

Research Article

CHALLENGES FACING IMPLEMENTATION OF STRATEGIC PLANNING IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS

¹Otenyo M. Wilson, ¹Catherine Kiprop, ¹Benjamin Kyalo Wambua, ²*Zadock Obuchere Murundu

¹Moi University, P.O. BOX 3900, Eldoret, Kenya.

²Tom Mboya University College, P.O. BOX 199-40300, Homabay, Kenya.

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ABSTRACT

Strategic planning has been employed in schools as a transformative tool to re-engineer institutions of learning resulting into improved performance. School strategic plan can guide an organization to clarify further direction to identify its priorities, diversify its products and services and be ready to handle changing circumstances. Despite the efforts made by most secondary schools to implement the strategy, its desired outcomes have not been achieved due to various challenges facing its implementation, hence the need to conduct the current study. The study was targeted 1 County Quality Assurance and Standards Officer, 150 Principals, 200 Deputy Principals and 500 Heads of Departments. Saturated sampling technique was used to select the County Quality Assurance and Standards Officer. 75 Principals, 75 Deputy Principals and 250 Heads of Departments were selected purposively using stratified probability sampling technique. Reliability of the questionnaire was established by the test- retested try-out which was conducted in non-participation institutions. Validity of the instruments was ensured by presenting the instruments to three experts from the Department of Educational Management and Policy Studies of Moi University who examined the content of the instruments and advised the researcher on the face validity. Improvements were made according to the suggestions made by the experts before the instruments were finally taken into the field. Both; administrative problems and involvement in the process were found to be the major challenges facing strategic planning implementation. The study recommends frequent training for school administrators on how to reduce both; administrative problems and involvement in the process as the major challenges facing implementation of Strategic Planning in Secondary Schools.

Keywords: Challenges, Implementation, Strategic and Planning.

INTRODUCTION

Challenges in Implementation of Strategic Planning in Secondary Schools

Bryson (2005) offer an explanation on strategic planning based on a study of its initiation in the public sector. They emphasize the difficulty of planning strategically in public entities. They advance that the deliberate attempts to produce change is the greatest strength and weakness of strategic planning process. Changes in organizations' normally occur through disjointed incrementalism or muddling through (Menyasi, 2009). Any process designed to force important changes can be seen either as a highly desirable improvement on the ordinary decision making or as an action doomed to failure. Thus whatever the merits of strategic planning, normal expectations have to be that most efforts to produce fundamental decisions ultimately one likely to be made at the highest levels (Ondoro, 2014). At the same time political rationality dictates that top decision makers not to make important decisions until forced to do so. The situation describes above advances a scenario in which principals of secondary schools operate. Policy and changes in education are designed from top and are expected to be implemented at school level. The school may be facing numerous challenges that may not facilitate the attainment of the anticipated goals. Thus Republic of Kenya (2012) advances in paragraph 73 and I quote "We live in a digital age and internationally it is acknowledged that without both the infrastructure to support it to exist and the human resource capacity to make it work the Kenya economy will not function effectively or be internationally competitive". The I.C.T integration in education faces such challenges when it comes to implementation to steer the country to a middle income

nation in the world. The schools have an uphill task to ensure that the meager resources available are effectively and efficiently utilized. Secondary schools in rural areas may be having a vision of I.C.T integration but they are affected by limited access to electrical and frequent power disruptions. Further still, high costs of internet provision and other cases associated with I.C.T. equipment, infrastructure and support costs are obstacles to rolling out national ICT program in the medium term (Republic of Kenya; 2012). With limited resources, the education industry sometimes finds itself doing too many things within the same medium term period. This is likely to lead to spreading the resources too thin which in turn leads to poor implementation. This calls for sober implementation of strategic plans by setting priorities and making choices to arrive at limited number of programmes that are manageable. Programme priority setting is closely linked to policy formulation. This calls for closer interaction between planners, policy makers and stakeholders. According to Kiprop, Emily & Michael (2015), the key strategic resources are people. It is therefore essential for organizations to effectively utilize the know-how of their employees (teachers and stakeholders) at the right places. It is the challenge of management to allocate them to their most useful tasks as well as coordinating and integrating activities of employees and functions (Ondoro, 2014). There is also need to choose the right people for the right responsibility. In a study by Bordean, Borza, Rus and Mitira (2010) that was meant to determine the extent of practice of TQM in Kenyan secondary schools revealed that most schools did not have strategic plan. Among the few that showed evidence of strategic planning, the strategic plan acts not only as the road map but also as a tool to communicate quality expectations to all employees. Sometimes it is realized that schools are weak in systematic follow-up to ascertain the implementation of the plans (Gudo & Olel, 2011). There also seem to be no deliberate attempts to formal internal evaluation with a view to ascertain the extent which qualitative and quantitative targets have been met. This may deny the organization the opportunity to reflect

