INFLUENCE OF SCHOOL CULTURE ON STUDENTS' PERFORMANCE IN KENYA CERTIFICATE OF SECONDARY EDUCATION EXAMINATIONS: A CASE OF ALLIANCE HIGH SCHOOL

BY

REUBEN BANDA

MATRIC.NO. B.Ed 63/08/09

A Research Project submitted to the Department of Education in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement for the Award of the Degree of Bachelor of Education.

Marist International University College (MIUC)

Constituent College of the Catholic University of Eastern Africa (CUEA)

NAIROBI-KENYA

APRIL, 2012

MARIST INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE (MIUC)

CONSTITUENT COLLEGE OF THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF EASTERN

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DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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DECLARATION

This research project is my original work and has not been presented for any academic credit in any other university. No part of this project may be reproduced without the prior express permission from the author and / or Marist International University College.

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REUBEN BANDA   Date

This research Project has been submitted for examination with my approval as the university college supervisor.

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MR. PETER CHANGILWA KIGWILU   Date

This research Project has been accepted by the Head of the Department of Education.

………………………………….. **………………………………..**

DR. JAPHETH ORIGA   Date

DEDICATION

To my late parents Mr. Albert and Mrs. Cecilia Besnart Lungu and my uncle Mr. Abel Lungu who brought me up in love and concern to become what I am today. To my late siblings Phelistus, Nicholas and Saviour. To all the Marist Brothers at Marist International Centre (MIC), Nairobi and the entire Marist world who in diverse ways proved a true and loving family to me.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVATIONS

BOG: Board of Governors

K.C.S.E: Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education

PTA: Parents Teachers' Association

SPSS: Statistical Package for Social Sciences

MS Excel: Microsoft Excel

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to investigate the influence of school culture to students' performance in K.C.S.E in Kenya, with special reference to Alliance High School in Kikuyu District. The study sought to answer the following research objectives:

1. To investigate the role of the school leadership in shaping the school culture

2. To find out the students' perception of their school culture.

3. To determine the relationship between school culture and the student's academic performance in Alliance High School.

The study used a survey design. The target population included the Principal and the students. The sample comprised 120 students and the Principal. For the students, stratified and simple samplings were used and data collecting instruments included questionnaires and interview schedule. Only one school was targeted for the whole study.

The data collected were organized and analyzed using frequencies and percentages with the aid of SPSS and MS Excel. The findings indicated that the Principal/ head teacher played an important role in students' attitude towards education. The teachers' and fellow students' support and encouragements helped build a conducive school culture. The findings also indicated that students developed positive attitudes towards education due to the influence they received from the stakeholders. The study also found that parents/ guardian participation in school activities had great influence on students' academic achievements.

The study recommended that the Ministry of Education provide quality education, equip schools with necessary facilities to enhance teaching and learning. To the school administration,

the recommendation was that they should boost the academic morale in teachers and students alike, build warm relationships among the stakeholders, empowering both students and teachers by giving them responsibilities and also by building trust in the subordinates including parents.

Furthermore, the study recommended that teachers should build a good relationship with the students to reduce gap between them, identifying students with learning difficulties and finding time and ways of helping them. It would also be important to encourage students to trust and help one another in all challenging issues**,** teachers to be punctual in all school activities so that they can be the models to the students and giving of positive feedback to the students. In that way, the students will be motivated. About the students, the study recommended that the students be empowered with leadership skills and experiences, they should have self discipline leading to responsible behavior and should give due respect to the teachers and the administration.

CHAPTER ONE

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Problem

There is a strong belief among the Kenyan population that good education carries with it socio-economic benefits. This belief has been supported by the ministry of education strategy plan of 2006-2010. According to this strategic plan, providing educational opportunities to all Kenyans is central to the government's economic strategy. It is expected that educational and training would lead to the realization of a wide range of other important benefits including increased economic growth, enhanced productivity across sectors, increased individual earning, enhanced democracy and good governance.

Good performance at primary and secondary national examinations enables one to get admission to institutions of higher learning. Most courses at university level require one to have attained a mean grade of C+ and above for admission besides a good combination in the course subjects. This implies that poor K.C.S.E results will give no room to a person to enter the higher level education.

Kenya has three categories of public schools; national, provincial and district schools. Most provincial and district school have had distinctive performance. While some have performed quite well, others have had dismal performance over the years. There are many factors that jointly contribute in determining performance, school culture is seems to be a key factor. Wegner and Penelope (2002) supports this view that schools have tried various improvements to create more effective schools but many educators and researchers are discovering 'a missing link.' This

missing link has more to do with school culture than with elaborate curriculum alignment projects, scrimmages tests and the buzzword reform efforts.

School culture is the behind-the-scenes context that reflects the values, beliefs, norms, traditions, and rituals that build up over time as people in a school work together. Organizational culture is not just the norms which are supposed to govern members' actions but also the concept of what the organization is about which gives rise to them (Harris and Benet, 2001). Smith (2007) says "effective school culture goes beyond creating an efficient learning environment and focuses on the core values necessary to teach and influence students." This is because the heart and soul of a school culture is what people believe and the assumptions they make on how school works.

One of the vital tasks of school leaders is to working at building and developing a good working culture. According to Whitaker (1998), he identified two types of organizational culture in which the first one is a culture of management. This is the one within which the plans are made, decisions taken and the work of the school organized. The second is a culture of the classroom- the climate of values and behaviors which also affect the capability of students to learn successfully. Therefore leaders should embark on developing these two related cultures in a cohesive and inter dependent climate of endeavors. Those in leadership positions need to recognize the central importance of organizational culture in their own management and leadership behavior. Teachers experience and commitment to students learning emerges as a key characteristic of successful learning, hence teachers 'attitude, behavior and teaching practices are the most significant implication for the schools and learners level of performance.

Table 1.1: Performance in K.C.S.E from 2007 - 2010

Year	2007	2008	2009	2010
No. Enrolled	195	203	218	214
Mean Score	10.446	10.567	11.106	11.266

According to the Table 1.1, the school has experienced an increase in the enrolment over the past years but there has been a steady increase in performance too.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

A number of studies have been done on factors which influence student's performance at K.C.S.E. For instance, Smith (2007) in her study on the relationship between school culture and students achievement found that a school leader has great influence on school's achievements. She noted that successful principals are those who create a culture that accepts and encourages collaboration, risk-taking and change in teaching practices.

Masha's (1999) study shows that parental support in form of motivation, material and financial support lead to high achievement while Leithwood and Jantzi (2006) indicate that parents' engagement in school has an impact on student's performance. Eshiwani (1983) carried out a study on the influence of student-teacher relationship and its effect reported that if there is a positive relationship, then students' academic performance is good.

Out of the studies mentioned, none has addressed the influence of school culture on students' performance. Since the problem of academic performance still exists, the study sought to find out if there is a relationship between the school culture and academic performance in K.C.S.E at Alliance High school.

1.3 Research Objectives

The study was guided by the following research objectives:

1. To investigate the role of the school leadership in shaping the school culture

2. To find out the students' perception of their school culture.

3. To determine the relationship between school culture and the student's academic performance in Alliance High School.

1.4 Significance of Study

The findings of this study will be useful to the Ministry of Education, the school, teachers and the students. The findings will provide the Ministry of Education with information on factors that enhance performance and insights into how public schools can achieve and enhance students' performance. The study will also help teachers, community members and all stakeholders who are entrusted with the role of looking after the welfare of the students to think of the best way to motivate the students in learning and other school activities.

1.5 Assumptions of the study

The study was based on the following assumption; there was a relationship between school culture and academic achievements of the learners.

1.6 Scope and Delimitations of the Study

The study was narrowed to a particular public school which is called Alliance High in Kiambu County. The school was selected as a case due to its outstanding Form Four K.C.S.E results for several years. The researcher could not cover a wider scope because of time and financial limitations or constrains.

1.7 Conceptual Framework

The culture of the school is expected to be influenced by teachers, leaders and students and school factors. This study has chosen to concentrate on the first three factors since they are the ones more amenable to change. The school culture is estimated to form the attribute variables relating to the school, leadership, teachers and students will be treated as the dependent variables while the school K.C.S.E performance will be the independent variable. Items in the interview schedule and questionnaire will collect data directed to estimating these variables. It shows the interconnectedness of the variables to be used in the study. The variables were identified and then grouped into two; thus independent and dependent variables. Ogula (2005, p.8) defines an independent variable as the presumed cause of the dependent variable while dependent variable is the expected outcome of the independent variable.

The model below rests on the notion of relationship between individuals within organizational setting and indicates the independent and dependent variables.

