the devolution of state functions to County governments (Republic of Kenya, 2014). Kenya's desire to improve the quality of education as a strategy to eradicate poverty dates back to 1963's independence; then, poverty identified as a major deterrent to economic development (Jwan, 2010; Wambua, 2012). Policy makers, then, recognised the access to education as empowering citizens to participate in national development. However, fifty years after independence, Kenya, like other developing countries in sub-Saharan Africa still struggle with high poverty rates among its citizens (Republic of Kenya, 2005a). The economic recovery strategy reverently regards education as a vital tool for poverty eradication, improving social mobility, national cohesion and socio-economic development (Republic of Kenya, 2005, 2012). Accordingly, the ministry of education (MOE) has always received a hefty portion of the national budget for educational development (World Bank, 2013). This persistent emphasis, coupled with growing costs of educational funding relentlessly raise the attention paid to educational achievement in Kenya. External funders, policy makers and other interested parties insistently interrogate the increase in quantitative access against the quality of learning outcomes (SACMEQ I and II; Uwezo Kenya, 2010; UNESCO, 2013).

#### ***4.1.1 Free Secondary Education (FSE)***

The FSE Policy (2008) hatched during the design of The Kenya vision 2030 has seen an increase in transition rates from primary to secondary (Oketch and Rolleston, 2007). The Kenya-Vision-2030 is a development blueprint designed to transform Kenya into an industrialising, middle-income economy with a high-quality life by the year 2030. The review of an education strategy paper: a policy framework for education, training and research (Kenya sessional paper No.1 of 2005) informed the introduction of FSE Policy. The key targets of the strategy paper included achieving UPE by 2005, EFA by 2015 and a 70% transition rate to secondary school by 2008. The review recognized that access to secondary education remained problematic, evidenced by the low transition rates. This review intensified the focus on education as a significant social pillar for building an equitable, just and cohesive society that has equal chances for all citizens to contribute to social development (Republic of Kenya, 2007a). Accordingly, secondary education became highly targeted for improvement as a priority to achieve vision-2030 (Orodho, 2014). The MOE strategic plan (2008-2012) reiterates a refocus on transition rates, giving prominence to increasing the equity of access to secondary education

FSE policy received a further endorsement in the Sessional Paper No. 14 of 2012 (Sought to align education and training to the Constitution of Kenya (2010) and Kenya Vision 2030) that identified free, compulsory basic education as a fundamental human right. Other priority focus included uplifting the governance of education and training to improve its quality, relevance and equity. The latter concerned with taking care of marginalised communities in arid and semi-arid lands (ASALs). A new substance in the 2012 strategy paper is aligning MOE policies with equity obligations set out in the new constitution. In addition to sustainable economic development, the new strategy paper presents education as significant in building human and social capital (Republic of Kenya, 2012). Article 21 of the constitution of Kenya (2010) and the Basic Education Act (BEA) 2013, therefore, legislates and obligates the government to provide FSE (Republic of Kenya, 2013a). This legislation support indicates the high priority placed on secondary education in Kenya. The expansion in the provision of secondary education positively contributes to the sustainability of gains made in universal primary education (UNESCO, 2013; OECD, 2013). For Kenya in particular, the access to quality secondary education is significant in preparing children for various career courses; suggesting it is the shortest route out of poverty because it broadens employability chances (Republic of Kenya, 2010). Implicit in the Vision 2030 objectives, therefore, is the

call for universal access to quality equitable education that geared towards human capital development to meet 21<sup>st</sup> Century career and development demands.

The expansion and increased focus on secondary education by policy documents above indicate that Kenya has well-intentioned and envisioned aspirations for educational development. That notwithstanding, while Kenya's investment in education is high and secondary level enrolment rates have increased, learning outcomes remain low (Uwezo Kenya, 2010; 2012). World Bank (2013) report takes on the quality of learning outcomes debate, interrogating Kenya's ability to achieve the Kenya Vision 2030 that promises to transform the country into a newly industrializing middle-income economy. The report states,

...But the question in Kenya, as indeed in much of Africa, is how to ensure that the human capital exists to realize the promised economic growth, as well as how to ensure that all citizens share in newfound national prosperity. The answer lies partly in whether people are well educated and healthy enough to gain access to more productive work (p.3).

The World Bank report points to the reality that education has strong links to the economic development of a country. However, suggests that the high proportion of Kenyan GDP invested in education is a waste because of the 'gaps' in the service delivery; gaps in teachers' knowledge, time spent teaching and absence from classrooms that requires urgent action. The report further underscores the inequalities in education provision in terms of access, gender and regional disparity. The report concludes that gaps exist between well-intended policy documents and their implementation on the ground.

Research centrally positions school management in the implementation of education policies at grass-root levels. Dunne, Akyeampong, and Humphreys (2007) review of education access in the global south identify school process and local governance of education as fundamentally defining factors in the success of policy implementation. Dunne and colleagues acknowledge the difficulty of policy makers to monitor direct grass root practices. Arguing that local educational management practices are important, this review further advocates for in-depth research studies that provide high-quality information about school leadership processes that work, particular to the global south context. Similarly, Wambua, (2012) study in Kenya suggest that one of the challenges of education is unsatisfactory school leadership practices, which he suggests hinders successful achievement of educational goals. Wambua asserts that effective school leadership should centre on transparency and

accountability of school system processes that check on the capacity of public servants (teachers) to deliver on their mandate.

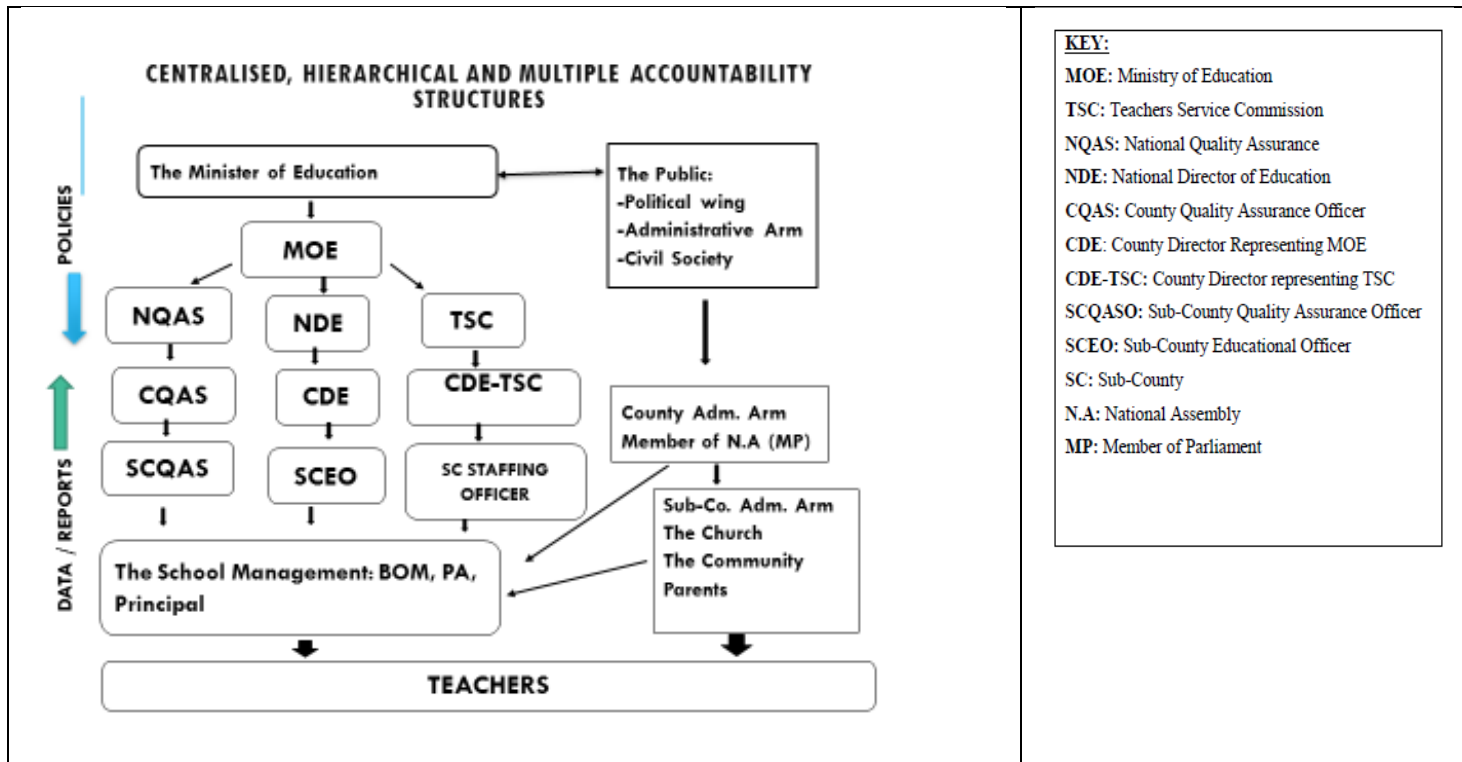
While research from developed contexts identifies different factors influencing students' achievement like family background and out of schools' variations (Leithwood, 2005), they also highlight the substantial influence of within and around school factors. In the Kenyan context, for instance, a study by Yambo et al (2012), perceive school leadership practices to be problematic. Yambo and colleagues suggest that most principals have developed stress-related illnesses following difficulties in the execution of their work amid rising policy demands. Another study by Koome (2007) claims that school principals are exiting the system because of too much pressure to account for achievement undulations. Koome questions the principal-focused accountability systems, which, often, narrowly based on students' examinations grades. Similarly, addressing educational accountability in USA schools, Leithwood (2005) cautions about the limitation of test-based approaches in assessing school leaders' effectiveness. He suggests widening the scope of accountability approaches that analyse micro-organisational practices alongside meso and macro policies and practices. Equally, in Kenya, there is need to address some of the complexities informing students' achievement over time. Achieving equitable access to FSE and improving the quality of secondary education might be informed by the expansion in institutional frameworks and leadership capacities for effective delivery and management of education (Mwaka and Njogu, 2014).

#### **4.2 Kenyan Educational System Organisation**

The organisational structure of the national management of education in Kenya has changed over time. Currently, two ministries exist; the MOE in charge of basic education (age 4-18) and Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology which accounts for post-secondary, tertiary and university education (Hakijamii Trust, 2010). MOE organisational structure is highly hierarchical; however, the constitution 2010 and the BEA 2013 have initiated the devolution of education management to grassroots. Currently, the management of education, in general, is not yet fully devolved; the county government is only in charge of early childhood education. However, the constitution and BEA mandates the establishment of local accountability structures to foresee and support the provision and quality of education management at grassroots. The BEA legitimises local communities (parents, church sponsors, members of national and county assemblies as well as community opinion leaders) to question,

criticise and guide educational leadership practices in schools within their settings (Republic of Kenya, 2015). These teams form part of the community social responsibility in education provision as key stakeholders. Figure 4.1 below summarises MOE organisational structure.

**Figure 4.1: MOE Accountability Structures**



**Sources:** Author's design as derived from interview conversations and documents analysis

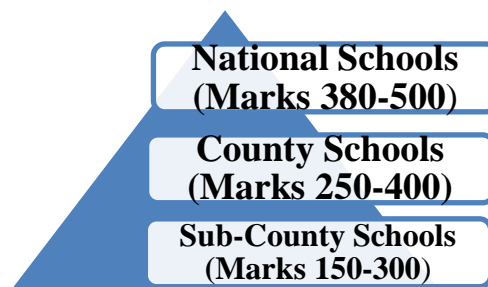
Within the ministry, three segments of education management exist as illustrated in figure 4.1. TSC, a semi-autonomous government agency (SAGA) is fully in charge of teacher management: develops and implement teacher management policies focusing on deployment, promotion, transfers, appraisal, motivation and discipline (Republic of Kenya, 2015). The national quality assurance work is concerned with the quality of education provision in institutions. The national directorate forms the administrative arm. The BEA 2013 legitimises stakeholder involvement in school leadership, informing the various accounting bodies and groups directly or indirectly engaged in school leadership activities at various levels as shown in figure 4.1. Figure 4.1 further illustrates the existence of a top-down model of educational management, with a linear and parallel flow of policies and reports between the national and local education authorities and schools. Policies related to teacher management and stakeholder involvement appear visibly important to school leadership practice. Bureaucracies within these policies have indirect implications on national and local structures

of accountability raising tensions between school leaders, teachers and other stakeholders.

### 4.3 The Management Structure of Public Secondary Education

Secondary schools form the final cycle of basic education after early childhood and primary. Further, secondary schools form the transition period to higher education. The public secondary education system is stratified in a tripartite hierarchy as illustrated in figure 4.1.

**Figure 4.2: Stratification of Secondary Schools in Kenya**



**Source: Republic of Kenya (2012)**

MOE centrally conducts students' selection and placement following primary examinations (KCPE). Schools admit all students who live within or outside the borders of their County through academic meritocracy in KCPE scores as illustrated in figure 4.2 or other factors such as parental interests, government admission quota or extraneous factors (Glennester et al. 2011). Schools are differentiated along gender lines as single-gender or mixed-gender schools. Previously, priority for placement in public secondary schools was given to pupils from public primary schools: a move to support and sustain UPE and foster equitable access to quality secondary education regardless of pupils' socio-economic background (Mwaka and Njogu, 2014). However, the policy on the selection from private and public primary schools keeps shifting depending on political preferences. Moreover, in reality, not all well-performing pupils from public schools join designated secondary schools as some fail to meet the fee requirements. Accordingly, not all joining Sub-County schools are underachievers; due to high fee-levies in boarding-schools, students with high entry behaviour but from lower economic backgrounds join Sub-County schools. Markedly, the boundary in entry mark is not a clear cut; however, it reflects a majority of students joining the school category. Students' achievement trends are expected to automatically reflect this stratification. However, this is not always the case. Schools in different categories have exhibited different achievements patterns over time (*Section 4.3*).



The board of management (BOM) and parents' associations (PA) are two legal bodies recognised to oversee the management of secondary schools, with the principal as the secretary to both. While the minister of education directly appoints BOM members, parents elect PA during school annual general meetings (AGM). PA's core function is to provide advisory and financial support to the principal; aid in funds to facilitate infrastructural development (Republic of Kenya, 1999; Republic of Kenya, 2007b). However, the principal is obliged to lobby and engage the BOM and PA support. The leadership structure of schools' professional staff is hierarchical, with the principal at the top, then the deputy principal, the Director of Studies (DOS), Head of Departments (HOD), teachers, down to students. The principal is responsible for all planning, organizing, directing, controlling, staffing, innovating, coordinating, motivating and actualizing the educational goals and the objectives of the institution and the country (Republic of Kenya, 1999; Republic of Kenya, 2007a). In executing these duties, the principal delegates some to the deputy principal, DOS or HOD depending on the situation. However, TSC and MOE hold the principal solely accountable for resources, teachers, learning and achievement. The principal, therefore, remains the key decision-maker and determinant of school processes and outcomes. Observably, the centralized, line-management and demarcated positions of power are contrary to the new school leadership literature that advocates for a shared and engaging leadership practice. Calling for a more flattened and relationship-driven leadership, current literature suggests the need to develop schools into fluid organizations and learning communities (Leithwood, 2005; Retallick, 2005; Spillane, 2006; Hargreaves et al, 2014). The Kenyan school management structures, therefore, may have implications for teaching, learning and achievement.

Research consistently shows that leadership practices are not divorced from their contexts (Bush and Oduro 2006; Oduro et al, 2007; Gu and Johansson, 2012). Instead, there exists an interactive relationship between context and practice with the former defining the discourse of the later. Stevenson (2006) argues that school leadership roles are "best understood against a complex background of social, political and economic trends, operating both simultaneously and interdependently on a global, national and local scale" (p. 414). In a review of literature, focusing on principals' preparation, induction and practice in Africa, Bush and Oduro (2006) note that principals in developing contexts (Kenya included) face significantly different problems in comparison to those in developed contexts. They highlight the cultural context beliefs, values and politics, which definitely influence the practice of

leadership in schools. Citing a case of Ghanaian schools, they note that cultural orientation towards the exercise of authority and power, the value for old age and language do influence leadership practice in African schools. Within the contexts, for instance, it is disrespectful to correct or object what the leader decides or try to equate yourself to the leaders and imagine you are equals as proposed by distributed leadership models. These African cultures conflict with the current leadership approaches assumed imperative in fostering SSA.

Moreover, studies on school leadership in Kenya highlight challenges principals' face in matching the quantitative expansion of educational provision and the need for quality education (Lewin, 2008; Yamada, 2010). Contextual realities such as limited physical facilities, shortage of qualified teachers, congested classrooms and high teacher-student ratio among others hamper principals' effort to improve and sustain students' achievement (Kipkoech and Kyalo, 2010). Principals seem to struggle with increased access and enrolment rates resulting from successful FPE (2003) and subsequently, FSE (2008). The pursuit of EFA goals within resource stringency environments poses a risk to sustainable achievement. School leaders, therefore, struggle with these cultural, socio-political, accountability and resource challenges. These challenges form critical hindrances to school leaders' effort to improve and sustain students' achievement over time.

#### **4.4 Study Schools**

Apart from the general picture of the Kenyan context, in this section, I give a picture of the context of schools in which I collected qualitative data. The section presents information on the nine schools sampled for the qualitative study. The section provides the background of study schools using secondary data. As explained in the introduction, this thesis adopted a non-conventional mixed-methods research, in which, quantitative data does not come as an independent chapter, rather, appears in the context of the study. Secondary data is presented here because the study talks about undulations in students' achievement in Kenyan schools, the evidence of which was not readily available during this study. Secondary data analysis, therefore, basically provides the necessary background information on students' achievement trends in Kenyan schools. This section provides the evidence of undulation in students' achievement, thus, the rationale for having secondary data analysis in this section.

The nine public secondary schools sampled for this study receive funding through parental fees payment alongside FSE tuition subsidy by MOE. A grant from the constituency

development fund (CDF) selectively supports students' fee and schools' infrastructural development on a need-based analysis. In some schools, private sponsors outsourced by principals form alternative sources of funding (*Appendix XI, full details of school settings*). Sampled schools' achievement trends for a period of seven years is displayed in figures 4.3 A, B and C (ME08 stands for 'School-Mean' for the year 2008).

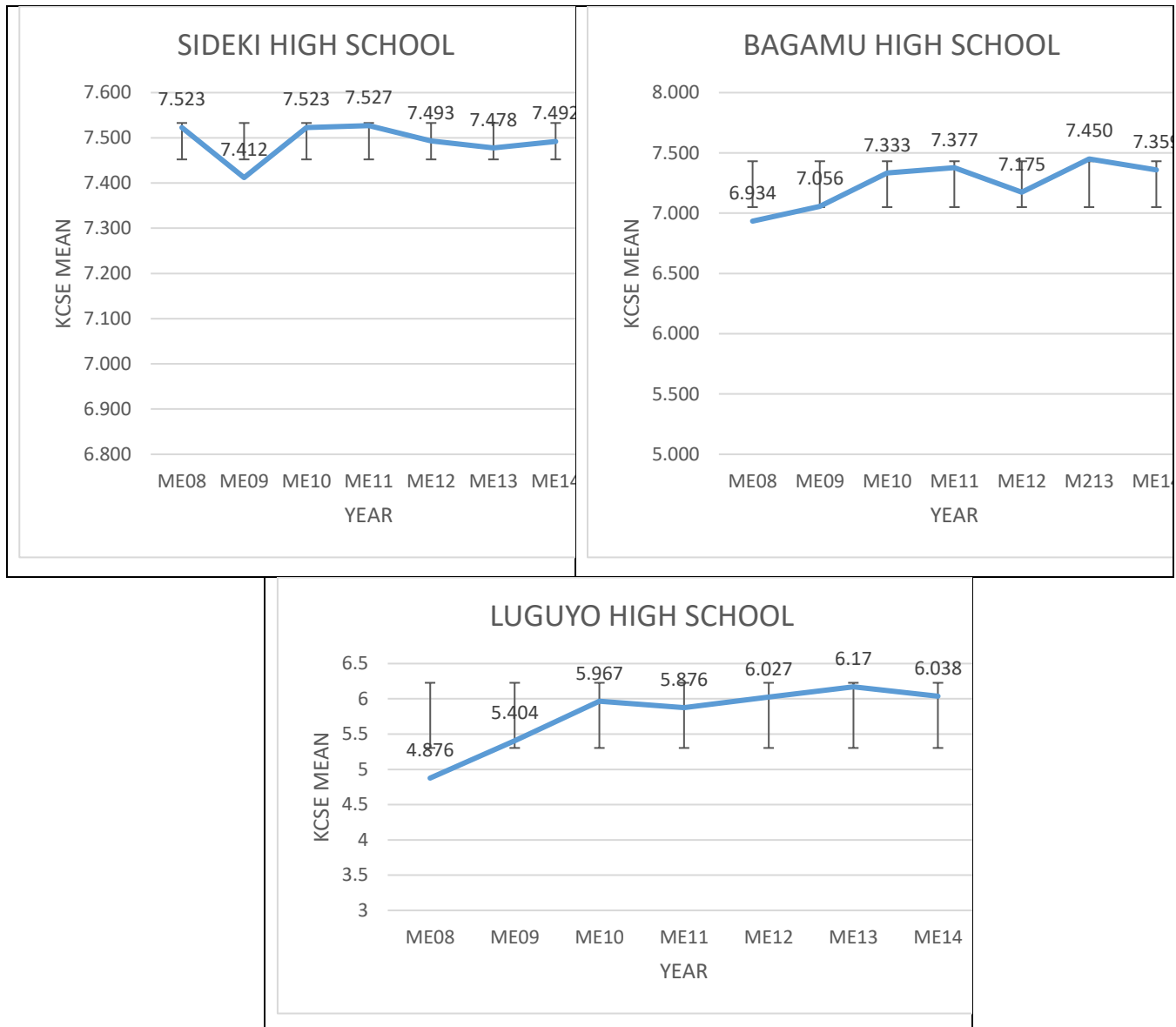
**Figure 4.3 A: Achievement Trends in C1 Schools (dipping trends)**



Bageno is a national school. The current principal had led the school for four years, after taking over from a long-serving principal that had served the school for eleven years. All these years, the current principal was deputising the former leader. This is the only school the current principal has taught since her first employment. Bidobe is a Sub-County school. The

current principal has served the schools for eleven years. Lidude is a County school. While the current principal had served for two years, the deputy is one year old in the school. The former principal served the school for five years.

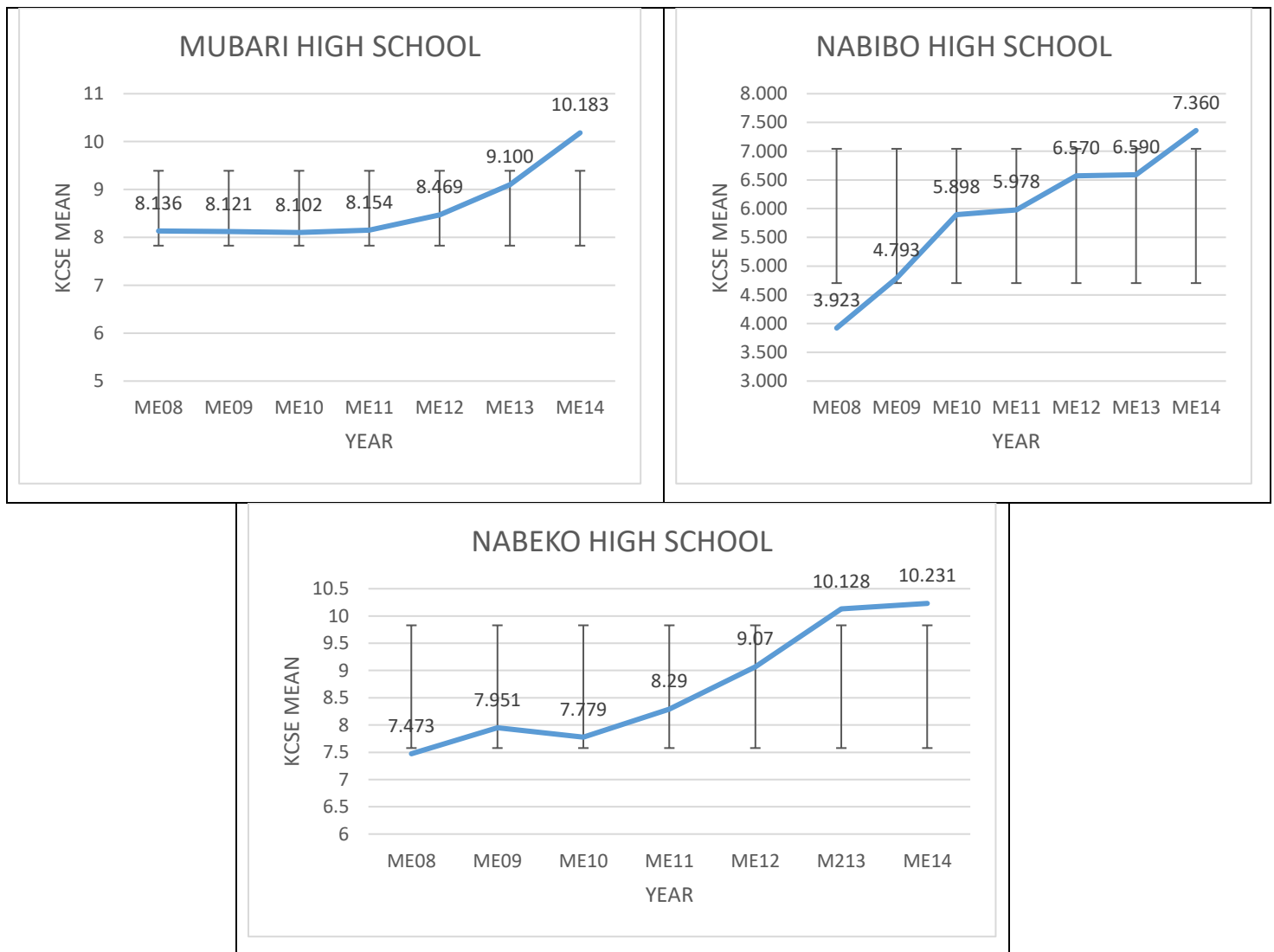
**Figure 4.3 B: Achievement Trends in C2 Schools (oscillating trends)**



The main characteristic of C2 schools is the low mean deviations in school means from one year to another. While dipping and rising schools' achievement trends substantially drift to the negative and positive respectively, C2 schools mean deviations range between 0.004 to 0.2. Thus, the schools register nearly similar means consistently over time, oscillating between decimal points of 0.0004 and 0.5. Sideki School is a national school with a current principal serving her 10<sup>th</sup> years. The school has no deputy principal. The DOS sometimes

acted on behalf of the principal, especially when she has commitments away from school. Bagamu is a County School. The current principal has served the schools for two years after taking over from a former principal who had served the school for 30 years. The former principal started his career in this school, progressed through career ladders and became the principal in this same school until his retirement. Luguyo is a Sub-County School initially doing well, however, consistently exhibited a near stagnated trend for five years consecutively. The current principal had served the school for nine years.

**Figure 4.3 C: Achievement Trends in C3 Schools (thriving trends)**



Mubari is a County school with the current principal having served for four years. The former principal had led the school for 13 years. Nabibo is a Sub-County school. The current principal had served the schools for seven years. Nabeko is a national school. The

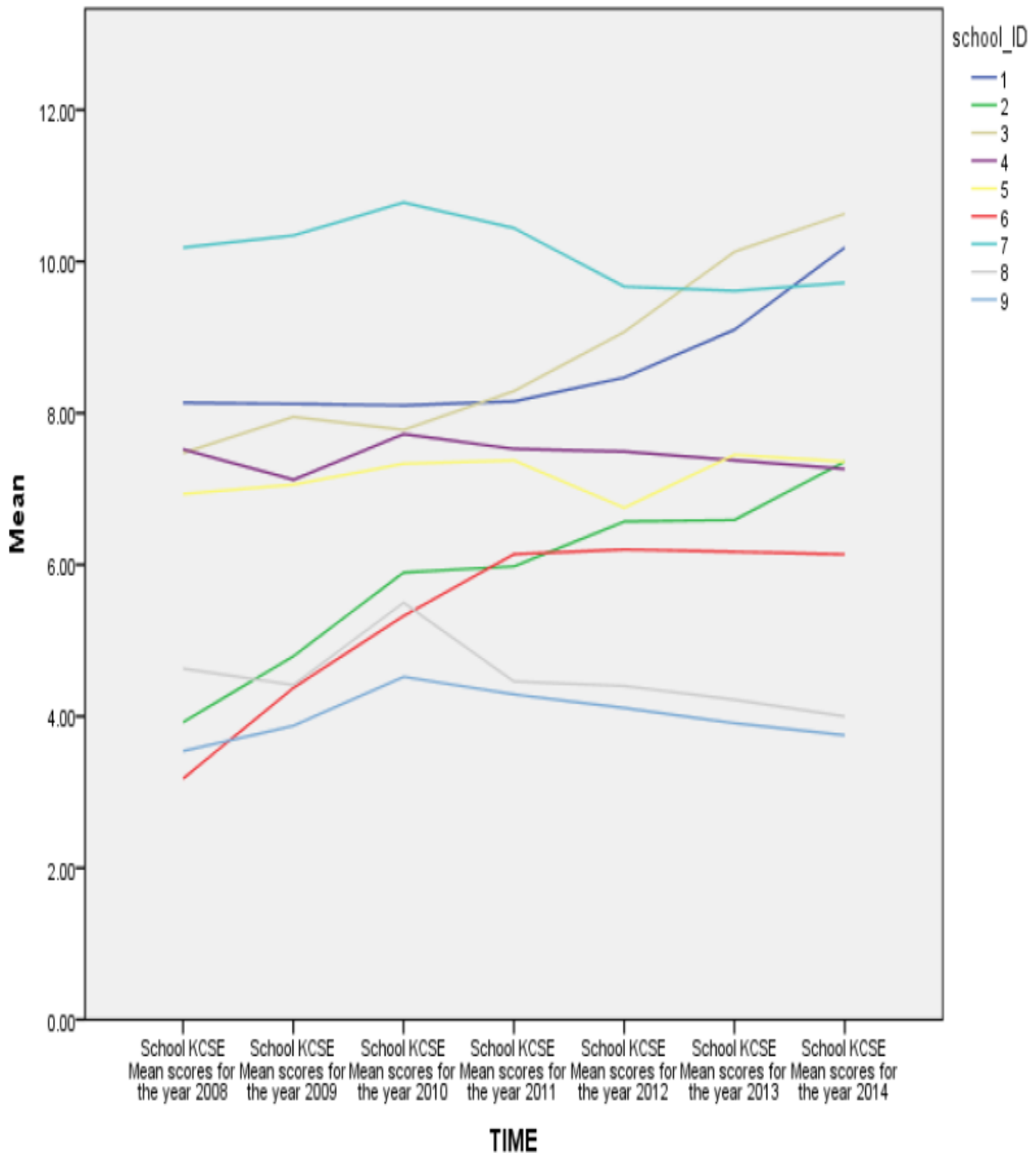
current principal had served the schools for four years after taking over from a principal who had served the school for four years too.

#### ***4.4.1 KCSE Achievement Data: Emerging Insights***

The secondary analysis of KCSE students' achievement data from sampled countries assisted in designing this study in three ways. First, reaffirming the assumptions made on the onset of the study that schools struggled with the problem of ensuring progressive improvement in students' achievement over the years. Hence, the need for understanding school level practices (especially focusing on leadership) that may enhance the sustainability of students' achievement over time. Secondly, aided in clarifying the various trends and trajectories in students' achievement over time across schools. The analysis, therefore, identified schools falling in the different categories of either dipping (C1), oscillating (C2) or thriving (C3) schools. Finally, the analysis assisted in the construction categories, from which the selection of nine study schools for the in-depth qualitative study was done.

The SPSS mixed-methods ANOVA design was used for secondary analysis of students' achievement data. Time was the independent variable analysed against repeated measures of students' achievement data as a dependent variable. The analysis established the various trends and trajectories in students' achievement across schools. The analysis demonstrated that time had a significant effect on students' achievement with a p-value of less than 0.05. The significant difference was observed between years (08, 09, 10....) and within specific schools. The 4.4 show the analysis of nine study schools sampled for qualitative research (1-3, thriving; 4-6 oscillating; 7-9 dipping). The graph illustrates changes in schools' achievement trends over time. For instance, school number six (Red- Luguyo), improved steadily from its inception up to year four, then maintained an oscillating trend for subsequent years. During interview conversations, school leaders also perceived these changes in achievement, stating that the school improved steadily with the increase in resources. However, after reaching relative sufficiency in resources, additional resources did not enhance improvement; suggesting other reasons for non-thriving status besides resources (qualitative data analysis in chapter five gives more insights on this issue).

**Figure 4.4 A difference in time and achievement**



The analysis in figure 4.4 demonstrates fluctuations in students' achievement over time. Notably, the changes in achievement vary from one school to another. However, some schools show progressive achievement over time, some are dipping, while others show oscillating characteristics. Observably, the variations in achievement trends do not follow the

entry behaviours. In this study, stratified sampling was used to ensure that each category of study schools, included a National, County and Sub-County school.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter has discussed the context of study drawing from existing policy documents and secondary analysis of students' achievement data over seven years. The chapter presented reasons for the focus on school leadership, particularly at secondary level, explicating the high stakes associated with secondary education in this context. Secondary data analysis in particular highlights the undulations in students' achievement over time. This secondary data analysis was mainly used to identify the three types/categories of schools for qualitative analysis. The purpose was to explore exemplary practices that facilitate upward growth and sustainability in students' achievement over time. It is against this background that this study examined school leadership practices that might enhance SSA; making assumptions that school leadership centrally informs other school-level factors that influence the occurrence of SSA. Qualitative data analysis chapter follows after this context chapter. Chapter five presents a comparative analysis of leadership practices in C1, C2 and C3 schools.



## Chapter 5 Leadership Practice in Schools

The principles of office hierarchy and of levels of graded authority mean a firmly ordered system of superiority and subordination in which there is a supervision of the lower offices by the higher ones. No machinery in the world functions so precisely as this apparatus of men and, moreover, so cheaply... Rational calculation . . . reduces every worker to a cog in this bureaucratic machine and, seeing himself in this light, he will merely ask how to transform himself into a somewhat bigger cog. ... The passion for bureaucratization drives us to despair..... Max Weber (1864-1920)

Max Weber's seminal account on bureaucratic and hierarchical leadership dating centuries back, unfortunately, still reflects the realities in some schools in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. This study established that some leaders within educational institutions in Kenya still conceptualised leadership in authoritative and heroic terms; either defined within individual perceptions and understanding or demarcated within shifting educational policies. Such understandings explicitly emerge in teachers' and leaders' attitudes, beliefs and dispositions about leadership. That notwithstanding, an alternative collectivist outlook, framed within democratic spaces permeates some school systems. The latter collective understanding and re-conceptualisation of leadership has emergently shifted leader-follower relationships in thriving schools. Through regeneration of organisational structures and ethos, such school systems have been able to transcend the changing and turbulent education environments in search of sustainability.

In this chapter, I discuss study findings in view of these conflicts as indicated in leaders' experiences in different schools. The analysis responds to the research question, *what leadership practices exist in study schools having different achievement trends?*

The question examines how participants perceive and experience exiting leadership practices in study schools. First, I analyse participants' conception of good leadership. Engestrom (1999) activity theory, emphasise the link between cognitive conceptions of activities and the actual realisation. The analysis of conceptions of good leadership explains how and why leaders experience leadership in certain ways, and the varied expectations of leaders. Secondly, I analyse the emerging practice of leadership in different categories of schools, outlining how school leaders create or not create educational opportunities for students' learning and achievement through organisational structures, ethos and characteristics. Finally, analyse how leaders have experienced the existing leadership, evaluating its influence on teacher engagement and resultant learning cultures.

This chapter, therefore, presents a comparison of leadership practices in study school clusters. The chapter demonstrates the similarities of leadership practice between schools in each cluster C1 (Dipping), C2 (Oscillating) and C3 (Thriving) and uncovers reasons behind existing characteristic leadership practice in these clusters. The analysis is organised along the C1, C2 and C3 study school clusters.

### **A. Leadership Practice in C1 Schools**

Bageno (*National*), Lidude (*County*) and Bidobe (*Sub-County*) are the schools in this category. These schools demonstrate dipping achievement trends as displayed in statistical analysis graphs in chapter 4. Despite their differentiated classification, these schools display similarities in the practice of leadership as analysed below.

#### **5.1 The Conception of ‘Good Leadership’ in C1 Schools**

School leaders’ conception of and understanding of good leadership appear to shape their practice. School leaders’ attitudes, beliefs and dispositions about leadership emerge strongly in this study. I asked participants, what is good leadership? C1 School leaders describe good leadership as embodied in leadership positions. The emphasis seems placed on tasks performed by individual leaders, especially the school principal. Lidude principal in her own words, claims the principal has the sole responsibility of ensuring core school programmes like teaching and learning succeeds,

A good leader is one that leads a school to good performance, talent development, and infrastructural development.... *because the principal is in charge of everything: discipline, teaching and learning, so they are to take responsibility (Emphasis)*. Everyone looks at the principal. ... for me this person will be best of leaders in all the areas, may delegate some duties, but not hands-off, you delegate, supervise and check what they are doing.

Lidude principal exemplifies good leadership by describing what a good leader should do. The principal perceives a good leader as one in control of all school programmes. The emphasis underscores principal’s core position; who, in her view, must take responsibility. The last statement suggests the principal should be exemplary in practice; although indicating the possibility of delegation of duties, she appears cautionary about it. Importantly, she communicates that individuals occupying a senior leadership position as sources of good leadership. These individuals put initiatives to ensure is in control of the system and achieves stipulated functions.

The notion of good leadership as individual, self-initiative and responsibility appear to centrally position principals in school leadership. During interviews, Bidobe principal extols this position claiming, “At my former school, I was a leader in various departments and at the back of my mind, *I wanted to bring some change which could only be achieved if I was in such a position than just a teacher (Emphasis)*”. Like her colleague in Lidude, she perceives the principal as having the sole responsibility of initiating change (*and possibly improvement*). The emphasis illustrates the power vested in the principal’s position. Similar accounts emerge in Bageno School where the deputy principal claims, “When we talk of good leadership, *I look at the administration, the principal. They are the people at the top. Maybe because they are the people in charge*. That is why I think when we talk about good leadership we look at what they do”. These leaders demonstrate good leadership as good headship, a perception had implications on how leaders acted and how school community members responded (*analysed further in section 5.2*).

Perceiving good leadership as an individual initiative by senior management especially the principal might distance other stakeholders’ input in school leadership. While C1 senior leadership struggles to maintain their exemplarity, they seem to give little room for input and support by other stakeholders. When responding to the interview questions that sought the practice of good leadership in Lidude School, one HOD suggested there existed a distanced super-subordinate relationship, “You know some areas are too sensitive to touch. What I can say is... I think it is now better. When it comes to representation, I think it is better than it was initially. In the previous regime, teachers, parents and students were not part of the leadership team”. When probed further on what he meant by ‘sensitive’ the HODs was reluctant to discuss further; openly displaying the tension and fear to speak about leadership in the school. A different HOD chose to share her expectations instead, “Good leadership *is supposed to drive people to work towards achieving desired objectives, goals and results (Emphasis)*. Where people feel they are part of it and they have achieved together”. Another HOD interjected,

*They are supposed to bring in the participation and involve all members (Emphasis); members feel proud to be part of that achievement and working under that leadership. When we are involved, we feel intrinsically motivated then you are driving towards the right direction. Even reluctant ones should be involved, so that you work as a team.*

HODs seem to perceive good leadership as participative; suggesting participation not only motivates other stakeholders but also, regenerates team building. Nonetheless, the emphases suggest these are only but HODs’ expectations and not the practice of leadership in the

school. The distancing phrase ‘they’ (*referring to senior leadership*), demonstrate that middle and junior leaders are not obviously part of the sources of good leadership. Importantly, the analysis communicates the opposing perceptions of good leadership in Lidude School; whereas senior leaders perceive and position themselves at the centre of good leadership, middle leaders express the desire for inclusion and participation in leadership activities.

The conflicting conceptions of good leadership and lack of unifying factors of the opposing camps further impact negatively on the working relationships in C1 schools. Senior leaders’ ardently make effort to ensure school programmes run successfully, however, often single-handed. In her own words, Bageno principal explains, “My role is to manage school finances, monitor teachers’ planning and curriculum delivery. I wake up early in the morning, come around to ensure students sit in class. At the end of the day, I inspect teachers’ class attendance”. The extract illustrates Bageno principal’s commitment; however, performing most leadership functions single-handed. The deputy, who works closely with the principal, disapproves the existing leadership tradition stating,

I think we can achieve good leadership practice when people work without being followed, and students can go to class without being followed. Although it is not easy, it may take long but I think you are effective when we have achieved that (Bageno Deputy principal).

Similarly, Bageno LST claims, “the practice of good leadership should be consultative one, where you take views from others. You look at the demands of the people, not the other way, where you impose things; teachers and students will just look at you”. These participants seem to advocate for a different approach to leadership. While Bageno deputy desires self-responsibility among staff and students, the LST asserts consultative approaches are more fruitful. LST last statement seems echoed by Bidobe HODs who claim pressure without support appear frustrating,

The leadership (*principal*) rarely helps, even in my department. They do not even give you room to explain anything they just demand, ‘we want to improve this subject’, period. So what I am I supposed to do? *I do not think they want to know what improvement involves. At least the leadership should know our issues; allow us to explain what is happening. If they demand for results, there are things leadership should do to get results (Emphasis)*

The excerpt communicates a less cohesive leadership team in Bidobe School. Middle leaders perceive senior leaders as over demanding yet offering little support. The emphasis seems to indicate poor working relationships; HODs feeling withdrawn and less appreciated.

Significantly emerging in the C1 school system is conflicting conceptions of good leadership; however, effective communication between leadership teams appear less apparent. In the

following section, I analyse how these conceptions define existing leadership practice in C1 schools.

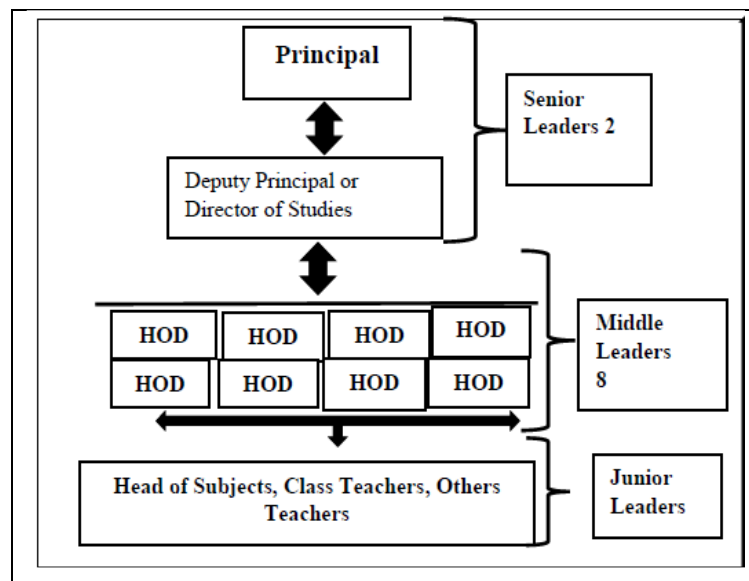
## 5.2 The Practice of Leadership in C1 Schools

In this section, I analyse the practice of leadership in C1 schools focusing on organisational structures and ethos; evaluating how they influence teacher engagement and learning cultures within these schools.

### 5.2.1 Organisational structures and Division of Labour

School leaders' conception of good leadership might have influenced organisational structures and division of labour in C1 schools. Perceiving leadership as embodied in the position (especially principal's) may have informed the narrow apex school organisational structures. Existing organisational structures and division of labour in C1 schools appear hierarchical and centralised depicting principal's central positioning as illustrated in figure 5.1 below.

**Figure 5.1: C1 schools' Organisational Structures**



The analysis of school documents (strategic plan and management meetings) and observation of division of labour in C1 schools indicate that senior leadership comprises of the principal, and deputy (referred to as the administration). The two appear to form the locus of decision-making while the rest of teachers and other stakeholders respond and implement these decisions. These hierarchical organisational structures appear to enhance dichotomous relationships between senior leadership and their subordinates; seemingly promoting dissociation rather than unity.

Overemphasis of the positional leadership that promote hierarchy and designated loci tends to disharmonise school working relationships. When explaining how leaders are organised and the schools' internal departmental engagements, Lidude LST indicates that there was little interdepartmental or school unified planning and envisioning.

Here there is too much pressure from the administration (*principal*). You know they want us to improve, so we work independently as departments. On rare occasions, we have academic meetings; HODs come together, maybe when there is a new circular or something urgent has come up. However, there is no such a thing as planning together how to teach or improve, each department find its way out.

This excerpt illustrates a school system that is less united due to individualised working. The teacher associates this state with the pressure on individual specific subject teachers and departments to improve results. The last statement depicts a school organisational structure with little internal networking. Bageno and Bidobe HODs reiterate similar accounts respectively, "At the departmental level, we have no interaction, each department works independently; set targets independently" and "Maybe just borrowing an idea, of what another department is doing. But we share at the individual level, a teacher with another on ad hoc basis, not really planned". In follow up interviews, Lidude principal affirms teachers' sentiments claiming, "We do not have a forum that brings teachers together. They work independently, but you know, I oversee what they do. So, I can advise if something is going wrong". However, Bageno principal cites individually focused accountability demands, as the reason for not pursuing meaningful collaborative working.

Some of the things you ask are a pain; in most cases, we avoid them. Even the society and the ministry when the school is not doing well, it is the principal. Therefore, we focus so much on getting teachers work hard to achieve results. We have morning weekly assembly briefs before classes and mealtimes to share best ways to operate as a school, but *we have not yet really pursued serious interdepartmental working (Emphasis)*.

