Educational Leadership Practices that Sustains School Improvement in selected Secondary Schools in Tanzania

Perpetua John Urio (corresponding author)
Dar es Salaam University College of Education
Department of Education Foundations, Management and Life long Learning
Box 2329 DSM. E-mail Perpetua.urio@duce.ac.tz & peturio@yahoo.com

Abstract
This paper explores educational leadership practices that can sustain school improvement in selected Secondary Schools Tanzanian. This study employed a qualitative research approach in collecting and analyzing data. The paper is focused on understanding the ability of school heads to set direction, foster professional development and restructuring the school organisation to contribute to school improvement. Data were collected through Interviews, focus group discussions, documentary review and observations. The data were later subjected to content analysis. Results indicate that in best-performing schools, leaders demonstrate ability to set direction by articulating the school vision although like in worst performing schools, the school visions were developed when schools were established thus the current leaders were not involved in their development. Leaders in best-performing schools gave teachers opportunities to attend trainings, seminars and workshops though the schools lack plans for professional development. These leaders demonstrated ability to make collective decisions, to engage school communities and instill teamwork spirit, as well as ability to delegate responsibilities with empowerment, support and trust. Such practices were rarely demonstrated by leaders in worst performing schools. It is seen that school heads needs more skills on management and leadership to enable them analyse their environment and lead schools in a positive direction for school improvement.

1.0 Introduction

This paper is a result of a qualitative study conducted to explore leadership practices that can sustain school improvement in Secondary Schools Tanzanian. Leadership practices entail all activities performed by leaders that have the potential to transform the input into desirable outputs/outcomes. According to Joel and Henry (2014), leadership practices are the manner and approach in which a leader provides direction, implements plans, and motivates staff so as to achieve school goals. It is also defined as a particular kind of leadership that unfolds in moment-by-moment as part of the social world of the school and is intrinsically linked to everyday interactions that takes place in schools Harris and colleagues (2001). Attention to such everyday interactions is essential if one wants to create schools as solid professional communities. School improvement describes a set of processes, managed from within the school, targeted both at pupil achievement and the school's ability to manage change (Potter, Reynolds, & Chapman, 2002, p. 244). The implementation of these set of processes need a leader with effective practices to ensure successful implementation.

Globally the issue of the effective leadership practice and its contribution to in school improvement and students' good performance is clear. In Canada for instance Bouchamma, (2012) argue that studies over the last 35 years have connected leadership with the effectiveness of most of the major dimensions of education and every important outcome of schooling. Through effective practices the teachers and students can learn and understand what is expected from them and respond to the expectations of the school leadership. The essence of leadership effective practices lies in answering the question "what must I do to lead the people for whom I am responsible?" This approach views leadership through the practices that meet group needs and task requirements (Harris and colleagues, 2001). Since head of school is generally not involved in the direct delivery of instruction, the behaviour of the head of school, especially when supportive, collegial, and not overly restrictive, can have a positive impact on student achievement through the impact this behaviour has on school climate and thus his or her teachers (Tschannen-Moran & Tschannen- Moran, 2011). Mulford (2006) assert that leadership becomes an important intervening variable between teachers and students in realizing enhanced outputs, including outcomes. Thus, leadership is required to foster organizational learning through good practices like a trusting and collaborative climate, a shared and monitored mission and taking initiatives as well as risks Mulford (2006).

In African countries studies show that although the school leaders have such big role to play in school still for many countries the responsibilities of building a strong school leadership has not received due attention to make them perform properly their roles. The study conducted In Ethiopia by Demonzie, (2018) about Principals'

Leadership Practice and Students Academic Achievement, indicated that the mean on school leadership practice was lower than expected results and as the result the students' achievements was above average and nearest to the expected mean. It was recommended that a special leadership and management programs be established to build the capacity of school heads towards managing and leading school activities. Dembele (2005), in his study titled "Improving the Effectiveness of Schools: the African Experience," contends that school leaders play a vital role in school development. However it is argued that to be able to accomplish these tasks, school heads have to possess transformational and instructional leadership qualities. This indicates that we have leaders in African schools but not effective leaders who can implement effective practices as expected. When schools are not performing at required level the first impression goes to the school leadership with indication of the weaknesses in leading and supervising schools and vice versa is true. However, Dembele (2005) points out the problems and challenges facing education leadership in Sub-Saharan Africa, that the majority of school heads are usually untrained for the job. Most of them are still being appointed to the positions based on teaching experience, with no leadership training prior to assuming office. This is also supported by World Bank (2005), in a study on "Restructuring, Retaining and Retraining Secondary Schools Teachers and Principals in Sub-Saharan Africa," found out that ill-preparation of secondary school administrators pose a challenge in execution of their responsibilities. This can raise a doubt whether we have leaders with effective practices as envisaged in order to improve school and students performance.

