
**INFLUENCE OF LEADERSHIP STYLES ON IMPLEMENTATION OF
STRATEGIC PLANS IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN
KAKAMEGA COUNTY, KENYA**

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Abstract

Successful implementation of strategic plans would improve internal efficiency and subsequently enhance good performance output that would enable institutions realize their vision. However, evidence from studies carried out, a number of institutions that have formulated strategic plans, implementation aspect poses a challenge and impedes them from realizing their vision. It was against this background, that this study was carried out with an aim of determining the influence of leadership styles on implementation of strategic plans in public secondary schools in Kakamega County. Specifically, the study sought to; establish the influence of school leadership styles - Autocratic, Transformative, Democratic and Laissez fair on the implementation of strategic plans in public secondary schools from Kakamega County. The study used a combination of descriptive survey design and correlation design and targeted a total of 1604 managers from public Secondary schools and 13 Ministry of Education Sub County Quality Assurance and Standards officers each from the 13 sub – Counties of Kakamega County. Multiple stage sampling techniques were applied. The study used questionnaires and interview schedules as instruments for data collection alongside document guide list. Questionnaires were validated through application of content validity analysis determined by expert judgement. Piloting of the questionnaires was carried out in four selected secondary schools and split half technique applied to ascertain the reliability of the instruments where a correlation co-efficient of above 0.8 indicated high reliability of instruments. Both descriptive statistics and multiple regression analysis were adopted. In addition, the researcher carried out document analysis of strategic plans for individual Schools sampled out. Both secondary and primary data was therefore used and analysed using a blending of qualitative and quantitative techniques. The study established that principals were employing to a greater extent, transformational, authoritative and democratic leadership styles and to a very lesser extent, laissez faire leadership

style in their schools. However, there was no significant relationships between these four leadership styles and implementation status of the school strategic plans at, $p < 0.05$ level of significance. The study recommends that, leadership styles be applied along other factors in order to enhance implementation of strategic plans in public secondary schools from Kakamega. It is envisaged that findings of this study would enhance execution of strategic plans in public secondary schools by secondary schools managers in Kakamega County, Kenya.

Keywords: Determinants, Efficiency, Performance, Public School, Strategic Plan and Strategic Implementation

Introduction

Literature on discourse regarding strategic planning process aver that implementation part of the process is the most difficult one Alexander (1985), Hrebiniak; (2006), Allio (2000), (Hussey 2000 and Thomson & Strick, 2003) all cited in Yang Li et al (2008), Pearce & Robinson (2007), Abok (2013) and Kirui (2013). Reasons advanced by these studies for the poor implementation of strategic plans among others point out such determinants as strategic leadership, human and financial resources, and management capacity.

The problem with dismal performance in organizations as noted from these studies is typically with implementation of the plans. Successful implementation of a strategic plan is key for any organizations success and survival. A good strategic plan is one that can be implemented. As Lawlor (2006) asserts that best plans and ideas without execution are just plans or ideas, they don't result in much of anything unless they are implemented. Against this background, this study therefore focused on influence of leadership styles on implementation of strategic plans specifically in public secondary schools from Kakamega County.

Globally, some countries have made it mandatory for schools to formulate strategic plans in line with national strategic plans. Bell (2002), notes that in 1989, the United Kingdom (UK) government put emphasis on the staff to develop their own priorities in line with national goals and objectives and come up with strategies to achieve them. In Australia, the government has gone a step ahead and made a guideline of what schools should include in their strategic plan (State of Victoria, 2010). The United Kingdom government passed the 1988 Education Reform Act which gave the responsibility of planning to schools (Giles, 1995) both cited in Njeru et al (2013).

Ezugwu (2013) observes that whereas some countries initiate and implement their development plans, others initiate but do not implement them. He goes on to state that 90% of the plans made by developed word like Japan are fully implemented while in contrast 90% of plans made in developing world like Nigeria are not fully implemented. As a result, even though sound plans are made in most of the developing countries no meaningful development is achieved as the objectives of the plans are not realized due to poor implementation of these plans.

In 1998 Uganda introduced the first five years Education Sector Investment Plan (ESIP), the first genuine educational sector programme (Government of Uganda, 2012). It focused principally on

primary education. It was followed by Education Sector Strategic Plan (ESSP) 2004 – 2015. The first ESSP revision 2007 – 2015 reflected towards free secondary and revision of the curriculum, while the second revision 2010 -2015 prioritised access, equity, relevance and efficiency of education (Government of Uganda, 2012). Currently, Education and Sports Sector Strategic Plan 2017 – 2020 under implementation aims at providing the policy framework that will guide the education sector through its ambitious goal of providing quality education with an insufficient resource envelope (Government of Uganda, 2017)

In Kenya, with the introduction of Results Based Management and Performance Contracting in early 2000, various ministries including the Ministry of Education were to come up with Ministerial Strategic plans. It was a statutory requirement that public organizations, including government ministries develop strategic plans as a means of enhancing result-based management and efficiency in their operations. Strategic planning process was to set the foundation of effective performance measurement systems as individuals and departments would be measured against the set targets. Performance management in public service was therefore to be operationalized by strategic plans. Consequently in 2006, Ministry of Education came up with her five year strategic plan 2006-2011 (Ngware, Odebero and Wamukuru 2006).

