

School Structure 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 school structure on the strategic plan implementation. The study used of a descriptive survey research design. The study targeted 351 public secondary schools, 351 public School principals, 1,404 class teachers, and 1,755 academic Heads of Departments from which the sample of 105 principals, 176 academic Ho Ds and 140 class teachers was derived. The respondents were sampled using stratified sampling technique. A questionnaire and an interview guide were the data collection instruments. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyze data. Data was presented by use of frequency distribution tables and pie charts. Person's product moment correlation coefficient and multiple linear regression was used to analyze the inferential data. The set level of hypothesis testing was at 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 structure in school development plan has a positive and significant influence on the strategic implementation in schools. Based on these findings, the study recommended that there is need for the schools to have forums to evaluate achievement of the goals and objectives in strategic plan. The researcher conducted Hypothesis testing using a multiple regression model at the 5 percent level of significance. The results of hypothesis testing gave a positive coefficient of 0.0470 on school structure results with a p-value of 0.314 and not statistically significant at the 0.05 level. Hence we fail to reject the hypothesis that, school structure has no effect on strategic plan implementation. This indicates that, school structure does not have a statistically significant effect on strategic plan implementation in public secondary schools in Machakos County.

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

INTRODUCTION

In the whole globe education is recognized as a basic human right for all children. This is in line with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural organization (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). Strategic Plan is a step-by-step guide, created by a school or organization, to map out how it will realize goals, and set a foundation so the whole company knows what will happen 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. A study carried out by Ezugwu (2013) in Japan indicates that while some states formulate and implement plans for their development, other countries formulate but lack implementation. He asserted that developed countries like Japan fully implement their strategic plans. On the other hand, the strategic plans formulated in developing countries like Nigeria are 90% not implemented. Because of this, very good plans are formulated in many developing countries but they are hardly implemented, and hence not much development is achieved since the set goals and objectives are not realized.

A study carried out by Deventer (2009) in South African secondary schools found out that the poor perspective of the stakeholders like teachers leads to failure of the implementation methods of the strategic plans. He also found out that political interference and Poor management are additional factors impacting strategic plan implementation in some schools in South Africa. A study done by Jooste and Fourie (2019) in 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 plan in schools in order to achieve the objectives and goals contained 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 the strategic plan remains 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 school structure, leadership, resource allocation and stakeholders' participation in school development plans in public secondary institutions in Machakos County influence the implementation of strategic plans.

The 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 provide every Kenyan with basic quality education and 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 a Policy on Education, Training and Research.

Huber (2011) defines school structure as a policy that directs how activities are allocated coordinated and supervised in order to achieve the set goals. According to Mcshane and Glinow (2010) firms with structures are characterized by a high degree of standardization, formulation, centralization rigid rules and tight procedures that are reluctant to change, discourage innovation and creativity and hence discourage the atmosphere within which strategic plans can be implemented. On the other hand, in organizations whose structures are characterized by a full span of decentralized decision making, control, and little formalization, roles are much more fluid; adjust to new situations and organization needs more efficiently. This organizational structure can result in increased disagreement among managers who equally share power and can discourage accountability hence constraining strategy implementation.

According to Mcshane and Glinow, (2010) firms whose structures are characterized by a high degree of formulation, standardization, rigid rules, centralization and tight procedures are reluctant to change, discourage innovation and creativity and hence discouraging the atmosphere within which strategic plans can be implemented. On the other hand, organizations whose structures are characterized by a full span of control, decentralized decision making and little formalization, tasks are more fluid; adjust to new

situations and organization needs more efficiently.

Strategic plans are very important tools in the current times of performance based management and Kenyan education reforms. Many institutions of education have formulated strategic plans in line with their needs, objectives and status. In the year 2003, the ministry of education made it a requirement for learning institutions to develop domestic strategic plan to help them in school development. Canole's (1999) and Lane et al.'s (2005) found that there is a strong positive correlation between strategic plan implementation and the general performance in terms of structures, co-curricular activities, and resources. Proper implementation of strategic plans greatly contribute to attainment of projections in performance and success all round. The ministry of education made its own strategic plan since the year 2006 and stressed need for each school to formulate a strategic plan. All the schools embraced this ministerial policy. In as much as many studies have asserted that there are problems facing strategic plan implementation in Kenya, Abdikadir (2015); Nakhumicha (2014); David (2012); Onkundi (2011), it is important to ensure that the implementation matrix changes from one organization to another. Studies have been done in Kenya, but their findings are not generalizable to contexts such as Machakos County. In addition, organizational structure in school development plans was not studied in depth as possible determinant of strategic plan implementation in these public secondary schools. In Machakos County, schools have formulated strategic plans since it is the requirement from the ministry of education. However, statistics from the County Director of Education points that out of the 351 public secondary schools, only 25% have embraced the implementation of the strategic plans in the schools' general progress. This is an alarming low statistics despite the government policy to embrace performance based approaches one of which being strategic plan implementation. It is against this background that the researcher was interested to conduct a study on the institutional determinants of strategic plan implementation in public secondary schools in Machakos County, Kenya. The literature review covers an insight of the study variable that is organizational structure in school development plans.