There has been a national concern in Tanzania that the quality of education in Government secondary schools is not as high as envisaged. Several people, including school heads and some parents, feel that some public secondary schools, especially community secondary schools are not properly led. Research conducted so far for example, EQUIP (2015) on Tanzania baseline evaluation indicated a big problem on the way school leaders conduct their daily practices. (Daudi, 2002; Komba, 2003 & Massawe, 2014) indicate a knowledge gap on the critical role of effective leadership in school improvement. There is a doubt whether they real know effective practices that can lead to school improvement. There are relatively few research works on secondary schools in Tanzania that have focused exclusively on effective leadership practices and their effects on the schools improvement using transformational leadership model. This study, therefore, intended to fill that gap by exploring effective leadership practices that can lead to school improvement through effective leadership practices in public secondary schools in Tanzania. Specifically, the study sought to answer the following questions: (i)What are school leaders' ability to set positive direction and build teamwork among deputies, academic masters, teachers, students, leaders and parents for realisation of school improvement? (ii)What are initiatives taken by leadership and school boards, to enhance professional development of teachers for them to perform their jobs well? (iii) What are efforts made by leaders in re-designing school organisation in order to contribute to good performance?

2.0 Theoretical Framework
The researcher adopted the transformative leadership model as proposed by Leithwood and Jantzi (2005) to guide this study. They argue that schools are not the same organisations as government bureaucracies, the military and other enterprises for profit generation. Schools have unique goals as well as unusually committed employees, and need to adopt high porous practices that embrace the school improvement. The model comprises the leadership practices of setting direction of the school, developing people (teaching and non teaching staff) and re-designing the school organisation to accommodates different changes as explained here under:

2.1 Setting Direction
A critical aspect of the work of leadership is helping a group to develop shared understanding about the organisation and its activities as well as its goals, which provide a sense of purpose or vision (Hallinger and Heck, 2002). The most fundamental theoretical explanation for importance of direction-setting practices on the part of leaders is embodies in goal-based theories of human motivation. According to the theory, people are motivated by goals that they find personally compelling and challenging, but achievable (Bandura, 1986; Lock, Nathan and Eraz, 1988). Three sets of leadership practices are cited as helping in setting directions, namely identifying and articulating a vision, fostering acceptance of group goals and creating high performance

expectations.

2.2 Developing People

Developing people involve the intelligence displayed through personal attention paid by leaders in enhancing employee's capacities thereby increasing the level of enthusiasm and optimism as well as reducing frustrations. It also facilitates transmitting sense of mission and indirectly increases their performance (McColl-Kennedy and Anderson, 2002). Such attention given to employee is influenced by direct experience from organisational members with those in leadership roles as well as the conditions of the organisational in which people work (Lord and Mayer, 1993). More specific practices include offering intellectual stimulation, providing individualised support and providing an appropriate model of exemplary work. The researcher investigated the extent to which these elements are practised in secondary schools, and whether they had real influence on improving the school performance.

2.3 Re-designing the School Organisation

Successful educational leaders develop in their schools an effective organisational culture and structures that support, enhance and sustain teachers and students' performance. Such leadership practices have emerged from recent evidence about the nature of learning organizations and professional learning communities including their contribution to learning (Leithwood *et. al*., 1998). Such practices assume that the purpose behind organisational cultures and structures is to facilitate work of organisational members, which means that malleability structures should match the changing nature of schools' improvement agenda. More specific set of practices that are typically associated with this category includes strengthening school cultures, modifying organisational structures and building collaborative processes. The researcher explored cultures that prevail in school organisations, and whether the prevailing structure allows collective leadership styles that are critical to the success of schools. Therefore the effective leadership practices were operationalized to see how they worked in our own setting and what is missing in our school leaders that can be insisted for effective school performance. Thus these practices guide the writing of this paper.

3.0 Methodology

This study employed a qualitative research approach in collecting and analyzing data. The approach was chosen over the other approaches because it allowed an in-depth assessment of the leadership practices that can sustain school improvement in secondary schools in Tanzania. This is because the qualitative approach as defined by Creswell (2018) facilitates the assessment and understanding of the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem. Methods used to collect information from various categories of respondents included semi-structured interviews with head teachers, school board chairpersons, the Eastern Zone Chief Inspector of Schools, and senior academic masters/mistresses; focus group discussions with teachers and students; documentary review; and unstructured observation that provided an insight into what goes on daily in schools where the study was conducted. The population for this study comprised 51 respondents (4 head teachers; 4 senior academic coordinators; 4 school board chairpersons; the Eastern Zone Chief Inspector of Schools; 24 secondary schools teachers; and 16 student leaders) in the 4 selected secondary schools. Qualitative data were analysed using content analysis, and then illustrated by using data reduction mapping framework through three important levels of analysis: the first level constituted initial reduction of data; the second level constituted pattern variables which, for the purpose of this study, represented research questions posed by the researcher to respondents; and the third level constituted alignment of data with the research objective.

