

Leadership Communication Strategies as an Institutional Determinant of Strategic Plan Implementation in Public Secondary Schools in Kenya.

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ABSTRACT

The study sought to investigate the influence of leadership communication strategies on the Strategic plan implementation. The study used descriptive survey research design. The study targeted 351 public secondary school principals, 1,404 class teachers and 1,775 academic Heads of Departments from which a sample of 105 principals, 176 academic Heads of Departments and 140 class teachers was derived. The respondents were sampled using stratified sampling technique. A questionnaire and an interview guide were data collection tools. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyze data. Data was presented using frequency distribution tables and pie charts. Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient and Multiple Linear Regression was used to analyze the inferential data. The set level of hypothesis testing was at 0.05 level of significance. This study may be significant to the school board of management members and policy makers in terms of know how skills on formulation, implementation and evaluation of strategic plan implementation in schools. This study found that school leadership communication strategies have a positive and significant influence on the strategic plan implementation. Based on these findings, the study recommended that the school principals should ensure clear information concerning duties.

Key words: Strategic Plan, Implementation, Public Secondary Schools, Kenya

INTRODUCTION

In the whole globe education is seen as a basic human right for all children. This is in line with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural organization each child should enjoy right to education (UNESCO). Each child is entitled to right of education (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, 2009) Planning and implementing educational strategic plans in schools has proved to be a strong means of achieving sustainable development goals (UNICEF, 2015). A strategic plan is systematic guide, formulated by a school to assess it can actualize its set goals, and formulate the basis so that the whole school knows what will take place and what is expected of them Mintzberg (2004). Globally, strategic plan implementation is important for it dictates the success and failure in education. Many public and private organizations like ministries, parastatals, legal services, hospitals, financial services, and churches formulate strategic plans to track their performances. There are many shareholders in public

secondary schools who take part in the process of making a strategic plan.

A study conducted by Reeves (2008) in United States of America showed that for schools to improve student results, leaders require guidance in the processes of strategic planning. While analyzing many schools' strategic plans in USA, Reeves discovered that successful planning and students' achievement are determined by leadership practices and leadership high expectations. The study also found out that more than 70% of the strategic plans are never implemented. This study filled this gap in Machakos County by studying the analysis of institutional determinants of the strategic plan implementation in public secondary schools.

A study conducted in Malaysia showed that the most challenging obstacle on strategy implementation is management information systems, (Zakaria & Omar, 2013). Nyamwanza (2013) found out that inadequate preparation before strategy implementation accounts for the main reason as to why many organizations' strategies fail and recommended that necessary preparations be carried out before embarking on strategy implementation. Kenya, like most emerging economies has faced challenges in expanding public healthcare coverage especially with declined resources and increased public demand for same.

A research study done by Jooste and Fourie (2019), South Africa showed that organizational performance is greatly influenced by the strategic leadership role during the implementation stage as giving direction is very vital.

Kenya is currently allocating more funds to the education sector compared to the other economic sectors. The ministry of education introduced strategic plans in the learning public institutions for them to effectively attain goals and objectives contained in the in the **Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 4)**. The SDG4 aims at achieving lifelong learning, equity, effective learning and relevance education. The ministry of education initiated strategic management in all schools in line with the social pillar of Vision 2030. According to the ministry of education policy, (MoE, 2012) the Ministry gives the blueprint for strategic plans where all the schools must prepare a strategic plan. The implementation of strategic plan a big challenge. This will lead to a challenge of national realization of overall educational goals and objectives. The study sought to identify in depth how leadership communication strategy development plans in public secondary institutions in Machakos County influence the strategic plan implementation.

Sessional Paper No. 1 of 2005 on Education, Training and Research, led to changes in expected returns on investment in education in terms of productivity and skilled manpower through a Sector Wide Approach to Planning (SWAP). Though the emphasis was on the access, relevance, equity, quality and the strengthening of governance and management, the expected outcomes on investment in education was to equip all the citizens of Kenya with basic quality education as well as training. Education sector in Kenya has for long time been faced by several changes according to the global goals of education, which forms the wider delimitation of the national policy, set out in the Economic Recovery Strategy (ERS) and domesticated in the Sessional Paper No. 1 of 2005, on Education Policy, Research and Training.