Figure 1.7: School Cultural Variables
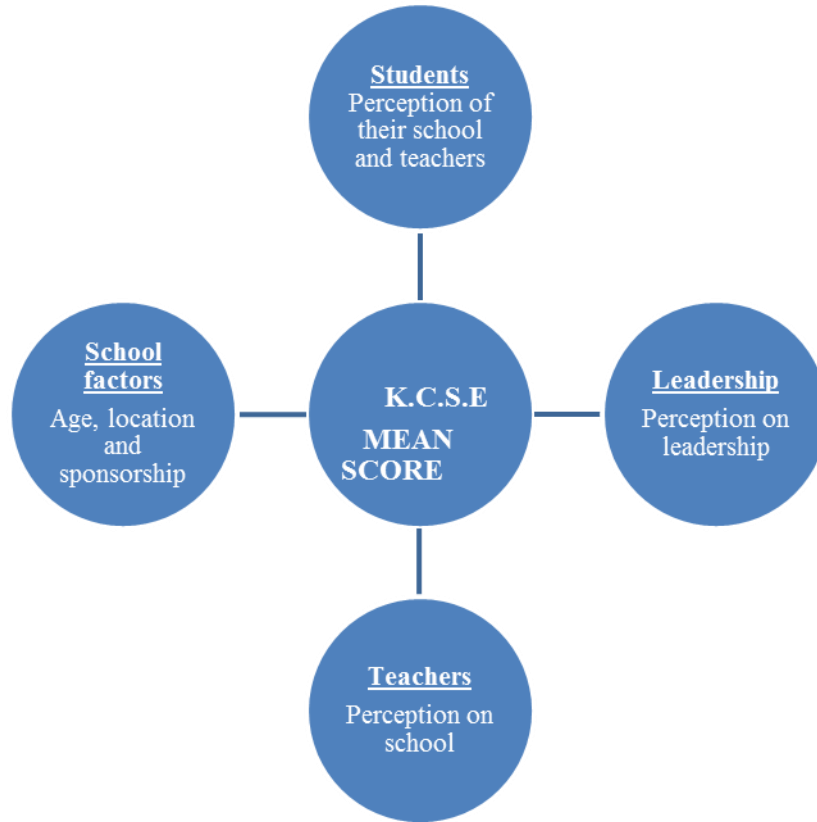
1.8 Operational Definition of Terms

Performance: In this study, performance is used to refer to the results of students at K.C.S.E.

Culture: In this study, culture refers to all aspects of the school that promote learning and teaching. It also includes non-curricular activities which help enhance learning and motivate students to better performance.

School culture: It is used to refer to unique attitudes, beliefs and behaviors which characterize a particular school.

Achievements: refers to the extent to which a student has attained the goal of a course as indicated by this or her grades.

CHAPTER TWO

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter deals with the review of literature related to the study. It discusses the influence of school culture on students' performance in K.C.S.E at Alliance Boys' High School. Literature review can be defined as an account of what has been published on a topic by accredited scholars and researchers (Kombo & Tromp, 2006). To get a better understanding of school culture and its effects on students' academic achievement it is necessary to review literature related to the concept such as the role played by the Principal in shaping the culture of the school. Teachers' attitude towards their school and students' perception of their school all are believed to influence academic achievements of learners.

2.2 The role of the Principal in Shaping the Culture of the School

In a research by Brown (2004), he discovered that a general culture is the culture of bureaucracy, the method which the educational system has to employ. This culture helps the institution to carry out its institutional mission since it has its own values, beliefs, assumptions, forms of communication and processes for making decisions, prioritizing issues and spending time and resources (Brown, 2004). On the other hand, balkanization culture exists where teachers seek power and influence for their own ends. In this culture, there is competition, poor communication and poor integration of curriculum and instructional ends which characterize these schools (Fullan and Hargreaves, 1991).

Another school culture referred to as Collaborative exists in some schools. As the name suggests, involves professionals working together. Collaborative schools devote considerable time working together in groups on various task forces, projects, and programs. Working alone is easy; working together is hard. The process of shaping a collaborative school culture is neither easy nor quick. It requires close attention to what is going on in the school and to educational values and daily activity

Day, Harris and Hadfield (2001) carried out a study on collaborative school culture. In their findings, they concluded that effective schools have common values with stakeholders of the school and foster a climate of collaboration. Little (1982) expresses that in schools with collaborative culture, teachers regularly engage in professional dialogue with colleagues, share ideas, knowledge and participate in collaborative problem-solving around classroom issues. They work together to develop shared technical knowledge and discover common challenging problems. This is a collaborative school culture underlying norms, values, beliefs and assumptions reinforced and support high levels of collegiality, team-work and dialogue about problems of practice. In a school with a strong sense of internal community, teachers share common goals for student achievement, work collaboratively to provide challenging instruction, and share collective responsibility for the success of each student.

To build collaboration, developing skills may be helpful. Leadership can be developed. Leaders are nurtured, supported, and developed in collaborative cultures in a number of ways. For collaboration to work, teacher leadership needs to develop, grow, and flourish. Developing teacher leadership does not mean that teachers take on the hierarchical, authoritarian leadership styles of traditional schools. Rather it requires that teachers engage in the type of collaborative,

facilitative modes of leadership necessary in successful organizations. Nurturing quality leadership is not easy, but it can be achieved. New cultures are developing at schools. Principals are important throughout the process of supporting expanded leadership roles for teachers. As a collaborative culture becomes stronger, teacher leaders then nurture the ongoing development of the school.

In a study of teacher leaders, Leiberman, Saxl, and Miles (1988) identified key skills of leaders: (1) building trust and rapport, (2) diagnosing the organization, (3) dealing with the collaborative process, (4) using resources, (5) managing work, and (6) building skill and confidence in others. These skills support the interactions of colleagues and staff as they engage in joint work, collaborative projects, and collegial problem solving. Teachers can develop these skills in schools through training, informal learning, and practice. These six aspects of leadership may be necessary for teachers to reinforce collaborative cultures.

Fullan (2006) says that" reculturing is a contact sport that involves hard, labor-intensive work." He says that this sport has to be played more aggressively if schools are to achieve the kind of results that are expected of them. Hence, it should firstly help educators recognize that having a strong positive culture means much more than just safety and order.

Principals have a great impact on the students and affect the results or student's performance. According to the study carried out by Ngugi (2012) on the influence of head teacher's leadership styles on students' K.C.S.E performance in public school of Maragua district, Kenya, he found that head teacher's appraisal played an important role. The head teacher's concern for people related with academic performance. In another study, Nyang'acha (2012) studied the role of interpersonal communication between teachers and students in Limuru

Division, Kiambu. Her findings and suggestions are that to enhance great academic achievement, the school administration needs to involve teachers and students in school administration because it is part of democracy.

Griffin (1996) expresses that a good school with good administration will offer its' pupils with as many responsibilities as possible to develop trustworthiness and competence in them. All writers on organizational and school culture agree that a school leader must be, first and foremost, be a cultural leader. As an educator, Sergiovanni (2006) indicates that what a leader stands for is more important than what he or she does. In his findings, he expresses that leadership acts are expressions of culture. It is around the leader as stable center that the culture can grow.

The benefits of creating a positive learning environment, a culture of inquiry and thought, and a climate of passion and excitement are obvious to what is needed for success. A school having such characteristics will be a place that students enjoy coming to everyday. It is institution for which parents will be grateful and work to support and a source of pride for the community in general.

Many researchers agree that the Principal plays an important role in shaping the school culture. One of such researchers is Harris and Bennett (2001) who argue that leaders need to gain some understanding of the culture if they are to try to manage it. The early stage of leadership is a time when head teachers are socialized into the knowledge, value and behavior that constitute the culture of a particular school.

According to DuFour (2000), learning centered Principal refers to leadership were a Principal is transformed from one who focuses on teaching to a more successful principal who

focuses on learning. As a learning leader, the Principal draws on the strengths of teachers, understands how they learn in teams and implements a detailed plan of action to improve students' achievements (Schmoker, 2005).

The head teacher should have admirable characteristics and qualities so that participants in the school will look up to him/her for guidance. Olembo, Wang and Karagu (1992, p. 162) says that as a model, the head teacher is expected to be an example whose professional and academic integrity are admired by his/her staff, students and the wider community. He should be emulated in all areas thus legal, ethical, religious and so on. Of all the teachers in the school, the head teacher should be the most competent. The role played by the head teacher in shaping school culture is the most important factor that determines students' performance.

Deal and Peterson (2009) say that" when school leaders have reflected and feel they understand a school's culture, they can evaluate the need to shape or reinforce it." Valuable aspects of the school's existing culture can be reinforced, problematic ones revitalized and toxic ones given strong antidotes (Deal and Peterson, 2009). The authors (Deal and Peterson, 2009) argue that cultural leaders reinforce the underlying norms, values and beliefs. They support the central mission and purpose of the school. The leaders also create and sustain motivation and commitment through rites and rituals. Therefore, it can be said that deep, shared leadership builds strong and cohesive school cultures (Deal and Peterson, 2009).

Students bring numerous ethnic cultures, languages and habits of mind to the classroom. Each of these is associated with varying child-rearing and educational traditions. Moreover, there are also class cultures, each can be likewise be distinguished by distinctive kinds of formal and informal communication that takes place within that classroom.

Little (1982) and Rosenholt (1989) found that behaviors in schools with strong collegial orientations are very positive among all stakeholders. In these schools, teachers and administration spend time observing each other, they instruct each other in craft of teaching through formal and informal demonstration. These interactions build powerful relations with students too and they enhance teaching and learning that is precise and concrete. The Principal is the vital figure in building as an interactive school system.

According to Wilson and Corcorran (1998), academic standards are one manifestation to staff and community expectations for student performance. The authors Wilson and Corcorran found three aspects of a school's culture which are expectations, standards and rewards as closely linked in the sense that when expectations are low, standards also tend to be low and the use of reward diminishes or the rewards are devalued. When expectations are high, standards tend to be high and rewards are more frequent and more likely to be used to motivate students to work up to their potentials. Wilson and Corcorran express that high staff expectations, high academic standards and the effective use of reward are critical to student motivation and hence essential building blocks in the success of these schools. The Principal ensures that all these are implemented for him/her to influence the school.