*Corresponding Author: Zadock Obuchere Murundu,

2Tom Mboya University College, P.O. BOX 199-40300, Homabay, Kenya.

on quality planning and inculcate a culture of quality assurance in schools. The fact that schools are operating without strategic planning is an indication of lack of commitment to quality management. Lack of quality management results to poor provision of quality education services which is likely to lead to low student achievement (Kisembe and Were, 2014). There is lack of commitment to implementation of strategic planning. Kazmi (2008) argues that for any institution to be successful, it has to depend on the quality and commitment of its human resources to implement laid strategies. This implies that strategic planning is a key to success of a school in terms of its mission, goals and objectives (Bordean, Borza, Rus and Mitira, 2010). It is of essence for schools to ensure mechanisms are in place for strategic plans and followed the guide daily actions. As per the representation by Paul (2014), Kenyan secondary schools have continued to perform poorly in national examinations largely due to the management systems which operate on compliance processes rather than results. Several research findings have established strategic planning is one of the major steps that schools can take to address the challenges they face in enhancing the quality of their programs in provision of Education. It explains why the ministry of education through the Sessional Paper No. 1 of 2005 mandated all managers of education institutions in Kenya to develop strategic plans for effective management of the schools. It was followed by Kenya Education Staff Institution (KESI) presently called Kenya Educational Management Institute (KEMI) to organize for training programs to equip head teachers with strategic planning skills. After training the head teachers were expected to give leadership in strategic planning for their schools. Despite the training, there have been concerns expressed by government bureaucrats, politicians and big proportion of the public over what they perceive as lack of and/ or inadequate planning practices in schools (Ganley, 2010) misappropriation of funds. The outline has been haphazard planning techniques that results in poor prioritization and failure to use meagre resources available for the right projects (Ganley, 2010). Head teachers rarely involves teachers, students, and parents and other stakeholders in making decisions regarding school growth and management due to poor planning, most schools fail to achieve their goals and objectives which is reflected through poor academic performance (Ganley, 2010). This explains why the study is looking at challenges in implementation of strategic planning in management of secondary schools in Vihiga County, Kenya.

OBJECTIVES

The study therefore aimed at exploring challenges facing strategic planning implementation in secondary schools.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research Design

The study employed a mixed method design. Cresswell (2012) advances that; a mixed methods design is useful to capture the best of both quantitative and qualitative approaches. For instance a researcher may want to generalize the findings to a population and develop a detailed view of the meaning of phenomenon concept for individuals. This will call upon the researcher, time to explore generally to learn about what variables to study and then studies those variables with a large sample of individuals. Alternatively researchers may first survey a larger number of individuals then follow up with a few of them to obtain their specific language and voice about the topic. For this research, the researcher will exploit the advantages of employing both closed ended quantitative data and open ended qualitative (Kothari, 2008).

According to Cresswell (2012) quantification approach is best applied if the problem is identifying factors that influence an outcome, the utility of an intervention, or understanding the best predictors in outcomes. On the other hand qualitative is useful if a concept or phenomenon needs to be understood because little research has been done on it. Qualitative research is exploratory and useful when the researcher does not know the important variable to examine. This is supported by Morse (Orodho 2009) qualitative approach may be needed because the topic is new, and has never been addressed with a certain sample or group of people, or existing theories do not apply with the particular sample or group understanding.