Bageno principal highlights the overemphasis on principal's leadership position and the external accountability pressure to deliver on results as the reason for individualised working (*Analysed further in chapter 6*). Although she cites briefs as forums for sharing, she negates their capacity to promote collective responsibility for leadership and learning in the school as the emphasis illustrates. During school visits, I attended some of these briefs; I observed that the communication taking place is about informing and instructing teachers on decisions already taken by senior leadership. In most cases, the principal seems to beseech teachers to cooperate by implementing these decisions and there seems little evidence of consultation. In addition, these sessions appear too short ranging between 10-15 minutes, thus rarely enough and favourable for meaningful discussions. The briefs, therefore, appear less likely to facilitate substantive shared repertoire as the principal claims. Subsequently, the lack of a

shared repertoire and harmony in working seem to influence the responsibility and accountability for leadership and learning as analysed further below.

### ***5.2.2 Responsibility and Accountability for Learning***

Non-harmonious working relationships and non-unified organisational structures tend to diminish collective responsibility in C1 schools. Following the disparity in conceptions of good leadership, I sought to understand whether they unite in responsibility and accountability for leadership and learning. I asked, ‘who is held responsible when there is non-satisfactory achievement?’ Participants’ response across the C1 schools conflicted further. Whereas principals claim they take responsibility, teachers assert the focus was on individual teachers. Lidude principal states, “It is obviously the principal; because the principal is in charge of everything, discipline, teaching and learning, so they take responsibility. Everyone looks at the principal”. This extract communicates that the principal is centrally held responsible. Lidude teachers, however, claims to take responsibility, although not by choice as they seem not happy about it,

**HOD 2:** A teacher has the task to explain, to carry the cross.

**HOD 4:** The teacher is pressed into a corner to explain. You are the one who taught.

**HOD 5:** The subject teacher explains why the students failed exams and you find you are tight up. You are left wondering is it the teacher who sat the exam or the student.

**HOD 1:** I think when results are out, we need to come together as a school, sit down and evaluate what we did, then come up with the way forward.

**HOD 3:** (*Echoing HOD 1*) that is what is supposed to happen, however, it is not happening in this school. You cannot even try to suggest because we do not have forums where we can make suggestions. It is just the blame game.

These teachers complain the accountability demands bestowed on them. HOD 2, 4 and 5 illustrate the pressure placed upon individual teachers to account for results. HOD1 and 3 suggest an alternative collective accountability approach to identifying the problem and suitable response. HOD 3 claims there exist little forums for such suggestions rather condemnation. Similar accounts emerge in Bidobe School where a teacher claims,

Due to lack of consultation and some kind of dictatorial way of ruling it becomes difficult to take responsibility. At times, it is very wrong when a principal thinks of having his way. You cannot dictate to someone and get the best from him. It is best when you sit down and agree.

These teachers’ extracts communicate a controlling managerial leadership that seems to demand for results but offers less support or is less open to suggestion or discussion. Notably, the discussion depicts C1 schools as having authoritarian leadership systems with poor communication networks.



In an authoritarian leadership system, it might be difficult to hold teachers accountable for unsatisfactory performance because of mandating senior leadership to take responsibility. Discussion in preceding section indicates a blame game scenario; where accountability is tossed between teachers and the principal. Similarly, in Bageno FGD, when responding to the question, ‘who is held responsible when there is non-satisfactory achievement? A HOD suggested that lack of empowerment for middle leader limited the extent of accountability,

Because HODs we are not empowered, it is not easy for someone to strongly pin you down. *Yeah, we usually have meetings to explain what happened but generally, we shall just give excuses. Personally, I did my best blablablaa, I do not know what was the problem with the client (students); the blame goes to the student (emphasis).* I have heard that song over the years. By the end of it all, it is the principal to explain, it is about leadership, it all bottles up to administration

This extract communicates that lack of collaborative working relationships in school may make it difficult to hold teachers to account. HODs cite lack of empowerment for middle and junior leaders; referring to the failure to engage teachers in decision-making on leadership and learning (*analysed further in section 5.2.4 on teacher engagement*). The emphasis gives a picture of non-commitment on the side of teachers and the shift of blame to students. The last statement echoes negative effects of centralised positional leadership, resounding C1 senior leaders’ conception of good leadership. Notably, school organisational structures that promote individualised and isolating working relationships may lack the capacity to enhance collective accountability and responsibility necessary for improved learning.

### ***5.2.3 Organisational Ethos and Characteristic***

The organisational ethos of C1 schools was less likely to promote envisioning and planning for improvement of learning and outcomes. The analysis in preceding sections pictures disjointed school organisational characteristics: suggesting that school leaders and teachers working together as a matter of policy requirement but evidently lacking collaborative enthusiasm. This study established that C1 Schools lacked a culture of collective envisioning and planning for improvement. Literature suggests that designing a good vision for improvement may aid in focusing the school on what matters most: teaching and learning and lay a good foundation for sustainable achievement of learning outcomes (Hargreaves and Fink, 2006). During interviews, I inquired about school envisioning and planning for improvement; limitations in this area appear a major drawback in C1 schools. Lidude LST suggests envisioning is conceptualised as an external government policy requirement; attracting little commitment from school leaders.

The government wanted schools to have a mission and vision. The principal back then told the department of languages to design them. *They presented to staff and BOM where it was approved (Laughing) but it is just there; written at the gate and in the strategic plan. However, no one refers to them; maybe students who are made to recite on parade (Emphasis)*

The excerpt illustrates a perception of envisioning as fulfilling a policy requirement with little attachment to the process. The sarcastic laughter and the emphasis signify lack of commitment to the same. I observed a similar scenario during a FGD with middle leaders in Bageno schools, where one HOD states “*(All laughing)* we see them at the gate ... but not sure, saying something like *(mumbles something not clear; another louder laughter)* ...I cannot remember” and another HOD says, “*(A quick interjection)* we do not have the vision and mission in our offices. In fact, we do not have offices, and there is none in the staff room”. When probed further on significance of vision and mission, G/C HOD stated,

Yes, they do. However, in this school they serve a very small percentage, it is never emphasised ....I think when you take it, think about it and you try to practice it, it has a meaning. If you believe in and practice, it will work. However, if you do not it will be another fluke. Like here, it is just there; even core values are just there, no much concern about them.

These conversations exemplify the weak state of envisioning and planning for improvement in C1 schools. In follow up interviews, senior leaders in the two schools affirm these claims. When asked if the school had forums where stakeholders convene to plan and share on achieving the school vision, Bageno principal cites lack of a big room to accommodate everyone as the problem. “We have not met as the whole group because we do not have the room. So, I have been having meetings with different groups; PA, BOM, staff members and even support staff”. The principal seems to justify individualised working; meeting stakeholders in dissociated forums without creating opportunities for a shared and meaningful interaction. This dissociation is further emphasised when teachers complain about a divided stakeholder team who seem less concerned about their wellbeing (*analysed further in section 5.4.2 on teacher engagement*). Lidude principal expressed reluctance; showing little interest in the vision and mission, “They are there *(pointing to the notice board)*. I found them here. They are in the strategic plan too, we have not changed it.” However, Lidude deputy notes the reluctance, and the little value attached to school vision.

I have had a problem with the vision and mission as an individual because I feel it is just on paper and is not working for us. Even teachers and students have not internalized it. I think we need to rework on it and launch it so that it may be purposeful. What I see, it was designed because it is a policy requirement. I have an issue with that personally, but you see now I am only but a deputy, I cannot change. They are necessary but not working for this school.

The deputy reiterates the school mission and vision as policy requirements, suggesting as a school they have not yet given it much consideration. This standing suggests 3 things: school

leaders' limited understanding of the policy or a problem of implementation of the policy or limited capacity to interpret, embrace and make the policy work for them (analysed further in chapter 6). The deputy further exemplifies the evasive position the school has taken, however, claims not to have the capacity to change the situation because of her less powerful deputy position. The latter appear to exemplify the negative effect of positional leadership and the emphasis on the principal as the central decision-maker. It also indicates a school system that seems less open to communication and sharing among leaders across the board.

Defective envisioning and planning for improvement in C1 schools seem to contribute to the school's lack of unified purpose. During interviews, it emerged that C1 School lack core values that might guide the school leadership and learning practices. Lidude Senior teacher laments, "The reality is we are just working. We have not written our values anywhere. Values are not there, we cannot say these are our values. So far, we are just working". The teacher communicates lack of focus and clarity of the school's priorities. In further probes on the meaning of 'we are just working', she explains that teachers routinely report to school, teach to cover the syllabus and what happens thereafter is rarely given much thought. Bidobe HODs claim comparable circumstances of unapplied values, "Values are in the deputy's office, we do not have them in the staffroom" and "we do not have the values in our offices, but we have seen them in the deputy's office. Although we do not really refer to them. The only one we insist on is discipline, which we keep on reminding students about discipline". A new teacher who seems surprised by the situation in Bidobe suggests,

There is need to have focus; the community, teachers and support staff. The school should be working towards one goal; everybody focused. There are values, but I think we cannot just put values on paper, we need to make them work; they have to inform the schools' progress.

The teacher draws attention to the need for a unified purpose, achieved by working towards a unified goal, guided by established values. This seems to communicate that lacking a proper vision in C1 School may explain the lack of unified harmony and focus. It further explains the emphasis on individualised working approaches adopted in C1 schools with principals struggling to ensure school programmes work. These situations reflect negatively on teacher engagement and learning cultures in C1 schools as analysed in subsequent sections.

#### ***5.2.4 Teacher Engagement***

The lack of a unified purpose and shared practice in C1 schools appear to influence teacher engagement in school leadership and learning. Teachers seem less positioned to make a

significant contribution to decision-making, a scenario that appears to affect senior-middle leadership working relationship. In Lidude School, it appears evident in interviews and FGD that positioning of teachers in the school system negatively affected teacher engagement and commitment. When explaining the school's downward trend, the senior teacher faults the former leadership regime claiming, "The problem is the leadership actually. The leader gives direction and if the right direction is not given, definitely things go wrong". In follow-up probes the teacher states, "Teachers are shouted at, called out on parade or to the staffroom and told to behave. You understand, by the time the teacher is going back to class, they are not motivated. They did not know how to handle teachers". Lidude LST echoing the colleague's claims further states,

Most teachers are undermined, they are demoralized, the *principal* would shout at teachers before students. Therefore, teachers could not work. The principal was like seeking popularity among students. *Now teachers went to class for the sake of it and did not work with passion to help students learn (Emphasis).*

The teacher highlights teachers' positioning in the school system as less advantageous not only to the functioning of the system but also, to teachers' commitment. Participants further illustrate a strained working relationship between teachers and senior leadership. The emphasis suggests the effect of inconsiderable positioning of teachers within the system; bound to have a subsequent effect on learning outcomes. Strained working relationships appear to affect teacher commitment as affirmed by the SCEO who asserts, "There has been lack of harnessing the desperate effort of teachers. The former principal was not able to inspire teachers to work as a team; could not even work with the deputy". These participants underscore the divisive working relationship and lack of teamwork as limiting teacher engagement in Lidude.

Divisive and isolating working environments seems fostered in C1 School when middle and junior leaders are less engaged in leadership activities. Procedural and routine engagement of teachers in the leadership position without giving them mandate to autonomously execute leadership responsibility appear demoralising to teachers across the C1 schools. One HOD states,

There is something we all lack as HODs, empowerment. We are not empowered so that our decisions are valid. If we are allowed that freedom to be in charge, we can do better. Actually, we are HODs by name that is what I know, because nobody respects our decisions. *Our decisions are not binding; the decision must come from the principal (Emphasis).* So if you are empowered you can make decisions and even bring in new changes.

These leaders denote the existing leadership that seems to isolate teachers from making binding decisions. Teachers express a desire for autonomy and empowerment to contribute to change in the school. The emphasis seems to denote less consultative and participatory leadership which to isolate middle leaders' voices. Such isolating relationships seem to discourage teacher engagement and lower teacher commitment to sustainable students' achievement.

School ethos that seldom prioritises teacher engagement in leadership practice may fail to nurture the capacity and commitment to learning and achievement. This study established that school leadership system in which teacher engagement is less evident may lack the capacity and commitment for teaching and learning, with subsequent effects to learning outcomes. Bageno School seems to have a vibrant team of middle leaders; well informed of their leadership role in facilitating effectiveness in teaching and learning. In interviews and FGD, HODs express enthusiasm, passion and commitment to student learning and achievement. That notwithstanding, Bageno senior leaders seem less keen to actively engage HOD in decision-making. Subsequently, HODs felt less appreciated, discouraged and demoralised. The guiding and counselling (G/C) mistress stated,

G/C is not considered an important department like others. Yet it is very important for any school to improve. Some issues you need to refer to experts because it is beyond my capacity. Like you would like someone to come and address students because some issues require specialised attention or someone to reinforce what you are trying to handle. However, there is no support. Therefore, some of the issues you just leave them like that; I remain tough-tight because I know something can be done but the leadership just ignore.

The extract highlights lack of support accorded to middle leaders especially in executing their roles. Since decisions originate from the principal, some departments may become less privileged despite genuine concerns. Whereas G/C seems centrally positioned in schools that appear thriving in student learning and achievement (*see analysis in section chapter seven, section 7.5.3*). A lesser position of this department in C1 schools appears to limit their capacity in supporting students learning and wellbeing needs. The scenario has suggestively communicated about the positioning of the learning and the learner in the school system.

### **5.2.5 Learning Cultures**

Divisive and isolating relationships between senior and middle leaders might have informed the existing unfriendly learning culture in C1 schools. Learning in these schools was perceived as individual teachers' and students' affair as Bidobe principal claims, "The

biggest challenge has been the passing of students which is more of an individual affair”.

Lidude LST further suggests unpleasant relationships among staff seem to affect student relationships with teachers. In his view, the problem originates from senior leadership failing to give direction.

We had a case of one HOD inciting students, telling them directly maths is not a subject for girls. Some students took it up, inciting other against maths. This is a problem partly teachers' and partly students', *however generally when the leadership is not right it contributes because students have no direction ...also leadership should bring departments together to avoid divisions (Emphasis).*

The teacher points out how lack of harmony among staff affects learning. The excerpt exemplifies a school system that lacks a unified approach to learning such that effort in one subject or department is brought down by competing teachers or departments. The emphasis, however, points to gaps in leadership; failing not only to provide direction and focus on students but also, in ensuring harmonious relationships exist across departments.

Significantly, the emphasis on the individualised effort by teachers and learners may not have the capacity to foster sustainable learning and achievement as it appears to enhance unhealthy competition.

Senior leadership in C1 schools lay more emphasis on teaching than learning. Analysis of data from C1 schools reveals that principals vehemently focus on teaching and syllabus completion rather than the type of learning taking place in schools. Principals claim to talk to teachers, check records of work covered and ensuring that teaching is going on (*Which is necessary, however, not obvious evidence of learning*). Lidude principal when talking about how she is using her leadership position to promote learning states, “Our initiatives to improve have centred on talking to teachers, also involving the class teachers checking and doing follow up to ensure all subjects have covered the syllabus”. Equally, the counterparts in Bidobe states, “We do not have much of interdepartmental working because we look more on teaching initiative. Like we have given more teaching slots to science and maths” and Bidobe deputy, “We try to cover the syllabi early so that we engage in revision especially the Form-fours”. These leaders illustrate the emphasis on early syllabus completion to pave way for revision and preparation for examinations. They seem to communicate the central focus on teaching for examinations than actual learning. Such a focus may work well in achieving short-term results; however, sustained learning outcomes may require a more ingenious organization of learning that encourage deeper engagement.

The emphasis on syllabus completion and revision to raise the school mean and individual students subjects appear to promote unhealthy competition and withholding of classes. C1 schools' examination-oriented learning culture appear to limit collaboration and a shared approach to teaching and learning. The mathematics scenario in Lidude School exemplify the unhealthy working relationships among staff and departments. Similarly, teachers in Bidobe School appear to resist the effort to share classes. During FGD in Bidobe, a HODs mentioned, "I think changing teachers make students confused. Maybe the way this person teaches the concept is very different from the other. So, you should maintain the same person to teach students"

Another one remarked,

I was given a class then it was taken away; I was given form one instead. That does not motivate me because when you come in you set targets and it is not healthy when you are given a class then sometimes you are told now leave that class.

These teachers negatively perceive collaboration suggesting it confuses students or break the progress in achieving set targets. Alike, their colleagues in Lidude perceive shared teaching as causing syllabus coverage to lag behind. These teachers' arguments appear regressive. The analysis of learning cultures in thriving schools demonstrates that collaborative teaching is more advantageous in enhancing student learning. These perceptions seem to arise from cultures of competition and individualised appraisal of teachers' work in C1 schools. Subsequently, teachers lacked trust in students' capacity to drive own learning.

The culture of learning in C1 schools appear wanting as the system position learners as passive recipient knowledge content. Both senior and middle leaders appear to have little trust in the capacity of their learners to take on their learning and explore their potential. The perceptions and practice in C1 schools indicate that teachers rarely challenged students to take on learning by themselves. Lidude deputy-principal laments,

Majorly students' attitude is the problem; the thinking that I need to work on my own, as a student is not there. Students have no drive. This is the culture from all quarters and even some make allegations against teacher as long as they get their way. The greatest challenge of our school is in the character, then the academic culture and personality.

The deputy points out students' lack of psyche and character as Lidude school's critical hindrances. Lidude teachers further express little trust in their learners. One teacher suggested there was little to be done to improve the schools' achievement trajectory with the calibre of students, "One of the reasons I would say is the problem with the learners. They perform dismally. You do not expect these learners to get quality grades. It becomes tricky to make

them get quality grades”. These perceptions seem problematic; they fail to foster initiatives that encourage learners’ participation. Comparable perceptions appear the reason for conflicting relationships between Bageno school leadership, student and parents. When explaining how the school’s achievement trajectory started going down, the current principal describes,

The former principal kept commenting negatively about students; one time on assembly the principal just commented, ‘you are going to score very low marks’. The principal brushed them off on the assembly that they are not performers in the presence of teachers. The girls did not take it positively, they reported to parents who did not take it kindly either. That is where our downfall started.

This extract exemplifies the positioning of learners in Bageno School; suggesting that when students perceive the school leadership has little interest in them they may fight back or may develop indiscipline character. This appears evident in Bageno and Lidude schools where students’ indiscipline appears informed by the unhealthy working relationships among leadership teams; often with a subsequent weak focus on students’ wellbeing and learning needs. Alternatively, findings in C3 schools suggest that when students realise the school leadership have their concerns and interests at heart they work hard and maintain high discipline.

In summary, this section has analysed the perceptions and leadership practices and experiences in C1 schools. Five critical issues emerge. First, the practice of position-focused leadership where participants equate leadership to headship. This practice seems to explain the hierarchical organisational structures with dichotomous relationships between senior leadership and their subordinates.

Secondly, the existing authoritarian leadership practices with poor communication networks seem to promote dissociation rather than unity in C1 schools. With divisive and isolating working relationship, teamwork seems less apparent. Subsequently, there is less collective responsibility for leadership and learning in these schools.

Thirdly, C1 schools appear characterised by less unified focus and vision building for learning. Schools lack a shared repertoire and harmony in working which might explain the schools lack of commitment and enthusiasm to school vision, mission and core values; not only as unifying tools, but also critical in refocusing the school on important priorities.



Moreover, the existing non-harmonious and isolating working relationships seem to discourage teacher engagement in leadership and learning; failing to harness teachers support and enthusiasm. Distancing teachers' participation and involvement in decision making seem to demotivate them with subsequent low teacher commitment to sustainable students' learning and achievement.

Finally, non-harmonious working relationships and little commitment to collective envisioning for improvement seem to inform the central focus on teaching for examinations; accountability focus on the mean than actual learning. Learning cultures that focus on competition and individualised appraisal of teachers with little trust and intentions to nurture students' capacity to drive own learning appear regressive.

## **B. Leadership Practice in C2 School**

Sideki (*National*), Bagamu (*County*) and Luguyo (*Sub-County*) form the C2 schools' category. These schools' achievement trends are neither improving nor dipping: they oscillate around the same mean for a period of time as shown in chapter 4. This section analyses C2 schools' participants' conceptions of good leadership and evaluate how these conceptions influence organisational structures and ethos. Finally, I assess how structures and ethos inform teacher engagement and the resultant learning cultures in C2 schools.

### **5.3 The Conception of 'Good Leadership'**

There existed a bilateral conception of good leadership in C2 schools. Senior leaders perceive individual leaders' exemplary behaviour as core constitute of good leadership. The purpose of leadership is to maintain stability, orderliness and smooth running of the school. Teachers, however, appeal for consultative and participatory leadership, with some calling for radical reforms within the school system to kick-start the progress in achievement.

Senior leaders in C2 schools conceptualise good leadership as embodied in the exemplary behaviour of the leader. Most principals describe good leadership by focusing on leaders' expected behaviour traits: modelling good character and exhibiting good administration skills. The Luguyo principal claimed, "Good leadership requires a lot of integrity. ...you are everybody's role model, so should be of good character. You must also have what we call prudent management and transparency". The principal highlights behavioural traits that characterise good leadership; integrity and transparency. In subsequent probes, the principal

express that the society often judge individual character to determine leadership expediency, with leadership training programmes often emphasising these expectations too. Luguyo deputy further explains, “As a good leader, you are strict but friendly; strict in an orderly way. Accept where you have gone wrong and correct. However, *must appear to be ahead, because you are an authority; you should be commanding power (Emphasis)*”. The extract further highlights individual leaders’ character, accentuating the need for exceptionality, to which he apportions the command of power. The emphasis, however, suggests authoritarianism; a predisposition which may be appealing to the general administration or management discourse. However, its influence on teaching and learning appear less apparent (*analysed further in section 5.4*).

Some senior leaders in C2 schools perceive good leadership as good administrative skills. Beyond the personal character, these leaders express the importance of establishing cordial public relationships within the school system as important in achieving stability. Sideki DOS avows,

Good leadership is when you are open-minded; you are not working in a vacuum you are working with people. The leader must be open, get ideas from outside after which should analyse them, and know which ones to pick. Not just picking because you want to please people; the ones who are supposed to be led.

DOS highlights the need for good public relations within the school system emphasising listening to stakeholders. However, he exemplifies leader’s authority and distance stakeholder participation; indicating possible superior-subordinate leadership relationships. He seems to suggest the discretion to make binding decisions lie with the senior leadership. Subsequently, DOS intentions of inclusion appear quasi: for creating good relationships, not necessarily creating active stakeholder participation. Sideki principal further underscores the ability to exercise good administrative skills and public relations claiming it arises from individual leader’s charisma. The principal views the charismatic practices as inborn and the lucky leaders seem to acquire them naturally.

Good leadership is having very good administration skills and *public relations*. You need somebody with charisma. In my first posting, I worked with a director who was a much-focused person, very good in administration and *public relations*. That was my starting point. I think in-born leadership qualities should be key to help you find your way. Like myself, I discovered I had leadership skills, I think they just come naturally.

The principal exalts the charisma of the leader as an imperative to good leadership. She indicates that such charismatic characteristics innately occur in individual leaders who accidentally discover them during practice. Sideki PA appears to echo comparable views

claiming, “Good leadership is not a position that you campaign for; how you talk and contribute make people recognise you as a leader. Like here, I want to leave a legacy, when I leave this school; I want people to miss me”. Sideki leaders appear to epitomise leadership heroism that promotes individualised leadership aura based on perceived charismatic character. In their view, acting appealing and likable are of central concern. Significantly, they demonstrate a type of leadership that is highly conscious of the position of the leader; which perceive disturbances within the school system as a failure of the leader. With such propensity, school leaders may hesitate to make difficult decisions and risk-taking ventures that cause hard changes and destabilise the status quo (*analysed further in section 5.4*).

The fundamental purpose of senior leadership in C2 Schools appears to centre on establishing and maintaining system orderliness, stability and status quo. School leaders seem to focus on seeking material resources, establishing infrastructure and supervising teachers. Bagamu principal contends, “Good leadership is where everything moves, and it is in sync with the objectives: Resources mobilized and effectively utilized *for the smooth running of the school* (*emphasis*). Luguyo principal equally claims,

A good leader should have plans for the school; plans to achieve stated objectives. Procedurally, as a principal, you have to supervise teachers and allocate resources to improve the performance. The leadership (*principal*) identifies what plans to make and see how to implement them. Those issues are a function of the leadership, although a leader should work with all stakeholders.

Bagamu principal seems to emphasise stability and regulation of the school system by statements, ‘in sync with and smooth running of the school’. Luguyo principal exemplifies teachers’ supervision, resource planning and allocation as central to good leadership. These perceptions seem informed by job specifications as illustrated by statements ‘procedurally as a principal’ and ‘these issues are functions of leadership’. In further probes, I gathered that planning meant coordination, organisation and utilisation of resources and programmes to maintain the stable organisations of the schools. Luguyo principal’s last statement highlights the need for stakeholders’ participation in decision-making and school leadership practices. However, analysis of interview and FGD within the school indicate a conciliatory and pseudo-participatory involvement; stakeholders usually informed of decisions taken, and partially consulted, however, not necessarily undertaking leadership tasks in their own capacity. Significantly, C2 leaders appear keenly mindful of the smooth running of school and implementation school programmes in ways that avoid disturbance of status quo (*analysed further in section 5.4*).

Teachers hold opposing conceptions to seniors' calling for higher participation in decision-making. First, contrary to principals, middle and junior leaders in C2 schools perceive good leadership as that which creates good relationships and meaningful engagement of teachers in school leadership activities. Teachers express a desire for consultation and involvement in dialogue and practice of leadership, to which they attribute positive identity, motivation and teamwork. Sideki LST contends, "Good leadership is one where the entire school community is able to work as a team and improve student performance. If you have a problem with one member, you cannot be able to achieve anything". Luguyo HODs argue, "Leaders are actually supposed to bring in, and involve all members. When we are involved, we own it, and feel intrinsically motivated ....so that you work as a team". Bagamu HODs FGD echos comparable calls for improved consultation, involvement and participation by emphasising dialogue, teamwork and engagement.

**HOD 1:** Good leadership is one that is consultative, sharing and listening to all stakeholders

**HOD 2:** How you network with people, the community listening to ideas and open to corrections.

**HOD 3:** Where there is a lot of teamwork and dialogue, it has to involve engaging others

These conversations communicate conceptions of leadership that seek a whole-system approach to school leadership as illustrated by statements, 'where the entire school community is able to work together', 'is supposed to bring in and involve all members': and 'where there is a lot of teamwork and dialogue' seem to attest to the holistic approach discourse. Significantly, these teachers' contentions indicate the whole-school discourse is less apparent in C2 schools. Subsequently, the opposing conceptions seem to inform the bilateral expectations and responsibility for leadership and learning in C2 schools.

Secondly, some teachers, still holding opposing views to principals seem to conceptualise good leadership as that which facilitate change in practice and achievement. Senior teachers, having substantial experience of teaching in C2 schools seem to call for radical changes and risk-taking that might kick-start positive progress. Senior teachers appear critical of the existing status calling for a transformation in leadership practice, which they perceived as necessary in influencing changes in the schools' achievement trajectories. While Bagamu LST claims, "Good leadership is a kind of leadership that is transformative. There should be something new achieved. There should be progress", Luguyo senior-teacher contends, "One that produces a positive change. The general growth of a learner academically, socially, morally.... also, focused, should know what exactly is to be achieved, and should be able to work towards that". These leaders demonstrate good leadership as that which has the capacity

to revamp, revolutionise and renew school practice and objectives with an aim of driving positive change. Correspondingly, Sideki LST seemingly frustrated by the current leadership approach asserts within school system restructuring is necessary.

Good leadership should be radical, make hard decisions that actually change the school performance because nobody likes change. Being ready to stretch and the willingness within you is necessary. Like the G/C issue, there should be an internal reshuffle in the school to make the school move forward. The school has a lot of potentials, very strategically located but not achieving. I recommend a reshuffle, it will be very healthy for the school; it will help both the teachers and students.

The LST seem to conceptualise good leadership as that with the capacity to take risks and make hard changes that might hurt existing dispositions and standings that appear less productive. The second statement appeals for audacious leadership; radically willing to redesign school practices and exceptionally tap into the system potential for maximal productivity. Citing the case of G/C (*analysed further in section 5.4.1*), the teacher visualises possible changes. In follow up probes, I inquired whether stakeholders share such suggestions. His response cites the lack of sharing opportunities and the apparent insecurity in the senior leadership that seems less open to reflections over such suggestions, “Actually people do not want to talk about leadership in this school. They feel they will be spied over. They keep diverting whenever you would ask a question”. Importantly, teachers seem to understand the problem ailing their schools’ performance. However, existing senior leadership predisposing of maintaining stabilised systems and distancing other stakeholders excludes their input. The following section evaluates the influence of these conceptions of the practice of leadership.

## **5.4 The Practice of Leadership in C2 schools**

In this section, I evaluate the practice of leadership in C2 schools. I reflect on the existing organisational structures and ethos as well as their effect on teacher engagement and learning cultures within these schools.

### ***5.4.1 Organisational structures and Division of Labour***

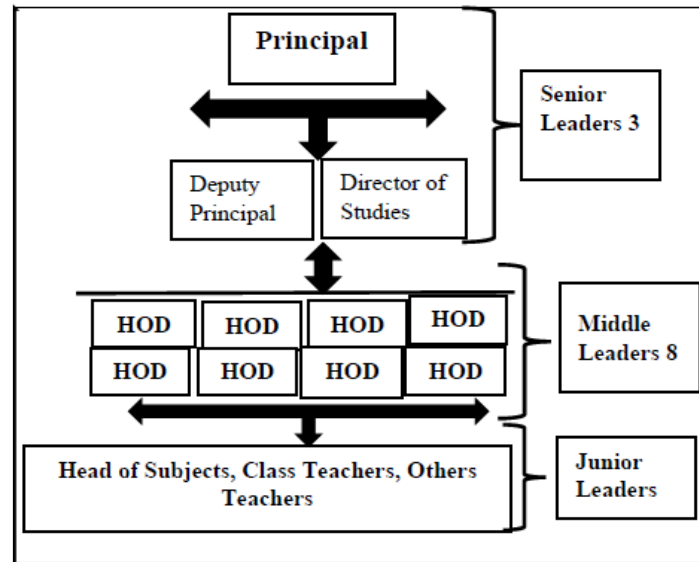
Existing division of labour in C2 schools appears pseudo-participatory<sup>1</sup>, with substantial emphasis on principal’s authority. C2 school organisational structure slightly differ with C1 because senior leadership incorporates one extra person; the Director of Studies (DOS) as

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<sup>1</sup> A weak of participation where Leaders create an impression of openness however careful to retain decision-making in their own hands

illustrated in Figure 5.2 below. During the study, however, Sideki had only two in senior leadership, the deputy position being vacant for over six months with various explanations.

**Figure 5.2 C2 Schools' Organisational Structures**



Interview conversations and document analysis suggest that C2 principals indicate intentions of working with other stakeholders. They assert intentions of creating positive working relationships, however, seemingly with high vigilance as Bagamu principal suggests,

Teachers and other stakeholders should be part of leadership; you have to involve them in one way or another. It depends on how you approach issues and how you do it. Sometimes they can be a source of the problem. You may have a big problem when someone feels you are not in charge and want to introduce their own things.

The principal acknowledges the need for stakeholders' participation in school leadership practices. However, appears vigilant of eminent opposition, as the last statement negates these intentions. The principal looks worry about chances that stakeholders may want radical changes that may be disruptive to his authority. In comparable scenarios, Sideki new teacher, commenting on delay in changing the deputy and G/C positions claims, "The principal is treading carefully. She is not sure who is who." Luguyo principal, on the other hand, mentioned in his own words that he not only marginalises but also, initiates the transfer of teachers deemed opposing to his authority, "Some members in the school community try to oppose my leadership. Sometimes you try to understand but sometimes we use force to remove this; I had to transfer some teachers who tried to fight me". SCQASO, however, observes, "Good leadership is not that you compel or give orders; there are many styles to get cohesion and manage the school. We have noticed in Luguyo if teachers challenge *leadership*

they are given a warning letter. So how does that work and you want to ask a teacher to produce good results? There is a lot of discouragement even from the leaders themselves". These participants exemplify the existing organisational structures in C2 schools where senior leaders seem to promote weak participation. There is a correlation in statements "I had to transfer some teachers who tried to fight me", "You may have a big problem when someone feels you are not in charge and want to introduce their own things" and SCQASO testimony of giving warning letters. These statements suggest senior leaders appear insecure about their leadership position and seem to use various means to retain their authority. Partly, the insecurity seems informed by the conception of good leadership as embodied in exemplary administration skills. That notwithstanding, leaders' insecurities and effort to retain authority seem informed by other factors surrounding senior leadership work environments (*Analysed further in chapter six*).

The expansion of senior leadership to include DOS position seem to add little value to the organisational structure and school leadership in C2 schools. C2 principals claim to have moulded DOSs to take the academic leadership forward by coordinating HODs and academic committee. During interviews with DOSs, I inquired how they are using their leadership positions to take teaching and learning forward. All DOSs' reiterates they generally centre on examination routine activities; checking syllabus coverage, timetabling, collecting, recording and presenting students' examination attainments. Bagamu DOS explains DOS duties as basic examination administration and analysis, "I mainly take care of exams and timetables. *I get in touch with HODs when preparing timetables for examinations, and when checking syllabus coverage; finding out how far they are gone and reporting to administration (Emphasis)*". Bagamu DOS seems to communicate that the position supports the principal and deputy in monitoring and controlling syllabus coverage and examination activities. The emphasis illustrates a basic interaction with HODs, with little mandate to make binding decisions; contrary to principals' assertion of DOS providing academic leadership. I asked how DOSs handle leadership challenges in their line of duty, Bagamu and Luguyo DOS states "I forward them to the principal for the solution to the problems" and "Whatever come up I report to principal ... That is now the role of the principal". These accounts suggest the inclusion of DOS in senior leadership is to achieve basic administrative agendas. It further communicates a lack of capacity development or empowerment to allow DOS to carry out meaningful leadership mandate.

Senior leaders' insecurities and desire to withhold decision-making appears to influence leadership organisational structures, interrelationships and staff division of labour in C2 schools. Sideki School's missing deputy scenario, for instance, communicates much about leadership structures and interrelationships; the school had remained without a deputy principal for over six months following the promotion of former deputy. During the visits to the school, I observed Sideki principal literally leading the school single-handed, with the DOS only supporting in basic administrative duties. In follow up interview with the principal, she claims to have failed to identify the right person to take up this position.

I have not had a deputy for a long time. The County director send to us a deputy from the local community whom we rejected... *we wanted someone who could fit in that situation. Also, getting a local deputy would localise the school (emphasis)*.... We could have internal promotion from HODs; *unfortunately, those who qualify have no interest in becoming a deputy. ...do not like administration. Those who want to take up the position do not qualify (emphasis)*

The extract advances various reasons for lacking a deputy for a long time. It seems obvious the school had various opportunities to fill the deputy position; however, the principal seems hesitant to accept available options. The first emphasis not only communicates antagonistic school-community relationship (*analysed further in chapter 6*), but also principal's perceptions about a good leader. Probably the principal sought certain behavioural qualities in proposed deputies, which informed judgment of their suitability as evidenced in her commentaries, "It is unfortunate that we have more balanced men than women. If DOS were a woman, I would have taken him already as my deputy. He is excellent, has many administrative skills although he has no leadership training. There are some people who are naturally good leaders". Comparable predispositions appear to inform the second emphasis on internal appointments. Although Sideki principal claims female leaders among HODs dislike or fail to qualify for deputy's position, other participants report otherwise. A HOD claims the principal denied a number of qualified and willing teachers to take up leadership for fear of disagreement. She points out leadership differences citing principal's uneasiness to appreciate an alternative opinion.

In reality, we have so many teachers that qualify and willing to become the deputy. However, they seem to have a different opinion and standing with the principal, and the principal feels they will disagree. The CDE send to us a deputy from the local community, the principal declined because they will disagree on many things. 'The principal said we would rather stay without a deputy'.

This extract highlights a tense leadership-working environment in Sideki, suggesting principal's fears of disagreements. She suggests the principal is non-receptive to opposing views from colleagues. The principal's dispositions about leadership and insecurities over opposing views seem to inform the current organisational structures and division of labour in



Sideki. Such dispositions subsequently influence who should take responsibility for teaching, learning and achievement.

#### ***5.4.2 Responsibility and Accountability for Learning***

The existing pseudo-participatory leadership seems to inform the slackness in accountability for students' achievement in C2 schools. Unlike C1 schools where responsibility for unsatisfactory achievement appears to be a tag of war between the principal and teachers, in C2 schools there seem to exist complacency with a hardly evident structure of accountability. While responding to the interview question, 'who is held responsible for non-satisfactory achievement?' it appears obvious no one keenly takes responsibility, rather a blame game or effort is made to spread the risk across the board. In their own words, Sideki DOS and Principal's mentioned,

When the ministry announces results we blame each other, sometimes we sit and say what went wrong. Sometimes the teacher, sometimes the administration; *it becomes a blame game (emphasis)*. Teachers, you did not do this, teachers blame students and parents and the blame continues.

From the community and ministry, the buck stops at the principal; when results are bad they look for the principal. *Before BOM comes to discuss results, we ensure there is representation from class teachers, subject teachers, hostel master and HOD so that we spread the risks of what might come up (emphasis)*. By the time I call them, I have all the answers to explain why results are like that

Senior leaders' response above seems ironical given their mandate to lead teaching and learning in the school. Both emphases seem to communicate the complacency within Sideki School. The drive and spirit for high achievement appear less evident. I observed similar dispositions during the FGD in which HODs seem to communicate the current students' achievement as the best the school might achieve. These dispositions communicate the lack of commitment in Sideki school given the school's low achievement trajectory; not only ranking below national schools but also, outperformed by some county schools sampled in this study. This is ironical because the school receives comparable top performers from primary schools.

The focus on leaders' exemplary behaviours and charisma in C2 schools seem to put the burden of accountability to the principal. Bagamu and Luguyo principals seem overwhelmingly held responsible for students' achievement. Luguyo principal contends, "Issues of performance are a function of the leadership which identifies the problems in teaching, learning and the attitude. When I say the leadership I mean the principal, with some input of the deputy". Bagamu principal further states,

The principal takes responsibility; takes it all and not teachers. I would like everybody to take responsibility for students' achievements, but we are not on the same level ...*Internally I have identified areas that went down and shared with teachers. I held teachers accountable for their results, but all that ends here. I will carry my own baggage (Emphasis 1). We have been talking about performance contracts<sup>2</sup>, probably that will help because everyone would have signed a performance contract with set targets. Contracting goes with promotion, after this what next; maybe I can recommend for a promotion. That is the furthest I can go (emphasis 2).*

These leaders point to the societal positioning of the principal, which put accounting responsibility for achievement singly on principals (*analysed further in chapter 6*). The explanation reiterates Sideki principal's preparation when calling BOM meetings. Bagamu principal proposes that internally it is possible to get teachers to account, however, weakens the argument suggesting this has little influence (*see emphasis*). Furthermore, the principal is optimistic about TSC performance-contracting system to which he assumes more power to hold teachers accountable. On the overall, this suggests that C2 leaders practice weak leadership as they seem incapable or reluctant to design internal monitoring and evaluation systems that make teachers responsible.

### **5.4.3 Organisational Ethos and Characteristic**

The existing weak leadership appears to inform a culture of complacency in C2 schools. Following interview and FGD narratives of the puzzling division of labour in Sideki School, I organised a planned observation of a typical morning routine. Having been in the school for some time, in this unobtrusive observation I endeavoured to understand how Sideki leaders organise programmes on a typical day: networking and participation of senior and middle leaders. Observation data portray a problematic culture with the principal overwhelmed with responsibility and teachers showing little commitment and support. Observations excerpts below demonstrates typical leadership culture in Sideki School.

I arrive at school at 06.20; I see the principal moving around classes monitoring cleaning and constantly instructing students who ran to various directions on seeing the principal. The principal pace up and down, holding a Cain but not using on any student; probably just a symbol of authority. She struggles to check that all is clean; I hear her instructing students to assist and report. She ends up in a candidate class, expected to do a national mathematics examination this morning; shortly encourages and assures them then goes back to administration block. At 07.20, a few teachers arrive including the teacher on duty and DOS. Assembly begins at 07.30. The rest of teaching staff arrive during and shortly after assembly.

After assembly at 08.00, all teachers assemble at the reception for principals briefing. The principal talks throughout while teachers listen. Her speech ranging from complains, expressing disappointment with issues and activities in the school, often with a periodic high-pitched voice in between. She gives instructions, proposes the way forward and consequences on some issues if not responded to, however, to no specific person; the message send to everyone. The principal finally gives reassuring remarks;

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<sup>2</sup> An accountability system designed by the employer

‘We need to stick and work together, otherwise, we are going nowhere. My door is open as usual, feel free to come and share.’

This observation points to an individualistic leadership culture. In both cases, the principal comes through as an instructing leader while teachers’ voices appear passive. The first extract shows the principal running basic routine programmes and duties that teachers in middle and junior leadership can easily carry out. Moreover, on this examination day, one would expect DOS and other senior teachers in middle leadership to take charge of the candidate class. The second extract partially explains the situation in extract 1; the briefing seems to focus on instructing teachers on what to do rather than forming forums for sharing or discussing any critical issues. Although the principal appears inviting and encourage staff to work together, there seems no evidence of making efforts to initiate and create robust participatory working relationships. In follow up interviews over this observation, two conflicting explanations emerge. A new teacher, puzzled by this culture contends,

There is no keenness on students in this school. Teachers are here just to pass a day and go away. So, the principal runs the school alone and it is quite difficult for her. The delegation of duties to HODs is just a title. The dedication is not there.

The LST, although agreeing with the colleague on the little commitment on the side of teachers, he thinks leadership is the problem, “Something should change in leadership; the principal here accommodates anything. I feel there is a need for change at the top to unsettle these comfortable teachers”. The new teacher highlights significant issues touching teachers’ commitment to pedagogy and subsequent outcomes. The LST suggests the problem could be arising from a weakness in leadership. Importantly, emerging from these scenarios is the weak leadership that seems to inform a culture of complacency, little commitment and enthusiasm for student learning and achievement.

Senior leaders’ wanting dispositions towards establishing a vision for improvement appear to inform subsequent organisational behaviours in C2 schools. Senior leaders in C2 schools seem too hesitant to destabilise the status quo and change the school’s organisational behaviour. Analysis of both interview and document data suggest that C2 schools have little emphasis on setting and implementing clear vision and goals. When sharing school vision and plans to improve the achievement trajectory, Sideki senior leaders expressed hesitation. While the principal suggests it might not be necessary, “I cannot recall the mission and vision... but good results are found from the effect of good teaching and finishing of syllabus”. The DOS suggest lack of commitment for the same, “We have our vision and

mission but you see saying and doing are two different things. We say we are going to do this but when it comes to the actual implementation there is no commitment”. Affirming DOS sentiments, HODs in a FGD expressed,

**HOD 1:** Vision and mission, aha, in fact, we were looking at it yesterday but cannot remember. Can only remember the motto. Unless I go and read them now (*all amused*)

**HOD 2:** We only prepared them because it was a ministerial requirement. The administration selected a few people and they developed the strategic plan.

**HOD3:** (*All laugh*) we have not had that time; in a week, we do not have time set aside to talk about vision and mission, if we had the time we would do so.

**HOD4:** But Core values are on the reception notice board. I can go and read (*all laughing*). We do not have them in our offices and classes. Sometimes we have them but you know we graduate from one class to another, so when we graduate we remove them.

**HOD 3:** Are you talking about consultation? We sit together and discuss when the results are out. You can go and consults your fellow HOD; you can ask if that is what you want. We do not have a designed programme but we talk on a daily basis.

Comparable scenario abounds in other C2 schools. Luguyo DOS claims, “Vision and mission are written somewhere, we do not bother so much about them, as a teacher I just know, they are there, but I am not very keen on them. What I know the most important in a school is teaching; has the student acquired knowledge?” Although these leaders suggest they do not value vision building because it adds less value to teaching, a HOD in Sideki claims little emphasis is given to envisioning due to the fear of destabilising the status quo, “The principal is treading carefully; she is not sure who is who. With the relations situation, she does not want to hurt the status quo in the sense of asking hard questions”. Bagamu principal appears to justify such fears when he claims hesitation of re-envisioning for fear of creating new changes that could hurt the status quo, “There was a strategic plan when I came in, I never interfered with it. It would have brought change in everything, which I did not want. You know it is not easy for everyone to accept totally, especially coming to a school where somebody else has led for the last 30 years then you are coming with new things”. These narratives point towards dispositions that seek to maintain existing school routines and cultures. Findings from C3 schools suggest principals use mission, vision and strategic planning as tools to promote collaborative working and change school’s organisational behaviours. Little consideration for vision and mission in C2 schools seem to explain the individualised working approach, little commitment and the persistent oscillation about the same mean.

Due to the existing culture of complacency and maintenance of status quo, C2 schools seem to fail in establishing internal systems imperative in guiding change processes necessary for the uptake of teaching and learning. The analysis of data reveals that leaders appear not ready

to disrupt comfort zones. Subsequently, C2 schools lack unified values, working culture and tradition of achievement. Moreover, there exists little follow up monitoring and evaluation (M/E) programmes to check on progress and inform areas of improvement. Sideki HODs stated, “In this school, we do not have a tradition, how do we establish a tradition? Where do we begin? How do we change things? I feel we seriously need a tradition of working and achieving in which when form ones or new teachers come they fit in it and move forward”. Equally, Sideki DOS complains,

It is difficult to push teachers, although I wish for 100% success in what we do. Sometimes, I am forced to accept 50%; just appreciate that at least something has been done. *Like you agree to give extra homework to get students on task all the time. When you follow up you find a few have given, some do not give at all, and some give something you think is not to standard (emphasis).* You try to push those who are not willing, but now the problem arises where in the course of pushing you collide because teachers are not willing to do the right thing and they do not want to be pestered.

