

STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT PRACTICES AND PERFORMANCE OF PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN AWENDO SUB-COUNTY, MIGORI COUNTY, KENYA

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ABSTRACT

Despite the Government of Kenya's effort to improve performance in education sector at all levels in Kenya, public secondary schools in Migori County, Awendo Sub County in particular, continue to record dismal performance as has been witnessed in the annual Kenya certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) results by the Kenya National Examination Council (KNEC). The study aimed at establishing the effect of strategic management practices on performance of public secondary schools in Awendo sub county, Migori County, Kenya. The specific objectives included; to determine the effect of technology adoption, culture change, restructuring and business process re-engineering on performance of public secondary schools in Awendo Sub County, Migori County, Kenya. The study was guided by the theories of; resource-based theory, institutional theory, and stakeholders' theory. A descriptive research design was utilized. The sample size was determined by using Krejcie and Morgan's method of determination of a sample size. Primary information was gathered by methods for structured questionnaires. The questionnaires were self-administered, drop and pick later method. Content validity was used to research if or not the devices addressed the study questions. The quantitative information gathered was analyzed utilizing descriptive statistics with the help of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 21. The study

revealed that that adoption of current technologies had a positive effect on performance in public secondary schools in Awendo sub county, most of the schools were struggling to keep their system update, there lacked immediate technological assistance in case of system failure. Organizational restructuring had a positive effect on performance of public secondary schools in Awendo Sub County; Organizational restructuring was a delicate process that required immense resources. Most of the organizational restructuring presented fresh platform upon which schools redefined their processes by building economical procedures that promoted quality, efficiency and value. The study concludes that technology adoption, school's culture, organizational restructuring and process re-engineering all had a significant influence on performance of public secondary schools in Awendo sub county, Migori county This study recommends secondary schools in Migori County, Kenya should continually keep on adopting new technologies as this factor was found to be positively associated with positive performance. However, the management should carefully consider ICT quality factor, simplistic in utilization, durability and availability of technical assistance associated with new technologies.

Key Words: *strategic management, organizational performance, restructuring, technology adoption, culture change*

INTRODUCTION

The performance of a firm is dependent upon its capacity to adapt to the changing environment and the expectation of its customers. The demands of the government, stakeholders and the institutions employees change continuously depending on the changes in their operating environment and consequently, there is need for the organization to align its operations to the changes in order to improve its performance. Capron (2008), argued that a firm that is able to manage turbulent complex environments and therefore maintain or improve its performance is one that will willingly embrace change in its operating environment since its management will be able to control all the activities in the organization and manage them effectively (Nel, 2008).

Several steps have been taken by the Government of Kenya to improve quality of secondary education in Kenya. Yet, it is regrettable that secondary education in Migori County in particular Awendo Sub-County has been plagued by poor academic achievements, by most schools, in national examinations as has been witnessed in the annual Kenya certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) results by the Kenya National Examination Council (KNEC) .

Since 2008, the education sector in Kenya has undergone tremendous reforms which necessitated the enactment of several legislation and policies. In Public secondary schools, school heads are responsible for successful management of the institutions and the implementation of strategic plans. Ministry of education, science and Technology Kenya is a state corporation mandated to define and implement government policies and programmes that helps Kenyans to access quality and affordable education. As a state corporation it has its own strategic plans. The mission and vision of the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology are well defined to facilitate the improvement of performance in institutions of learning (Dess & Miller, 2007). The study, therefore, focuses on Awendo Sub County for two reasons. First, because the students' academic achievement in KCSE examination, among the majority of secondary schools in Awendo Sub County between the year 2014 to 2016 was viewed and the sentiments were raised often, especially during the various Sub county education forums.

Public Secondary Schools in Migori County

In Kenya, The Education and Higher Education, Science and Technology are the two ministries that run the education sector. Despite this, The Labour; Youth Affairs and Sports; Gender, Children and Social Development; Local Government and Public Health and Sanitation ministries also offer programmes that are related to education and training. How education, training, research, science and technology are coordinated, promoted and provided is the responsibility of the sector. The (Basic Education, Higher Education, Quality Assurance and Standards Technical Accreditation and Policy and Planning), Provincial Education Boards, District Education Boards, two autonomous and 10 semi-autonomous statutory organizations are the seven directories that enable the sector to fulfil its mandate. All Kenyans are entitled to be provided for quality education, training and research by the Kenyan Government. There have

been various changes that have been experienced in the education sector in the past years that include; launching and implementing of the free primary education, effective plans and financing of the adoption of quality education and training and provision of free secondary education to the day scholars.

The age group between 14 and 17 years is what the secondary education caters for who have graduated from primary school. The students in the secondary school later on after four years sit for the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE). From here some join the university, others join the middle-level trades, others join different professions, vocational and technical training. The secondary school in Kenya is greatly valued as it is viewed as the graduation stage to adulthood from primary school and the government too has invested a lot to ensure its well provided. This helps the students to train on various skills which they will later on apply after joining the labour market in future. Their careers too are determined at this stage as they are given the opportunity to choose the subjects of their choice as per their capability which later help them in choosing their future careers. The skills they acquire are necessary in different kinds of fields that they would desire to join in future which are in the curriculum. This makes most of the students self-reliant as per the 8-4-4 system.

