

Research Article

Influence of Principals' Leadership Styles on Implementation of Strategic Plans in Public Secondary Schools in Trans Nzoia West Sub County

Beatrice Kwamboka Moturi¹, Dr. Wambua Kyalo Benjamin² and Dr. Sang James Kimeli³

Department of Educational Management and Policy Studies, Moi University P.O. Box 3900- Eldoret

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Abstract: The purpose of this study was to analyze the effect of the principals' leadership styles on implementation of strategic plans in public secondary schools in Trans Nzoia West Sub County. The study was guided by the Modern Decision Theory, stakeholder and communication theory. The target population included all Board of management members, the principals and the teachers. Both probability and non-probability sampling approaches were employed to determine sample size for the study. A suitable sample size of 305 respondents was selected from this target population for data collection purposes. Primary data was done through the help of Questionnaires, document analysis and qualitative data was collected using the interview schedules. Quantitative and qualitative approaches were applied to process and analyze data collected from the field. The study was significant to the education stakeholders such as the Ministry of Education, Departments of Education, teachers, parents and the society. The study concluded that there was a strong relationship between the principals' leadership styles and implementation of strategic plans in secondary schools in the sub county. Schools' administration should give strategic plans life by not only ensuring that they are developed just as a statutory requirement, but they should be implemented to the letter. It was recommended that the ministry of education should develop clear school policy plan implementation. School management should employ a democratic leadership style while developing strategic plans as they ensure better achievement of strategic objectives.

Keywords: Target population, School management, leadership.

Introduction

According to Brinkschroder (2014) organizations and institutions operate in an ever changing environment. This change is often brought by either legislation modification, innovation in technology or emerging behavior of people or customers. These changes force organizations to react accordingly. He argues that as a result organizations develop plans in form strategies in order to gain a competitive edge against their rivals or to stay afloat in the dynamic business environment. A good strategy therefore should be of a long term nature, innovative, inspirational and stretching, and it should have a direct impact on the customer and competitor the mission, vision and major organizational goals form the basis for strategy choice (Buul, 2010). According to Hrebiniak (2006) formulating a strategy is difficult; making strategy work- executing the strategy throughout the organization is even more difficult. Hambrick and Cannella (1989) state that "Without successful implementation, a strategy is but a fantasy".

Johnson, Scholes and Whittington (2005) noted that strategy implementation involves describing how resources are going to be used and allocated to make the chosen strategic option happen. Strategy execution requires that all aspects of the organization be in congruence with the strategy and that every individual's effort be coordinated towards accomplishing strategic goals (Richard, Kendrick and Vershinina, 2010).

In South Africa, compensation management, managerial behaviour, institutional policies and resource allocation have a considerable impact on successful strategy implementation within public schools (Mango, 2014). However, on a lean success scale of one (not successful) to ten (successful) 90% of organizations do not score more than three while only 10% score more than eight. In Nigeria, reasons for strategy implementation include poor understanding of the strategy by the workforce and ineffective communication of the strategy to the workforce (Mwijuma, Omido, Garashi, Odera and Akerele, 2013).

Public institutions in Kenya are mandated to develop strategic plans as a means of achieving their desired goals to ensure proper management, performance and effectiveness in their functions. The MoE Strategic Plan (2006-2011) provides direction in regard to resources targeting programme implementation. From the manual of School Management Guide of (1991), strategic direction is a clear path of action planned by schools to achieve their aim and objectives using scarce resources available. Strategic planning leads to improved performance and better management of resources than lack of planning (Katsiolouides, 2002). The planning team is tasked with ensuring that activities undertaken by an institution reach the expected destination with the resources available. Article 56 (1A) of the Basic Education Bill of Kenya entrusts the role of developing and implementing a strategic plan for public schools to the school management board. However, this law does not state who should take this responsibility in secondary schools (GoK, 2013).

Leadership Styles

According to Espy (2012), leadership style refers to the way a leader provides directions, implements plans and motivates people. It entails not only influencing the performance of an organization but also triggering the morale of the employees, their productivity, and influencing the decision-making process and metrics.

Blomstrom (2013) defines leadership style as the pattern of a leader relating with subordinates. In particular, it entails how a leader directs and controls how the subordinates conduct their respective assignments as well as how he/she gets them to produce goods and services. It comprises the manner in which instructions are given as well as the approaches and techniques used by the leader in motivating the employees and ascertaining that the instructions are executed (Johnston & Marshall, 2016).