These leaders’ lamentations communicate a system of perilous compromises that may affect teaching, learning and subsequent outcomes. HOD not only complain about the lack of tradition but also, desire an inbuilt culture or established tradition and systems of working that promote self-responsibility. DOS’ emphasis suggests the effect of such compromises to teaching and learning. The last statement points to feeble monitoring, which seems to involve one or two senior leaders following up on the rest of staff. Comparable concerns arose in other C2 Schools, Bagamu PA suggests the lack of internal sharing systems is the problem, “Our trend has been oscillating for 10 years but, actually we have never discussed why the trend has been this way for long, it is like we have not been conscious about it. But now I realize it is good to discuss because we can establish the problem”, and Bagamu LST, contends, “I think There should be evaluation and monitoring forum, to look at academic goal; we need to go back to our strategic plan, implement and monitor it, this will help improvement”. DOS Luguyo also claims the school fails to make a value judgment on its achievements due to lack of monitoring systems, “We have not done the evaluation to know if we are really working to what we should achieve. We have not discussed how this affects achievement. Because of that, there is no way to know where we are and what we have not achieved”. These conversations significantly highlight pitfalls in organisational ethos in C2 schools. Extracts suggest lack of consciousness about existing situations, ignorance of the problem or just a lack of visionary and audacious leadership that is willing to confront the complacency, overcome status quo, and provide the impetus for change and improvement.

#### **5.4.4 Teacher Engagement**

Existing organisational structures and ethos in C2 schools might promote a good climate of smooth working, however, fail to productively engage teachers and build the capacity for sustainable improvement. The existing culture of complacency, the effort to marshal the power of teachers' productivity seems feeble. During interviews, a SCQASO laments how Luguyo school leaders fail to capture teachers' potential.

The problem is Luguyo is about the leadership because we attend their staff meetings, I know teachers are not free to talk. I believe in a staff meeting people should be free to air their views because we are colleagues but rarely will you find people talking. They do not own decisions, it is as if the principal is telling teachers what they should do; the principal comes to a meeting to give instructions. Therefore, there is no meeting, rather telling.

This education officer's claims resonate well with those of other leaders C2 schools who suggested that little support is accorded to teachers. Luguyo DOS asserts, "The schools do not support all teachers especially when you are in wrong books with the administration. There is a selective provision of opportunities; this is a weakness on the side of the management". Bagamu HODs attributing the problem to the negative attitude and lack of bonding correspondingly reiterate, "Sometimes there are negative attitudes in the teaching staff because we have not bonded much with the administration". Sideki PA conclusively suggests teachers are not doing well because attempts to build their capacity is yet to materialise, "We might not be doing enough to support teachers. We can do better, like getting them attend leadership training and learn how to push productivity may help". Importantly, the extracts point to loop-holes in engaging teachers' in leadership and learning in C2 schools. The relegation of teachers' positioning in decision-making may influence their commitment to teaching and learning.

Teachers in C2 schools seem to take advantage of the complacency in leadership and show little commitment and dedication to their practice. Sideki new teacher, surprised with teachers' dispositions exclaims,

In this school, it is the principal who fits in the programs of teachers. That is what I am seeing up to today. Teachers own the school and it becomes hard even for the principal to control them .... after induction, a member cautioned me not to introduce new ideas in the school but just fit in the system.

The principal appears to confirm the NT claims when she complains,

We have been bench-marking with a performing school from another County, and when we did that our results improved. We wanted to keep doing so every year but teachers said why that school all the time? They resisted, so we stopped but we went down in results .....I can prove it, among national schools HODs went to school even if the strike was on, but in this school, not one was here. Any extra work, any going an extra mile they are not ready.

These extracts suggest that weak leadership not only cost the school system commitment and dedication but also appear to fuel non-professionalism. Lacking a unified approach in C2 schools seem to give rise to less committed teachers who seem to harbour resistance and signs of professional indiscipline. Sideki DOS affirms that some teachers simply fulfill minimum contractual responsibility without going an extra mile,

Teachers are interested in just doing as expected; they are here just by virtue of employment. They are here for the money. What is important is what will come at the end. The former is not willing to go an extra mile. They have no touch with students. They will tell you I did my best, I taught, I set exams and students just did not do their part, what can I do? In most cases this group just want to give minimum requirement, they do not want any extra work.

Sideki principal reiterated DOS claims during a follow-up interview to the early morning observation scenario. The principal faults teacher for lack of commitment, “Teachers in this school do not want to arrive on time, but they want to finish their work very fast and go”. Although senior leaders shift the blame to teachers, opposing views associate the problem with how leadership position teachers in the system. Some teachers who consider themselves committed suggested that existing leadership practices are discouraging. Sideki LST in a follow-up interview after the morning principals briefing lamented,

I think leaders should take teachers seriously and appreciate their work. How they are communicated to, you see we are adults, there is a better way of addressing us, so if there is an issue. Handle issues with the individual affected but do not generalize issues and address or accuse everyone. I am not the only one feeling this way, teachers tell me because they fear to say this to the principal. Do not generalize because some of us have done our best and we get offended. Therefore, if there is an issue call the person concerned and sort out. Sometimes we learn, oh! So, we are the only ones working, others are not working.

Similarly, Luguyo and Bagamu teachers express feelings of apathy and withdrawals emanating from leadership practices. Bagamu LST laments, “The problem is that we have people who are not ready to change and take new ideas. It is a bit difficult to deal with them. You bring a new idea but the administration refuses to take it. What do you do? As a teacher you just give up” Luguyo DOS notes, “I normally do not want to go at loggerheads with people. However, I am not ok with it. I believe that a teacher has great ideas, because it is these ideas that transform the learning and achievement”. These teachers’ sentiments communicate that the problem lies in the lack of trust in the school systems. There seems to exist poor relationships between teachers and senior leaders. That notwithstanding, the existing gaps in leadership practice appear to fuel these conflicts and some teachers take advantage of the conflicts to relegate their responsibility (*analysed in the next section*).

### 5.4.5 Learning Cultures

Defective organisational structures and ethos in C2 schools seem to inform the non-productive learning cultures of non-commitment, professional dishonesty and indiscipline. Preceding sections exemplify disconcerting interrelationships between teachers and leadership, which in turn appear to affect student learning. Luguyo and Bagamu LST complains about teacher' little commitment respectively, "There is a mismatch between teachers' and students' reports. This shows laxity in monitoring curriculum implementation. The curriculum is not being implemented effectively" and "A teacher should work professionally by coming to school early, being present and attending all the classes. Here teachers are not ready to work an extra mile and cover the syllabus in time. They have no motivation". Comparably, Sideki DOS complains about the effect of non-commitment and professional dishonest to student learning.

Teachers here do not readily cooperate as expected because you decide we are going to do this but when you go to the ground, you find not so much is going on. Teachers usually give us reports that I have taught or finished the syllabus but when you follow up, you find that that is not the case. I have to ask students what is happening on the ground. If performance has to occur in this school, then teachers' commitment must improve, without which we cannot achieve anything.

These participants raise critical concerns over teaching and learning cultures in the three C2 schools. Luguyo teachers point to dishonesty among teachers reporting associating with the problem of laxity in monitoring and evaluation. Bagamu teacher cites non-commitment among teachers, indicating that motivation to go an extra mile and support student-learning lacking. Sideki DOS highlights both non-commitment and professional dishonesty. DOS last statement significantly highlights the effect of these professional gaps to learning.

The culture of complacency in leadership appears to reflect in student learning too; teachers show little enthusiasm for learning and achievement trajectories. Conversations suggest further complacency in taking responsibility for student learning, with teachers giving unjustified excuses. One Sideki HOD claims, "There is a lot of laxity. Teachers are so much at home with everything; they are comfortable and own the school. The concern for the student or the feeling that we need to improve is not there". These claims appear justified during HODs FGD when sharing on students' achievement trajectory. HODs appear ignorant or refuse to acknowledge the reality after seeing the schools' achievement graph.

**HOD 3:** Where did you get this data?

**HOD 4:** No these are not our results. Madam academic bring our results.

**HOD 5:** That is not our results

*(Academic mistress pulls out results from school records)*

**HOD 1:** In 2011, did we go that down?



**HOD 2:** No madam your scale is exaggerated

**HOD 6:** Why are you comparing us to other schools?

**HOD 3:** That trend could be our best; in fact, it is our best.

**HOD 7:** Trends are like this because of the kind of students we admit; when you compare it with school A and B, our entry behaviours is weak.

**HOD 8:** We have issues with culture and tradition; our students need pushing because the culture of the community outside the school is not supportive.

**HOD 3:** Also, the culture within the schools is a problem (*all laughing*).

The conversation above highlight escapism in not only acknowledging the realistic achievement situation but also seeking seemingly far-fetched and unjustified excuses to cover for the non-satisfactory achievement. HOD 3 statement, ‘that trend could be our best; in fact, it is our best’ seems ironical specially when compared to the principals’ statement, “In that list of national schools, I am sure we are the last ones. Hahaha, I say this because we have had our struggles”. This contradiction is significant in signifying the complacency and laxity among staff and possibly within the system. Ignorance of the school’s achievement trend might indicate the laxity in the school’s monitoring, evaluation system, and lack concern for student learning and achievement. Sideki PA supports the latter by stating, “What teachers tell students is not good. Like, ‘whether you pass or fail, that does not affect my salary’. Teachers believe it is all about a salary; the commitment is very low. Teachers are not doing enough”. PA’s extract highlight how complacency among teachers significantly affect commitment to teaching, learning and achievement.

Learning cultures in C2 schools seems devoid of teamwork and collaboration in teaching and learning. The emphasis on syllabus coverage seems to promote individualised examination-oriented pedagogy. Findings suggest a learning culture characterised by transmissive pedagogy and little trust or sharing among staff. Sideki LST explains, “Teamwork is not persistent. Here teachers have specialized in certain classes, they take ownership of the class and when another step in while they are away it stirs a little trouble, which I feel is wanting” and Bagamu LST elaborates,

For mathematics specifically, we were to apply learner-centred teaching so that learners do more practice for them to apply. However, our system is more of exam-oriented; at the end, it is not how you teach but the grade. This has affected our teaching. We have to finish the syllabus quickly, then revise and guide how to answer questions. However, if a student does more cramming than learning it becomes harder for them as they move higher. All this is because of the pressure for syllabus coverage and poor reading habits.

The extract communicates a learning culture characterised by drilling with little opportunities to nurture students’ capacity for self-directed or guided learning. Luguyo DOS confirms the latter suggesting little trust in students’ capacity for own learning, “These students cannot

think on their own, the modern students tend to be very narrow-minded in thinking about a problem. There is very little about the outside world that the kids get involved into”. DOS thinking seem not only regressive but also detrimental to progressive student learning as it promotes non-productive transmissive learning cultures.

Due to ineffective organisational structures and ethos, C2 schools seem to lack efficient systems necessary to support student learning and achievement. Support systems towards students’ wellbeing like disciplinary committee and G/C appear haphazard with schools failing to capture students’ attention. Inefficient systems seem to cultivate students’ indiscipline and dropout with subsequent effect on students’ achievement. In Bagamu and Luguyo, testimonies of early pregnancy and dropout appear to accelerate girls’ poor performance as shared by deputies, “We have several cases of pregnant students in Bagamu. We talk to them, try to make sure they are in school. However, their performance is not very good; students have lost hope. Even parents have lost hope” and “It is unfortunate that some students became pregnant and have lost interest in school”. As deputies point to students’ early pregnancy and withdrawal, Bagamu PA suggests the problem lies with inefficient G/C programmes,

We have not talked to girls in a way that can help stop these pregnancies and make students focus. If we talk to them they will realize that there is something wrong somewhere and can work harder; without which they will just relax.

Comparably, Sideki school indecisive G/C programmes appear ineffective to counter the cultural limitations within school contexts as testified by a HOD, “We need an active G/C department to support students; they have many issues. This in this community the girl-child is a threatened species. One of the students who had issues last term has not come back and there is no one to ask”. These extracts suggest inefficient systems not only threaten students’ wellbeing but also learning outcomes as testified by Sideki principal, “Last year when we expected to improve, we had 8 girls doing examinations from outside because of discipline issues. Some of them escaped with Ds when actually they were ‘A’ material”. These testimonies significantly suggest ineffective organisational structures and ethos that seem devoid efficient support systems to students’ learning and wellbeing.

In summary, this section has analysed participants’ conception and practice of leadership in C2 schools. 4 critical issues emerge; first, the analysis suggests tendencies to promote general administration discourse. There is much focus on maintaining order with senior leaders

expressing insecurities over challenges to their authority. Insecurities seem partly informed by leaders' inadequacies, but also, possibly informed by leadership working environments (*analysed further in chapter 6*). There is an emphasis on leadership charisma, with leaders acting appealing and likable; highly conscious of disturbances within the school system. C2 senior leaders subsequently, seem too hesitant to make difficult decisions and risk-taking ventures that cause hard changes and destabilise the status quo.

Secondly, the fear to destabilize the status quo appear to inform the minimal stakeholder involvement and participation in decision-making. Accordingly, C2 schools lack the whole-school approach to leadership and learning. Little consideration is given to vision building or nurturing a collective action; leading to opposing leadership teams with bilateral expectations and responsibility for learning. Senior leadership often opted to distance other stakeholders' input to maintain the smooth running of the school. This practice fails to develop or empower other stakeholders to carry out meaningful leadership mandate. The practice seems to inform the existing a culture of complacency and little commitment which are less likely to provide the impetus for change and improvement.

Moreover, C2 school systems lack active engagement of teachers in leadership and learning. The relegation of teachers' positioning in decision-making appears to influence teaching and learning due to the lack of trust in the school systems. Poor relationships between teachers and senior leaders as well as the existing gaps in leadership practice appear to fuel internal conflicts and relegation of the responsibility for teaching and learning.

Finally, the relegation of responsibility among staff appears to raise critical concerns over teaching and learning cultures in C2 schools. Professional dishonesty and non-commitment among teachers and indications of little motivation and support for student learning and achievement appear apparent in C2 schools. Moreover, C2 senior leaders seem to practice weak leadership, incapable or reluctant to design internal monitoring and evaluation systems that make teachers responsible for learning. All these highlighted issues appear to explain C2 schools' persistent oscillation about the same mean.

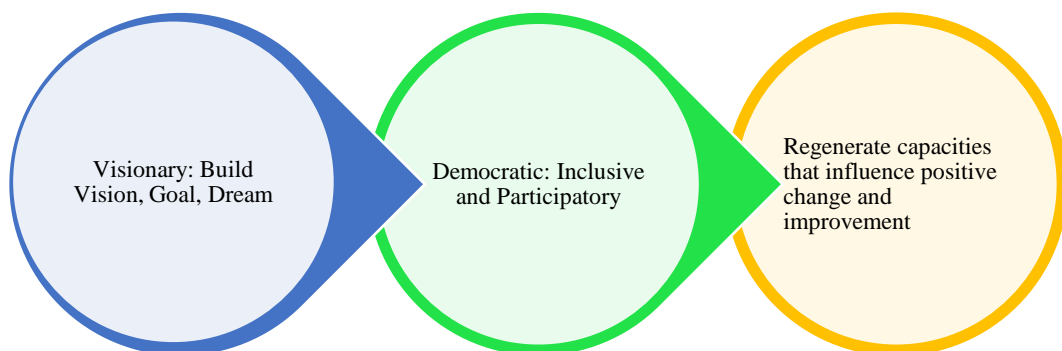
### C. Leadership Practice in C3 School

This section analyses existing leadership practices in C3 schools. I evaluate the conception of good leadership and appraise school organisational structures, characteristics and ethos. Finally, I examine their influence on teacher engagement and learning cultures.

#### 5.5 The Conception of ‘Good Leadership’

Three core conceptions of good leadership emerge in C3 schools; visionary, promotes democratic engagements and regenerate new capacities that counter difficult working environments as shown in figure 5.3 below. It was possible to design a graphical presentation of conceptions of good leadership in C3 schools because these schools demonstrated an explicit view of leadership; C3 leaders shared much more in terms of engagement, the depth and the conception of leadership was coming out strongly compared to C1 and C2 schools. Accordingly, a lot of the lessons I am picking up is drawn from C3 schools, thus, not necessarily getting the equivalent for C1 and C2 schools.

*Figure 5.3: Conceptions of good leadership in C3 schools*



Leaders in C3 schools seem to consider developing a good vision for the school as the starting point to providing good leadership. Participants describe being visionary as having the capacity to build a feasible vision illustrating it as the core responsibility of senior leadership. Nabeko principal claims, “Being a good leader starts from having a vision. This is a guide to ensure that everything works well”. Mubari Form-3 principal further explains, “A good leader is one who knows the way, shows the way and leads the way”. These leaders

highlight vision building as not only central to good leadership but also, imperative in providing guidance to practice. Nabibo deputy and Mubari DOS further suggest that good leadership not only builds a good vision but also, inspires other stakeholders' support, "A good leader leads by giving a vision and motivate others to make decisions that work to achieve the vision. One who inspires others" and "Good leadership is one that has a goal, a vision and a dream, with a holistic in approach; meaning, you approach issues not just in one direction, but in all spheres. You embrace dialogue and brings everyone on board" These participants highlight building a good vision and inviting others to work towards its achievements as essentials for good leadership. Nabibo deputy links good vision building with feasible decision-making that comes from a motivated team. Mubari DOS describes vision building as having expanded thinking and reflections through a whole-system dialogue. Significantly emerging is an indication that vision building works with active stakeholder participation (*analysed further in the next paragraph*).

All participants in C3 schools conceptualise good leadership as a democratic collective action. Participants claim high stakeholder participation in leadership activities is foundational for improvement. Nabeko principal avers, "Everyone has a role to play and are able to perform; accommodative, including others' input and understanding situations" and Mubari Form-3 principal suggests, "Leadership that is engaging with high expectations from teachers, students and everyone. A leadership whose presence does not instil fear in others but embraces them. Like in this school, nearly everybody has a role to play in school leadership". While Nabeko principal cites the need to be accommodative and vigilant to individual diversities. Mubari F3 principal point to a whole school approach to leadership activities acclaiming the free environments and high expectations. Nabeko Deputy-Admin associate stakeholder inclusion and participation with democratic leadership,

Democratic type of leadership bears more fruits, *whereby you run at the same time with the consumers of the services and you give them an open ear. Whereby the leader is hearts on, not hands on. Hearts on means that direct contact with a consumer of services (emphasis)*

The deputy claims positive attributes to democracy. The emphasis section demonstrates democracy as good listening, open sharing and near personal engagement with students. Significant in these excerpts is the illustration of leadership as a collective action undertaken by all stakeholders. Participants in C3 schools point to collective action suggesting is the impetus to their sustained progress in performance.

Some participants further conceptualise good leadership as that which regenerates capacities that influence positive change and improvement. Participants suggest material resources and good relationships are important to implement school programmes, however, contend they are not enough to nurture sustainable achievement. Mubari HODs claims good leadership transforms people and situations to facilitate professional improvement.

Good leadership is one that can influence situations for the better. You know there are management issues where you have the resources, the plans and the roles on who is to do what. Then there is the leadership issue, and this is what I am looking at as positive influence. It is the ability to reduce the gap between the plans and action. *You know you cannot influence people until there is a change of practice and heart. Therefore, the ability to amass that change and have the people move forward is necessary for change to occur. Creating the ability to influence in the leadership of all, here we have put strategies for improving and moving forward as a school (Emphasis)*

This extract outlines influencing for transformation as netted in a closely interconnected relationship between goals, abilities and commitment. In further probes, the participant describes positive influence as creating capacities and commitment to practice. The emphasis highlights the need to regenerate capacities for improvement. Similarly, Nabeko Deputy-academic avers, “It is the ability to encourage people to view work positively and be productive despite the environment. Encouraging teachers to do their best; boosting teachers’ self-esteem”. Mubari principal further states, “It is about the centre (*principal*), looking for new ways to push for results; how do I get others to change?” Notably, all extracts underscore regenerating positive capacities as important to good leadership. The following section analyses how these conceptions shape the practice of leadership in C3 schools.

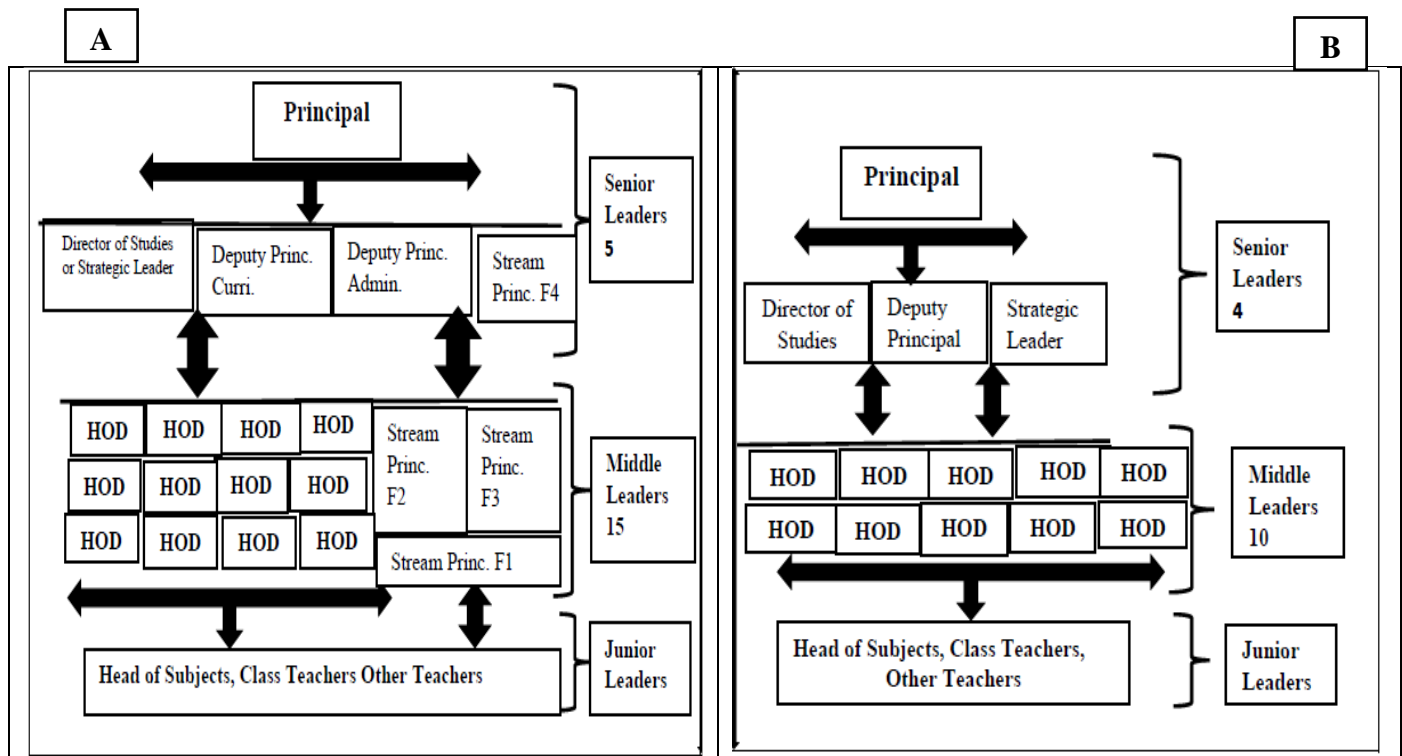
## **5.6 The Practice of Leadership**

This section analyses existing leadership practices in C3 schools; centring on how existing organisational structures and ethos informs teacher engagement in leadership and learning s and resultant learning cultures.

### **5.6.1 Organisational structures and Division of Labour**

Organisational structure in C3 schools depicts a division of labour that encourages high participation in leadership practice. The schools have a stretched leadership outlook with more teachers engaging in middle and senior leadership compared to C1 and C2 schools as shown in figure 5.4 below.

**Figure 5.4: C3 Schools' Organisational Structures**



Conceptions of leadership as a collective action appear to inform organisational structures in C3 schools. C3 principals claim to have intentionally created existing leadership structures to facilitate teachers' participation in school leadership activities. Nabibo principal narrates, "When I came in, the school had challenges. I noticed many conflicts, infighting and complacency. First, I had to change structures and streamline the school organisation; getting as many teachers into leadership to zip all complacency loopholes". Nabeko principal also claims to have redesigned leadership structures to reduce conflict, "In a school, everything starts with leadership organisation. Like here, I started with structures: I developed the structures of problem-solving and conflict resolution by empowering teachers to handle issues to conclusion. Teachers are empowered to be in charge". These extracts suggest that encouraging teacher participation in leadership resolve in-school conflicts. While Mubari principal concurs, he further argues teacher participation helps in reducing workload baggage for principals, "Running a school system is obviously difficult. It is a problem to think that the principal alone can manage. *What I have done is develop structures to ensure that all of us are part of the solution to the challenges we encounter (emphasis)*". The extract highlights the importance of not only giving a voice to everyone in a collaborative leadership approach but also, ensuring effectiveness in service delivery. Significantly, these conversations

communicate that leaders designed organisational structures and leadership practices that promote teamwork (*analysed further in the following paragraph*).

Expansion of leadership structures appears to drive teamwork in C3 school systems.

Participants claim adopting a collaborative leadership framework facilitates team working within and between leadership ties and departments. Nabeko strategic-leader associates the existing leadership structures with the cohesion of the school system, “The success of a school depends on certain guiding principles; cohesiveness in terms of the communication, unity of purpose and the traditions of the school. For us, structures have helped in achieving these principles; everybody works as a team, you even get the best results as an institution”. Congruently, Mubari DOS explains how the expanded leadership structures facilitated teamwork.

Some of the things we have done is improve the structure (*of leadership*) so that it provides that conducive environment for teachers and learner to love the school. *The new strategies included having two deputies - one in charge of administration, another curriculum. This brings order ... Because each deputy gets information from their side they sit together and come up with strategies for handling such issues. Again, the form principals and I sit and look at issues from a different angle ...I believe it is a good strategy, each working, and all contributing to the same goal (Emphasis).* This has reduced the burden that is usually placed on *the principal*.

The extract highlights the expanded working relationships emerging from the redesigned organisational structures. Mubari DOS associates these relationships with a conducive working environment. The emphasis illustrates a typical example of teamwork among senior leaders. DOS suggests that getting more teachers engaged in leadership activities provide back-up support for the principal; a perception shared by Mubari principal as analysed in preceding paragraph. Importantly, both participants communicate the importance of organisational structures in cultivating a positive working relationship and a coordinated school system (*analysed further in the following paragraph*).

C3 senior leaders seem to use expanded leadership structures to redesign and develop coordinated systems of working build on trust. Teachers in C3 schools associate expanded leadership power structures with trust and stakeholder involvement in decision-making. During Nabibo FGD, HODs explain how existing school leadership aid in system coordination and departmental trust, “We have leadership that is not domineering but has involved us in decision-making. We are encouraged to lead departmental meetings that allow free sharing. Also, we have had people listening to us, so that you cannot put across an issue and is not addressed”. Nabibo DOS supports HODs sentiments suggesting,



It is about having a leader who is able to listen and give room to people to give their views. Also, give space for others to perform. You know there is the aspect of being given the job to do, and just being police-marked do it this way. To do your level best, the leader needs to trust you. When given chance of improving yourself, you feel empowered; you know that such time I was doing this way, let me try this other way.

These extracts highlight how C3 senior leadership has developed a system of working that encourage trusting relationships. HODs cite strengthened departmental structures that promote autonomy in decision-making. DOS emphasise teacher autonomy is based on trust; suggesting such autonomy is empowering and encourage professional growth. Nabeko principal in agreement affirms,

*This is a big school with many challenges; if you do not develop systems, you can never be effective. I do not start with individuals; I just work on the structures. When you work on the structures, teachers will follow according to where the structures will take them. Like this school runs better when I am not there (emphasis).*

The principal accentuates the position of structures in streamlining system functioning. The emphasis highlights the autonomy given to teachers and the trust that teachers will accomplish the assignment effectively. The following section analyses how these structures inform the responsibility and accountability for leadership and learning in C3 schools.

### **5.6.2 Responsibility and Accountability for Learning**

Organisational structures appear to inform the collective responsibility for leadership and learning in C3 schools. Unlike C1 and C2 schools where a few individuals took responsibility, stakeholders in C3 schools collectively take responsibility for learning and achievement. I asked, who takes responsibility when there is a non-satisfactory achievement? Nabeko deputy-academic and principal claims, “Everyone takes responsibility, nobody runs away. We sit back and discuss” and

*I have a supportive staff; we all take responsibility. We ask ourselves, where did we go wrong? We sit down and look at our work, how did we do it? Did we have any loopholes? We also look at the class, how was the class? This helps us to accept and own the results; we sit to look at it from inside out, with BOM and PA as part of the team.*

These leaders demonstrate the collective responsibility in Nabeko School. HODs in Mubari FGD reiterate similar accounts, “The society looks at the principal, but here, it is the whole school. Departments analyses issues and identify the problem, whatever comes up we accept. Then all of us including teachers and students are involved in finding a solution”. These HODs associate the collective responsibility to collaborative leadership adopted in Mubari. They cite the central role departments play in diagnosing the problem and inviting a collective response to problem-solving. Outstandingly, the conversations exemplify an

accountability approach devolved into the system rather than a few individuals in top leadership. Subsequently, leaders at different levels seem to have taken responsibility for internal self-evaluation to inform progress in practice and learning (*analysed further in the next paragraph*).

Expanded leadership structures in C3 schools seem informed by a desire to respond to school system needs. Shifting away from individual work, leaders appear to seek collective and creative system problem-solving. Mubari LST claims, “We cannot blame one another especially when we are in the same system”. Nabibo principal equally echoes, “If we do not perform, there must be an issue somewhere in the system, issues from parents, teachers or students”. These dispositions appear to inform C3 schools’ devolved monitoring and evaluation. Leaders at different levels have developed tools for constant internal system self-evaluation as illustrated by Nabeko principal’s reflective questions in the preceding paragraph. Correspondingly, Mubari F3-principal explains,

To get good results, all stakeholders require the support of others; the system has to work together. There are a number of questions to ask; was the administration supportive? Did it provide the required materials and conducive environment? How was the support of the parents? Were they available when needed? How did teachers prepare students to realize better results? What did the student do to make sure that they achieved better results? Did they go an extra mile? How was the learning environment in classes? Do they support each other? There is need to look at where the system failed and sit down to correct to realise desired outcomes.

The extract point to system level introspective questions that not only identify gaps but also keep track and internally evaluate and appraise practice and performance. Nabibo deputy-principal illustrate a typical example of initiating elaborate internal monitoring and evaluation systems to which they attribute the school’s progress.

We focus on the whole system, like in 2013 we conducted internal research; the questionnaire went to all teachers and students. We identified areas that need improvement. From there we developed a strategic plan; biggest was the structure, then syllabus coverage and absenteeism. We also have the head students who conduct a parallel investigation on disciplinary matters. We also have class meetings and books where all issues are written; the class teacher signs and forward it to me. The same applies to other areas; we know what is happening in school all times. It is about making the system efficient.

The extract highlights a collective school self-evaluation that identified gaps in the system and support effort to resolve them. The deputy points to an elaborate review of the school system that informed the establishment of accountability structures. In a follow-up interview, Nabibo principal claims to have introduced school self-evaluation by designing supporting monitoring and evaluation tools to change the previous unproductive culture and encourage progressive leadership and learning practice. The following section analyse how existing leadership and accountability structures inspire C3 schools’ organisational ethos.

### ***5.6.3 Organisational Ethos and Characteristic***

The existing collaborative leadership appears to inform a culture of high expectations, accountability and progressive achievement in C3 schools. C3 school leaders seem to prioritise the nurturing of positive working relationships rooted in working traditions and values. All C3 school leaders claim to build internal relationships through constant reflections and communication that focus on highly esteemed core values. Nabeko strategic-leader, explaining the history of progressive achievement, cites collaborative working cultures as the impetus for high expectations and achievement,

We purposely develop good working relations. We have bonding sessions where we allow everyone to express themselves, even against the principal. In the end, it ends up with hugging. We also play together, have fun and develop a good cultural relation. We even have a functional welfare that looks into relationship issues.

The teacher suggests collaborative working relationships improve working environments by enhancing freedom of sharing and expression. He lauds Nabeko School's culture of bonding for nurturing positive relationships. Mubari LST further suggests collaborative working relationships have broken barriers of leadership hierarchy thereby promoting improved teamwork, "We work as a factory. We all work; there is no leader or those led. When it comes to work, we are all there. Since expectations are high, we work as a team to achieve; we mark, discuss the marking scheme and correct each other. We enjoy working together". These leaders demonstrate the role collaborative organisational structures play in building strong interrelationships among teams in C3 schools. Remarkably, participants suggest collaborative cultures in C3 schools encourage the development of strong traditions of working founded on established values of high expectations.

The culture of high expectations seems to explain C3 schools' emphasis on the tradition of constant re-envisioning. School leaders acclaim developing strong vision and mission and establishing structures to achieve them as the impetus for continuous progress in achievement. C3 principals testify of starting on difficult backgrounds; however, assert that setting a clear vision and marshalling whole system support in its achievement nurtures school's resilience. Nabeko principal, for instance, claims, "Vision and mission have really worked for me; as a principal, you have a dream and you have to carry everybody towards that dream. Whatever we do must be towards that, like in our vision you really have to bring out the resilience and excellence". The deputy-principal, assenting to her colleagues' claims explain the elaborate envisioning system in Nabeko School.

We value our vision and mission because it is our road-map, it guides everything, for us to achieve everybody must run with it. To help people run with it, we have placed it on notice boards in all the departments. Every time we have a meeting we remind ourselves, we share during assembly, we attempt to assess ourselves, where are we? Each year we have a theme, which we develop annually. We created the moral inspiration department (*a creation of the school; not a policy requirement*) to work besides G/C in taking care of and leading envisioning. Hence, every year we have a new vision, theme and a mission. This is what is pushing our school forward as we focus on achieving the theme for each year.

The extract highlights not only the overriding importance accorded the vision and mission but also, the accompanying annual reviews in Nabeko. Equally, Nabibo and Mubari leaders claim to use vision building to acquaint students and staff; helping them fit in established traditions and driving the school culture forward. Mubari F3 principal asserts that through constant re-envisioning the school has re-designed curriculum delivery by developing a new model of learning,

The mission and vision drive our school; create the culture and keep the school going in the desired direction. For example, this school has a different learning model coming from vision reviews and feedback. Unlike other schools where lessons take 40-minutes; here we have 1-hour lessons. We learned that longer lessons help us not only cover more content but also create more time for getting feedback from students; more time for teacher-student interactions.

This extract outlines sample change processes emerging from vision building. It communicates that re-envisioning informed leaders' decision to establish the existing learning culture. Significantly emerging is that re-envisioning not only cultivates a culture of high expectations but also, nurtures and informs C3 schools ingenious creation and experimentation of programmes that befit school learning needs (*further analysis in section 5.6.5*).

The constant re-envisioning and culture of high expectations appear to improve C3 schools risk-taking and experimentation on learning initiatives. C3 Senior leaders appear to ingeniously and non-traditionally take risks to challenge non-productive cultures, break status quos and redesign new approaches to leadership and learning. Nabibo principal claims taking risks when designing programmes to change the non-productive culture. He claims to redesign monitoring and evaluation tools to curtail teacher absenteeism and non-lesson attendance, which attracted high teacher resistance. Probing further, I asked, what is the response from staff and community to your new changes? The principal explains, "The first one was resistance; many were like where has this one come from? People always resist change, so you have to take risks for change to occur. When you are, firm and insist on it, you succeed. The idea is to have the majority to carry your vision. So, getting more teachers into senior leadership helps; many vision bearers". Mubari LST correspondingly appreciating

that changes hurt the status quo suggest that risk-taking is necessary to realise progressive achievement.

We shared with the principal the necessary changes that could revive our school, which had become a sleeping giant. We told him that the changes could hurt all of us but were necessary. He embraced the idea and made us work to realize the improvement that we have now. He united us in developing a common vision, mission and eventually coming up with the strategic plan. We worked as a team, even sharing meals together, Monday – Monday which had never been the case before. The idea of rivalry and divide-and rule ended. The unity brought us together to face the common enemy, poor results.

These leaders communicate that through vision building the school took risks and experimented with new ways of leadership and learning. Mubari LST point to the vision building process as a way through which to change leadership practice from divisive to collaborative engagement. Participants communicate that through re-envisioning C3 school leaders have taken risks in turning around negative cultures, changes status quos and adopts new leadership and learning practice. The following section evaluates how C3 school organisational structures and ethos shaped teacher engagement in leadership and learning.

#### **5.6.4 Teacher Engagement**

The existing structures and ethos appear to spur the existing teamwork in C3 Schools. During interviews, I inquired how C3 principals handle the problem of teacher resistance widely witnesses in C1 and C2 schools. Nabeko principal claims to receive exceptional support from teachers, however, attributing it to her leadership approach and the school's organisational ethos.

*(Laughing loudly) let me tell you today if there is anything that gives me peace in this school are teachers. However, I am very good at building teams. I do not talk about the TSC or government policies; I do not refer to hard rules and code of conducts. Like I have never written a warning letter to any teacher in this school, I go to their emotions. This works very well, they really feel it. I strongly believe I can build these teachers to get better; you only need to empower them, let them know that you believe in them and their decision counts. Therefore, teachers make decisions and move on, that way teachers have really matured in how they work (Emphasis).*

The extract communicates a cordial and supportive working relationship in Nabeko. The principal highlights a judicious and empathetic teacher management approach to which she attributes teachers' positive support. The emphasis underscores the choice of softer accountability approach rather than a reference to hard policy rules. It further exemplifies the principal's belief in building teachers' professional and leadership capacity. She accentuates her approach as empowering and facilitates teachers' professional growth especially by allowing teachers' space in decision-making. Nabibo and Mubari principals reiterate comparable accounts of adopting softer approaches to teacher managements described by

Mubari HODs as the change of heart. Significantly, these leaders communicate that organisational structured and ethos may inform teachers' engagement in leadership and learning. Moreover, leadership dispositions, especially of principals, might attract or limit teacher engagement (*analysed further in the following paragraph*).

Senior leaders' dispositions and capacity to attract and nurture teachers' commitment appear critical in establishing fruitful teacher engagement in leadership and learning. Suggesting that teachers are already established professionals, Mubari principal claims,

Teachers know what to do. They only require an enabling environment; they need personal, academic and social environments to work. Teachers do not need offices to be leaders; it depends on the instructions given. The centre has to give the correct instructions and direction; you give wrong instructions you get wrong results.

Mubari principal's argument suggests a counter-argument to C1 and C2 principals, who portray teachers as difficult to manage because they are less committed and have little capacity to accomplish professional work. He shifts the problem to senior leadership's capacity to visualise change and find ways to attract and nurture teachers support and commitment. Nabibo DOS typify the nurturing of teachers stating that "It is allowing others to do the job. It has worked so well. I easily come up with what I want to be done, then I delegate and follow up from there. Because previously when I would try to do, it was too much. Now we normally work with HOD, we give each other a time span and after 3 weeks we come together to see where we are, how far we have gone and what needs improvement" DOS highlights ingenious ways in which senior leaders attempt to attract and nurture teacher engagement. Notably, senior leaders' ability to communicate effectively and give the right direction is fundamental in not only attracting and nurturing teachers' engagement but also creating opportunities that encourage teachers' optimum performance.

Encouraging and appreciating teacher engagement and participation in school leadership appear to cultivate teacher motivation. Participants suggest that engaged teachers positively support school programmes and surpass contractual expectations. Nabibo HODs claims, "Teachers are leaders; they may not be HOD but they are leaders. I have learned that when making decision together with them it is easier even to implement because they are willing to support" and Mubari F3-Principal suggests,

The recognition of teacher leadership is the driving force behind student achievement in this school. It gives intrinsic motivation because responsibility is a good show that you are doing good work. It is some honour and is good for career development.

These extracts suggest that getting teachers involved in decision-making cultivates their motivation, teachers willingly taking on responsibility and accountability for learning.

Mubari teachers affirm the latter in a conversation,

**HOD 1:** When participating in leadership teachers discover their potential. If you sit on their opportunity, then you demoralize them. But if you provide an avenue, it motivates them.

**HOD 2:** As a teacher, when you are appreciated you feel good. When an opportunity is given to everyone to participate in what they think they are best at, they are likely to perform optimum.

**HOD 3:** Here the leadership identifies and motivates us. The leadership comes down to us, we sit and make decisions together, and we feel like a family. So, all of us put effort.

**HOD 4:** Supporting teachers' objectives and developing our school vision and mission together has motivated us.

This conversation associates invitation to participate in school leadership with appreciation, honour, recognition and positive identity. HODs communicate that engagement cultivates a conducive working environment where all stakeholders appear responsive and feel part of the system. That notwithstanding, teachers do not readily engage as expressed in this extract rather beyond invitation, senior leaders in C3 schools seem to invest heavily in building teachers' capacities and nurturing positive dispositions (*Analysed further in the next paragraph*).

Prioritising teacher professional development and building leadership capacities might inform teachers' positive dispositions and willingness to engage in school leadership and learning. C3 senior leaders claim teachers may not obviously show positive aptitude rather require professional nurturing. Nabibo principal contends that teacher education programmes may not be sufficient as it fails to connect with the reality of working environments, "Teacher training is universal just to teach, but the environment of teaching is totally different. Even school leaders are not prepared to handle such. Therefore, you must evolve into everything to fit in the environment. Teachers require a lot of education, vision and learning, more than what initial training usually describe and teach". Mubari LST further suggests that handling teachers may not be easy rather requires a lot of capacity building.

Teachers, as professionals do not embrace any idea, they must question. Whatever decision you make they must discuss, always starting from the negative. So we educate them, we sponsor them for various professional developments. Personally, I have attended quite a number of seminars and workshops on leadership within and without the school. When courses are advertised, the school sponsors those teachers to attend. The principal purposes to sponsor 4-teachers' in-service every holiday. He intends to expose all teachers.

These leaders communicate that building teachers' capacity through professional development is fundamental for the uptake of teacher engagement. Nabibo principal demonstrates the teaching profession as an evolving one requiring constant learning. Mubari

LST point to professional development as one way of handling teacher resistance. These leaders emphasise the awareness of, recognition of teacher learning needs and subsequent capacity building as important in facilitating engagement and participation in leadership and learning. The following sections evaluate how school organisational structures and ethos influence learning cultures in C3 schools.

### ***5.6.5 Learning Cultures***

Existing cultures of risk-taking and experimentation seem to encourage redesigning of learning programmes, curriculum delivery and testing new learning models. During school visits, Mubari and Nabeko leaders had introduced unique learning models. A new teacher with 4-years teaching experience in two different schools, and had recently joined Nabeko is fascinated by the new approach, describing it as unique,

Nabeko has a different way of teaching; students lead teaching in form of panels and teachers majorly facilitate. We give students the syllabus and guiding questions, so they read ahead. In previous stations, we started from zero. But here, students research during library classes, weekends, and any free time. Research questions are in form of assignments. Even when you are late, you find student representatives already started teaching; as a teacher, you feel embarrassed

The teacher suggests ‘the panel- learning’ seems to promote active students’ engagement in an inquiry type of learning. Curious about the new development, I attended some classes to understand how the panel learning works. Figure 5.5 show pictures of a Form-2 mathematics lesson where students studied solid figures in Geometry.

***Figure 5.5: A Panel-Learning Session***







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In follow up probes with the mathematics teacher, I established that before this lesson, Mathematics panel leaders had guided the groups to design the model of the pyramid in the picture. During the lesson, students used the solid pyramid in figure 5.5 to respond to guiding questions provided the previous week. In picture A, students refer to different textbooks to find the right explanation. The new teacher's explanation and the illustration in figure 5.5 seem to demonstrate how the panel learning approach repositions learners as leaders of their own learning. While making a comparison between Nabeko learning approaches to other schools within the context, the new teacher's last statements seems to display student-led learning as having a progressive effect on student and teacher commitment. That notwithstanding, I wondered how students cope with this new approach especially the average and below average students. Nabeko LST however, claims the prior training provided in the school resolves the problem, "When students join form-1, we orient them on panel-learning. First, they struggle, but with time, it becomes part of their learning". Another challenge I observed is class congestion which seems to make group discussions and supervision difficult as evident in the picture. Mubari School, which had adopted a similar learning model, seemed to overcome the congestion challenge by taking group learning out of classes to the tents (see figure 5.6).

The existing teamwork and collective responsibility cultivated through a vibrant division of labour in C3 schools seem to promote a shared identity and open dialogue that encourages innovations. In Mubari School, a shared identity and open dialogue intuitively encouraged by the new principal initiated the 'Elimu-Mashinani' (*Swahili phrase meaning learning from the grassroots*) initiative, to which participants attribute the sustained students' achievement. Sharing about this creation Mubari LST claims,

For 10 years, we struggled to change results, but the new principal opened our eyes. We (*whole school*) reflected on how we do things here; from which came this Elimu-Mashinani initiative, which has worked miracles. ... We have set up tents in many open places, majorly in the area between classroom blocks. These tents are actually our operational grounds. It has brought all of us together; leaders and teachers, even the principal... have left their offices and transferred our services to tents. In these tents, we attend to students throughout; there is a very high engagement with students, but also with teachers and senior leaders. We hold our impromptu discussions and meetings there.

The extract highlights the origin and development of an innovative initiative to improving learning in Mubari, spearheaded by the new principal. During fieldwork, I observed the learning practice in the tents and their positioning between classes as illustrated in figure 5.6 below.

**Figure 5.6: Elimu-Mashinani Initiative Tents**



In FGD, HODs claim the Elimu-Mashinani initiative changed their pedagogical approaches, “That had to change the type of teaching we do. Teachers now just guide students in the class, give them research tasks, which students respond to, and we discuss in class or tents...and this has been very productive”. Similar to Nabeko, Mubari participants claim Elimu-Mashinani initiative facilitates an inquiry approach to learning, with students leading the process. Suggestively, participants underscore teamwork and collective responsibility as the source of this initiative, to which he attributes a shared identity and practice nurtured through improved communication.

The unity of purpose and shared identity developed through the expanded leadership structures appear to shift the focus from monitoring teachers and teaching to demand accountability for students’ learning. C3 School leaders seem to prioritise accounting for students’ learning rather than for teaching and syllabus completion as Mubari principal

affirms, “Teaching at a secondary level does not necessarily change the outcome of the students. You know you cannot give much by just covering the content. So, our major focus is how do we ensure that students learn?” Mubari HODs in a FGD supports principal’s claims,

**HOD1:** The focus was more on the teachers doing the work, but since the change in management, we have moved the focus more on students’ learning...

**HOD2:** Before the focus was more on looking at what the teacher has done and if the syllabus has been covered. Once I have done my work and done everything you want, then what else? (*Sarcastic laughter*) However, that does not guarantee results...