At Secondary schools level, Boards of Management (BoM) are charged with the responsibility of managing education. As managers of education, BoM are expected to keep in pace with current trends of management. They are supposed to embrace strategic planning process in their management. It is imperative therefore for them to formulate strategic plans for their respective schools and ensure implementation of the same. It should be noted that planning is one of the functions of management and therefore secondary schools BoM are expected to formulate schools strategic plans and align them with macro level policies and programs such as Vision 2030, Sessional paper No14 of 2013, Basic Education Act 2013 and MoE strategic plan.

According to Carter and Pucko (2010), while a well-formulated strategy, a strong and effective pool of skills and human capital are extremely important resource for strategy success, poor leadership is one of the main obstacles in successful strategy implementation. The need for effective leadership, they note, outweighs any other factor. From their observation therefore, one can deduce that leadership has a significant influence on implementation of strategic plans in organizations. This study therefore set out to establish the influence of leadership styles in implementation of strategic plans in public secondary schools from Kakamega County.

Hallinger and Heck (2002) opine that the critical aspect of leadership is helping a group to develop shared understanding about the organization, its activities and goals that can undergird a sense of purpose or vision. According to them, the most fundamental theoretical explanation for the importance of leaders' direction – setting practices are goal-based theories of human motivation. According to the theories, people are motivated by goals which they find personally compelling, as well as challenging but achievable. They further recommend that leaders should apply transformative leadership theory so as to influence positively their subjects.

Transformational leadership theory rests on assertion that certain leader behaviours can arouse followers to a higher level of thinking. By appealing to follower's ideals and values, transformational leaders enhance commitment to a well-articulated vision and inspire followers to develop new ways of thinking about problems. Transformational leaders make their organization's mission salient and persuade followers to forgo personal interest for the sake of the collective. When followers equate their own success with that of their organizations' and identify with the organizations' values and goals, they become more willing to cooperate in order to make a positive contribution to the work context. Their assertion echos Ngure (2013), who notes that the guidance and direction of the leaders, that is, leadership style is important in ensuring that strategies are implemented successfully and desired outcomes are achieved. In support of the above, Avolio and Bass (2004) aver that managers who exercise transformational leadership behaviour of inspirational motivation enjoys project success. Inspiration, they state, is defined as inspiring and empowering followers to enthusiastically accept and pursue challenging goals and mission.

Transformational leadership emphasizes the importance of leaders' relationship with followers. A transformational leader is a person who stimulates and inspires followers to achieve extraordinary outcomes. Robbins and Coulter (2007) posit that transformational leaders pay attention to the concern and developmental needs of individual followers. They change follower's awareness of issues by helping them to look at old problems in a new way, and they are able to arouse, excite and inspire followers to put extra effort to achieve organizational goals, objectives and vision. As Warrilow (2012) assert that, it is all about leadership that creates positive change in the followers whereby they take care of each other's interests and act in the interest of the organization.

While studying how implementation of co-operative strategies affect business units 'performance, Menguc, Auh and Shih (2007) argued that managers' use of transformational leadership skills results in the best competitive strategies, including innovation differentiation, marketing differentiation and low cost of product. They noted that this leadership style affects implementation by driving the strategy, maintaining focus, being visionary and acting as a driver for change management necessitated by the new strategy.

Koech and Namusonge (2012), conducted a study on the effect of leadership styles on organization performance. Their study was in State Corporation at Mombasa Kenya. One of the key variables was laissez faire leadership and transformational leadership styles. The results of the study showed that laissez faire leadership style was not significantly correlated to organizational performance. They therefore recommended that managers should discard laissez faire leadership by becoming more involved in guiding their subordinates and should formulate and implement effective reward and recognition system. Their study showed that adoption of democratic leadership style, where the owner and the employee are involved in the decision making improved implementation of strategic plan and so was the use of autocratic leadership style. Laissez fair leadership style, their study notes that, can only be used in situations where employees have high skills and are capable of working solely on their own, which is extremely rare in most organizations. As Nort house (2007) observe that laissez fair leaders abdicates

responsibilities and avoids making decisions. They instead let members in an organization to make all decisions. Since they believe in freedom of choice and avoids active participation in the responsibility of setting goals, clarifying expectations and giving directions.

