

Influence of Strategic Leadership Style on Academic Performance of National Schools in Kenya

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Abstract: Strategic leadership, is an ability by the leader to anticipate, prepare and position for the future; It has also been observed to be the leaders ability to anticipate, create a vision, empower others and exercise flexibility, to create a strategic and viable future of the organization. Leaders who are strategic leaders formulate the goals and strategies for the organization. They do this by developing structures and processes that impact the present and future performance of the organization. They are experienced, senior leaders that are knowledgeable and have the ability to create a vision and execute plans and make significant decisions in the dynamic environment. This study sought to examine the influence of strategic leadership style on academic performance of National Schools in Kenya. The study recommended that the national schools should emphasize the role of strategy leadership styles with view of improving on the academic performance of their schools. However strategy leadership styles variables alone cannot influence the academic performance of their schools as strategy leadership styles were found not to have a significant influence on the academic performance with a P value of 0.307. This was largely attributed to the fact that the national schools have a set policies and procedures in which leaders are required to adopt hence little variances in terms of leadership styles in various schools and leadership styles for an individual is hence not a key determinant of academic performance in national schools. School should however focus on leadership traits, resource availability and strategy execution plan besides variables of leadership styles.

Keywords: Academic Performance, Strategic Leadership Style,

I. Introduction

According to Northhouse (2007) Leadership is that process where an individual impacts on a group of individuals with the intent of achieving a common goal. Various previous studies have firmed up that leadership styles has a direct relationship with performance - school of thought. The Upper echelon theory Hambrick & Mason (1984) suggests that organizations are reflections of top managers' cognitions and values. Hambrick & Finkelstein (1987) imply that the amount of discretion enjoyed by top managers will moderate the relationship between their strategic choices and organizational outcomes. The greater the discretion the more the impact the leaders choices will have on organizational outcomes. Cannella & Monroe (1997) define discretion as a summary of variable that incorporates environmental constraints, organizational factors and individual differences as reflected by demographic and personality characteristics.

In a rapidly changing and highly demanding world there is continual high stakes in the academia fraternity. Learning institution are expected to continually produce top performing students. The leadership of this schools in equal measure is expected to continually lead the organizations ethically and significantly. The values vested by this should go beyond the present to the future. With the ever increasing demands to the principals in relation to the academic deliverables, it is difficult for most of the leaders to see beyond the academic performance at present. Most are concern with the now. However the successful principals will be those that look beyond the now.

Strategic leadership, is an ability by the leader to anticipate, prepare and position for the future (Serfontien & Hough, 2011); It has also been observed to be the leaders ability to anticipate, create a vision, empower others and exercise flexibility, to create a strategic and viable future of the organization (Kleijnen, Dolmans, Muijtjens, Willems, & Van Hout, 2009). Leaders who are strategic leaders formulate the goals and strategies for the organization. They do this by developing structures and processes that impact the present and future performance of the organization. (Boal K. &, 2001). They are experienced, senior leaders that are knowledgeable and have the ability to create a vision and execute plans and make significant decisions in the dynamic environment (Guillot, 2003). This strategic leaders have the direct influence on leadership at present and also are concerned with the future of the organization. It is therefore appropriate to firm up that there being many contributory factors to the success and the failure of the organization at large according to Bass (2009); leadership is often regarded to as the single most critical factor in the success of failure of institutions. Different leadership styles have varying impact on the performance of institutions in both long and short term. Amongst the various leadership styles, strategic leadership has been observed to have immediate and long term impact in

the organization. Great leaders are arbitrated by the impact they legacy of their tenure. A vibrant, vital organisation that is competitive and determined to excel is, an essential component for a leader (Boal & Hooijberg, 2001). This means the leaders need to get their teams working in sync, understanding and embracing the vision and goals set ahead.