**HOD 3:** The focus has shifted to students...

Mubari leaders exemplify the shift of focus from teaching to students learning. Mubari principal asserts the key concern is how to ensure students learn while HODs suggest that coverage of syllabus does not guarantee learning. With similar accord, Nabeko leaders claim to make effort to get students take up the initiative of leading learning. The deputy-admin suggest,

You keep reminding students that they have more time in school than the teacher. The teacher is only a guide and a facilitator of learning. You have to let students do their own learning. We also demand accountability from the student; we organise meetings and look at performance...., progress against entry behaviour. They give reasons for any drop, fluctuation, and stagnation. When they know, they will give an account, they go extra miles to make sure they achieve.

Agreeing with the deputy, Nabeko principal asserts,

We also have panels where students come to account for their work; because we have realized it works. When a child appears before a panel of teachers, of course, we already have the records, we share, ask questions ranging from academic, touching to emotional and asking them to relate and account. *We do it as a school because we have our core values which we believe in and we trust that all of us are driving to achieve this one goal (Emphasis)*

Nabeko leaders’ extracts exemplify the feasible shift from teaching to learning. The emphasis, however, suggests the shift is successful because of the developed trust, commitment and collective responsibility among staff.

In summary, this section has analysed the conception of and practice of good leadership in C3 schools. Core 5 issues emerge. First, building a good vision and inviting other stakeholders to work towards its achievements as the starting point of good leadership. Vision building is illustrated as having expanded thinking and reflections through a whole-system dialogue; with active stakeholder participation. Constant re-envisioning as imperative in informing existing organisational and learning cultures. Leaders suggest re-envisioning cultivates the culture of high expectations, nurtures and informs ingenious creation and experimentation of programmes that befit school learning needs. With constant re-envisioning, schools took risks

and experimented with new ways of leadership and learning; taking risks in turning around negative cultures, changing status quos and adopting new leadership and learning practice.

Secondly, in C3 schools, leadership is considered a democratic and collective action undertaken by all stakeholders; with good listening, open sharing and near personal engagement with teachers and students. Democracy seems to inform C3 schools' redesigned organisational structures, expanded working relationships and conducive working environments. Giving a voice to everyone in a collaborative leadership approach and ensuring effectiveness service delivery through collective action suggested as the impetus to their sustained progress in performance. The importance of redesigned organisational structures is to cultivate a positive working relationship through coordinated streamlined system functioning. These leaders demonstrate the role collaborative organisational structures play in building strong interrelationships, encourage the development of strong traditions of working founded on established values of high expectations and provide back-up support for the principal.

Thirdly, regenerating positive capacities as important to good leadership. C3 Leaders emphasise the autonomy given to teachers and the trust that teachers will accomplish the assignment effectively. Participants underscore teamwork and collective responsibility as the source of regenerative initiatives; cultivated through a shared identity and practice and nurtured through professional development. C3 leaders consider the teaching profession as evolving and requiring constant learning. Professional development is considered critical in handling teacher resistance; creating awareness of, recognition of teacher learning needs and subsequent capacity building as important in facilitating their engagement and participation in leadership and learning.

Moreover, C3 schools opt for devolved accountability system; leaders at different levels have taken responsibility for internal self-evaluation to inform progress in practice and learning. Senior leaders advocate for a collective school self-evaluation that identifies gaps in the system and support effort to resolve them; pointing to elaborate review of the school systems which informs the establishment of new accountability structures. These schools have designing supporting M/E tools to change unproductive cultures and encourage progressive leadership and learning practice. New learning Models appear the most important outcome of these devolved systems of accountability; panel learning and accounting that reposition

learners, encouraging student-led learning. C3 leaders' core concern is how to ensure students learn, suggesting coverage of syllabus does not guarantee learning.

Finally, C3 schools highly position teacher engagement suggesting is imperative in not only creating cordial and supportive working relationship but also, important in developing trust, commitment and collective responsibility. Senior leaders have adopted a judicious and empathetic teacher management approach to which they attributes teachers' positive support. Choosing softer accountability with belief in building teachers' professional and leadership capacity rather than a reference to hard policy rules. Empowering and facilitating teachers' professional growth especially by allowing teachers' space in decision-making is given priority. Senior leaders, however, suggest that leadership dispositions, especially of principals, may attract or limit teacher engagement; senior leaders' ability to communicate effectively and give the right direction is seen as fundamental in attracting and nurturing teachers' engagement and creating opportunities that encourage teachers' optimum performance. Participants in C3 schools suggest getting teachers involved in decision-making cultivates their motivation, willingness to take responsibility and accountability for learning. Table 5.1 below outline a summary of the comparison of leadership practices in C1, C2 and C3 schools.

***Table 5.1: A Comparison of Leadership Practices in study schools***

Category	C1 Schools	C2 Schools	C3 Schools
<b>Conceptions of Good leadership</b>	-Position-focused leadership where participants equate leadership to headship. -Hierarchical organisational structures with dichotomous relationships between senior and junior (teachers) leadership	-Behaviours-focused; emphasising good administrative skills. -Tendencies to promote general administration discourse.	-Building a good vision and inviting other stakeholders to work towards its achievements as the starting point of good leadership. -Vision building is illustrated as having expanded thinking and reflections through a whole-system dialogue; with active stakeholder participation
<b>School organisational Structures and Division of Labour</b>	-Authoritarian leadership practices with weak communication networks -Promoting dissociation rather than unity	-Focus on maintaining order -Leaders expressing insecurities over teachers challenging their authority. -Minimal stakeholder involvement and participation in decision-making. -Lack the whole-school approach.	-Emphasis on the democratic and collective action by all stakeholders; with good listening, open sharing and near personal engagement with teachers and students. -Redesigned organisational structures and expanded working relationships
<b>Responsibility and</b>	-Divisive and isolating working relationship -Teamwork seems less apparent.	-Opposing leadership teams with bilateral expectations and responsibility for learning	-Giving a voice to everyone in a collaborative approach hailed for effectiveness in service delivery

<b>Accountability for Learning</b>	-Less collective responsibility for leadership and learning	-A culture of complacency and little commitment to student learning	-Devolved accountability system. Leaders at different levels take responsibility -Using internal self-evaluation to inform progress; Robust accountability structures
<b>School organisational Ethos</b>	-Less unified focus and vision building for learning. -Lack a shared repertoire and harmony in working. -Lack of commitment and enthusiasm for school vision, mission and core values	-Emphasis on leadership charisma; senior leaders acting appealing and likable; highly conscious of disturbances within the school system Leaders too hesitant to make difficult decisions and risk-taking ventures that cause hard changes and destabilise the status quo -Little consideration is given to vision building or nurturing a collective action	-Cultivated positive working relationship through streamlined system functioning. -Constant re-envisioning to inform organisational and learning culture. -Cultivating cultures of high expectations, creativity and experimentation to benefit school learning needs. -Taking risks and experimenting with turning around negative cultures, changing status quos and adopting new leadership and learning practice
<b>Teacher Engagement</b>	-Non-harmonious and isolating working relationships -Discourage teacher engagement. -Failing to harness teachers support and enthusiasm. -Teachers appear demotivated.	-Lack active engagement of teachers -Poor relationships between teachers and senior leaders -Internal conflicts and relegation of responsibility for student learning.	-Highly position teacher engagement; creating cordial and supportive working relationship -Adopted judicious and empathetic teacher management approaches. -Promoting teamwork and collective responsibility; a shared identity nurtured through professional development -Emphasise teacher autonomy and trust
<b>Learning Cultures</b>	-Non-harmonious working relationships -Little commitment to collective envisioning for improvement -Central focus on accountability for teaching than learning -Competition and individualised appraisal of teachers with little trust and intentions to nurture students' own learning.	-Relegation of responsibility -Professional dishonesty and non-commitment teachers; little support for student learning. -Senior leaders practice weak leadership, incapable or reluctant to design internal monitoring and evaluation systems that make teachers responsible for learning	-New Learning Models appear the most important outcome of the devolved systems of accountability; panel learning and accounting that reposition learners, encouraging student-led learning. -Encouraging student-led learning -Student wellbeing promoted through supportive systems

Table 5.1 presents a summarised comparison of leadership practices in study schools.

C1 schools are characterised by bureaucratic and hierarchal structures of leadership practice with authoritarian tendencies. These tendencies, coupled with weak communication networks among senior leaders, teachers and the community explain the failure to harness team spirit and a collective responsibility for learning. There is little evidence of a unified focus, a shared repertoire and cohesive leadership teams in C1 schools. This lack of cohesion explains the little commitment to envisioning and accountability for student learning and achievement. C2 school leaders, on the other hand, display substantial complacency in their practices.

These leaders come across as having a basic understanding of what ails students' learning and achievement in the schools. However, profound complacency informed by tendencies of managerialism, emphasis on orderliness, maintenance of status quos and protective type of leadership hinder efforts to resolve existing problems. Feelings of insecurity, fear of competition and conflict in leadership teams explain the lack of harmony and trust in C2 schools. Moreover, because of non-trusting relationships and weak leadership, C2 school leaders failed to build cohesion and nurture a collective responsibility and accountability for students learning.

Table 5.1 shows that C3 school leaders, however, are distinctive in the way they carry out leadership and learning activities. Unlike C1 and C2 schools, C3 leaders prioritise the building of cohesive teams. This cohesion seems to define all other leadership activities. Emerging leadership practices in these schools do centre around re-envisioning, collective reflection, dialogue and participation which, appear foundational in nurturing cohesive teams in C3 schools. The emphasis on democratic collective actions and a shared repertoire seem to explain existing trusting relationships and increased engagements between senior leaders, teachers and other stakeholders. With abundant trust, C3 teachers were willing to go out of their way to experiment on new pedagogies without fear. This safe professional space seems to explain the cohesion and strong leadership displayed even among teacher in C3 schools.

The focus of this study was to understand leadership practices that create an enabling environment for SSA to occur. This chapter has demonstrated the comparison of leadership practices between C1, C2 and C3 schools, but illustrated that C3 schools' leadership practices are profound, clearly emerge and leaders in these schools are able to clearly articulate what it is they do that creates enabling environments for SSA to occur. Ultimately, table 5.1 demonstrate that C3 schools' leadership practices are profound and distinctive. This explains why C3 schools get more space compared to C1 and C2 schools in the analysis. Chapter seven gives extra attention and focus to C3 schools to learn more about existing mechanisms in these schools that make them outstanding. This is important because most scholars writing about school leadership, often, focus on best schools. The interest of this study, however, was to see the journey through which these schools have undergone because even thriving C3 schools previously operated at C1 and C2 levels as demonstrated by participants' narratives. The substance in chapter seven is to understand how thriving schools were able to go through the journey and reach their current achievement levels.

## Chapter 6 Challenging Leadership Environments

When teachers went on strike, the Ministry of Education (MOE) send us show-cause letters, (*to explain*) why we have failed to keep teachers in school. This was intimidating. You cannot force teachers, they have their own unions; it becomes difficult for us. The MOE and Teachers Service Commission (TSC) are making the work of principals very difficult. They are not on the ground to see what is happening. They just want reports from us. However, we are not even sure whether they act on those reports. They are not assisting us to run schools. Like now, the minister has ordered students to return to school on Monday. How do I have students in school if there are no teachers? They will come, be idle, get bored and burn the school. Then, TSC will reprimand me again for failing to run the school. *Nabibo Principal, Interview*

In this chapter, I analyse the social, structural and cultural context of school leadership. The chapter responds to the question; what factors influence school leadership capacity to enhance (or not enhance) sustainable students' achievement? The question explores external explanation to existing leadership practices in schools, different from the normative agency. In doing so, I examine the significance of policy and community-working environments to existing leadership practices in schools. I evaluate dilemmas and tensions they pose, and how this shape existing leadership practices and participants' experiences. Nabibo principal's preface typifies the socio-structural contexts in which school leaders operate. It outlines tensions arising from conflicting social and policy expectations, and day-to-day school leadership practices. I capitalised on the ongoing national teachers' strike during data collection as a critical incident that lay bare realistic socio-structural and contextual policy environment in which school leaders operate.

The chapter is organised around four themes: the policy-working environment (National structures of accountability); the local community politics; tensions arising from the interaction between these two, and leadership (in) capacities to handle this pressure. The analysis exemplifies the significance of socio-structural issues in shaping existing leadership practices in schools and local education authority (LEA).

### 6.1 The Policy Working Environment and Accountability Structures

The policy-working environment appears a strong structural mechanism shaping leadership practices in schools: Conceivably, as a guiding strategy, forming a framework for educational leadership practices (Pont et al. 2008), however, ironically, as possibly exacerbating leadership challenges and altering leadership practices. Policy accountability structures



related to teacher management and stakeholder involvement seem to play a quite huge role in tailoring leadership practices in schools.

### ***6.1.1 The Centralised and Top-Down Decision-Making***

Hierarchy in decision-making appears to shape leadership practices in schools and LEA. The centralised top-down decision-making model adopted by the ministry seems to inhibit agency at the local level. A model in which linear directives descend from the national educational authorities (MOE / TSC), parallel reports ascend from LEA and schools seems problematic. I asked, ‘what do you find most difficult to deal with as leaders?’ School and LEA leaders identify the centralised top-down decision-making as limiting their capacity to initiate change in schools. Nabibo principal shares a ministerial demand scenario that school leaders struggled with during the national teachers strike (*Preface*).

When teachers were on strike, MOE sent us show-cause letters (*to explain*) why we have failed to keep teachers in school. This was intimidating.... *They are not on the ground to see what is happening. They just want reports from us. However, we are not even sure whether they act on these reports (Emphasis).*

The principal expressed displeasure with directives from higher authority, arguing that central MOE appears less informed of the real situation on the ground. The emphasis not only highlights that MOE makes decisions without consulting LEA and school leaders but also indicate lack of a feedback mechanism between them. The extract above illustrates the dilemma this situation poses to the school principal. Response to and implementation of centrally originating decisions may have other repercussions as indicated by the emphasis in the preface. This scenario suggests that when decisions by MOE conflict with the real situation on the ground, principals do not necessarily respond to resolve the situation but to meet ministerial demand and protect their job.

Secondly, top-down decision-making appears to deny school leaders the autonomy to make changes deemed necessary to turn around and initiate school improvement. In response to the interview question, ‘what do you find most difficult to deal with?’ Sideki principal claims to have limited autonomy to handle teacher indiscipline, “My greatest problem is the issue of teacher discipline. No one can discipline teachers, except TSC; but they are never prompt. So, you end up having a difficult lot, always resisting anything and there is little you can do”

The principal complains about a resistant teaching staff whom she describes as rigid and unwilling to change. However, laments about the weak agency to make decisions concerning teacher non-professionalism. Subsequently, the principal desires the easier option,

If I could get a way of giving an opportunity for people, say boldly, if you are not for us just move out. Teachers have been here for long; too familiar to see or take on any new ideas. ...but as a principal, you have no say, yet you feel they have outlived their usefulness.

The principal wishes to get rid of teachers struggling with familiarity and unresponsiveness problem. Equally, Nabibo principal initially conceives similar objectives and implements them albeit with negative repercussions,

When I came to this school, everything was wanting, starting from teacher professionalism to students' discipline and achievement. So, the idea was how do I turn around the school? But, I faced resistance. Teachers were like where has this one come from? *I even requested for transfer of some teachers that were not working towards our new changes. When I recommended teachers' transfer, LEA who supported our new initiatives facilitated the transfer, but TSC brought all the teachers back to us. TSC was reluctant to support and told me I am disturbing teachers (Emphasis)*

Nabibo principal attempts to exercise professional agency after identifying gaps in school practice and visualised changes. The principal decides to take risks and make changes in staff, however, meets resistance from teachers and TSC. The emphasis illustrates the principal's and LEA's weak agency as TSC revokes decisions taken at the local-level. Nonetheless, revocation may have partly resulted from the haste to transfer teachers without consulting with TSC; probably ignoring laid down procedures for transfer approval. The standoff may partly arise from TSC's delay to respond to school and LEA requests as Sideki principal suggested, 'TSC are not prompt'. Revocation might also arise from the communication gap between LEA and MOE/TSC as Nabibo principal suggest, 'They are not on the ground to see what is happening' (*Analysed further in section 6.1.3*). That notwithstanding, seeking for teachers' transfer may illustrate weak leadership; suggesting principles' failure to get teachers work according to school vision. Nabibo principal later attests to this flaw and takes a different approach (*See analysis in chapter seven*). This scenario illustrates how centralised decision-making may not only counter principal agency but also point to the power imbalance between central and local authority. Moreover, it exemplified how this imbalance may curtail school leadership capacity to initiate and implement improvement initiatives. Importantly, there is little evidence that MOE provided alternative means of dealing with the problem in Nabibo after returning transferred teachers. With such stalemate, principals may act in ways that appear safe and protective to their job. Principals may resort to weak leadership practices; finding an easy way out to deal with

problems. This scenario could explain Sideki principal's sole effort to ensure school programmes move forward.

Moreover, LEA officers seem to have little autonomy to facilitate meaningful decision-making regarding school leadership challenges due to policy-related limitations. LEA officers, similar to the school principal, claims their capacity to take corrective measures on issues in schools are limited to recommendations only. A quality assurance officer explains that despite their concern and understanding of existing problems in Sideki, they only but make recommendations to TSC. However, in their view, TSC appear unaware of the leadership challenges in the school or reluctant to act or respond to the problem.

*I believe that there should be the transfer of teachers to improve performance in Sideki, but I cannot do anything as SCQASO. The mandate for transfers is with TSC, we normally just recommend, however, they really take time to act. We do not usually get feedback from them, once we recommend, that is all (Emphasis). We have no means of knowing what is happening after that.*

This excerpt highlights a limited LEA role in supporting school leadership and effecting changes in education at local level. The emphasis illustrates two things: First, the centrality of TSC concerning important decisions about teachers' composition and transfer. Secondly, lack of a feedback mechanism between central ministry authorities and LEA. The latter seemingly delaying decision-making due to overdependence on the centralised system. Notably, centralised systems may create redundancy in LEA and school principals' capacities to make decisions due to limited autonomy.

### **6.1.2 Conflicting Multiple Accounting Systems**

School leaders appear embattled in a divergent accounting system on which they are responsible. Sometimes leaders experience overlaps with these accountability systems. When explaining challenges encountered during leadership succession, Bagamu principal expresses accounting overlaps may cause confusion in schools and LEA.

*We do many consultations but you know most of the time it is confusing. We work with TSC who are in charge of teachers. We also work directly with MOE who is in charge of quality. When it comes to school management: Resources, infrastructure and student discipline you are responsible to MOE. Issues of teachers you are responsible to TSC. However, teachers are human resources too. Sometimes it is difficult especially when there are conflicting demands from both sides (Emphasis). You have to survive, as a principal you use all means to survive.*

The principal demonstrates TSC and MOE as opposing forces of accountability. The emphasis highlights the conflict arising from these opposing forces; outlining possible effects these conflicts have on school leadership practice. The statement 'You have to survive, as a

principal you use all means to survive’ suggest that school leaders act in certain ways, not because they believe that is the right way to lead. Rather, because that is the only way to be safe and keep their jobs. This seems to explain Bagamu and Sideki principals’ hesitancy to initiate hard changes that would destabilise the status quo.

The embattled divergent accounting systems with little local leadership agency appear to enhance contrived compliance. Existing gaps in professional interactions between MOE and LEA officers appear to create room for compromise. Nabibo principal explains the difficulty he encountered when handling teachers termed uncooperative. The principal suggests some teachers rarely account for their indiscipline or non-performance due to personalised connections with certain senior personalities, “TSC was reluctant to support because most teachers had their connections in TSC and MOE”. In further probes, the principal illustrates ‘connections’ as having relatives, friends or close acquaintances who intervene on behalf of the teacher. SCQASO officer raises similar claims and describe TSC and MOE working relationship as ‘a tug of war’.

There is a tug of war between TSC and ministry; sometimes the ministry and TSC tend not to work in harmony and this affects schools... We normally give recommendations to TSC and MOE on observation of problematic issues in schools but we do not know what happens after that. This has affected performance because when teachers know this they take advantage of the situation.

The extract suggest that teachers are aware of existing TSC/MOE conflicts, are willing to exploit the situation to their advantage, and this seems to add to the difficulties principals face. When such happens, school senior leadership bear the burden of teacher indiscipline and lack of professionalism. This may explain why Nabibo and Sideki principals sought unconventional means of getting rid of problematic teachers (*Discussed further in section 6.3*).

This section has exemplified how embattled and divergent central accounting system might have shaped leadership practices in schools. Next section further analyses the missing links and ineffective communication between national and local system accountability structures, outlining possible implications to existing leadership practices in schools.

### ***6.1.3 Missing Links and Ineffective Communication***

The missing link between central and local accountability structures creates communication gaps. Little lateral interaction, capacity engagement and information sharing between

national, intermediate and local accountability structures appear to explain the ambiguity in principals' professional expectations. Talking about their experiences, all principals suggest little clarity on leadership roles. Nabeko and Bidobe principals respectively contend,

Here you become everything; you are a nurse, a police officer, a counsellor etc. *It is a jack of all trades and a master of none. In Kenya, the role of the principal is not clearly defined (Emphasis) ...The work of a principal is very challenging because you are expected to be everything (Emphasis).* You should be a doctor, a police officer, a CID. Hence, this calls for too much on us as leaders.

These extracts suggest school principals struggle meeting wide and multiple responsibilities; highlighting the multi-dimensions in expectations and the uncertainty over what specifically principals should focus on. The emphases not only point to the pressure such ambiguity places on leaders' shoulders but also, illustrates the ambiguity in leadership practices. Importantly, principals may indeed be overwhelmed with much other accounting responsibility in the effort to meet varied demands, subsequently threatening the time, the priority and focus on students learning as discussed below.

Muddled accountability structures add to the demands on school leaders, shifting attention from core pedagogical processes in schools. However, the dilemma arises when school leaders' appraisal ignores the various accountability requirements and narrowly focus on students' grades. I asked, what role leadership plays in school and students' achievement? All principals denote the little clarity on the definition of achievement and contend the little consideration given to other achievements. Bidobe principal claims appraisals narrowly focus on students' achievement grades in examinations.

When we say, the principal must account for many things, anything going wrong the principal. In fact, we work more on other things rather than the teaching itself. However, when results are out concentration is just on ranking academic exams. Let this change... Personally, I feel I have achieved; starting a school from nothing and establishing it is a big achievement for me. Even the acceptance that a *local* girl can go to school is an achievement. Therefore, MOE should consider many things before making suggestions of demoting a principal.

The extract communicates principal frustration over the imprecision of accountability requirements and the narrow focus on students' grades. Expressing dissatisfaction with the narrowly focused appraisal system, the principal suggests that ambivalence in role expectations are rarely considered. The narrow appraisal seems to demoralise principals as they determine career progress based on students' results regardless of the pressure to meet all other accountability requirements. Certainly, such conflicting role expectations with non-matching appraisal have potential to alter school leadership practices.

Moreover, the muddled accountability structures appear to fuel tensions in schools due to lack of clarity on teacher appraisal systems. Teachers not only appear uncertain but also laments the unclear procedures of appraisal, promotion and professional growth. Sideki DOS, expressing the uncertainty on teacher promotion procedures states,

I have never received a promotion for the 20 years I have worked for TSC, I have never received any appointment for an position. *We survive on internal appointments (Emphasis)*. This is happening across all schools. Half HODs population have TSC appointment letters, the other half does not.

Similarly, Bageno HODs lament about the uncertainty with which TSC appraises and promotes teachers.

*We are not sure whether the principal submits school appointments to TSC for approval (Emphasis)*. However, TSC has stagnated for long without promoting teachers. Even job groups we have stagnated for so long; you stay in one job group for over 10 years, and there is little promotion. Like in this school, we produce very good results but promotion is hard to come by. It has been like this for long until people now mock us that we are just producing good results but we do not think about ourselves.

These teachers illustrate the uncertainty of appraisal procedures by TSC. Importantly, they exemplify a lack of clear communication and clarity of appraisal procedures. Bageno teachers suggest the school had posted excellent results over time with minimal accompanying teacher recognition or promotion. Sideki DOS claims such scenarios left teachers at the mercy of principals, describing the situation as surviving on internal promotions. The emphases point to tensions arising from such uncertainties, which may have implications on how teacher relate to their seniors. Some principals may capitalise on such uncertainties to drive their own agendas and marginalise, isolate or exclude some teachers' voices (*witnesses in C1 schools*). It may further explain tendencies of teacher apathy and withdrawal (*Analysed further in section 6.3*).

This section has illustrated how the missing links and ineffective communication between different levels of accountability structures shape core leadership roles and practices. Ambiguities in principals' professional expectations seem overwhelming and threatening to time, priority and focus on students learning and achievement. The section has exemplified how these conflicting role expectations with non-matching appraisal may fuel tensions in schools; altering school interrelationships and leadership practices. Conflicting multiple accounting systems went beyond the national bodies; at local levels, other accounting systems put pressure on school leadership activities. Local bodies made demands on school leaders, sometimes with little regard for MOE and TSC national policies. Section 6.2 analyses the intersection between local politics and policy expectations.

## **6.2 Local Politics: Policy versus Reality**

Local politics emerges as an immense external factor exacerbating school leadership challenges. Research cites community stakeholder participation in school leadership as critical in building the trusting relationship and moral support for sustainable improvement (Day and Sammons, 2013; Louis et al. 2010). However, in Kenya, stakeholder participation in educational leadership at the local level seems to create confusion. Instead of achieving the anticipated dividends, stakeholder participation seems to instigate misunderstanding and generate conflicts between school leadership and communities served. Whereas the policy obligates stakeholder engagement with school leadership, the reality on the ground seems puzzling. Two issues emerge, first, the aspect of stakeholder and community's social responsibility seem misunderstood. Secondly, community's capacity to contribute and engage with school leadership appear wanting.

### **6.2.1 Community and Opinion Leaders' Patronage**

External pressure by local opinion leaders appears inhibitive to school leadership practices influencing principals to act in protective ways. Principals and LEA seem to scuffle with political patronage, described as influential to school leadership succession within their locality. Sideki principal denotes, "The member of parliament thinks the school is not local (*sic*) per se because I come from a different region". Sideki PA confirms the principal's claims, suggesting that that political patronage limits schools' capacity to access desired support.

We have had a bit of issue with our local community, starting with our MP, who, during the AGM said cannot assist Sideki because the school admits few students from the constituency. He imagines if the principal was local, the school will admit many students from here. So these are some of the things affecting our performance, denying us support is not very inspiring. *Such little conflicts can affect 100% of the running of a system and even the achievement of students (Emphasis)*

Sideki, a national school, admits students from all Counties, thus, having a smaller representation in each constituency. However, politically biased demands sometimes arise from opinion leaders' ignorance of policy requirements as a LEA officer suggests, "A lot of times we have politicians who do not even have a clue of what education is about but want certain people to lead schools because of their vested interest". PA emphasis suggests that local politics may affect how school leaders act, with possible effect on students' achievement.

Secondly, political patronage seems to limit the principal's capacity to deal with non-professionalism among staff, especially from the local community. LEA officers claim political leaders advocate for some individuals from their communities to lead schools regardless of their professional capacity, suitability and historical performance. A quality assurance officer asserts that politicians muddled in school leadership practices by protecting rogue teachers and leaders from disciplinary measures whenever they are required to take responsibility.

There is this element of political patronage, you have some teachers and principals who are non-performers or have disciplinary issues, but they are untouchable. Like in my district, I would not mention the name of the school but fellows are documented not to perform and have a history of indiscipline but politicians constantly protect them. *So, whereas principals desire things to work in a certain way they can only go so far as per their power because of this political patronage (Emphasis).*

This excerpt illustrates how opinion leaders might interfere with school leadership practices and succession. The emphasis illustrates how the principal agency is constrained by political individuals that seem more powerful. Sideki principal claims that due to political rhetorical manipulation, parents and other community members ganged up to protect teachers from local community irrespective of unprofessional conduct, "We had a teacher facing a disciplinary tribunal. When a new school opened, local-community leaders demanded he is deployment to head it. Villagers said this is our son; it is just in order for him to head the school". The extract suggests that local community's demands appear antithetical to professional demands of school leadership. Bidobe principal further claims little support from local communities, "Parents here do not support principals, we have seen principals thrown out of school by communities". Community influence in leadership succession and teacher professionalism appear obstructive to principals' autonomy and capacity to make long-lasting improvement in schools. Limited agency coupled with circumscribed accountability requirements may threaten current principals' positions. In turn, principals may practice controlling and authoritarian leadership as witnessed in C1 schools or calculated leadership practices fearing to disturb the status quo like C2 schools.

### **6.2.2 Church Preference**

Religious group playing the role of sponsors potentially shape leadership practices in schools. Church preferences seem to negatively interfere with school leadership practices, successions and principal's appointments. LEA officers claim church clergy made demands on who should lead schools under their sponsorship, based on faith orientations rather than professional capacity and suitability.



*There are politics from the church. TSC act indicates that TSC has the final say on principal appointments. However, in practice, the church says we do not want this one because they come from a different church. The constitution says anyone should have an opportunity and we should not judge people based on their religion (Emphasis). However, some churches make demands and TSC accepts their request. Therefore, as a school leader or LEA officer, you may have no say; even if we refuse they have their way.*

The extract points out conflicts between professional requirements and church preference. The emphasis highlights ideal expectations as outlined in school management policy and the national constitution which outlaws the discrimination based on religious orientations. The extract points out the anomalies in practice, however, faulting TSC's uncandid position on this matter. The final statement illustrates that school leaders and LEA officer feel incapacitated to act when faced with such situation.

Religious groups seem to micro-manage within school leadership practices. Pressure from religious groups appears to leave principals in confusion on whether they should be responsible to church or government. Bageno leaders claim the church overdrew from the school's financial kitty limiting their financial capacity to initiate school improvement programmes. In a HOD's FGD, teachers explain that most schools utilised boarding fees to substitute tuition deficits. However, Bageno could not do so, because clergy managed boarding fees deploying it to fund church programmes, "In this school when students pay boarding fees, the money goes to church. In most schools, boarding money boosts the academic side". Bageno Principal reiterated HODs claim highlighting the pressure to contribute financially to church development programmes. The principal further claims clergy dictates principal leadership approaches within the school.

*Sometimes the sponsor (church) and the government have conflicting policies. I go per the government, but I also go by the church. However, sometimes we have pressure from the clergy because they think the church should be leading the school. Also, we feel the church takes so much from us (Emphasis); if there is a program in the church, we must contribute financially yet we are struggling and as a school, you do not question.*

Bageno principal expresses frustrations of having to respond to dual demands by the church and the government. The emphasis indicates the opposing situations facing principals; highlighting how the church micro-manages not only school finances but also school leadership. The statement 'as a school you cannot question' indicates principal's limited agency to handle this situation. A comparable scenario exists in Bagamu; uniquely, the long-serving former principal is the current church sponsors' head clergy. The current principal

claims his predecessor uses the church platform to intimidate him and dictate leadership practices and activities in the school.

I have faced interference from the sponsor of this school, the church. The former principal is the elder of that church. When you attempt to make changes, there is resistance and issues are blown out hand. It becomes a little hard to determine such issues especially when the church has its own preferences.

Bagamu principal illustrates the church as an opposing force to school leadership practice. He underscores the possibility of church preference limiting improvement initiatives. The scenario partly explains Bagamu principal's hesitance to robustly initiate changes or interfere with the existing strategic plan. Emerging in these schools is the possibility that principals played both sides to survive; without taking a personal hard stand and initiate hard changes that might destabilise the status quo and begin the journey to school improvement. Principals' act of taking middle grounds seem to go against teachers' expectations raising more confusion, misunderstanding and apathy (*Analysed further in section 6.3*).

### **6.3 Tensions Arising from Cluttered Accountability Environments**

Accountability challenges and conflicting local demands discussed in preceding sections suggest enormous tensions in school leadership. Visibly emerging are tensions in (a) balancing external demands and school leadership priorities and (b) Teacher management. In this section, I analyse these tensions and debate their implications for resultant leadership practices in schools.

#### **6.3.1 Balancing External Demands and School Priorities**

A normalised approach to leadership with prescribed top-down decision-making processes might be restrictive to schools. School leaders appear to experience difficulty balancing between external demands and internal school improvement initiatives. In interviews, principals suggest that demands to respond to external pressure took attention away from teaching and learning. Bidobe and Bagamu principals contend the centralised accountability system interfering with focus on students learning and achievement.

We face frustration from the work environment. You may want to change the way people work or improve students' talents, but we are just pushed to produce results. This comes from the top, our education system; they no longer value anything else apart from examination grades. Therefore, there are frustrations from the office: TSC, CDE, QASO auditors, all roving on your back, you feel witch-hunted, you feel frustrated.

This excerpt highlights school leaders' frustration arising from restrictive managerial demands. Principals claim these demands make their work environment not only threatening

but also unfavourable for pedagogical productivity. Bagamu principal deplores the retributive appraisal systems that narrowly focus on examination grades, ignoring other educational values. He seems to perceive the accountability processes as exasperating and limiting to school leadership innovativeness. Tensions between restrictive managerial demands, unclear role expectations and astringent accountability systems appear to shape leadership practices in schools.

Political euphoria and religious partialities devoid of accompanied relevant resources and professional support appear frustrating and intimidating to school leaders. Hostile expectations from above groups seem to exacerbate school leadership challenges by exerting unyielding pressure on principal. Bageno principal shares a scenario in which her predecessor, in the effort to fulfil the dual demand by MOE and the church, experiences tensions that caused her attrition. The current principal explains how the predecessor failed to cope with the conflicting church and MOE expectations, eventually exiting headship.

When MOE launched FSE in 2008, we got double admission of students from the ministry. *The church resisted this move, but the principal could not send students away. The church, therefore, turned against the principal. There was a tug of war from all sides. Due to the strenuous relationship the principal left for sabbatical leave* (Emphasis)...she decided to quit. I took over the school as the principal.

This extract illustrates how school leaders bear responsibility and eventualities of adverse expectations. The emphasis outlines the dilemma principal experience and indicates they suffer eventualities of conflicting decisions by MOE and the church. It further outlines the effect such accumulative pressure has on serving principals. Undergoing such emotional scenarios with little support may make the work of school leadership unattractive. School leaders' response to such pressures may affect their leadership practices.

Similarly, Lidude principal is embattled between community-opinion leaders' enforced elevation of Lidude School and the school's limited capacity to meet county status expectations. Elevation to county status without accompanying human and material resources seem to increase internal tensions. The LST explains how this action conferred tension to senior leaders to perform akin to county league, contending against established, well-resourced and advantaged schools within this category, "This school's resources do not match the title given. Rising to county level was political. It was prominent people's interest; some of whom are politicians looking for votes. However, they just elevated the name; did not supply resources required to match the title." Equally, Lidude principal laments,

People just demand results without offering much support. They openly tell us we are not comfortable with the results, you have to do something: Yet teachers are not enough, learning materials are not there, parents are not paying fees. When you ask them how to improve results with all these problems, they say we are the experts

These excerpts communicate that changes externally enforced sometimes differ with school level capacities. Community leaders' desire to elevate Lidude school to county status appear to arise from political euphoria devoid of professional or infrastructural support. The teacher illustrates uninformed political pressure vested in individual interests of a good public image and desire to appease a voting population. The principal indicates how school principals experience and take responsibility for such erroneous decisions amid limited resources. The unyielding pressure is deemed intimidating, especially to new principals who struggle to turn around the schools' achievement trend. In the effort to meet these external demands and maintain their leadership position, principals may reactively respond to the prevailing situation by practicing heavily controlling managerial leadership practices.

Community expectations, preferences and cultural orientations appear antithetical to policy and professional requirements for progressive leadership practices. While policy makes assumptions about unreserved reception of educational initiatives and TSC employees, the reality appears disquieting. Interview conversations with participants in schools and LEA suggest community's hostile reception to teachers. Participants suggest that tensions arise from community preferences against policy requirements in areas akin to students' admission, leadership appointments and succession. Sideki DOS suggests that whereas the policy requires student admission processes to be centralised, community understanding of the same seems limited.

Parents around have a negative attitude towards the school. *In fact, the community out there fights us a lot; they say we are a school that hates locals because we admit few students from within. They do not know MOE centrally carry out the selection and give us a list. When they come, look at the list and see few local students, they say that is not our school (Emphasis).* Some of us are very unpopular because parents think we are the ones who deny them a place.

The extract highlights tensions arising from centralised admission processes and local community expectations. The emphasis suggests that these tensions strain the school-community relationship. Nonetheless, school leaders become targets and take responsibility for such tensions; facing aggressive and hostile attitudes from local members and leaders. This scenario resonates well with PA Chair's claims about a local MP denying Sideki financial support basing on admission data. Sideki principal also refers to local community's adversative dispositions when explaining deputy principal's succession dilemma. These

school-community tensions indicate that community expectations antithetical to policy requirements may appear threatening to school-leaders working environments. Subsequently, principals may practice protective leadership; isolating and marginalising stakeholder involvement and becoming critical of who should join the leadership team because of existing non-trusting relationships (*as witnessed in some C1 and C2 schools*). In other circumstances, principals' feelings of vulnerability may be less attractive for teachers to join leadership teams and support overall school improvement; exacerbating teacher management tensions.

### **6.3.2 Teacher Management**

The centralised teacher management system may critically alter school leadership practices. The prescriptive TSC teacher management approach appears limiting to principal's autonomy on teacher discipline and quality; generating tensions and conflicts between leadership teams in schools. During interviews, 6 out of 9 principals suggest they grapple with control of teacher quality, discipline and professionalism. Partly, because of the inadequate supply of qualified teachers by the employer, but also, due to principals' little choice over teacher deployment. Lidude principal and Sideki DOS suggest schools habitually accepted TSC supplied teachers irrespective of their professional capacity and commitment levels, "You lack a teacher for almost a year. When TSC gives you the one who is floating, because of deficiency and despairing, you just take; you have no choice of checking the background to know why that teacher is floating" and "TSC transfers teachers from one school to another. But when you look back where the teacher has come from, you find that the teacher had issues. The same teacher is transferred to another school with the same issues". These excerpts point out three issues; inadequate supply of teachers, gaps in teacher discipline and quality as well as school leaders limited authority over the first two. These extracts are significant in highlighting the routine process through which teachers are supplied to schools irrespective of their quality and professional standards; exemplifying TSC limitation in monitoring and improving teacher quality.

TSC reluctance or incapacity to resolve the problem of teacher quality and discipline coupled with principals' little autonomy over the same appear to intensify school leadership challenges. School leaders contend that TSC has shifted its responsibility to schools without necessary support. Nabibo principal, claims that whereas TSC leadership policy 2007 emphasise strong school-based management system, the employer still maintains heavy

control. Citing MOE return to school orders during teachers strike, he suggests that principals' efforts to handle teacher quality and discipline lands them in trouble with the employer. Sideki and Bageno principals reiterate their colleague's claims by reiterating TSC relegation of its responsibility on teacher management, "TSC just give you teachers; they are not concerned whether they are doing the right thing. They do not bother about the quality of teachers. They have very big deficiencies in the quality of teachers" and,

TSC should become strong in handling issues of teacher discipline and help improve the school administration because they have become a big problem to schools. Our hands are limited, if TSC does not come in strongly, there will always be issues with school leadership. *You know the principal as a supervisor cannot do much, the supervisor should just report and TSC human resource should take over (Emphasis).*

These extracts seem to communicate the little consensus between TSC and school leadership expectations on teacher discipline and quality. The principals perceive TSC input in teacher quality as weak and inadequate; suggesting little support is accorded to school leaders in terms of maintaining teacher quality. The principals further denote the little autonomy and empowerment of in handling teacher quality issues. The emphasis, however, points to principals limited professional capacity to handle teacher quality and discipline issues. Lidude principal also highlights the deficiency of leadership capacities by stating, "When you have problems with a teacher you write a letter to TSC explaining the problem, TSC tells you to mould that teacher. How do you mould the teacher?" This statement significantly reiterates the argument on principals limited professional capacity to confront teacher management and other challenging leadership problems (*analysed further in section 6.3*). Principals appear not only vulnerable to consequences of poor teacher quality and indiscipline, but also, struggle with the dilemma of which way to follow due to limited capacities and support.

The missing links, ineffective communication and TSC delay to respond to LEA and principals appear to create leadership tensions in schools. TSC delayed response on teacher supply and deployment requests in schools seems to raise anxiety within and without school contexts; triggering strained relationships between the school and community. Sideki leaders contend that TSC has deployed a male HOD in charge of G/C in a context where cultural beliefs barred girls from speaking to men. The quality assurance officer, critical of TSC delayed correction of a G/C HOD deployment error in Sideki suggests, "For a girl school, especially in this culture, there must be a lady in G/C for students to be open. But Sideki has a male G/C master. We have advised for a change, but TSC takes a long time to appoint people into position and this causes a little trouble in school". Sideki principal

correspondingly contends leadership positioning as non-responsive to school needs, “For 10 years, we have a non-local male teacher as G/C master. With all the cultural rules of this community, he cannot provide full guidance and support to girls whose tradition and culture forbid free sharing with men. I have visited TSC over the same severally but no response. They say it is a leadership position and he can only be removed when an opportunity arises in another school”. These leaders illustrate how the centralised decision-making impedes school progress. A case of unsuitable G/C master in a school whose students cultural background appear retrogressive and obscuring to student’s achievement may aggravate leadership challenges. The overstayed prohibition of relevant changes (10 years) despite principal’s visits suggest flaws in TSC’s teacher management, monitoring and evaluation system.

The weak monitoring, follow-up and mentoring by central teacher management systems appear to aggravate principals’ struggle with teacher professionalism. I asked, what difficulties do you encounter in your venture for SSA? Principals cite teacher non-professionalism as a major drawback. Participants in school and LEA claim deterioration in teacher professionalism is associated with too much familiarity. Sideki principal claims the biggest problem in her school is teachers who appear non-responsive to change initiatives; to whom she has a little mandate over their deployment. Lidude and Bageno principals too cite non-responsive teachers as the problem,

Best teachers are those being employed afresh; they have no issues. When they come, you might mould them. Schools that have enough resources release old experienced teacher without replacement. It is better to have a less experienced BOM teacher, but less problematic. That has been difficult for us because we are not well endowed with finances to employ a BOM teacher

This extract indicates a preference for newly employed teachers, including BOM-teachers<sup>3</sup> to counter problems of non-professionalism among staff. Ironically, this trend appears to exist across study schools with leaders expressing desire and preference for BOM teachers. Lidude principal, however, points out the financial implication of these preferences citing schools differentiated financial status. That notwithstanding, leaders’ comparison of new, fresh less experienced BOM and more experienced TSC teachers seem to give an obscure picture of the problem. The problem seems to partly arise from gaps in teacher professional development to sustain proficiency, quality and aptitude as illustrated in the analysis on *teacher quality and disciplinary issues in preceding sections*). Partly, the problem seems generated by ineffective teacher motivation; imperative in keeping teachers’ momentum and commitment to work.

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<sup>3</sup> Less experienced (trained or untrained), temporarily employed by BOM.

The latter signifies that a centralised teacher management system may fail to meet the localised teacher needs due to ineffective follow-up, monitoring and evaluation; the inefficient professional support to teachers and leaders further exacerbating the problem of teacher motivation.

### **6.3.3 Teacher Motivation**

Challenges in teacher management, which have indirect implications on teacher motivation and appraisal appear to back-track school leadership initiatives. The analysis in preceding sections points to tensions arising from motivation and appraisal disputes. The ongoing national teachers strike during data collection seem to explicate the huge motivational challenges facing school leadership. During interviews and FGD, leaders expressed dissatisfaction with perceived educational system's lack of clarity on teacher professional and career growth. Bagamu HODs perceive the existing situation as MOE's lack of appreciation and little attention paid to teachers' work, "We are also human beings, and we would like if we work so hard, MOE to see our work and appreciate us. We do not need bigger appreciation it is just promotion we seek." Bageno LST suggests that little appreciation towards teachers' work affect the attention given to students, "As a teacher you are human and you need to feel motivated. When you are doing much and not getting any tangible appreciation you feel like giving up. We just give up by doing our part and letting students be on their own. I think it is important to motivate teachers so that they can do much more." The extract suggests a possible explanation for Bageno's downward trend. Whereas Bageno principal associates the problem of declining achievement trend to teacher indiscipline, FGD point towards dissatisfaction and demotivation among staff. One HOD demonstrated how Bageno teachers contend the stagnation in promotion despite consistent excellent performance,

We have worked very hard over the years, we have seen a number of people come here from the ministry and we have been crying to them, '*we perform very well, we give very good results, but we are not growing, we are just producing A's for other people's children*'. In fact, someone commented teachers of this school you are only good at producing A's for other people's children and you remain poor (Financially) (Emphasis)

These teachers point to the limited professional and economic growth despite perceived consistent exceptional performance. The emphasis illustrates teachers' feelings of disheartenment and apathy ironically resulting from the failure of appreciation as demonstrated by stagnation in the promotion. Such pervasive teacher dissatisfaction not only affects how teachers work and respond to students' needs but also, their commitment and



presence in the school. Sideki principal asserts, “One of the challenges is remuneration, teachers see that what the government pays is not worth the struggle. This is a major problem; teachers feel the compensatory package is not worth and there is no need to struggle”. PA Sideki confirming principal’s claims laments about teachers divided attention,

There are times when you see a teacher in a market, car boot open, selling tomatoes or oranges. Like when a teacher has a free lesson in the morning, waiting for afternoon one then they are on the market selling tomatoes. I do not mind teachers doing business really, but the picture painted is that of a popper. Although we say teaching is a calling, it’s not incentivised enough.

Scenarios highlighted in these extracts pose dilemmas to school principals because they do experience first-hand effects of such demotivation. Principals also have the responsibility keep teachers in school and ensure they effectively deliver professional services as mandated by the employer despite teachers’ economic challenges.

School leaders appear to struggle with tensions arising from societal and cultural prejudices over the status and professionalism of teaching. Participants across study schools claim that little appreciation by Kenyan society lowers teacher morale. Principals appear critical to the government’s response to the ongoing teacher’s strike (*the third in a span of 3 years*).