Jones (2012) defines leadership as a major factor that influence successful strategic plan implementation. He also elaborated further that a leader can transform a thought vision to actualization is to embrace implementation and execute that vision via several policies, processes that will introduce stakeholders and empower them in vision implementation.

Institutional strategic plans are very vital instruments in the current times of many educational changes associated with performance contracting in Kenya. Many schools have formulated strategic plans in line with their needs, objectives and status. In 2003, the government of Kenya through the ministry of education made it mandatory for all public learning institutions to formulate a domestic strategic plan document to help them in the realization of developments in their institutions. Canole's (1999) and Lane et al.'s (2005) found a strong correlation in general institution performance and strategic plan terms of structures, co-

curricular activities, and resources. Proper implementation of strategic plans greatly contribute to great achievement in institutional success all round. In the year 2006, the then minister for education directed for the formulation of strategic plan for the ministry of education. In turn, the ministry made it mandatory for all learning institution to make a strategic plan. All the learning institution embraced this ministerial policy. In as much as many studies have asserted the problems facing the implementation of strategic plan in Kenya, Abdikadir (2015); Nakhumicha (2014); David (2012); Onkundi (2011), stated the significance of ensuring the that different organization strategic plan implementation. Researches have been carried out in Kenya on locale in Machakos County. In addition, organizational leadership in school development plans was not studied in depth as possible institutional determinants of the implementation of the strategic plan in public secondary schools in Machakos County Kenya.

Schools in Machakos County already formulated strategic plans since it is the requirement from the ministry of education. However, statistics provide from County ministry of education points that out of the 351 public secondary schools, only 25% have embraced the strategic plan implementation in the schools' general progress. This indicates an alarming low statistics despite the government policy to embrace performance based approaches one of which being strategic plan implementation. It is from this background that the researcher was interested in conducting this study on institutional determinants of strategic plan implementation in public secondary schools in Machakos County.

A research by Mariani et al. (2018) on influence of school strategic plan implementation and its relationship with secondary school academic achievement in Selangor, Malaysia. The study found out that there is weakness of leadership affecting negatively the strategic plan implementation. The research results showed that strategic plan implementation is mostly influenced by poor leadership.

Nwabueze and Bolaji (2020) conducted a study to examine the effects of the school leadership on the strategic plan implementation in universities in Enugu estate, Nigeria. The research outcomes indicated a positive and statistically significant correlation between the school leadership and the strategic plan implementation. The study also found out that leadership should sensitize the leadership in the strategic plan implementation.

Mureithi, (2019) conducted a research seeking to investigate organizational determinants impacting implementation of strategic plan implementation in Universities in Mount Kenya region, Kenya. The study found out that the leadership in an organization should communicate the strategic plan objectives and goals to the relevant stakeholders for effective strategic plan implementation in learning institutions. The study asserted that for smooth implementation of strategic plan, the leadership must ensure proper channel of communication of the implementation of the strategic plan.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

The study was guided by the following objective.

1. Determining the influence of leadership communication strategies on the implementation of the strategic plan in public secondary schools in Machakos County.
2. To establish the influence of school structure on the implementation of the strategic plan in public secondary schools in Machakos County.
3. Examining the influence of resources allocation on the implementation of the strategic plan in public secondary schools in Machakos County.
4. To determine the influence of the stakeholders' participation in school development plans on the implementation of a strategic plan in public secondary schools in Machakos County.

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses guided the study:

H01: There is no statistically significant influence of school structure on the implementation of strategic plans.

H02: There is no statistically significant influence of leadership communication strategies on the implementation of strategic plans.

H03: There is no statistically significant influence of resource allocation on the implementation of strategic plans.

H04: There is no statistically significant effect of stakeholders' participation in school development plans on the implementation of strategic plans.

METHODOLOGY

The researcher used descriptive survey design to analyze data. Inferential data analysis was done using Pearson's Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient and multiple linear regression. The study targeted 351 public secondary school principals, 1,404 class teachers and 1,755 academic Heads of Departments from which a sample of 105 principals, 176 academic HoDs and 140 class teachers was derived. Stratified sampling technique was used to sample the respondents. A questionnaire and an interview guide were the data collection tools. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyze data. Data was presented by use of frequency distribution tables and pie charts. Pearson's Product-Moment correlation Coefficient and Multiple linear regression was used to analyze the inferential data.

