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Influence of nepotism on institutional leadership in public secondary schools in Kajiado County, Kenya

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Abstract

This study focused on investigating how nepotism influences institutional leadership in public secondary schools in Kajiado County, Kenya. Nepotism is a reality that has serious consequences manifested in its impact on the unity and cohesion of the nation. Nepotism is not a new phenomenon in the labour market. Nepotism has not spared the teaching profession. The study was guided by the following objective: to establish the influence of nepotism on institutional leadership in public secondary schools in Kajiado County, Kenya. The study adopted a mixed methods approach, combining qualitative and quantitative approaches. The researcher used the concurrent triangulation design which involved the collection of two types of data within the same time frame. The target population consisted 783 participants comprising 8 Education Officers (EOs), 60 principals, 60 deputy principals and 655 teachers. The sample size comprised 25 principals, 25 deputy principals, 5 Education Officers (EOs) and 185 secondary school teachers. The study employed simple random sampling techniques to select the education officers, deputy principals and teachers, purposive sampling for the selection of principals and stratified sampling techniques for selection of public secondary schools. Questionnaires, interview guides and document analysis checklists were used to collect quantitative and qualitative data. Quantitative data were analyzed descriptively and inferentially and presented using tables and pie-charts. Inferential statistics were analyzed using simple linear regression and presented in a table. Qualitative data was analyzed thematically and presented in narrative form and quotations. The study found that the level of nepotism in the education sector is getting worse as its influence is manifested in the employment of teachers by Board of Management (BOMs), transfer of teachers by the Teachers Service Commission (TSC), awarding of contracts and tenders by principals, politicians giving out donations in the form of

school development, employment of support staff by the BOMs, selection of BOMs and replacing students who do not report after the selection exercise which is done by the Ministry of Education (MOE). The study concluded that nepotism influenced institutional leadership in public secondary schools. The study recommends that efforts should be made to ensure transparency; fair treatment and meritocracy are upheld at all times during the appointment, recruitment, selection, transfers and promotions of principals, teachers and support staff by both the TSC and the BOMs. The study also recommended that all public secondary schools must have at their disposal all the relevant legal and administrative documents in their respective schools and principals and BOMs should ensure these documents are placed in the staff rooms, libraries, waiting rooms and relevant offices and departments with KEMI and MOE providing mandated policy compliance kits directly to ASAL schools. The study further recommends that, the Ministry of Education (MOE) should ensure the compulsory training of all newly appointed principals, BOMs and Parents Association (PAs) officials in public secondary school to equip them with the necessary skills and knowledge that will assist them in carrying out their roles within the schools as required by law without compromising the integrity and dignity of their schools.

Key terms: Nepotism, culture, leadership, institutional leadership, public school

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background and Context

The cultural issue is one that is traditional and has been held by most African tribes in high esteem for many years. The traditional cultural dynamics dominate and continue to control how people think, talk, behave, interact, and also determine what one opposes or supports (Adeyanyu, 2014). Perceptions regarding leadership and ways to exercise leadership are also subject to the impact of culture (Unal, 2017). Leadership dynamism in education provision has posed a great challenge to the whole world (Musyoka, 2018). According to Kumar (2009), different communities have their own customs and traditions, beliefs and styles of living, which are known as community cultures, and each nation has a distinct national culture.

The importance of culture lies in the fact that it is a link between people and their value systems, which might vary from one society to another. Cultures are very diverse and play an important role in society. African individualism has largely replaced communalism, as both individuals and nations struggle to survive. As a result of individualism, nepotism has increasingly become evident in the daily life of most African societies today (Unal, 2017). Nepotism is likely to happen where there is high group solidarity. Many people (teachers included) are presently comfortable and fond of surrounding themselves with fellow tribesmen and hiding under tribal and ethnic cocoons because they do not trust people from other tribes. According to Sugundan, Raja and Jaganathan (2018), nepotism is one of the least studied and most ineffectively comprehended topics, yet its effects are tremendous.