Luguyo principal contended,

Teachers feel so down because the government does not care about them. Their morale is down, so they teach without going an extra mile. Some contemplate leaving the profession, finding another job. The government should avoid the hard term and show a positive attitude towards teachers. You can imagine now working with an emotionally wounded teacher.

Bagamu principal further claimed,

Teachers are not appreciated as leaders by society, people look down on teachers. Like this strike, the biggest issue is not about salary increment, the problem is how the government handles teachers. We are human beings too and there should be compassion. Some students even now look down on teachers following senior politicians’ detestable language.

These principals highlight the perceived lack of respect for the teaching profession, which in their view arose from government dehumanising approaches to teachers’ strike. They perceive the language used by politicians against teachers as unjust and dehumanising with subsequent negative effect to teacher identity and efficacy. While Luguyo principal asserts that such negative influences appear to generate teachers’ feelings of apathy and contemplations of resignation, Bagamu principal suggests they bear tensions of handling these teachers’ emotional healing and attitudes of apathy. The following section analyses school leadership capacities to handle discussed tensions and possible implications for overall leadership practices.

#### ***6.4 Trial and Error Leadership: Jipange***

Gaps in leadership preparation appear as a critical drawback to school leaders' potential to counter the effect of socio-structural challenges. Insufficient leadership capacity development seems to explain school leaders' struggle with leading change in institutional and learning cultures, teachers' professionalism and resolving conflicts arising from inconsistent accountability structures. Educational leadership research highlights inadequate leadership preparation as a major reason informing school leaders' struggle on their job (Mulford, 2003; Pont et al, 2008). I asked, why do you think you experience difficulties handling the tensions in your leadership role? All leaders across study schools point to the inadequate prior preparation and limited in-service professional development with subsequently dependence on-job leadership experiences.

##### *Little Prior Leadership Preparation*

Little prior leadership preparation as habitually experienced in the study context appears the core drawback in school leadership practices. The analysis of leadership practice in chapter 5 and the assessment of how school leaders grapple with various tensions arising from socio-structural mechanisms in preceding sections point to huge gaps in school leadership readiness and capacities. School leaders seem to associate the magnitude with which they struggle with lack of leadership training. Bagamu principal contends the ad hoc entry into educational leadership, "There is no formal training or preparation; you are rarely trained to become a principal. So, your initial objective of becoming a principal really matters." The principal suggests an assumption that people innately possess leadership wisdom and capabilities. The last statement points to attraction to leadership as a possible explanation school leaders' reaction and response to the challenging leadership dilemma. Following on the latter, I asked, what motivated you to become a leader? School leaders claim the core attraction to leadership is the subjective recompenses associated it. Leaders assert they are attracted to occupy the highly-ranked position in schools (principal) to enjoy benefits that come with it; power, authority and privileges (*money and pride*). Bagamu principal asserts, "I wanted to rise; be in the position to influence. As a teacher, there are things you want them done in particular ways, but you cannot. I imagined you do things better when you are a principal." The extract positions power and authority in principal's office while apportioning less authority and leadership mandate to teachers. Sample interview excerpts by other participants corresponds to these views,

**Mubari Deputy:** Its human nature to want to grow and aspire to rise in rank. What attracts us to the top is powers, privileges, money. You want to get to the next job group and get a better salary. The responsibility is never thought about. It is just becoming a leader.

**Nabeko Principal:** That is the only opportunity for upward mobility for a teacher.

**Luguyo HODs:** It is an honour when you are appointed to leadership; it gives you an advantage during interviews for promotion. These interviews issue is one of the greatest motivation.

**Bidobe HODs:** There is also the urge to move from one job group to the other. There are returns for this; the financial gains are motivating.

These extracts communicate that teachers are attracted to leadership because of promotion and associate financial gains. Nabeko principal suggests rising to top leadership is the only possible route for teachers' career progress. Mubari deputy and Luguyo HODs claim there is little reflection and professional preparation for leadership responsibility. Triangulating colleagues' claims, Nabeko strategic-Leader concludes, "Educational leadership in this country is more of guess-work and learning on the job". Significantly, limited prior preparation and readiness for school leadership responsibility seem to partly explain why school leaders struggle in carrying out their responsibility.

School leadership support networks like BOM and PA appear to equally grapple with limited leadership capacities. BOM/PA chairpersons across study schools claim to have taken up leadership roles without a clear understanding of its expectations. Nabibo BOM chair claims to have learned about their executive management role from friends or the school principal,

We had no particular training. I learned from a friend who had experience. Due to changes in the constitution and education Act, we had a two-hour training on the structure of MOE led by our principal. In fact, we are seeing problems where principals end up taking advantage and train the board on their own agenda.

The extract point to the insufficient capacity building for school executives; ironically suggesting principals' own initiatives to train them. The executive, however, contends that some school principals use such opportunities to drive their own agenda rather than building BOM capacities to critically engage in school leadership issues. Mubari BOM chair further contends, "*BOM members require training because they come from different professions and may not be familiar with expectations of the education system (Emphasis)*". We need training, there should be someone knowledgeable with current expectation of MOE to initiate and give directions." Mubari BOM chair expresses further concern for the executives' little educational leadership capacity. The emphasis suggests leadership practices in other professions may not obviously be applicable in open and public-school systems. This seems apparent in Sideki School where the PA-chair, coming from private sector appear to impose closed system leadership models that may be antithetical to open school systems.

We wanted to run this school like a business. Let us get teachers to account for what they do in academics. If teacher-1 is producing an A in their subject, why is teacher-2 not producing an A in their subject? Because in my understanding, they went to college, and objectively studied how to get students pass in their subjects and get better results. So, there is no reason teacher-1 is doing so well in their subjects while teacher-2 cannot. So, I wanted us to run as a business, you being responsible for what you do and you tell us why you are not able to achieve

This PA-chairperson appears to have good intentions; however, he seems to use a business model to put pressure on teachers to account for their work. This appears authentic and practical; however, he seems to ignore the various factors that may influence teachers' work and students' achievement. Sideki School, as discussed elsewhere in this thesis appears to experience internal and external organisational difficulty, which, if not resolved may impact on students' performance. Ignoring such adversities while putting pressure on teachers and principals to deliver might raise more tensions in schools. Notably, the limitation of relevant capacities resulting from little prior preparation for both BOM, PA and school leaders could be a possible source of leadership conflicts and tensions.

*Limited in-service leadership training.*

In-service programmes available appear limited in meeting current school leadership needs. Although the government has put in place an educational leadership in-service training through KEMI, school leaders appear dissatisfied with it, claiming it is non-responsive to the contextual problem in schools. Mubari principal point gaps in the kind of training provided, citing it as academic and examination oriented,

KEMI courses do not meet school leaders' needs; too academic, not in touch with the daily experiences. Courses are more centred on examinations and certification than the practicability of the skills in schools. Most lecturers have never managed any school; do not understand the difference between the theory and practical. The workshops and seminars are not professionally aligned but academic oriented.

The counterpart in Bagamu affirms, "Last year we did a KEMI diploma course. We were given books and did assignments about once in a month. They would come, bring their module and then at the end of it all we did an exam, we graduated with a diploma." These principals claim KEMI content lacks a practical touch; not feasibly meeting typical challenges in schools. The analysis in preceding sections illustrates school leadership challenges as evolving; requiring a professionally aligned in-service. Nabibo principal reiterated the evolving nature of school leadership recapping the challenge of handling unionised teachers on strikes the preface. He summarily indicates, "That affects us as a school" signifying how insufficient capacity to handle structural issues eventually affected school leadership.

## Conclusion

This chapter has analysed the social-political context of school leadership in Kenya. The analysis exemplifies structural mechanisms perceived to shape school leadership practices in Kenyan schools. Emerging in the analysis is the influence of management bureaucracies and the highly-centralised decision-making that deprives LEA and school leadership autonomy, agency and the capacity to determine decisions regarding issues directly facing teaching and learning.

Conflicting expectations between various accountability systems due to inefficient coordination and communication further creates confusion and misunderstanding between schools and local communities. Moreover, contradictions between the national policy requirements and local politics generate tensions between school leaders, teachers and other stakeholders. Notably, some school leadership practices and actions might not be purely agential, rather reactive to existing socio-structural working environments.

Finally, there exists huge responsibility placed on individual school principals, who, however, are accorded little professional support. School leaders feel less supported by the ministry and the wider society in accomplishing complex leadership responsibilities. The huge network gaps and missing links between MOE/TSC, LEA and school leaders might be possible mechanisms behind principals' struggle with challenges of teacher management. These issues may explain why principals act in ways that appear too protective and controlling to keep teachers in schools. Subsequently, principal leadership practices may have tendencies of authoritarianism, which could be displeasing, especially to experienced teachers.

Despite the prohibitive socio-structural working environments as analysed in this chapter, some school leaders appear to endure and mitigate the negative effects arising from socio-structural and cultural facets and progressively improving students' achievement. Chapter seven takes on this issue; analysing the emergent leadership practices C3 schools adopted to navigate the socio-structural challenges and sustain students' achievement in challenging contexts.

## Chapter 7 Emerging Regenerative Leadership

This is a school that started under very difficult background, we had a very difficult beginning .... We came in with a lot of deficiency, so we really needed resilience so that we manage to cope. When you walk around the compound, you will see posters saying; 'I am about to walk, I have not yet walked.' Students needed a lot of resilience .... We (*teachers and management*) required a lot of resilience too. Now we have acquired several resources; however, we are still sticking to resilience  
*Nabeko Principal Interview*

The excerpt above point to the complexity of school leadership in a challenging context like Kenya. The principal illustrates the state of a national school with challenging beginnings. Outstanding in the excerpt is the emphasis on individual and collective agential consciousness and the ability to build school system resilience; not only to cope with, but also to mitigate the effect of socio-political challenges to teaching and learning. Chapter six analysed social-political challenges school leaders struggle with on their line of duty. This chapter responds to the research question: What specific leadership practices best circumvent existing socio-political hindrances to enhance the achievement of SSA? The chapter highlights C3 schools' leadership practices that are profound in realising SSA amid socio-political dissension.

The focus of this study was to understand leadership practices that create an enabling environment for SSA to occur. This chapter picks out practices that are outstanding in enhancing sustainable achievement, which is the interest of the study. Chapter 5 demonstrated the comparison of leadership practices between C1, C2 and C3 schools, but illustrated that C3 schools' leadership practices were profound, clearly emerged and school leaders were able to clearly articulate what it is they were doing that created enabling environments for SSA to occur. The summary table in chapter five illustrates the evidence that C3 school leadership practices were distinctive. In this chapter, therefore, C3 schools receive extra attention and focus to learn more about existing mechanisms in C3 schools that make them outstanding. Most scholars writing about school leadership, often, focus on best schools. The interest of this study, however, was to see the journey through which these schools have undergone because even the thriving C3 schools previously operated at C1 and C2 levels as demonstrated by narratives from participants. The substance in chapter seven is to understand how thriving schools were able to go through the journey and reach their current achievement levels. The objective is to demonstrate that sustainability is a journey, and not something that can be achieved in one day. In this chapter, I analyse five emerging

themes: Overcoming challenges through resilience; developing structures for resilience; strategic tools for resilience and sustainability, the power of collective leadership and positioning learners in the school system.

### **7.1 Overcoming Challenges through Resilience**

Building system resilience to socio-structural turbulence that risk students' learning and achievement might be the most important school leadership role, especially in challenging contexts. Leaders in all study schools perceived the contextual working environments as turbulent and challenging as discussed in chapter 6. However, findings from C3 schools suggest that devising ways to overcome these contextual challenges appear the most important leadership role. Mubari principal claims,

If I stand here and complain that the government has not done this or that... we will not get results.... Personally, I try to implement government policies as prescribed, but I encounter many challenges. *What I do, which I think is paramount is to accept the situation and work around it to improve performance; it is about developing the hard skin, being resilient (Emphasis).*

The principal communicates that appreciating the challenge of leading schools in such a context is important but not enough. The emphasis suggests that the important leadership role involves building resilience, which he actuates as channelling efforts towards mitigating challenges to teaching and learning.

Realising resilient school systems appears the beginning of progressive practice, achievement and their sustainability. C3 leaders suggest resilient school systems have three things in common: (1) Centres on creating awareness of the real challenging situation. (2) Engages in conversations about the prevailing adverse situations affecting them. (3) Collectively take on the risk and responsibility for changing the existing situations for better outcomes. Nabeko principal's prologue above demonstrates how leaders realised and appreciated their difficult background. In response, these leaders prioritised the building of school system resilience as one way of overcoming context specific obstacles to students' achievements. The principal succinctly asserts a deeper conception of the role resilience plays in providing the necessary aptitudes for overcoming socio-political exigencies in the statements, 'so we really needed resilience so that we manage to cope', and 'now we have acquired several resources, however, we are still sticking to resilience'. Nabibo HODs conversations typify how teachers nurture perceived weak students to achieve amid pervasive examination-oriented cultures in the context.

**HOD 1:** As HODs, we have powers to change things on the ground; we have to be resilient even in what we do. For example, when I look at low performing students, I know for sure they cannot get A; they will not make it to university. So, what do I do? I focus on practical aspects of the subject and encourage them to build skills that will be enterprising and give them income. So, I provide market skills required out there and help the student to capitalise and improve on them.

**HOD 2:** I teach a practical subject, some students are very good with their hands, when it comes to practical's they do very well but in theory, they perform dismally. Life experiences show that some of these students who are very good with their hands are some of the most successful people in life and earn a good income. So, I encourage such students so that we are not just adamant about them and dismiss or discourage them.

HODs' extracts highlight practices that demonstrate teachers' consciousness of the real student learning situation in Nabibo. These conversations seem interesting especially in a Sub-County school that admits medium to low achieving students. Unlike comparable Sub-County and even County schools like Lidude where teachers lament about students' weak entry behaviour, Nabibo teachers claim to go beyond prescribed teaching duties to nurture weak students' employability skills. Supporting teachers' claims Nabibo principal and strategic-leader asserts, "I am happy with how teachers have become resilient. We talked and agreed that our strategy is to explore alternatives that help us achieve; as you are teaching F4, what is there to expect in terms of sustainable achievement?" and "The strike scenario, some schools have never opened their gates since the strike started. But, us, we talked and agreed to assist our candidates as much as possible because this is their time to make their life and future. The exam determines their future, no one will refer to teachers' strike when judging their achievement, advancement and career progression." Nabibo principal suggests teachers have become resilient as a result of engaging them in conversations on existing situations and seeking creative alternatives. Referring to teachers' strike the strategic-leaders perceives nurturing resilience as developing aspects of social justice even when it is lacking in the wider country context.

Participants in C3 schools widely conceptualise resilience as internal leadership processes of creating awareness, building capacities and nurturing adaptability cultures and competencies. They suggest these components enable school systems to recover from difficulty overcome its effects and move forward in the effort to drive and achieve their agenda. Nabeko principal when probed further on her rationale for resilience, she suggests that realising sustained achievement depends on the key activities senior leaders engage in: what they do, how they do and act and how they connect with other members of the school system to create a resilient team that support achievement of objectives,



Being resilient is about seeing the objectives of the school achieved irrespective of the many problems. The issue is how do you do that? It is about capacities, attitudes and processes of leadership that work. Of course, you do not do everything alone; you must work with everyone. *Now changing teachers' attitudes and making them see things in certain ways is very important (Emphasis).*

The principal illustrates resilience as the ability to overcome socio-contextual problems and facilitate the achievement of school objectives. She claims resilience is achieved when the right capacities are developed and suitable leadership approaches are adopted. The emphasis suggests the appeal to teachers' agency and outlook as critical to building resilience. That notwithstanding, the appeal for the agency and right attitudes may not be straight-forward given the low teacher motivation in the study context. Mubari principal recommends the nurturing of right aptitudes for students' learning, "as a leader, you endeavour students to be in school for them to learn and they get to the next level. The grades students get are determined by the institutions that they attend. As teachers, we must reflect, after secondary school, what are the students going to do in life?" The principal highlights school leadership mandate in nurturing students' future career prospects. He emphasises the reflections on the adaptability and learning competence as central to teachers' practice. Mubari principal's perceptions appear to inform the existing *Elimu Mashinani* learning culture in the school; to which leaders' associate teacher's renewed commitment (*further analysis in section 7.5*). Similar to colleagues in Nabeko and Nabibo he exemplifies a social justice perspective in student learning. Significantly emerging is that leadership practices that create awareness, nurture capacities and aptitudes of adaptability may facilitate the SSA to occur.

### ***7.1.1 Understanding Expectations and Exigencies of school leadership***

The succinct understanding of leadership expectations and exigencies appear to form the starting point of developing resilience. However, understanding is not limited to cognitive awareness; a clear conceptualisation of the character of the challenge, and the ability to adopt suitably responsive leadership seems significant. During interviews, I asked, 'In what ways do you resolve the cited leadership challenges? The point of departure between thriving and non-thriving schools is the deeper conception of leadership expectations and exigencies. Nabibo principal cites individual reflections as the genesis of school system resilience, "The school administrative and academic programmes were half-hazard and in crisis. I asked myself, what I am I doing; Am I worth to be here? So, I started thinking, how do I change the school to a better state?" The excerpt communicates principal's initial conscious evaluation of the internal status of the school. The introspective questions demonstrate the

deep reflections on the status of the school. Nabibo principal claims these reflections informed subsequent steps,

I convened a meeting with teachers. We discussed and came to a consensus that if we are not performing there must be an issue somewhere, issues from teachers, if not in the workplace. Are students working hard or are they disciplined enough? Are parents taking their responsibility? Is the principal concerned? Is the board of management supportive? What do we expect from everyone? *We agreed that results are not given on a silver platter, they are earned. So, we decided to find out how (Emphasis).*

The extract suggests individual reflections led to further profound and collective comprehensions of the problem. The emphasis suggests reflections not only broadened the awareness but also informed the acceptance and change of predispositions. Nabibo principal's dispositions resonate well with Nabeko principal's prologue; a clear conception of challenging beginnings seems to engender resilience aptitudes among staff to overcome the difficulty. Notably, principal's individual agential consciousness became productive when advanced to the collective consciousness.

Senior leaders' capacity to translate individual agency into a collective one seems to inform the regeneration and transformation of a school system. C3 leaders appear to utilise collective agency to spur progressive system reflections on schools' core interests, values and objectives. Nabibo principal's excerpt in the preceding section suggests the decision to convene a meeting prompted translation of individual consciousness to a collective cognizance. Nabibo deputy claims the school initiates collective conceptualisation through a robust school self-evaluation and group reflections. The deputy-principal suggests that succinct collective reflections based on the collected evidence paved way for processes of institutional change. Correspondingly, Mubari LST, DOS and F3-principal when discussing the changes in the school's achievement trend, suggest that collective agential consciousness requires reviewing and appraising existing school structures (physical, professional and dispositional) to determine their expediency. They seem to emphasise that collective consciousness does not occur by chance, rather, it is consciously cultivated.

### ***7.1.2. Building a Collective Understanding and Responsibility***

Building collective understanding and capacity for all stakeholders seem to leverage schools' resilience propensity. The building of agential capacity needs to go beyond informing and consulting and make stakeholders take responsibility to encourage collectivist dispositions. Mubari and Nabibo leaders hail the new principals' capacity to nurture a collective

understanding and responsibility, claiming it is the reason for the school's progressive achievement. Nabeko deputy-Academic suggests that ensuring everyone takes responsibility for school leadership establish collective understanding and unity of purpose, "We wanted to see a school where the systems are in line. *Where no one is blamed. Each one of us sits down and discuss. Everyone takes responsibility, nobody runs away (Emphasis)*. This way we have reached a common understanding". This excerpt communicates a process of building collective consciousness by providing a conducive environment for people to engage. The emphasis suggests a collective resilience that is natured through taking responsibility. Correspondingly, Nabeko deputy suggests that collective understanding and responsibility may cushion a school's stability in times of socio-political turbulence; thereby facilitating school system resilience, "I have learned that when making decisions together with teachers, it is easier even to implement and survive in difficult times; like the strike we just had. It is just that we have positional power, but they are all leaders, they just need support". The extract further suggests that building collective understanding lies in the praxis: The nurturing of a collective agency through professional support which seems imperative for institutional reformation and sustainability.

### ***7.1.3 Nurturing Collective Responsibility through Professional Development***

School initiatives and likelihood to nurture a collective professional growth appear to advance its member's capabilities to overcome difficulties. Evaluation of data from C3 schools suggests that higher expectations and obligation may be achieved through the nurturing of collective agency and professionalism. During interviews, C3 school leaders indicate teachers' tendencies to resist change similar to C1 and C2 schools. Nonetheless, C3 school principals seem to undertake purposive initiatives to nurture different dispositions and professional repertoire to offset such resistance. Mubari principal for instance states,

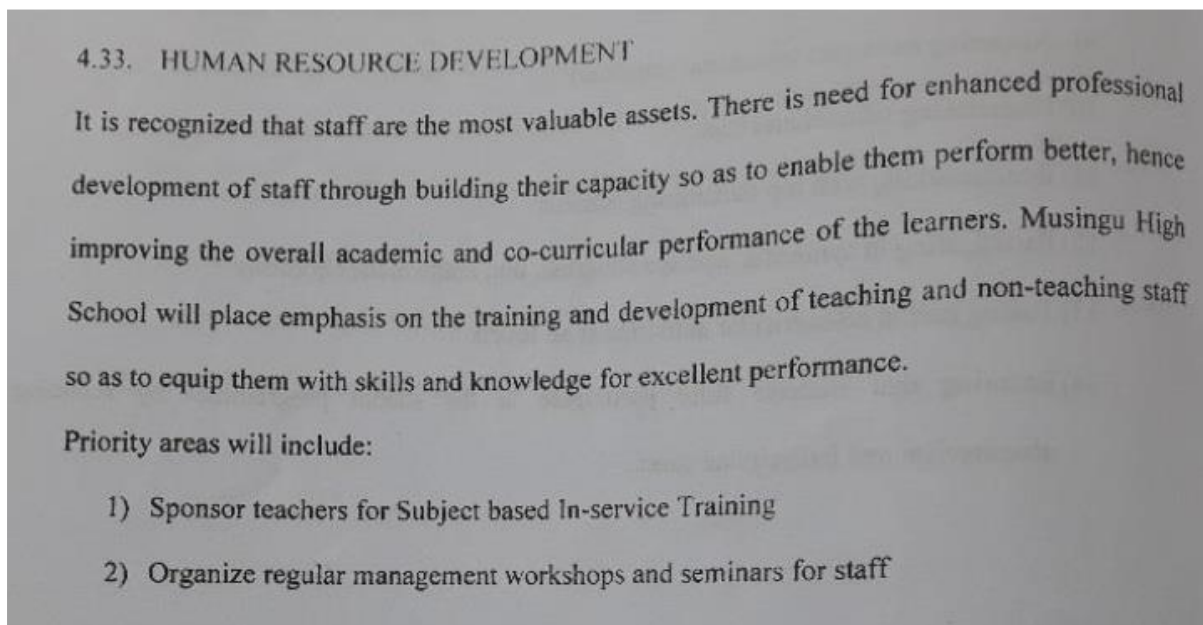
You will always meet challenges when trying to get everyone to journey with you. It is not easy for all 58 teachers to accept change; will always resist new developments. Even students may not readily accept change. *Here, we spend a lot to overcome this resistance. We organise seminars for teachers to see the need to move together. Sometimes we even use external experts to talk to students, teachers and even parents (Emphasis)*

The excerpt communicates the recognition of possible resistance to change initiatives; suggesting collective agency in a school system is not given but results in deliberate and strategic professional development activities. The emphasis suggests the need for schools to enhance professional capacities and group change aptitudes. Nabibo DOS claims to have learned from an external leadership training, "I attended a one-week conference on

leadership. This was a refresher course for leaders to learn new and emerging issues in the changing educational society. I learned about changing a school system practice and I feel empowered.” Correspondingly, Mubari DOS claims teachers attend various leadership seminars and workshops which he associates with a change in attitude and practice,

We normally attend seminars; I have gone for leadership training twice taking one week each. Motivational speakers are invited to talk to teachers too; *through that we get a lot of information on how to associate with and lead others towards the betterment of the institution and the child (Emphasis)*. In our school when there is a training all leaders, must attend if possible all teachers. *These courses have improved our effectiveness of how we relate with each other, how to deliver results and how we operate as teachers and leaders. Like now, we have a strike going on but all teachers we call senior managers are in school (Emphasis)*.

These DOS’ exemplify the position of professional development in nurturing collective responsibility. Document data from the Mubari strategic plan in the extract below supports DOS views.



**Source: Mubari Strategic plan (2013; P.32)**

Nabibo DOS suggests professional training may empower teachers to manage change. Mubari DOS claim professional development not only change teachers’ attitude but also enhance professional relationships and practice. Emphases highlight the collective responsibility that may have developed from the improved relationships and agential consciousness. That notwithstanding, C3 schools appear to shoulder the heavy cost for teacher professional development. Despite the positive attributes attached to it, the analysis in chapter six suggests little evidence for an elaborate national leadership development programme for teachers. Lidude principal stated, “We have tried to invite motivational

speakers to talk to teachers, but it's very expensive; motivational speakers charge high amount of money to deliver their services." The LST, however, suggest that Mubari meet the costs by students' fees, "We have a good motivation program where parents pay extra Sh.3000 per student annually; which support teachers' training". Great as the programmes may appear, it may threaten students' access especially from poor backgrounds whose parents may fail to meet the extra burden.

Nurturing a mutual change in attitude, practice and ethos through professional development appear to cultivate collective agential consciousness, which leverages C3 schools' resilience. School leaders in C3 schools appreciate that physical and infrastructural resources are important for schools to function well; however, they only go so far. Nabeko principal claims that acquiring material resources might not be enough to achieve sustainable achievement.

*It is a matter of priority; previously we concentrated on constructions of dormitories, classes, library etc. However, we realised, that was good, but not enough. There is need to change the attitude of teachers, the teaching methods and even on how to involve the students' psyche in the learning. We realised teachers needed support to cope. This is never touched in teacher training (emphasis). We have trained teachers. We encourage research or reading; go for formal or informal training and do some courses on leadership.*

This excerpt suggests that preservice training might not necessarily equip teachers to effectively work in challenging contexts. The principal emphasises the need to prioritise building teachers' professional and attitudinal capacity to respond to the changing needs of pedagogy. Nabeko strategic-leader, supported principal's claims, explaining that it took the school time and resources to achieve the change in attitude and practice, "We now had to work on teachers through internal training especially on the panel learning. We invited a colleague from a private school who had experience on this. We even sponsored teachers to attend KEMI leadership courses; just to get their consensus. The bonding and sharing sessions through our welfare have also helped to create this consensus". The extract communicates that Nabeko leaders tended to prioritize the development of teachers' attitudes and ethos in cultivating a collective and shared responsibility. Similarly, the analysis in preceding paragraph demonstrates how Nabibo and Mubari schools' detailed leadership professional development over time nurtures teachers' attitudes and practice. Mubari, F3, principal claims the principal prioritized leadership training for all teachers; teachers' leadership training and professional growth was the principal's initiative to equip everyone to attend to holistic system leadership mandate (*analysed further in section 7.4*). Nabibo

strategic-leader contrasting his initial resistance status argues that capacity building programmes facilitate a change in teachers' attitude, practice and professional ethos.

Actually, I was one of the teachers transferred when the current principal came in (*Laughing sarcastically*). However, after that incident, the school organised training which equipped us with latest information and skills. I remember we attended workshops; teachers, HODs, BOM and PA. This was helpful because you are able to discuss with others and know that actually there are other better ways of doing things. You are able to know that we are not doing the best. Even the way we are handling students or ourselves as teachers has shifted; we are able to change.

The extract exemplifies C3 schools' theory of change as that of promoting need-based professional capacity development, accentuating the central positions of professional development in fostering a collective leadership responsibility and cultivating collective agential consciousness in a school system. Nabibo strategic-leaders illustrates collective agential consciousness as reformative in times of conflict. Significantly, C3 leaders suggest that change in attitude and ethos of practice is achieved through school environments that promote learning and reflections on practice.

## **7. 2 Developing Structures for Resilience**

Existing school organisational characteristics appear as powerful mechanisms influencing a school's capacity to be resilient and sustain its achievement over time. I use organisational characteristics to refer to two issues. First, the structural design of school leadership and established networks among stakeholders: The concern being how befitting the existing structures are to the school's present needs and future vision (Gunter and Butt, 2007).

Secondly, the aspect of school culture; interrelationships within and without the schools as well as values and dispositional perspectives of stakeholders (OECD, 2016). The analysis in preceding sections suggests that developing resilient school systems may require leadership practices that visualise, restructure and regenerate organisational characteristics; make them responsive to school teaching and learning needs.

### ***7.2.1 Restructuring Internal Organisational Characteristics***

Realising and sustaining progressive students' achievement appear to require leadership approaches that enhance school system efficiency. Sustaining efficiency appear to entail going beyond fulfilling ministerial procedural requirements, to nurturing localised regenerative leadership capacities for long-term change and benefits. Subsequently, enhancing school system efficiency may require restructuring internal school organisational characteristic; to not only provide alternative thinking and ways of acting but also regenerate

localised cultures that are responsive and adaptive to change. A SCQASO claims existing organisational characteristics may explain schools' differentiated achievements.

There are certain day schools that perform better than boarding schools; depending on the culture of the school – leadership, teamwork and the academic culture in play, and whether other stakeholders have a part. Now students are keen, they take up the culture and can perform or not. In a way, mainly the school leadership is key here.

The excerpt draws a comparison between day-schools and boarding-schools, citing organisational characteristics as possible factors explaining differentiated achievements. He underscores the importance of cultures related to organisations in the academic, leadership teams and stakeholder engagement. Similarly, Mubari principal highlights the critical role the school organisational characteristics play, “everything can become difficult in a school system; depending on how you are organised. The school environment whether social or political plays a lot. *Students and teachers can just resist giving results because of the environment (Emphasis)*”. The extract demonstrates school organisational environment as social - the internal structuring and interrelationship; and political - the power relationships within school systems (*as established from subsequent probes*). The emphasis points to the effect existing organisational characteristics have to schools' capacity to improve. This understanding seems to inform principals' leadership agendas in transforming internal school contexts across all C3 schools. Significantly emerging is the emphasis on redesigning school system structures; to create internal capacities to anticipate and respond to unexpected changes. Subsequent sections analyse the specific ways in which C3 school leaders achieved the internal organisational redesigning.

### ***7.2.3 Developing Commitment through Trusting Relationships***

The realisation of a unified stakeholder identity and commitment to schools' objective lies in the school system organisational architecture. Whereas school leaders in C1 and C2 schools identify little commitment and resistance as critical problems, C3 schools seem to enjoy abundant stakeholder support. I asked, what is it you have done to achieve high stakeholder support? Mubari DOS claims, “The new principal is attracting people to come in. The new principal has a good-will, because of this, many people want to identify with our school. So, there is a smooth running of the school because everybody is talking one voice; we need to change Mubari.” When probed further on ‘good-will’ Mubari DOS explains, “I mean honest and the value of integrity; he wants to work well with everybody. Fairness in terms of holistic leadership, and does not discriminate but provide support and care.” These extracts accentuate the capacity to attract and encourage stakeholder participation in school leadership

in creating strong identities. They exemplify principal's commitment to stakeholder participation; providing opportunities for stakeholders to play an active role in influencing the school system leadership. Importantly, the DOS identifies intentional nurturing of stakeholder trust and commitment as important in creating strong identities and giving a school the collaborative advantage within and without school networks.

Internally, within the school system architecture, the realisation of multiple stakeholder identities and making attempts to recognise unifying factors that draw them together and build support for the change agenda is vital. Sharing how Nabibo School managed to change working relationships the deputy asserts, "It was through getting people to work with us. *One is leadership composition; getting different members understand and appreciate our leadership focus (Emphasis)*. Ensuring everyone is on board has been our goal; however, it's not easy" This excerpt communicates that recognition and informed involvement of stakeholders in school leadership seem to attract and cultivate strong identities. The last statement, however, highlights the difficulty of achieving this. The emphasis suggests identifying, connecting with and managing stakeholders is important to overcome the difficulty. C3 leaders explain that incorporating stakeholder interests may nurture their commitment and trust, eventually building a school's unity of purpose and harmonised teams (*analysed further in section 7.4*). The latter appears as an important point of contention in non-thriving schools, in which teachers felt left out of key decision-making processes.

Bageno HODs explains how senior leadership seem to ignore their interests for a long time,

*We never met our senior management for a long time. When they come in they do not even greet us; they go upstairs to see the principal and cannot even dare look at us (Emphasis)*. They sit here to talk for hours. Eventually when results went down that is when they came to look for us (*Teachers*). They sat up there, looking at us over their glasses as we sat on the lower side facing them. *So, they asked us where the problem was. We told them off. You do not even greet us. You do not bother whether we exist or not. You do not talk to us and we do not know you. What can we tell you? (Emphasis)*

This excerpt exemplifies typical experiences of disengaged teachers and lack of trusting relationships among stakeholders. Although there seem to exist stronger ties between the principal and BOM/PA, their relationship with teachers appears weak. The sitting arrangements as described in the excerpt further project a super-subordinate relationship. The first emphasis indicates that teachers are marginalised. The last one suggests teachers' frustrations with the existing isolating leadership relationships; significantly illustrating the lack of trust and a unified identity as teachers appear less willing to engage in the conversation.



External stakeholders are often not organised as the internal ones; however, they can be mobilised and become densely networked across the boundaries of a school system. Having said so, attracting the commitment of external stakeholder to identify with and get committed to school objectives seems to be heavily linked to the levels of trust. Nabibo principal explains that the community had little trust in the previous management and that withheld support, “The culture then was, what am I gaining from Nabibo? Everything else revolved around finance. We had to work on the financial situation to gain trust. When parents have confidence in the school, usually they have no problem paying fees. When you are able to convince them that your money will go to good use, they will pay”. In subsequent probes, he explains how he managed to nurture parental commitment and trust by modifying the school’s organisational architecture.

The other one was students’ retention; students only joined this school in F1 as parents looked around for a better school. So how do you retain students if parents and guardians do not trust the school? So, the first thing was to ensure that the school was attractive to the community in terms of performance. We came up with academic and discipline policy; through the strategic planning process, I was able to convince the community to come to my side.

The two excerpts communicate how Nabibo principal nurtured parental commitment by establishing trusting relationships through financial and professional integrity. The first excerpt suggests transparency and accountability in school resources management leverages a school’s reputation. The excerpt associates a lack of parental trust and commitment to the problem of student’s retention. This extract highlights important tenets in the school organisational architecture that limit parental trust and commitment; professional dishonesty, students’ indiscipline and conflict among leadership teams. The last statement suggests that the strategic planning process aid leaders to modify the schools’ organisational architecture and achieve strong stakeholder identity, commitment and trust.

### **7.3 Strategic Tools for Resilience**

Designing a sustainably improving school organisational architecture that achieves high stakeholder expectations, commitment and trust seem grounded in strong school internal networks nurtured through strategic planning processes and tools; school vision, mission and core values and sustained reflections over their achievement.

#### ***7.3.1 Strategic Planning and Internal Networks***

Senior leaders in C3 schools claim strategic planning (SP) processes provide internal social structures that form a nexus of connections among stakeholders. Nabibo principal’s excerpts

in the preceding section point to SP as a relational social structure that facilitates various members of the school system to build relations of commitment to set objectives. Similarly, Nabeko principal asserts that SP is a tool to invite school community members' participation in school leadership activities,

The SP process has worked for us; *people now know what they are after (emphasis)*. Here we did it as a school, we asked everyone what do you want? How do you want this school to be in 5 years' time? Then we came up with the committee within the staff that now looked at the suggestions from every group and came up with a strategic plan. We identified a senior teacher who leads and runs with our strategic plan; he keeps reminding us; this is what we are set to achieve

Nabeko deputy-admin further claims that besides encouraging high stakeholder participation, the SP processes achieved the school other dividends; the realisation of the core value of resilience.

One way we have built resilience in our school is through leading the strategic planning process. It has been our road-map, guiding every activity in this school. We realised that for us to achieve highly, everybody must run with our SP. Every time we have a meeting we remind ourselves, we share during assembly, we attempt to assess ourselves, where are we?

These extracts identify SP processes as a symbolic tool that attracts stakeholder participation in decision-making process. They further denote SP as an object of identity, which every stakeholder not only associates with but is also committed to its achievement. The principal's emphasis exemplifies the agential consciousness emerging from the SP processes. The deputy suggests SP process is a means through which senior leaders intentionally used to realise school system resilience; identifying SP as a constant reminder of what the school stood for, important in realising resilience. They significantly suggest that SP processes is an important tool in the schools' organisational architecture, not only as a means of constant assessment and evaluation of practices, but also, determining the positioning of each member in the school system.

SP processes as a school social structure, appear to form a framework of positioned practices imperative for initiating and achieving system cohesiveness. C3 schools' senior leaders suggest that through SP processes, stakeholders assume certain social positions within the school system, subsequently designing a networked web of harmonious relations between different practitioners. Mubari PA relates the schools' progressive improvement to initiating and successfully building stakeholder harmony and unity through SP process.

For the trend to start moving upward sharply, something happened; a new principal came in and streamlined things. He brought harmony, especially when we did our strategic plan. The strategic plan was a tool that brought this school back to the map. All structures were put in place through SP; the

principal now worked on how to handle different groups, parents, teachers and workers, taking them to the right direction.

Mubari PA signifies SP process as a tool for building a cohesive school system; suggesting they may streamline relational engagements, unifying and harmonising various stakeholders. Mubari BOM Chair. echoing PA claims suggest the improved relations further nurtures stakeholder interest and commitment to school activities.

After we made the strategic plan, BOM/ PA members now developed personal interest and commitment to the school. They were ready to stand, support and encourage the principal. Parents were able to pay fees. Local leadership became interested in assisting some physical facilities in the school. The BOM helped to reach the local and political leadership, MPs governor, senator....

The extract suggests the new principal used SP processes as a tool to attract stakeholder interests; illustrating that involving stakeholders through SP seems to attract financial and moral support as well as commitment from parents, civil and political leadership. Similarly, Nabibo and Mubari senior-leaders associate SP with building stakeholder trust, which they described as imperative in cultivating school system resilience. This trust may explain the strong external networks observed in C3 schools. Whereas C1 and C2 schools seem to struggle with resource limitations, school-community conflicts and political leadership preferences, C3 schools appear to enjoy well-founded support from political and community leaders. This difference suggests that SP processes is foundational in creating strong community networks and local capacities imperative for school system resilience.

SP processes appear to aid in developing schools' local capacities to reform and improve performance. The processes seem to create conditions, opportunities and experiences for collaboration and mutual engagements oriented towards the development of local capacities rather than simply responding to external policy demands. Mubari DOS claims much more dividends to SP processes,

*The most important success from SP is making us strong .... making us resilient...we have not solved all the problems yet, but we have forums where we keep talking, sharing and reminding each about our vision, mission and values. SP has helped us to achieve cohesiveness in terms of communication, the unity of purpose, the traditions of the school, the guiding principles of the school and above all, now everybody works as a team (Emphasis)*

The DOS suggests that SP processes streamline internal school policies of leadership, learning and relational engagements through a harmonised approach. The emphasis suggests SP processes provides self-renewing capacities by consciously creating inspiring school environments that promote a shared obligation and constant accountability feedback loops. Senior leaders in Nabibo and Nabeko reiterate similarly accounts, asserting that SP positive

attributes cited above enable school leaders to resiliently manage and tackle emerging school system challenges. However, C3 leaders point out that commitment to school objectives is only achieved when senior leaders in the school, especially the principal, make effort not only to attract stakeholder interests but also, gain their trust. DOS emphasis attributes the existing high commitment to the nurtured stakeholder trust, unity and harmony contributed to high commitment.

### **7.3.2 The Role of School Vision**

The capacity to re-conceptualise the purpose of the school in SP processes seems to make the difference in schools' progressive achievement, especially in challenging contexts. Spurring new life in the school vision, mission and core values and making them work for the school appears to shape the schools' organisational culture. In this study, school systems appear to have varying degrees of capacities to change; while C1 and C2 schools appear rigid, inflexible and unable to change, C3 schools seem to have built-in capacities to change and adapt to fluctuating working environments. Nabeko deputy-admin explains how the school's annual re-envisioning and reconceptualization of its objectives drive change processes, "Each year when implementing annual SP strategies, we have a new theme, vision and mission; we focus on achieving the unique theme for each year. ... This is what is pushing our school forward every year." The extract highlights a school culture with high expectations enforced through annual re-envisioning and strategizing. Extracts from the strategic plan affirms Nabeko-deputy's views,

3. The strategic plan should enhance the capacity of [REDACTED] Girls to develop and manage education.
4. The school should improve and accelerate the achievement of international commitments that our nation has embraced as guiding principles i.e MDG'S and EFA (FPE, FDSE) goals.
5. Enables the school to reflect on its work and take stock of the same for purposes of seeking to improve performance results through visioning, planning and goal setting.
6. Enables the school to map out the way forward. This builds momentum of focus through future thinking, refocusing and re-energizing the stakeholders (Students, Parents, Board of Governors, Parents Teachers Association and teachers) consequently building commitment to be agreed upon goals and targets
10. It helps in charting the long-term course for the school by developing yearly plans to implement the strategy taking action, monitoring progress and adjusting plans and action based on emerging issues.

***Nabeko Strategic plan (2012; P.2)***

Extracts from the strategic plan indicate the emphasis on constant refocusing and re-energising; purposely to build and sustain constant agential consciousness as the driving force

for improved achievement. Similarly, Mubari deputy and Nabibo principal seem to prioritise re-orienting staff and students to the school vision and mission; describing it as the schools' driving force for nurturing the achievement of set objectives, "Our vision and mission are the driving force for achieving our objectives. When new staff and students join the school, we bring them together to understand the school vision and mission so that we move together. We get to know where we are and where we are heading to" and "We have our vision, mission and core values outlined in our strategic plan and service charter. They help us to understand where we are coming from, and serve a great purpose in rebranding, to fit in our team kind of strategy; fit the dream we have for the school." These excerpts highlight the importance of school system thinking through envisioning; as an opportunity to see the big picture and critically reflect on the kind of changes needed to facilitate sustained achievement. Nabibo principal indicates re-envisioning may facilitate deep reflections on the state of the school in line with desired goals. Mubari deputy demonstrates that envisioning bridges the divide between groups, thereby establishing a foundation for harmonious engagements and unity of purpose. These leaders considerably suggest that school vision, mission and core values are important sustainability tools as they create forums for collective reflections.

### ***7.3.3 Effective Communication and Sharing***

Effective communication and collective reflections appear to build strong stakeholder networks and mutual support. Prevalent in preceding sections' analysis is the testimony of improved relationships; achieved through stakeholder engagements and conversations. C3 senior leaders highlight meetings and briefings as communicative forums leveraging schools' capacities to be resilient. Mubari DOS asserts,

We keep talking about our values in what we call principal hours. We have an hour every Saturday where the principal talks to student and staff. Sometimes he delegates to deputies, HODs, DOS or career master; we all talk to students in terms of values, their dreams and what they are supposed to do to achieve. We also have forums where we (*teachers and leaders*) talk and share the vision, mission and values, where we keep reminding each other on how to achieve them.

Similarly, Nabibo Strategic-leader indicates that a good communication strategy navigates the complexity of school cultures and may have a significant effect on people's behaviour.

Like if you want to start a new school rule, we sit in a Kamukunji (informal meeting), set our ground rules; whatever we say here we should not abuse each other, there will be no victimisation, and you are free to present your feelings and ideas.... Eventually, you reach an agreement and we also discuss the consequences thereof; students suggest what should happen to anyone offending the rule. So, they make their own rules and it is very easy for them to follow compared to those ones imposed on them.

The excerpts not only highlight increased sharing about tenets of achievement but also, the opportunities created to collectively reflect on what the schools endeavour to achieve. These leaders suggest that establishing clear and transparent communication channels might mitigate the problem of resistance; exemplifying a culture of shared values. Significantly, communication seems to be an ongoing process visualised as imperative in the organisational architecture and sustainability of high expectations. The case seems different in C1 and C2 schools where meetings and briefings appear to arise from a crisis; thus, meant to only resolve conflicts but lacking a progressive agenda.

#### **7.4 The Power of Collective Leadership**

Building a resilient school system with capacities to overcome difficulty and persistently achieve positive results might be realised in school environments with collective leadership synergies. Synergy referring to the systemic process in which school leadership teams, departments and different units of stakeholders “may generate greater value working as one system rather than working as separate entities” (Benecke et al, 2007, p.8). Productive leadership synergies seem to be those framed around organisational relationships that result in dynamic networks rather than positional hierarchy. A LEA officer when responding to Luguyo School’s non-thriving achievement, which, teachers associated with transfer of a charismatic deputy-principal claims that school problems arise from the overemphasis on positional leadership. The officer argues for the need to create and sustain synergies of leadership and professional practices that shift from contractual obligations and encourage attention to the whole system.

*A school performance is dependent on a system, and once you have an established culture in school you do not need to depend on one person. Like in Luguyo, the deputy left, however, the school should not go down just for that. The principal was there; HODs were there. So, what happened? From our inspection, we realised the principal failed to manage the transition. You see, teachers are supposed to be at the centre of leadership, but in Luguyo, they are not; for Luguyo to sustain itself and be a good school in discipline, performance co-curricular, teachers are the key leaders (Emphasis).*

The quality assurance officer picks on Luguyo School’s leadership framework; drawing attention to the school system organisational culture, to which he seems to apportion a foundational role to the school’s performance. He suggests the school leadership organisational architecture might partly explain the school’s achievement position. The emphasis puts a huge responsibility of school leadership to teachers rather than the principal; shifting the rhetoric from hierarchical individualised to broad collective leadership. Notably,

he seems to exemplify a whole-school leadership approach, indicating it may cushion a school's achievement stability, rather than depending on an individual's capacity.