RESULTS

Influence of Leaders Communication Strategies on the Implementation of the Strategic Plan

The researcher study sought to examine the effects of leaders' communication strategies on the implementation of strategic plan where Table 1 and Table 2 presents the responses of principals and class teachers and HoDs on the various indicators of school leadership in public secondary schools in Machakos County. School leadership was measured using five indicators for the class teachers and HoDs but three indicators were used for the school principals. Mean and standard deviation (SD) statistics for each questionnaire items were tabulated. The findings of table 1 and table 2 are as indicated respectively.

Table 1: Responses of Principals on Influence of School Leadership on the Implementation of Strategic Plan

Variable		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Mean	Std. dev.
I ensure that the professional development to the school's educational goals	f	2	2	5	80	16	4.01	0.672
	%	1.9	1.9	4.76	76.19	15.24		
I ensure that teachers work according to the school's educational goals	f	1	1	5	80	18	4.076	0.583
	%	0.95	0.95	4.76	76.19	17.14		

I ensure that there is clarity concerning the responsibility for co-coordinating the curriculum	f	2	0	3	71	29	4.19	0.666
	%	1.9	0	2.86	67.62	27.62		

From the findings in table 1, 91.43 percent of the school heads agreed with the statement that they make sure that the professional development to the school’s educational goals while only 3.80 percent of the school Principals were against the statement that they make sure that the professional development to the school’s educational goals. Moreover, 93.33 percent of the school heads agreed with the statement that they make sure that teachers work in line with the school’s educational goals while only 1.90 percent disagreed with the statement that they ensure that teachers work according to the school’s educational goals. The school Principals who agreed with the statement that they make sure that teachers are guided by the school education goals while doing their work.

The principals agreed that there is clarity concerning the responsibility for co-coordinating the curriculum were 95.24 percent while only 1.90 percent of the school Principals disagreed with the statement that they ensure that there is openness pertaining the roles for co-coordinating the curriculum. The scale rating for the school Principals on average ranged from 4.010 to 4.190 indicating that the school Principals agreed with regard to school leadership in public secondary schools in Machakos County. In particular, a mean rating of 4.190 for the statement “I ensure that there is clarity concerning the responsibility for co-coordinating the curriculum” (SD=0.666), a mean rating of 4.076 for the statement “I ensure that teachers work according to the school’s educational goals” (SD=0.583) and a mean rating of 4.010 for the statement “I ensure that the professional development to the school’s educational goals” (SD=0.672). These indicates that the school Principals agreed with the statement that they ensure that there is clarity concerning the responsibility for co-coordinating the curriculum, they ensure that teachers work according to the school’s educational goals, and they ensure that the professional development to the school’s educational goals in public secondary schools in Machakos County.

This study sought to establish from class teachers and HoDs the influence of school leadership on the implementation of strategic plan, the findings are as indicated in table 2.

Table 2: Responses of Class Teachers and HoDs on Influence of School Leadership on the Implementation of Strategic Plan

Variable		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Mean	Std. dev.
The school leadership has put in place effective channels for communication in implementing of strategic plan.	f	131	46	1	66	50	2.517	1.618
	%	44.56	15.65	0.34	22.45	17.01		
The leadership in your school encourages honest communication of the strategic plan implementation.	f	51	102	3	93	45	2.929	1.404
	%	17.35	34.69	1.02	31.63	15.31		

The leadership of your school allows for consultation in the strategic plan implementation.	f	46	70	6	110	62	3.245	1.424
	%	15.65	23.81	2.04	37.41	21.09		
The school leadership involves all the stakeholders in the implementation of the strategic plan.	f	63	58	2	64	107	3.32	1.623
	%	21.43	19.73	0.68	21.77	36.39		
The leadership in the school reviews the strategic implementation process time to time.	f	56	50	3	71	114	3.466	1.586
	%	19.05	17.01	1.02	24.15	38.78		