Strategic leadership has been defined as determining where an organization was heading and how to get there. According to the Cheng, 2000, strategic leadership largely entails strategic and 'long-range' forecasting, and was a process that was viewed to mainly belong to the upper management mainly. However progressively it is clear that strategic leadership not just about having the vision but also achieving the desired future. Strategic leadership acknowledges presence of uncertainty of the expected future and it accordingly develops strategies to tackle the unknown (Quong & Walker, 2010). Of the various impact of strategic leadership, alignment is considered to be an integral component of this type of leadership. According to Khadem (2008: 29), alignment is crucial to success. Alignment is that state in which strategy, employees, customers and key processes work in sync to drive growth and profits. Aligned organizations have satisfied customers, fulfilled employees and superior services and products. Further they have better returns to the shareholders (Labovitz, 2004: 30). The right planning results in the right work structures resulting in the development of cohesion amongst team members, which results in the positive output. An important correlate of effective performance is cohesiveness of the group. Therefore development of alignment among team members is an important part of team management. The planning is derived from the goals and objectives of all the stakeholders of the school. The strategy on the other hand is guided by the leadership of the organization. The synergy between the two components results in the success of the organization. The significance of strategic leadership has been deeply researched but in relation to the key factors within this leadership that result in success are still progressively being researched. These questions give rise to the problem statement and objectives addressed in this study. What key factors of the strategic leader make the difference in this competitive landscape? It would seem that some leaders definitely do influence organizational performance (Smith, Carson & Alexander, 1984: 765). In this context this inherently means that the head teachers are congruently responsible for the school performance. The choices in policy, procedure and strategy they make; determining the success or failure of the school. The principal as the leader of the school is invariable impacted by discretionary factors that may influence the outcome; his ability in absorbing and adapting to this factors determine if he will success or fail. There are among the many components of leadership that congruently contribute to the success or failure of the organization. Several reasons indicate that there should be a relationship between leadership style and organizational performance. Zhu et al. (2005), suggest that a visionary type of leadership will result in high levels of cohesion, commitment, trust, motivation, and hence performance in the new organizational environments. Visionary leaders will generate a strategic vision for an expected future state, communicates the vision, model the vision, and ensures a buy-in towards the vision (Avolio, 1999; McShane and Von Glinow, 2000). On the other hand, transactional leadership helps organizations achieve their current objectives more efficiently by linking job performance to valued rewards and by ensuring that employees have the resources needed to get the job done (Zhu, Chew, & Spangler, 2005). Mehra, Smith, Dixon, & Robertson, (2006) argue that when some organizations seek efficient ways to enable them excel in their performance, the key is to focus on the effects of leadership. On the other hand, substantial current literature studying school leadership postulates that leadership has a minimal direct impact on student achievement (Rose & Gray, 2006). Kruger, Witziers, & Slegers (2007) hypothesised that leadership is no longer proposed as having a direct influence on academic outcomes, but indirectly influences instructional organization and culture of the learning institutions. A clear understanding of the impact leadership on performance is hence important as research has indicated as it is considered to be a critical driving force for improving an organization performance. A review of the educational leadership in our country details that the school leadership structure in Kenya is hierarchical with the principal at the top then the deputy principal, the director of studies, heads of departments, teachers then students. In relation to the governing of the school there are two legal bodies tasked with managing the school and parent students' interest. The board of governors (BOG) is tasked with the management of the school as per the Education Act cap 211 and the Parent Teacher Association was established with the role of addressing the school needs by raising funds to facilitate the school projects. According to the Head Teacher's manual the principal is responsible for the planning, organizing, directing, controlling, staffing, innovation, coordinating and motivating for the actualizing the education goals and objectives of the institution and country. He is the key decision maker and determinant of the system of planning in the school. To this end in accordance with Goddard, Hoy, & Hoy, (2000) Goddard and Emerson (1993) wherein he asserts that there is a strong relation between the quality of a school and leadership, the performance of the school is largely determined by leadership quality. Fry (2003) defines leadership as provision of guidance in strategy to offer inspiring motivation and to enhance the staff's perspective for growth and development. Studies have suggested that effective leadership behaviours can facilitate the improvement of performance when organizations face these new challenges (McGrath and MacMillan, 2000; Teece, Pisano and Shuen, 1997).

Success in the national public high schools is measured mainly by performance of students' in external examinations. Examinations are used among others to measure the level of candidates' achievements and clarify the candidates' level of education and training. They also provide the basis for evaluating the curriculum both at local and national level. A student's performance in any examination is dependent such variables include the type of school and the facilities in this schools, the level of qualification of the teachers, the academic panache, the qualification and leadership style by the head teacher, the school environment and the teachers (Lydia & Nasongo, 2009). The main role of the instructional leader is to ensure that the mission achievement of the established mission through creating a good environment for the schools (Lezotte, 2001). According the (Graddy & Stevens, 2005) there was a negative relationship between the pupil teacher ration and the academic performance of the students. Munir & Khalil (2016) established that the effect of the leadership behaviour of principals on student did not have a significant impact on the performance of the students

Amongst the vast studies conducted in Kenya in relation to Leadership styles there is yet to be a study on strategic leadership alignment on academic performance. Mang'olla (1977), Asunda (1983) and Kariuki (1988) researched on leadership behaviour but not on styles and performance. Ursula (2000) researched on the influence of leadership styles on academic performance in Nairobi province, Njuguna (1998) researched on the relationship between head teacher's leadership styles and general performance of KCSE examination in Nairobi province. Mwamuye (2012) studied the role of leadership in performance of primary schools in Kenya. Musungu & Nasongo (2008) studied on the impact of the head-teacher's instructional role in academic achievement in secondary schools. Okelo (2011) researched on influence of Head teachers' strategies in Starehe district. Akoth (2011) investigated the influence of head teacher's leadership style on job satisfaction among public secondary schools teachers. Nyongesa (2014) studied on head teacher's leadership style on school on school academic performance in Kenya Secondary Schools. Nyamboga et al. (2014) evaluated the impact of leadership styles on the performance of public secondary schools in the national examination in the Tana River County, Kenya. However there is no research which has explored strategic leadership alignment correlation with academic performance in relation to schools in Kenya.

