



ISSN: 2278 – 0211 (Online)

## Determinants Of Implementation Of Strategic Plans In Public Secondary Schools: A Case Of Nakuru Municipality, Kenya

Atieno Hennes Dan

Jomo Kenyatta University Of Agriculture And Technology, Kenya

### Abstract:

The ministry of education, in its bid to achieve its goals as envisioned in the social pillar of Vision 2030, introduced strategic management in all its institutions of learning. These institutions are supposed to be managed like business enterprises and to achieve this, the Ministry decided to formulate strategic plans for both primary and secondary schools. Although the Ministry provides the blueprint for strategic plans upon which each school develops its internal strategic plan, the procedure of its implementation still remains unclear. This may hinder the full realization of the overall national educational goals. In spite of the first level of formulation of strategic plans, institutions have had a series of challenges in the implementation stage. Some of the challenges have been lack of sufficient finances, lack of prerequisite skills to implement the plans among others. The study sought to identify the insight of the challenges and the determinants of implementation of strategic plans in public secondary schools. The study focused on the planning process, the role of school management boards, effective use of resources and the necessary skills required for successful implementation of the plan. The study was carried out in Nakuru Municipality, Nakuru County. The Municipality has 23 public secondary schools with a total of 322 teachers. The target population was made up of all teachers of public secondary schools in Nakuru Municipality. A sample size of 181 respondents was selected through a cluster sampling technique. The research used both qualitative and quantitative approaches specifically a survey method in the collection of data. The data was then analysed using both inferential and descriptive statistics. Secondary data were obtained from documents analysis of schools strategic plans, and the Ministry of Education guideline for the implementation of strategic plans while primary data was sought from teachers using questionnaires. The data was then cleaned, coded, and analysed using frequencies and percentages. Statistical inferences were then drawn using Spearman correlation analysis; strength of associations was determined using Cramers' coefficient. The study revealed that most schools have strategic plans in place. The strategic planning process was entirely the responsibility of the school and greatly vested on the teachers and the school board, although the ministry was responsible for developing the blueprint, however there was variation across schools in abiding to all the stages. Schools which undertook a proper strategic planning process were able to implement the strategies with ease and achieve better results. Teachers had the greatest responsibility for strategy implementation although they ranked low on the skills for effective strategy implementation. Support by the board plays key roles in ensuring successful implementation of school strategic plans. All the teachers indicated that indeed, finances presented challenges in the implementation of strategic plans in their schools. Therefore the study recommends review of the strategic planning process in schools to incorporate the expert opinions and guidance, continuous training and capacity development for teachers and strategy implementation teams in schools should also incorporate key members of the board of governors to ease financing of strategies. This study may be of assistance to school management boards all over the country, in identifying the key issues to address in ensuring successful implementation of strategic plans.

### 1.Introduction

Education remains a top priority of the Kenya government in the social pillar of Vision 2030 and as a driver to other sectors of the Kenyan economy (Government of Kenya, 2007). Under the Vision 2030 economic development strategy, various flagship projects have been developed to ensure that the education system provides trained skills of the highest standards that will staff other sectors in implementing the country's economic blue print by 2030. In developing the education system, the Vision 2030 aims at achieving gender parity in secondary enrolment and to achieve better regional distribution of schooling opportunities and training of teachers. Currently, Kenya is allocating more funds to education out of the national budget than to any other sector (Budget Speech, 2012).

Therefore, currently, education planning and management streams right from the topmost government agenda and for this to be effective up to school level, synergy is required in education planning and strategies at all levels.

History, educational planning, as a strategic process for the improvement of teaching and learning, first appeared in the educational literature of the post-World War I era (Ornstein & Hunkins, 1988). Since that time, educational leaders have utilized several different approaches in designing programs to improve teaching and learning in light of changing societal factors (Hyman, 1973; Brandt, 2000). An educational planning framework that has effectively been utilized in the later half of the twentieth century to improve teaching and learning, however, is based on the premise that planning activities for the improvement of instruction should be designed to be: cooperative, comprehensive, continuous, and concrete (Krug, 1957). Planning for change, according to Krug, must not be done by individuals or small groups exclusively, but must be undertaken by large groups of stakeholders working in "cooperative" settings to develop projects for implementation. The more people involved in the problem analysis, the better, and more sustainable the solution. The planning process itself must be "comprehensive" and consider a vast array of real and potential intervening variables such as people, things, and ideas that may impact on the implementation of change. The planning process must be viewed as a "continuous" experience that may not have a specific "end-date." There must be continuous monitoring and adjusting of the plan itself as the context continues to change. And, the planning process must produce specific artefacts or events related to the changes in order for participants in the process to have "concrete" evidence that they can identify and celebrate as the outcomes of their collective efforts.