Ethical considerations were also observed including following all the research principles. The researchers obtained an introductory letter from the Vice Chancellor's office for conducting this study which introduced us to the Regional level, From there I could access other lower levels, from the district level to the school level. According to Patton (2002) researchers have to ensure that participants are treated with respect and sensitivity beyond what may be required by law. Sensitive data, which were obtained from the respondents, were dealt with anonymously. The study did not include names of participants or names of their schools so as to ensure anonymity as Israel & Hay (2006) point out that a researcher has to ensure confidentiality of data and sources.

The researchers provided a consent form for the informers to read and volunteer to participate in the study. The researchers allowed the participant to join the study and withdraw from the study at any time without harm. Ethical considerations enabled the researcher to build trust among the respondents.

4.0 Results and Discussion

4.1 Ability to Set Direction for School Improvement

It is the responsibility of the school leadership to lead, dream and create the future for their schools. Thus, an effective leaders have the role of developing school vision, articulating the vision to school and to set high performance expectation to the school community as discussed in the following sections.

4.1.1 Understanding and developing school vision

A school vision is a guiding force towards what the school aims at achieving. Through school vision, stakeholders share determinations and commitments in all their endeavours towards realisation of school objectives. The findings revealed that there were differences in understanding levels of the school vision: in best-performing schools, all Most of respondents reported that their schools have visions that are well understood by heads of schools, teachers and students, and they are able to state their respective school's vision. According to Lynch (2016), effective school head must be open and willing to incorporate innovation into vision for school processes and practices. When the school vision is known it enables the school leadership and other members to understand the goals designed to be achieved and ultimately success in the school plans. It is therefore important to invite contributions from all stakeholders in the process of developing school vision. Student performance has been shown to improve in schools where the entire school community works toward shared goals.

Further more the findings revealed that students in School best-performing school A1 are using their motto as a greeting slogan, "Determination is our motto." They are given moral support and freedom to innovate various strategies for their performance, which serves as motivation to everyone. At School B1, as one enters through the gate, one sees the vision, mission and motto clearly inscribed on the notice board. These are good leadership practices that guide and bind the school community together towards thinking of attaining high quality education. Day *et al.* (2000) observed that leadership is not about imposing own vision on a school community; rather, it is encouraging collaboration within the school community, thus facilitating openness, availability and readiness to be involved in practices for improving quality education (Day *et al.,* 2000)

That is not the case in worst performing schools, where few respondents understood the school vision. Surprisingly, both School A2 and School B2 have vision and motto but they keep them in files, as it was discovered during documentary review. There is no evidence that the school vision is being used to guide the schools' daily activities and practices, and neither did the researcher see any vision displayed. Only the school motto was on school logo and on students' t-shirts. At School B2 the situation was even worse because there was no statement in the headmaster's office indicating what the school vision was despite the fact that it was in the school head's office that the school's direction ought to be discerned. School vision binds school communities together, therefore if it is not made public and is not owned by the school community, it is difficult to set positive direction. Leithwood *et al.* (1999) argued that vision is important for building commitment and for motivating followers, groups and organisations. The school vision binds school communities together, thus, if not made public and owned by the school community, it is difficult to set a positive direction.

The results further show that participation in vision development was ranked by none of the two categories of schools. The schools' management teams said that the vision, mission and motto were developed when the schools were established, and that previous leaders were responsible for that activity. On development of the vision the head school A1 said;
I did not develop the schools vision the former head of school developed it. I am trying, in collaboration with the school community, to see whether we can review and improve it to suit our current situation and system, although I still find it relevant (Head, S. A1).

They also said that teachers and students are unaware that they were also supposed to participate in formulation of vision. D'Souza (2004) maintains that effective leaders must keep in mind that the process of clarifying and defining the school vision, mission, and motto as well as involving others in contributing towards its development is important. Involvement and participation of more stakeholders in development of vision shows a democratic system in the school, "...it is inadequate for the head to enunciate the vision without the participation of others with legitimate interest in the outcome" (Middlewood, 2005:10). Therefore, a successful school is one with effective leadership that is ready to involve members in creation of vision and fostering a sense of ownership.