Various studies have varying perspectives in relation to the effectiveness of a school; particularly in regard to performance. Martimore, (1998) maintains that effective schools are the schools wherein the students score higher on achievement text that might be expected from the characterization at entry whilst Hoy and Miskey (2008) reckons that schools effectiveness is usually judged through academic performance results. In the most general sense, school effectiveness refers to the level of goal attainment of a school (Prof.Scheerens, 2013). According to Schreerens (1999) school effectiveness research, the context of school performance is not limited to ranking alone it is also based on value add to the students. However research tradition in educational effectiveness has varied according to the emphasis that is put on the various antecedent conditions of educational outputs Amongst the five factors related to effectiveness in schools, according to (Edmonds, 1979) frequent evaluation of pupil progress was such a factor related to school effectiveness. Academic evaluation of the students' performance is an aspect that is undisputedly accepted as parameter that is used to determine the effectiveness a school. In our country the national examinations provide a standardized evaluation of the students across the country. The performance of the students on this examination in relation to the school, guides the question of how effective was the school in having equipped the students for the examinations. Thus it would be ideal to conclude that the performance of the students in a particular school is directly relation to the effectiveness of the institution. Numerous reviews on school effectiveness have been published since the late seventies. Notably there is a fairly large consensus on the main categories of variables that are distinguished as effectiveness enhancing conditions in the reviews, more so when earlier and more recent reviews are compared. Schreerens (1999) highlights the consensus being largest in relation to the following factors: achievement orientation, co-operation, educational leadership, frequent monitoring, time, opportunity to learn and structure. Of the six factors highlighted as factors that enhance the school effectiveness, the focus of this study will mainly be on leadership and evaluation of how in particular strategic leadership impacts effectiveness. To this end for the purpose of this study school performance in relation to the achievement in the national exam KCSE is considered to be academic performance.

A strategically-focused school is one that in regard to educationally effective in the short term but has clear guidelines, policies and procedures to convert the moral and the vision into an education that is fulfilling, challenging and sustainable in the long run. (Davies, Davies, & Ellison, 2015).In the quest to establish the impact of strategic leadership alignment on academic performance, strategic leadership alignment constituents' namely strategic leadership style, strategic leadership traits and strategy execution will be part parameters for impact on academic performance to determine what component in strategic leadership is critical to the academic performance of the students.

According to Greenwald, Hedges, & Laine (1996), broad range of resources positively impacted the performance outcomes of students. Of the resources under consideration in the various studies, are teachers availability, funds, amenities, laboratories. Each of this resources is considered to have varying relationships

with the performance of the students.. The study will use resource availability as a moderating variable. The role of resources in performance of firms cannot be undermined. Resource dependence perspective provides valuable explanation on the interaction between organizations and their environment, how organizations cope with environmental constraints, and how the environment and different strategies affect organization's outcomes. Macedo & Pinho, (2006) are of the view that organizations are not isolated entities free from external pressures and acting on their own will. Instead they consistently in direct or indirect interaction with other entities in the environment where resource exchange relationships take place. According to the resource dependence theory, institutions are dependent on the resources within their environment (Fadare, 2013). Resources include but not limited to assets, capabilities, organizational processes, information, and knowledge that contribute to improved organizational efficiency and effectiveness (Daft, 2001). In this study the resources that under consideration for the moderating variable in the quest to determine if they have an impact on performance are infrastructure, government funding and teachers.

II. Literature Review

Strategic Leadership Theory

The competencies of a strategic leader can be categorized into two; in relation to the organization and individual abilities. A conclusively afore mentioned, a strategic leadership the leader has to make decisions in relation to the future taking consideration of the present and the probable future. He has to ensure that the strategies adopted allow for the dynamism of the expected market environment. To be able to undertake this role the leader must understand the relationship between his ability and the value creation. Davies (2004) argues the key to that strategic focus is the quality of the strategic leadership in the school. Such a leader should have the organizational ability to be strategically orientated; able to translate strategy into action; can align people and organizations toward a goal; is able to determine effective strategic intervention points; and develops strategic competencies.

According to Ireland and Hitt (2002) there is a definite relationship among the leadership's characteristics, an organization's strategies, and its performance. When the board of directors/ governors and the leadership in the institution are involved in shaping an organization's direction, the organization generally improves its performance critical element of strategic leadership and organizational performance, is the ability of leadership to manage and utilize the organization's resource portfolio. This includes integrating resources to create capabilities and leveraging those capabilities through strategies to build competitive advantages and high performance.