In her study, Ngure (2013) observed that Co-operative bank predominantly uses participative (democratic) leadership style and transformational leadership style. She found out that this leadership styles greatly influenced strategy implementation. In her study, she observed that the guidance and direction of the leader, that is leadership style was important in ensuring that strategies are implemented successfully and desired outcomes are achieved. The key findings of the study were that Co-operative bank of Kenya predominantly use participative (democratic) leadership style and transformative leadership style. Her study found out that the two leadership styles greatly influenced strategy implementation and recommended that organizations should use various leadership styles characteristics to influence strategy implementation. This study sought to find out if this could be applicable to public secondary schools in Kakamega County.

Murigi (2013) conducted a study on influence of headteachers' leadership styles on pupils' performance in Murang'a Kenya. Her study revealed that the autocratic leadership style was the least significant in influencing of pupils. Autocratic style she observed had very little impact as compared to other styles of leadership. Autocratic leaders give clear expectations for what needs to be done, when it should be done and how it should be done. They make decisions independently with very little or no input from the followers. According to Fletcher (2001), autocratic leaders are rigid in their thinking and perceptions and believe that employees have minimal abilities and need extremely closer supervision and direction, and that controls are needed to their compliant behaviour. This style of leadership results in minimal or no innovation and virtually no personal or organizational change, growth and development. This could be probably why its impact on implementation is rated insignificant. However, this study set out to confirm whether this style was a determinant or not for strategic implementation in public secondary schools in Kakamega County.

Chege, Wachira and Mwenda (2015) sought to analyse the effect of leadership styles on implementation of strategic plans in Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in Nairobi. Their study recommended that organizations should use all the three leadership styles – autocratic, democratic and laissez faire, to maximize implementation of strategic plans. Their study found out that the fate of SMEs was closely related to the leadership style of the manager and the strategies they chose to implement.

According to Northouse (2007), democratic leadership is sometimes referred to as enlightened leadership. He asserts that an individual who employs this style recognizes each person's self-worth and esteem. This leadership style foster open communication among all employees at all level. Democratic leaders share decision making with other members. He further assert that this type of leadership is associated with higher morale in most situations since it puts emphasis on group participation alongside involving all employees in decision making, and reaching consensual decisions. It also encourages innovation and successful implementation of plans.

A study carried out by Ogbeide and Harington (2011) to determine relationship among participative management style, strategy implementation, success and financial performance in the food service industry in United States of America, found out that higher level of action plan implementation success for the restaurant firms were more likely to use participation in decision-making and plan execution. Small firms, they concluded were likely to use approach with greater participation than large firms.

Major objective of this study was to establish the influence of leadership styles on implementation of strategic plans. Chairpersons of secondary schools Boards of Management and Principals of public secondary schools are expected to provide leadership over their respective institutions. As leaders they are expected to influence their subordinates in realization of organizational goals and vision through their inherent leadership styles.

From the literature reviewed, studies aver that various leadership styles have different impact or varied influence on implementation of organizational goals. Some of these studies recommend application of all styles while others put emphasis on one or two styles of leadership for successful implementation. Inversely, other styles are dismissed by some studies as being insignificant in influencing implementation. This study therefore sought to establish the influence of leadership styles on implementation of strategic plans in public secondary schools of Kakamega County so as to concur with some of the studies or depart from them in case of divergent or contrary findings. In addition, the study sought to find out which leadership style is predominantly used in Kakamega County and its influences or effect on implementation of strategic plans in public secondary schools from the County.

Close to three decades ago, Alexander (1985) claimed that the overwhelming majority of the literature has been on the formulation of the strategy and only “lip services have been given to other side of the coin, namely strategy implementation”. This studies though increasing in numbers, are also considered “glamorous” (Artkinson, 2006). On the other hand, problems with implementation continue unabated (Alexander, 1985). This signals the need for balancing strategic planning with implementation based strategies and studies. Mwajuma (2013) observes that many studies have indicated that a number of organizations have slowly embraced strategic planning but the implementation process remains a challenge, resulting in well formulated strategies at times that fail at implementation stage.

Most of the organizations where the studies have been carried out on implementation of strategic plans are business enterprises, industries and corporate firms keen on profit making and increased production. Thus, firms embracing strategic planning process specifically to boost production for financial gains and profits. This study however analysed influence of leadership styles on implementation of strategic plans but at school level and with focus on human resource development factors that will enhance development of human capital and depart from profit making and increased production studies.

In their study, Njeru, Stephen and Wamboi (2013) specifically analysed factors that influence the formulation of strategic plans in Embu North District. Their study explored the link between

formulations of school strategic plans with employee motivation, availability of funds, support of top school leadership and employee know how. While their study basically dwelt on formulation of strategic plans, this study looked into implementation aspect of strategic plans in schools. This study therefore intended to fill this gap on strategic planning process by analysing influence of leadership styles implementation of strategic plans by secondary school managers in Kakamega County so as to aid in addressing the human capital state of the County.