In Migori County there was a noted increased between 2007 and 2012 of the students that enrolled in secondary school. Secondary education had not been subsidized despite the fact that there was free primary education between 2003 and 2007 by the government. Transition to secondary was made easier in 2008 when the government subsidized secondary education from primary.

The study, therefore, focuses on Awendo Sub County for two reasons. First, because the students' academic achievement in KCSE examination, among the majority of secondary schools in Awendo Sub County between the year 2014 to 2016 were viewed and the sentiments were raised often, especially during the various Sub county education forums. As a result, the Sub County is not producing required persons to pursue the highly competitive and more marketable courses like Medicine, Pharmacy, Engineering, Nursing, and Commerce. If the trend of low academic achievement continues, it will impact negatively on the socio-economic development of Awendo sub County since it may accelerate unemployment and its related vices.

Further, the students, parents and Board of Governors (BoG) from various schools in Awendo Sub County, have often claimed that head teachers' styles of leadership are largely responsible for the perceived low academic achievement in the sub county. Similar claims have also been generally noted in Kenya (Sirigi, 2005). However, from the related literature reviewed, there seemed to be no research that had been done in Awendo Sub County to either authenticate or nullify the stated claim.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Despite the Government of Kenya's effort to improve performance in education sector at all levels in Kenya, public secondary schools in Migori County, Awendo Sub County in particular, continue to record dismal performance as has been witnessed in the annual Kenya certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) results by the Kenya National Examination Council (KNEC). While there is not much information available on research carried out by the Ministry of Education Science and Technology to establish what could be the reasons for dismal performance of schools at secondary school level; Andrews (2008), in his research to explore why some students achieve high academic performance than others established that; Ability of the principal to supervise school resources, principal's supervisory skills on teachers, ability of the principal to supervise school curriculum implementation and the principal's ability to motivate teachers; hire, promote, retain teachers in the school and the school plant are some of the determinants. Therefore, a need to establish the effect of strategic management practices on performance of public secondary schools in Kenya. Studies on strategic management practices and performance have been carried out and produced mixed reactions. Cetindamar (2013), examined Australian manufacturers with a bid to understand the strategies adopted by the firms to remain competitive. In another study, Rex (2010) examined the challenges experienced by Danish police in the adoption of strategic management. The study used the study design of descriptive statistics. Kimaku (2010) studied Barclays Bank of Kenya with the intention to study the components of change management. The study realized that the bank employed threats to cause change when they expect resistance. The bank also uses appraisal system and effectively communicates for change management. In another study conducted by Wanjiru and Njeru (2014) to study the effect of strategic response to the changes on financial performance of commercial banks in Kenya. The study revealed a strong relationship between strategic response and financial performance of commercial banks. Nyangau (2011), also sought to understand the effects of the changes in culture on the strategic planning in the commercial banks baking sectors with a particular focus to Kisii Central. The study realized a positive relationship between cultural changes and strategic planning by the commercial banks. The study found missing links in the study theories, the methodology and the variables used in the study. This study hence aims to use a case study approach based on the resource-based view theory, institutional theory and stakeholders' theory. Therefore, the study aims at answering the question: what is the relationship between strategic management practices and performance of public secondary schools in Awendo sub county, Migori County, Kenya?

GENERAL OBJECTIVE

To determine the effect of strategic management practices on performance of public secondary schools in Awendo sub county, Migori County, Kenya

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

1. To determine the impact of technology adoption on performance of public secondary schools in Awendo sub county, Migori County, Kenya.
2. To establish the impact of culture change on performance of public secondary schools in Awendo sub county, Migori County, Kenya.
3. To establish the impact of organizational restructuring on performance of public secondary schools in Awendo sub county, Migori County, Kenya.
4. To explore the impact of business process re-engineering on performance of public secondary schools in Awendo sub county, Migori county, Kenya.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Scott (1995) developed the institutional theory in his work in organizations and institutions. Institutional theory is a largely accepted theory that stresses on isomorphism, rational myths, and legitimacy. Institutional theory focuses on more resilient and deeper aspects of the social structure. The theory considers norms, rules and routines to be the authoritative guidelines governing social behavior (Scott, 2004). Institutional theory majors on more resilient and deeper social structure aspects. The relevance of the theory to this study is attributed to the fact that the institutional environment can adequately influence the technological advances in the delivery of services in public schools which improves performance. Innovative structures that improve technical efficiency in early-adopting organizations are legitimized in the environment. In the end, these innovations reach a legitimization level whereby the failure to incorporate them becomes negligent and irrational (Kostova, 2008).