To create this strong culture, Wilson and Corcoran (1998) emphasize that it requires a sense of shared purpose among the faculty, students, parents and community. For a school to be successful and be counted among the best schools whether private or public, Wilson and Corcoran (1998) emphasize that more stress should be placed on staff cooperation, community participation and parental involvement, collegiality and collaborative responsibility. It is the duty of the Principal to ensure that all stakeholders take up their respective roles in the affairs of the school.

Smith (2007) carried out a study on the relationship between school culture and students achievements. The finds of her study are that Principals play a vital role in the success of the school outcomes because they are the ones who create a culture that accepts and encourages collaboration, risk-taking and change in teaching practices that lead to the development of norms, expectations and behaviors that foster school improvement.

Some studies recommend collaborative culture as one which has a positive influence on students' achievements. In such schools, the Principal develops and imparts new strategies into teachers and learners. Such effective administrators solve problems through a variety of approaches including personal negotiations. Day, Harris and Hadfield (2001) say that to maintain a strong focus on commitments to learning, professional development of students and staff alike, a culture developed by the Principal of collaboration helps a lot. It models core values of respect, fairness and integrity and honesty (Day et al, 2001). The conclusion of the study by Day et al (2001) shows that morale, emotions attached, integrity and social bonds among the staff were stimulants to motivation and commitment.

2.5 Teacher's Perception About Their School

Teachers are key participant members of the school and therefore determine the students' level of academic achievement. According to Waweru (1982) teachers experience and commitment to students learning emerges as key characteristics to successful learning. Teachers' attitude, behavior and teaching practices are the most significant implications for the school and learners level of performance. Students learn more if they find pleasure in the learning experience.

In support to this view, Sammons Hillman and Mortimore (1995) argue that teachers in effective schools are reported to work collegially and to collaborate to achieve goals. They have high expectations of their students, teach purposively, monitor students work, and give positive feedback, e.t.c. Such teachers are believed to have an impact on the students' level of achievement and are part of what makes one school unique as compared to others. In effective schools teachers have high expectations of their students and they are willing to design strategies to move towards such a goal. They frequently give assignments which they mark, give feedback to students, give rewards to students who perform well, identify those students with problems and help them out. In such schools, there is a culture of hard work among the teachers and the students and anyone coming in must fit in or go.

Cheryl and Rebecca (2006) carried out a study about the teachers working experience and its impact on performance. They found that teachers who have worked and interacted with students for long are well versed with students' perceived problems solving, skills and techniques in teaching. Qualification of teachers had also been identified as a crucial factor in influencing performance. Nyoroge (2007) in his research cited Sammerset (1972) who noted that schools with best qualified teachers tend to be the most successful.

Time located to teaching and learning is another factor. Nyoroge cited Eshiwani (1983) by saying that many schools normally loose many teaching and learning hours at the beginning and at the end of the term. This factor contributes to poor performance. This shows that the more the time located to instruction in a subject the more the achievements. To ensure that students are being successful in the classroom, schools must guarantee that every classroom is staffed with qualified teachers (Barth, 2001). The findings of the study by Comber and Keeves (1973) states that the more the hours allocated to instruction in a subject, the more the achievements.

Bett (1986) carried out a study on factors affecting performance in Kericho district. Her findings reveal that the major factor that influences performance in the said district was unequal distribution of graduate teachers and infective role played by the teachers and head teachers. Eshiwani (1983) in his study also reported that a positive relationship between students' academic performance and teacher character which includes his/her qualifications played a big role towards success.

In some schools, teachers plan together in teams. Collahan and Clark (1990) found team planning as advantageous because it is ease for teachers to coordinate their teaching activities; another thing is that it gives one a chance to share ideas. Despite successful team planning demands even more careful and detailed planning than solo teaching, its advantages are enormous (Collahan & Clark, 1990). Teachers in effective schools are reported to work collegially and to collaborate to achieve shared goals: they have high expectations of their students, teach purposively, monitor students' work and give positive feedback (Callahan & Clark, 1990).

Callahan and Clark (1990) add that many teachers encourage students to participate in the planning of their learning activities, units and courses. Participation in the planning tends to give students a proprietary interest in the activities that may cause them to try harder. What students have planned seems relevant to them. They like to see their plans succeed. They have good feelings about the plans because they are theirs. Teacher- student planning can be an effective motivational aid. In spite of its merits, teacher- student planning can be risky; therefore one must provide the students with much guidance. Beware of asking students to make decisions for which they are not equipped (Callahan & Clark, 1990). Wagner (2006) asserts that when

teachers and staff meet regularly to solve issues, working together, supporting one another and feeling valued, there is a sense of career satisfaction. Such a school culture is supportive thus fostering students' achievements (Wagner, 2006, p. 12-13).

2.6 Perception of the School by Students

Students are very much interested in educational development and it is surprising to know why they do not perform well. They would give constructive comments when asked to do so of helping identify what is about their school that gets in the way of learning. A study was carried out by Rudduck, Chaplin and Wallace (1996) about why students do not perform well in some schools. The responses show that most students want to succeed. From the pupils involved as respondents, the researcher identified some principles that make a significant difficult to pupils' learning and would lead them not to respond constructively in school. The principles include that there must be respect for the students as individuals and a body occupying a significant position in the institution of the school, fairness to all students irrespective of their class, gender, ethnicity or academic status and social support in relation to both academic and emotional concerns.

Another study was carried out by Sammons et al (1995) on school effectiveness. He came up with key factors associated with school effectiveness which include that; effective head teachers are firm and purposeful, appoint effective teachers, and create consensus and unity of purpose. They share and delegate responsibilities and involve all teachers in decision making. They are leading professionals with an understanding of classroom and how teaching and learning can be improved. Other factors include; the learning environment which is attractive, orderly and encouraging self control among pupils which is prerequisite for a positive classroom ethos, there is a general culture which has high expectations of every one; teachers, pupils and

parents. Students are given rights and responsibilities. These enable them to play an active role in the life of the school which is important for raising self esteem and encouraging taking responsibilities for their own learning.

Sammons et al (1995) add on that effective schools are learning organizations were teachers and their senior managers can improve their practice and keep up with change, partnerships that encourage and foster parent support for learning have positive effect on achievements. Monitoring progress keeps track of whether the school is meeting its target and goals, monitoring awareness of targets and goals among staff, pupils and parents, inform planning and teaching, sends clear messages on pupils that teachers are interested in their progress. Finally, there is a clear priority on teaching and learning as the schools' primary purpose, for example, time spent on learning, amount of homework, effective learning time, learning time for different subjects are measured indicating the practical implementation of this focus (Sammons et al, 1995).

Students feel happy and fresh when they change the activities as they break the monotony of class work. It is really good that they are given time to attend to other activities too. Marsh and Kleitman (2002) carried out a study on the benefits of extracurricular activities to students. They found that students' participation in these activities helped them perform better than those who never participated. In a journal by Darling, Caldwell and Smith (2005), on extracurricular activities they expressed that adolescents who participated in extracurricular activities score higher grades, have positive attitude towards learning and have higher aspirations in life.

2.7 Parents' Level of Involvement in Students' School Work

Parents' level of involvement in children's work has a great impact on level of performance. Parents may be involved in various activities that touch on students' school work. This may be through Parents-Teachers-Association, school open day, visiting day and as members of the BOG and so on. Michieka (1983) carried out a study in which the findings are that parents' involvement in the school work affects students' performance.

In another study, Concilia (2002) observes that family sets the lifestyle of the person and influences the life chances for their children in the sense that family support, neutral or antagonistic to school education. The values which each family attaches to school education determine the motivation with which its children pursue such education. According to Deal and Peterson (1999), schools expect the parents and community to take part in all dimensions of the school. They want parents to help out in school, be involved in governance, and encourage their children to try hand, or simply attend student performances in force. They want parents to coach, encourage and inspire their children before they come to school.

According to Leithwood and Jantzi (2006), parents' engagement in school has an impact. Parents believe they have the skill and know how to make meaningful contributions to the school's efforts and they believe that staff and their children value their participation in the school. Some of their suggestion include; issuing invitations for parents participation that are personal and specific rather than general, matching parents skills to the activities in which they will participate, providing every specific information and feedback to parents about their child's progress. There should be a creation of opportunities for parents to interact with one another about school matters and appointing a community liaison person as a link between the parents

and the school in order to build both teachers and parents' capacity to communicate with one another.

Concillia (2002) observes that learners whose parents earn a higher income and value school education are more likely to do well in class. This is because their parents possess financial means and willingness to provide their children with books and necessary school materials for better learning. The family sets the lifestyle of the person and influences the life chances for their children in the sense that family support, neutral or antagonistic to school education. The values which each family attaches to school education determine the motivation with which its children pursue such education.

2.8 Characteristics of Successful Schools

Successful schools are those with a collaborative culture. In a research carried out by Deal and Peterson (2002), they found that a strong positive school culture serves several beneficial functions. Some of these functions include; fostering effort and productivity, improving collegiality and collaborative activities that promote better communication and problem solving, supporting successful change and improvement efforts. In addition to the above mentioned functions, Deal and Peterson (2002) include building commitment and helping students and teachers identify with the school, amplifying energy and motivation of staff members and students and also focusing attention and daily behavior on what is important and valued.