Statement of the Problem

As a statutory requirement, all public institutions in Kenya were to develop strategic plans as a means of enhancing result based management and efficiency. In public secondary schools, strategic planning was to set the foundation for effective performance measurement and subsequently enhance overall school efficiency and performance. Implementation of strategic plans was expected to enhance school performance by focusing the energy, resources and time of everyone in the school in the same direction.

Abok (2013) observed that findings from various studies indicated that many organizations were slowly embracing strategic planning process but implementation part of it remained a challenge, resulting in well formulated strategies that failed at implementation stage. Alexander (1985) on the other hand opined that although strategy implementation was viewed as an integral part of the strategic management process, little had been written or researched on it.

A Standard Assessment carried out in Mumias Sub-County of Kakamega County in five secondary schools in February 2014 reported that only one secondary school had reviewed her strategic plan and was on course in implementing the plan. Two other institutions had strategic plans that were still in draft form yet the implementation period had expired and nothing as per the strategic plans had been done. In the remaining two institutions, the strategic plans which were “professionally developed” (by a consultant) had not been followed or adhered to and neither were the objectives set out in the very strategic plans achieved or attempts towards that made.

The education status of public secondary schools in Kakamega County in terms of access, transition, academic performance and learning environment is dismal as observed by the Kakamega County Education Task Force of 2014 and requires a deliberate attention to address it. This in essence is the reason why public secondary schools in Kakamega County should aggressively undertake strategic planning process for efficiency and improved performance. Public secondary schools in Kakamega County ought to execute their strategic plans. Their strategic plans should therefore be formulated with intentionality and practicality. Unfortunately, this seems not to be the case. A number of public Secondary schools in Kakamega County that had formulated strategic plans, these documents could be found on bookshelves gathering dust and not on desktop being implemented. This study therefore sought to address the question, what is the influence of leadership styles on implementation of strategic plans in public secondary schools in Kakamega County, Kenya?

The Purpose and objectives of the study

The purpose of this study was to determine the influence of leadership styles on implementation of strategic plans in public secondary schools. Specific objectives of this study was to establish;

- i) Influence of transformative leadership style on implementation of Strategic Plans
- ii) Influence of democratic leadership style on Implementation of Strategic Plans
- iii) Influence of autocratic leadership styles on Implementation of Strategic Plans
- iv) Influence of laissez fair leadership style on Implementation of Strategic Plans

Methodology

This study adopted both descriptive survey design and Correlation method and was conducted in Kakamega County, in Kenya. The study targeted 401 public secondary schools from Kakamega County, Kenya. Of the total number of public secondary schools in Kakamega County, 2 (two) were National schools, 12 (twelve) Extra County schools, 31 (thirty one) were County schools and 356 (three hundred and fifty six) were Sub-County Secondary Schools. In addition to these, the study also targeted 13 Sub County Quality Assurance and Standards officers (SCQASO). The total target population was therefore 1604 managers and 13 SCQASOs.

Multi Stage sampling technique was applied. Stratified random sampling was used to select subjects for the sample to represent existing sub-groups in the population. These subgroups were National Secondary Schools, Extra County Secondary Schools, County Secondary Schools and Sub-County Secondary Schools. Further, following stratification, purposive sampling procedure was also applied by the researcher since some strata had very few schools. However, in an effort to get a representative sample of the population, the researcher sampled out 10% of schools from the 401 public secondary schools in the County. Hence a total of 40 public secondary schools were sampled out for this study. The study therefore used 40 BoMs Chairpersons, 40 PA chairpersons, 40 Principals and 40 senior teachers/HODs. This means one respondent per category from each of the sampled schools. In addition to these, the study targeted all the thirteen (13) Sub County Quality Assurance and Standards Officers (QASOs) from the 13 Sub Counties of Kakamega County.

Questionnaires were developed and administered to each of the following; BoMs Chairpersons, PA Chairpersons, Principals and Heads of department respondents. Separately, Sub County Quality Assurance and Standards officers were interviewed using a tailor made interview schedule. The study also consulted documentary evidence, specifically schools strategic plans documents. The instruments for this study were validated through application of content validity determined by experts' judgement. On the other hand, reliability of the questionnaires was determined by split half method of testing internal consistency after pre-testing in four purposively selected pilot schools. Results for the reliability co-efficient of the instruments were 0.85 for BoM questionnaire, 0.81 for PA questionnaire, 0.87 for Principals and 0.84 for senior teachers.

Administering questionnaires took two weeks and another two weeks to collect them. BoMs and PA chairpersons got their questionnaires through their respective Principals, who had their

contact. They completed and returned them to their respective schools from where the researcher collected them in person. At the same time, the researcher also conducted interview schedules with eleven (11) SCQASOs from eleven sub counties from Kakamega County.