Since independence, education planning in Kenya has been implemented by the ministry of education, through commissions and task force committee's reports and recommendations. The major education reports that have had a significant impact on education and training in Kenya include the Kenya Education Commission report, (1964), which sought to reform the education system inherited from the colonial government to make it more responsive to the needs of independent Kenya. The Report of the Presidential Working Party on the Second University in Kenya (The Mackay Report, 1981), led to the expansion of other post-secondary training institutions. In addition to the establishment of second University, it also recommended the establishment of the 8:4:4- system, which removed the advanced level of secondary education.

The Report of the Presidential Working Party on Education and Manpower Training for the Next Decade and beyond (The Kamunge Report, 1988), focused on improving education financing, quality and relevance. The report had a major departure on financing of education and training in Kenya, as it recommended a policy of cost sharing between government, parents and communities. The Koech Report, (2000) was to identify ways and means of enabling the education system to facilitate national unity, mutual social responsibility, accelerated industrial and technological development, lifelong learning and adaptation, in response to changing circumstances. Although the report was not adopted due to cost implications, some recommendations such as curriculum rationalization have been implemented. The Transformation of Higher Education and Training in Kenya report (2006), and the National Strategy for University Education (2007), provided a road map on university education in Kenya.

The Sessional Paper No. 1 of 2005 on Education, Training and Research, led to reforms through a Sector Wide Approach to Planning (SWAP). Though the emphasis was on access, equity, quality, relevance and the strengthening of governance and management, the expected returns on investment in education in terms of productive and skilled manpower has not been realized to the full. In addition, the Constitution of Kenya (2010) has placed demands that have implications for education and training. All these policies and committee recommendations have been done at national level, while on the other hand implementation is done at the school level.

Stakeholder involvement in school management has emerged to be a key aspect in achieving educational goals in Kenya. A study by Anyango (2012) on the influence of school based management on students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Kadibo Division; Kisumu County, Kenya revealed that, the commitment of principals greatly influenced students' academic performance as indicated by 87% of respondents. The study revealed that contribution of teachers in school management greatly influenced students' academic performance as indicated by 92.86% of the respondents. The study also revealed that students' involvement in decision making influenced their academic performance as indicated by 85.95% of respondents.

Education sector in Kenya has been experiencing a series of reforms in line with the global goals of education, which is part of the broader framework of the national policy, set out in the Economic Recovery Strategy (ERS) and domesticated in the Sessional Paper No. 1 of 2005, on a Policy on Education, Training and Research. In 2005, the then Ministry of Education developed a national education strategy, the Kenya Education Sector Support (KESSP), to bring together all education stakeholders for the achievement of the country's education goals, which included both vertical and horizontal performance accountability. Through this program, infrastructure development remains to be the responsibility of school management boards engraved in the school strategic plans.

Article 56 (1) a of the Basic Education Bill, 2012, in Kenya, entrusts the role of developing and implementing a strategic plan for pre-primary institutions to the school management board, appointed by the county education board, however, this law does not state who should take this responsibility in secondary schools (G.O.K, 2012). Currently, all schools are required to have a well outlined five year strategic plan, by the ministry of education. The strategic plan is developed by a team of teachers trained by the ministry through the Kenya Education Management Institute (KEMI). Each school has one teacher trained in strategic planning, while every school head undergoes a short course on education management. Teacher education offered to secondary school teachers at the university level, is purely subject based, thus, knowledge of strategic management remains to be scanty among teachers. Further, promotions of head teachers, is purely based on, classroom performance rather. Head teachers who are supposed to provide strategic leadership in school, acquire on the job training on strategic management after appointment to the positions.

Various education stakeholders have also realized the role of strategic management in school management and the United States Agency for international development for instance, launched a project termed The Decentralized Education Management Activity (DEMA), which provides technical support to KESSP to strengthen the capacities of education personnel, particularly at the former

district and school levels, for efficient delivery of education services between the year 2010 and 2012. Education managers in all counties and 4,000 schools across the country have acquired the capacity to plan strategically and base management of education on performance and results (Kariuki, 2012).

### *1.1.Statement Of The Problem*

Introduction of strategic planning in the management of Kenya's education system is a noble move. This is because; it will ensure that performance and synergy among all education stakeholders is achieved. Many of the Kenya's national education goals stemming from the country's Vision 2030, Sessional paper No 1 of 2005, and ECRWS, Universal access to education goals, and KESSP for ensuring quality education and training in Kenya, are achievable through synergy in education planning and implementation. The introduction of strategic planning and management in secondary schools will contribute a lot in ensuring implementation of national educational goals, stakeholder involvement and infrastructural development in schools at grass root level, enhance access and quality of education. However, the procedure adopted by the ministry of education in implementing strategic plans may hinder the full realization of the overall educational goals across the country. First, the Kenyan teacher education system does not offer courses in strategic management making the teacher unable to design and implement successful strategies without further training. Secondly, the ministry of education provides a blueprint for the design of the school strategic plan where all strategies follow a similar approach to address individual school needs. The schools are charged with the responsibility of formulating, financing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating their own strategies. Whether these strategies translate to the national education goals remains unclear. It is with this in mind that this study seeks to identify and analyse the determinants of implementation of strategic plans in public secondary schools in the Nakuru Municipality of Nakuru County.

