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African culture and school leadership: a case study of secondary school leader's ethical decision making in Kenya.

The need to have a deeper understanding of ethical practice in organizations across contexts has led to calls for an exploration of perspectives outside western derived notions prevalent in the literature. The response within education contexts has been slow with a few studies in the East and less in Africa. This single interpretive qualitative case study explored how African cultural values inform Kenya secondary school leaders ethical decision making. The study drew from the indigenous philosophy of ubuntu, which is the heart of African social and cultural values to analyze data. The case, ethical decision was examined across 5 schools in the western region of Kenya using focus group discussions, semi-structured interviews and documentary reviews. A thematic analysis revealed that African cultural values namely: African based care, communal care and justice, Afrocentric value of goodwill and considering the cultural perspectives of issues underpinned by the strong value for cohesion and harmony informed school leader's ethical decision making. The results indicate that cultural values define ethical leadership practice of secondary school leaders in Kenya. The findings highlight the need to recognize the multiple perspectives of ethical decision making. There is value in incorporating the indigenous ubuntu values in ethical frameworks that govern the conduct of secondary school leaders in Kenya because of their enduring presence in the ethical decision-making process. This description marks a divergent view from mainstream research on ethical decision making.

Keywords

Ethical decision making, ethical practice , school leaders, Kenya, Ubuntu, Africa

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