In Kenya, nepotism is a reality that has serious consequences that are manifested in the way it has affected the unity and cohesion of the nation. Nepotism is not a new phenomenon in the labour market. A study by Ombanda (2018) found that relative nepotism is one of the most insidious forms of nepotism in

Kenya, accounting for 77% of the staff currently employed. Nepotism has become a national culture that has been transmitted from one generation to another from within the various communities sharing a common community culture. It has remained to be one of our utmost challenges, bearing in mind its cultural, social and political background. The culture of a country has a very powerful impact on its educational patterns, because culture is dynamic. It changes and grows with the change of time (Kumar, 2009). The intimate relationship between culture, education and institutional leadership is evident from the role culture plays in the life of a person and how it guides his or her conduct in different walks of life.

Cultures greatly influence how a person behaves. The employment of personal connections remains the principal method of recruitment and appointment of teachers and principals. People with closer ties to leaders or managers are offered positions without going through the laid-down procedures at the expense of the most deserving applicants or employees due to the power they wield. Nepotism is an unprofessional phenomenon that disregards the qualifications and experiences of non-relatives, even though qualifications and experience are critical in recruitment (Kuffo & Kivipold, 2019). Hiring of qualified teachers has been cited as a serious problem affecting both developed and developing countries such as Kenya (Makori & Onderi, 2013). Hence, the traditional and cultural foundation of the communities around the schools can determine the institutional leadership because cultural factors can go hand in hand with leadership, though some cultural factors may not augur well with leadership and hence have a negative effect.

According to Musyoka (2018), devolution in Kenya has sought to bring the government closer to the people by bringing the county governments to the centre of the distribution of political power and economic resources and leadership for all Kenyans. However, devolution in Kenya has since resulted to the 47 counties fighting for control of “their own share and stake” of resources which in turn has resulted to political nepotism influencing the granting of special favours to politically correct people in public institutions such as the TSC and public secondary schools. Nowadays, getting a good job is no longer about qualifications but rather about “who you know”. A study by Koech, Tikoko and Chemwei (2014) in Baringo County found that the recruitment exercise is sometimes marred by tribalism, ethnicity and clan factors since Members of Parliament (MPs) and Members of County Assemblies (MCAs) and other local leaders disregard the TSC recruitment guidelines and set their own.

A similar study by Makori and Onderi (2013) revealed that corruption, nepotism, and negative influence from BOMs who paid less attention to qualifications than to clanism and BOMs who wanted their own people regardless of qualifications or competence were some of the issues identified in relation to the conduct of BOMs and recruitment of staff in public secondary schools. According to TSC (2007), over the years, appointment and deployment of heads of educational institutions have not been guided by a clear, transparent and documented policy and as a result, the TSC formulated a policy to improve efficiency in teacher recruitment, provide direction for current and future recruitment, and define roles of recruiting agents, among others. In addition, the delegation of the recruitment exercise to BOMs and County Directors by TSC was aimed at minimizing allegations of malpractices such as nepotism, tribalism and political arm-twisting among others; however, bias and nepotism are still rife (Koech, Tikoko & Chemwei, 2014).

In Kajiado County, the influence of nepotism has not spared the teaching profession. Teachers can no longer say they are untouched by nepotism since people in influential and powerful positions continue to give priority to their family, friends, relatives, clansmen, tribesmen, and acquaintances at the expense of other qualified people who could have benefited the institutions immensely. Devolution has been linked to increased nepotism in Kajiado County as people have become more conscious of “what belongs to them”. Despite the good intentions of TSC to delegate the recruitment exercises to BOMs at the grassroots level (in schools) and TSC County Directors (at the county level), criticisms, bias, and nepotism continue to

emerge (Koech, Tikoko & Chemwei, 2014). In Kajiado County, public secondary schools' recruitment and appointments are largely based on near-kin relationships. The sectional interests of different sectional groups and clans have led to this structural looseness and hence the prevalence of nepotism within the public schools. According to Kumar (2009), culture and education cannot be divorced from each other. They are interdependent; hence, the cultural patterns of a society guide its educational practices.