Criteria of effective Strategic Leadership

The search for strategic leadership competencies has been a continual process. In the early 1980s there was the feel that leadership had been exhaustively explored however some researchers felt that there was more to be explored leading to a culmination point that led to studies on transformational, visionary leadership, organizational change, charismatic leadership and thereafter strategic leadership. During this phase the competencies that were identified for strategic leadership were vast. Steve Covey states that strategic leaders have basic functions; path finding, aligning and empowering (Wong, Gerras, Kidd, Pricone, & Swengros, 2003; Hayat, Hussain, & Sardar; Weiss, 2006).

Kim Boal and Robert Hooijberg distill the essence of strategic leadership to three factors—effective strategic leaders must create and maintain absorptive and adaptive capacity in addition to obtaining managerial wisdom (Wong L.et al., 2003; Compton, 2008;Duursema, 2013). According the Army Leadership the Army's doctrinal leadership manual there are 41 competencies addressing the direct, organizational and strategic levels (Wong L.et al., 2003; (Head Quarters Department of the Army , 2015). A review of the detailed literature and other literature details vast array of competencies of strategic leadership. Part of the difficulty encountered by anyone desiring to adjust leader development or education efforts is the broad array of competencies presented in the literature (Wong et al., 2003). Strategic leaders are concerned with not just managing the present status, but also setting up a framework of where the organizations should be in the future (Davies & Davies, 2004). Effective strategic leadership practices also includes focusing attention on outcomes and processes; seeking to acquire and leverage knowledge; fostering learning and creativity; anticipating internal and external environmental changes; maintaining a global mindset; meeting the diversity of the interests of the multiple stakeholder; building for the long-term while meeting short-term needs; developing human capital (Bass, 2007). The Davis and Davis (2004) model has this components describing the strategic leader within a learning institutions environment.

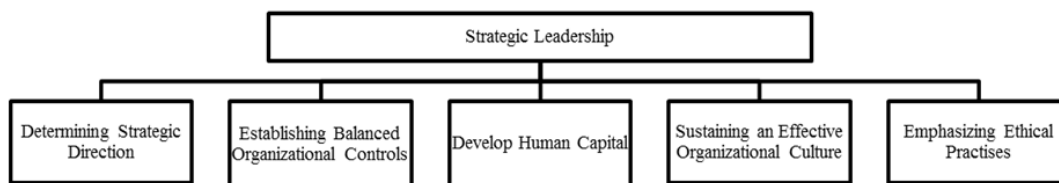


Figure 1 Strategic Leaderships Influence on the Management Process

Source: Hoskisson, Hitt & Ireland (2004).

Hoskisson, Hitt, & Ireland (2004) defines strategic leadership as the managerial ability to anticipate, envision, maintain flexibility, and empower others to create strategic change. They identified key activities that top management should focus on to contribute to the performance of the organization. These are determination of effective strategic direction, development of human capital, emphasizing on ethical practises, establishment of balanced organizational controls, exploiting core competencies and sustaining an effective organization culture.

Strategic Leadership connotes focus on the management of an overall enterprise, not just a small unit; it also implies substantive decision-making responsibilities, beyond the interpersonal and relational aspects usually associated with leadership (Finkelstein, Hambrick, & Cannella Jr, 2009). Rowe (2001) defined strategic leadership as the ability to influence others to voluntarily make day-to-day decisions that enhance the long-term viability of the organization, while at the same time maintaining its short-term financial stability. Amos (2007) defines strategic leadership as the ability to understand the entire organization and the environments within which they operate and using this understanding to create strategic change through other people so as to position the organization in the environment for both short-term stability and long-term viability. A strategic leader makes decisions every day that impact people of different cultures, agencies, agendas, personalities, and desires. It requires the devising of plans that are feasible, desirable, and acceptable to one's organization and partners whether joint, interagency, or multinational (Junarso, 2009). It is thereby crucial that strategic leaders should have the ability to make sound, reasoned decisions specifically, consequential decisions with grave implications. Since the aim of strategy is to determine the ends, choose the best ways, and apply the most effective means (Col Guillot, 2003). "Strategic leadership involves activating agendas that infuse organizations not just with change visions, but also with sustained capacity for change implementation". Further, strategic leaders display dissatisfaction with the present, absorptive capacity, adaptive capacity and wisdom (Duursema, 2013).

Harray (2008) indicates that strategic leadership involves ability of leaders to have wisdom and vision to create and execute plans and make consequential decisions in the volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous strategic environment. Similarly, Mungonge (2014) notes that strategic leadership involves the creation of environment that supports achievement of organizational goals and roles of monitoring external environment to take advantage of opportunities as well as defend against threats. Serfontein (2010) examined the Impact of Strategic Leadership on the Operational Strategy and Performance of Business Organizations in South Africa. The study noted that strategic leadership is about the ability to position the organization to meet its future objectives through mobilization and focusing of resources in the action steps required for this achievement. The ability to position the organization's future is recurrent in other definitions of strategic leadership. Njiri (2016) indicates that strategic leadership refers to the ability of leaders to create and recreate reasons for organization's continued existence through meeting today's organizational deliverables while constantly monitoring changes within the organizational environment. This environmental scanning involves the examining factors that may undermine the operations of the organization as well as any opportunities that are present in the environment. While still emphasizing on the positioning the organization for the future.