### *1.2.Specific Objectives*

The specific objectives were;

- To analyse the effectiveness of the planning process, for successful strategic plan implementation in Public Secondary Schools in Nakuru Municipality.
- To identify the pre-requisite skills and competencies for successful implementation of strategic plans in public secondary schools in Nakuru Municipality.
- To identify and analyse the roles played by school management boards in successful implementation of strategic plans in public secondary schools.
- To establish the role played by financial resources in successful implementation of strategic plans in public secondary schools in Nakuru Municipality.

### *1.3.Scope Of The Study*

The study was conducted among the secondary schools in Nakuru Municipality, targeting all the teachers in the Municipality. The study narrowed down to studying, the factors that determine the successful implementation of strategic plans in secondary schools in Nakuru Municipality.

## **2.Methodology**

### *2.1.Research Design*

The study used quantitative descriptive survey design. The design was used to collect information from teachers about their opinions on the determinants of implementation of strategic plans in Secondary Schools.

### *2.2.Population Of The Study*

The study was carried out in the Nakuru Municipality in Nakuru County. The target population was all teachers of public secondary schools in Nakuru Municipality. Currently, there are 23 secondary schools in the Nakuru Municipality with a total population of 322 teachers

### *2.3.Sample*

In this study teachers were clustered according to schools resulting to 23 clusters with an average of 14 members each. A sample size of 181 was found to fit within the 13 clusters.

### *2.4. Research Instruments*

The study utilized both primary and secondary data. Secondary data were obtained from document analysis of school strategic plans, and the MOE guideline for the implementation of strategic plans. The main instrument for primary data collection will be the questionnaire. Questionnaire items were designed in such a way as to elicit teachers' views concerning the determinants for successful implementation of school strategic plans. The questionnaire was based on the following themes: the effects of planning, skills development, managerial support and financial support for successful implementation of strategic planning.

### 3. Findings And Discussions

The study was on the determinants of implementation of strategic plans in public secondary schools in Nakuru municipality. The study had four objectives to accomplish. That is, to analyse the effectiveness of the planning process, for successful strategic plan implementation, to identify the pre-requisite skills and competencies for successful implementation of strategic plans in public secondary schools, to identify and analyse the roles played by school management boards in successful implementation of strategic plans in public secondary schools and to establish the role played by financial resources in successful implementation of strategic plans in public secondary schools in Nakuru Municipality. Data from the field was analysed and a summary of findings is presented below.

#### 3.1. Planning Process And Implementation Of Strategic Plans

The findings of this study revealed that, strategic planning was entirely the responsibility of the school and greatly vested on the teachers and the school board, although the ministry was responsible for developing the blueprint to guide in the development of strategic plans. The blueprint provided guidelines on the process of strategic planning and the details of strategic plans. It was also clear that schools do not consider hiring experts in strategic planning to facilitate in the process.

Strategic plans in schools are guided by a blueprint from the ministry with details on the processes and procedures; however there was variation across schools in abiding to the steps necessary to prepare a good strategic plan. Schools were ranked highest in writing the strategic plan documents followed by facilitating the process of strategic planning process. However, schools ranked lowest in provision of training to their strategic planning team and in the selection of the strategic planning team which are key steps in developing good strategic plans. The mean on the adherence to the standard strategic planning process by secondary schools in Nakuru Municipality was 3.46 with a standard deviation of 0.844. This means that school's adherence to the strategic planning process was moderate in overall terms. A correlation between adherence to the strategic planning process and teacher's opinion on how successful they considered the implementation of strategic plans in their schools revealed that there was a significant correlation between the two, therefore schools which undertook a proper strategic planning process were able to implement the strategies with ease and achieve better results.

#### 3.2. Pre-Requisite Skills And Competencies For Successful Implementation Of Strategic Plans

In the second objective, the study sought to establish the prerequisite skills needed by strategy implementation team to ensure successful implementation of strategic plans in secondary schools. The majority of the teachers indicated that there was a strategy implementation team in place in their schools however, the majority of the teachers disagreed that the strategy implementation team was skilled. The school strategy implementation team which is composed of teachers was rated moderately good on communication skills and human relations skills, however on monitoring and evaluation skills, and finance skills, school strategy implementation teams were ranked lower. Strength of the association between the variables shows that communication skills in the team played the greatest role in ensuring successful implementation of strategic plans, followed by finance skills, monitoring and evaluation skills and human relations skills. However, school management skills played least role although significant.