According to TSC (2007), the procedures for formal appointment to principalship involve advertising vacancies, identification of potential candidates by the provincial staffing committees, shortlisting, conducting interviews to identify suitable candidates, submitting the merit list to the Secretary of the TSC, and finally, the issuance of appointment letters to successful appointees. Bearing in mind that culture is the part of the fabric of every society which shapes "the way things are done" and our understanding of why this is so, it is hard to prove that the selection and appointment procedures are watertight and foolproof from any influence of nepotism. The unfairness that nepotism brings is a result of the favour that decision-makers at top management levels at TSC and County offices make consciously in favour of their kinsmen at the expense of those who deserve. The current supremacy battles between TSC and the KNUT add to the woes of an already frustrated workforce.

Kajiado County, being a "cultural melting pot" and home to the Maasai, experiences situations where the interests of the various tribal sections and clans most of the time conflict with one another because kinship is often central to the social, cultural, economic and political life of the Maasai community. Favoritism and nepotism are very difficult to control in cultures that emphasize interpersonal relationships (Kuffo & Kivipold, 2019). According to Musyoka (2018), devolution of education moved decision-making closer to people, giving them a greater say in education decisions. This has resulted in nepotism influencing the poor identification, selection, deployment, appointment, and promotion of teachers and principals, and this has affected institutional leadership in the public secondary schools. When "People" dictate and influence the appointments of "teachers" and "principals" they like without thinking whether such a person is fit to deliver, the quality of the labour force is compromised and the employee (in this case the principal or teacher) will be remote-controlled to suit the interests of their godfathers.

Similarly, in discharging their functions, the BOMs work closely with politicians, sponsors, NGOs, county governments, local administration, and other stakeholders, some of whom have a vested interest (Kengere & Thinguri, 2017). This has contributed to inbreeding in the teaching profession, promotion of ethnicism and politicization of the profession (Koech, Tikoko & Chemwei, 2014). Sugundan, Raja and Jaganathan (2018) affirm that education is obviously a reflection of the social, cultural and political conditions prevailing outside. A study by Ongeru (2013) found that the majority of BOMs in Kajiado County lack adequate supervisory competencies because they have not been exposed to management training. Thus, it is certainty to say that institutional leadership and the teaching profession at large in public secondary schools in Kajiado County do have ethnic, political and cultural dimensions. The *policy on identification, selection, appointment, deployment and training of heads of institutions (TSC, 2007)* and the *policy on appointment and deployment of institutional administrators (TSC 2017)* has done little to curtail the reality of the influence of nepotism in the public secondary school's leadership in Kajiado County even though the policies provides clear and transparent criteria for identifying, selecting, appointing, deploying and training heads of post-primary institutions.

1.2 Statement of the problem

The quality of leadership at institutional level continues to be a major concern in public secondary schools in Kajiado County. Kajiado County, being an Arid and Semi-Arid Land (ASAL) area has unique cultural problems that have been influencing the management and leadership of public secondary schools.

Effective, watertight, clear and transparent procedures in appointing principals, deputy principals and teachers seem to be lacking. This is evident from the nature of the influence the external environment has over the public secondary schools, which is mostly perpetuated by the culture of near-kin versus distant-kin relationships and to a certain extent, devolution. As a result, recruitment and appointments in the public secondary schools heavily rely on which tribe, ethnic group, clan, family, clan politics, who knows whom, which geographical region one comes from as well as the incumbent political leaders. The culture and traditional customs continue to dominate the social standing of the Maasai people, who thrive on the assumption that if school leadership and workforce are not from their tribe, clan or ethnic group, then it does not benefit the school and the community at large.

These problems are partly fueled by the demographic location of the institutions and the dominant cultural underpinnings around the schools. Since schools are closely linked to society, kinship and personal relationships are used to limit opportunities for those deemed as outsiders. Because of its very nature, it is difficult to document nepotism; however, unpublished reports indicate that poor identification and appointment of principals, deputy principals, and teachers as a result of vested interests, clan affiliations, and politics are prevalent in Kajiado County. It is important to identify, select, appoint, deploy, and train the right people to be institutional leaders and teachers. There is very little evidence of research done to investigate the influence of nepotism on institutional leadership in public secondary schools in Kajiado County. This study strived to fill that knowledge gap.

1.3 Objectives of the study

The study was guided by the following objective:

To establish the influence of nepotism on institutional leadership in public secondary schools in Kajiado County, Kenya.