Strategic Leadership style

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anyone desiring to adjust leader development or education efforts is the broad array of competencies presented in the literature (Wong et al., 2003). This research mainly focuses on Davies organizational and individual competencies (Davies & Davies, 2004).

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Strategic Leadership – Strategic Oriented

The function of strategy is to translate the moral purpose and vision into reality. School leaders articulate the definition of the organization's moral purpose which can be considered as 'why we do what we do'. The values that underpin this moral purpose are linked to the vision setting 'where we want to be and what sort of organization we want to be in the future these ability to consider long –term future is termed as strategic orientation; generally looks at least five to ten years into the future (Beare, 2001; Hitt L.M, D.J, & X.G, 2002 Hagen, Hassan, & Amin, 1998). Strategic orientation is a way of developing strategies, it involves analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. It to Naver & Slater (1990) a number of realistic alternatives and provides a prioritization. According a firms strategic orientation reflects that strategic direction implemented by a firm to create the proper behaviour of the continuous superior performances of the business (Liu & Fu, 2011).

According to Porter as cited by Hammonds (2001) chief strategist of an organization have to be the leaders such as the CEO. This is due to the emphasized inking has stressed the notion of empowerment, of pushing down and involving many people. This is crucial, but empowerment and involvement do not apply to the ultimate act of choice. There is a link between the strength of the leader in making definite decisions and the effectiveness of the strategy. According to Hammonds (2001), there is a striking relationship between really effective strategies and really strong leaders.Hence provision of strategic direction in strategic leadership includes a component of strategic direction and provision vision. The development of organizational vision and the ability to manage the change engendered by visions represent core organizational competencies that foster a competitive advantage for organizations (Zaccaro& Banks, 2004: 367). The principal of the school as the leader must be able to communicate the vision of the organization in order for him to succeed in cascading the vision. He must be a visionary, seeing beyond the here and the now as it is a critical element for anyone in a leadership position because it is closely aligned with future-directed goals (Orndoff, 2002).Strategy, therefore, is translating the vision and moral purpose into action. It is a delivery mechanism for building the direction and the capacity for the organization to achieve that directional shift or change. This translation requires a proactive transformational mind-set which strives for something better rather than the maintenance approach of transactional leadership. A significant factor in organizations that have successfully transformed themselves from those that labour mightily to produce little more than business as usual, is the possession of a long-term strategic intent that aligns the actions and beliefs of everyone in the organization towards a challenging goal.

Ability To Translate Strategy Into Action

Strategic leaders make and communicate decisions for their organizations' future (Bass, 2007: 36). They formulate the organizations' goals and strategies; develop structures, processes, controls and core competencies for the organization; manage multiple constituencies; choose key executives; groom the next generation of executives provide direction with respect to organizational strategies: maintain an effective organizational culture; sustain a system of ethical values; and serve as the constituencies, as well as negotiate with them. Strategic implementation is the most important yet the most difficult part of strategic leadership (Brecken, 2004). According to David & David (2004) Kaplan and Norton (2001) argue that strategy can be translated into action through the use of 'strategy maps' and 'balanced scorecards' as they 'provide a framework to describe and communicate strategy in a consistent and insightful way'. Execution of strategy entails the transformation of the current frame of mind of the institution. When executing change / translating the culture of the organization; there are two principal aspects that have to change; the culture – the mind-set and the behaviour of the people within the organization. Wilson (1997) states 'organizational change has two principal aspects; change in mission and strategy and change in culture and behaviour" to ensure alignment. According to Tichy and Sharman (1993) there is a three stage process to transform the strategy into action; Firstly there is the awakening stage; it involves building an agreement within the school that a continuation of the current way of working will not deliver the effectiveness desired in the future. Secondly is the envisioning stage. This entails

the creation of a clear picture of what the new way of operating looks like and creation of the capacity to achieve it. Finally there is the new architecture of the new institution or in this case a school then emerges. It is important to remember that strategy is a neutral delivery vehicle. If you have a poor vision and a dubious moral purpose then a good strategic process and approach may effectively deliver it for you (Davies, 2015). This means that the strategy's existence is not in a vacuum environment it requires be part of a wider process of values-led leadership and futures visioning.