Data analysis used descriptive statistics and regression analysis. Analysis by descriptive statistics entailed use of frequency tables, graphs, percentages and measures of central tendency in particular the mean, standard deviation and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). Multiple regression analysis was also applied in particular when looking at influence of leadership styles on implementation of strategic plans that entailed correlation design. The objective of this analysis was to make a prediction of the dependent variable - implementation of strategic plans based on its covariance with the concerned independent variables - influence of leadership styles, Hence, a multivariate regression equation; $Y = a_1X_1 + a_2X_2 + a_3X_3 + a_4X_4 + c$ applied to assist determination of the relative importance of each variables to implementation of strategic plans in public secondary school

Results

Major objective of the study was to establish the influence of leadership styles on implementation of strategic plans in public secondary schools from Kakamega County. Table 1 shows Principals ratings on the four leadership styles namely; Transformative, Autocratic, Democratic and Laissez fair leadership styles.

Table 1: Principals’ leadership styles

Autocratic leadership style	Mean	Std. Dev.
Leaders should supervise closely their employees	4.30	.648
Most employees feel insecure about their work and need direction	3.77	.920
The leader is the chief judge of the achievements of the organization	3.48	1.132
Effective leaders give orders and clarify procedures	3.48	1.086
It is fair to say that most employees in general are lazy	2.28	.905
Overall mean and std. deviation	3.46	0.94
Transformational leadership style	Mean	Std. Dev.
Leaders should challenge and inspire their employees with a sense of purpose	4.50	.679
Effective leaders should have broad field of knowledge	4.47	.784
Leaders should create an enthusiastic work environment for their subordinates	4.38	.740
Leaders should motivate employees to enhance their productivity and efficiency	4.27	.847
Leaders should create a vision and communicate it to their subordinates	4.02	1.291
Overall mean and std. deviation	4.33	0.87
Democratic leadership style	Mean	Std. Dev.
Employees should be part of the decision-making	4.40	.672
Most workers want frequent and supportive communication from their leaders	4.28	.679
The leader need to help subordinates accept responsibility for completing their work	4.25	.707
Providing guidance without pressure is the key to being a good leader	3.35	1.027
People are basically competent and if given task will do a good job	3.05	1.131
Overall mean and std. deviation	3.87	0.84
Laissez- Faire Leadership style	Mean	Std. Dev.
As a rule, leaders should allow subordinates to appraise their own work	3.80	.723
Leaders require to stay out of the way of the subordinates as they do their work	2.53	1.176
Leaders should give subordinates complete freedom to solve problems on their own	2.45	1.011
Leaders should let subordinates to work out on their own	2.18	1.035
In general, it is best to leave subordinate alone	1.70	.791
Overall mean and std. deviation	2.53	0.95

As shown in Table 1, the mean scores obtained by the respondents on items measuring autocratic leadership style employed by the principals ranged from 2.28 to 4.30 with a standard deviation of 0.905 and 0.648 respectively. The highest ranked item was “leaders should supervise closely their employees (4.30)” while the lowest ranked item was “it is fair to say that most employees in the general are lazy (2.28)”. Respondents obtained mean scores of above 3 in all items measuring autocratic leadership except in one item. Majority of the respondents felt that employees should be closely supervised and given directions. They also felt that leaders are the chief judges of the achievements within the organization and they should give orders and clarify procedures. Over all mean for autocratic leadership style was 3.46. This clearly indicated that most of the principals in the sampled schools were practicing authoritative leadership style.

In relation to transformational leadership style, the mean scores obtained by the respondents ranged from 4.02 to 4.50. The most highly scored item was “leaders should challenge and inspire their employees with a sense of purpose (4.50)” while the lowest scored item was “leaders should create a vision and communicate to their subordinates (4.02)”. Over all mean for transformational leadership style was 4.33. This showed that majority of the principals were employing transformational leadership style in their schools. In a study conducted by Menguc, Auh and Shih (2007), use of transformational leadership skills results in the best competitive strategies, including innovation differentiation, marketing differentiation and low cost of product. They noted that this leadership style affects implementation by driving the strategy, maintaining focus, being visionary and acting as a driver for change management necessitated by the new strategy.

Regarding democratic leadership style, the mean scores obtained by the respondents ranged from 2.98 to 4.40 with a standard deviation of 1.097 and 0.672 respectively and an overall mean of 3.87. The highest ranked statement was “employees should be part of the decision-making (4.40)” while the lowest ranked statement was “people are basically competent and if given task will do a good job (3.05)”. Majority of the respondents agreed with the items on the scale, meaning they were practising democratic leadership style. However, a bigger number of the principals were in disagreement with the item which stated that most of the employees were basically competent, with a least mean average of 3.05. In line with the study, Ogbeide and Harington (2011) in their study on the relationship among participative management style, strategy implementation, success and financial performance in the foodservice industry established that higher level of action plan implementation success for the restaurant firms were more likely to use participation in decision-making and plan execution.