Albers et al., (2016) did a study to investigate School Structure in Secondary Schools in America. The study found out that the school structure impacts the manner in which a school implements its strategic plan. The study also found out that the school structure should be clear in terms of how duties are allocated to different departments. The research found out that the school departments should be encouraged to work in consultation towards the implementation of strategic plan.

In Nigeria, Okwukweke (2015) did a study to determine the problems of strategic plan implementation for secondary schools in Anambra State, Nigeria. The study found out that the implementation of the strategic plan was at average level in public secondary schools. The study further found out that school structure need to be structured in a manner that enlightens the principals and the staff on strategic planning and strategic plan implementation.

Nyandeje (2014) examined factors influencing the implementation of strategic plans in public secondary schools in Homa Bay County. The study found out that 30% of the schools have all departments working together and they have meetings to review set structures while a whole 70% do not have meetings to review the set structures. If the structures are not restricted to fit the

strategic plan, then the implementation is minimal. From the findings most surveyed schools do not have departments working together. These departments do not have regular meetings in order to review set structures. The schools should restructure their organisations and departments in order to achieve the set objectives.

Nyangemi (2017) carried out a study to investigate the organizational determinants affecting the strategic plan implementation in private schools in Nairobi County, Kenya. The research findings showed a very

strong correlation between organizational structure and strategic plan implementation in private schools. The study also found out that most of the school departments have meetings to review the rate of implementation of the strategic plan.

Research Objectives

This study was guided by the following objective

1. To establish the influence of school structure on the implementation of the strategic plan in public secondary schools in Machakos County, Kenya.

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 was used to analyses data. Data was presented by use of frequency distribution tables, and pie charts. Person’s product-moment correlation Coefficient and multiple linear regression was used to analyze the inferential data. The data was presented using pie charts and frequency distribution tables.

RESULTS

Influence of School Structure on the Implementation of Strategic Plan

This study sought to determine the influence of school structure 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 structure in public secondary schools in Machakos County. School structure was measured using four indicators for the class teachers and HoDs and four indicators were used for the school principals. Mean and standard deviation (SD) statistics for each questionnaire items were tabulated. Each scale was rated on a five Likert like scale ranging from 1 denoting “strongly disagree” to 5 denoting “strongly agree”. The findings of table 1 and table 2 are as indicated respectively.

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

Variable		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Mean	Std. dev.
The school has a well-designed organizational structure	F	3	20	7	69	6	3.524	0.962
	%	2.86	19.05	6.67	65.71	5.71		
Departments working together to obtain their strategic objectives	F	1	4	2	95	3	3.905	0.528
	%	0.95	3.81	1.9	90.48	2.86		

Regular review meetings are held to audit the implementation of Objectives	F	48	18	2	27	10	2.362	1.501
	%	45.71	17.14	1.9	25.71	9.52		
The organisational structure is key to the attainment of strategic plans	f	7	13	19	36	30	3.657	1.208
	%	6.67	12.38	18.1	34.29	28.57		

Centered on the responses of the school Principals as presented in table 4.5, 71.42 percent of the school Principals agreed that the school has a well-designed organizational structure while 21.91 percent the school Principals disagreed that the school has a well-designed organizational structure. Moreover, 93.34 percent of the school Principals agreed that departments work together to obtain their strategic objectives while only 4.76 percent the school Principals disagreed that departments working together to obtain their strategic objectives. The school Principals who agreed that regular review meetings are held to audit the implementation of Objectives were 35.23 percent while 62.85 percent the school Principals disagreed that regular review meetings are held to audit the implementation of Objectives. In addition, 62.86 percent of the school Principals agreed that the organisational structure is key to the attainment of strategic plans while 19.05 percent disagreed that the organisational structure is key to the attainment of strategic plans.

The results in table 1 have indicated that the rating for the school Principals on average ranged from 2.362 to 3.905 indicating that the school Principals agreed with regard to school structure in public secondary schools in Machakos County. In particular, a mean rating of 3.905 for the statement “Departments work together to obtain their strategic objectives” (SD=0.528), a mean rating of 3.657 for the statement “The organisational structure is key to the attainment of strategic plans” (SD=1.208) and a mean rating of 3.524 for the statement “The school has a well-designed organizational structure” (SD=0.962). These indicates that the school Principals agreed that the departments work together to obtain their strategic objectives, the school organisational structure is key to the attainment of strategic plans, and the school has a well-designed organizational structure in public secondary schools in Machakos County. However, a mean rating of 2.362 for the statement “regular review meetings are held to audit the implementation of Objectives”

(SD=1.501), indicates that the school Principals disagreed that regular review meetings are held to audit the implementation of Objectives. This study sought to establish from class teachers and HoDs the influence of school structure on the implementation of strategic plan the findings are as indicated in table 4.2.