4.1.2 Articulation of the school vision
A well-articulated vision is a component of effective leadership. Developing vision by involving the school community is not enough, it must also be articulated to each member in the school community. Research on effective schools (for example, Blumberg and Greenfield, 1986; Leithwood and Jantzi, 2000) consistently supports the notion that the school with effective leaders have well-designed and articulated visions. The findings in this study revealed that school visions are articulated to students during morning assemblies and to teachers and non-teaching personnel during staff meetings, department, and senior management meetings as reported by head school B1that;

I do this through students' morning assembly, teachers and non-teaching staff meetings, departmental meetings and senior management team meetings. In order to attain our vision, whenever we meet we remind each other why we are in school and insist on extra teaching for students who are not performing well. (Head, S. B1)

The vision facilitates smooth running of academic activities. This is in line with observation by Harris and Lambert (2003) that when teachers and students perceive the management team of school to be articulating a realistic vision for the future that can be shared, and mobilises commitment to such vision, they experience high satisfaction

Findings further revealed that there was a difference between best-performing and worst performing schools in ranking provision of documents to school community members. The best-performing schools all participants supported the practice of making documents available to school communities. Students believe that their respective schools' visions are well articulated because they are displayed everywhere for everyone to read. Teachers in school A1 during focus group discussion said,

In our school we understand our school vision, mission and motto by reading them on the notice board. Important documents are displayed on the board for everyone to read and be informed about our school. The morning assembly speeches reflect our vision and motto, and during school assembly we do the same and remind each other what we are supposed to do to make our vision come true *(Teacher, S.A1)*.

This statement indicates that both teachers and students accessed the document equally and this practice was seen to be effective for making members of school community to be informed. However, in the second category of schools, only few respondents stated that documents are made available to school communities. Furthermore, findings showed that more than half of respondents in best-performing schools stated that all school academic activities are planned in consideration of school vision. As one teacher S.B2 said;
We ensure that daily academic activities are based on our vision. All school academic plans are driven by our vision. Because the core vision and mission of this school focus on attainment of academic excellence, we have set various strategies to help us realise our desired vision.(teacher, S.B2)

They also indicated that the school vision is continuously reviewed whenever the need arises.   In worst-performing schools, respondents reported that school leadership do not link development of school plans to the school vision. However, school academic programmes have to be grounded in sound vision otherwise followers

may view it as unrealistic or wishful thinking (Berson *et. al.,* 2001). School plans normally involve many actors in school. If actors do not know their vision and how it links with plans, how can they implement planned activities? It is imperative to make the vision clear to facilitate planning in teaching.

4.1.3 Setting high performance standards and expectations for teachers and students
 Results indicate that effective leadership practices of encouraging high performance standards are communicated to teachers and students. Again the practice of leaders' commitment to articulate school objectives, setting high expectations for teachers and students in order to enhance school performance were highly ranked by best-performing schools. It was also noted that students and teachers had high expectations because teachers believe that every student has the right to quality education, thus they set high performance standards; and on their part, students believe in good performance. The head of school B1 said,

My expectation is that teachers, the community and the Government will be collectively responsible for setting standard cut-off points in order to attain good performance. Students should assume their responsibility of studying harder and attaining good performance. Furthermore, I expect teachers to be committed to their job, i.e. teaching; to make proper use of students' time; to care for students; and to feel they have a responsibility to help them.(Head, S.B1)

Thus, it is evident that leaders in this category of schools set high performance standards, demand commitment to setting up as well as to articulating school objectives, and encourage teachers and students to set high expectations. These results concur with those by Leithwood and Riel (2003), who maintain that one of the strongest in-school influences in students' learning appear to be teachers' expectations that students can and will succeed. Teachers' expectations help to determine the school's degree of academic drive in the classroom and the curriculum in which students are exposed, plus efforts that teachers need to make so as to help students attain high performance. Leaders also have the same expectations: they believe that every student has the right to be given an opportunity to realise his/her potentials. They maintain that it is the responsibility of all actors i.e. school leadership, teachers, students and community to collectively set high performance standards for public schools and try to attain them. In contrast, the drive on such practices is low in worst-performing schools. Teachers from this category of schools reported that although their aspirations are to teach effectively for students to perform well, their schools are constrained with shortage of resources. Teachers in School A2 said,

We expect good performance from our students but the school does not have electricity so there is no light in classes to facilitate reading. This means students can no longer have evening preparation classes yet we expect them to perform well and get Division I-III! The school also faces a shortage of resources such as textbooks and laboratory equipment. (Teacher, S A2)

This was as well indicated by students from this category of schools that their expectations are not very high because teachers do not attend classes regularly and school leadership does very little to remedy the situation. This is contrary to what is advocated by Licata and Harper (2001) that teachers are more likely to be genuinely involved with implementation of a school's vision when they observe that their school head and colleagues are instituting new structures and use them successfully to bring about desired future. In addition students also need to have high expectations in their learning (Teacher, S.A2).