METHODOLOGY

The study population consisted of 1 County Quality Assurance and Standards Officer, 150 Principals, 200 Deputy Principals and 500 Heads of Departments. Saturated sampling technique was used to select the County Quality Assurance and Standards Officer. 75 Principals, 75 Deputy Principals and 250 Heads of Departments were selected purposively using stratified probability sampling technique. Purposive sampling according to Mugenda and Mugenda (2009), allows a researcher to identify cases that have required information with respect to the objectives of the study. The study utilized Questionnaires, Focused Group Discussion Guide and Classroom Observation Schedules as instruments of data collection.

Reliability and Validity of Instruments

Reliability of Instruments

Reliability is a measure of the degree to which a research instrument yields consistent results or data after repeated trials. Reliability in research is influenced by random error which the deviation from a true measurement due to factors that have not been effectively addressed by the researcher like inaccurate coding, ambiguous instructions to the subjects, interviewers fatigue, interviewer is bias (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2009). A reliability test answers to the consideration whether the procedures of the data collection and analysis generated the same results on other occasions or other observers made similar observations and arrived at the same conclusions from the raw data (Chang, 2008). Gray (1992) observes that for research data to be reliable, data Collection tool must have ability to consistency and yield the same results when repeated under the same conditions. An instrument is considered reliable when it is able to elicit the same responses each time it is administered (Kombo, 2009). Reliability of the questionnaire was established by the test- retested try-out which was conducted in non-participation institutions. The sets of questionnaires were administered to principals of Secondary schools, HOD (Heads of Departments) Deputy Principals and after a period of two to three weeks the same were administered to the other group. The results were computed and correlated. Pearson product moment correlation coefficient statistics was used to calculate the co-efficient correlation. Pearson Product Moment Correlation shows the time and the strength of relationship between two variables under study (Kothari, 2008). The aim was to determine the relationship between two sets of scores for each individual on the two different occasions. $R = 0.75$ and 0.85 with a minimum value of 0.5 . Reliability of 0.7 or higher showed the characteristics it was designed to measure.

Validity of the Instruments

Validity of the instruments was achieved by presenting the instruments to three experts from the Department of Educational Management and Policy Studies of Moi University who examined the content of the instruments and advised the researcher on the face validity. Improvements were made according to the suggestions

made by the experts before the instruments were finally taken into the field.

Data Collection Procedures

The researcher secured a research permit and a research authorization letter from the National Council for Science and Technology in the Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology through the School of Graduate Studies (S.G.S) of Moi University before proceeding to the field for data collection. The researcher then reported to Vihiga County Director of Education and presented a copy of the letter of research authorization. Permission was then sought from him to enable the researcher to access the sampled schools and principals for data collection. Letters seeking for appointment were written to principals two weeks before the study was undertaken. For effective administration of the questionnaires, the researcher made a personal visit to the sampled schools and gave the questionnaires to the respondents and he also carried out the interviews with principals of the sampled schools at the same time looking at documents for strategy implementation.

Methods of Data Analysis

Using statistical software, the regression model was tested on how well it fits the data. The significance of each variable was also tested. Fischer distribution test called F-Test was applied. This refers to the ration between the model mean square divided by the significance of the overall model at as percent confidence level. The P-value for the F- statistics was applied in determining the robustness of the model. The conclusions were based on the P- value where if the null hypothesis of the beta is rejected then the overall model is significant and if the null hypothesis was accepted the overall model was insignificant. The T- test statistics were used to test the significant of each individual predictor or independent variable and hypothesis. Their P- Value for each T- test was used to make conclusions on whether to fail or accept or fail to reject the null hypothesis. The degree of relationship was expressed as a correlation coefficient (r). The magnitude of a correlation co-efficient was evaluated by considering the absolute size and lies between zero and one but can never assume values of zero or one. Correlation co-efficient close to one indicated a strong relationship between variable. A negative correlation implied that, as the measurements of one variable increases, the measurements of the other variable decrease. A positive correlation implies that measurement of one variable increase as the measurement of the other variable increase and vice versa.