#### 3.3. Roles Played By School Management Boards In Successful Implementation Of Strategic Plans

In most schools the board of directors is either fully involved or moderately involved in ensuring proper implementation of strategic plans. The greatest contribution of the board of directors in implementing strategic plans was in the sourcing of funds that they were needed to provide other necessary resources, communicating with the key ministries concerned while the least was to provide technical advice

Support by the board plays key roles in ensuring successful implementation of school strategic plans. First, it gives confidence to the strategy implementation team to perform better. Secondly, full involvement and support by the board makes it easy to finance strategic activities. Further the board of directors helps the strategy implementation team in the schools in coordinating and communicating to external stake holders of the school making it easy to implement the strategic plans. The board of governors also comprises of knowledgeable persons who sometimes offer technical advice to the strategy implementation team.

#### 3.4. Finances And Successful Implementation Of Strategic Plans

All the teachers indicated that indeed, finances presented challenges in the implementation of strategic plans in their schools. Majority cited that this occurred very often. The modes of financing strategic plans according to teachers were from multiple sources. Majority of the teachers indicated that the main source of funding for strategic plans activities was the parents' contribution, followed by income generating activities then funds from the ministry of education.

Lack of funds greatly hindered the timely completion of strategic activities of the strategic plan as indicated by majority of the teachers. The uncertainty in the supply of funds also led to difficulties in planning and scheduling of strategic activities which. Procurement of essential services required for successful implementation of school strategic plans was also made difficult by the availability of funds in addition to hindrance to strategy monitoring and evaluation process in schools. Delays in the disbursements of funds in schools have also been highlighted as key issues that have hindered implementation of strategic plans in schools. All these imply indeed finances have posed a major challenge in the implementation of strategic plans in schools.

#### 4. Conclusion

The study therefore concludes that: Schools have already adopted strategic management by having strategies in place. However, the implementation of strategic plans remains to be a challenge to many schools.

The method used in the development of strategic plans is guided more by the blue print from the ministry of education. However, most of the schools do not abide by the planning process a factor that presents challenges in the implementation of plans.

Teachers also do not possess appropriate skills on strategic planning and management. However, the ministry provides short training to teachers on strategy development and implementation. Schools on the other hand do not offer training on the strategy implementation team. There are a range of skills required for effective strategy implementation.

Most of the challenges in the implementation of strategic plans originate from the availability of funding due to the mechanisms of funding school activities. However, funds provided by the government are based on tuition costs. Development costs entirely are meant for schools management. Therefore the involvement of schools management remains to be a key determinant of success or failure of strategic plans in schools which is closely intertwined with finances.

#### 5. Recommendations

The study recommends: A review of the strategic planning process in schools to incorporate the expert opinions and guidance so that all the planning procedures are incorporated. Continuous training and capacity development should be done to the strategy implementation teams to enable them efficiently undertake the steps necessary in strategy implementation such as fund raising, planning and implementation of strategic activities. The strategy implementation team in schools should also incorporate key members of the board of governors who would represent the strategic agendas in the board, enhance financing and fast track implementation of strategic plans. Income generating projects provide an opportunity for schools to raise extra income that can be incorporated in school strategic developments. Therefore, schools should incorporate IGAs as part of the strategic activities aimed at financing strategies.

#### 6. References

1. Brandt, R. (2000). Education in a New Era. Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, Alexandria.
2. Hyman, R. (1973). Approaches in Curriculum. Prentice-Hall, New Jersey
3. Krug, E. (1957). Curriculum Planning. Harper, New York.
4. Ornstein, A. & Hunkins, F. (1988) Curriculum: Foundations principles, and Issues. Prentice Hall, Englewood Cliffs, NJ.
5. Kamunge, J. (2007). The Task Force on the Review and Harmonizing of the Legal Framework Governing Education, Training and Research. Shrend publishers, Nairobi.
6. Kariuki, W (2012). Decentralized Education Management Activity. United States Agency For International Development, Nairobi.
7. Onyango, D. & Anyango, A. (2012) Influence of School Based Management on Students' Academic Performance in Public Secondary Schools in Kadibo Division, Kisumu County, Masters Thesis University of Nairobi, Nairobi.
8. Republic of Kenya (2007), Vision 2030, Ministry of Planning, Nairobi.
9. Republic of Kenya, (2005). Sessional Paper No. 1 of 2005 on a Policy Framework for Education, Training and Research, Government Printer, Nairobi.
10. Republic of Kenya (1981) Second University: Report of presidential working party (Mackey Report). Government Printer, Nairobi.
11. Ministry of Finance (2012). Budget Speech. Government Printer, Nairobi.