4.2 Developing People
Information was gathered through interviews with schools heads (SH), senior academic masters/mistresses, (SAM) the Zonal Chief Inspector of Schools (ZCIS), school board chairperson (SBCP), as well as FGD with teachers and students on initiatives taken by the leadership and strategic organs such as the School Board to enhance the professional capacity of teachers to perform their jobs well as discussed in the following sub-sections

4.2.1 Individualized support.

Interviews with senior school management teams and focus group discussions with teachers as well as with students revealed that social support by school leaders to teachers was highly ranked as a good practice in both school categories. Leithwood and Duke (1999) maintain that provision of individualised support is a characteristic of effective school leadership across the context. It means that understanding and sharing in followers' concern and development needs, while treating each follower fairly, enhances morale to perform better. It is therefore important for leaders to recognise and understand this aspect in order to satisfy their followers' current needs.

However, findings show that leaders in best-performing schools provide individualised and social support, while in worst performing schools leaders provide great support on social matters but minimum individualised support. These differences are also reflected in the way the two school categories ranked the item: whereas in best-performing schools individualised support was highly ranked in worst performing schools it was averagely ranked. Teachers in the first category of schools reported that they get support for matters such as resolving salary problems and during sickness. One of the teachers at School B1 said:

The school head understands that personal problems affect individuals' day-to-day activities at school. Sometimes teachers have salary problems or leave problems, but the school insists on assisting staff collectively rather than providing solutions to similar staff problems individually (teacher S.B1).

This means that the head of school pay attention to teachers as individuals by asking them about their personal welfare and that of their families, as well as about their professional problems. Such findings support an observation by Ross and colleagues (1996) that good leadership ensures that problems encountered by staff, whether personal or official, are taken seriously by those in leadership positions. In schools that perform poorly, teachers at School A2 a teacher attested to this by saying, *"...social issues are well taken care of. We normally work together in various social occasions, but there is no much support that are provided to individuals".* Teachers S.B2 added by saying, *"There is support for social matters, for instance in funerals and wedding ceremonies."* teachers reported that these statements indicate that school leadership occasionally assists teachers as individuals, but that they always support them significantly on all social matters.

4.2.2. Professional development

Professional development programmes are necessary if teachers are to meet changing needs of students and society. New knowledge and skills are emerging all time, therefore teachers should be given priority to be acquainted with and exposed to such knowledge, innovation and change if quality education is to be realised. Rajab (2000) identified three main areas of staff development, namely knowledge, skills and attitude. Knowledge can be imparted by means of well-established methods such as in-service courses, correspondence courses and new methods of distance learning. Skills and attitude are best cultivated through on-job approaches. Study findings show that individual initiatives to access higher education, and to engage in preparation, moderation, supervision, marking and compilation of results of Form Two and Form Four mock and national examinations were ranked highly as means used by teachers for professional development in all schools. One of the teachers in best performing school had the following to say:

The school leadership has been very creative – they have initiated various activities that help us to acquire various skills. For example, to be effective in using time as well as in preparing, marking and compiling examination results. We feel cared for by the leadership in this school (teacher S.B1)

This indicates that school head in best-performing schools had ability to engage teachers in various activities that form the basis for their professional development. On the other hand, in schools that perform poorly there is little involvement of teachers and other supporting staff in professional development activities.

Furthermore attendance to or participation in seminars and workshops were ranked differently by the two categories of schools: respondents in best-performing schools ranked this practice above average, while

respondents in worst performing schools ranked it below average. Respondents in worst performing schools said that "*we are encouraged but not supported to participate in training seminars and workshops".* They also commented that when such training opportunities arise they are not fairly distributed to teachers, and that some teachers have never had an opportunity to attend any of such trainings. It was noted that respondents perceived professional development to mean going for further studies, participating in seminars and workshops, and invigilating as well as marking national examinations while ignoring other ways of professional development, such as induction, counseling, mentoring/coaching and peer teaching. Haldar (2010: 191) maintains, *"Leaders in schools should take their responsibility on professional development exercise like coaching, mentoring and counseling of each follower and empower them for job performance and satisfaction."*

In the current study, respondents from both categories of schools admitted that the schools lack plans for professional development. School leadership is primarily responsible for establishing norms, values and expectations essential for professional development, including training needs (Urio, 2006). All head teachers in admitted that things had changed after decentralisation, schools are now required to have plans for professional development, which will help in moderating teachers' departures for further studies. In the plan professional development or further studies not more than four teachers at a time is allowed to go for further studies and must have worked for at least three years since the first appointment or return from further studies. The notion of planning for professional development is in line with Raihan (2007) who maintain that well-planned professional development programmes contribute to effective process of organisation, particularly in support of creating learning organisation. Thus it is imperative to have plan for professional development, which will allow everyone to have equal opportunity.

