

School Leaders Dynamics on Implementing Strategic Plans: Assessing Kenyan Public Secondary Schools

Dr. James Kimeli Sang

Department of Educational Management & Policy Studies, School of Education, Moi University, P.O Box 3900, Eldoret, Kenya

***Corresponding author**
Dr. James Kimeli Sang

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Abstract: Evaluation of strategies in Kenya may be done either quantitatively or qualitatively. This is to ascertain whether the process of implementations will succeed in attaining the educational objectives or not. This study sought to investigate the implementation dynamics of strategic plans in secondary schools in Masaba north-sub County, Nyamira County, Kenya the specific objectives of the study were to assess the effect of leadership style on implementation of strategic plans in Masaba North sub county, secondary schools. The study used descriptive research design to get the information under investigation. The target population consisted of 31 Principals, 31 BOM chairpersons, and 31 PTA chairpersons. The study used purposive sampling and simple random sampling. The research instruments used to collect data was questionnaires. The questionnaires were made up of close-ended questions. Data collected was analyzed quantitatively. For descriptive statistics, frequency tables, and percentages were used, while for inferential statistics, the researcher used regression analysis The findings of the study show that school Leadership style played an important role in implementing the strategic plans since there was a team that was supposed to steer ahead the formation and implementation of the strategic plans. The Education policy makers would find this study useful in formulating educational policy that would enable the schools to improve on strategic planning process and also in addressing the critical issues that may be affecting public secondary school education in the Country.

Keywords: Role, Leadership Style, Implementation, Strategic Plans

INTRODUCTION

Transformational leadership is defined as a type of leadership in which the leader motivates the followers and increases their commitment. Transformational leadership factors yields leadership outcomes. According to Thompson and Land [1]. Leadership outcomes are the final results of leadership that include the following three factors: The leaders' ability to increase followers' desires to succeed and willingness to try harder, how satisfied followers with their leaders and their job. The leaders' abilities to lead an effective group and meet the followers' job related needs Omutoko [2] defines transformational leadership as the process of influencing major changes in the attitudes and assumptions of organization members and building commitment for the organization's mission or objectives. Similarly Barry [3] affirms that transformational leaders change the entire society through their words and actions and have great influence on their followers. Leaders stimulate their followers to disregard personal wishes for the sake of achieving sublime, collective goals and thus motivate them to accomplish more than they planned to accomplish. Transformational leaders seek to raise the consciousness of followers by appealing to higher ideals and moral values such as liberty, justice, equality, and peace; not to support emotions such as fear, greed, jealousy or hatred.

Transformational leaders work to awaken dormant needs of the followers and challenge them to reach a collective higher purpose. Thus, these leaders must have a desirable level of emotional understanding and proper personality traits [4]. Transformational leaders use intellectual stimulation skills and their own individualized considerations in actualizing these issues. Understanding the emotion through relevant emotional cues and managing these emotions are vital skills for a transformational leader. These leaders choose their followers and enhance their performance through personal communication Lehner [5] showed in their research that there is a positive linear relationship between the three factors of transformational leadership (individualized influence, individualized

consideration and inspirational motivation) and leadership outcomes. Similarly, Noble [6] found out that there is a significant positive relationship between the transformational style of leadership and leadership outcomes.

Extra effort is an ultimate variable of leadership. Extra effort of a follower is measured by their tendency for stronger effort, achievement beyond what is expected of them and ample enthusiasm for success. Leaders who make great use of transformational leadership can manage extra effort through understanding, utilization and management of emotions. Noble, [6] reported that transformational leadership is followed by extra efforts of the followers for achieving organizational goals. Dooley [7] found in their research that transformational leadership has a relationship with employee's satisfaction. Similarly, Noble [6], found out a significant relationship between transformational leadership and satisfaction in the managers of physical education.

Akan and Allen [8] found in their research that school leadership is related to effectiveness in strategic plans design for tomorrow's action, an outline of the steps to be taken during some future period. However, the plan might be well thought of, well planned but its execution may face a number of challenges caused by various factors. Pearce and Robinson [9] states that once the strategy has been designed, the managers in this case the principals of the schools should focus on the following five components to ensure effective execution; leadership styles, structure, culture, manpower skills, socio-economic political and resources. The authors recognize that the strategy implementation is more effective when conducted through subsystem within an organization hence the structure should be compatible with the chosen strategy. In order to implement the strategy, it is necessary to create processes and units within the implementation process that are sensitive to change, and that strategies are bound to succeed even if under unexpected circumstances.