Results in Table 1 further shows that in items measuring laissez-faire leadership style, the study respondents obtained mean scores ranging from 1.70 to 3.80 and an overall mean of 2.532. The highest ranked statement was "as a rule, leaders should allow subordinates to appraise their own work (3.80)" whereas the lowest ranked statement was "it is best to leave subordinate alone (1.70)". Majority of the respondents were in disagreement with the statements on the scale, meaning most of the principals were not freely delegating duties to their subordinates.

Compared to other leadership styles, Laissez fair was the least applied style with a mean of 2.53 behind autocratic 3.46, democratic 3.87 and transformative 4.33 as per the responses given. Highly ranked and preferred leadership style from the responses received was transformative leadership style with an overall mean average of 4.33 and therefore, one predominantly applied by the Principals in Kakamega County.

4.3.1 Implementation status of the schools strategic plan

To determine the implementation of the strategic plan in school, the study respondents were presented with 10 items on a 5-point likert scale. Presented in Table 2 are the means and standard deviations obtained.

Table 2: Implementation status of the schools strategic plan

Status	Mean	Std. Dev
Monitoring and Evaluation mechanism is in place overseeing the progress of implementation	3.20	.758
Tasks and responsibilities are clearly assigned and being undertaken	3.10	.744
Progress reporting is on course	3.05	.815
All verifiable performance indicators are in place as stipulated in the strategic plan	2.85	.770
All planned activities are being carried out as outlined in the strategic plan	2.83	.712
Objectives in the strategic plan document are being realized as intended	2.83	.712
Reviewing of the strategic plan is in place and strictly adhered to as scheduled	2.83	.874
The school is realizing her set targets as per the strategic plan document	2.72	.751
All planned activities are being carried out within the expected/specified time frame	2.23	.660
Financial resources for implementation of activities are in place as per the budget	1.92	.656
Overall mean and std. deviation	2.76	0.75

Data presented in Table 4.6 shows that the mean scores obtained by the principals on items measuring implementation of strategic plan in schools ranged from 1.92 to 3.20 with standard deviations of 0.656 and 0.758 respectively. The highest ranked statements were “monitoring and evaluation mechanism is in place overseeing the progress of implementation (3.20)” and “tasks and responsibilities are clearly assigned and being undertaken (3.10)”. The lowest ranked statements were “financial resources for implementation of activities are in place as per the budget (1.92)” and “all planned activities are being carried out within the expected/specified time frame (2.23)”. From the study findings, it is clear that most of the principals were in disagreement with the items on the scale measuring the implementation of strategic plan. This implies that majority of the principals confirmed that they had not successfully implemented strategic plans in their respective schools with overall implementation being a mean of 2.76 below average of 3. In agreement with the findings, Zaribaf and Baryami (2010) discovered that majority of the leaders within the organizations spend a great deal of time, energy, and money in formulating a strategy, but do not provide sufficient input to implement it properly. Similarly, Cater and Pucko (2010) found out that while 80% of organisations have the right strategies, only 14% have managed to implement them well.

To verify the above findings, the researcher assessed the execution of strategic plans in the sampled schools using an observation checklist. An implementation matrix with a 5 point likert scale was used. The scale ranged from 0 to 1 with, 0 representing no action, 0.25 denoting a slight implementation, 0.50 average, 0.75 slightly above average and 1 full implementation. The

midpoint of the scale was a score of 0.5. Therefore, mean scores below 0.5 denoted that strategic plans were not implemented or were slightly implemented while scores above 0.5 signified that strategic plans were implemented above average, whereas an overall score of 1 would denote full implementation. Table 3 shows results of the analysis.

Table 3: Schools’ strategic plans as per the implementation matrix

Implementation Status	No action (0)		Slight (0.25)		Average (0.5)		Slightly Above Average (0.75)		Fully (1)		Mean	Std Dev.
	f	%	f	%	F	%	f	%	f	%		
Operating within time Frame	4	10.0	10	25.0	4	10.0	6	15.0	16	40.0	.625	.3712
Progress in addressing strategic issues	6	15.0	8	20.0	14	35.0	8	20.0	4	10.0	.475	.2985
Workshops on implementation of the Strategic plan	12	30.0	21	52.5	7	17.5	0	0.0	0	0.0	.425	.2133
The School is realizing her targets as per the objectives	1	2.5	19	47.5	11	27.5	9	22.5	0	0.0	.406	.2381
Within Budget Provision as per implementation log frame	6	15.0	10	25.0	17	42.5	7	17.5	0	0.0	.400	.1772
Availability of resources for implementation	1	2.5	18	45.0	17	42.5	4	10.0	0	0.0	.369	.2467
Frequency of meetings and minutes on strategic plan	10	25.0	19	47.5	9	22.5	2	5.0	0	0.0	.269	.2071
Tasks accomplished as per plan	6	15.0	17	42.5	9	22.5	8	20.0	0	0.0	.256	.2228
Extent of monitoring and Evaluation exercise	14	35.0	12	30.0	13	32.5	1	2.5	0	0.0	.219	.1716
Progress reports on implementation status	17	42.5	12	30.0	10	25.0	1	2.5	0	0.0	.219	.2206
Overall mean											0.37	0.24