4.2.3 Intellectual stimulation

Results from the study revealed the opportunities for teachers to get information, introduce new ideas, and conduct discussion were highly ranked in best-performing schools. Respondents reported that teachers, non-teaching staff and students are given opportunities for intellectual stimulation by attending school meetings at different levels – i.e. teachers' council and non-teaching staff council, and students through class meetings, village meetings and school assemblies. School head B1 indicated that,

On the issue of opportunity to discuss, we have teachers' council and non- teaching staff council, in which every group gets chance to discuss all matters related to their daily activities. If a person introduces any idea that is positive for the well being of the school community, she/he is supported; there is also opportunity as well as encouragement to find more ideas for school development (Head,S.B1).

In worst performing schools opportunities for intellectual stimulation respondents ranked practices below average: One teacher in school B2 noted that,

School meetings are irregular because the school leadership does not follow the school calendar, and that discussions related to improvement of performance are rare. Similarly the information related to finance and other fringe benefits is shared selectively (Teacher S.B2).

This statement indicates teachers' dissatisfaction on the way they get and share information in school. However, Leithwood (2005) reported that offering intellectual stimulation include making information resources available to teachers, providing them with opportunities for in-depth conversations about teaching and schooling, supporting well-organised programmes for professional development and introducing new ideas for the school to consider. It is imperative to provide adequate information as a way to empower teachers to question their practices. Lack of it leads to demoralisation and less participation of teachers in school improvement measures.

4.2.4 Role modelling

Role modeling creates models that induce teachers and students to emulate. Study findings established that leaders in both categories of schools have the ability to be role models. Teachers and students from schools that

perform well expressed satisfaction with what their head teachers do, as well as with the way they guide, support, and assist them wherever possible. Teachers School A1 said, saying *"Yes, we think he is a role model, and we feel comfortable in helping him fulfill his leadership tasks because he is always ready to guide, support and assist us whenever possible."* These findings concur with explanation by Harris (2005) that role modeling has the power to set example by heads of schools and teachers because they know it influences students' and colleagues' performance. In addition that the findings show that teachers watch their leaders closely – i.e. what their leaders do in order to check whether their actions over time, are consistent with what they do and say.

In worst performing schools teachers were of the view that their school heads are role models because they are able to supervise school activities and to teach regardless of their many responsibilities. A teacher at School B2 said that on one hand they regard their school head as a role model because of his strong character: "*The school head normally comes early to school and he is very hard working in supervising cleanliness, physical constructions and maintenance of the environment".* These findings concur with what Hallinger (2009) who said that the principal (in this case the head teacher) in an effective school is highly visible in school and even in classrooms. He/she serves as a role model of value and practices that promote continuous improvement of teaching and learning in school.

The findings further indicated that promotion of positive changes among school communities and ability to guide, support and assist teachers were more prominent in best-performing schools as compared to the worst performing schools. In the focus group discussion teachers revealed that they work according to head teachers' guidance and implement what has been collectively planned, and that everyone is committed to school activities. One teacher in S.A1 indicated that,

We are all working towards realisation of school vision following his guidance. We implement what we have planned together, and participate in all school activities to ensure that his dream and ours come true. Everyone is committed to working because he is always there to show the way.
The head of school B1 added that;

Making follow up on teachers has helped them to do their job even if they are not doing so willingly. They try to come early to school, although not all of them do so. This is also true of students – they try to come early to school and maintain school discipline, clean the surroundings and take care of the garden because they know I will make a follow up and sometimes even appear physically to supervise school activities.

Leaders in worst performing school schools stated that there were behavioural changes for both teachers and students due to positive characteristics shown by head teachers. The school head S.A2 said that,

"Teachers and students are very keen on changing their habits in order to support the attainment of the school's desired goal, which is being championed by the school leadership." teachers have changed the way they do daily activities like teaching, being teachers on duty, punctuality and supervision of school activities." Head, S. A2)

Streich (2009) argues that school leadership is not just about walking halls and telling students to "tuck in their shirts." Rather, he explains, that it is about dynamic modelling that encourages collaboration and promotes excellence in every aspect of the school community. The finding indicated that being a role model facilitates changes to teachers and students and it contributes to school performance due to commitment and positive attitude. The head in school B2 indicated that,

Performance is now improving and it has helped to build teachers' self-confidence in the way they discharge their daily responsibilities. Students have also changed their study habits they are now motivated to learn and they are studying very hard because they have realised that the school is improving its academic performance (Head,S.B2).

There is evidence that a leader who is a role model can influence school performance and change the behaviour of those they lead. Therefore, being a role model for an effective leader has positive impacts on school community while an ineffective leader prepares a community that has no direction.