1.4 Significance of the study

The findings of the study may serve as a repository of knowledge to MOE for further references during the selection and nomination of BOMs and Parents Association (PAs) members. TSC will use the study findings to make better and more informed decisions during selection, identification, recruitment, appointments, and posting of principals, teachers, and TSC personnel in the counties. The appointment of principals by TSC assumes rightly and sometimes wrongly that the school principals would be equal to the task; however, this is not always the case. The study will additionally guide secondary school principals and teachers to deal with and prepare them to lead and face the realities that come with the nature and status of their offices and institutions. Most principals have little or no prior knowledge of the communities in which the schools to which they are posted to head. This puts most of them in a precarious position. Unfortunately, there are no studies that address the influence of nepotism as a traditional cultural dynamic on institutional leadership in Kajiado County. Lack of such studies hinders the ability of secondary school principals to lead schools, making the terrain of institutional leadership very challenging.

2. Literature review

2.1 Institutional Leadership and Principalship

The management of secondary schools in every country in the world calls for secondary school principals to be well-trained or highly qualified to discharge their school duties (Musembi, 2016). Globally, school principals are bestowed with duties such as administering the approved curriculum, managing school

finances, staff supervision, teaching, and school-community relations (Budohi, 2014). The concept of institutional leadership unlocks some crucial facets of institutional leadership that could be defined as the shared capability of management to detect and cope with changes in the internal and external environment by upholding the most important objectives of the organization. It is acquired through one's ability to control, initiate or set the pattern of behaviours for others. According to Kumar (2009), culture influences education; in the same way, education also influences culture. Institutional leadership has therefore been subjected to numerous challenges emanating from the dynamic nature of the society (Ugochukwu, Kalagbor & Harrion, 2016). According to Ondieki (2011), lots of principals have found themselves in hitherto unfamiliar leadership terrains that need them to assume innovative leadership styles that not only consider but respect and take into account community expectations.

Principals who are on the ground are faced with the realities of how communities influence what goes on and happens around their schools more than their counterparts in the county and TSC headquarters offices. Principals as educational leaders may often be faced with choices that require them to make decisions, decisions which are likely to be problematic; hence, the ethical leadership of the principals is a matter of great importance to the educational institutions (Ibrahim & Turgut, 2009). Institutional leadership has currently become a shifting target and goals solely meant to favour and suit certain individuals, clans, and tribal and ethnic group interests. When positions are awarded based on the influence of nepotism, the real return in education may be poor (Damianus, 2014). For principals to address the pressure and outside influence and remain afloat, they, too, resort to nepotism to survive in the leadership mantle. A study by Kengere and Thinguri (2017) found that the elements of nepotism, cronyism, ethnicism, and clanism influenced the appointments and operations of the BOMS. For devolution in the education sector to be successful, principals must acquire new skills in leadership and management (Musyoka, 2018). The institutional leader should therefore form a thick skin for the purpose of wading through the thorny, stony landscape of troubled school challenges, rocky monuments and painful leadership troubles (Kiongo & Thinguri, 2014).

2.2 Nepotism in Institutional Leadership

Nepotism is a big social and political problem. It is a widespread and worldwide phenomenon today. The management of secondary schools in every country in the world calls for secondary school principals to be well trained or highly qualified to discharge their school duties (Musembi, 2016). In Africa, leaders are the custodians of culture, community values and take the lead to promote it and even ensure that communal interests are met (Oduol, 2014). In South Sudan, for example, many young men and women who have better certificates and degrees than others are turned away from jobs because of discriminatory nepotism (Thomas, 2015). In a civilized culture like the one we are in today, nepotism has become a big embarrassment. Nepotism deprives the public service, state and non-state institutions of finding the right persons for the right positions. Unjust distributions of jobs and resources have brought a lot of general discontent in many parts of the country. Nepotism can be likened to putting "square pegs into round holes" when unqualified persons are placed in positions, leaving out the most qualified.