Levine & Lozette (1990) expound that successful schools share characteristics such as strong instructional leadership, a clear and focused mission, high expectations for students, a climate conducive to learning, opportunities to learn, regular monitoring of students and classroom and a positive home-school relations. This enhances school outcomes. Levine and

Lozette explain that effective schools are characterized by an orderly environment. They say an orderly environment is rather associated with interpersonal relationships than regulations. The researchers (Levine and Lozette) found that faculty input in decision- making was identified as an effectiveness enhancing factor. They point out that the commitment of staff members and the impetus for collaboration and communication has to be directed towards student achievement. Therefore, there is great relationship between school culture and school performance or effectiveness thus if a school has a strong culture, school members express that school as highly effective according to Levine and Lozette (1990).

According Deal and Peterson (1999), a successful school has leaders who are the foremost implementers of the school programs, agents of change and act with integrity, fairness, and in an ethical manner. This clearly shows that teachers and students are more likely to succeed in a culture that fosters hard work, committed to valued end, attention to problem solving and a focus in learning for all students (Deal & Peterson, 1999). According to Stedman (1987), effective schools have been defined as institutions that display, effective instructional leadership and practices, high expectations; a safe orderly and positive environment; frequent monitoring of students progress and positive home-school relationship. Educationists agree that quality academic performance comes as a result of combined factors. For instance, students tend to perform better in schools where conducive and well organized work environment is provided than in those with troubled and unhealthy conditions as highlighted by Stedman (1987).

An environment where there is trust brings about achievements and progress. According to the study by Bryk and Schneider (2002) about trust in school, they found that trust plays an important part in building a strong school culture. Bryk and Schneider express that both staff and students must be able to develop trust and know how to sustain it. Both staff and students must

be able to make sense of their work together in terms of what they understand as the primary purpose of the school. By so doing, an effective culture is built which leads to successful academic achievements.

The issue of religious affiliation plays another significant role in successful school. Students develop moral values which help them be responsible for whatever they are doing and help them care for one another. This implication can be attributed to their parents who firstly initiated them religiously. Mugure (1999) carried out a study in which the findings show that if family fails to meet one of its essential obligation of instilling moral values and standard attitudes to a child at a tender age, this may trail the child's conduct and any attempt to modify it by any other subsystem might be comparatively difficult.

CHAPTER THREE

3.0 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter will deal with the research design and methodology for the study. This includes the research design, the target population, the sample and sampling procedures, the description of research instruments, data collection and data analysis procedures.

3.2 Research Design

The study used a combination of a case and survey study designs. A survey is an efficient method for collecting descriptive data regarding the characteristics of a population. In this regard, a survey study collected data from students and the principal.

3.3 The Target Population

For this study, the population was the Form four students and the principal of the school only. The school has 239 Form four students. The Form four students were picked because they have been in the school more than other students. As for the principal, the study collected data from him because he is the key information to the study.

3.4 Description of the Sample and Sampling Procedure

The study used stratified random sampling method to select the sample. By this method, all the defined population had an equal and independent chance of being selected as member of the sample. As for the school of study, the sample was drawn from all the Form four students and the Principal. Since the Form four classes are in five streams, the researcher used the stream for

stratification purpose. From each stream, stratified random sampling was used to give chance to each stream to participate in the study.

In this study, 120 small pieces of papers written 'yes' were folded while the rest had 'no' written on them so as to sample those who were to be involved in the study. Four streams received 24 'yes' each. Hence, a sample of 121 participants was used and that included the Principal of the school. For the Principal, the study used purposive sampling. By purposive sampling, the study hoped to collect in-depth data related to the central issues being studied.

3.6 Description of Research Instruments

In order to achieve the stated objectives the study set up a questionnaire and structured interview schedule. The study used the questionnaire for the students and an interview schedule for the Principal. Each of the two instruments for data collection was designed to have two sections: demographic and factual information. Respondents were assured of confidentiality by the fact that writing their names was optional.

3.7 Data Collection Procedures

The researcher obtained permission from the administration of the school involved before embarking on data collection. Once permission was granted, prior notice was given to respondents before the actual data collection exercise. The researcher administered the questionnaires and interview schedule personally to the respondents.

3.8 Data Analysis Procedures

Data analysis is the act of examining of what has been collected in a survey or experiment and making deductions and inferences out of it (Kombo and Tromp, 2006). After getting the

information from the field, the researcher analyzed the data in descriptive and quantitative form. For quantitative data, the researcher used Statistical Package of Social Sciences (SPSS). In this case, frequencies and percentages were used. The analysis of data enabled the researcher to deduce inferences based on the research questions.

The study used tables, graphs and pie-chart in order to interpret data. Data collected through the interview schedule and other qualitative responses were summarized thematically and reported appropriately. In this regard, the researcher categorized related responses or topics so as to identify major themes and concepts. This based on what was relevant to the research questions.

CHAPTER FOUR

4.0 DATA PRESENTATION, DISCUSSION AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings and analysis of the data obtained on the items contained in the questionnaires distributed to the students and the interview schedule for the Principal. The information acquired from respondents was scrutinized, extracting important variables. The section is divided into three sections, the first part of the analysis deals with respondents' demographic information; the second part deals with the factual information of the respondents while the third part deals with the perception of the respondents. The findings have been analyzed using tables, line graph, bar charts and pie charts.

4.2 Demographic Information of the Respondents

Table 4.2: shows a breakdown of the sample category that provided answers to the questionnaire and interview schedule.

Table 4.2: Questionnaires Return rate

Respondents	Administered		Returned	
	f	%	f	%
Students	120	99.2	120	99.2
Principal	1	0.8	1	0.8
Total	**121**	**100**	**121**	**100**

A total number of 121 questionnaires were distributed. The number included 1 interview schedule for the Principal of the school. All the questionnaires together with the interview schedule were collected back. This gives a 100% response rate.

4.2.1: Distribution of Students by age

The study also sought to establish the age of students involved in the study. From the responses, 99.2 percent were aged between 15-20 while 0.8 percent for a student who was between 21-25 years. The age mean of the students' respondents was 17.6 years. At this age, learners are very active and interested in issues concerning intellectual, moral and spiritual aspects. Therefore, the study concludes that the learners who participated in this study were mature enough to give reliable information for this study. Actually, the reason to why the researcher included the age in the questionnaire was to determine whether it might have a direct or indirect influence on the students' performance and behavior.

4.2.2 Religion of the Students

The study sought to find out the religion of the respondents. From the findings, 91.7 percent of the students are Christians or are from Christian families, 5.8 percent are Muslims while 2.5 percent did not indicate their religions. Religion helps the students to acquire good morals and values for it. In support to this point, Mugure (1999) agrees that the family has to meet the essential obligation of instilling moral values and standards in children at a tender age.

4.3 Demographic Information About the Principal

The principal of the school has a teaching experience of 20 years. He has been the Principal of Alliance High School for 4 years now. About the academic qualification, he has a Bachelor and Master in Education with a professional qualification of Job Group N.

Since the Principal has a lot of teaching experience, he is able to determine the effective teaching. This agrees with the findings of Cheryl and Rebecca (2006) who said that teaching experience largely determines the effectiveness of teachers. Teachers who have worked and interacted with students for long are well versed with students' perceived problem solving, skills and techniques in teaching and administration.

4.4: Punctuality of Teachers

The study sought to find out how responsible and the faithfulness of teachers to time. The majority (63%) agreed that their teachers very often kept time. Punctuality is a virtual hence a concerned and serious teacher is ever punctual because he/she does not want to waste a minute. Such a teacher knows that time wasted is never recovered. The findings show that teachers of the school are time conscious so as to achieve the set objectives in their respective teaching subjects.

4.5 Frequency of Assignments in each of the Subjects

The study sought to find out whether the students were given assignments and if so, how often. A high percentage of 95 agreed that teachers give assignments once a day while 5 percent of the students said that they are given the assignments once a week. It clearly shows that teachers do their best by giving assignments to students so that could practice in order to be conversant with the topic under discussion. A good teacher keeps his/ her learners busy with work. The findings confirm with those of Sammons et al (1995) which shows that in effective schools, there is clear priority on teaching and learning and teachers give amount of homework.

4.6: Marking of Assignments

The study sought to know how often the teachers marked the assignments they gave. The findings show that 75 percent agree to the point that teachers mark the assignments after a day

while 21 percent said after one week. Meanwhile 3 percent of the respondents disagreed that their teachers mark the assignments while 1 percent said after one month. This shows that the majority of the teachers do mark the assignments after one day. The findings concur with those of Sammons et al (1995) that teachers in effective schools frequently give assignments which they mark, give positive feedback to students and give rewards.

4.7: Remedial Teaching

The responses about remedial classes indicate 30 percent of those who agreed with the statement, 68.3 percent said 'no' there is no step taken to help them while 1.7 percent did not give any response to the question. The findings greatly show that most teachers do not organize remedial classes. This implies that students to their part in order to make corrections and catch up with their colleagues. Nevertheless, some teachers seem to do what is expected of them by considering students with difficulties.

4.8 Rewards to Those who do well in Assignments

The aim of the question was to find out if the teachers rewarded the students who did well in assignments. From the responses, 85 percent of the students disagreed while 14 percent agreed that it happened. Still there was a percentage of a student who did not respond to the question. The findings are contrary to the Principals view who said that rewards are given for academic achievements. This means that the students did not get the question well or they based their responses to assignments only not any other academic aspect.