There is a difference between leadership and management. Management focuses on promoting stability and empowering the firm to run smoothly, while on the other hand, the role of leadership is to stimulate, promote and manage initiatives to do with the long-term change (Draft, 2014). The role of a leader is to inspire, provide opportunities, train and motivate the staff in order to have their support while making important long-term choices (Shao, Feng & Hu, 2016).

Approaches to Leadership

According to Espy (2012), leadership theories emphasize leaders' traits, behavior (what a leader truly does), the power effect approach (the extent and nature of power and how it is

applied), the situation and/or a combination thereof. Leadership theories applied during the early days were universal in nature, i.e. were applicable in almost all types of situation, whereas the emergence of the contingency theories of leadership suggests that certain aspects of leadership apply to some situation but not others. Several theories concerning leadership style have focused mainly on authoritarian styles against Democratic ones and people orientation versus task orientation (Lehner, 2014). The behavioral approach theory examines the type of leadership behavior, which stimulates the performance, and enthusiasm of the staff.

The path-goal model also called the path-goal theory of leader effectiveness is commonly referred to as a path-goal theory. This is a theory of leadership put forth by Robert House in 1971. According to the theory, the behavior of a leader is conditioned on the motivation, satisfaction, and performance of his/her subordinates (Girma, 2016). The implication of this is that a leader influences the performance of the subordinate by determining the behaviors (paths) that will result in desired rewards (Griffin & Moorhead, 2012).

In addition, Situational Leadership Model looks at the willingness of the followers to achieve a particular task. According to Fielder's theory, a leader is predisposed to a given set of leadership behaviors. A leader may be either task oriented or relationship oriented. A Task-oriented leader is a directive, structure situational; sets a time limit and develops task assignments. A relationship-oriented leader focuses on people and creates a positive social interaction (Williams, 2015).

Types of Leadership Styles

The type of leadership in an organization determines the level of performance. Leaders have a great influence in carrying out the organization's operations. These people set goals, objectives, and strategies. They are the ones who take part in making decisions such as recruitment and selection, setting targets among other critical issues. Poor leadership, therefore, signifies poor performance while good leadership reflects the success of the organization. There are several leadership styles adopted by organizations. These include transformational and transactional leadership, autocratic and democratic leadership style and charismatic and servant leadership among others (Adeniyi, 2016). The type of leadership style determines how individuals will behave and how the organization will perform.

Leadership style is defined as a manner in which leaders provide directions, plans implementation, and motivate different people. In every organization, leadership style is crucial for the management strategies. It has been argued that different leadership styles are best suited for different business settings and the choice of such leadership style depends on the culture and organizational goals (Sekaran & Bougie, 2013). It should, therefore, be emphasized that the type of leadership style chosen by an organization must be flexible to fit its requirements. It should thus be noted with emphasis that studying different styles of leadership is a prerequisite for selecting the style depending on the state in which the leadership is exercised with the followers' involvement (Byars, 2014).

Transformational and Transactional Leadership

Transformational leadership is the type where leaders and subordinates help one another grow to higher levels of motivation and morality (Kalshoven, Den Hartog & De Hoogh, 2013). Here, the organization does not majorly rely on its leader but relies on every individual including the lowest level employee. Leaders can listen and borrow ideas from their subordinates while the same happens to the employees (Adeniyi, 2016).

Transformational leadership emphasizes on team building, motivating workers and collaborating with them at different organization levels to bring about change for the better. Transformational leaders are always aimed at managing their company's daily operations and taking it to the next performance and success level. They achieve this by setting goals and incentives that push their assistants to higher levels of performance and thus, the leaders provide an opportunity for individual and professional growth for every employee (Adeniyi, 2016). The leaders are most concerned about the followers' needs to use an exceptional form of influence, and assist the followers in obtaining fullest potential (Tomkins & Simpson, 2015).

A transformational leadership style minimizes the rate of employees' turnover. Leaders who embrace this kind of leadership are able to retain employees for a long time. Every employee would like to work in a free environment where they are free to offer their views and ideas. Therefore, no one will easily leave the job and hence, reduce the rate of turnover, which minimizes expenditure associated with hiring (Cameron, DeGraff & Thakor, 2014).

According to Adeniyi (2016), this type of leadership style enables employees to realize and make use of their full potential. As a result, employees become more productive in performing the assigned duties and responsibilities and hence contributing to the attainment of the set goals and objectives. Transformational leaders are able to identify the existing needs of the organization as well as those of the potential employees (Kippenberger, 2014). In addition, they are able to identify the weaknesses of a particular employee and use them to build up their strengths for effectiveness. As a result, transformative leaders are the most successful ones, especially in large and multinational organizations (Thompson & Strickland, 2014).