#### ***7.4.1 The Holistic Leadership Approach***

A systemic or whole-school leadership approach that considers multiple perspectives and engages all stakeholders in decision-making appears more productive in leveraging a school's capacity to sustain a rising trend. C3 leaders suggest that adopting a whole-school approach to leadership and learning may enhance positive working environments. These leaders conceptualise holistic leadership as one that adopts a multi-dimensional understanding; sourcing for stakeholders' views through active engagement and participation. Mubari DOS claims a holistic leadership approach creates cohesive teams that facilitate a unified understanding, *"Our success comes from cohesive teams; I mean the unity with which we operate, where everyone has something to give and is appreciated. With this unity, we have been able to embrace dialogue, appreciate views by others and come up with consensus. (Emphasis)"* The extract suggests that holistic approach involves not only appreciating alternative perspectives, but also, going beyond involvement to active engagement and participation in decision-making and implementation. The emphasis underscores the communication imperative to which they attribute democratic capacities to build unified and cohesive teams.

Holistic leadership involve democratised decision-making processes; going beyond diminutive stakeholder involvement to active engagement and participation in decision-making and implementation to drive the school vision forward. Nabeko deputy-admin claims democratising decision-making is appealing to students and teachers; emphasising the engaging relationship cultivated in a democratic school environment. Similarly, Mubari deputy-academic asserts that democratic decision-making processes may achieve changes in the school system by increasing teachers' and students' collective responsibility.

Our principal uses democracy; *he makes us part of the problem and the solution (Emphasis)*. We sit in many forums; everybody becomes part of what we want as a school....by democracy, I mean he never commands anyone to do what he wants; he proposes and we sit down to discuss his proposal. At times, we say no, at times we accept.

The extract exemplifies active participation in decision-making as central to holistic leadership. The emphasis illustrates the principal's indirect influence of making stakeholders take the responsibility. The consistent use of "we" suggests the strong stakeholder

networking. He seems to communicate that the principal uses democratic approaches in building the holistic leadership: establishing robust internal networking and teaming among stakeholders (*analysed further in section 7.4.2*).

The leadership approach described above differ from the traditional bureaucratic leadership witnessed in some C1 and C2 schools. Traditional bureaucratic leadership and control systems become fragile and vulnerable especially difficult times. The fragility and vulnerability of traditional top-down leadership practices become conspicuous especially in times of uncertainties. During the national teachers' strike for instance, although the cause of the uncertainty was external and beyond local leadership control, the responsibility fell on school leaders; to not only respond to the uncertainty but also meet both internal and external expectations of learning. Leaders indicated that the strike affected local school leadership differently, with schools practicing traditional leadership experiencing substantial effects.

I can prove it, in many schools HODs went to school even if the strike was on, but in this school, they were not here. Any extra work, any going for an extra mile they are not ready. Since this issue of strike started, I think it has had a very negative effect (Sideki Principal)

In every institution, there is a framework of leadership; ours has improved the effectiveness of how we relate to each other, how to deliver results and how we operate as teachers and leaders. Like here, now we have a strike going on, but all teachers we call middle and senior managers are in school (Mubari DOS).

The extracts highlight two different responses to a crisis; the national teachers' strike. Sideki principal complains about middle-leaders' distancing attitude during the strike; grieving teachers' non-responsiveness and points out the potential negative effect (*to student learning*). Mubari DOS, however, espouses teacher commitment and support during the strike. He points to institutional leadership framework as the possible explanation for the differentiated response. Notably, DOS suggests that a holistic leadership approach may regenerate capacities to respond to crises and overcome vulnerability in times of uncertainty.

#### **7.4.2 Teamwork key to Effective Leadership**

Harnessing multi-sourced leadership support through teamwork seems imperative to overcoming challenges. Devolution of leadership power in C3 schools appear to promote adaptability that lead to the development of resilient systems. C3 School leaders claim sustained improvement arose from their accommodative leadership; working in a networked friendly school system that connects stakeholders and builds teams. I asked, 'what have you



done to sustain students' improvement over time?' Nabibo principal asserts that it all happened because of teamwork.

*I cannot say 'me'; it is 'we' because it is teamwork (Emphasis). That is something good we introduced and are proud of. Previously there were many conflicts and you know, without a team you cannot achieve much. Now we are working as a team with teachers. We have improved structures, which were wanting; we have expanded teachers working space (Emphasis).*

The extract extols building teams as an important aspect of achieving a cohesive school system. The emphases highlight the importance of teamwork, which the principal claims to introduce through the expansion of *leadership* structures. The emphases further suggest that teamwork is nurtured when leadership structures are expanded to not only accommodate more teachers but also create more space for teachers to feel wanted, appreciated and contributing towards the achievement of school objectives. Expanding teachers' working space may also mean improving teachers' capacity to engage with senior leadership in making critical decisions.

School leadership practices that appear to diminish participation and a shared responsibility seem to disempower especially teachers. Lidude and Bageno schools (*C1 and C2 schools respectively*) appear to suffer high vulnerability whenever sudden changes occurred due to limited opportunities for meaningful engagement and the weak sense of belonging and identity. The SCQASO highlights little stakeholder participation and lack of a shared responsibility as issues ailing Lidude school leadership.

*Leadership is the problem; there has been a lack of harnessing the prime effort of teachers (Emphasis 1). Particularly the former principal was not able to inspire teachers to work as a team. She did not even work with her deputy; she only communicates with her through correspondence on issues. She wrote letters to TSC on matters that could be resolved with her deputy (Emphasis 2)*

The quality assurance officer points at the perceived authoritarian leadership style of Lidude's former principal; suggesting the principal's controlling leadership that draws on positional power and authority is inhibitive. Emphasis 1 indicates that exercising positional authority has a disempowering effect because it fails to harness teamwork to support and inspire teachers' productivity. Emphasis 2 indicates the hostility and limited harmony even within Lidude's senior leadership team. Such hostility may render other leaders and teachers incapable and incompetent to influence decision-making. Lidude principal claims such leadership challenges not only affect within school relationships but leaks to external networks too, "When I came in, I found a lot of complaint from teachers and the community on the status of our performance and how things were running here. So many conflicts in school and outside" She reiterates

LEA officer's claims of the unhealthy stakeholder relationship in C1 and C2 schools; suggesting their senior leadership lost touch and support from within and without school settings. That notwithstanding, there was little evidence that LEA provided professional support, in-service training or mentoring to change the leadership practice in Lidude. As discussed elsewhere in this chapter, the current principal is still struggling with these historical conflicts. Notably, Lidude is yet to achieve a harmonious, cohesive and meaningful teacher engagement and support that would cushion the school against contextual challenges affecting teaching and learning.

#### ***7.4.3 Reaching out for External Support***

Achieving a holistic leadership with substantial stakeholder support may require cultivating a strong identity through internal and external networking. It seems impractical to separate school leadership from the context it is situated because school systems are nested in wider policy and societal authorities of governance. C3 school leaders are cognizant of the complex policy and community working environments. However, these leaders suggest that supporting stakeholders to see the bigger picture within this complexity is important in leveraging the school's resilience.

If you are able to bring people (*stakeholders*) to your way of operation, working together and ensuring that everyone is on board, is a strength in maintaining the focus and unity. You know education is political, everyone wants to have a say. So, we have been keen to consider the composition of different members of our stakeholders and help them to understand what we stand for as a school (Nabibo Deputy)

Majorly it is the leadership of the school to attract support. LEA is there for the policy and checks if the school is adhering to the policy and quality. But, even when LEA want to do more, do they have the capacity? So, it is the internal system of the school that determines, we have to provide avenues for people to engage with us (Nabeko Strategic-Leader)

The excerpts highlight the importance of establishing networking relationships with the school's wider social settings. Nabibo deputy identifies the political nature of education, indicating the need to encourage networking with various stakeholders. However, he cautions that desire for diversity should not override the school vision; leaders need to make effort to create consensus. The strategic-leader centrally positions the school leadership as the major determinant of, and creator of school system networks; asserting that LEA has limited capacity to influence how school network with stakeholders in the wider societal location. Mubari BOM chair supports these claims contending, "We have overcome challenges by receiving support from people. It all depends on how organised we are in networking; how do we position the demands of these people? How well do we meet their demands without

compromising our priorities?” The extract draws attention to the importance of networking, arguing it should be considered in line with school priorities. Significantly, C3 leaders espouse tolerance, open-mindedness and reaching out to key networks within social authorities as advantageous in building stakeholder identity, ownership and attracting support.

It is not easy for all stakeholders to link the big picture and day-to-day school needs at a collective level. Some stakeholders especially those whose profession relates less to the educational field may find it hard to navigate their social boundaries and collectively support the achievement of school objectives. As discussed in chapter 5, Sideki, Bagamu and Bageno school leaders appear to have different understandings with some external stakeholders on how to lead the school. In this respect, Mubari Form-3 principal advocates for a multi-lateral approach in engaging a network of leaders within and without school boundaries.

We work as a team sharing a lot of the challenges we face as leaders. On a day-to-day basis, the interaction between teachers, parents, PA/BOM and LEA is limited. However, there is more of intra-group than inter-group interactions, but we are interdependent. The groups work differently but work together; they have their own targets and goals but there are frequent meetings under the chairmanship of the principal, BOM and my office to share ideas concerning internal and external issues affecting teaching and learning.

This extract suggests a diverse networking engagement between stakeholders. Although he acknowledges a limited day-to-day stakeholder engagement (because of different role expectations and capacities), he underscores the interdependence between these groups and the role of school senior leadership in bridging the gaps between them. He resonates well with BOM-chair’s explanation on Nabibo’s cohesive network, “We have several committees with different roles and objectives. These committees incorporate teachers, BOM, parent and community representatives including politicians who support us. LEA is represented too. These meetings have built people’s confidence in the school.” These leaders seem to exemplify a type of leadership that spans boundaries; demonstrates leadership engagements that create an interface of operation that bridges hierarchies and traverse a wider lateral network. This leadership approach, however, may alter or contravene the outlined policy’s leadership procedures; suggesting that the task of school leadership is to provide conditions and structures through which networks are created and sustained over time. The latter raises questions of how power relations are handled in such wider and complex leadership networks.

This section has analysed how C3 schools capitalised on collective leadership competencies through teamwork and networking. Through holistic approaches and developed independent of thinking and acting C3 schools seem to develop capacities to span organisational boundaries and rules; such competencies appear to play a foundational role as drivers of imagination, creativity and inspiration even in teaching and learning practices as exemplified in the following section.

### **7.5 Positioning Learners in the School System**

Realising SSA might be contingent to how school leaders locate and position the learner in the school system. While TSC policy commissions and mandates school principals to monitor teachers, the teaching and delivery of the curriculum, it seems silent of learners' positioning within the school system. However, leaders in C3 schools appear to find fault with the emphasis on teacher-work accountability as an impetus to improvement in students' learning and achievement. Alternatively, C3 school leaders advocate for leadership that centrally position learners in the school system; claiming a teacher-focused accountability approach may have a little achievement, instead, creates more conflict and resistance among staff. Mubari HODs claims the school managed to change its achievement because of a change of leadership focus from teachers to students.

**HOD 1:** For a long time, we focused on the teacher; is he teaching, revising and guiding students well. However, when your boss wants to see your working, you will work just to please them, but you are not delivering in the classroom. Now the focus is on learns; is the learning effective?

**HOD 5** There is the leadership issue, and this is what I am looking at as positive influence. You know you cannot influence achievement until there is a change of heart in teachers and even students. Therefore, the ability to amass that change of heart has to work very well for the change in achievement; to us, this has worked well.

These extracts communicate three things: a shift in leadership focus from teaching to learning, a change of heart in both teachers and learners and the ability to influence the change of heart. HOD 1 accentuates the importance of shifting leadership focus from teachers' work to the learning process. He resonates well with Nabibo DOS' argument that teacher-focused leadership may lead to superficial coverage of syllabus, instead of facilitating learning. "Like the issue of the syllabus, someone will tell you if it is just finishing the syllabus I will finish. However, the challenge is, have students understood." These participants perceive the shift as influencing levels of teacher commitment. HOD 5 suggests the ability to amass the influence and change of heart is critical for the shift to occur. This argument suggests adopting leadership accountability system that focuses on the learning

process guided by, instead of centring on the teacher creates a productive learning environment.

Learner-centred leadership appear to create a positive identity among learners which becomes an intrinsic motivation for the uptake of commitment and enthusiasm for learning. Nabeko Senior leaders claim when learners feel appreciated and listened to, they increase their productivity. Nabeko deputy-admin claims a democratic leadership centred on the learner is appealing. In a rejoinder, Nabeko deputy-academic asserts that learner centred leadership require having learners at heart.

We have implemented that perspective of the learner sense, everything in the school is student-centred; the focus is on the learner than the teacher. What is the learner doing? The discipline of the learner, the performance of the learner, the wellbeing of the learner. You know when the learner realises that the highest office is concerned with them and has them at heart, they will always obey the school rules, and avoid doing anything that will annoy this person. They also go out of their way to please you; so that one contributes a lot to the performance. But when they know you do not care they will also not care.

The extract exemplifies the current student-centred leadership in Nabeko School. They seem to associate leadership focus on students' learning and wellbeing with sustained performance similar to Mubari colleagues. Deputy-academic claims that a student-centred leadership draws students' commitment, encouraging sustained performance. Nabeko principal supports her juniors' perceptions stating, "To be honest, I am more student centred; my interest is just on the welfare of students. Once students are settled well, they become comfortable, happy and will do well. *I do not start with teachers; I work on the students. When you work on students, teachers will follow according to where students will take them (Emphasis).*" The principal underlines the aspect of student wellbeing as vital in student learning (*analysed further in section 7.5.3*). The emphasis privileges student-centredness over teacher focused leadership, claiming a focus on the student is an impetus for teacher practice. Mubari DOS, holding similar views argues that students should lead learning. "You make students lead learning; this makes them intrinsically motivated. The modern child requires more participatory than passive listening. If you are able to capture them by varying the approach to learning, then you get the best results. As a school, we are trying our best to get hold of this modern child." The extract emphasises the central positioning of the student not only in facilitating intrinsic motivation but also, in providing a deeper understanding of the students' learning needs and responding to them accordingly.

### ***7.5.1 Understanding the Digital-Natives***

School leadership's understanding of the current students' imagination, preferences and backgrounds seem critical in informing practices that enhance SSA. The analysis in the preceding section suggests that a contextual understanding of not only technical aspects of learning but also, considerations of students' backgrounds and societal educational changes do inform learning and achievement. Emerging across C3 schools is the understanding of a different generation of learners, which they claim have diverse needs, preferences and psychological aptitude that needs appreciating and dealing with for the school to achieve unified objectives. DOS Mubari reflects on the perceived unique generation of learners, "I believe the society is changing so fast, and so are our students. The leadership needs to change to embrace the new changes in terms of technology and the social life that is happening". Nabibo Strategic-leader affirms,

The biggest challenge is how to deal with the current generation of students because we seem to be reading from different scripts. We have a generation gap between analogue teachers and digital youths; it becomes very difficult. We have attempted to involve them in everything we do, we are trying to do things in a digital way; however, we have not been very successful in changing the pedagogy because of financial limitations. We may need to involve some digital consultancy service because that is one field we feel insufficient, but it is one critical area to consider to capture the attention of the modern student.

These leaders communicate their consciousness of the changing nature of students and how the wider societal changes seem to shift learning. Mubari DOS highlights the need for a leadership that is transformative and adaptive to societal changes; one that develops capacities that respond to the current generation of learners' needs. Nabibo strategic-leader claims an observed conflict, described as 'a generation gap'; subsequently suggests that encouraging students' involvement and participation in school leadership activities is necessary. However, he cites limitations in schools' effort to ameliorate the engagement of analogous teachers with digital youth, particularly, in pedagogy. These extracts highlight the need for a significant understanding of the current generation of students and figuring out leadership and learning practices that best respond to their needs.

School leadership that focuses on developing and regenerating technical, social and cultural capitals of teachers and learners may have the capacity to sustain achievement. C3 senior leaders point out that improving teacher's pedagogical and attitudinal aptitudes as well as students psyche as important in sustaining learning and high achievement. Nabibo principal claims teachers' professional development especially in pedagogical practices that embrace

digital technology is critical in closing the generational gap and subsequent uptake of teaching and learning.

One thing we must do, we need to change the attitude of teachers and teaching methods; Involving what we call the students' psyche in the learning. We have not been able to change these things due to financial gaps; we have not been able to come up with a fund to tackle this area of digital methods of teaching; as a school, we do not have a fund for teacher training. But, the question of teachers retraining on methods of handling the digital natives is long overdue and is very important.

The principal although appreciating the importance of a pedagogical shift complains about the financial implications and limited resources available for teachers' professional development. He suggests that schools within the context are less endowed with financial resources to meet these financial implications. That notwithstanding, Nabibo strategic-leader in the preceding section indicates the need to attract external networks; to support teacher's digital professional development initiatives in schools. Mubari School seems ahead of the rest. The school had created networks with a local university to support the uptake of digital pedagogy in the school. Notably, Mubari initiative indicates that leaders working in challenging contexts have to be creative, and imaginatively seek out-of-box solutions to the challenges facing their schools to keep the improvement agenda.

School leadership that is learner-focused seems to willingly and ingeniously try out and experiment new strategies in the effort to support their students to persistently learn and achieve highly. Whereas all school leaders pointed to the limited resources base to meet the digital shift in pedagogical practices, Mubari school leaders claim to have resolved the problem by sourcing external networks in achieving this objective. Interview conversations within the school and the evidence in the strategic plan indicate Mubari School sought networks with sponsors including a local university in the digital pedagogy initiative as by extracts from the school strategic plan.

13	Improve Computer laboratories	-Identify donors. -Solicit for funds(fundraising, government,well wishers, donors, stakeholders) -purchase 20 new computers & 2 new laptops every year.	-Number of computers
14	Staff development	Identifications of staff training needs and subsequent training - Attendance of SMASSE trainings	Effectiveness of staff in their work Use of skills learnt during training - %age success in

21	Computer networking	-Solicit for funds(fundraising, government,well wishers, donors, stakeholders)
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*Mubari strategic plan (2013; P. 37-38)*

Mubari Deputy-Academic asserts, “We have partnered with *a local* university who supports us with resources and training of teachers in embedding technology in teaching” Mubari F3-principal confirms by claiming that networking with the university arose out of the schools’ desire to meet the changing youths’ preferences and societal demands.

The way we used to do things is different now; we want to meet the new societal demands so that our goals and vision remain alive. We realised we needed to change the teaching to attract these youths by having more technology in our methodology. *Like to embrace technology, vary teaching methods like using PowerPoint and projectors, digital content from YouTube, etc. With the support of the university, we have changed the perception towards learning (Emphasis).*

These leaders demonstrate the shift in Mubari’s instructional leadership; suggesting a change in pedagogical practices seems to appeal to the current generation of youths. They perceive networking with the University as an ingenious way the school responded to this need. The emphasis signifies a change in student’s perception due to schools’ effort to address the digital natives’ learning preferences. Importantly, the analysis suggests learner-centred leadership keeps abreast with, and innovatively source and cultivate school learning environments that are appealing and supportive to the changing nature of learners.

### **7.5.2 The Panel Learning**

Student-centred leadership that encourage learners to actively engage with content in an inquiry learning approach may facilitate sustained learning and achievement. A strong emphasis in C3 schools is a shift away from the traditional teacher-led curriculum delivery to student-led learning processes; seeking competence in student’s skills and knowledge rather than a transitive pedagogy where teachers deliver content to cover the syllabus. Nabeko NT, fascinated by the panel learning approach, identifies it as new and unique. Similarly, Nabeko deputy- academic applauds the panel learning model,

We came up with what we call panels in classes; learning takes place at the panel level. Each panel has a leader, but members of the panel form leaders of various subjects. We give out the syllabus, textbooks and guiding questions; students do research which helps them respond to questions and make notes. So, teachers go to class just to facilitate the topic, set the pace and provide questions that engage students.

The extract highlights a learning culture with active students’ engagement in an inquiry type of learning; demonstrating that learners are repositioned as leaders of their own learning and teachers as facilitators. The new teacher when reflecting on her experience in other schools suggests student-led learning has a progressive effect on student and teacher commitment. That notwithstanding, the panel learning seems to have its drawbacks. Nabeko LST claims the new model depreciate teachers’ professional identify, “Some teachers complain there is a



detachment between teachers and students. Like last year after teachers' strike students did not seek teachers' assistance. Students believed they knew everything, however, their performance went down. But this year having learned from their friends they are close to teachers". Nabeko deputy-admin, citing another challenge claims some students fail to cope with the demanding inquiry learning, "Some students struggle especially those coming from challenging backgrounds. Besides finding difficulty in learning they also have problems with fees payment and it is worse when they are weak academically. Most of the time we call their parents, we discuss and support them to continue. There is only one case of an orphan who dropped out." Although the LST latter claims the new students' orientation programme may alleviate these challenges (coaching and training students to fit into this culture), there seems to be more to work on especially in dealing with teachers' identities on one side and students' mental preparedness and support; especially those who seem academically weak and/or coming from socio-economically poor backgrounds.

Prioritising student learning rather than monitoring teaching appear to open avenues for school leaders to creatively and innovatively seek ways to improve learning and achievement. C3 school leaders claim when the school is keenly focused on learning, the leadership and staff ingeniously identify approaches that deliver higher sustainable achievements. Nabeko principal indicates that the school not only developed the idea of panel learning, but also panel accounting for learning; staff monthly appraised students' learning and achievement in ways that facilitate deep and introspective reflections and which, in turn, raise students' enthusiasm.

It is about leadership practices that work; we have an initiative called prioritising the learner; besides the panel-led learning, we have teacher panels where students come to account for their work monthly. During this time, we also appeal to their emotions, we touch on their family issues and remind them where they have come from. Because we have realised it works. When a child appears before a panel of teachers, of course, we already have the records, we share, ask questions ranging from academic touching to emotional and asking them to relate and account; mostly they shed tears.

The principal suggests that besides foreseeing the technical teaching, school leadership has a role to identify practices that work; those that have the capacity to facilitate a unique learning and achievement culture. The type of accountability adopted in Nabeko seems antithetical to the high-stakes testing accountability approaches prevalent in this context. Nabeko strategic-leader further claims this approach succeeds because of a democratic leadership approach in which students are identified and engaged in decision-making. "But this has succeeded because of having democracy, we sit and discuss with students, then they tell us what they

want. What we do we guide them towards what we think is right. We teach them and it comes out from them that is when they own it. When we are all here and involved we can think and come up with good ideas.” The extract underscores creating students’ agential consciousness and cultivating a strong identity as having contributed to the success of a new learning and accounting initiative. His argument resonates well with Nabibo strategic-leader’s rationale for democratic practices that encourage students’ involvement and participation in frequent school self-evaluations; engaging student in critical and informed decision-making processes. Similarly, the shared identity and open dialogue intuitively encouraged by the new principal in Mubari seems to have initiated the ‘Elimu-Mashinani’ initiative; to which all participants attribute their sustained students’ achievement. Sharing about the creation Elimu-Mashinani initiative Mubari LST underscores a collective reflection on practice as its source; attributing the initiative to high student engagement. These conversations highlight a different approach to instructional leadership whereby students becoming drivers of learning; teacher’s activities and commitment is therefore driven by learner’s motivation and engagement, not school principals monitoring and appraisal.

Reflecting on the conversations witnessed and the informal interview sessions with both senior and middle leaders in the school, it appears Panel Learning and Elimu-Mashinani initiatives achieved the school other dividends beyond engaged students’ learning. Mubari LST statement, “Now these tents are actually our operational grounds. It has brought all of us together; leaders and teachers, even the principal... have left their offices and transferred our services to tents” seems to indicate the suppression of leadership hierarchical barriers; creating a level playing ground, a unified identity and a harmonious engagement between teachers and leaders. Moreover, interview conversations and FGD analysed elsewhere in this chapter supports this observation, highlighting the emphasis on collaborative leadership and learning among teachers and leaders in Mubari. This suggests that when a school is student-centred, leaders create conditions that encourage active learning not only for students but also, teachers and the wider school community. Nabibo DOS further argues that through collective reflections and actions, senior leaders in student-centred schools encourage other teachers to take on leadership responsibilities for learning through teamwork.

Now that we use teamwork in teaching, students now embrace all teachers unlike elsewhere where student feel they belong to a certain teacher. The advantage is that less variation in the performance unlike when there is the liking of one teacher which brings great variations in performance. Also, when there is a transition or when a teacher or leader leave the school we have no problem. We have nothing like a good teacher and a bad one. We proceed as normal

The extract communicates that a collective approach to leadership and pedagogical practice reduce the variability in student achievement within schools because of the embedded teamwork. DOS further indicates that teamwork may mitigate disturbances arising from leaders and teachers' transition, facilitating sustainability of school systems and established achievement cultures. The latter seems to be a problem in C1 and C2 schools like Luguyo, Sideki and Lidude where the transfer of teachers and leaders left huge gaps destabilising school systems. Significantly emerging is that with an established unified web of leadership and pedagogical practice, departure or transfer of a teacher or a principal does not destabilise the system; the position and established practices carry on due to the established adaptability and flexibility within the system.

### ***7.5.3 Support Systems for Student Learning***

School leadership that focuses on, and pay persistent attention to changes in students learning, welfare and wellbeing seem to substantially contribute to the uptake of students' learning. Findings in C3 schools indicate that school leadership practices that augment SSA are those that prioritise improved students' learning environments, attend to the evasive students' social, economic and wellbeing needs and ardently enhance students' retention, completion and achievement. Mubari DOS claims they do more than expected,

*We teach, revise and guide students, however, we do more: We talk and psyche student, we make sure they are comfortable and are in school throughout. Form 4 (examination candidates) do not go home for fees, they are in school. Previously student would be sent away for fees and would overstay at home, but now we agreed when you are in form 4 the issue of sending away students for fees should not be there (Emphasis).*

The extract suggests that technical teaching is important, however, is not enough to sustain high achievement, especially in socio-economically challenged contexts. Instead, he draws attention to the socio-economic and emotional wellbeing of students. The emphasis suggests the school's responsibility to not only provide an orderly, safe and calm learning environment but also, protecting instructional time and enhanced teacher-students contact time. It further appeals for the school's response to students' economical needs: accentuating students' retention and completion of secondary education as a form of achievement. This points to school leadership's broadened understanding of students' learning and achievement; highlighting the need for leadership that clearly conceptualise how student learning is embedded and influenced by the wider society. This understanding significantly underscores the critical role of school leadership in mitigating negative effects arising from adverse

environments; ensuring that enabling circumstances are cultivated to enhance sustained learning and achievement for all students.

A learner-centred leadership seems to help students to progressively learn within caring and cohesive communities by establishing social initiatives that alleviate background challenges. Leaders in C3 schools claim they help school communities to see the big picture within the underlying difficult socio-economic environment; thereby resourcefully identifying means to support students' learning. Citing poverty as one of the school's drawbacks, Nabibo principal exclaims, "Students coming from a poor background cannot raise fees, we risk losing them; in extreme cases, they drop out. But we help them by seeking for sponsorship from our networks. Some parents also volunteer to pay fees for the needy children. This way we have ensured they never drop out". The counterpart in Nabeko states,

I have a student who came in with about 1% of the fees. A very bright child. The child did not afford to be in a national school not because is incapable intellectually but lacks fees. Usually, those who fail to get sponsorship totally resort to joining Sub-County schools that seem cheaper. Luckily, we had a child we realised had two sponsors, so we talked to one of the sponsors and they rescued her. We called her from home and now she is in class. I also have a girl in F4 who have a fee balance of ksh.194, 000, but we do not send them away. We look for sponsorship for them when we fail still we do not send them away. That is our major project these days.

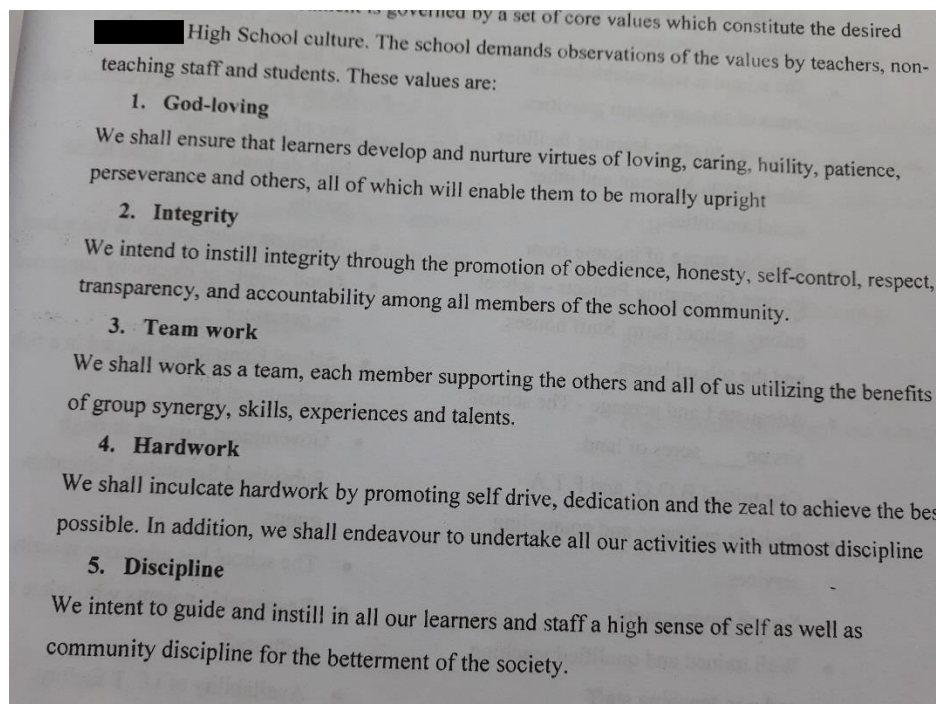
These leaders point to the changing role of school leadership, with principals tasked to go beyond their professional mandate of monitoring and facilitating curriculum delivery. These leaders lament about the school fees agenda which seems disquieting within the context of the study. The extracts affirm Mubari DOS view that school fees problem risks students' retention, completion and achievement. That notwithstanding, C3 leaders who appear to enthusiastically shepherd their school vision appear to forcefully contend with this problem; earnestly seeking alternative funding options for needy students (*illustrated by the statement, 'That is our major project these days'*). Nabeko deputy-admin suggest that C3 leaders' vehement funding initiatives are partly influenced by a social justice perspective driven by a social and moral responsibility to provide basic education,

We have challenges with needy students, they cannot pay school fees and definitely, you cannot send them home because we want all these students to learn, achieve something and build a future. The money accumulates, you do not know whom to ask from, and we have quite a number because this is a national school. It is very difficult. Here we tell the class teacher to look for sponsors. The class teacher is directly involved with these students as class managers, they identify them. In fact, teachers here are very good because they know students; will tell you this one even if you send them away you will not get money, her background is extremely needy. We are looking for sponsorship, but if they do not get, all of us take it as our concern. As a school, we come in to help.

Nabeko deputy-admin's view communicates that facilitating a high and progressive achievement for all students in contexts experiencing difficulty seems driven by the desire for social justice and equity of learning opportunities as illustrated by these extracts from C3 schools' strategic plans.

<b>1.4. CORE VALUES .</b>		
<i>Education</i>	<i>Character</i>	<i>Service</i>
- Hard work	- Integrity	- Commitment
- Professionalism	- Accountability	- Community
- Innovation	- Justice	- Fairness
- Diversity		

***Nabibo Strategic Plan (2013; P. 1-2)***



***Mubari Strategic Plan (2013; P.23)***

C3 school leaders suggest consciousness of and subsequent planning to counter the effects of socio-economic problems on students' learning and achievement. Response to students' needs, however, seems to go beyond learning and socio-economic needs; identifying schools' internal means of helping students to adjust to the learning environment through guiding and counselling and pastoral care.

Student-centred leadership informed by a socially responsive vision challenges the school community to facilitate the learning and achievement of all students through pastoral care. Pastoral leadership exercised by guiding and counselling departments within C3 schools seems to prioritise students' emotional wellbeing, enthusiasm and expectations of high achievement. Citing the influence of students' extreme cultural backgrounds, leaders in C3 schools claims a strong emphasis on pastoral care as the impetus for learning and achievement. Nabeko and Nabibo leaders identified students from marginalised communities as being at risk, suggesting focusing on students' wellbeing may enhance students' retention and completion rates.

Students from marginalised communities have extreme cultural issues; some are older and have other cultural reasons pulling them away from school. They fail to cope with the environment but we integrate them into the system, follow them up and try to raise their morale through our pastoral care. We even accommodate them during holidays. Not letting them go home and affected by cultural issues helps motivate them (Nabeko SL).

The dropout rate has gone down; we have a very high retention. Initially, you would start with a group in Form-1; by the time they are in Form-4, you have a totally different group. But from the time we started having a working system that looks at student welfare and started looking seriously at student wellbeing with the priority of students' needs, sometimes we involved parents in helping us, it encouraged students to remain in school (Nabibo DOS).

These leaders exemplify the importance of pastoral care and attention to students' wellbeing in enhancing students' retention and learning. Nabibo DOS describes a student-centred leadership as a working system, suggesting a system that is socially responsive to students' needs. Nabeko strategic-leader underscores building students' morale and motivation through pastoral care as having potential to help students adjust to the learning environment and keep in the programme. Nabeko deputy-admin affirms colleagues' views, mentioning the school's creation of a moral inspiration department to which she attributes much of the schools' progress.

We have a moral inspiration department, which is a creation of the school, working beside the guidance and counselling. This department was created to provide pastoral care; we take care of all spiritual and emotional issues; we have a chaplain and a moral responsible mother. Every year we have a new, vision theme a mission and this is what is pushing our school forward every year as we focus on achieving the theme for each year. In fact, we are spending more energy on building character than academic. We are focusing on building the whole, once the character is built and developed academic just falls into place. And that is why every year we are improving and increasing the number joining University.

The deputy highlights the initiative to intensify the provision of pastoral care alongside instructional leadership. She underscores character-building emphasising developing a whole student rather than narrowly focusing on academic outcomes. In her view, once students'

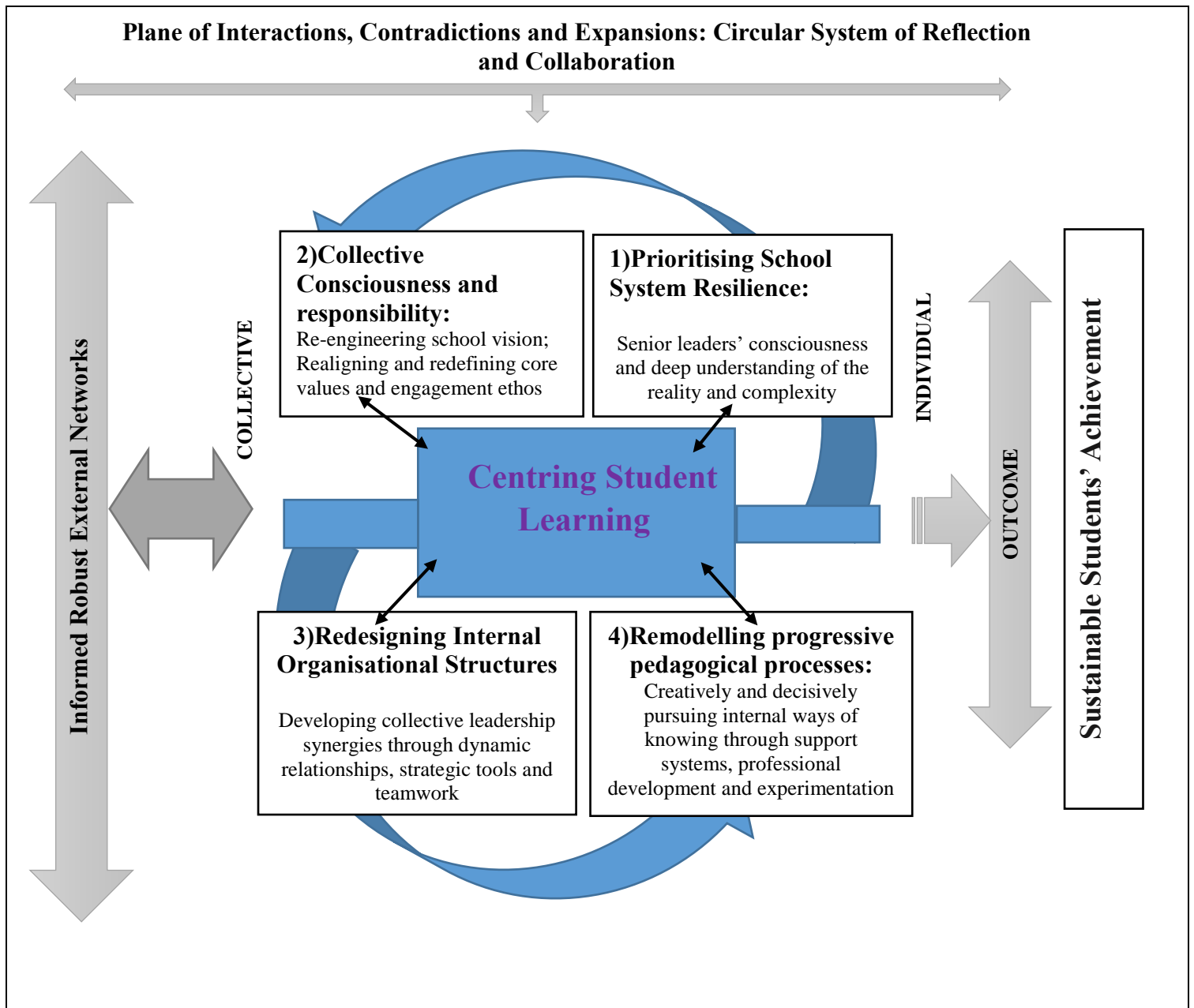
character and emotional wellbeing are taken care of, then it becomes easier to develop the academic and the achievement (*a position taken across the C3 schools*).

This section has analysed learner-centred leadership discussing its influence on digital natives, the new learning models and the role played by support systems to students learning and achievement. Findings from C3 schools suggest that learner-centred leadership endeavour to develop the spirit of high expectations by ingeniously initiating and implementing leadership and pedagogical practices that encourage student-led in-depth and inquiry-based learning. On the whole, the section communicates that democratic school environments in which leaders do position learners as active agents and support their learning and wellbeing may nurture and enhance SSA.

### **7.6 Regenerative Leadership Practices Model**

This section synthesises regenerative leadership practices discussed above into an illustrative model. It is noteworthy to mention that the practices of leadership discussed above do not exist and work in isolation. Rather, the success of regenerative practices is founded on the interrelationship between them. Central to these interrelationships is the deep and collective triple-loop reflective processes that form an interface between these practices. Figure 7.1 demonstrates the interrelationship of emerging regenerative leadership practices necessary to enable SSA to occur.

*Figure 7.1: Regenerative Leadership Practice Model*



The model in figure 7.1 is designed from C3 schools' findings. This was possible because the practice of leadership emerged strongly in C3 schools compared to C1 and C2. This strong leadership enabled C3 schools to circumvent existing socio-political challenges and sustain progressive improvement over time. This figure demonstrates that leadership practices required to realise SSA is a complex mix of strategies, mechanism and creativities. Embedded in this complexity is the transformation of socio-political environments necessary to pave way for successful pedagogical engagements and achievement.



The numbering in the quadrants presents a theoretical process of regenerative leadership practice. At the centre of regenerative leadership practice is students' learning and achievement, the focus on which informs all other processes within the school system. This model, therefore, presents student-centred leadership as the basis for SSA. Quadrant 1: Prioritising school system resilience is the starting point of the journey to sustainability. Mainly, this is a responsibility of senior leaders. Quadrant 2: Collective consciousness and responsibility, is where senior leaders engage other leaders, teachers and stakeholders in collective reflections on vision, mission, core values and system ethos. Quadrant 3: Redesigning internal school structures is where leaders redesign and recreate structures of engagement, expand leadership structures to create strong synergies, collective working relationships and team initiatives. At this point distribution of leadership materialises easily. Quadrant 4: Remodelling progressive pedagogical processes is the stage of actualisation. At this level, trust is developed and is abundant in the system to allow decisive innovation, creativity and experimentation. Members of the school community appreciate continuous learning and improvement. Quadrant 1 and 4 relates to the individual; it's about developing the capacity of individuals in the school system. Quadrant 2 and 3 relate to the collective, the system; it's about the organisation of the system to improve productivity and functionality.

These stages are presented in numbered quadrants to facilitate understanding, however, in reality, the picture is much more complex. The dark arrows show that at every stage leaders reflect back on student learning. The blue circular line illustrates the back and forth triple-reflection loop that school leaders engage in to drive internal conversations. While most of these conversations are internal, there is a network of engagement with the external systems like ministry policies, community expectations, societal expectations among others. The line of intersection between the internal and the external is very thin, however, it forms zones of interactions and contradictions. Well established internal collective reflections have potential to change these contradictions into zones of expansions through regenerative practices.

Central to regenerative leadership practices, therefore, is the ability to prioritise the building of school system resilience by recreating structures, cultures, capacities, relations and pedagogical practices, repositioning them to circumvent the socio-political challenges and nurture environments that enhance SSA. Espousing regenerative leadership practices, however, requires engendering collective awareness and action, nurturing system capacities and developing stakeholder aptitudes of high adaptability, flexibility and willingness to learn

and create resilient cultures in schools. These aptitudes protect schools from socio-political turbulence and facilitate system resilience. Importantly, these practices should be contextualised as emerging both from within school spaces and out of the society that is still transforming into a well-developed democracy. The critical awareness of stakeholder identity and diversity, and tapping into their collective potential, is important in enhancing the capacity to navigate difficult socio-political environments and ensure students maintain high levels of academic performance. This model disputes the assumption that socio-political conditions pre-date and reproduce status quo, rather, centres the regeneration of school system-level capacities and structures that enable SSA to occur.

## **Conclusion**

In summary, this chapter has analysed regenerative leadership practices that C3 schools adopted to overcome the socio-political challenges to enhance SSA. Five important issues emerge from the discussion: First, the aspect of building resilience school systems; underscoring resilience as the most crucial aspect for SSA. C3 leaders make sacrifices beyond professional roles; appreciating the challenge of leading schools in such contexts but, importantly, channelling efforts towards mitigating these challenges to teaching and learning. Prioritising building school system resilience as one best way to overcome context specific obstacles to students' achievement.

Secondly, senior leaders' agential consciousness and succinct understanding of leadership expectations and exigencies cited as very important; however, the ability to shift from individual to collective consciousness is mandatory. Creating awareness of the real challenging situation and engaging other stakeholders in conversations about the prevailing adverse situations affecting them; collectively taking on the risk and responsibility for changing for better outcomes. Leadership practices that create awareness, nurture capacities and aptitudes of adaptability may facilitate resilience; collective understanding and responsibility may cushion a school's stability in times of socio-structural turbulence, thereby facilitating school system resilience. Leaders further acclaim professional development to change teachers' attitude and enhance professional relationships and practice.

Thirdly, nurturing collective agency may require designing organisational structures that are supportive; create internal capacities and localised cultures that are responsive and adaptive to change with alternative thinking and ways of acting to anticipate and respond to

unexpected changes. Encouraging stakeholder participation and opportunities to play an active role in influencing the school system leadership considered important in nurturing stakeholder trust and commitment. SP process and vision building considered vital means through which senior leaders realise school system resilience; as an important tool not only as a means of constant reflection, assessment and evaluation of practices, but also, determining the positioning of each member in the school system.

Moreover, C3 leaders advocate for collective leadership synergies framed around organisational relationships that result in dynamic networks as opposed to positional and hierarchical leadership. These schools have developed expanded leadership structures to put the responsibility for leadership and learning to teachers rather than the principal; suggesting holistic and collective leadership synergies cushion a school's achievement stability. They underscore the communication imperative to which they attribute democratic capacities for unified and cohesive teams. C3 leaders have nurtured teamwork through leadership structures which are expanded to accommodate more teachers and create space for teachers to feel wanted, appreciated and contributing towards the achievement of school objectives. They have also improved teachers' capacities to engage with senior leadership in making critical decisions.

Finally, C3 leaders' belief realising SSA is contingent on how school leaders locate and position the learner in the school system; centring on the learner rather than the teacher. They claim learner-centred leadership creates positive identities among learners intrinsically motivating them and nurturing their commitment and enthusiasm for learning. This focus on learning seems to encourage the willingness to experiment with new strategies in the effort to support their students to persistently learn and achieve highly; the panel learning approach. C3 leaders suggest a learner-centred leadership help student to progressively learn within caring and cohesive communities by establishing social initiatives that alleviate background challenges.

The analysis is concluded by presenting a model developing from emerging regenerative leadership practices in C3 schools.

## **Chapter 8 The Synthesis of Key Findings, Discussion and Conclusion**

### **8.0 Introduction**

This study principally examined leadership practices that school leaders have engaged in to achieve sustainable students' achievement (SSA) in Kenya. In particular, the study examined the existing leadership practices in schools, explained why they appear so and analysed their expediency in achieving SSA. While acknowledging research that shows multiple factors contributing to SSA, this study chiefly focused on leadership as one school level factor. The central purpose of this thesis is to elucidate the school leadership context in which SSA may occur. This concluding chapter highlights new insights emerging in three areas: discrepancies in school leadership practice, contradictions in teachers' and other stakeholders' engagement and management, and regenerative leadership practices that C3 schools used to re-create the enabling environment for SSA to occur. The chapter also reflects on implications of these insights on policy, practice and theory.

### **8.1 Discrepancies in School Leadership Practices**

This study found substantial discrepancies in the conception of, and practice of leadership across study schools. The conception and understanding of good leadership occur on a continuum, with hierarchical-positioned focused and democratic participative leadership forming the two extremes. In theory, position focused leadership is associated with managerial bureaucracies, mostly, connected with authoritarian leadership approaches (Northhouse, 2013; Yukl, 2010). C1 and C2 school leaders conceptualise and practice leadership that can be characterised as authoritarian. On the contrary, C3 school leaders demonstrate democratic-like leadership practices, with high tendencies of power-sharing and stakeholder engagement in decision-making. Discrepancies in school leadership practice across C1, C2 and C3 schools distinctively emerge in three areas: responsibility and accountability for learning, internal relations and the commitment to school vision for learning and achievement.