Inspirational Motivation, this refers to the degree to which the leader articulates a vision that is appealing and inspiring to followers. Leaders with inspirational motivation challenge followers with high standards; communicate optimism about future goals and provide meaning for the task at hand. The followers are willing to invest more effort in their tasks; they are encouraged and optimistic about the future and believe in their abilities [10]. This might be achieved through motivational speeches and conversations and other public displays of optimism and enthusiasm, highlighting positive outcomes, and stimulating teamwork [11]. Through these sorts of means, transformational leaders encourage their followers to imagine and contribute to the development of attractive and alternative futures.

Individualized Consideration according to this is paying heed to individual differences of the followers, establishing relationship with each of them, and offering them work opportunities that challenge their growth and development. At the heart of individualized consideration lies the leader's concern for each individual's unique gifts and talents [10]. Here, people are treated individually and differently on the basis of their talents and knowledge Leedy & Ormrod [12] and with the intention of allowing them to reach higher levels of achievement than might otherwise have been achieved. This might take expression through expressing words of thanks or praise, fair workload distributions, and individualized career counselling, mentoring and professional development activities. Therefore, besides having an overarching view of the organization and its trajectory, the transformational leader must also comprehend those things that motivate followers individually Quinn [13]. Transformational leadership is based on inspiring, getting followers to buy-in voluntarily and creating a common vision, that summarizes the many ways transformational leaders use power and influence as: Transformational leaders use their power to empower others, provide members with the knowledge, skills, information, resources and support to accomplish goals, they use their power and influence to assist others and thus raise the productivity of the organization.

Intellectual stimulation and creativity, since transformational leaders are agents of change; they must have the knowledge base to help motivate people to come up with innovative solutions and new ideas. They take risks after careful analysis [14]. Individual consideration and interactivity, Transformational leaders attempt to know each person's talents and assign them responsibilities accordingly. They respect everybody [15]. Honesty and Integrity, Honesty and integrity are essential elements for sustained effectiveness. People who don't trust their leader do not follow them effectively [16]. Confidence and optimism, a transformational leader must not shoot the messenger. He must project confidence and optimism because people follow better if they are convinced that their leader believes in the vision set forth before them [7].

Statement of the Problem

The Kenyan Ministry of Education instructed that all secondary schools should develop strategic plans and submit copies to the permanent secretary. Leading by example the Ministry of Education developed a five year strategic plan [17]. In the Strategic plans, Schools are expected to define what they want to be, whom they will serve and how, with a focus in the vision and mission of the school.

However, according to the Sub-County education Officer in Masaba North Sub-County, even those schools that have this documents in place have left them to gather dust on the shelves due to various challenges they encounter in an attempt to implement them [6] In most research studies, strategic plans are only made available to Quality Assurance and Standard officers when they visit schools [2] this study therefore seeks to find out how school leadership style contribute to the implementation of strategic plans in Secondary schools in Masaba North-Sub County, Nyamira County, Kenya.

Objective of the Study

- To assess the effect of leadership style on implementation of strategic plans in Masaba North Sub-County Secondary Schools.

Hypothesis of the study

Ho: There is no significant relationship between leadership style and strategic plans implementation in Masaba North Sub-County Secondary Schools.

Research Methodology and Methods

The study used descriptive research design to get the information under investigation. The method was ideal for this study because it emphasizes on the discovery of ideas and insights, flexible enough to provide opportunity for considering different aspects of the problem under study [18]. The design was selected because of the nature of investigation that was to be carried out: to investigate dynamics influencing the implementation of strategic plans in Kenyan secondary schools: a case study of Masaba North sub-county, Nyamira County.

The researcher used the questionnaire and interview schedules. According to Kothari [18] defines a questionnaire as that consisting of a number of questions printed or typed in a definite order on a form or set of forms. The researcher constructed closed ended and open ended questionnaires, which was administered. The researcher used questionnaires because of its low cost, and its being free from bias. Respondents were given adequate time to give well thought out answers and large samples were made use of and thus the result was made more dependable and reliable.

Ethical Considerations

The information gathered from participants was kept in confidence and was only used for the purposes of the study. This information was not revealed to anybody without the participants' consent. The participants were informed on the purpose of the research. The researcher preserved the anonymity of the informant by not writing the names of all those involved in the research.

Findings and Discussion

The objective of the study sought to assess the effect of leadership style on implementation of strategic plans in Masaba North Sub-County Secondary Schools. The findings are presented below.