In contrast, transactional leadership style is mostly concerned with the maintenance of the normal operations' flow. It is concerned with the basic process of management such as planning, organizing, coordinating and staffing. This style focuses on management to perform their roles and responsibilities (Kippenberger, 2014). Most researchers describe it as "keeping the ship afloat." The transactional leader uses a punitive control and incentives in motivating employees to perform their level best. Transactional leaders focus on supervision, organization, and group performance. Their concern is about the day-to-day control of the workers (Armstrong & Taylor, 2014). These leaders, therefore, lead strategically in their different positions aimed at achieving particular company's set goals and ensuring employees' satisfaction.

Transactional leadership discourages creativity since the management is tasked with making all critical decisions leaving no room for employees to contribute concerning thoughts and ideas and having them nod to everything as instructed by their leaders. This denies employees a chance to participate in major issues and as a result, the organization does not promote creativity and innovation amongst the employees (Thompson & Strickland, 2014). It should also be noted that employees, in most cases, are the ones in possession of sufficient knowledge concerning the client's need. They know areas that need improvement since they are the ones spending much time on the ground. However, the transaction leadership style does not allow this. In addition, the transactional leadership style does not encourage accountability amongst employees (Chemers, 2014).

Given that all the basic and important decisions are left in the hands of management, under the transactional leadership, employees are rendered less accountable and as a result, are

discouraged by the failure of management to recognize their efforts. Their prime focus becomes the tasks as directed by the management thereby becoming deprived of the freedom or desire to go an extra mile beyond the roles as directed by their seniors. It is unfortunate that in this leadership style, people work to achieve the minimum results instead of working in their level best (Iqbal, 2015).

Autocratic and Democratic Leadership Style

O'Reilly, Lapiz, and Self (2010) define autocratic managers as those leaders who horde power, authority and decision making activities. Micromanagers are autocrats with a compelling need to control every activity within their jurisdiction. The antithesis of the autocrat is the delegating manager who prefers a style of hands-off management and tends to delegate authority, responsibility, and accountability to others. Autocratic leadership is effective when there is a need for quick decision-making. It is most used in small or upcoming businesses where decision-making is always fast.

Autocratic leaders do not experience stress in caused by relying on outsiders to complete the assigned tasks and totally dependent on their own in performing the daily duties and responsibilities. The autocratic leadership style does not need many levels of leadership in the organization (Kippenberger, 2014).

Autocratic leaders can manage several responsibilities. On the other hand, Democratic managers have a tendency to engage in participative decision-making. According to Martinez-León and Martínez-García (2011), participation can help foster subordinates' growth and development and may result in higher performance levels and job satisfaction.

Bhatti, Maitlo, and Shaik (2012) conducted a study on how autocratic and democratic leadership styles impacts on job satisfaction, they sampled out teachers from both private and public schools in one of the cities in the US. Their findings suggested that as much as a democratic leader makes the final decision, such a leader often invites other team members to make contributions in the decision making process. The study showed that such participation increases job satisfaction as well as create a humble environment for skill development.

The associated such benefits to the fact that employees who form the team feel in control of their destiny and are thus motivated to exert more effort in their duties for reasons other than financial reward.

The study further pointed out the likelihood of slowing down the pace of doing things due to consultation. The study concluded that this leadership style is more plausible whenever quality has precedence over speed.

Charismatic and Servant Leadership

Blomstrom (2013) defines charismatic leadership style as a perspective based on the follower perceptions, whereby a leader is gifted with unique and exceptional qualities. Charismatic leaders tend to deal with the emerging social issues in an organization and possess some extraordinary abilities such as a clear vision, high self-confidence and act as change agents.

Thompson & Strickland (2014) suggest that some of the charismatic leadership traits are articulation goals, serving as role models, image building, arousing motives, and showing confidence. The leaders tend to utilize communication strategies to connect with their followers emotionally, physically, and intellectually.

Greenleaf invented servant leadership in 1970 as a leadership approach (Greenleaf, 1970 as cited in Greenleaf, 1998). Later on, researchers carried out studies and developed it to servant leadership style (Van Wart, 2014).

Iravo, Ongori, and Munene (2013) argue that in servant leadership, the focus is on some of the behaviors the leaders must possess in order to put followers first. Its concern is how the leaders treat and react to subordinates. The Servant leadership uniqueness is altruism because it is, in most cases, the central processor component. Servant leadership behaviors include emotional healing, behaving in an ethical manner, putting followers first, assisting followers to grow and succeed, conceptualization, empowerment, and lastly, creating value for the community (Klein, 2014).