#### ***8.1.1 Responsibility and Accountability for learning***

This study found a substantial variation in how school leaders across study schools organised themselves. This variation distinctively informed by how leaders construed the responsibility and accountability for learning. The hierarchical principal focused leadership in C1 schools was largely informed by the conception of leadership as position, thus, equating leadership to

headship. This conception placed a huge responsibility to principals to account for learning, with other stakeholders having a lesser obligation. Similarly, the focus on principals' charisma and exemplarity explain the pseudo-participatory leadership in C2 schools. In the effort to maintain smooth administration and order, C2 principals hesitated to make difficult decisions, take the risk and initiate hard changes that destabilise the status quo. The analysis in chapter 5 demonstrated these variations in detail outlining how the various approaches to leadership informed processes of responsibility and accountability for learning.

The overemphasis on principals' accountability considerably contributed to a dichotomous relationship between senior leaders and teachers in C1 and C2 schools. In the effort to individually drive improvement in results, C1 principals tended to become authoritarian, further creating division and isolation among staff. On the other hand, C2 leaders expressed tendencies to spread the risk among stakeholders or seek justifiable explanations for failure. There was a tendency to shift the blame to parents, MOE and students, rather than seeking innovative ways to improve learning and achievement. C1 and C2 schools' accountability practices encouraged complacency, little commitment and less teamwork among staff: exhibiting less collective responsibility and accountability for learning. These findings are consistent with other studies conducted in the African contexts (Bush, 2007, 2009; Bolden and Kirk, 2009; Amanchukwu et al. 2015). Bush (2009) suggests that on the overall, African school leaders lack a sense of collective responsibility and accountability for learning. Bush (2007) and Barton (2006), associate the individualised accountability procedures with existing school leadership policies that prioritize leadership development of principals and ignores other leaders. Similarly, this study suggests the over-emphasis on principals' accountability on school management and student achievement in Kenya tend to explain the lack of collective responsibility and accountability for learning and achievement in C1 and C2 schools.

While findings in C1 and C2 schools resonates well with Bush (2009) findings, this study identifies some significant structures of the division of labour with well-organized and collective responsibility and accountability for learning in C3 schools. C3 School leaders had designed a devolved accountability system, which, encouraged a collective responsibility for learning and achievement. Rather than focusing on the principal or a few senior leaders, teachers at different levels took responsibility for learning and improvement. Findings from C3 schools show a shift from individual work towards a collective and creative problem-

solving system. Different from Bush's overall judgment, this thesis suggests that specific schools in Kenya have the potential to reorganize and realign their structures to nurture and sustain a collective responsibility and accountability for learning. Some scholars suggest that school leaders in the African context are more likely to appreciate collective responsibility due to historical and cultural ubuntu collectivist mind-sets (Day et al. 2009; Ebersohn, 2012). Ebersöhn's study on resilience in schools in South Africa connected leadership collectivism to Ubuntu culture; suggesting that collective responsibility is likely to exist because of the existence of ubuntu culture. Ebersöhn, however, ignores the reality that existing educational policy environment might be antithetical to ubuntu culture (Bolden and Kirk, 2009). This study distinctively identifies that senior leaders' conception of good leadership and the subsequent ability to redesign and align leadership accountability practices that respond to schools need considerably generates (or impedes) the initiative for collective responsibility and accountability.

### ***8.1.2 Internal Relations***

There existed discrepancies in internal organisational relations across C1, C2 and C3 schools. Discrepancies were evident in the division of labour that defined who was involved in decision-making. The study found consistencies between existing school structures and stakeholder engagement and commitment; with the latter informing subsequent working ethos. The hierarchical narrow-apex and pseudo-participatory leadership structures in C1 and C2 schools respectively informed the existing defective internal relations that exhibited tendencies of super-subordination predispositions. Accordingly, these schools were characterised by less unified focus and vision for learning. Existing weak internal relations tend to explain the lack of a whole-school approach, lack of a shared repertoire and harmonious working relationship in these schools. These findings resound other scholars' arguments that school organisational characteristics influence internal relations and engagements ethos, which define the success of improvement initiatives, (Mescht and Tyala, 2008; Wu et al. 2013; Kools and Stoll, 2016). Mescht and Tyala, (2008) argue that school environments where senior leaders strive to achieve control, internal relations rarely flourish because of conflicting expectations across leadership tiers. Equally, dissatisfying internal relations in C1 and C2 schools failed to garner the desired commitment and enthusiasm imperative for SSA to occur; teamwork and collective agency for learning and improvement became less evident.

On the contrary, in C3 schools, the emphasis on democratic and collaborative leadership practice informed well-developed internal relations. Chapter 5 section C demonstrated C3 schools expanded and redesigned leadership structures that accommodated many teachers (other stakeholders). C3 schools' participant narratives suggest the existing leadership structures encouraged active stakeholder participation, thereby establishing internal trusting relationships. These findings echo Wu et al. (2013) quantitative analysis that tested an organisational model of student achievement using enabling school structures and collective responsibility. Wu and colleagues associated these two constructs with collective efficacy and staff trust, suggesting they had indirect effects on students' achievement. However, beyond positive and trusting working relationships, this study found out that elaborative engagement structures further enhanced coordinated and streamlined system functioning. The latter was important in mitigating and overcoming structural drawbacks arising from unexpected, multiple and rapid changes (Coleman, 2006; Mulford, 2008; Beycioglu and Kondakci, 2014). From the study, it was evident that the elaborative leadership engagements and active stakeholder participation enhanced staff capacity to take responsibility irrespective of their position in the school. This evidence suggests that the manner in which a school leadership is organised does influence teachers'/stakeholders' dispositions and commitment that has indirect implications for student learning and achievement.

### ***8.1.3 The Commitment to School Vision for Learning***

This study identified discrepancies in stakeholder commitment to the vision for learning in study schools. Findings suggest that existing leadership practices in schools define teachers and other stakeholders' commitment, motivation and support for the vision for learning and achievement. The evidence from this study shows that existing non-harmonious and isolating leadership practices informed the lack of commitment and teaming initiatives to achieve the vision for learning in C1 and C2 schools. Authoritarian leadership practices in these schools tended to discourage teacher engagement, thus, failing to harness teacher support and enthusiasm. This study associates the lack of well-structured processes for collective envisioning and planning for improvement in these schools with the low levels of commitment to student learning and achievement. These findings are similar to Mulford's (2008) analysis of school leadership, which, associates authoritarian leadership approaches to the old public administration that promotes bureaucratic rule-driven executive management. Equally, C1 and C2 principals utilised assemblies, briefs and meetings to talk to teachers about their responsibility, citing employment codes of conduct and work ethics. While talking

to teachers is important in communicating school vision and expectations, the reliance on instructing and contractual appraisal is insufficient in achieving lasting commitment. Research shows that collective envisioning and planning for school improvement enhances commitment to school vision for learning (Drath et al. 2008; Day et al. 2009; Hardman, 2012; Day and Sammons, 2013). Drath et al. (2008), for instance, criticise the traditional practices of leadership that depend on principals' instruction to support staff; asserting that 21<sup>st</sup>-Century school systems are complex organisations, with multiple actors and responding to multiple socio-political changes. Hardman (2012) adds that authoritarian and individualised leadership perspectives fail to garner stakeholder commitment to school vision for learning. Similarly, leadership practices adopted in C1 and C2 that emphasised the appealing of teachers' emotions through instruction proved less productive. Appealing to individual teachers' personalities and simple reference to employment codes of conduct only achieved basic compliance.

In contrast, C3 schools enjoyed abundant teachers'/stakeholders' commitment, motivation and support for the vision for learning and achievements. This study found out that beyond emotional appeals, C3 leaders tapped more into structures of engagement established through envisioning and strategic planning processes. These processes enabled C3 leaders to redesign engagement structures, promote collaborative values and encourage the participation of all stakeholders in decision-making. Distinctively emerging from C3 schools is the evidence that recreating and strengthening structures of leadership and professional engagements augments teachers' job satisfaction, thereby enhancing their motivation and commitment to the vision for student learning. These findings support other research that has argued for expanded planning and envisioning structures to motivate strategic stakeholder engagement (Gronn, 2003; Hargreaves et al. 2007; Hardman, 2012). However, these findings contradict research that suggests teachers in developing countries are majorly extrinsically motivated (Maughan et al. 2012; Han and Yin, 2016). Participants in C3 schools suggested that collaborative envisioning structures heightened teacher autonomy and trust, which they attributed to teacher high efficacy, maturity, motivation and high commitment to students' learning and achievement, a point supported by other scholars (Leithwood, et al. 2006a, b; Louis et al. 2010). These findings have implications for leadership policies, professional practice and development. They evidence the need to shift away from leadership policies and practices that draw on basic instructing and reference to contractual obligations as sources of motivation. Shifting away from rule-based to values and result-based school system with



increased decentralised leadership structures and greater responsibility to lower leadership tiers augments teacher motivation. Realising this shift in policy and practice, however, demands for the development in educational leaders' capacity, flexibility and reflexivity on practices: the keenness to innovatively redesign internal school structures to encourage transparent accountability systems and promote robust collective engagements.

## **8.2 Contradictions between Socio-Political Expectations and School Leadership**

### **Experience**

This study found contradictions between national education management practices and policy expectations on one-hand and school leadership experiences on the other. While research on effective school leadership in Kenya and Africa centres on principals' agency (Mwangi, 2009; Mafora, 2013; Anderson and Mundy, 2014; Ayiro, 2014; Bhengu and Myende, 2016), this study found the socio-political context as another important mechanism that influences school leadership practice. The study identifies contradictions on two fronts: (1) Teacher management; (2) stakeholder involvement and community participation in school leadership.

### **8.2.1 Teacher Management**

The study identified contradictions between TSC teacher management practices and school leadership expectations. Contradictions evidently emerge in the management of teacher quality and professionalism. The analysis in chapter 6 demonstrates how senior leaders across C1, C2 and C3 schools contended with problems of teacher quality, discipline and professionalism. The analysis suggests that teacher management problems in study schools arise from three sources: (1) TSC routine process of supplying teachers to schools irrespective of their quality and professional standards; (2) school leaders' limited autonomy and authority over teacher selection, quality and professionalism; (3) TSC limitation in monitoring and improving teacher management practices.

This study identified cavities in TSC teacher management practices not only in supply but, importantly, in the quality and professional standards. Contradictions emerge between TSC and school leadership expectations on teacher quality and professionalism. This study analysed teacher quality and professionalism from an effectiveness perspective; that is, how teacher quality relates to learning and achievement (Berliner, 2005; Nzoka and Orodho, 2014). Narratives from study schools (chapter 6) illustrate how school leaders experienced conflicts from the employer, teachers and surrounding communities in the process of

handling issues of teacher professionalism. These narratives identify TSC management input in teacher quality and professionalism as weak and inadequate. Correspondingly, principals felt less supported by TSC, MOE and the wider society in accomplishing complex teacher management responsibilities. Despite these professional conflicts, individual school principals are held responsible and accountable for students' achievement. Research suggests that teacher management practices have direct implications on teacher motivation and productivity; with subsequent effects on learning and achievement (Bennell and Akyeampong, 2007; Mpokosa and Ndaruhutse, 2008; Mulford, 2008; Pont et al. 2008a, b; Cheng, 2009; Wasonga, 2013; UNESCO, 2015; 2016; Jonyo and Jonyo, 2017). Bennell and Akyeampong (2007) point to dysfunctional educational management system structures as having negative implications on teachers' sense of responsibility and commitment. Pont et al. (2008) and Mulford (2008) further associate teacher management with governments' failures to decentralise education management. In addition, Jonyo and Jonyo (2017), analysing teacher management problems in Kenya highlight gaps in teacher shortage, communication and technology and professionalism. The Jonyo's, however, only centred on the basic mechanical, logistical and procedural teacher management mandate of TSC: recruitment, training, promotion and codes of conduct while ignoring real teacher management challenges at the school level. This study identified that complex and real teacher management mechanisms existing in Kenyan schools require much deeper analysis. School leaders in this study contended that TSC either lacked the capacity or have failed to establish communication links and capacity structures that may ameliorate problems of teacher quality and professionalism. From the evidence, reforming teacher management practice at school level is necessary if schools are to realise SSA in Kenya. The quality of school-level teacher management practices crucially influences teacher competence, motivation and productivity (Bennell and Akyeampong, 2007). However, the evidence from this study suggests that the existing centralised and prescriptive teacher management approaches adopted by TSC are not only limiting but also, generates tensions and conflicts between principals and teachers in schools. This study suggests that contradictions between TSC's centralised and localised school-based practices might be resolved with effective decentralisation and devolution of teacher management practices, an argument supported by other researchers (Mpokosa and Ndaruhutse, 2008; Mulford, 2008; Pont et al. 2008a, b).

School leaders' limited autonomy to correct existing misalignments in teacher management practice not only exacerbates school leadership challenges but also, have indirect negative

implications on students' learning and wellbeing. While TSC mandates school leaders to provide effective leadership in schools, including teacher management, it accords them little autonomy to execute their mandate. Nabibo teacher transfers, delayed Sideki deputy principal and HODs deployment scenarios in chapter 5 demonstrate the rigidity in TSC policy, evidencing school leaders' limited autonomy. Moreover, delayed communication and undecisive response to schools' leaders' and teachers' challenges further generated teacher demotivation tendencies. These findings are consistent with research that suggests lack of autonomy on teacher management have indirect implications on teaching and learning practices as well as students' achievement (Day and Sammons, 2013; Wasonga, 2013; UNESCO, 2015; Cheng et al. 2016; 2016; Bush, 2016). Flaws in teacher management may pose a huge responsibility to school leaders, especially, in handling teacher motivation challenges (Pont et al. 2008a, b; UNESCO, 2015, 2016). While substantial evidence exists over principals' lack of autonomy in Africa (Bush and Oduro, 2006; Thylefors et. al. 2007; Mwangi, 2009; Wasonga, 2013; Mafora, 2013; Anderson and Mundy, 2014; Ayiro, 2014; Bhengu and Myende, 2016), the emphasis has been on highlighting the managerialism in principal leadership. This study distinctively demonstrates how lack of autonomy, especially on teacher management, indirectly influence teacher motivation, commitment and support to leadership, learning and achievement.

Ineffective follow-up and monitoring of teacher management practices coupled with the existing bureaucratic procedures are limiting to successful school leadership. This study evidence that the huge network gaps and missing communication links between MOE, TSC, LEA and school leaders are the mechanisms behind principals' struggle with challenges of teacher management. In turn, principals feel overwhelmed with multiple and conflicting accounting demands, often with little consensus. This study suggests that existing contradictions and flaws in teacher management practices might be informed by these institutions' ineffective monitoring and evaluation practices which are further exacerbated by lack of consensus among them. The huge communication network gaps and missing links between school leaders and TSC that often, caused delays in decision-making, explain these contradictions. These bureaucratic practices and mixes threatened school leaders' time, priority and focus on students learning. Studies on teacher management criticise the existing logistical and procedural teacher management approaches in African contexts (Avalos and Barrett, 2013; Bush and Glover, 2016; De Clercq, 2008). Bush and Glover (2016) and De Clercq (2008) contend that African teacher professional monitoring approaches that focus

more on bureaucratic administration than teaching and learning are insufficient for sustainable learning and achievement to occur. Equally, this thesis argues that devolved teacher management systems might be more productive in contributing to sustainable student learning and achievement if developed to full potential. This argument has implications for educational policies in Kenya; actuates the need to prioritise the substantial devolution of power, mandate and capacity for teacher management to LEA and school leaders to resolve problems of teacher professionalism. However, successful decentralisation can only be achieved with heightened capacity, autonomy and empowerment of LEA and school leaders. Moreover, successful school-based teacher management requires streamlined and clear communication structures and networks of interaction between MOE, TSC, LEA and school management systems to ensure coherence.

### ***8.2.2 Stakeholder Involvement and Community Participation***

This study found contradictions between national policy requirements and local context expectations of stakeholder participation in school leadership practices. Although education in Kenya is not yet fully devolved or decentralised, education leadership policies legislate stakeholder involvement and community participation in school leadership practices (Republic of Kenya, 2013, 2015). Findings from this study, however, show contradictions in the rules of engagement across stakeholders. The analysis in chapter 6, section 6.2 highlight emerging contradictions between national policy and local politics in study schools, pointing out the conflicting accountability expectations. Specifically, school leaders fight with various patronages from political, local and church leaders' demand from communities served by schools. These demands sometimes conflict with policy requirements posing a dilemma to school leaders. These findings resound the evidence from other school leadership studies across international contexts that highlight the existing contradictions and inconsistencies between local expectations and national policies (Bush, 2007; Christie, 2010; Komatsu, 2013; Charbit, 2011; Gu and Johansson, 2012; UNESCO, 2016). Christie (2010), for instance, argues against policies that ignore the situational complexity of school leadership in which school leaders deal with multiple stakeholders in labour relations, regulations of governance and performance management. Gu and Johansson (2012) study in English and Swedish schools intensively analyse contradictions between the external policy and school internal contexts of leadership practice, concluding that these interactions influence school improvement. Outstandingly, in this study, however, the various patronages related to teacher management tended to be obstructive to principals' autonomy, capacity and agency to make

long-lasting improvement initiatives in schools. The study evidence that because of the existing limited agency and the conflicting accountability requirements, principals tended to be threatened and worry about the sustainability of their leadership positions. In turn, principals practiced controlling, authoritarian or calculated leadership practices.

Contradictions further emerged between policy procedures and community expectations surrounding leadership succession. While TSC leadership policy (2007) seems clear on appointments into leadership positions, principals and LEA officers point out political, church and local leaders' backings on who should lead and how they should do so. The analysis in Chapter 6 highlights Sideki' deputy principals' and HOD guiding and counselling scenarios, as well as Bageno HODs' complaint about TSC promotions. Findings in chapter 6 (section 6.2) suggest two scenarios: first, lack of clear policy guidelines about school leadership and community engagement on leadership appointments. Secondly, the possibility of policy implementation loopholes that may encourage corruption and exclusive preferences for certain individuals to take on leadership. These findings relate to Wasonga (2013) on education management in Kenya that cites lack of clear guidelines on the complex relationship between policy, school leadership and community engagement. While Wasonga centred on ambivalence in educational policies, findings from this study raise questions related to ethics and integrity in leadership. Existing patronages cultivated feelings of insecurity among principals, who suggested promotion depended on individuals' connections. These contradictions on promotion and succession generated tensions between school leaders, teachers and other stakeholders. This evidence suggests school leadership practices and actions might not be purely agential, rather reactive to existing socio-political working environments. These findings suggest that in the effort to enhance SSA, therefore, there is need to streamline policies related to leadership succession and promotion to create a fair, just and equal platform and counter emerging issues of leadership ethics and integrity.

### **8.3 Emerging Regenerative Leadership Practices in C3 schools**

In this section, I discuss distinctive leadership practices particular to C3 schools, which participants extensively referred to as having created an enabling environment for SSA to occur. C3 leaders used descriptive terms like 'recreate', 'rethink' and 'redesign' new ways of doing and acting. I analysed these participants' narratives from Hardman's conceptualisation of regeneration, "shifting the culture in the *school (sic)* ..... leading to the designing and implementation of radically innovative ways of doing things" (p.4). I discuss 4 emerging

regenerative leadership practices, (1) prioritising school system resilience; (2) Collective consciousness; (3) redesigning internal organisational structures; and (4) remodelling progressive pedagogical processes.

### ***8.3.1 Regenerative Leadership 1: Prioritising School System Resilience***

Prioritising the building of school system resilience to contextual challenges distinctively emerge as enabling SSA. C3 senior leaders contended that appreciating the challenge of leading schools in this context is important, but not enough. Rather, exceedingly espouse prioritising the building of school system resilience to difficulty, by channelling efforts towards mitigating challenges to teaching and learning. The analysis in chapter 7 demonstrated C3 principals' deeper conception of the role resilience played in providing the necessary aptitudes for overcoming socio-political exigencies. These findings reverberate other research that considers school leader's consciousness and deep understanding of the reality and complexity of the leadership context to be the beginning of the journey to sustainability (Fullan, 2005, 2007, 2014; Mulford, 2008; Hardman, 2012; Hargreaves et al, 2014; Johnson and Dempster, 2016). Mulford (2008) argues that understanding the world surrounding school leadership practice is mandatory for sustainability to occur. Fullan (2014) and Hargreaves et al. (2014) contend that sustainability of achievement is best understood from the theory of change perspective; school leaders' consciousness of the societal position of education and the complexity of education provision in political and policy systems that are ever-shifting. However, beyond this technical understanding and consciousness, the evidence from this study demonstrates that in challenging contexts like Kenya, achieving SSA might require disengaging from previous normalised conceptions of leadership, and proactively learning to lead in new ways that are grounded in social justice. With reference to the ongoing teachers' strike during the study, leaders perceived nurturing resilience from a social justice perspective as collectively taking on the risk and responsibility to change existing situations for better outcomes, even when it is lacking in the wider country context. Subsequently, taking on a social justice perspective, school leaders did initiate improvement efforts and sacrificed beyond professional roles to achieve SSA. These leaders realised the regeneration of system resilience in 3 ways (1) creation of stakeholder awareness of existing exigencies; (2) nurturing stakeholder capacities through indiscriminate professional development; (3) advocating for changes in teachers and other stakeholders' aptitudes through equity and fairness to facilitate adaptability. Much of these initiatives advocated for and facilitated by principals in collaboration with senior leaders amid limited resources.

Taking on such a reflective and learning approach calls for leaders' deep agential consciousness. Going beyond the cognitive awareness to develop a clear conception of the social character of the problem and designing suitably responsive leadership solutions (Pawson and Tilley, 1997, 2013; Archer, 1999; Pawson, 2006; Gu and Johnson, 2013; Amanchukwu, 2015; Naicker et al. 2016). This means that conceptualising the socio-political expectations and exigencies entrenched in challenging contexts is paramount in identifying what works, rather than simple psychological and technical mind-sets of leadership. Schools leadership development programmes in challenging contexts like Kenya, therefore, need to adapt leadership courses to nurture trainees' reflective capacities and ingeniousness on social justice intelligence.

Nurturing stakeholder adaptability to generate system resilience requires going beyond appealing to agency and attitudes. Appealing to teachers' emotions though necessary, may not achieve resilience given the low teacher motivation in the study context. Instead, spearheading teachers' and other stakeholders' adaptability and learning may enable school systems to recover from difficulty, overcome its effects and move forward in the effort to drive and achieve their agenda. These findings support other school leadership research that persistently highlights what successful leaders do to enhance school improvement (Murphy, 2008; Day et al, 2009; Louis et al. 2010; Hallinger, 2011). However, most of these studies emphasise what school principals do to realise an improvement in learning outcomes. Findings from C3 schools suggest that realising sustained achievement over time not only depends on what principals do, rather, how principals act and respond to unexpected exigencies, coupled with ways in which they connect with other members of the school system in their actions to achieve desired objectives. Principals' ability to relinquish control and embrace risk-taking, experimenting and learning from mistakes as well as sharing of lessons learned with all stakeholders through internal systems of engagement, communication and reflection is noteworthy. Risk taking and experimenting practices in C3 schools encouraged adaptability and learning which created capacities to mitigate tensions during times of crisis when pre-established school social values were threatened. These leaders' actions highlight the importance of creating internal school capacities to not only anticipate and respond to unexpected changes but also, to recover and forge forward in realising the school vision. Importantly, the shifting power relations across leadership tiers promoted high levels of mutuality and desire to build impetus and resiliently move in the desired direction irrespective of instabilities.

### ***8.3.2 Regenerative Leadership 2: Collective Consciousness***

Collective consciousness is a necessary constituent for sustaining school organisational practices imperative for realising SSA. Individual agential consciousness is vital, however, on its own, is not sufficient to ameliorate school system challenges and kick-start the journey to sustainability. The evidence from this study suggests that the ability to translate individually implicit agential consciousness into organisational, collective understanding is essential in realising system transformation and resilience; findings supported by other researchers (Burns, and Engdahl, 1998; Fullan, 2002, 2005; Derrington and Angelle, 2013). Educational leadership scholarship bi-conceptualise collective consciousness, first, as creatively but decisively pursuing internal system ways of knowing (Burns and Engdahl, 1998). Secondly, as a whole-systems' succinct understanding of the leadership complexity realised through the recognition of the force of vision (Fullan, 2005, 2008; Anderson and Wenderoth 2007; Davies and Davies, 2010; Bryson, 2011; Wanjala and Rarieya, 2014). The latter identifies the building and re-energising the vision as the pillar of the school system, in which the individual and the organization intertwine with a higher purpose (Bryson 2011; Davies and Davies, 2010). Findings from this study support collective consciousness rooted in envisioning, that is, utilising collective agential power in spanning progressive system consciousness. This collective agential power informs redesigning of schools' core interests, values and objectives (Hardman, 2012). The evidence from C3 schools suggests that shifting from individual to collective consciousness created stakeholder awareness of existing challenges, thereby, enabling principals to engage stakeholders in dialogue, risk-taking, collective responsibility and accountability for better outcomes. These findings have two important implications; (1) achieving collective agential consciousness requires reviewing and appraising existing school structures (physical, professional and dispositional) to determine their expediency; (2) collective consciousness rarely occurs by chance, rather, is consciously cultivated and nurtured especially in contexts experiencing problems with teacher/stakeholder motivation.

### ***8.3.3 Regenerative Leadership 3: Redesigning internal organisational structures***

Redesigning school organisational and engagement structures to fit the purpose and meet schools' specific needs developed as one factor facilitating sustained achievement. On top of democratic conceptions and practice, C3 leaders recreated new structures and organisational ethos that encouraged flexible ways of engaging. Study findings partly demonstrate school



organisational structures as the division of labour among staff, especially with regard to leadership practices in the school (similar across all study schools). However, C3 participants distinctly denote other structures along various utilities of school system leadership beyond the division of labour that includes policy, relational and symbolic structures.

***Policy structures:*** Findings show that adopting non-conventional approaches to policy implementation makes institutions more adaptable and resilient to contextual exigencies. Redesigning internal school policy structures to compliment and bridge gaps with education policies might give schools the adaptability required to achieve SSA. The analysis in chapter 6 demonstrated how school leadership practice interacts with the multiple and complex policy and societal expectations: leaders contending with various policy dilemmas at micro, meso and macro levels of education management. However, while other schools struggled with various patronages arising from this interaction, C3 leaders overcame these challenges by implementing policies in an adaptive and persistently flexible way that gave prominence to the regeneration of stakeholder capacities. These findings are similar to research across context that underscores the importance of redesigning school organisational structures to meet school specific leadership and learning needs (Leithwood et al. 2004; Day et al. 2009; Ball, 2012; Day and Sammons, 2013; Gu, and Johansson, 2013). Gu and Johansson identify conflicts between external policies and school-specific needs, calling for restructuring and reorganising the internal school's operation to inform and encourage creativity and innovativeness in leadership practice. Existing studies emphasise restructuring of the school organisation to build teams, change internal conditions to meet their needs and encourage teacher commitment, motivation and capability. While findings in this study are in agreement with these researchers' propositions, the current evidence suggests that restructuring internal organisations requires high adaptability and flexibility among senior leadership teams. C3 leaders nurtured adaptability and flexibility by encouraging emergent participation in decision-making as a way of raising agential consciousness and capacities using three approaches: (1) configuring the school organisational architecture to promote active engagement across leadership tiers, departmental activities and associate stakeholders. (2) inspiring a strong sense of shared vision and collective identity imperative in bridging barriers of leadership hierarchy; (3) encouraging diversity of voices and perspectives in decision-making across the board. These approaches encouraged the adoption of a multi-level leadership network, anchored on developed internal system capacities to achieve adaptability. The focus was on what schools needed to enable transformations and expansions to emerge:

prioritising internal policies that built competence and efficiency, developing internal policy structures that enable experimentation and working contexts that endure failure and support professional learning. This evidence suggests that the sense of collectiveness within a multi-lateral leadership network required flexible and adaptive governance that allow new structures and emergent leadership capacities to regenerate. Temptations to over-formalize these networks may jeopardise creativity by promoting contrived collegiality. Accordingly, senior leaders must be vigilant and adaptive to the changing priorities within the multi-lateral leadership school network. Vigilance enables leaders to constantly address different stakeholders' vulnerability by keeping communication channels open. Mismanagement of multi-lateral networks may unexpectedly create a collective sense of hopelessness, isolation and decline of social identity which reduces the commitment to student learning and achievement.

***Relational Structures:*** Findings show that redesigning relational structures that encourage collective leadership, embeds and nurtures collective responsibility and social justice might support the achievement of SSA. C3 principals consistently reiterated the recognition that principal alone or few senior leaders cannot manage complexities surrounding school management. C3 schools thrived on the development of relational structures that nurtured collective responsibility, encouraged teacher innovation and creatively devised new ways of achieving despite the odds. Participants commended C3 schools' relational structures for nurturing professional identity and maturity thereby establishing the schools as communities of practice. In literature, scholars demonstrate school relational structures as relates to the division of labour in leadership practice (Gronn, 2003, 2009; Spillane, 2006). Gronn (2003) describes the division of labour as work-relationship configurations occurring in environments where work has to be undertaken by two or more people; patterns of work, segmentation and specialisation. This conception foundationally informs the distribution of leadership discourse that engenders leadership sharing across the organisational system. However, proponents of distributed leadership make assumptions of equal levels of engagement and power sharing; which is not the case in developing educational environments like Kenya (as the analysis in chapter 5 demonstrates). Instead, C3 leaders centred on developing value systems that enrich interworking relationships grounded in trust and social justice as uniting factors. Subsequently, there existed heightened considerations of equity and diversity purposely to respond to multiple and complex stakeholder interests and build cohesion for improved outcomes. This study, therefore, argues that distributed leadership

only materialises after the school systems structures are realigned to establish working values and cultures that encourage collective consciousness and responsibility to flourish.

Engendering regeneration of new cultures, relationships and knowledge of engagement to change stakeholder attitude, enhance professional relationships and change practices for the better, therefore, takes precedence. Without laying these foundations of engagement, the distribution of leadership may be chaotic in that leaders take positions without accompanying responsibility and commitment to student learning and achievement (as witnesses in some C2 schools).

***Symbolic Structures:*** Findings show that strategic planning process and envisioning tools including vision, mission and core values, are symbolic structures, necessary for the development of school community networks and local capacities. C3 leaders associated these tools with the realignment and redefinition of institutional structures and values underpinning their practice. Principal drew heavily on the strategic planning and vision building processes to garner both internal and external support and achieve institutional coherence. The evidence suggests that these tools ameliorate school system coherence as they aid in creating internal capacities and localised cultures. In the process of realigning and redefining core values, new cultures of practice and engagement emerge. The analysis and reflectivity embedded in these processes offer alternative thinking and ways of acting to anticipate and respond to unexpected changes. These findings reverberate international studies that identify the need for nurturing collective agency through redesigning organisational supportive structures (Mulford, 2008; Day et al, 2009; Cheng, 2012). Day and colleagues argue that recognising the force of and re-engineering a shared school vision is important in spinning the wheel of change, providing sustained impetus and motivation for staff in supporting improvement initiatives. Moreover, other researchers identify these symbolic structures as change management processes that transform non-productive school cultures and turn around schools (Fullan, 2005, 2007, 2014; Bryson et al. 2011; Hargreaves et al. 2014). Equally, the evidence from this study shows that collective consciousness, accountability and responsibility for learning and achievement flourish and are sustained in schools when supported by accompanying symbolic tools of strategic engagement, vision, mission and core values. Teachers in lower leadership tiers, for instance, considered it a privilege to participate in these processes, indicating they ameliorated trust, commitment and enables staff to become responsive and adaptive to change. This suggests that these symbolic tools not only advanced staff relational and reflective efficacies, but also, determined the positioning of each member

in the school system. These findings demonstrate that symbolic structures can enhance collaborative working and cohesive school systems by attractive teacher confidence, encouraging creativity, developing trusting relationships and a strong sense of ownership.

The evidence from C3 schools suggest that policy, relational and symbolic structures do not exist in isolation, rather, are an intertwined system of organisation and reflection to inform improved stakeholder awareness, consciousness and engagement. Importantly, these findings provide the evidence that existing school structures have implications on the general school outlook, climate and working environment. Particular to the study context, these structures have implications on interrelationships and networks significant to a school's functionality and efficiency. Therefore, besides people and relations, school leadership development programmes in Kenya should focus on the development of supportive structures and systems necessary to enhance learning and achievement.

#### ***8.3.4 Regenerative Leadership 4: Remodelling Progressive Pedagogical Processes***

Realising SSA is dependent on the ability of senior leaders to persistently centre on and encourage remodelling of progressive pedagogical processes. This is a noteworthy but unexpected finding in this study. It is noteworthy because it chiefly explains the schools' differentiated achievement among other leadership factors. Unexpected because the success attributed to Nabeko's Panel-Learning and Mubari's Elimu-Mashinani initiatives contravenes various studies that consistently downplay the feasibility of progressive pedagogy in African contexts (Tabulawa 1997, 2003, 2013; Schweisfurth, 2011; 2013). The evidence emerging from this study suggests that centrally locating and positioning learners and learning needs in school leadership facilitates sustained learning and achievement in four ways; (1) senior leadership persistently prioritise resources, time and building stakeholder capacity to advance learning; (2) teachers narratives suggest learners become intrinsically motivated when they perceive that school leadership is keen on their learning achievement and wellbeing, which regenerates enthusiasm and commitment for high achievement; (3) student-centred leadership facilitates a deeper understanding of students' learning needs thereby generating an appropriate response; (4) student-centred leadership encourages a shift away from teaching-focussed to learning-focused accountability. These findings demonstrate that wider school-system-level factors have implications on actors in the learning process. Thus, schools' social and situational contexts may enable or constrain learning and achievement. Therefore, adopting student-centred leadership that regenerates learning capacities, inspires climates of

equity and diversity and provide teachers with conditions for maximum productivity might enhance SSA. Foremost, however, is ensuring consensus among teachers before implementing new pedagogical initiatives. Participants in C3 schools persistently highlighted the change of heart among staff before the implementation of new learning models; suggesting that without consensus radical changes in pedagogical processes are bound to fail. This suggests that student-centred leadership may only be feasible in unique school contexts that nurtures collaborative practices, have clearly defined unified purposes and creates capacities and supporting structures that regenerate consensus and coherence. The context within schools and the environment of leadership, which includes leaders' beliefs, identities and system cultures may significantly inform realisation of SSA. This evidence suggests the need for a renewed research focus on the feasibility of progressive pedagogy in African contexts that considers the wider school activity system. There is need to understand implications of the wider school system factors on the success of progressive pedagogy in Kenya and by extension African contexts.

#### **8.4 Overall Contribution**

This thesis makes five main contributions; 1) School leadership practice in the Kenyan context; 2) Leadership theory 3) Debates of structure and agency; 4) Contribution to the understanding of leadership practice using Activity Theory; 5) Proposes an alternative regenerative leadership model.

***Contribution to the understanding of leadership practice in Kenya:*** This thesis presents one of the first detailed studies in Kenya that has taken a critical trajectory in understanding school leadership practice from a system perspective. While a number of studies have looked at school leadership in Kenya, most have partially focused on principals' individual leadership styles and their effects. In doing so, they have ignored the wider policy, community and political environments governing school leadership practice. This thesis suggests that beyond individual leadership styles, school leaders in Kenya experience various socio-political challenges arising within and without school contexts. School leaders across the board have to contend with these challenges to realise SSA. While some schools have been able to navigate these socio-political challenges to realise SSA, others fail. This thesis has demonstrated that within school leadership environment can create strategies to counter, deal with and overcome the socio-political challenges. From the study, there is strong evidence that it all depends on the relationship and the cohesion within school leadership

teams. It is the responsibility of senior leaders to enhance cohesion in leadership teams; if senior leaders initiate, create and support these cohesions, and facilitate them to exist, school community members become resilient. Successful school leaders use various strategies and tools to cultivate and sustain cohesive working teams, which provide enabling environments for SSA to occur. But when senior leaders fail to take the initiative to nurture good relationships, a cohesive environment is non-existent.

***Contribution to leadership theory:*** This thesis contributes to leadership theory by demonstrating how context shapes the conception and understanding of leadership.

When you look at the whole idea of leadership; how leadership is constructed and defined in the literature, what has not been featured in terms of its definition and operationalisation is the way in which context impacts on the whole concept of leadership. It is widely accepted that the context of leadership is important and does inform the practice adopted. However, every context creates its own notions and practices of leadership. So, what we did not understand much is how those contexts shape the Kenyan ideas of leadership. Emerging from this study is the variation in the way leadership is constituted, not only across study schools but also, in the Kenyan context as a whole.

The concept of regeneration, for instance, is a composite word that means many things. In this study, however, regeneration emerged as taking something, then remoulding and reshaping it into what you want it to become in order to serve the desired purpose. Thriving school leaders conceptualised good leadership as that which can recreate, restructure, redesign policies, programmes and practices to serve the purposes of the school, which I theorised as regenerative leadership. Ultimately, these conceptions originate from the challenging leadership working environment in Kenya as demonstrated in chapter six. A critical question from thriving school leaders was; we have leadership policies and training within the country, but then, are they serving the purpose? Following these intuitions, leaders in thriving schools started analysing existing structures and opportunities, and determined if they are meeting their needs, and if not, how best to change them to meet their needs. Chapter 7 demonstrated how these leaders went down into these things, redesigned and recreated cultures of engagement and structures of working; thus, recreating something new that met their immediate and long-term needs. These developments in C3 schools were not happening in C1 and C2 schools. However, since these schools are exposed to similar challenges, if C1 and C2 schools access similar understandings as those exhibited in C3 schools, they might be

able to reach such conceptions and figure out how best to resolve challenges facing them. These manipulations in thriving schools demonstrate that context is important, not only in providing a different experience, but it adds to the understanding of leadership that works within specific environments.

This thesis has demonstrated that in each context, there are various mediatory factors informing and influencing how leadership is conceptualised and understood. Therefore, lifting conceptions of leadership that have been shaped, for instance, in developed contexts and try to operationalise them in developing contexts like Kenya that are different, can be problematic. For example, the evidence from this study has demonstrated that notions informing the overrated distributed leadership, might only work in developed contexts. In challenging contexts like Kenya, the distribution of leadership can only materialise after major school system re-designation and re-alignment to establish collective working values and cultures. School leaders must provoke the regeneration of new cultures, relationships and knowledge of engagement to change stakeholder attitude, enhance professional relationships and change practices for distribution of leadership to occur. Distribution of leadership in itself, therefore, may not achieve much in this context. This thesis, therefore, cautions against the blind adoption of the oversimplified logic models of leadership promoted in literature. These models are often developed and tested in contexts that are well-endowed with resources, capacities, systems and structures that facilitate the success of proposed models. While these models habitually form the basis for leadership preparation programmes in developing countries like Kenya, often, school leaders in recipient contexts find these training programmes non-responsive to the complex school leadership needs.

***Contribution to the debates of structure and agency:*** This thesis demonstrates how a critical realist ontology that considers both structure and agency can aid in the comprehensive understanding of a social problem, like leadership practice within its context. While a number of studies have illuminated on the role of individual agency in school leadership in Kenya, little existed to demonstrate how structure influence school leaders' conception and practice of leadership. This thesis provides the evidence that shows how structure and agency interact and create zones of contradiction and expansion; suggesting that comprehensively understanding mechanisms that influence leadership practice is much more complex and requires paying attention to both structure and agency. The analysis in this thesis illuminates on the interface between these two, demonstrating how structure and agency not only interact

but also, inform the conception and subsequent practice of school leadership in Kenya. Adopting a critical realist ontology in the analysis exemplified the understanding of complex intersections between the multiple layers of reality, often, created within existing structures and varying levels of agency. This complexity presents leaders with different expectations and challenges, often, taking their attention from the core mandate of teaching, learning and achievement. Conceptions of structure and agency in the study, therefore, aided in unravelling mechanisms influencing leadership practice in the Kenyan context. It facilitated the understanding of specific leadership practices that might aid school leaders to overcome existing leadership challenges and realise SSA. This study has contributed to the evidence that a comprehensive understanding of a social activity and all mechanisms operating within and without it is better understood when researchers reflect on both structure and agency.

***Contribution to the understanding of leadership practice using Activity Theory:*** This study contributes to the understanding of leadership practice using Engestrom's 3<sup>rd</sup> generation Activity Theory (AT). AT was fundamental in providing tools to account for leadership practices in schools as open systems, interacting but also, in conflict with other systems. In applying AT to study leadership practice, I looked at schools as open activity systems operating and governed by multi-level systems within and without school boundaries. This opposes the idea of looking at schools as managerial systems with a straight forward input, process, output/outcome linear approach. Managerial systems' approach makes assumptions that when a school acquires resources/structures (both human and material), and organise these resources/structures, results will be achieved. But then, it does not happen so in school systems that often, are open and complex with various engagements levels and other external activity systems. Thus, school systems have porous points of stakeholders, society and cultural influences. The leadership practice required in these open systems is, therefore, more complex and has more fluidity compared to closed business systems and situations.

AT in this study enabled me to go into the school system, breakdown and look at the specific things; subjects, object(ives), rules, community, division of labour, power relations and mediating symbolic artefacts that govern leadership practice. In this study, AT helped to look at the division of labour; senior, middle and junior leaders' engagement. The community; how senior leaders engage with within school departments/staff and outside stakeholders like parents, politicians, LEA. The rules of engagement and power relations, outlining who makes decisions, whose decision matter, and whose final decision counts. The mediating symbolic



artefacts; highlighting symbolic structures and factors determining school interworking relationships, commitment and cohesiveness in leadership teams. For instance, it emerged strongly from this study that processes of vision building, mission and strategic planning are the symbolic and mediating artefacts that leaders used to cultivate positive relationships, cohesiveness and commitment to results in thriving schools.

The evidence from this study clearly demonstrates a school as an open system in the wider society system. Schools as activity systems have multiple within activity systems but also links to numerous activity systems outside the school. AT, therefore, provides a distinctive platform to analyse the contradictions between and within these activity systems, the points of learning that emerge and the transformations that school leaders must bring about to enable schools to survive and sustainably improve students' achievement even within very difficult socio-political working environments.

***The alternative regenerative leadership model:*** Finally, using research findings, this thesis proposes a multiple-level conceptual model of educational leadership for challenging contexts. Following the evidence on the conception, understanding and practice of leadership from a challenging context, the proposed model might be better suited to respond to the complex leadership and learning needs within Kenya, and by extension other developing contexts. The model in figure 7.1 draws on thriving schools' regenerative leadership practices that advocate for the creation of resilient school cultures that are founded on high stakeholder adaptability, flexibility and willingness to learn. The model emphasises the reflexivity school leaders need not only to manage change but also, to counter the complex but unpredictable contextual circumstances in which they lead in order to achieve sustainability. In addition, this model is broadly consistent with Hardman's ideas, however, it considerably expounds on his framework by illuminating more on mechanisms beyond internal school organisation. It highlights the influence of the surrounding external socio-political environment on school leadership practice. This expansion is informed by findings from the study which demonstrate that societal structures and socio-political life outside schools do inform internal school leadership and learning practices. Moreover, the emerging model specifically underscores student learning as the central field of engagement and emerging consciousness. While Hardman leaves this space as a plain field of conscious interaction, this study identifies student learning as the central field of consciousness, reflection and engagement in school leadership.

## 8.5 Implication of Findings

Findings from this study have implications for leadership research, policy and practice.

### *Implications for Leadership theory*

While substantive literature exists on school leadership practice from various contexts, often, this literature presents the practice of leadership as context neutral and assumes a universal application of these practices. Accordingly, researchers from various contexts have tended to demonstrate how developed models suit various contexts. This study, however, has demonstrated that the context of practice impacts on how leadership is conceptualised and practiced. The evidence from this study shows the need to be cautionary when applying externally originating leadership models to new and challenging contexts like those in Africa. While these models are illuminating on school leadership practice in general, they may not necessarily work in the same way or appropriately apply in these challenging contexts without a good understanding and adaptation to mechanisms that operate in the new context. Following findings from this study, this thesis has demonstrated a sample of contextualised conceptions and practices of leadership in Kenya. That notwithstanding, there is a need for further research to develop localised but widely applicable notions, conceptions and practices of leadership that broadly apply to developing contexts in Africa and beyond. The regenerative leadership practice model emerging from this study, for instance, may form a starting point to explore and seek deeper explanatory theories of leadership practice in challenging contexts.

### *Implications for Policy*

Findings from this study demonstrate the highly regulated but complex context of leadership in Kenya. Despite, the complexity there exists predominant overemphasis on accountability procedures that centres on the principal as an individual. Often, these procedures ignore the reality that principals work with a host of stakeholders whose actions and decisions considerably influence students' learning and achievement. Focusing on principals' leadership styles as a choice-free will, often, is taken out of context. In reality, principals' style of leadership is embedded within the wider societal confines. Findings from this study evidence that exclusively focusing on principals' leadership may not only be creating internal school conflicts but also, could be obscuring key drivers of SSA. This study suggests that policies on educational leadership and accountability for learning should go beyond the principal to examine other educational actors within and without school environments;

teachers, BOM, PA, local community leaders, LEA as well as the influence of central MOE and TSC (teachers' managers) practices. There is the need, therefore, to enrich the concept of school leadership in the Kenyan educational policies by considering the multiple stakeholder networks and generative policy structures that interlink to various actors and systems of management. This study calls for adjustment of policies to accommodate this new enrichment.

### ***Implications for Practice***

This study further challenges existing bureaucratic leadership procedures, which largely rely on individual principals' reactions and response to MOE, TSC and community accountability demands. Findings from the study suggest that educational leadership and school leadership, in particular, is an evolving profession in Kenya and is still in initial stages of development. Thus, substantial consideration and grounding of leadership professionalism are yet to be established. However, findings in this study demonstrate how collective action organised at the local level may successfully mitigate contextual exigencies to school leadership and learning. This study suggests that school leaders can overcome difficulties and achieve sustainable achievement when given appropriate environments and are regarded highly in societal settings. There is need to give autonomy and professional space for school leaders to make feasible policies and changes in schools in Kenya. This professional space should be enriched with non-selective access to professional development opportunities and support. The study, therefore, challenges predominant assumptions in Kenya that school improvement inevitably occurs when a school acquires enough resources and is accorded enough external inspection and supervision. Accordingly, designers of leadership development programme in emerging contexts like Kenya should adapt professional development programmes to acknowledge emerging conceptions, provide room for experimentation and nurture innovative and creative leadership practices appropriate to the context.