Being a successful school, it is obvious that rewards are given. This is supported by Wilson and Corcorran (1998) who express that in successful schools there are high expectations, high academic standards and the effective use of rewards which motivate the students. Sammons

et al (1995) also supports that teachers in these successful school give rewards to students after marking the assignments.

4.9: Students Punctuality After the bell

The study sought to know whether the students are punctual when the bell is rung. The findings are displayed using Table 4.9.

Table 4.9: Students Punctuality After the bell

Punctuality of students	f	%
Less than a minute	20	16.7
One minute	33	27.7
Five minutes	53	44.5
More than five minutes	13	10.9
Total	**119**	**99.2**

The data in Table 4.9 indicates that 44.5 percent said students enter after five minutes, 27.7 percent agreed to the view that they enter after one minute, 16.7 percent said they enter in less than a minute, some said they enter after five minutes (10.9 percent) and finally one respondent did not indicate his stance (0.8%). On the other hand, the Principal on this point agreed that students are more punctual than teachers. This implies that in less than five minutes the students find themselves in class once the bell is rung.

4.10: Participation of Parents/Guardians in School Activities

The study aimed at finding out to what extent did the parents/guardians got involved in the school activities. The figure below shows the findings.

Figure 4.10: Participation of parents/guardians in school activities
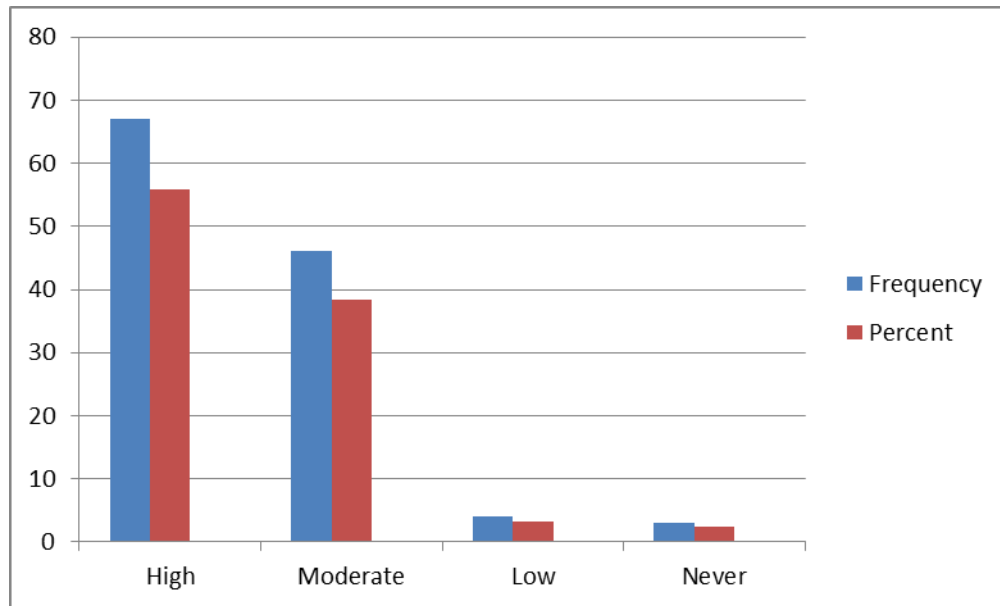
The data in Figure 4.10 indicates that 86 percent that their parents/guardian highly participated in the school activities while 7 percent said they do but not very often. Some expressed that they never participate (4 percent) yet 3 percent said they do but at low rate. This implies that parents /guardians participate in school activities as agreed by the majority. The findings concur with Michieka (1983) who identified parents' involvement in school work as a factor that affect students' performance. In addition to this view, Leithwood and Jantzi (2006) discovered that parents' engagement in school has an impact because they believe that they have the skill and know how to make meaningful contributions to the school's efforts and they believe that staff and their children value their participation in the school.

4.11: Means to Maintain good Performance

The researcher intended to find out the response from the respondents on what could be done in order for the school to maintain its good performance at K.C.S.E. The table 4.11 indicates the findings**.**

Table 4.11: Means to maintain good performance

To maintain good performance at K.C.S.E	f	%
Cooperation between teacher and students	20	14.18
Punctuality of both teachers and students	25	17.73
Competitive academic environment	45	31.91
High discipline of teacher and students	15	10.64
Motivation and encouragements	22	15.60
Holistic education	14	9.94
Total	**141**	**100**

Table 4.11 shows some collective responses from students. Since it was an open ended question, many of the students expressed themselves with different suggestions. As shown in the Table 4.1.2, the total frequency was 151 from the expected 120. From this, 14.18 percent suggested that to maintain the good performance in the school, there should be continuity of cooperation between teachers and students, 17.73 percent suggested that both teachers and students should be punctual in school activities. Others expressed that a competitive environment (31.91 percent) should continue prevailing, 10.64 percent suggested that high discipline of teachers and students must be maintained while 15.6 percent emphasized on motivation and

encouragements for both teacher and fellow students and 9.94 percent talked about holistic education which includes spiritual, intellectual and physical formation must prevail.

The findings show the willingness of the students on maintaining and improving the academic performance of their school. This implies that they want to get the best results and keep the good record of the school. In support to these views, Njoroge (2007) expresses that students are as interested as any other person involved in educational development. They (students) would give constructive comments when asked to identify what is about their school that gets in the way of learning.

Another emphasis could be on the point of competitive environment which the majority of the respondents commented on. Of all the findings, 41 (31.91%) of the responses urged the school to keep up with a competitive academic environment. This shows that each student works extra hard so as to be ranked among the best students. This motivates them to read and do research. This type of a situation is good in every school that wishes to be referred to as a successful one in terms of performance.

4.12: Frequency of Internal Examinations

The school organizes internal examinations twice a term. This was shown by a 100 percent response. The internal examination helps learners to study hard and those with difficulties to work on them so as not to fail. It boosts students' abilities and encourages a lot of research and discovery both at individual and group level. The internal examination together with homework/assignments give the students experience in answering questions, expose them to new challenges and increases their curiosity to know more. This exposes them to develop positive interest in learning.

4.13: Attitudes and Ideas of Students Towards the School and its' Stakeholders

Table 4.13 indicates that 92.5 percent of the respondents felt that teachers accepted and valued the ideas from students. There were 6.7 percent of those who were not very sure while 0.8 percent held a contrary view contending that teachers never took the students' ideas and views. This suggests that teachers value the students' ideas. It implies that students' contributions especially in academic issues are taken with credibility which boosts their participation in return.

Table 4.13: Attitudes and Ideas of Students Towards the School and its' Stakeholders

Attitude Items	SA		A		N		D		SD	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
teachers respect/value students' ideas	72	60.0	39	32.5	8	6.7	0	0	1	0.8
students trust one another	56	46.6	53	44.2	8	6.7	2	1.7	1	0.8
teachers believe all students can learn	95	79.2	17	14.2	5	4.2	2	1.7	1	0.8
teachers give support to students	57	47.5	40	33.3	18	15.0	5	4.2	0	0
I share problems with teachers	41	34.2	33	27.5	22	18.5	13	10.8	9	7.5
Alcohol and drugs are common	3	2.5	6	5.0	16	13.3	22	18.3	73	60.3
I am included in school activities	36	30.0	38	31.7	32	26.7	12	10	2	1.7
students have freedom of expression	72	60.0	36	30.0	5	4.2	2	1.7	1	0.8
Form ones are warmly welcomed	78	65.0	28	23.3	4	3.3	6	5.0	4	3.3
Students participate in administrative decision making	46	38.3	41	34.2	18	15.0	3	2.5	12	10

The Table 4.13 indicates 90.8 percent of those who agreed that there was trust among students while 6.7 percent were undecided. Still, there were 2.5 percent of those who disagreed. This implies that there is a lot of trust among students in the school. The reason to this may be because of high discipline as stipulated by the Principal or students' leadership which also play a vital role in the running of the student body.

The findings of Bryk and Schneider (2002) agree with this point that both staff and students must be able to develop trust and know how to sustain it. Griffin (1996) also supports the views on trust by expressing that a good school with good administration will offer its' pupils with as many responsibilities as possible to develop trustworthiness and competence in them. In effective schools, students are trusted by giving them a lot of responsibilities. This acts as a motivation to learning and in turn students trust each other. The school under study experiences a trust worth attitude which can also be attributed to the prayerful environment as expressed by the Principal.

The students' response on whether the teachers believe that all students can learn, 93 percent of the respondents agreed to the view. From Table 4.13, 4 percent were not very sure about the issue while 3 percent totally disagreed with this point. This implies that teachers in this school motivate and encourage students even those with learning difficulties. The point is supported with the findings of Sammons et al (1995) that teachers in effective schools have high expectations of their students and they are willing to design strategies to help them understand the contents being delivered. This is practically true because the teacher's comments and despairing words on students are very effective were learning is concerned. Once motivated and believed in, a student can do extremely well.

The Table 4.13 indicates 80.8 percent of the students agreed to the view that teachers respect them and care for them while 15 percent were not certain about it and 4.2 disagreed. It explains that teachers do respect, care and accept their students. The findings of Rudduck et al (1996) agree with the responses of the students about this issue. He found that respect for pupils as individuals and as a body occupying a significant position in the institution of the school will make them succeed in learning.