Results presented in Table 3 depicts that the mean scores obtained by the 40 sampled schools on the implementation of strategic plans ranged from 0.219 to 0.625 with a standard deviation of 0.2206 and 0.3712 respectively. The highest scored items were “operating within time frame (M=0.625)” and “progress in addressing strategic issues (M=0.475)”. On the other hand, the lowest scored items were “progress reports on implementation status (M=0.219)” and “extent of monitoring and evaluation exercise (M=0.219)”. From the study findings, it emerged that all the items except one (operating within time frame) in the implementation matrix obtained a mean scores of below 0.5, meaning in most schools, implementation of strategic plans was below average. Figure 1 illustrates an overall implementation status of the school strategic plans.

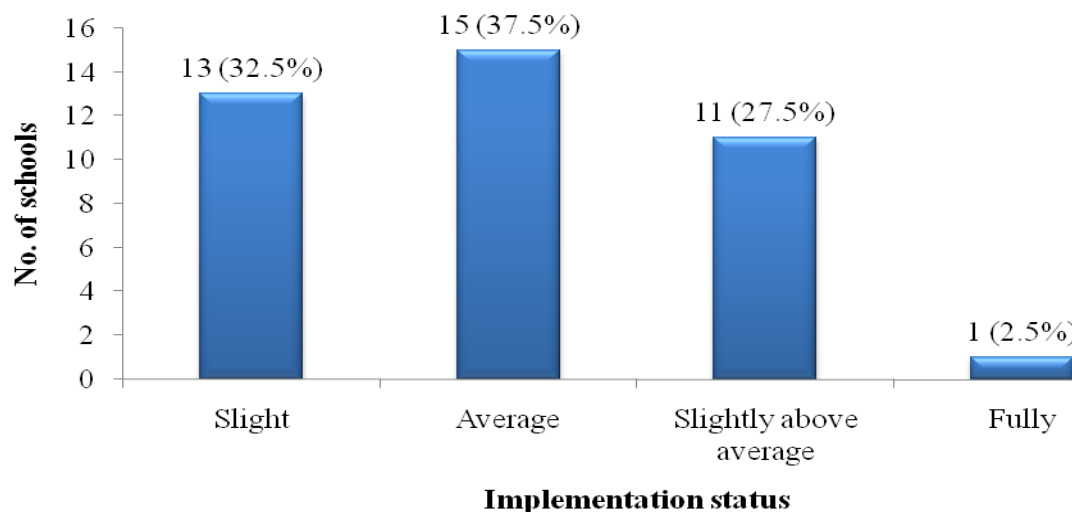


Figure 1: Overall implementation status of the school strategic plan

As shown in Figure 1, out of the 40 sampled schools, 13 (32.5%) had slightly implemented school strategic plans, 15 (37.5%) were average, 11 (27.5%) were slightly above average while the remaining 1 (2.5%) had fully implemented her strategic plan. This implies that majority of the schools (97.5%) were not fully implementing their strategic plans. In concurrence with these results, Kefa (2014) established that most public secondary schools in Kiambu County had low implementation of the school strategic plans.

Correlation between leadership styles and implementation of strategic plan

To find out whether principals’ leadership styles had an influence on the implementation of strategic plan, the researcher conducted Spearman’s Rank Correlation and the findings are presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Influence of leadership styles on implementation of strategic plan

Leadership styles	Spearman’s Rank Correlation	Implementation of strategic plan
Autocratic leadership	Correlation	.270
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.090
	N	40
Transformational leadership	Correlation	.198
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.220
	N	40
Democratic leadership	Correlation	.154
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.343
	N	40
Laissez-Faire leadership	Correlation	.027
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.867
	N	40

Not significant at $p < 0.05$ level

As shown in Table 4.8, Spearman's rho Correlation analysis revealed that there were no significant relationships at $p < 0.05$ level between leadership styles (autocratic .090, transformational .220, democratic .343 and laissez-faire .867) employed by the principals and the implementation status of strategic plans. Interview schedule for Quality Assurance and standards officers revealed that over 75% of principals were competent enough and effectively applying the various leadership styles. Asked why principals were not able to implement strategic plans yet they exhibited the recommended leadership styles, they responded that 'No matter how competent a leader is, dynamics of resources in public institutions seem to greatly hamper implementation of strategic plans'. This study findings therefore contradicted other previous studies on the influence of leadership on implementation of strategic plans. For instance, Rajasekar (2014) established that leadership was the most important factor in influencing successful implementation of strategy in the service sector. Ngunjiri (2013) on the other hand observed that democratic leadership style and transformational leadership style greatly influenced strategy implementation. The study found out that guidance and direction of the leader which are practiced through leadership styles were important in ensuring that strategies are implemented successfully and desired outcomes are achieved. Additionally, Johnson (2016) established that the adoption of democratic leadership style improved implementation of strategic plans. Whereas Chege, Wachira and Mwenda (2015) recommended that organizations should use all the three leadership styles – autocratic, democratic and laissez faire, to maximize implementation of strategic plans. Their study found out that the fate of SMEs was closely related to the leadership style of the manager and the strategies they chose to implement. This study however, to a certain extent, did not confirm these previous studies on influence of leadership styles on implementation of strategic plans.