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

Variable		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Mean	Std. dev.
There is a well-designed school structure.	F	123	42	2	70	57	2.646	1.647
	%	41.84	14.29	0.68	23.81	19.39		
To achieve the set objectives departments work together.	F	58	126	3	61	46	2.697	1.402
	%	19.73	42.86	1.02	20.75	15.65		
Regularly, meetings are held to review the implementation of objectives.	F	54	83	1	111	45	3.034	1.419

	%	18.37	28.23	0.34	37.76	15.31		
The key achievement of the strategic plan is organizational structure.	F	69	58	10	47	110	3.241	1.656
	%	23.47	19.73	3.4	15.99	37.41		

The results in table 2 have indicated that according to the responses of the class teachers and HoDs 43.2 percent of them agreed with the statement that there is a well-designed school structure while 56.13 percent of the class teachers and HoDs disagreed with the statement that there is a well-designed school structure. Moreover, 36.4 percent of the class teachers and HoDs agreed with the statement that to achieve the set objectives departments work together

while 62.59 percent of the class teachers and HoDs disagreed with the statement that to achieve the set objectives departments work together. The class teachers and HoDs who agreed with the statement that regularly, meetings are held to review the implementation of objectives were 53.07 percent while 46.6 percent of the class teachers and HoDs disagreed with the statement that regularly, meetings are held to review the implementation of objectives. In addition, 53.4 percent of the class teachers and HoDs agreed with the

statement that the key achievement of the strategic plan is organizational structure while 43.2 percent of the class teachers and HoDs disagreed with the statement that the key achievement of the strategic plan is organizational structure. The average scale rating for the class teachers and HoDs ranged from 2.646 to 3.241 indicating that class teachers and HoDs were neutral with regard to the statement that school structure in public secondary schools in Machakos County. The highest mean rating of 3.241 was for the statement “The key achievement of the strategic plan is organizational structure” (SD=1.656). The statement with the lowest mean rating of 2.646 was “There is a well-designed school structure” (SD=1.647).

The foregoing findings on the relationship between school structure and the Implementation of the Strategic Plan reveals that whereas 71.42 percent of the school Principals agreed with the statement that the school has a well-designed organizational structure, 56.13 percent of the class teachers and HoDs disagreed with the statement that the school has a well-designed organizational structure. Likewise 93.34 percent of the school Principals agreed with the statement that departments work together to obtain their strategic objectives though 62.59 percent of the class teachers and HoDs disagreed with the statement that departments work together to obtain their strategic objectives. Further analysis shows that 62.85 percent of the school Principals disagreed with the statement that regular review meetings are held to audit the implementation of Objectives, whereas 53.07 percent of the class teachers and HoDs agreed with the statement that regularly, meetings are held to review the implementation of objectives. In addition, 62.86 percent of the school Principals agreed with the statement that the organisational structure is key to the attainment of strategic plans while 53.4 percent of the class teachers and HoDs agreed with the statement that the key achievement of the strategic plan is organizational structure.

Hypothesis Testing for the Influence of School Structure 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 0.0470 on school structure was realized with a p-value of 0.314

which was not statistically significant at the 0.05 level. Hence we fail to reject the hypothesis that, school structure has no effect on strategic plan implementation. This indicates that, school structure does not have a statistically significant effect on strategic plan implementation in public secondary schools in Machakos

County.

DISCUSSION OF THE RESEARCH FINDINGS

Influence of School Structure on the Implementation of the Strategic Plan

The first objective of the study sought to establish the influence of school structure on the implementation of the strategic plan in public secondary schools in Machakos County. The findings of the first objective are indicated in table 4.1, table 4.2 and table 4.5 which indicated that based on the results from the multiple regression a positive coefficient of 0.0470 on school structure was realized with a p-value of 0.314 which was not statistically significant at the 0.05 level. This finding concurs with those by Nyangemi (2017) in Nairobi County, Kenya which showed a very strong correlation between organizational structure and strategic plan implementation in private schools. However, the current study findings differs with those by Albers et al., (2016) in America, which found out that the school structure impacts the manner in which a school implements its strategic plan. Hence we fail to reject the hypothesis that, school structure has no effect on strategic plan implementation. This indicates that, school structure does not have a statistically significant effect on strategic plan implementation in public secondary schools in Machakos County. The lack of statistically significant effect of school structure on strategic plan implementation was attributed to the school principals who disagreed with the statement that “regular review meetings are held to audit the implementation of Objectives”. Even though on average the school Principals agreed with the statement that the departments work together to obtain their strategic objectives, the school organisational structure is key to the attainment of strategic plans, and the school has a well-designed organizational structure in public secondary schools in Machakos County. The same was as a result of the class teachers and HoDs who were neutral with regard to school structure parameters such as “The key achievement of the strategic plan is organizational structure” and “There is a well-designed school structure” in which they were undecided.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

There is need for the schools to have forums to evaluate achievement of the goals and objectives in strategic plan.

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