The findings in table 2 revealed that 39.46 percent of the class teachers and HoDs agreed with the statement that the school leadership has put in place effective channels for communication in implementing of strategic plan while 60.21 percent of the class teachers and HoDs disagreed with the statement that the school leadership has put in place effective channels for communication in implementing of strategic plan. Moreover, 46.94 percent of the class teachers and HoDs agreed with the statement that the leadership in their school encourages honest communication of the strategic plan implementation while 52.04 percent of the class teachers and HoDs disagreed with the statement that the leadership in their school encourages honest communication of the strategic plan implementation. The class teachers and HoDs who agreed with the statement that the leadership of their school allows for consultation in the strategic plan implementation were 58.5 percent while 39.46 percent of the class teachers and HoDs disagreed with the statement that the leadership of their school allows for consultation in the strategic plan implementation. In addition, 58.16 percent of the class teachers and HoDs agreed with the statement that the school leadership involves all the stakeholders in the implementation of the strategic plan while 41.16 percent of the class teachers and HoDs disagreed with the statement that the school leadership involves all the stakeholders in the implementation of the strategic plan. Furthermore, 62.93 percent of the class teachers and HoDs agreed with the statement that the leadership in the school reviews the strategic implementation process time to time while 36.06 percent of the class teachers and HoDs disagreed with the statement that the leadership in the school reviews the strategic implementation process time to time.

The average scale rating for the class teachers and HoDs ranged from 2.517 to 3.466 indicating that the class teachers and HoDs were neutral with regard to school leadership in public secondary schools in Machakos County. The highest mean rating of 3.466 was for the statement “The leadership in the school reviews the strategic implementation process time to time” (SD=1.586). The statement with the lowest mean rating of 2.517 was “The school leadership has put in place effective channels for communication in implementing of strategic plan” (SD=1.618).

The findings on correlation between leadership communication strategies and the Implementation of the Strategic Plan as presented in table 1 revealed that whereas more than 90 percent of the school Principals agreed with the statement that they ensure that the professional development to the school’s educational goals, ensure that teachers work according to the school’s educational goals and ensure that there is clarity concerning the responsibility for co-coordinating the curriculum; 60.21 percent of the class teachers and HoDs disagreed with the statement that the school leadership has put in place effective channels for communication in implementing of strategic plan, 52.04 percent of the class teachers and HoDs disagreed with the statement that the leadership in their school encourages honest communication of the strategic plan

implementation, even though 58.5 percent of the class teachers and HoDs agreed with the statement that the leadership of their school allows for consultation in the strategic plan implementation.

Hypothesis Testing for the Influence of Leaders Communication Strategies on the Implementation of Strategic Plans

Hypothesis testing in this study was done using a multiple regression model at the 5 percent level of significance. The results of hypothesis testing gave a positive coefficient of 0.4168 on school leadership was realized with a p-value of 0.000 which was statistically significant at the 0.05 level. Hence we reject the hypothesis that, school leadership has an effect on strategic plan implementation. This indicates that, school leadership does have a statistically significant effect on strategic plan implementation in public secondary schools in Machakos County.

DISCUSSION OF THE RESEARCH FINDINGS.

Influence of Leadership Communication Strategies on the Implementation of the Strategic Plan

The research study second objective aimed determining the effect of leadership communication strategies on the implementation of the strategic plan in public secondary schools in Machakos County. The findings of second objective was indicated in table 1, table 2 and table which indicated that based results from the multiple regression produced a positive coefficient of 0.4168 on school leadership with a p-value of 0.000 and is statistically significant at the 0.05 level. Hence we reject the hypothesis that, school leadership has an effect on strategic plan implementation. This indicates that, school leadership does have a statistically significant effect on strategic plan implementation in public secondary schools in Machakos County. The research outcomes were in accordance with the findings established by Anyieni and Areri (2016) in Kenya, who found that for management to be influential, participation by the staff was critical to the implementation of strategic plans and hence leading to a substantial impact on management leadership style on these strategies implementation.

The statistically significant influence of school leadership on strategic plan implementation was a result of school Principals who agreed with the statement that under their leadership there is a clear pathway and guide as far as the duties for organizing for co-coordinating the curriculum is concerned, they make sure that teachers teach in line with the education a goals, and they make sure that the professional development to the school's educational goals in public secondary schools in Machakos County. Even though class teachers and HoDs were neutral with regard to school leadership in public secondary schools in Machakos County and specifically they were undecided with the statement that "the leadership in the school reviews the strategic implementation process time to time", and "the school leadership has put in place effective channels for communication in implementing of strategic plan".

RECOMMENDATIONS

Emanating in line with study results and the conclusions thereof, this research made the following recommends that:

The school Principals ought to make sure that there is clear information concerning duties and organization of curriculum implementation, teachers to teach in line with goals of education and professional development to the school's educational goals in public secondary schools.

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