According to the *TSC Code of Conduct and Ethics* (2015), a public officer shall not practice nepotism or favoritism or engage in activities that will bring about his or her personal interests conflicting with his or her official duties. Damianus (2014) offered the following five forms of nepotism: relative nepotism which is the common practice of hiring, prioritizing and promoting the relative first before anyone else, friend nepotism which is a management behaviour of giving special attention to friends, connection nepotism- a practice of giving special treatment to persons who have connections with the management, contribution nepotism which involves the management giving a special treatment to persons who have contributed something to the achievement of the management, and lastly is referral nepotism where a management asks a top performer whether he/she knows someone to fill up a position.

Nepotism has placed many principals at uncomfortable and compromising positions. The modern school principals and deputy principals must dance the tune of their educational seniors and supervisors as they too dance their tune from higher authorities (Kiongo & Thinguri, 2014). A study by Kengere and Thinguri (2017) confirms that clanism, racism and ethnicism have too found their way into public secondary schools BOMs. According to the *TSC code of Conduct and Ethics* (2015), a public officer shall not practice nepotism or favoritism or engage in activities that will bring about his or her personal interests conflicting with his or her official duties. A study by Moraa, Chepkoech, and Simiyu (2017) revealed that bias, nepotism, and tribalism were reported by candidates who missed chances despite knowing they were qualified for the teaching jobs. Nepotism weakens the public trust when the government gives the impression of being like a family unit, a company run not for the people, but for the families of those in command. Corruption, tribalism, and impunity are products of nepotism. Nepotism instigates low morale and performance of workers and the general well-being and cohesion within institutions. The objectives of such institutions become moving targets, as they deviate from the known and accepted norms.

According to the *TSC Report on Customer and Employee Satisfaction Survey (2017)*, a sizeable percentage of teachers are not satisfied with some aspects of recruitment and promotions within the service. Qualified and experienced teachers are never promoted, whereas recent graduates who have godfathers are being awarded promotions and principalship because of a powerful relative somewhere. Some schools refuse to shortlist qualified applicants in favour of their “preferred” candidates, while sometimes teachers are transferred in order to create an opening for someone’s relative who wants a job or leadership post (Makori & Onderi, 2013). The *TSC policy on appointment and deployment of institutional administrators (2017)* clearly stipulates that the identification process of institutional administrators should consider prerequisite skills and competencies before they are appointed and deployed. Kumar (2009) further affirms that Human Resources Management practices such as recruitment, selection, appointment, and promotion are not adequately implemented due to nepotism. Ombanda (2018), provides four dimensions of nepotism existing in public and private organizations in Kenya, which are tribal nepotism, kinship nepotism, bribery nepotism, and political nepotism. Nepotism kills healthy competition. Recruitment exercises should be streamlined to give them a national outlook by giving all the candidates equal opportunities for recruitment as long as they meet the qualifications (Moraa, Chepkoech & Simiyu, 2017).

In Kajiado County, the recruitment, appointment, and promotion of teachers to principalship have, over the years, evolved and devolved to accommodate the vested interests of personal, tribal, and ethnic groups, as nepotism has become a national and community culture. Nepotism has created borders and hurdles against which persons can find solace amidst fellow cronies or tribal cocoons to the detriment of others who are more deserving. School principals are important social actors in education today and are very busy people. Within the schools, the principals work with the teachers, subordinate staff and students. Outside the school, principals work with parents, the surrounding community, education officers, government agents, politicians, and other interest groups such as churches (Otunga, Serem & Kindiki, 2008). A good institutional leader should therefore take time to understand others; it is far less time than needed to back up and correct misunderstandings. 21st-century school leadership requires commitment, hard work, persistence, and tolerance (Kiongo & Thinguri, 2014). As institutional leaders, they play a crucial role in the development of the mission and vision and in maintaining the legitimacy of their institutions. Institutional leadership should therefore advocate for equality, fairness, and freedom from discrimination and prejudice. Leadership, like power, is relational, collective, and purposeful.