Strategic Leaders The Ability To Align People

Alignment in an organization suggest that there is strong connection between the employees activities, organization structures and product offering. Chorn, 1991; Labovitz & Rosansky, 1997 stated that the strength of the alignment theory is its ability to pool the organization members into a more logical and cohesive structure. They concurred that the alignment is essential because it “provides a way for capturing the best approaches by linking strategy and people and integrating them with customers and process improvement”. The strategic leader in the schools- the principal has the role to align the staff. The principal should govern the strategic conversation and dialogue relating to the issues and concerns facing school and the future outlook of the school. These conversations enable people to develop a strategic perspective of what the school might become. Further engagements in discussions evokes staff participation which leads to greater participation and increase in understanding. The process of greater awareness and participation in discussion is a key way which develops alignment. This is because the leader aligns by motivating individuals in the organization as they develop a strategic cause in which individuals contribute leading to increased commitment and effort. Gratton (2000) advocates developing ‘emotional capabilities, trust-building capabilities and capabilities to build a ‘psychological contract’ as the means of engaging and motivating staff. When people are involved and part of something they believe in they are better able to identify with the short and long term goals of the strategy. Building commitment to values and long-term ambitions provides individuals with a vision and sense of direction that allows them to put short term problems and challenges into context (Davies & Davies, 2004).

Strategic Leaders Are Able To Effectively Determine Effective Intervention Points

Additionally in creating alignment within the organization the leader should building capability within this organization. This is achieved through the strategic conversation and enhanced participation building greater personal and organizational capability and capacity. Given that the major resource of any organization is the quality of its human capital, then enhancing that quality should be a major organizational focus. It is useful to differentiate between capability and capacity. Capacity can be considered the resource level that is available at any given moment to achieve an objective. Capability is that mix of skills and competencies possessed by the people in the organization which is needed to achieve the task. The right number of people may not, at a particular juncture, have the right skills. However, when they do, it can be said that both capacity and capability are present. Boisot, (2003) states that, ‘we shall use the term capability to depict a strategic skill in the application and integration of competencies’. This idea was seen by a school leader as: ‘the ability to work at challenges together to bring skills of other people to bear so the organization can learn to solve problems and not just rely on simplistic external solutions’. (Davies & Davies, B.J, 2006).

The leadership challenge of when to make a significant strategic change is as critical to success as choosing what strategic change to make. The issue of timing can rest on leadership intuition (Parikh, 1994) as much as on rational analysis. When individuals in the organization are ready for change, when the organization needs the change and when the external constraints and conditions force the change, all have to be balanced one against the other. Such judgment is manifested in not only knowing what and knowing how but also knowing when (Boal & Hooijberg, 2001)as important, knowing what not to do (Kaplan & Norton, 2001). Therefore we could add to this list knowing what to give up or abandon in order to create capacity to undertake the new activity. Several of the school leaders in the study talked about the critical issue of strategic timing, of getting the time right for change for themselves and others in the school. School leaders also talked about this timing being intuitive (Davies, B & Davies, B.J., 2006). If the strategic timing is wrong it can have devastating effects on the school. People will be divided, and realizing the strategy will therefore be impossible. In addition to the critical skill of strategic timing is that of strategic abandonment. If a school adopts a new way of doing things or adopts a new strategic priority, how that fits into an already crowded agenda has to be considered. Sometimes this strategies have been abandoned as they did not tie into the current impacting factors. This may result in the institution abandoning the current strategy for the more likely one which will be in tune with the emerging concerns.

Developing Strategic Capabilities

Strategic capability can be defined as the resources and competences of an organization need to survive and prosper. Prahalad & Hamel(1990) use the term ‘core competencies’ whileStalk, Evans, & Schulman (1992)use the term ‘strategic capabilities’. Davies & Davies (2006) The strategic capabilities are divided into

two categories; threshold capabilities and capabilities for competitive advantage which are comprised of unique resources and core competencies, both difficult to imitate for competitors Johnson, Scholes and Whittington., (2009) identify strategic capabilities are those resources and competences capabilities needed by an organization to meet minimum customer requirements and for its survival or they could be the threshold competences required to deploy resources so as to meet customers' requirements and support particular strategies.

To survive and prosper an organization needs to understand the challenges of the environment that it faces. It should be clear the capable of delivering in terms of the critical success factors that arise from demands and needs of its customers. The strategic capability to do so is dependent on the resources and the competences it has. These must reach a threshold level in order for the organization to survive. Additionally the organization should be capable of achieving competitive advantage, this requires it to have strategic capabilities that its competitors find difficult to imitate or obtain, it could be in form of a resource or core competences of the organization (The strategic position: strategic capabilities, 2007)

III. Objective of the Study

To determine the impact of strategic leadership style on academic performance of the National schools in Kenya.