4.3 Efforts Made by Leaders in Re-designing the School Organisation
Information was gathered through interviews with schools heads (SH), senior academic masters/mistresses (SAM), the Zonal Chief Inspector of Schools (ZCIS) and school board chairperson (SBCP), as well as teachers' and students' focus group discussion on exploring efforts made by leaders to redesign the school organization as discussed in the following sub-sections

4.3.1 Promoting participation in decision making
Results revealed that convening meetings at various school management levels and involving school committees in various school activities create an opportunity for teachers and students to be involved and to participate in decision-making processes at respective schools. These attributes were ranked highly by the all schools. Gorton and co-workers (2006), hold that collective decision-making is critical to successful performance of a school leader. In best-performing schools, above average of the respondents reported that they are encouraged to participate in drawing up agendas for meetings, that discussion are participatory and that what is decided is implemented by all members of school community as senior academic master at School A1 explained:

Opportunities are given during management meetings at different levels and also through various committees that are involved in the school's decision-making process. Everyone has an opportunity to contribute to meetings' agendas, and the school leadership urges all meetings' chairpersons to ensure that meetings are as participatory as possible (Academic S.A1).

It was maintained by school leadership that the school community makes collective decisions during meetings, thus school leadership does not impose or force decisions onto the rest of the school community members. During focus group discussions teachers affirmed that they are given opportunities to participate in school's decision-making process by being encouraged to attend meetings. According to documented international literature, there is a need to involve staff in decision-making (Dean, 1993) The author advise heads of schools to involve staff in decision-making regardless of feelings they may have towards the staff. In worst performing schools, respondents admitted that they are given opportunities but they rated this aspect below average. They complained that meetings are not participatory and also claimed that they receive directives to attend meetings from head teachers. Data derived from minutes of meetings confirmed that staff and parents meetings are more directive-based than participatory.

4.3.2 Creating collaborative culture and teamwork
Teamwork and collaboration are essential components in education leadership. Findings showed that the two categories of schools rated this effort (building collaborative culture and teamwork) differently: teachers and students support to collective implementation of school plans and collaboration with other institutions were ranked very highly in well-performing schools while in poor-performing schools they were ranked averagely. Padhi (2004) emphasises that people feel greatly comfortable to work in a team. In well-performing schools, respondents said that teachers worked very seriously and collectively in implementing school plans. Respondents in worst performing schools admitted that there is collaboration in social issues and in academic matters. School community members participate in all social ceremonies, and teachers assist each other academically in departments in case of difficulties in teaching as head of school B2 insisted,

…Socially, we all participate actively in joyful ceremonies (graduation, weddings, and get-together parties) as well as during sad times (bereavements/funerals). On the academic front, if a teacher is facing problems in a certain topic he/she is assisted through inter-departmental cooperation. Teachers are free to ask for assistance from any other teacher within or even outside their department, and they will always be assisted (Head, S.B2).

Respondent in one worst performing school further claimed that collaboration is difficult due to the type of teachers in that school. The findings further showed that teamwork within the school community is a strategy for the success of school, and intra-department as well as inter-department collaboration was better in well-performing schools than worst performing schools. Respondents in schools that perform well stated that they work together in every activity and that teamwork is a useful strategy for school's success. Stone (2003:65) indicate "when collaboration is part of the school operating practices, the results are an effective school culture where leadership, teachers and students can do extremely well". In worst performing schools, respondents said that they are dissatisfied with the weak teamwork in their schools. Teachers at School A2 ascertained that building collaboration would be a good culture for the school but that there is no common culture. *In the past there was collaborative culture, whereby we worked together but not today…I feel as if we are building a culture of non-collaboration and of not having direction at all. Every one works on his own and towards his personal objectives.* This is contrary to what other researchers believe should happen in school organisation. Halder (2010) maintains that team building means to develop working relationship; promote team performance; highlight efforts that confront the individuals within the team; and create motivation. Communication, support, and interpersonal trust reduce individual differences within the team. Thus, in order to improve students' performance collaboration and teamwork are inevitable

4.3.3 Delegation of roles and responsibilities

The researcher sought to understand how roles and responsibilities are delegated to teachers and other staff so as to facilitate smooth running of school. Interviews with management team and focus group discussions with teachers and students in best-performing schools verified that delegation of responsibilities is well done from committee level to individual level. One teacher in school B1 in focus group discussion said that,

Delegation of roles and responsibilities is well done; the head of school delegates responsibilities to individuals according to their experience, degree of hard working, and ability to work on a given responsibility. He also shares leadership roles because he is not selfish, and he involves committees in deciding most of school matters. (Teacher, S.B1)

This statement indicates that the school head practiced effective delegation of responsibilities as witnessed by teachers. Salinas-Maningo (2005) narrates that the components of an effective delegation by a leader involves the right task, right circumstances, right person, right direction and communication and right supervision and evaluation. The study by Morake N, Monobe R and Mbulawa, M (2012) revealed that there was usually delegation of tasks to subordinates. School managers together with their teachers and other non-teaching staff share the workload and responsibilities and provide authority to those delegated responsibilities. Thus effective delegation of responsibilities paired with authority and trust facilitates progressive sharing of management functions among various management levels in an organisation. By sharing authority with teachers and other staff, the head enhances one's effectiveness and contribution to school organisation.