According to the students' responses, they feel comfortable to share any kind of problems with the teachers. This is shown in the data where 61 percent agreed, 18 percent were unsure, 19 percent disagreed while 2 percent were for those who did not attempt to the question. If teachers care, respect and accept their students no way can they make students fail to approach them. If there is respect and all conducive aspects in the school, it is clear that learners are free to meet their teachers and share their problem and ask for help. Again, it implies that teachers behave like biological parents to whom children can share their challenges freely with the hope of getting help.

The students were asked whether alcohol, drug use, truancy and verbal abuse are common occurrences in their school. The analysis shows that 79.1 percent disagreed, 13.3 percent were uncertain about the issue while 7.5 percent agreed that it happens in the school. Majority of the students disagreed and it expresses that in such a school were teacher and administration are serious with work, there cannot be tolerance of such behavior. To support this view, students responded that there is high level of discipline in the school when they were asked on the means to maintain good K.C.S.E performance. Njoroge (2007) supports the view in his findings that in effective schools, teachers identify students with difficulties and problems and

find ways to help them. Therefore alcohol, drug use, truancy and verbal abuse are not common occurrences in the school.

The Table 4.13 indicates 62 percent of the students who agreed that every student in their school is included in school activities. The portions of 27 percent were not very sure about it while those who disagreed were 11 percent. This implies that every student is given a chance to be involved in school activities including sports. The Principal agree to this point when asked on whether few or all students practice in sports. He responded that all students are involved. The findings agree with those of Rudduck et al (1996) which say that in successful schools, all students are treated with fairness irrespective of their class, gender, ethnicity or academic statue. Therefore it implies that there is consideration of every student in all school activities.

The study sought to find out whether students had freedom of expression in the school. The responses represent 90 percent of those who agreed with view, 4.2 percent were undecided percent 5 percent disagreed and 0.8 percent represented the student who did not attempt the question. This implies that the teachers and administration do give room to students to speak their minds and then they help them if they go off track. The students exercise their rights and responsibilities through self-expression and self-control.

In effective schools, pupils are given rights and responsibilities which enable them play an active role in the life of the school, raise their self-esteem, and encourage taking responsibilities for their own learning (Rudduck, 1996). This view supports the findings about students' freedom of expression. Nevertheless, the Principal said, "that students' should not be left alone to see what is good for them. Freedom can be there but not to do what they want."

The findings of the question on whether the new Form one students are warmly welcomed in the school indicated 83 percent those who agreed, 8 percent disagreed while 4 percent were uncertain about the whole issue. Majority of the respondents agreed that the new students are warmly welcome in the school which is a characteristic of a successful institution The findings of Rudduck, (1996) which say that in effective schools, pupils are given rights and responsibilities which enable them play an active role in the life of the school, raise their self-esteem, and encourage taking responsibilities for their own learning concur with the aspect of discipline as the reason to warm welcome of new students.

The data was analyzed on whether the students do take part in administrative decision making in the school. The Table 4.13 indicates 74 percent those who agreed, 15 percent were not certain while 13 percent disagreed with the view. This implies that students do take part in administrative decision making in the school. The Principal supported this point in his responses that the school has a strong student leadership which is a characteristic of the school culture in which some leaders represent the students in administrative meetings. Some students also expressed that they like the school because of the strong student union which leads and guides the students.

In support to this, Callahan and Clark (1990) found that involving students in decision making or planning of learning activities give them a proprietary interest in the activities that may cause them to work harder. What students themselves would not fail, they want it to succeed always because they have good feelings about their plans. This acts a motivational aid.

4.14: Reasons to Preference of the School

Table 4.14: Reasons to Preference of this School than Others

Reasons	f	%
Competent & experienced teachers	21	14.0
Qualified teachers	18	12.0
Commitment of teachers and students	10	6.7
Parents and school participation	12	8.0
Good administration	10	6.7
Students positive attitude	12	8.0
High discipline	18	12.0
Extracurricular activities	14	9.3
Good student /teacher relationship	20	13.3
Trust among stakeholders	15	10.0
Total	**150**	**100**

The discrepancy in the total number of responses was because most respondent expressed themselves in more than one point. Hence, instead of 120, it was 150. From the Table 4.14, there is 14 percent which represents that experienced and competent teachers enhanced learning positively. The findings of this study are supported by Waweru (1982) who says that

teachers' experience and competence played a vital role in achieving the best academic results. Cheryl and Rebecca (2006) carried out a study about the teachers working experience and its impact on performance and the finding concur also with what was obtained from Alliance High School.

Some students gave a reason of preference of the school due to its well qualified teachers. The analysis shows 12 percent of those who expressed themselves on the same. Right people deliver what is quality and relevant to the society and the teachers of the school under study are some of those. A successful school is expected to have well qualified staff. The issue of qualified teachers has been identified as a crucial factor in influencing performance. To support this view, Bett (1986) found that unequal distribution of graduate teachers and head teachers in Kericho district had a great influence on performance in schools.

Commitment is factor that influences performance too. Respondents expressed that both teachers and students of the school were very committed to the school activities. From the findings, 6.7 percent supported this point. The findings of Sergiovanni (2006) concur with the findings of this study that a high commitment and high performance are seen to be a distinguishing feature of a school with a healthy organizational culture. This implies that there is a good culture of commitment in the school under study from both teachers and students respectively.

The analysis of data indicates 8 percent about parents' involvement in running the affairs of the school. Parents play a vital role in the education of their children. Their words of encouragement, spiritual, moral, emotional and material support and as models motivate and inspire the children. Well learned parents always want their children to even go beyond them in

terms of educational levels. The findings of Leithwood and Jantzi (2006) agree with the view that parents' engagement in school has an impact. Parents believe they have the skill and know how to make meaningful contributions to the school's efforts and they believe that staff and their children value their participation in the school. Another supporting finding is from Concillia (2002) who says that learners whose parents earn a higher income and value school education are more likely to do well in class since parents possess financial means to support them in all aspects.

Good administration is all it takes for the school to be effective academically. From the findings of the study, 6.7 percent of the respondents expressed that they have good administration which makes them prefer the school to others. The view is supported by Sergiovanni (2006) who says that what a leader stands for is more important than what he/she does. He expresses that leadership is an expression of culture and it is the around the leader as a stable center that the culture can grow. Ngugi (2012) also supports this view by looking at that the influence of head teacher's leadership styles on students' K.C.S.E performance in public school. His finding is that head teacher's appraisal played an important role to academic performance.

The main artisans of education are the students themselves. If they have a negative attitude towards learning, nothing in terms of effective education can take place. But if students have a positive attitude towards all school activities and other aspects, they will perform extremely well in all aspects. From the respondents, 8 percent affirmed that there is positive attitude by students in all they do in school. Griffin (1996) confirms the findings by emphasizing that a good administration offers its pupils with as many responsibilities as possible to develop

trustworthiness and competence in them. These responsibilities build in students a positive attitude towards learning, administration and teachers.

The data represents 12 percent about high discipline. This implies that the school has strong disciplinary order which plays a big role in ensuring effective teaching and learning. The Principal expressed in the interview schedule that discipline is the second important cultural practice in the school after academic excellence. To prosper, discipline plays a big part in ones journey otherwise it will be a failure. Sammons et al (1995) says that in effective schools, there is a good learning environment, orderly and encouraging self control among pupils which promotes good positive classroom ethos. This point solidifies the findings of this study. It is true that disciplined person posses self-control in all he/she does which makes him/her excel. The teachers and students of Alliance High School under have these qualities in them which make them prosper academically.

In the pursuit of building men strong not in mind only but also in body and character, the school under study has extracurricular activities. Data analyzed indicates 9.3 percent of those who reasoned with the idea. Some of these activities include drama, choir, scientific club, school publications, school leadership through the prefects, community service through social welfare society, Sunday school teaching, scouting debate club, wild life just to mention a few. These help student to be formed holistically.

Marsh and Kleitman (2002) support that many extracurricular activities are proven to be beneficial in building and strengthening academic achievement even if some of such activities are not directly related to academics. Another concurring finding is of Darling, Caldwell and Smith (2005) that there is a relationship between extracurricular activities and academic

performance in adolescents. They observed that those who participated in these activities had higher grades, more positive attitude towards school and higher academic aspirations. Therefore Alliance High School does just that to enhance students' achievements.

Human beings are social beings therefore they need each other. According to the findings of this study, 13.3 percent of the respondents expressed that there is a good relationship between the students and the teachers. This has a direct impact on students' performance because they (students) are free to express themselves with teachers. This is true with the school under study as expressed by students and also by what the academic school records indicate. Little (1982) and Rosenholt (1989) found that the warm relationship that exist in effective schools between teachers and administration is extended to the students and they enhance teaching and learning which is precise and concrete. The finding of Nyang'acha (2012) on the role of interpersonal communication between teachers and students shows that good relation enhances great academic achievement. This also supports the findings in Alliance High School were teachers relate well with students.

In a conducive environment, students tend to perform better than in those with troubled and unhealthy conditions. An environment where there is trust brings about achievements and progress. According to respondents, 10 percent expressed that there was a good and conducive learning environment in their school.