IV. Methodology

The study used descriptive research design. A population is the complete group of entities that will be examined in the study (Zikmund, Babin, Carr, & Griffin, 2013). The target population is examined using the units of observation and units of analysis. The unit of observation refers to the units in which the information is received and statistics are compiled or an object about which information is collected (Cooper & Schindler, 2003). The unit of observation has also been defined as the identifiable organizations or physical entities which are able to report data about their activities (Mugenda, 2003). The unit of observation for this study was the national secondary schools deputies or department heads in Kenya in the 103 national schools. According to the Ministry of Education (2017), there are 103 national schools within the country. The total number of students in these national schools is approximately 107388. The national schools are represented in every county thus the information gathered would be representing the country. To ensure that the results acquired were not influenced by aspects of differentiation of the schools in entities such as cognitive ability of the students, infrastructure, government funding a choice to use institutions that are somewhat at par in resources was reached. This ensured that neither of the schools had an added advantage in relation to resources. The sample size of this study was 93 principals of national secondary schools that were drawn using census sampling. Therefore, 93 questionnaires were distributed to the respondents of which only 87 questionnaires were returned making a response rate of 93%. The six unreturned questionnaires were attributed to unwillingness amongst some principals to participate in the study. This is despite the issuance of a consent letter indicating that (i) the study is meant for an academic purpose only, (ii) maintenance of anonymity in their responses, and (iii) promise of keeping their information confidential. This response rate was deemed sufficient for study. This is because Sekaran & Bougie, (2011) indicates that a response rate of over 85% being excellent, 70-85% very good, 60-70% acceptable and below 50% not acceptable.

V. Findings And Discussions

Frequency Distribution of Strategic Leadership Style

In respect to the national school having a formal procedure of evaluating the school principal, a majority of 59.8% of the respondents strongly agreed on the metric. A cumulative percentage of 100% were in agreement that their schools observed ethics right from the staff members to the students. In relations to the monitoring of ethical behavior, a majority of 70.1% of the respondents strongly agreed that they monitored their staff and students to ensure ethical behavior. In respect to the gathering and analysis of relevant data and information for our strategic planning process, 2.3%, 48.3%, and 49.4% of the respondents were neutral, agreed and strongly agreed respectively in relations to the metric.

Table 1: Frequency Distribution of Strategic Leadership Style

	SD	D	N	A	SA
	Freq. (%)	Freq. (%)	Freq. (%)	Freq. (%)	Freq. (%)
We have a formal procedure to evaluate The School principal	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	1 1.10%	34 39.10%	52 59.80%
We ensure ethical behavior in all our students, faculty and staff	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	32 36.80%	55 63.20%
We have established clear measures to monitor ethical behavior of students, faculty and staff	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	26 29.90%	61 70.10%
We gather and analyze relevant data and information for	0	0	2	42	43

our strategic planning process	0.00%	0.00%	2.30%	48.30%	49.40%
We take a long-term view when planning for our organization's future opportunities and directions	0	0	0	42	45
We specify timetables for accomplishing our strategic objectives	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	48.30%	51.70%
Our strategic objectives are aimed at developing a competitive leadership position in our educational offerings	0	0	1	41	45
Our strategic objectives address both short- and long-term challenges and opportunities	0.00%	0.00%	1.1	47.10%	1.70%
We convert our strategic objectives into short- and long-term action plans to accomplish the objectives	0	0	1	46	40
Strategic plans are translated into specific requirements for each work unit or department	0.00%	0.00%	1.10%	52.90%	46.00%
Improvement plans are regularly upgraded	0	0	0	39	48
	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	44.80%	55.20%
	0	0	0	41	46
	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	47.10%	52.90%
	0	0	0	34	53
	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	39.10%	60.90%
	0	0	0	30	57
	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	-34.50%	-65.50%

All the respondents agreed to consider the long-term when laying down their strategies. The same was observed when 98% of the respondents agreed to their principals using timetables with only 1.1% of being neutral. On the other hand, a majority of 52.9% of the respondents were agreed that their school's objectives are aimed at ensuring competitive leadership while 46.0% of the respondents strongly agreed with the metric. The aspect of creation of competitive leadership is of importance to the academic performance of the school. These results are compared to Litz, Juma, & Carroll (2016) study in Greece secondary schools that indicated the importance of competitive leadership. Amongst the competitive aspects of leadership that the study identified include creation of conducive school climate, school leadership, personnel management, administration and school management, student management, and relationships with parents and the community but that they desired to improve with regard to curriculum development and professional and in-service development. A 100% of the respondents were affirmative that their schools' strategies were geared at ensuring that both long-term and short term challenges and opportunities are met. In relations to the school breaking down, long-term strategies into smaller short term goals, 47.1% and 52.9% of the respondents agreed and strongly agreed respectively. All the respondents (100%) were affirmative that their schools and management in general define the work requirements for each department and work unit in their schools. A majority of 60.9% of the respondents strongly agreed that Strategic plans were translated into specific requirements for each work unit or department. Finally, a cumulative percentage of 100% indicated that in their school the improvement plans were regularly upgraded and stakeholders had loyalty.

