

## **Principal's management strategies implementation challenges effect on learner's academic performance in Public Secondary schools in Meru County, Kenya.**

Paul Mworja Bagine<sup>1</sup>, Dr. Kaberia Isaac Kubai<sup>2</sup>, Dr. Zachary Njagi<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>(Department of education, Kenya Methodist University, Kenya)

<sup>2</sup>(Department of Humanities, University of Embu, Kenya)

<sup>3</sup>(Department of Education, University of Embu, Kenya)

\*Corresponding Author: Paul Mworja Bagine<sup>1</sup>

**ABSTRACT:** *This study aimed at examining the effects of principal's management strategies on student's academic performance in public secondary schools in Imenti North Sub-county Meru County, Kenya. The research used descriptive survey research design. The sample size was 30 principals sampled through purposive sampling of 2 heads of departments in every school. The researcher used structured questionnaire to collect data. This study revealed a positive relationship between strategy implementation and academic performance. It implied that 57.5% of changes in mean score were explained by the strategy implementation success. This research revealed a positive relationship between efficiency of teaching resources and student's results. The challenges faced during implementation had a strong significant effect on the performance of the school. Low level of satisfaction with the facilities by the staffs significantly affected the implementation of principal's strategies eventually negatively affecting the schools performance. This work informs higher education policies in developing countries. There is need for schools to adequately equip their schools with human and financial resources as well as improve teacher student ratio and satisfaction in order to improve performance.*

**KEYWORDS-** *challenges, implementation, leadership, resources efficiency, strategy formulation*

### **I. INTRODUCTION**

Globally, nations spend highly in order to develop and improve education. Education is the backbone of socio-economic development as it helps progress the industrious capacity of the nation politically, scientifically, and economically (Mahvar et al., 2018; Renzulli, 2015). It reduces poverty by alleviating its impact on health, nutrition, and population. Also, it increases the efficiency and value of labour offered by the people. New production methods have been brought about by a labour force that is well trained and intellectual with technological advancements (Huaisheng et al., 2019).

However, Effective management of institutions and subsequent achievements are inseparable (Avidon-Ungar, 2017) Schools, just like any other organization, cannot be left out in the effective management debate. The key to effective school management is getting results from other people by focusing on the goals or targets desired consistency, clarity, accuracy, and thoroughness in all management actions. Furthermore, schools are like other organizations, which should be well managed using known methods of management (Amoli & Aghashahi, 2016; Gakenia et al., 2017; Huaisheng et al., 2019). Luhangala, (2019) argues that effective and efficient strategy implementation is important in that it determines the ability of the school to attain its objectives and goals.

Orodho & Waweru, (2014) recently, Kenya has experienced a wave of unrelenting student unrest. This poses questionable management strategies by school managers. There have been various efforts to address strikes and the poor performance phenomenon. A study done by (National Crime Research Center 2016) on rapid assessment of induced fire cases in Kenya's high education shows many aspects that are causing consistency and terrible results in Kenya's public high schools (Opere et al., 2019). During the year 2016, there were 66 strikes recorded in Meru county alone, accounting for almost a fifth of all the strikes in the forty-seven counties of Kenya (Wanjohi et al., 2017). The rate of unrest in Meru is far much higher than the national average. Strikes and destruction of property are signs that performance in national examinations is likely to be poor because schools are unable to achieve their academic goals (Gacheri, n.d.). This research assessed the challenges of implementing principal's management strategies and their effect on learner's academic performance in public secondary schools in Imenti North Sub County Meru County, Kenya.

## **II. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

The Most schools in Imenti North Sub County have performed dismally during the last few years, and it is not clear whether principals' management strategies' effectiveness may have contributed to the current state of affairs. While some schools consistently perform well in national examinations, they continue to struggle to meet stakeholders' expectations (Obama et al., n.d.-b). Arguably, effective management strategies positively contribute to this achievement. Though management strategies used by principles may not be the only factor for academic performance, it cannot be wished away given that it is an important tool for steering an organization to success (Nzoka, 2014a). Thus, this analysis seeks to assess the challenges of implementing principal's management strategies and their effect on learner's academic performance in public secondary schools in Kenya.

## **III. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Theory**

This study was anchored on Fayol's principles of management. Managers at the operational level should apply Fayol derived up with fourteen principles of management, which he sensed. He itemized the principles as a division of effort, power, and duty to carry out the work/assignment, self-control in terms of respecting the school's procedures and guidelines, and the unity of command where instructions come from one person (Hou et al., 2019). Other principals include unity of direction in which all operate from a single plan. Individual subjugation of self-interest, fair compensation to employees, focal planning during which real influence is assigned, and scalar-chain demonstrates how power streams from the upper end to the base of the leadership circuit are also included (Bacud, 2020). The following principles were: order, equity, and fairness in dealing with workers and tenures of stable labour at the right place at the right time.