In support to this point, Bryk and Schneider (2002) found that trust in schools plays an important role in building a strong school culture. Both staff and students must be able to make sense of their work together in terms of what they understand as the primary purpose of the school. It is through this that a conducive environment is created. The findings confirm that the school under study has a trustful culture among stakeholders.

4.15: Order of Practical Goals

According to the Principal, practical goals of the school were important and he ranked them according to the order of importance. Academic achievement has the first priority than any other activity in the school. But to achieve academic excellence, there should be good discipline among stakeholders so that they can take up their respective responsibilities. It is for this reason that discipline was ranked second from academic achievements.

Co-curricular activities is ranked third as it provides student with fresh activities and helps them perform well academically. It breaks the classroom monotony hence every student has to take part in sporting activity of his choice. Darling, Caldwell and Smith (2005) supports that there is a relationship between extracurricular activities and academic performance in adolescents students improve academically when they are active in sporting activities. Students' welfare stands out to be the fourth consideration because once the needs of the learner are addressed, he/she participates actively in all activities. It is for this reason that the school considers the students welfare first before teachers' needs which falls on fifth.

The school looks into the teachers' affairs as well. Effective schools provide teachers with necessary needs and give them the due respect they deserve so that they can do their job effectively. It is for this reason Waweru (1982) concludes that teachers' experience and commitment to students' learning emerge to be a key characteristic to successful learning. For teachers to be committed, their needs ought to be addressed and fulfilled.

Income generating activities are ranked sixth in the school while expansion of the facilities is the last seventh among the goal. They are also vital in the development of the school but only if the school is able to progress academically. Because of this academic excellence, additional

infrastructure would become a serious need as many parents/guardians would like to send their children and relatives to such a school.

The school organizes some activities in which students come together and celebrate. Some of such events according to the principal's responses include dances, parties and other social get-together functions in which they socialize as a community. For Alliance High School, the Principal responded that the students do have such functions once in a term.

Every school should allocate time for study and personal work for students. In this study, the principal of the school expressed that the school allocates 3 hours and 30 minutes each day for the mentioned activity. Each class has the same quantity of time for prep. It is during this time that the students do their studies, assignments and other personal or group work.

In addition, there is time allocated for games. Each class has 7 hours and 30 minutes per week in which they do all sorts of physical exercises. The principal takes this activity seriously as it refreshes students from classroom activity hence every students is encouraged to participate in any sport of his choice. In support to the point, Marsh and Kleitman (2002) indicate that extracurricular activities have a lot of benefit to the students. They found that students' participation in these activities helped them perform better than those who never participated. Therefore, Alliance High school has put it compulsory that all students should attend or participate in any of the sports activities available in the school.

The school conducts rewards or prize giving activities each year. According to the Principal, the school rewards for three activities namely academics, games and leadership skills. The three motivate students and help them become responsible and determined so as to scoop one if not all the three prizes.

4.16: Ratings Between Teachers and Students

The figure 4.16 represents the ratings between the teachers and the students. It shows that there is cooperation and collaboration between the teachers and the students because according to the Principal, they ranked almost the same. The only exception was on punctuality on which the students were rated a bit higher than teachers. This implies that students were more punctual as compared to the teacher. This sends a message that teachers should be as punctual as students. In general, it shows that there is really good cooperation, responsibility and concern between the two stakeholders in the school.

Figure 4.16: Ratings Between Teachers and Students
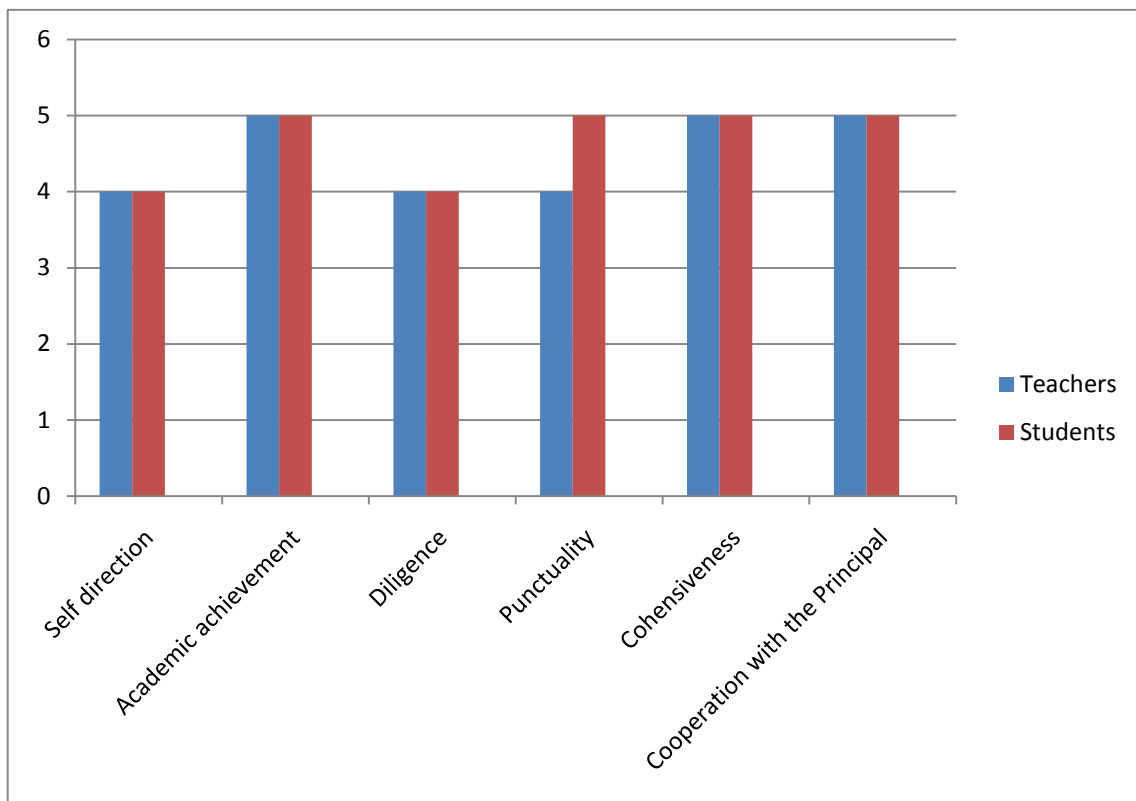
4.17: General Perceptions of the Principal

In his expression, the Principal disagreed with the point that he faces trouble getting along with the people he works with. This implies that there is cordial work relationship with his subordinates. On the same issue, he expressed that the subordinates were very reliable. They knew what to do, how, when and where to do it. If such an environment exists, that means there is a friendly atmosphere among the people. There was also an indication that co-operation prevailed in getting the job done by the subordinates.

There was a strong disagreement to the point that students should be left alone to see what is good for them. This implies that the administration and all stakeholders in the school had a part to play in ensuring that students were guided. Adolescence stage needs guidance hence the Principal held it that they should not be left to do whatever they want.

Teachers are second parents and they spend more time with students than the time they spend with their biological parents. On this point, the Principal agreed to the statement that teachers need not to be compensated for walking an extra mile with their own students. Being second parents, there is no need of getting compensations for job done to their own children but an incentive can be given just to say thank you. If the subordinates work together in harmony, it is an indication that there is no friction among them. On this point, he affirmed that there was no friction at all among the subordinates.

About the BOG, the principal indicated that there was great support in running the affairs of the school. The BOG works well and effectively. There is co-operation with the school administration of which the Principal is the vital man. He agrees that the school is supported

efficiently. Every school has PTA which is a body comprising parents, teachers and sometimes a representative from the surrounding environment.

In Alliance High School, the PTA supports the school very well according to the Principal. Parents of the students do attend the meetings and discuss practical issues on how to help run the school affairs. On this point, the Principal agreed that parents play their vital roles. In support to this, Leithwood and Jantzi (2006) affirm that parents' engagement in school has an impact. Parents believe they have the skill and know how to make meaningful contributions to the school's efforts. They believe that their contributions are of great value. This point was also raised by students that Parents, BOG and teachers should work hand in hand in order to continue acquiring good results in the national examinations.

Team work is an essential aspect of togetherness. If teachers meet to plan their work as a team, it shows the co-operation that exists in the school. The Principal affirmed that teachers in his school plan together in teams to achieve shared goals. The findings confirm with those of Collahan and Clark (1990) which shows that team planning is advantageous because it is ease for teachers to coordinate their teaching activities; another thing is that it gives one a chance to share ideas.

Sometimes students should also be involved in planning to enhance high retention. Moreover, what students have planned seems relevant to them and would like to see their plans succeed. Collahan and Clark add that many teachers encourage students to participate in the planning of their learning activities, units and courses. Participation in the planning tends to give students a proprietary interest in the activities that may cause them to try harder.

4.18: Regular Ceremonies in the School

The Principal expressed the school considers parades, prayer, opening and closing and athletics as regular ceremonies in the school. The school is founded on Christian principles, a protestant mission school. Because of this, religious affiliation is an important activity in the school. It does not discriminate those from other denominations or religions. Hence, prayer is the backbone of the school activities.