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Research approach

The study adopted a mixed methods approach to research (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003). The use of qualitative methods in this study was considered appropriate by the researcher because, according to the researcher, the quantitative methods cannot adequately describe what the situation is on the ground in relation to the cultural dynamics of leadership in the institutions. Mixed methods research also increases validity and reliability. The researcher used the concurrent-triangulation design for this research. The research design is a plan for conducting research (Kothari, 2009). The concurrent-triangulation design involved the collection of two types of data in the same time frame. The researchers employed both quantitative and qualitative approaches in data collection by using questionnaires, interview guides and document analysis checklists. The collected data was then analyzed and interpreted at approximately the same time, before the results were merged together.

3.2 Target Population

In this study, the target population involved a total of 783 participants comprising 8 Education Officers (EOs), 60 principals, 60 deputy principals, and 655 teachers. Out of the target population, the study sampled 25 principals, 25 deputy principals, and 185 secondary teachers in selected public secondary schools within the County. The 60 public secondary schools were classified according to strata as follows: 2 National schools, 7 County schools, and 51 District schools. One education officer was selected from each of the five constituencies in the County.

3.3 Data Analysis Techniques and Procedures

The collected data were analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively. Quantitative data analysis yielded the descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics were analysed using frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviation, and the results were presented in tables. Inferential statistics were analysed using a simple linear regression, and results were presented in tables. Qualitative data were analysed thematically and presented in narrative form and direct quotations. Qualitative data collected using the document checklist analysis were quantified and analyzed thematically and presented in narrative form. Conclusions were then drawn from the data, and recommendations for practice and policy were made.

Ethical Considerations

Some of the ethical issues observed included intellectual ownership and plagiarism, informed consent, privacy, confidentiality, anonymity, and research fraud.

4. Research Findings and Discussions

Questionnaire response rate

The researcher sampled 185 respondents who were drawn from public secondary schools in the study area. The number of teachers who returned the questionnaires was 132 out of the sampled population of 185 teachers, a return rate of 71.4%. In addition, 19 (76%) of the principals, 22(88%) of the deputy principals and 3(60%) of the education officers were interviewed respectively.

Influence of nepotism on institutional leadership in public secondary Schools in Kajiado County, in Kenya.

The respondents' views on the influence of nepotism on institutional leadership in public secondary schools in Kajiado County were presented as follows:

Influence of nepotism on recruitment of teachers by BOMs

Nepotism has plagued many public schools where it has interfered with fair competition for jobs during recruitment of teachers. Kinship and personal relationships limit opportunities for those deemed as outsiders as presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Influence of nepotism on recruitment of teachers by BOMs

Nepotism on recruitment of teachers by BOMs	f	%
Strongly agree	38	28.8
Agree	44	33.3
Disagree	31	23.5
Strongly disagree	19	14.4
Total	132	100

Results from Table 1 shows that, overall, 82(62.1%) of teachers agreed that nepotism influenced recruitment of teachers by BOMs, while 50(37.9%) disagreed. According to the *TSC Report on customer and employee satisfaction survey of 2017*, the lowest score of 49% was on fairness, transparency, and professionalism in teacher recruitment. The survey recommended the implementation of the recruitment policy later. A study by Moraa, Chepkoech, and Simiyu (2017) found that majority of BOM members (61.9%) were mere monitors in the recruitment exercise without being actively involved in the selection interviews. Since most BOMs have no recruitment training, they may not adequately and effectively run the recruitment process (Beatriz, Deborah, & Hunter, 2008). The Institutional Theory of Leadership urges principals to protect the integrity and values of the institutions that they are leading.

Influence of Nepotism on Appointment of Principals and Deputy Principals

The role of identification, selection, appointment, and deployment of institutional leaders lies with the TSC. The views of principals and deputy principals are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Nepotism on appointment of principals and deputy principals by TSC

Response	f	%
Strongly agree	16	12
Agree	34	26
Disagree	40	30
Strongly disagree	42	32
Total	132	100

Results from Table 2 shows that, overall, 72(62%) of the teachers disagreed that nepotism influenced the appointment of principals and their deputies by TSC whereas overall, 50(38%) agreed. This implies that the TSC should strictly adhere to and implement fully without bias or favour the 2007 policy on identification, selection, appointment, deployment and training of heads of post primary institutions and the 2017 policy on appointment and deployment on institutional administrators. A study by Ombanda (2018) revealed that 64% of recruiters in Kenya tend to ignore competencies read as qualifications when

employing relatives or friends. According to the Social Identity Theory by Henri Tajfel, inter-group categorization leads to in-group favoritism and discrimination against the out-group.