Analysis of Quantitative Data

Quantitative data was gathered by use of questionnaire. The responses were coded and weighted to produce variable which was used to analyze the data further by use of regression model. Multiple linear regression models were used to derive inferential indicators like the correlation, coefficient of determination, F- statistics and the P-value. The multiple linear regression model that was applied in this case is as follows:-

$$Y = B_0 + B_1X_1 + B_2X_2 + B_3X_3 + B_4X_4 + E$$

Where

Y = Strategy implantation

Analysis of Qualitative Data

Qualitative data analysis seeks to make general statements on how categories or themes of data are related. Creswell (2012) suggests that qualitative data provides for description and interpretation of what things means to people. In this study content analysis method was

used to analyze qualitative data. Content analysis categories phrases, describes the logical structure of expressions and ascertains associations, connotations, denotations, elocutionary forces and other interpretations (Mugenda and Mugenda, 2009). Qualitative data was analyzed by classifying opinions into main emerging themes, categorizing and codify the categories and assigning them numerical values.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Challenges Facing Strategic Planning Implementation in Secondary Schools

The study sought to find out challenges facing strategic planning implementation in Secondary Schools. The study findings were presented in Table 1;

Table 1: Challenges Facing Strategic Planning Implementation in Secondary Schools

Nos	Challenges in Strategic Planning	Percentages		
		Yes	No	Don't Know
1.	Administrative Problems	60.00%	00.00%	40.00%
2.	Inadequate Communication	35.00%	00.00%	65.00%
3.	Involvement in the Process	51.20%	00.00%	49.80%
4.	Resistance to Change	34.90%	00.00%	65.1%
5.	Fees Payment	10.00%	00.00%	90.00%

Analysis of data in Table 1 shows that, majority (60.00%) of respondents who participated in the study mentioned administrative problems to be the major challenge facing strategy implementation. Minority (10.00%) of the respondents mentioned fees payment, just above average (51.20%) of respondents mentioned Involvement in the process, 35.00% of respondent mentioned inadequate communication while 34.90% of respondents mentioned resistance to change to be among challenges hindering. Data analysis in the study therefore implies that both administrative problems and involvement in the process are the key challenges facing strategy implementation in secondary schools. These findings concur with Lewa, Matuku & Mutuku's (2008) study on the role of strategic leadership on effective strategy implementation who established that strategic leadership is one of the most important drivers of strategic planning implementation. It further indicated that determining strategic direction for the organization as the strategic leadership action plays the most important role in effective strategy implementation. In support of these findings, Kalali, Anvari, Asghari, and Karimany (2011) consider non commitment of decision makers who do not have enough commitment to implement strategy as a factor related to failure of strategy implementation. In the study on translating strategy into effective implementation: dispelling myths and highlighting what works, Caillods (2009) noted that some strategic fail because of insufficient buy-in; understanding and/or communication among those who need to implement them. Kepha (2013) adds that effective communication of the strategy and its underlying are also critically important. These therefore show that successful transition from strategy formulation to its implementation finally depends on the strategic leaders of the organization. Reluctance of incompetence in creating the process of implementing strategic change is the single most reliable predictor of its failure (Caillods, 2009). The responses from Quality Assurance and Standard Officer outlined some of the specific factors in the County that hinder effective strategic planning implementation as; inadequate stakeholder's support, inadequate resources especially finances, corruption cases where some principals work with a few members of Board of Management while the rest are kept in darkness and also lack of capacity to interpret and

implement strategic plan in most of the secondary schools in the county.

CONCLUSIONS

Challenges Facing Strategic Planning Implementation in Secondary Schools

A number of challenges facing strategy implementation were established from the results obtained. Both administrative problems and involvement in the process were found to be the major challenges facing strategic planning implementation while; Inadequate Communication, Resistance to Change and Fees Payment were found to be the minor challenges facing strategic plan implementation in secondary schools.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The study recommends frequent training for school administrators on how to reduce both; administrative problems and involvement in the process as the major challenges facing implementation of Strategic Planning in Secondary Schools.

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