Further, an initiative for employees to act and be innovative and Esprit-de corps means there is strength in teamwork and encouragement (Mwaria et al., 2016). This study was based on the theoretical framework of the Fayol Administrative theory of management. For principals to be successful, the fourteen (14) principles of Fayol can assist them in improving student performance.

The theory of administrative management applies to this study in that the 14 principles help in managing schools by applying the principles in their day-to-day management strategies to get things done by fostering teamwork in schools. The theory also emphasizes that principals should be trained, and there should be a separation of principals' duties as managers and staff members who are supervised by principals (George et al., 2017). By the review of literature challenges such understaffing, work stress and low job satisfaction emerged as major themes hindering strategy implementation thus leading to poor performance.

### **Understaffing**

There are some effects of understaffing in organizations in general and in educational institutions in specific. Globally, with introduction of low cost upper school education the transition rate from primary to secondary has improved (48%) (Oyugi, M. 2019). This implies that with an anticipated higher transition rate, then the student-teacher ratio will get even higher if teacher shortage and the attendant strategies to remedy the same are not addressed (Huaisheng et al., 2019). In Kenya, following the roll out of 100 per cent transition policy to complement Free Day Secondary School, primary to secondary transition rates have increased from 83.3 per cent in 2018 to 95 per cent by the first quarter (Q1) of 2020 (KIPPRA, 2020). Public schools all over the country are largely short-staffed. Something that is shown by the popular UNESCO analysis, which showed that the learner instructor ratio had analyzed 162 schools in Nairobi. In Central, Western, and Nyanza, the instructor engagement was limited to 1:58 versus approved 1:40. Some of the best schools also had unfavourable effects even though there were up to 120 students in certain classes (UNESCO 2013).

### **Work Stress**

Stress is a present reality in life to every individual. Stress is not something to be avoided, and that the complete absence of stress is death (Muti, 2019). Among the four major types of stressors identified in that model are the individual-level stressors (Hou et al., 2019). These are stressors openly connected with a person's occupation duty. In the teaching career, role overload as well as role conflict, among other things, a heavy workload in terms of the number of lessons taught per day as well as the number of subjects taught per day, and the frequency of other responsibilities such as the role of the teacher on duty or teacher in charge of co-curricular activities among others (Gbollie & Keamu, 2017). These multiple role features generate strain since they make individuals feel overwhelmed and unclear about what they ought to be doing (Abbas, 2019).

### **Job Satisfaction**

Job satisfaction is the emotional response to various aspects of an employee's job. It can be either favourable or unfavourable. Two main components that remain intricate in employee-employer relationships are contributions and consequences (Johnson, n.d.). On one side are the employees' inputs such as education, familiarity, and effort for which he or she anticipates a just return, and on the product side of the give-and-take, the organization delivers such things as remuneration, other profits, and appreciation. This implies that they

have to make certain equity comparisons (Nzoka, 2014b). The negative inequity can lead to symptoms of low motivation when employees start looking for ways and means of joining the superior employer or geographical area. In terms of allowances accruing (Polirstok, 2017a). From the preceding, teachers will compare themselves to other professionals, both in and out of the teaching profession, in terms of the prescribed workload and the resultant gains, and in case they find negative equity, their propensity to leave the profession in search of greener pastures will escalate (Simba et al., 2016). Their getting a place in the 'better' pastures escalates the problem of teacher shortage in the schools to the detriment of the learners who are the focus of the educational effort, inadequacy and (or) lack of appropriate work tools have a motivational aspect on the workers of the organization (Oyugi, M. 2019).

**IV. RESEARCH METHOD**

The research used descriptive survey research design. The targeted population was 41 principals of public secondary schools, and 144 heads of departments. The sample size was 30 principals and using purposive sampling of 2 heads of departments in every school. Piloting of instruments comprised 10% of the sample size was done in neighboring Meru Central Sub County. The reliability of the research instruments was determined by half-split Spearman correlation coefficient after which corrections and adjustments were done to the instruments. The questionnaires were then delivered to the respondents by the researcher and allowed them time of one week to fill.

**V. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

**Challenges experienced**

This study sought to find out what challenges of principal's management strategies implementation affect academic performance in public secondary schools. The respondents were required to indicate how often do certain challenges of implementing Management strategies occur. Both the HOD, s agreed that the school suffers understaffing, stress, low job satisfaction and underfunding. Majority of the respondents 18(36%) noted that the school experiences understaffing sometimes while, 9(18%) principals added that they experience understaffing always. Further, 23(46%) of the principals noted that they sometimes suffered low job satisfaction and 17(34%) noted that they always face low job satisfaction of their employees. This is likely to significantly affect school performance. Majority of the respondents indicated that they always experience underfunding always. Inadequate financing was a major challenge to most of the Public secondary schools in North Imenti.