How to rid Nepotism in Institutions of Learning

Principals, as institutional leaders, have to continually interact with the changing, unstable environment within and outside the schools. When principals were asked to state ways in which nepotism can be eradicated in the institutions of learning, they gave the following responses, as shown in Table 3.

Table 3: How to rid nepotism in institutions of learning		
How to get rid of nepotism in institutions of learning	f	%
TSC to set its own bar so that there is no room for manipulation during the hiring and promotion of teachers	8	42.1
Fair treatment of all persons	8	42.1
Follow the right channel of employment (qualification)	7	36.8
Picking the right people for BOMs	7	36.8
Sensitization of nepotism through civic education	6	31.6
Fair distribution of resources (human and economic)	6	31.6
Criminalize ethnic domination and advocate for tribal balance for cohesion	4	21.1
Hiring of teachers by BOMs to be purely on merit	4	21.1
Allow competent persons to run the schools	3	15.8
Admit students according to performance, not favours	3	15.8

Table 3 shows that 8(42.1%) of the principals said the TSC needs to set its own bar so that there is no room left for manipulation during the hiring and promotion of teachers. A TSC survey (2017) found out that the promotion of teachers as per laid-down policy and scheme of work scored a low of 44% pointing to a potential internal anomaly when it comes to promotions. In addition, 8(42.1%) of the principals said there should be fair treatment of all persons, 7(36.8%) said picking the right people for BOMs, with 6(31.6%) citing sensitization of nepotism through civic education and criminalization of ethnic domination and advocacy for tribal balance for cohesion at 4(21.1%). According to Masakhalia (2011), some of the possible solutions to nepotism involve looking for competence and not tribe, fair distribution of resources, and peaceful coexistence of people.

To verify the possibility of influence between nepotism and institutional leadership in public secondary schools, a linear regression was used to test the relationship between nepotism and institutional leadership as well as to test for the influence of nepotism on recruitment. The statements used were meant to determine whether nepotism influenced the employment of support staff, how much emphasis was placed on the employment of people from the clan or community around the school, and the role BOMs played in the recruitment exercise. The results are tabulated in Table 4.

Table 4: Statistical measurements on the influence of nepotism on institutional leadership

Dependent variable: Institutional leadership

Regression statistics

Model 1
Nepotism

Predictor: Nepotism R	.869
R-squared(R ²)	.755
Adjusted R squared(R ²)	.753
Beta β	.869
p-value	.000
Standard error of estimate (E)	.24691
Constant	6.989

Table 4 portrays results of a simple linear regression analysis on the influence of nepotism (predictor) on institutional leadership in public secondary schools in Kajiado County. The Pearson's $R=.869$ indicates that there was a strong positive relationship between nepotism and institutional leadership (dependent variable) in public secondary schools in the study locale. The R-squared (R^2) computed yielded a value of .755 suggesting that nepotism explained (75.5%) of the variations in institutional leadership in public secondary schools in Kajiado County. The p -value computed by SPSS yielded a value of .000 which is less than the significance level of $p<.001$. This led to the conclusion that there was a statistically significant relationship between nepotism and institutional leadership in public secondary schools in Kajiado County. According to the Makori and Onderi (2013), some schools refuse to shortlist qualified applicants in favour of their "preferred" candidates.

As part of the qualitative approach, interviews were conducted with nineteen principals on the effects of nepotism on the schools. The researcher further established that nepotism influenced the tendering process in the public secondary schools. In one boy's secondary school, the BOMs had awarded themselves tenders to supply the school through cronies and next of kin to conceal their identities. The Public Procurement and Disposal Act (2015) is very clear on the tendering and procurement process. Further results captured from the deputy principals by the document analysis checklist showed that the Anti- Corruption and Economic Crimes Act was not available in 20(90.9%) of the public secondary schools, while the Public Procurement Disposal Act 2015 was available in 21 (95.5%) of the public secondary schools. In addition, 20(90.9%) of the public secondary schools had the Public Procurement Regulations 2006. A BOM should not tender for any project in the school while in office and should be a person of high moral and ethics (Kengere & Thinguri, 2017). As one principal categorically reported that:

"Sometimes they (BOMs) award themselves these tenders through cronies or next of kin to conceal their real identity." (23rd May 2017)

From the foregoing quotation, it is evident that public secondary school principals and their deputies need to be conversant with all relevant legal and administrative documents so as to sharpen their administrative skills and operate within the safe precinct of the laws of Kenya. Public secondary schools should follow the right procurement and tendering processes. Nine (47.4%) of the principals said that nepotism was a big problem in their schools, especially when the employment of teachers and support staff from the local community where the schools are located is influenced by the BOMs. In one girl's secondary school, the principal reported that:

"Some BOMs push for the employment of their relatives who are not qualified or lack the required experience. Since some support staff are relatives of the BOMs, it becomes difficult to discipline them." (7th June 2017)

Another principal reported that:

"Nepotism has influenced the employment of teachers from outside the county by those in high offices"

and with connections.” (19th May 2017)

These comments suggest that nepotism is a big social problem. Vacancies have been personalized under the current devolution. A similar study by Moraa, Chepkoech, and Simiyu (2017) found that 75% of teachers were selected from within their own communities, with most BOM panelists favouring candidates from their own tribes and communities. This has given BOMs to have powers and great influence on what goes on in and outside the schools. Further results showed that 13 (68.4%) of the principals indicated that politicians played a significant role in propagating nepotism in their schools. One female principal admitted to feigning support for the politician because she had no choice. *“I do not want to put my job on the line...,”* said the principal. Another principal averred:

“Sometimes important or urgent decisions are delayed or subjected to a lot of consultations between “people” which is a waste of valuable time.” (5th June 2017)

From the foregoing quotations, it is apparent to say that conflicts of interest between principals, school leaders, and politicians exist in many public secondary schools, and this has placed many principals in uncomfortable and compromising situations during decision-making in the schools. Principals are charged with the responsibility of seeing that decisions made in the school are in line with the school policies (Budohi, 2014). However, one female principal was quick to report that:

“It is hard to say no when the politician has put up two or more classrooms in your school...” (25th May 2017)

From the foregoing, it is apparent that the greater the dependence of the institution on the external groups' influence, the more open it is to falling under the influence of outside forces. One of the education officers interviewed concurred that nepotism has also taken its toll in the selection of BOMs and PAs in most public secondary schools. He reported that:

“Politicians give out names of their preferred BOM candidates, and we as the education office, are left with no choice...” (25th May 2017)

The above findings were consistent with those of Moraa, Chepkoech and Simiyu (2017), who found that 61.9% of the BOMs and PAs were appointed by the area MP or local authorities, with the highest percentage being selected right from within the school community.

5. Conclusion

The study concludes that the Teachers Service Commission has good policies on recruitment, appointment and deployment of institutional administrators; however, nepotism has remained a major influence in the public secondary school's leadership where it has been linked to corruption, impunity and tribalism. Nepotism can be addressed through fair treatment of all persons in addition to upholding transparency and meritocracy at all times.

6. Recommendations

6.1 Recommendations for practice

The study recommends that the TSC and BOMs should ensure transparency, fair treatment and meritocracy are upheld at all times during the appointment, recruitment, selection, transfers, and promotions of principals, teachers, and support staff. Those found contravening the rules; regulations and policies should be held liable and accountable. The study also recommended that all public secondary schools must have at their disposal all the relevant legal and administrative documents in their

respective schools and principals and BOMs should ensure these documents are placed in the staff rooms, libraries, waiting rooms and relevant offices and departments so that everyone in the school can access them. The study further recommends that regarding the missing legislative documents, KEMI and the MOE to provide mandated policy compliance kits directly to schools in the ASAL regions.

6.2 Recommendation by policy

The TSC should strictly adhere to and implement fully without bias or favour the 2017 and 2007 policies on identification, selection, appointment, deployment and training of heads of post-primary institutions and institutional administrators in general. Godfatherism should not be entertained at all.

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