Methods

This study was both qualitative and quantitative in nature hence; it adopted a descriptive survey research design. The population of the study was all the secondary schools in Trans Nzoia West Sub County where principals, Head of Departments, teachers and Board of management members were targeted being a total of 1455 respondents. Suitable sample of a total of 305 respondents were selected to represent the study population in data collection.

The questionnaire, interview schedules and document analysis were the tools used for data collection. Both quantitative and qualitative approaches were applied to process and analyze the data. Quantitative data obtained from questionnaires were coded, entered, analyzed using the assistance of the statistical package for social sciences and information presented in terms of frequencies, percentages, means and standard deviation and inferential statistic.

Findings

School Leadership Styles and Implementation of Strategic Plans

The question sought to find out the type of leadership the school had adopted. The respondents were required to use the Likerts scale SA-(Strongly Agree)-5, A-(Agree)-4, U (Undecided)-3,(Disagree)-2, SD-(Strongly Disagree)-1 in giving their responses. Below are the responses they gave.

Table 1. School Leadership and Implementation of Strategic Plans

Statement	1	2	3	4	5
Democratic leadership styles	6%	16%	24%	20%	34%
Autocratic leadership style	33%	21%	11%	14%	21%
Leissez faire leadership	26%	34%	9%	14%	18%
The type of leadership influences implementation of objectives	11%	10%	19%	24%	36%

From table 1 it was clear that majority of the respondents 34% strongly agreed to their schools having a democratic type of leadership while developing the strategic plans. 20% of the respondents agreed to have democratic leadership while 16% and 6% disagreed and strongly disagreed to having democratic leadership. 24% of the respondents remained non-committal to whether their schools had this type of leadership while developing strategic plans. This implied that on average of 54% of the schools used democratic leadership while developing strategic plans.

On autocratic leadership style, majority of the respondents 34% strongly disagreed that their schools used this type of leadership, 21% disagreed, as another 21% said that autocratic

leadership was used 24% remained neutral while 14% agreed to use of autocratic leadership. Taking the agreed and strongly agreed category against disagreed category, it then implies that 54% of the schools did not use autocratic leadership compared to 35% which used the leadership style. On Laissez faire leadership style, majority of the respondents, 34% disagreed, 26% strongly disagreed while 18% and 14% strongly disagreed and agreed respectively to this type of leadership being in use while developing strategic plans. This implies that on average majority of the schools going by the disagreeing category; do not use this form of leadership style.

The respondents were asked then to tell if they felt that the type of leadership influenced implementation of objectives. Majority of them 36% and 24% strongly agreed and agreed respectively that the type of leadership used in developing the strategic plans go a long way in achieving their long term objectives in implementation.

Only 11% and 10% strongly disagreed and disagreed respectively with another 19% remaining neutral. On average of the agreed and disagreed category, majority of the respondents associated the type of leadership used to achievement of the strategic goals during implementation.

The interview schedule asked the BOM members to indicate the type of leadership strategy employed in their respective schools. Majority of them cited 'democratic and collaborative' with two of them saying authoritative leadership styles as the leadership strategy used in most schools. This confirmed the majority responses of principals adopting democratic leadership in running of schools.

Study was in agreement with findings of draft (2014) who found out that for any organisation to run well, the role of leadership is fundamental in to stimulating, promoting and manage initiatives to do with the long-term change. The study also concurs with studies done by Lehner (2014) which found out various styles of leadership can be employed in an organisation however, just like in this study where democratic collaborative leadership was dominant, Lehner's study found out that democratic leadership is more dominant that people orientation versus task orientation.

Influences of Leadership Styles on implementation of strategic plans

The question in this category wanted to find out how the implementation of strategic plans influenced implementation of strategic targets. The respondents were given using the scale where SA-(Strongly Agree)-5, A-(Agree)-4, U (Undecided)-3, (Disagree)-2, SD-(Strongly Disagree)-1

Table 2. Leadership influences implementation of strategic plan

Statements	1	2	3	4	5
I ensure that the professional development activities of teachers are in accordance with the teaching goals of the school	16%	71%	13%	0	0
I ensure that teachers work according to the school's educational goals	30%	70%	0	0	0
I ensure that there is clarity concerning the responsibility for co-coordinating the curriculum.	29%	63%	8%	0	0

The respondents were asked to tell if they ensured that the professional development activities of teachers were in accordance with the teaching goals of the school. Majority of the respondents 71% agreed 16% strongly agreed that indeed they ensured professional development activities as scheduled. 135 however remained neutral to the same question. This then implied that majority of the schools ensured that teachers professional development was done in accordance to school objectives.