Regression Analysis

In order to establish the relative influence of the four independent variables (Transformative, Democratic, Authoritative and Laissez fair leadership styles) on the implementation of strategic plans, the following linear regression model was specified with strategic plan implementation index as the dependent variable.

$$Y = a_1X_1 + a_2X_2 + a_3X_3 + a_4X_4 + c$$

Where:

Y = Strategic plan implementation index

X₁ = Autocratic

X₂ = Transformative

X₃ = Democratic

X₄ = Laissez fair

c = Constant; and a₁...a₄ are regression coefficients

Table 5 shows the regression model summary.

Table 5: Regression Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.717	.515	.409	3.48701

Table 5 shows an R-Square value of 0.515, meaning the independent variables (Autocratic, Transformative, Democratic and Laissez faire styles) explained 0.515% of the variation in strategic plan implementation index. Table 6 shows the regression coefficients for the model.

Table 6: Regression Coefficients

Independent variables	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	3.509	6.538		.537	.595
Autocratic L/S	0.167	.217	.100	.771	.446
Transformative L/S	7.113 x10 ⁻²	.238	.045	.299	.767
Democratic L/S	0.139	.334	.071	.416	.680
Laissez-faire L/S	6.517 x10 ⁻²	.199	.046	.327	.746

Dependent Variable: Implementation of strategic plans

Table 6 shows that the prediction equation for implementation of strategic plans (Y) becomes:

$$Y = 0.167 [\text{Autocratic leadership style}] + 7.113 \times 10^{-2}[\text{Transformative leadership style}] + 0.139 [\text{Democratic leadership style}] + 6.517 \times 10^{-2} [\text{Laissezz-faire leadership style}] + 3.549 \times 10^{-2}$$

This means that, for leadership styles, implementation of strategic plans is predicted to increase by 0.167 when autocratic leadership style goes up by one, increase by 0.07113 when transformative leadership style goes up by one, increase by 0.139 when democratic leadership style goes up by one and also increase by 0.06517 when Laissez-Faire leadership style goes up by one. This implies that all leadership styles had a positive impact on the implementation of strategic plans. These findings are in agreement with Chege, Wachira and Mwenda (2015) whose study recommended that organizations should use autocratic, democratic and laissez faire leadership styles to maximize implementation of strategic plans. In another study, Ngure (2013) observed that participative (democratic) and transformational leadership styles greatly influenced implementation of strategic plans. As such, Ngure (2013) recommended that organizations should use various leadership styles to influence strategy implementation with regard to goal achievement.

Discussion

The study established that principals were employing transformational leadership style greatly with a mean average of 4.33 followed by democratic leadership style with a mean of 3.87, autocratic leadership style was next with a mean of 3.46 and the least being laissez faire leadership style with a mean of 2.53 out of a scale of 5, hence below mid-point of 3. Spearman’s

rank correlation analysis revealed that there were no significant relationships between these leadership styles (transformational, democratic, autocratic and laissez-faire) employed by the principals and the implementation status of schools strategic plans. This implies that leadership styles did not have a significant influence on the implementation status of schools strategic plans. This was a divergent finding from other previous studies which had established that leadership styles had a significant influence on implementation of strategic plans (Carter and Pucko, 2010, Ngure, 2013, Koech and Namusonge, 2012, Chege, Wachira and Mwenda, 2015, Rajesakar, 2014 and Johnson, 2015). However, regression analysis revealed that when leadership styles goes up by one, the level of implementation of strategic plan also increases. This implies that with an improvement or enhancement in leadership styles among the school principals, such schools would have successful implementation of their respective strategic plans.

Conclusions

From the study findings, the following conclusions were made;

- i. Leadership styles did not show any significant relationship with the implementation status of school strategic plans. However, there was a positive correlation between the four leadership styles and implementation status of the schools strategic plans as revealed by regression analysis.
- ii. Principals were employing mostly transformational, authoritative and democratic leadership styles in their schools to a greater extent and to a lesser extent laissez fair leadership style.
- iii. The study therefore recommend that leadership styles should be applied along other factors in order to enhance implementation of strategic plans in public secondary schools from Kakamega County.

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