Means and of Strategic Leadership Styles

The means and the standard deviations of strategic leadership styles were examined using a five point likert scale with descriptors Strongly Disagree (SD), Disagree (D), Uncertain (U), Agree (A) and Strongly Agree (SA). These were represented as 1,2,3,4 and 5 respectively in the SPSS input spread sheet.

Table 2: Means and Standard Deviations of Strategic Leadership Styles

		Mean	Respondents on average tended to;	Std. Dev.	Responses Distributed around the mean;
We have a formal procedure to evaluate The School principal	87	4.5862	Strongly Agree	0.51831	Moderately
We ensure ethical behavior in all our students , faculty and staff	87	4.6322	Strongly Agree	0.48501	Closely
We have established clear measures to monitor ethical behavior of students, faculty and staff	87	4.7011	Strongly Agree	0.46041	Closely
We gather and analyze relevant data and information for our strategic planning process	87	4.4713	Agree	0.54643	Moderately
We take a long-term view when planning for our organization's future opportunities and directions	87	4.5172	Strongly Agree	0.5026	Moderately
We specify timetables for accomplishing our strategic objectives	87	4.5057	Strongly Agree	0.52548	Moderately
Our strategic objectives are aimed at developing a competitive leadership position in our educational offerings	87	4.4483	Agree	0.52293	Moderately
Our strategic objectives address both short- and long-term challenges and opportunities	87	4.5517	Strongly Agree	0.5002	Moderately
We convert our strategic objectives into short- and long-term action plans to accomplish the objectives	87	4.5287	Strongly Agree	0.50207	Moderately
Strategic plans are translated into specific requirements for each work unit or department	87	4.6092	Strongly Agree	0.49076	Closely
Improvement plans are regularly upgraded	87	4.6552	Strongly Agree	0.47807	Closely

The interpretation of the scores $1 < \mu < 1.5$, $1.5 < \mu < 2.5$, $2.5 < \mu < 3.5$, $3.5 < \mu < 4.5$, and $4.5 < \mu \leq 5$ where μ represents the mean were that the respondents on average tended to strongly disagree, disagree, be uncertain, agree and strongly agree respectively in relations to the given metric. On the other hand, the standard deviation interpretation with the scores $0 < \sigma X < 0.5$, $0.5 < \sigma X < 1$, and $\sigma X \geq 1$ implied that the responses were concentrated around the mean (high consensus), responses were moderately distributed, and there was no consensus on the given metric respectively. All the responses of the strategic leadership style were moderately distributed since they had a standard deviation between 0.5 and 1.0 except on four metrics. These five metrics included; We ensure ethical behavior in all our students, faculty and staff; We have established clear measures to monitor ethical behavior of students, faculty and staff; Strategic plans are translated into specific requirements for each work unit or department, and Improvement plans are regularly upgraded which standard deviations of less than 0.5 signifying that the responses were closely distributed around the mean and hence high consensus.

Multiple Linear Regression of Strategic Leadership Style

The cumulative effect of strategic leadership styles on the academic performance was examined using multiple linear regression analysis. The positive multiple correlation coefficient (R) indicated the cumulative effect of strategic leadership strategic leadership is positively correlated to academic performance of national schools. There is a strong and positive correlation of 0.524 between the strategic leadership styles and academic performance of national schools. On the other hand, the coefficient of determination (R Square) of 0.274 indicates that 27.4% of the variance in academic performance can be attributed to strategic leadership styles in national schools.

Table 3: Model Summary of Strategic Leadership Styles

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.524 ^a	0.274	0.04	1.52241

a. Predictors: (Constant), Strategic Leadership Styles

To examine if the multiple linear regression was a good fit for data, then the ANOVA of strategic leadership styles was examined. Since $F(21, 65) = 1.170$, $p > 0.05$ then the model was considered not a good predictor of academic performance as a p value of 0.307, implied a 30.7% likelihood of a multiple linear regression model giving the wrong responses. Therefore, the multiple linear regressions of strategic leadership styles was not undertaken.

Table 4: ANOVA of Strategic Leadership Styles

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	56.937	21	2.711	1.17	.307 ^b
	Residual	150.652	65	2.318		
	Total	207.588	86			

a. Dependent Variable: Overall average score for 2015 KCSE

Predictors: (Constant), Strategic Leadership Styles

VI. Recommendation

The study recommended that the national schools should emphasize the role of strategy leadership styles with view of improving on the academic performance of their schools. However strategy leadership styles variables alone cannot influence the academic performance of their schools as strategy leadership styles were found not to have a significant influence on the academic performance with a P value of 0.307. This was largely attributed to the fact that the national schools have a set policies and procedures in which leaders are required to adopt hence little variances in terms of leadership styles in various schools and leadership styles for an individual is hence not a key determinant of academic performance in national schools. School should however focus on leadership traits, resource availability and strategy execution plan besides variables of leadership styles.

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