### ***Reflections on Insider-Outsider Positionality***

Reflexivity is important in enabling the reader to evaluate how my positionality influenced my research, the interpretations and conclusions drawn from it. The methodological stand adopted in this study drew widely from reflections of my insider-outsider positionality, which, consciously or non-consciously influenced how I told the story. While coming from an insider background of education and working experiences in the context of the study, I

recognised the reality of an independent, causally efficacious world and acknowledged how my access to it is not only limited but also socially mediated.

*There is the material world of actual and possible states of affairs; the social world of normatively regulated social relations and interactions; and the personal world of experiences and beliefs (Mingers, 2014; P. 65)*

As an outsider, of particular importance to this study was explanations of exiting leadership practice as they appeared in study schools and not simply drawing on my subjective experiences. In particular, the interest was to uncover the generative mechanisms influencing leadership practices by using the principle of retroduction, beyond conflation of induction and deduction (Acher, 1998). I was conscious that the world of practice is a complex intertwining of the social, cultural, political and personal that interact in not only non-linear but also, in multifaceted ways.

During this research, my reflexivity has grown and advanced to distinctive levels of consciousness on the reality of the social world. I am more conscious of the empirical evidence base, allowing data to speak for themselves but also, increasingly cognizant of the limitations within data itself, and the subjectivity of my analysis. While I paid keen interest on participants' accounts of their social world, the interpretations, meanings and valuations of them, I was challenged to bridge the gap between the researcher and the researched meaning making. In doing so, I became eclectic in the research methodologies, methods and theories; adopting an interdisciplinary and multi-theory perspective that facilitated a complete understanding of the leadership phenomena in schools. This approach was critical in elevating my ethical and moral consciousness on my decisions and actions, not only to value the position of the researcher and the researched but also, appreciating that findings from the study are value-laden and do communicate on the researcher, the researched and context of the study.

I exercised the elevated reflexivity in the act of triangulation of research sources and methods to generate plausible conclusions and the enhanced validity of findings that was imperative in reducing my personal biases. Multi-method, multi-sources and multi-theoretical approaches not only provided greater confidence of conclusions drawn but also, generated unthought of, and contrasting but interesting questions deserving further research and greater understanding

of the complexities of leadership practice especially in challenging contexts. The elevated reflexivity reduced judgmental relativism by actualising the idea that an independent socially mediated objective world exists irrespective of our limited access to it but also, acknowledging the reality that different viewpoints about it exist. Balancing between this two is critical in understanding actual mechanisms influencing social practice.

With this reflexivity I adopted a systemic approach to data analysis, I analysed the influence of structures and contexts to leadership practice, picking out components, systems, power relations and processes that formed active generative mechanisms in the Kenyan context of leadership practice. The main focus was to understand emergent properties of these mechanisms, the interactions and conflicts within them and how these interactions produced the resultant practices. The research process, therefore, was more of discovery rather than justification of theory. While this study gathered the evidence to explain existing leadership situations and the resulting hypothetical theoretical leadership framework, I am cognizant of the need to gather more evidence to test the proposed framework that might require significant research to evaluate the weaknesses and strengths of these explanations and identify mechanism that possibly offer the best and strongest explanatory power.

### **8.6 Study Limitations**

This study has a number of limitations, which is important to consider when interpreting findings. First, the qualitative analysis which forms the substance of this thesis was limited to only nine schools in Kenya. The sample size is small and might not fully reflect what happens in all schools in the country as some schools might have different practices. However, these schools were sampled across counties found in different regions; three from western, three from central and three from southern Kenya. The spread of sample schools provides a relatively general picture of school leadership practices across the country. Moreover, the limited focus on nine schools provided an in-depth understanding of schools' experiences and practices of leadership which could act as a basis for replication of the study with a larger sample. Furthermore, the thick description of the findings provides lessons that could inform other schools in similar contexts on leadership practices that may provide an enabling environment for SSA to occur.

Secondly, this study proposes a regenerative leadership practice model that may enable schools to become resilient and realise SSA in Kenya and by extension other developing contexts.

Nonetheless, I am conscious of the limited data sources of only nine schools. I, therefore, consider the model exploratory and not explanatory. The rationale is to provide a conceptual framework and language that scholars in developing countries can use to guide the analysis of educational leadership and management in schools, especially in challenging contexts. The model may assist in not only identifying schools' stages of change and improvement but also, to decide on best intervention measures to support schools struggling with students' achievement. This model, therefore, should not be taken as a perfect tool, rather a methodological guide that may aid in the systematic and coherent review of leadership practices in schools in challenging contexts.

In addition, this study did not manage to access direct students' voices. Capturing students' voices directly might have illuminated more on their experiences of the initiatives around progressive learning models in C3 schools and enriched study findings. However, due to the limitation of time and resources, this was not possible. That notwithstanding, I still managed to capture students' response to leadership practices in general, and on the new learning models in particular from teachers and other leaders' explanations. Given that the sample included teachers at all levels and parent representatives, these participants substantially shared details of students' reaction to new approaches to learning.

Finally, these findings might be restricted to developing settings, and may not apply to developed contexts. Developing countries are disadvantaged in various ways; resources, knowledge and capacity development levels, wide disparities in economic and social backgrounds of students, teachers and leaders among other challenges. These socio-economic, socio-political and professional capacity variations may not apply to developed and wealthy contexts endowed with economic capacities to meet school leadership and learning needs. Although some schools in developed contexts are described as having the difficulty of being economically disadvantaged, these schools still enjoy well-established education management structures contrary to the context of the study. That notwithstanding, the analysis in the study brings forth the importance of understanding the complexity of school leadership within contextual confines, rather than simply focusing on principal's behaviour or merely replicating leadership models developed elsewhere.

### **8.7 Recommendations for further research**

Future larger studies with statistical analyses of the proposed regenerative leadership practice would be of interest to identify the feasibility of these practices in schools across contexts. While the analysis in this study evidenced detailed narratives informing the emergence of these practices, it was majorly qualitative. Larger longitudinal studies combining qualitative data and quantitative analysis and tests are necessary to identify what works, for whom and under what circumstances on a wider scale. Alternatively, taking regenerative leadership practice model as a methodological tool for participatory intervention studies or action research with schools struggling to sustain students' achievement could be a potential area to explore.

Secondly, various studies identify gender as an important factor in leadership practices, suggesting female and male leaders experience leadership differently. Although the scope of this study is wide, drawing on various socio-political aspects of school leadership, it did not capture the aspect of gender. This study focused on school system-level leadership, underscoring various leaders' practices and their interrelationships within the school system irrespective of gender. The unit of analysis was leadership practice. Some studies, however, suggest women are particularly affected by patriarchal leadership environments, especially in African contexts, and therefore, would have stern experience compared to men (Rarieya, 2007; Clarke, 2011). Further research on how different male and female leaders respond to and handle socio-political challenges to achieve SSA may enrich the field.

Finally, the evidence from this study demonstrates the need to review the findings of schools' uptake of progressive pedagogy in developing contexts. The unexpected findings on progressive learning initiatives in thriving schools contravene studies that consistently downplay the feasibility of progressive pedagogy in these contexts. The evidence emerging from this study suggests that wider school-system-level factors impact on actors' acceptance and adoption of progressive pedagogies. School leadership level factors like collaboration, unified purpose, capacities, supportive structures, leaders' strong belief in teachers and students and system cultures significantly inform realisation of progressive pedagogies. This study, therefore, recommends a renewed research focus on the feasibility of progressive pedagogy in developing contexts with a keen consideration of the wider school and leadership activity system. There is need to understand how wider school system factors impact on the success of progressive pedagogy in developing contexts.

## 8.8 Conclusion

What leadership practices do school leaders engage in to achieve SSA in Kenya? This empirical analysis of data from 9 schools in Kenya shows that leadership practices that enable SSA to occur are a complex mix of things, strategies and mechanisms. However, there is some distinctiveness about this complexity. The story is about driving change in the mix of constraints and challenges by recreating and regenerating structures, cultures and capacities across the school system in order to provide an environment that facilitates SSA to occur. The regeneration is guided by a vision and bringing people along from not only the senior management but also, driving change through the system. The evidence in the study illustrates that successfully driving change and realising SSA is more about working with teachers, students, associate stakeholders and the whole school as a system. This thesis suggests SSA does not happen in policy and working environments that emphasise: (1) procedural, and hierarchical positioning of leadership personalities; (2) monitoring and appraising individual staff teaching and syllabus coverage; (3) centralised and bureaucratic teacher management policies; (4) the central focus on individual principals to account for students' achievement; (5) school systems lacking focus, unified vision and coherence of engagement. A focus on these aspects simply encourage complacency: practitioners minimally respond to contractual engagements and ensure they meet basic role mandates on which accountability is pegged, however, with little effort to maximise productivity and enhance sustainable achievement.

With such policy and working environments, school leadership has to come in and organise things around. This thesis concludes that the context both within and without schools, considerably matters and the environment of leadership is very important. What school leaders believe in, how they see themselves and school system cultures is quite important in navigating the contextual challenges and realise SSA. All study schools faced similar challenges, however, C1 and C2 schools failed to overcome them because: (1) they failed to nurture cultures of teamwork and collective agency; (2) they were not persistent; (3) they lacked proper vision and plan for learning and improvement; (4) there was little evidence of leaders' initiating or striving to achieve system coherence and consistency of practice. These schools focused on basic procedural and contractual policy requirements, however, failed to recreate own internal mechanisms that could drive change and sustenance of achievement. Whereas C3 school leaders appreciated the challenging working environment, they applied



additional strategies and mechanisms that helped in overcoming existing exigencies and realising SSA, including; 1) Prioritising school system resilience: Collective consciousness of the reality, deep understanding of leadership complexity and designing responsive initiatives. 2) Inner organisational exploration: Realigning and redefining individual and institutional values to achieve coherence. 3) Creatively pursuing internal ways of knowing: Internal reflections, professional development and experimentation on new ways of acting (insightful and decisive within the multiple realities and leadership complexity of schools). 4) Recreating and regenerating new capacities at macro and micro levels of leadership experiences: Collective responsibility for organizational engagement and multi-dimensional leadership coherence. 5) Recognising the force of vision building and re-energising school vision as the pillar of school system resilience. 5) Centrally locating and positioning the learner and learning needs in the school system.

This thesis, therefore, argues that leadership practices that prioritise the building of school system resilience in response to socio-political turbulence are enablers of SSA in challenging contexts like Kenya. This thesis argues for school leadership practices that recreate and regenerate structures, cultures and capacities that counter difficult socio-political environments and resiliently pave the way, drive and promote effective teaching and learning that enables SSA to occur. The thesis proposes an emerging regenerative leadership practice model that engender collective awareness, nurturing system capacities and aptitudes of high stakeholder adaptability, flexibility and willingness to learn to create resilient cultures that enable SSA to occur in schools. School system resilience is realised in schools that have established collective envisioning, understanding, accountability and responsibility for student learning. These aptitudes protect schools from socio-political turbulence and facilitate system resilience. Notably, these regenerative leadership practices must be contextualised as emerging from both within school spaces and out of the society that is in the process of transforming into a well-developed democracy, especially in developing contexts like Kenya where equity and social justice are significant issues that school leaders must address. The critical awareness of stakeholder identity and diversity as well as tapping into their collective potential is important in providing the capacity to navigate difficult socio-political environments and ensuring students maintain high levels of academic performance.

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## **APPENDICES**

### **Appendix I Interview Schedule**

#### **Introduction**

As you know, I'm doing a study on leadership practices in Kenyan schools. I am specifically looking at leadership practices might enhance SSA. To get a clearer picture of these issues, it is important I get the views of school leaders. This is why I'm conducting this interview with you today.

#### **Background Information**

1. Can we begin with you telling me how you became a head of school/LEA/BOM/PA? How long have you held this position? Did you apply for the position or was it assigned to you? Why?
2. What motivated you to consider becoming a leader? How do you define effective school leadership?
3. Please describe a little about your responsibilities in the school? what do you do as a leader? why?
4. Since you became head of this school, what are some of the things you have done for the school?
5. How do you and others accomplish leadership activities in this school? What has been challenging to deal with as a leader?
6. Does the school have a vision? And a mission? If yes, what does it say? What purpose does it serve? How did you come up with it?
7. If no, why not? Do you think they are necessary for a school? Could you share with me the main values that this school uphold?

#### **Factors influencing the changes in patterns of students' achievement**

1. How are performance patterns like in your school? Why do they appear like that?
2. Do you think leadership has played a role in the existing pattern of students' achievement? If so, what are some of the leadership factors that have played a role? In what ways have they done so?
3. What are some of the challenges you have faced as a school? How have you tried to resolve these challenges, especially those related to students' achievement?
4. What counts as students' achievement and why?

#### **School leaders' experiences relating to the SSA?**

1. How prepared are/were you to deal with SSA? What has worked for you? What has not worked? What do you find difficult to deal with? Why?
2. How have you involved other stakeholders in handling SSA? Teachers, student, parents' voices? What role do these groups play?
3. How are the groups interconnected to make a coherent whole?

#### **Leadership practices influencing teacher leadership**

1. In your view what is the role of teachers in SSA? Have they done so?
2. What have you done to support teachers' in pursuit of SSA? How do you see your contribution to SSA?
3. When there is a problem of unsatisfactory performance; whose responsibility is it? How are such problems handled/ resolved?
4. How do departments work? Is there interaction between them? In which manner?

## **Appendix II FGD Schedule**

### **Introduction**

As you know, I'm doing a study on leadership practices in Kenyan schools. I am specifically looking at leadership practices might enhance SSA. To get a clearer picture of these issues, it is important I get the views of Middle and junior Leaders. This is why I'm conducting this FGD with you today.

1. Can we begin with you telling me how long you have been teachers in this school? How long in leadership position?
2. What leadership positions do you hold in this school? What motivated you to consider becoming leaders? How do you define effective school leadership?
3. Please describe a little about your responsibilities in the school? what do you do as a leader and why? How do you and others accomplish leadership activities in this school? What has been challenging to deal with as a leader?
4. Does the school have a vision and a mission? If yes, what do they say? How did you come up with them? If no, why not?
5. What purpose do vision and mission serve in this school? Do you think they are necessary for a school? Could you share with me core values that this school uphold?
6. What counts as students' achievement in this school? why? How are performance patterns like in your school? Why do they appear like that?
7. Do you think leadership has played a role in the existing patterns of students' achievement? If so, what are some of the leadership factors have played a role? In what ways have they done so?
8. What are some of the challenges you have faced as a school? How have you tried to resolve them, especially those related to students' achievement?
9. How prepared were you to deal with SSA What has worked for you? What has not worked? What do you find difficult to deal with? Why?
10. Who should be held responsible for non-satisfactory students' achievements? Why?
11. Briefly explain how you work with fellow leaders and teachers. In your view what is the role of teachers in SSA? Have they done so?
12. How do you see your contribution to SSA? What support have you provided/received
13. When there is a problem of unsatisfactory performance; whose responsibility is it? How are such problems handled/ resolved?
14. How do departments work? Is there interaction between them? In which manner?

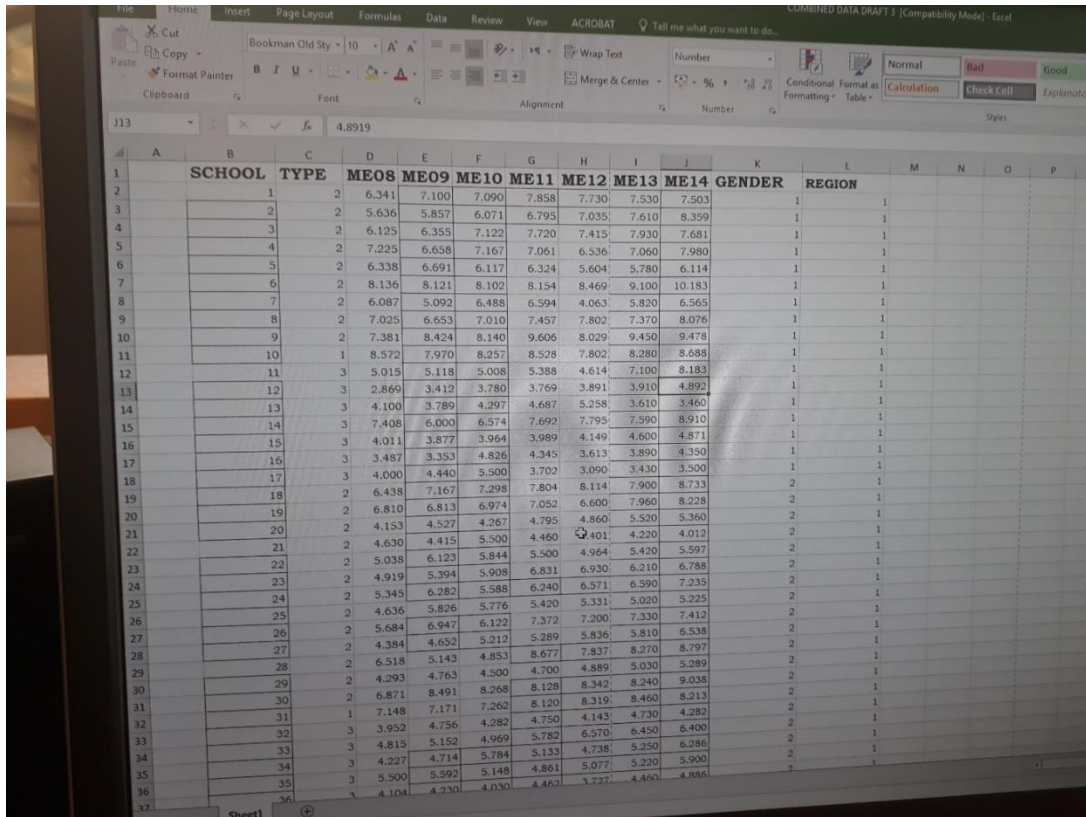


### Appendix III Sample Observation Scenarios and data

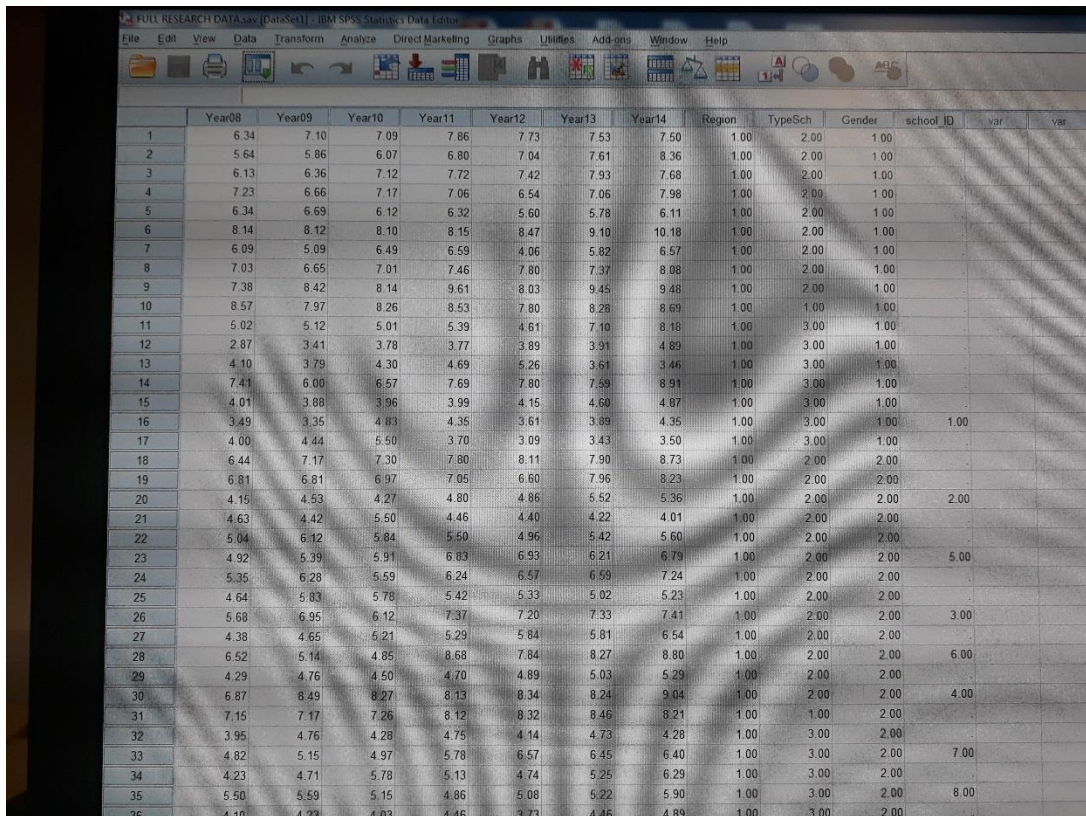
OBSERVATION	SCENARIO ACTIVITIES
Obs. 1	<b>Scenario 1: Sideki School</b> On a typical day towards the two weeks visit in Sideki, I arrived in the school very early to observe aspects of organisation, networking and participation in leadership activities. This was a follow-up of interviews and FGD with participants in the school through which had created good rapport with most members in the school.
Obs. 2	-That day the principal was the only teacher in the school. She moved around classes monitoring cleaning and constantly instructing students. Students ran to classes or various directions on seeing her.
Obs. 3	-She paced up and down, shouting at students who failed to follow instructions. She held a Cain to either command or just a symbol of authority; never used on any student. She struggled to check that all was clean; I could hear her instructing students to assist and report.
Obs. 4	-She ended up in a candidate class who expected to sit a national examination paper that morning. She shortly encouraged and assured them then went back to office.
Obs. 5	-A few teachers arrived shortly before assembly including the teacher on duty; majority arrived during or after assembly.  -After assembly the principal held a short briefing with teachers in which she talked although while teachers listened. Principal's speech ranged from complains, expressing disappointment with issues and activities in the school, often with periodic high-pitched voice in between. She gave instructions, proposed way forward and consequences on some issues if not responded to, however, to no specific person. Message send to everyone.
Obs. 6	-Finally gave reassuring remarks; "We need to stick and work together, otherwise we are going nowhere. My door is open as usual, feel free to come in and share."
Obs. 1	<b>Scenario 2: Bageno School</b> During the two-week's visits to the Bageno School, I observed tensions within the school leadership teams, with the current principal struggling to maintain control. In a critical incident that occurred during the last days of the visit, there appeared to exist piled up tension within teachers and students.
Obs. 2	-On this day, all seemed calm until around 4pm when it was raining and the bell rang to end afternoon classes. Suddenly, students started shouting on top of their voices, screaming and running around. The deputy and I got concerned, stopped an ongoing interview and moved out.
Obs. 3	-We found the principal running from left to right, in the rain shouting at students to go back to classes. This continued for a short while.
Obs. 4	-Meanwhile, teachers went about their business paying little attention to this scenario.
Obs. 5 Obs. 6	-The deputy never joined the principal either; she stood and observed from a distance. The downpour became heavy and students retreated to classes.
Obs. 7	-The principal left towards the boarding and never came back. -The deputy declined to comment anything about the incident.  -Efforts to get the principal talk about the incident were unsuccessful and I thought it was unethical to push participants to talk about it.
Obs. 1	<b>Scenario 3: Mubari School</b> This was the second week after students reported for third term. The government had remained mum and had not released any statement concerning the ongoing teachers strike. However, according to policy school principals as agents of the employer on the ground remained in schools throughout. On this day, I was to observe how the leadership handled the situation during this crisis.
Obs. 2	
Obs. 3	<b>-6-7 AM:</b> The school was quiet students settled in classes. In some classes, teachers taught in others students did personal reading.
Obs. 4	-I noticed a group of students in the dining hall engaged in some discussion.  -About 30 teachers had arrived on the compound by 7.10 am.
Obs. 5	-The principal was in his office doing some planning in his diary. The two deputies, DOS and Form 4 principal joined the principal in his office. They had a brief conversation for about 10 minutes.
Obs. 6	-Four other teachers walked about the classrooms kitchen and dining area checking on cleanliness.
Obs. 7	<b>-7-7.30 AM:</b> All teachers including the principal and his team, of senior leaders gathered in the staffroom for a briefing. This being the 2 <sup>nd</sup> week in this school everyone seemed used to my presence. I joined the briefing too.
Obs. 8	-The teacher on duty took charge and called the meeting to order. The teacher introduced other teachers on duty that week and shared events of the previous evening and early that morning presenting both compliments and challenges.  -After which the deputy curriculum took over, briefly shared on preparation of candidate class and keeping students commitment to learning engagements, daily routine and time management. Finally, he made an inquisitive statement, "My dear colleagues this strike is a test of our time, values and standards as a school. It will make or break us. So far, the government has said nothing; KNUT are still holding on hard terms. Looking at the much we have put in to build our performance for all these years, should we let it go to waste?"
Obs. 9	-This ignited a lengthy discussion as teachers deliberated on their engagement as members of the union as well as considerations for what they stood for as a school.

<b>Obs. 10</b>	-The principal and other senior leaders too contributed in the discussion.
<b>Obs. 11</b>	-There was continuous flow of ideas and conversation in turns with no particular order. Open discussions prevailed, a number of teachers urging each other to think of their effort and the future of the students.
<b>Obs. 12</b>	-The principal never directed the discussion to a particular course.
<b>Obs. 13</b>	-In the end, they reached a consensus to keep students in school and keep teaching until the government and KNUT resolved issues of the strike.
<b>Obs. 14</b>	-In final remarks the teacher on duty stated, "Colleagues the decision we make here will define the future of this school" and reminded teachers it was assembly time.
<b>Obs. 1</b>	<b>Scenario 4: Nabibo School</b> It was a Monday, after the Minister of education had announced that students should report to schools. Principals had received instructions to reopen and allow students back in schools. However, teachers' industrial action was still on. Teachers in this school kept in school although the national strike was going on. According to the school principal, teachers remained behind to attend to candidates, whom the school had chosen to let remain in school as Form 1-3 stayed home during the strike.
<b>Obs. 2</b>	-The meeting started at 9 am and lasted for one hour. In attendance besides principal and teachers, was the BOM and PA chair persons.
<b>Obs. 3</b>	-The principal briefed the meeting of the ministerial order after which he asked, "What do we do about this order? Do we allow students to report back now that we are not sure about the union decisions because they have not yet called off the strike? what do we do?"
<b>Obs. 4</b>	-These questions arose a heated discussion among members. For a while, teachers brainstormed, talking in loud voices to each other.  -Some teacher moved from table to table, either to ask questions or seek opinion of others; some remained at one place talking to immediate neighbours. While the principal, deputy, BOM and PA chair discussed together the strategic leader and DOS joined other teachers in discussion. After about 20 minutes, the strategic leader took over, called the meeting back to order and set the stage for feedback.
<b>Obs. 5</b>	-A number of teachers gave feedback in no particular order. While some suggested letting students in and go ahead with teaching, others suggested otherwise, each group giving various reasons.
<b>Obs. 6</b>	-This went on for some time with no apparent consensus.
<b>Obs. 7</b>	-In the end, there was no universal consensus. Those supporting students to report would go ahead and teach. Those not supporting would find time to teach extra hours off the timetable to cover time lost during the strike.
<b>Obs. 8</b>	-The strategic leader then asked, We have decided to teach extra hours off the timetable, are we going to regard them as extra hours that need pay or are we going to regard them as paying for the time we lost during the strike? <i>(He laughs.... you now some things are difficult but they are a reality.... all other teachers join the laughter)</i>
<b>Obs. 9</b>	-This again created another lengthy and heated informal discussion. However, still no consensus had been reached.  -In the end, the strategic leader gave members until 4 pm that day to deliberate and come up with resolutions that would have emerged.
<b>Obs. 10</b>	-The meeting ended and senior leaders with BOM and PA chair retreated to principal's office.

## Appendix IV Sample Secondary Data



SCHOOL TYPE	ME08	ME09	ME10	ME11	ME12	ME13	ME14	GENDER	REGION
1	6.341	7.100	7.090	7.858	7.730	7.530	7.503	1	1
2	5.636	5.857	6.071	6.795	7.035	7.610	8.359	1	1
3	6.125	6.355	7.122	7.720	7.415	7.930	7.681	1	1
4	7.225	6.658	7.167	7.061	6.536	7.060	7.980	1	1
5	6.338	6.691	6.117	6.324	5.604	5.780	6.114	1	1
6	8.136	8.121	8.102	8.154	8.469	9.100	10.183	1	1
7	6.087	5.092	6.488	6.594	4.063	5.820	6.565	1	1
8	7.025	6.653	7.010	7.457	7.802	7.370	8.076	1	1
9	7.381	8.424	8.140	9.606	8.029	9.450	9.478	1	1
10	8.572	7.970	8.257	8.528	7.802	8.280	8.688	1	1
11	5.015	5.118	5.008	5.388	4.614	7.100	8.183	1	1
12	2.869	3.412	3.780	3.769	3.891	3.910	4.892	1	1
13	4.100	3.789	4.297	4.687	5.258	3.610	3.460	1	1
14	7.408	6.000	6.574	7.692	7.795	7.590	8.910	1	1
15	4.011	3.877	3.964	3.989	4.149	4.600	4.871	1	1
16	3.487	3.353	4.826	4.345	3.613	3.890	4.350	1	1
17	4.000	4.440	5.500	3.702	3.090	3.430	3.500	1	1
18	6.438	7.167	7.298	7.804	8.114	7.900	8.733	2	1
19	6.810	6.813	6.974	7.052	6.600	7.960	8.228	2	1
20	4.153	4.527	4.267	4.795	4.860	5.520	5.360	2	1
21	4.630	4.415	5.500	4.460	4.401	4.220	4.012	2	1
22	5.038	6.123	5.844	5.500	4.964	5.420	5.597	2	1
23	4.919	5.394	5.908	6.831	6.930	6.210	6.788	2	1
24	5.345	6.282	5.588	6.240	6.571	6.590	7.235	2	1
25	4.636	5.826	5.776	5.420	5.331	5.020	5.225	2	1
26	5.684	6.947	6.122	7.372	7.200	7.330	7.412	2	1
27	4.384	4.652	5.212	5.289	5.836	5.810	6.538	2	1
28	6.518	5.143	4.853	8.677	7.837	8.270	8.797	2	1
29	4.293	4.763	4.500	4.700	4.889	5.030	5.289	2	1
30	6.871	8.491	8.268	8.128	8.342	8.460	8.213	2	1
31	7.148	7.171	7.262	8.120	8.319	8.460	8.213	2	1
32	3.952	4.756	4.282	4.750	4.143	4.730	4.282	2	1
33	4.815	5.152	4.969	5.782	6.570	6.450	6.400	2	1
34	4.227	4.714	5.784	5.133	4.738	5.250	6.286	2	1
35	5.500	5.592	5.148	4.861	5.077	5.220	5.900	2	1
36	4.104	4.230	4.030	4.462	7.227	4.450	4.886	2	1



Year08	Year09	Year10	Year11	Year12	Year13	Year14	Region	TypeSch	Gender	school_ID	var	var
6.34	7.10	7.09	7.86	7.73	7.53	7.50	1.00	2.00	1.00			
5.64	5.86	6.07	6.80	7.04	7.61	8.36	1.00	2.00	1.00			
6.13	6.36	7.12	7.72	7.42	7.93	7.68	1.00	2.00	1.00			
7.23	6.66	7.17	7.06	6.54	7.06	7.98	1.00	2.00	1.00			
6.34	6.69	6.12	6.32	5.60	5.78	6.11	1.00	2.00	1.00			
8.14	8.12	8.10	8.15	8.47	9.10	10.18	1.00	2.00	1.00			
6.09	5.09	6.49	6.59	4.06	5.82	6.57	1.00	2.00	1.00			
7.03	6.65	7.01	7.46	7.80	7.37	8.08	1.00	2.00	1.00			
7.38	8.42	8.14	9.61	8.03	9.45	9.48	1.00	2.00	1.00			
8.57	7.97	8.26	8.53	7.80	8.28	8.69	1.00	1.00	1.00			
5.02	5.12	5.01	5.39	4.61	7.10	8.18	1.00	3.00	1.00			
2.87	3.41	3.78	3.77	3.89	3.91	4.89	1.00	3.00	1.00			
4.10	3.79	4.30	4.69	5.26	3.61	3.46	1.00	3.00	1.00			
7.41	6.00	6.57	7.69	7.80	7.59	8.91	1.00	3.00	1.00			
4.01	3.88	3.96	3.99	4.15	4.60	4.87	1.00	3.00	1.00			
3.49	3.35	4.83	4.35	3.61	3.89	4.35	1.00	3.00	1.00	1.00		
4.00	4.44	5.50	3.70	3.09	3.43	3.50	1.00	3.00	1.00			
6.44	7.17	7.30	7.80	8.11	7.90	8.73	1.00	2.00	2.00			
6.81	6.81	6.97	7.05	6.60	7.96	8.23	1.00	2.00	2.00			
4.15	4.53	4.27	4.80	4.86	5.52	5.36	1.00	2.00	2.00	2.00		
4.63	4.42	5.50	4.46	4.40	4.22	4.01	1.00	2.00	2.00			
5.04	6.12	5.84	5.50	4.96	5.42	5.60	1.00	2.00	2.00			
4.92	5.39	5.91	6.83	6.93	6.21	6.79	1.00	2.00	2.00	5.00		
5.35	6.28	5.59	6.24	6.57	6.59	7.24	1.00	2.00	2.00			
4.64	5.83	5.78	5.42	5.33	5.02	5.23	1.00	2.00	2.00			
5.68	6.95	6.12	7.37	7.20	7.33	7.41	1.00	2.00	2.00	3.00		
4.38	4.65	5.21	5.29	5.84	5.81	6.54	1.00	2.00	2.00			
6.52	5.14	4.85	8.68	7.84	8.27	8.80	1.00	2.00	2.00	6.00		
4.29	4.76	4.50	4.70	4.89	5.03	5.29	1.00	2.00	2.00			
6.87	8.49	8.27	8.13	8.34	8.24	9.04	1.00	2.00	2.00	4.00		
7.15	7.17	7.26	8.12	8.32	8.46	8.21	1.00	1.00	2.00			
3.95	4.76	4.28	4.75	4.14	4.73	4.28	1.00	3.00	2.00			
4.82	5.15	4.97	5.78	6.57	6.45	6.40	1.00	3.00	2.00	7.00		
4.23	4.71	5.78	5.13	4.74	5.25	6.29	1.00	3.00	2.00			
5.50	5.59	5.15	4.86	5.08	5.22	5.90	1.00	3.00	2.00	8.00		
4.10	4.23	4.03	4.46	3.73	4.46	4.89	1.00	3.00	2.00			

## Appendix V Ethical Review Clearance



University of Sussex

### Certificate of Approval

<b>Reference Number:</b>	ER/CW343/3
<b>Title Of Project:</b>	Exploring Leadership Practices for Sustainable Students' Achievement in Kenyan Schools: A Comparative Case Study
<b>Principal Investigator (PI):</b>	Christine Wanjala
<b>Student:</b>	Christine Wanjala
<b>Collaborators:</b>	
<b>Duration Of Approval:</b>	n/a
<b>Expected Start Date:</b>	01-Jun-2015
<b>Date Of Approval:</b>	18-May-2015
<b>Approval Expiry Date:</b>	30-Nov-2015
<b>Approved By:</b>	Jayne Paulin
<b>Name of Authorised Signatory:</b>	Janet Boddy
<b>Date:</b>	18-May-2015

\*NB. If the actual project start date is delayed beyond 12 months of the expected start date, this Certificate of Approval will lapse and the project will need to be reviewed again to take account of changed circumstances such as legislation, sponsor requirements and University procedures.

#### Please note and follow the requirements for approved submissions:

##### Amendments to protocol

- \* Any changes or amendments to approved protocols must be submitted to the C-REC for authorisation prior to implementation.

##### Feedback regarding the status and conduct of approved projects

- \* Any incidents with ethical implications that occur during the implementation of the project must be reported immediately to the Chair of the C-REC.

##### Feedback regarding any adverse and unexpected events

- \* Any adverse (undesirable and unintended) and unexpected events that occur during the implementation of the project must be reported to the Chair of the Social Sciences C-REC. In the event of a serious adverse event, research must be stopped immediately and the Chair alerted within 24 hours of the occurrence.



## Appendix VI National Research Council Clearance


**THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT:**


**MS. CHRISTINE NAFUNA WANJALA**  
**of UNIVERSITY OF SUSSEX, 109-902**  
**KIKUYU, has been permitted to conduct**  
**research in All Counties**


**on the topic: EXPLORING LEADERSHIP**  
**PRACTICES FOR SUSTAINABLE**  
**STUDENTS' ACHIEVEMENT: A**  
**COMPARATIVE STUDY**

**for the period ending:**  
**1st February, 2016**

**Permit No : NACOSTI/P/15/2371/6539**  
**Date Of Issue : 22nd June, 2015**  
**Fee Received :Ksh. 2000**



  
**Applicant's Signature**

  
**Director General**  
**National Commission for Science, Technology & Innovation**

## Appendix VII Information Sheet

**RESEARCH TOPIC:** Exploring leadership practices for SSA in Kenya: A Comparative Case Study?

**Research Purpose:**

The study seeks to explore leadership practices in Kenyan schools. The aim of the study is to find out what and how leadership practices might enhance SSA. Specifically, the study will involve: Statistical analysis of secondary data (students' attainment data in national examinations) to establish patterns of students' achievement trends and trajectories in secondary schools; Find out leaders' (local education authority and school) perspectives on factors influencing the changes in achievement trends and trajectories; Explore school leaders experiences and identify leadership practices that positively influence teaching, learning and achievement.

**Nature of participation**

This research will involve one-on-one semi structured interviews with local educational authority (District Education Officer/ Quality Assurance and Standards Officer) and school leaders: The principals, BOG/PTA members, parents and teachers. Interview sessions will last about one hour and some participants might have more than one interview sessions. I will further conduct Focussed Group Discussions lasting one hour with teachers holding leadership positions in schools. I will carry out analysis of school inspection data and policy documents, and observe day to day school leadership activities and programmes.

**Reciprocity**

A summary of findings will be shared by leaders of participating schools and in the interest of time, I may hold a workshop with at least one school.

I.....a participant in this study, I am fully informed and understand the nature, purpose and requirements of this study.

Participant Signature.....Date.....

My name is **Christine N. Wanjala** I am a doctoral researcher from the University of Sussex. I have three years research experience in working with school leaders and teachers under the ministry of education, Kenya.


**Publications**

The research data will be used within the researcher's PhD thesis and also in other journal papers, articles, books and presentations. The research outputs will be disseminated nationally and internationally, by the researcher, and through the university, funder and other research and professional networks. The name will be anonymized by use of pseudonyms.

## Appendix VIII Consent from County Directors

**MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY  
STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

Email: [kajiadocde@gmail.com](mailto:kajiadocde@gmail.com)  
When replying please quote  
**Ref: KJD/C/R.3/VOL.I/107**  
And  
**Date: 4<sup>th</sup> August, 2015**



County Director of Education  
[REDACTED] County  
P. O. Box 33  
[REDACTED]

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Christine NafulaWanjala  
University of Sussex  
**UNITED KINGDOM**

**RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION**

The letter from National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation dated 22<sup>nd</sup> June, 2015 refers.

This is to confirm to you that, you have been authorized to conduct your research on ***"Exploring leadership practices for sustainable students' achievement: A comparative study, [REDACTED] for a period ending 1<sup>st</sup> February, 2016.***

The administrators of the Schools are required to co-operate and provide you with the relevant data and information for the research exercise.

  
[REDACTED]  
**FOR: COUNTY DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION**  
[REDACTED] COUNTY



# MINISTRY OF EDUCATION SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

Telephone: 056 - 30411  
 FAX : 056 - 31307  
 E-mail : wespropde@yahoo.com  
 When replying please quote.



COUNTY DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION  
 COUNTY  
 P. O. BOX 137 - 50100

## STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

REF:WP/GA/29/17/VOL.III/ 12

7<sup>th</sup> September, 2015

Christine Nafuna Wanjala  
 University of Sussex  
 United Kingdom

### RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION

The above has been granted permission by National Council for Science & Technology vide letter Ref. NACOSTI/P /15/2371/6539 to carry out research on "**Exploring leadership practices for sustainable students' achievement: A comparative study in all Counties, Kenya**", for a period ending 1<sup>st</sup> February, 2015.

Please accord her any necessary assistance she may require.

*[Signature]*  
 PP

COUNTY DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION



## Appendix IX Ethical Consent Form

### For School Principals

**RESEARCH TOPIC:** Exploring leadership practices for SSA in Kenya: A Comparative Case Study?

I, \_\_\_\_\_ consent that my school will be a research site for the research project to be conducted by Christine Wanjala.

- I have been informed of the requirements of this study and fully understand what will be required of me as a participant and my school as a research site. It is my understanding that:
- This study focuses on **leadership practices for SS in Kenya: the purpose of the study is to understand leadership practices that might enhance SSA.**
- The purpose of the study is not to judge me or the school on the issue or types of responses I give during the study.
- I'm aware that the process will involve participation in more than two (1) interview sessions, to be arranged at times and in places convenient to me.
- I'm aware that the study will involve the BOG and PTA, DOS and Teachers in interviews and focused group discussions.
- I also know that some school documents will be analysed.
- I understand that individual data will remain confidential and that identifying markers (such as name, school name, and location) will be removed.
- No interview transcript or notes from Documents, in whole or in part, will be used without my approval. In addition, the said identifying markers will not be used in scholarly writing (e.g., a conference presentation, a journal article, a book). Pseudonyms will be used to keep the anonymity.
- Should I decline to answer any questions, or decide to withdraw from the study at any point, my decision will be respected with no questions asked.

Name of School Principal: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### For Research Participants

**Research Study:** Exploring leadership practices for SSA in Kenya: A Comparative Case Study?

- I have been informed of the requirements of this study and fully understand what will be required of me as a participant. It is my understanding that:
- This study focuses on leadership practices for SSA in Kenya
- **The purpose of the study is to understand leadership practices that might enhance SSA.**
- The purpose of the study is not to judge me on the issue or types of responses I give during the study.
- My identity as a research participant will remain confidential and my name or the name of my institution will not be used in the study or in reporting its findings at any point.
- I hold the right to withdraw from the study at any point in time.
- I hold the right to decline to answer any question.
- My voice will be recorded when I'm interviewed.
- Findings from this study will be used in conference presentations and in Academic publications.

I express willingness to participate in this study by signing this form:

**Name:**.....**Designation:**.....

**Signature:** .....**Date:**.....

**Name of Institution:** .....

## Appendix X Full details of school settings

### CI Schools

School	Type	Gender	Location/ Community	Students	Teachers	Workers	Facilities
<b>1.Bageno</b>	National (Full Boarding) 40 years old	Girls only (4 streams)	Sub-Urban  Mono-ethnic local community	750	28	18	Land acres- 4 Classrooms 16 Laboratories 8 Dormitories 10 Bus 1 Storey Admin. 1 Library 1 Dining and kitchen 1 Staff houses 10
<b>2.Lidude</b>	County (Full Boarding) 40 years old	Girls only (2 streams-under-established)	Rural  Mono-ethnic local community	270	18	12	Land acres- 2 Classrooms 8 Laboratories 3 Dormitories 3 Bus 1 Admin. Rooms 4 Library 1 Dining and kitchen 1 Staff houses 4
<b>3.Bidobe</b>	Sub-County (Full Boarding) 14 years old	Girls only (2 streams)	Sub-Urban  Majorly a mono-ethnic pastoralist community	350	17	12	Land acres- 100 Classrooms 10 Laboratories 1 Dormitories 3 Bus 1 Admin. Rooms 3 Library 1 Dining and kitchen 1 Staff houses 2

### C2 Schools

School	Type	Gender	Location/ Community	Students	Teachers	Workers	Facilities
<b>1. Sideki</b>	National (Full Boarding) 30 years old	Girls only (4 streams)	Sub-Urban  Cosmopolitan + indigenous community	769	38	33	Land acres- 53.9 Classrooms 16 Laboratories 5 Dormitories 5 Bus 1 Storey Admin. 1 Library 1 Dining and kitchen 1 Staff houses 10
<b>2.Bagamu</b>	County (Boarding/day) 25 years old	Mixed (4 streams)	Sub-Urban Mono-ethnic community	750	28	18	Land acres- 4.5 Classrooms 20 Laboratories 3 Dormitories 3 Bus 1 Admin. Rooms 3 No Library Dining and kitchen 1 No Staff houses
<b>3.Luguyo</b>	Sub-County (Full Day) 14 years old	Mixed (2 streams)	Sub-Urban	388	14	10	Land acres- 9 Classrooms 9 Laboratories 3 Admin. Block 1 Library 1 Dining and kitchen 1

**C3 Schools**

School	Type	Gender	Location/ Community	Students	Teachers	Workers	Facilities
<b>1. Nabeko</b>	National (Full Boarding) 40 years old	Girls only (5 streams)	Urban Cosmopolitan	1000	53	45	Land acres- 300 Classrooms 20 Laboratories 3 Dormitories 5 Bus 2 Storey Admin. 2 Library 1 Dining and kitchen 1 Staff houses 10
<b>2.Mubari</b>	County (Full Boarding) 40 years old	Boys only (6 streams- under- established)	Rural  Mono-Ethnic	1,200	55	43	Land acres- 3 Classrooms 22 Laboratories 3 Dormitories 9 Bus 3 Storey Admin. 2 Library 1 Dining and kitchen 1 Staff houses 33
<b>3.Nabibo</b>	Sub-County (Full Boarding) 13 years old	Boys only (3 streams)	Sub-Urban  Majority Mono ethnic+ Minority cosmopolitan	680	24	12	Land acres- 35 Classrooms 12 Laboratories 1 Dormitories 9 Bus 1 Storey Admin. 2 Library 1 Dining and kitchen 1 Staff houses 3

### Appendix XI- Observation Schedule

<b>Factors to observe</b>	<b>What happens</b>	<b>Who are involved</b>	<b>What is the interpretation/ response</b>	<b>Implications for leadership practice</b>
Communication to and with people (teachers, students, BOM/PA, community)				
Direction setting; how structured				
People development skills (what approaches, how done)				
Structure of engagement (lines of engagement and networking)				
Managing teaching and learning (student learning)				
Responsibility Sharing				
Any critical incidents (how handled)				
Decision making (what is the process, whose decision, how concluded)				