Best preforming schools also provided job descriptions for each person who was given responsibility as opposed only few of respondent. Apart from that delegation of authority and empowerment of the teachers as attributes of good leadership is well done. This was evident also in the school documents where almost every teacher had other responsibilities apart from normal teaching. These responsibilities were documented and placed on various notice boards in the schools to help teachers and other school community members know who is responsible for a given task. Elmore (2000) argues that a good school practice is distributed leadership that relies on multiple sources of leadership across the school organisation to guide completion of numerous tasks within the organisation. Robert and Hindle (2001), also hold that effective leaders need to develop leaders among their staff, and that one of the means to achieve it is through delegation of authority. Effective delegation of responsibilities and strategies for ensuring accountability are clearly evident in best performing schools. On the contrary in worst performing schools, although roles and responsibilities are allocated and job descriptions are provided to people given responsibilities, there was no fairness in provision of those responsibilities and nepotism prevailed. One teacher in school B2 commented that,

Inexperienced staff are given responsibilities and appointed to positions for which they lack experience. The head of school appoints staff to positions of high responsibility not based on qualifications but the way she feels (Teacher, S B2)

In this school, teachers were dissatisfied with subjectively in distribution responsibilities. As a result people given responsibilities lack authority to make decisions, are not empowered nor supported to perform tasks autonomously as one teacher said." They have no any authority to make decisions on anything without first consulting the head". D'Souza, (2004) insists that effective leaders are required to share responsibilities and give authority to people to make decisions; facilitate group discovery; encourage self-responsibility; focus on building upon strengths and finding resources; generate enthusiasm as well as commitment; and pull school organisation towards vision. Robert and Hindle (2001) argue that an effective leader must monitor delegated responsibilities by assuming responsibility while allowing the delegated to have autonomy. Delegation is essentially a two-way power-sharing process.

Heads of school in best performing schools encourage cooperation and collective responsibility. Clarke (2007) maintains that leaders in the effective model are needed to encourage and empower those who they work with and need openness as well as trust so that there is buy-in from those they direct. It was also noted that every individual and every school committee has a written job description that has been derived from school heads' management guides. In worst-performing school- performing schools job descriptions are kept away in files instead of being displayed for public viewing; the researcher did not see any job description displayed anywhere in the offices that she entered. Bakhda (2004) indicate that for an institution to run smoothly and efficiently every employee must understand what is expected of him/her. No matter how simple a job looks like, putting its details on paper and letting the worker understand them generates goodwill as well as positive attitudes to work. It is evident that head teachers in best-performing schools effectively delegate roles and responsibilities, and grant authority to carry out these responsibilities, thereby promoting empowerment, support and trust. In worst performing schools, however, head teachers delegate roles and responsibilities without any consideration of empowering, supporting, or trusting persons to whom they assign roles and responsibilities. The delegation of roles and responsibilities should be accompanied with authority to execute, thereby promoting empowerment, support and trust.

5.0 Conclusion
This study aimed to explore effective leadership practices that can sustain school improvement in public secondary schools in order to ascertain whether these leadership practices matter. Results from the study provide clear evidence that where effective leadership practices are employed the school improvement is clear and every member in the school understand the school direction. Thus, wherever we see effective schools have effective and considerate leaders, who demonstrate leadership practices that are acceptable by the school community. For instance, leaders in best-performing schools were able to articulate the school vision and to share it through various means; to manage instructional programmes; plan for professional development; and re-designing the school organisation. They can therefore be recognised as leaders with effective leadership practices. Adesina (2011) consider leadership as the ability to get things done with the support and cooperation of other people within the institution, organization, or system. Leadership is all about organizational improvement; more specifically, it is about establishing agreed-upon and worthwhile directions for the organization in question, and doing whatever it takes to prod and support people to move in those directions. In worst performing schools leaders demonstrated fewer effective practices leading to school poor performance.

Probably this kind of observation will prompt the Ministry of Education into re-thinking about the criteria for the selection of leaders in our secondary schools and the context in which they operate that affects best practices of school leadership. It should therefore, make an urgent decision on how to rectify the situation. Based on these findings, it is recommended that school heads change the style of managing schools and adopt leadership styles that encourage power sharing. School leaders should also groom others to be leaders, and plan for other forms of professional development (such as organisational learning strategies). It is further recommended that the Government allocates enough resources to school leaders so that they can cope with their various and demanding responsibilities under the current reforms. Most importantly, school heads should be given more training to build their skills on management and leadership to enable them analyse their environment and lead schools in a positive direction for quality improvement.

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