The Principal mentioned that athletics is part and parcel of the school program. This is because it provides a balance to the intense academic life of the school. He expressed that the school does not expect all the students to be good athletes but they encourage physical fitness. The students learn the importance of physical fitness through school-wide cross-country runs, the value of teamwork and good sportsmanship in both individual and team sports. He expressed that some of the school sports activities include: basketball, rugby, soccer, track and field, hockey, volleyball, handball, swimming and lawn tennis. To support this point, Darling, Caldwell and Smith (2005) say there is a relationship between extracurricular activities and academic performance in adolescents. Because of the change of activity, students feel refreshed as the monotony of classroom work is broken.

4.19: Characteristics of the Culture of the School

The principal expressed that the school had three characteristics which marked the school culture. The first of the three is that he school has a strong students' leadership which participates in administrative affairs. The second characteristic is the observance of the school routine and thirdly the adherence to tradition.

4.20: Characteristics that have Direct Effect on Performance

According to the response, all the three mentioned features above have a direct impact on the academic performance of students in national examinations. The school takes all of them seriously. Tradition and routine are things which have been there since the beginning and the school still clings or holds on to them so dearly because all the achievements come through them. These include religious dimension, teachers' relations with students and administration, parents' involvement in running the school and also students' union.

Students' leadership has a direct influence on fellow students. The students give due respect to their student leaders and do listen to them. This is true in the sense that the prefects influence their fellow students positively hence the administration ensures that it chooses those students with a strong and positive character and well mannered to be in the college of prefects.

CHAPTER FIVE

5.0 SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary

This study sets out to find out the influence of school culture on students performance in K.C.S.E at Alliance Boys High School in Kiambu County. The study adopted to use a survey design in this study. Data was therefore collected from members of the target population using questionnaires and interview schedule. The sample used was 120 Form four students and an interview schedule for the Principal of the school. The students belonged to Form 4 class which has 4 streams hence stratified random sampling was used to pick the sample. This was based on the idea that they had enough experience in the school and were finalist who could give factual information.

Having analyzed data collected, the study provides the following findings; empowering students in leadership skills leads to motivation in all school activities; the Head teacher's leadership styles has a great influence on performance; an environment which is academically competitive boosts the students learning and study skills to achieve more; involving students in some administrative decision making helps them feel respected and acknowledged; the relationship between students and teachers plays an important role on performance. In addition to the mentioned findings, parents' involvement in the running of the school affairs has a positive impact on students' performance and teachers building of trust in learners inspired them to do well.

5.2 Conclusions

Firstly, the study suggests that the government should provide the necessary academic facilities in schools so as to enhance good and effective teaching and learning. It should also motivate the school administrations and teachers by responding to their basic needs and considering the suggestions they make on how to improve the schools.

Secondly, the head teacher has to share the responsibilities with the teachers and students and his /her leadership style has to influence performance. In addition, the head teacher shapes the school culture through the empowering of students in leadership skills. There should be a culture of motivating staff members and students and also focusing attention and daily behavior on what is important and valued. These will boost the students and teachers'.

Thirdly, the study concluded that the relationship that exists between students and teachers boosts the morale of students. The student leadership/union is an encouragement to all students therefore schools should promote this aspect. In addition, there should be a culture of trust among the stakeholders in the school and develop the environment which is academically competitive that boosts the students learning.

Finally, the study found that the culture of involving parents in running the affairs of the school was an influential factor to good performance because parents' participation motivated the students. Therefore parents should be part and parcel of decision makers in the school. They have to be involved in the activities of the school.

5.3 Recommendations

From the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

5.3.1 The School Administration

The school administration should develop a good working relationship with all stakeholders of the school, encourage students to take part in co-curricular activities and build trust within the school system thus with all stakeholders.

5.3.2 The Teachers

The teachers should build a good rapport with the students so, be punctual in all school activities so that students can emulate them, give positive reinforcement/feedback, identify students with learning difficulties and find time to help them.

5.3.3 The Students

The students should be responsible in the duties entrusted to them so that the administration and teachers, respect the teachers and collaborate with them well, to do the given assignments in time and submit them for marking.

5.4 Areas of Further Research

The study suggests further research on the influence of school culture on students K.C.S.E performance.

1. To find out the extent to which teachers and parents/guardians contribute to the building of an effective school culture.

2. An investigation into the contribution of the community environment to the building the school culture.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX I: Questionnaire for the Students

Dear respondents,

I am Reuben Banda, a student at Marist International University College, A constituent college of the Catholic University of Eastern Africa, pursuing a Bachelors Degree in Education.

As a requirement for the completion of my program, I am carrying out a research on the influence of school culture on students 'performance in K.C.S.E. Your participation is highly needed for me to accomplish the task. Be assured that the information you will give me shall be accorded all the confidentiality it deserves and shall be used for the purpose of research. I therefore request you to complete the questions listed below. (You are free to write or omit your name)

Instructions

a) Kindly answer the following questions by a tick (√) appropriately in the spaces provided.

b) You can give more than one answer where appropriate

Section A: Demographic Information of the Respondent

1. Age: 15-20 ☐   21-25 ☐   26 and above ☐

2. Religious affiliation: ☐

Section B: Factual Information

1. Do your teachers come to class punctually?

   a) Very often ☐   b) Often ☐   c) seldom ☐   d) Never ☐

2. How often are you given assignments in each of the subjects you take?

   a) Once a day ☐   b) one a week ☐   c) once a month ☐   d) Never ☐

3. How often are the assignments marked?

   a) After one day ☐   b) After one week ☐   c) After a month ☐   d) Never ☐

4. Are students who fail to answer questions correctly given remedial teaching?

   a) Yes ☐   b) No ☐

5. Are there any rewards given to those who do well in assignments?

   a) Yes ☐   b) No ☐

6. How long does it take all the students to enter the classes after the bell is rung?

   a)   Less than a minute ☐   b) one minute ☐

   b)   five minute ☐   d) more than five minutes ☐

7. What is your parents/guardians level of participation in school meetings and activities?

   a) High ☐   b) moderate ☐   c) low ☐   d) Never ☐

8. What do you think can be done to maintain good performance in K.C.S.E?…………………………………………………………………………………

9. How often do you have internal examinations?

Once a week ☐   Twice a month ☐   Once a month ☐

Once term ☐   Twice a term ☐

Section C

Indicate the extent to which you agree with the following ideas about your school. Tick (√) only one answer for each question.

Key: SA= strongly agree, A= Agree, N= neutral, D= disagree, SD= strongly disagree

Statement	SA	A	N	D	SD
Teachers listen and value students' ideas					
Students trust one another					
Teachers want students to understand their work not just to memorize it					
Teachers believe all students can learn					
Teacher only care about the bright students and have given up on some of their students					
As a student, I feel accepted and respected by others at school					
I feel a high level of support from the teachers in terms of respect, acceptance and caring					
When I have a problem, I feel comfortable sharing it					

with the teachers					
I feel uncared for or rejected by my classmates					
Teacher give special privilege to students who get good grades					
Other students feel academically oriented					
Alcohol and drug use, truancy and verbal abuse are common occurrences in our school					
Other students take my opinion seriously					
I am always included in school activities					
I like school this year					
In this school, students have freedom of expression					
Students coming to Form One are warmly welcomed					
A new student in our school faces a lot of hardships					
Students participate in administrative decision making					

10. What other reasons make you prefer this school to other schools?

....

....

APPENDIX II: Interview Schedule for the Principal

Section A: Demographic Information

1. Teaching Experience…………… years
2. Length of stay in this school……………….years
3. Experience as a head teacher/ Principal……………………..years
4. Academic qualifications……………………………………………………………
5. Professional qualifications……………………………………………………

Section B: Factual information

1. Rank the following goals in order of preference (1 to 7, with 1 as the most important) as practical goals to pursue in your school:

   ☐ Co-curricular,

   ☐ Academic achievements,

   ☐ Income generating,

   ☐ Discipline,

   ☐ Expansion of facilities,

   ☐ Teacher welfare,

   ☐ Student welfare

2. How many times do students have parties, dances etc…………………..

3. How many prep hours in a week do students have per class………………………

4. a) How many hours of games in week per class……………………………………

   b) Which students in the school usually practice in sports?

   ☐ School team,   ☐ All students   ☐ few interested students

5. What three important achievements does your school reward or give prizes for?

   ……………………………………………………………………………………

6.Generally, how would you rate your students and teachers on the following qualities on

a scale of 1(low) to 5 (high) (Please number from 1, 2, 3, 4, 5)

Quality	Teacher	Student
Self direction		
Academic achievement		
Diligence		
Punctuality		
Cohesiveness		
Cooperation with head		

7. Indicate by ticking in the appropriate box. SA = strongly agree, a = Agree, N = neutral, D = disagree, SD= strongly disagree.

	SA	A	N	D	SD
The people I work with have trouble getting along with me					
My subordinates are reliable					
There is a friendly atmosphere among the people I supervise					
My subordinates always co-operate in getting the job done					
I believe that students should be left alone to see what is good for them					
Teachers need not be compensated for walking the extra mile with their own students					
There is friction between my subordinates					
My subordinates are a good deal of help and support in getting the job done					
The BOG in our school is very supportive					
The PTA here is very supportive					
All parents of our students take part in running the school affairs					
Teachers plan together in teams to achieve shared goals					

8. What ceremonies are regularly conducted in the school?

…………………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………………

9. What special features characterizes the culture of this school?

…………………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………………

10. Which of these features have a direct effect on the academic performance of students in national examinations?

Thank you very much for your generosity and support.

APPENDIX III: Alliance High Main Gate

APPENDIX IV: Signs of Success