The Effect of school Leadership Style

The study sought to assess the effect of leadership style on implementation of strategic plans in Masaba North Sub-County Secondary Schools. See table 1.

Table-1: Leadership style

		SA	A	UD	D	SD	TOT	M
We involve student leadership in decision making	F	6	13	9	3	0	31	2.3
	%	19.4	41.9	29.0	9.7	0.0	100	46.0
There is co-ordination and consultation	F	13	12	4	1	1	31	1.9
	%	41.9	38.7	12.9	3.2	3.2	100	38.0
Existence of proper delegation of institution leaders	F	5	13	10	3	0	31	2.4
	%	16.1	41.9	32.3	9.7	0.0	100	48.0
There is set procedure for implementing strategic plans	F	12	13	4	1	1	31	1.9
	%	38.7	41.9	12.9	3.2	3.2	100	38.0
Existence of competing activity	F	9	16	5	1	0	31	1.9
	%	29.0	51.6	16.1	3.2	0.0	100	38.0
There is involvement of and user in implementing	F	3	12	9	7	0	31	2.6
	%	9.7	38.7	29.0	22.6	0.0	100	52.0
There exist top management support in schools	F	12	15	3	1	0	31	1.8
	%	38.7	48.4	9.7	3.2	0.0	100	36.0

Form the study results revealed that 46% of the respondents supported the statement that they involved student leadership in decision making on some matters related to student affairs, 38% was of the opinion that there was co-ordination and consultation among the students, parents, Board of the school and the school teachers and principal, 48% of the respondents supported that there was existence of proper delegation of institution leaders, 38% supported that there was set procedure for implementing strategic plans for the betterment of the school, 38% supported that there was existence of competing activity that could distract implementation such as opposition from other stakeholders, 52% supported that there was involvement of and user in implementing the strategic plan by all stakeholder concerned and 36% supported that there existed top management support in schools faster implementation of the strategic plans.

The results revealed that leadership in any school did play an important role in implementing the school's strategic plan. This was because strategic plan are made by the management and implementation had to be done by the same management. Good management had to fasten the implementation process so as to ensure that things was done in the right time and in the correct way minimizing mistake and loopholes for accountability. The study results conceded with Morgan [4]'s findings. On his study on effective school management observed that the head teacher's leadership styles and general management is what causes a difference in academic achievement in schools.

Relationships between leadership style and implementation of strategic plans

The study sought to establish if there was significant relationship between leadership style and strategic plans implementation in Masaba North Sub-County Secondary Schools, this was achieved with the aid of a regression analysis

Regression analysis on implementation of strategic plans

The study sought to compute the regression model for the study in an effort to understand the perceived effectiveness of the various dynamics influencing the implementation of strategic plans in Kenyan secondary schools: a case of Masaba North sub-county, Nyamira County. The study findings were presented in the table 2.

Table-2: Regression model on strategic plans implementation

ANOVA						
Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	8.290	4	2.072	117.018	.000 ^a
	Residual	.549	31	.018		
	Total	8.839	35			
a. Predictors: (Constant), leadership style						
b. Dependent Variable: Strategic Plans Implementation						

The study findings indicated that Leadership style played a major role in implementing the strategic plans since there was a team that was supposed to steer ahead the formation and implementation of the strategic plans. The leadership ensured that there was delegation of duties to everyone according to his/her position so that they could take part in implementing the strategic plans. It ensured that there was co-ordination and consultation between the stakeholders and school management by involving student leadership where necessary in decision making and involvement of and user in implementing the strategic plans plus the support of the top management.

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that for schools to implement strategic plans it must consider every aspect that will affect the implementation by ensuring that all factors are examined broadly to ensure smooth running of schools. Implementation must ensure that there is good leadership from the top to the bottom to ensure there is good coordination in all aspects and ensures that decision making is all inclusivity so that it that does not bring disputes along the way. Accountability should be ensured that resources are used well to minimize cases of theft and fraud. It is the responsibility of the leaders to ensure that he/she motivates the staff by using a proper reward system that tends to address both the intrinsic and extrinsic aspect of all the officers involved in implementation of strategy. School Leadership play an important role in implementing the school's strategic plan. This was because strategic plan are made by the management and implementation had to be done by the same management. Good management had to fasten the implementation process so as to ensure that things was done in the right time and in the correct way minimizing mistake and loopholes for accountability.

Policy Implication

Based on the findings, the study recommends that; the government should ensure that school leaders. who are responsible of implementation of the strategic plans have adequate skills and experience that are required for implementing of strategic plans this could be achieved through school resource centers, training, seminars and workshops.

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