**Table 1. Challenges experienced in implementing strategic plan**

Challenges experienced in implementing strategic plan	Always	sometimes	often	undecided	never
Understaffing challenge	9(18%)	18(36%)	10(20%)	4(8%)	9(18%)
Stress challenge	14(28%)	22(44%)	5(10%)	6(12%)	3(6%)
Job satisfaction challenge	17(34%)	23(46%)	5(10%)	6(12%)	3(6%)
challenges of under funding	32(64%)	6(12%)	9(18%)	0	3(6%)

**Inferential Statistics**

This study sought to find out the effect of challenges faced on implementation of strategies and school performance. This study found that challenges faced during implementation explained over 65.4% of poor academic performance of public secondary schools in North Imenti Constituency ( $R=0.809$ ,  $R^2=0.654$ ,  $F=2.349$ ,  $p=0.047$ ). Low level of satisfaction with the facilities by the staffs significantly affected the implementation of principal's strategies eventually negatively affecting the schools performance. Table 2.

**Model Summary<sup>a</sup>**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.810 <sup>a</sup>	.657	.435	.989

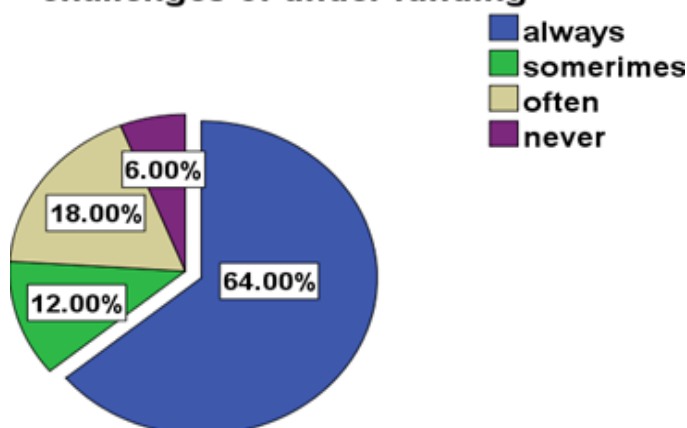
a. Predictors: (Constant),

b. Dependent Variable: Performance(mean score)

Table 2. Regression model on challenges in implementation

The overall coefficient of determination R of 0.657 also called the R squared was 65.7%. This means that jointly, the predictor variables (formulation of strategy, implementation, efficiency of teaching resources & leadership initiatives, challenges of implementing) explain 65.7% of the total variations in the dependent variable (performance of secondary schools). The correlation coefficient of 80.1% indicates that the joint effect of the predictor variables has a strong correlation with performance of public secondary schools.

**challenges of under funding**



**ANOVA for linear relationship between challenges faced in implementation and performance of Public secondary schools.**

ANOVA was used to evaluating the exact relationship between challenges and strategy implementation in secondary schools. The researcher considered the significance values which were gotten for various variables. The results on the analysis of the variance (ANOVA) are in the table below. The results indicated that the overall model was statistically significant. Further, the results implied that the independent variables are good predictors of performance of public secondary schools. This was supported by an F statistic of 2.957 and the reported p value of 0.02, which was less than the threshold probability of 0.05 at 5% level of significance.

**ANOVA<sup>a</sup>**

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	63.598	22	2.891	2.957	.002 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	33.244	34	.978		
	Total	96.842	56			

a. Dependent Variable: Performance (mean score)

b. Predictors: (Constant),

Table 2: ANOVA for linear relationship of the variables

**VI. CONCLUSION**

This study concluded that inadequate human and financial resources were strong indicators of poor strategy implementation and poor performance (R=0.809, F=2.349, p=0.047). The principals management strategies largely affect students academic performance (R=.735, F=4.975, P=0.00). The numbers of teachers in the department strongly affect student academic performance. Teaching resources significantly affects students results (r=.561, F=2.761 p=0.19).

This research will be very useful to County Governments, Teachers service commission (TSC) and the Schools Board of management (BOM) to deploy quality, competent and sufficient teachers in public secondary schools in Meru County to curb deficiency and meet the required teacher student ratio. The need of adequately remunerate the teachers to ensure high teacher motivation and satisfaction for quality service delivery.

The study will inform National government Of Kenya (GOK) and Ministry of Education (MOE) to policies to allocate enough funds to during the Budget 2021/2022 to the education sector and especially County public secondary schools.

The School heads will benefit since regular training of their staff on strategy deliverable goals, can improve academic performance.

This study recommends partnerships between UNESCO, Ministry of education and county governments to implement programs that will support and improve teaching resources and infrastructure in Public secondary schools in Meru County.

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*\*Corresponding Author: Paul Mworio Bagine<sup>1</sup>  
1(Department of education, Kenya Methodist University, Kenya)*