On the second part of the question majority of the respondents 70% and 30%, agreed and strongly agreed respectively to ensure that teachers worked according to attainment of school goals. On clarity of the curriculum, majority of the principals 63% agreed to ensuring clarity in coordinating of the curriculum, 29% strongly agreed while only 8% remained neutral.

The interviewee when prompted on how leadership strategies affect implementation of strategy, there had several ways of expressing themselves. Some said “the leadership strategy saves on time hence ensuring timely implementation”, “It allows active participation from all stakeholders,” “allows flexibility in decision making hence allowing right decisions being made.” This implies with employment of collaborative leadership style, strategy would be implemented better in our school thus better implementation.

This study slightly differed with Sekaran & Bougie (2013) who argued that different leadership styles are best suited for different business settings and the choice of such leadership style depends on the culture and organizational goals. They also argue that the type of leadership style chosen by an organization must be flexible to fit its requirements. This slightly differs with the findings from the study which showed that majority of the schools had adopted nearly a similar type of leadership. Given that there were quite a number of schools under study, going by Sekaran and Bougie’s study, we could have expected various styles in each or many of the schools.

The study also agrees with Martínez-García (2011) who demonstrated that democratic managers have a tendency to engage in participative decision-making hence, participation can help foster subordinates’ growth and development and may result in higher performance levels and job satisfaction. Though this study did not engage in finding out the effect of a style and performance, it was in tandem with this study which indicated that there was a feeling from the respondents that the type leadership adopted in their schools had a positive correlation with implementation.

Inferential Statistics

Hypothesis Test one

The first hypothesis was stated as; there was no significant relationship between the principals’ leadership styles and implementation of strategic plans in public secondary schools in Trans Nzoia West Sub County. The study used the test of analysis of variance to establish any significant relationship between the two variables and the results were as below:

Table 3. Principals’ leadership styles and implementation of strategic plans

	Model	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	7	22.374	66.950	.000 ^b
	Residual	177	.334		

From Table 3, Principals’ leadership styles had a $\beta=0.000$ was found to be positively related to implementation of strategic plans. Statistically, this null hypothesis was rejected because

$\rho < 0.05$. Hence, the study accepted the alternative hypothesis which showed that there was a significant relationship between Principals' leadership styles and implementation of strategic plans.

Table 4. R-Square Model Summary and implementation of plans

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.852 ^a	.726	.715	.57809	.726	66.950	7	177	.000
a. Predictors: (Constant), The school has a functioning strategic plan, The implementation of the strategic plan is within schedule, The implementation of previous plans has been implemented as planned									

From table 4, the R value was determined as 0.852 whereas it's R Square was 0.726. This indicated a high degree of correlation between the two variables being Principals' leadership styles and implementation of strategic plans.

The R² value indicates how much of the dependent variable, "implementation of strategic plans", was explained by the predictors of Principals' leadership styles. In this case, 72.6% was the R Squared, implying that this high percentage was high which high indicating high correlation between the two variables.

Table 5. Coefficients a Principals' leadership styles

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1	(Constant)	3.448	.135		25.453	.000	3.181	3.716
	The school has a functioning strategic plan	-.430	.069	-.521	-6.219	.000	-.566	-.293
	The implementation of the strategic plan is within schedule	.088	.081	.101	1.092	.276	-.071	.247
	The implementation of previous plans has been implemented as planned	-1.297	.090	-1.540	-14.464	.000	-1.474	-1.120
a. Dependent Variable: implementation of strategic plans								

The study established a significant relationship between the following elements of Principals' leadership styles and implementation of strategic plans; the school has a functioning strategic plan $r=-.430$, $p=.000<.05$ and the implementation of previous plans has been implemented as planned $r=-1.297$, $p=.000<.05$.

Conversely the study established no relationship on the following elements of the implementation of the strategic plan was $r=-.088$, $p=.276>.05$. Based on the statistical findings from this variable, it was evident to reject the analogy that there was no effect of the implementation of previous plans being implemented as planned on implementation of strategic plans.

Conclusions

From the study findings it was concluded that there was a significant relationship between the principals' leadership styles (Sig. 0.000) and implementation of strategic plans in public secondary schools in Trans Nzoia West Sub County.

It was concluded that schools lack democratic leadership is the main leadership strategy in schools. That majority of schools do not implement strategic objectives as they planned. It was also concluded that the type of leadership strategy influences strategic plan implementation.

Recommendations

From the study finding the study recommends that schools should implement appropriate leadership styles that ensure proper implementation of strategic plans. Hence, schools should implement democratic leadership style since it seemed to have a higher correlation to implementation of strategic plans.

Conflicts of interest

There is no conflict of interest of any kind.

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