On the other hand, the resource-based view was propagated by Wernerfelt, (1984). The resource-based view (RBV) proposes that a firm can attain competitiveness by delivering innovative products with more value compared to that of its competitor (Wernerfelt, 1984). This literature is focus remain sustainably competitive by implementing strategic planning (Borg & Gall, 2009). Theorists of international business additionally explain the performance of companies by considering how competitive local alliances or subsidiaries are across boundaries. The local knowledge that is availed by a local alliance or subsidiary is an essential requirement for value conceptualization according to local requirements (Gupta & Govindarajan, 2011). For this study, RBV is relevant in that it depicts the strategic management that public secondary schools in Awendo sub county, Migori County, Kenya can adopt in the management of its resources affecting service delivery. For public schools, resources include human, financial, commercial, technological, physical and organizational assets that firms use to advance, manufacture and deliver services and products to its customers (Cocks, 2010).

Stakeholder's theory has its origin the 1984 when Edward Freeman wrote the book called Strategic Management. The theory addresses business ethics by discussing values and morals of management and organizational management. Stakeholders' theory approach recognizes and

models' different groups that stakeholders in a firm and further describes appropriate methods that management can adopt with regard to their groups interests. The theory further addresses what and who really matters. Stakeholders' theory is relevant for this study since it believes that and individual or group engaging in strategic management in a firm does so to obtain certain benefits and the primacy of the stakeholders is not obvious (Mansell 2013). Further, Mansell argues that despite the fact that the theory is instrumental and descriptive, it is essentially normative. For public secondary schools in Awendo sub county, Migori County, Kenya, all the stakeholders are categorized based on their interests which are termed as intrinsically valuable.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study employed descriptive research design. This design shows variable relationships being studies. The total population target was 165 (including head teachers, deputy head teachers, Board of Governors). The study used Krejcie and Morgan's method of determination of a sample size. The study utilized primary information. Primary information was gathered by methods for structured questionnaires. The questionnaires were self-administered and drop and pick later method was adopted. Content validity was used to research if or not the devices addressed the study questions. To build up content validity alterations to the instruments was carried out with the help of the supervisor. Test-retest technique was utilized whereby the pilot questionnaires were self-administered two times to the respondents, with a one-week interim. For reliability, the researcher used Cronbach's Alpha (α) which demonstrates the degree to which an arrangement of estimation things was handled as estimating a single latent variable. The research was used Cronbach's alpha formula to test reliability, with value of 0.7. The research yielded both qualitative and quantitative data. The quantitative information gathered was analysed utilizing descriptive statistics with the help of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 21. The results were presented utilizing tables, frequencies and rates. Multiple linear regressions was used to show the correlation between technology adoption, culture change, business process re-engineering and organizational restructuring and organizational performance public secondary schools in Awendo sub county, Migori county, Kenya. The regression model is illustrated below;

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta_4 X_4 + \varepsilon$$

Where: Y= Organizational Performance; β_0 = Constant; X_1 = Technology adoption; X_2 = Culture change; X_3 = Organizational restructuring; X_4 = Business process re-engineering; β_1 . β_4 are the regression co-efficient or change introduced in Y by each independent variable; ε is the random error term accounting for all other variables that influence organizational performance but not captured in the model.

ANOVA test was conducted to determine the level of significance of the variance by the use of a one-Way ANOVA in order to determine the existence of significant variations between the variables.

RESEARCH RESULTS

Strategic Management Practices

The finding, revealed that majority of participants in this survey agreed that the school has a strong working and reliable ICT strategic selection blueprint (M= 4.32 SD=0.69), new technology updates in the school are introduced thorough a gradual process (M= 4.28 SD=0.58), and adoption of current ICT technologies aids in cutting down major operational costs (M= 4.16 SD=0.75). These study findings concurs with Ellis and Loveless (2013) who in their studies established that technology is significant in placing students in an active position and in enhancing the effectiveness and efficiency of the tutorial. Further assessment technology adoption in the institution revealed that the adoption process of ICT in these schools is executed in a slow manner (M=3.92 SD=0.41), the flow and the speed of concentration escalate with increased benefits to the institution (M=3.84 SD=0.11), and that the school embraces technology transfer (M=3.81 SD=0.81). As a result it can be deduced that ICT adoption has positive impact on students' performance.

Culture Change

This study sought respondent's opinion in investigating the link between school's success and culture change as a strategic management practice amongst schools in Awendo Sub County, Migori County. The finding, revealed that majority of participants in this survey agreed that all the values that these schools stands for are well comprehended by all stakeholders (M= 4.25 SD=0.36), The schools promote; positive values, visions, good behaviours, language, work life balance and beliefs in work environment in order to foster quality performance (M=4.18 SD=0.25) and that quality motivational strategies in place ensure that all the staff develop positive attitude towards work (M= 4.07 SD=0.39). Further assessment of culture change in the institution revealed that the institution has strong staff motivation strategies in place (M= 3.94 SD=0.14), staff hold strong ethics, understanding and respect towards school beliefs and norms (M= 3.80 SD=0.85) and that employee have greater respect on their colleagues opinions, and only object in respectable manner (M= 3.74 SD=0.22). The findings concurs with Hatch (2013) who points out that strategic management practices is all inclusive and is also enforced when every member of the organization understands the management strategy.

School Restructuring

Participants were required to indicate their level of agreement with the following statements relating that investigate the impact of school restructuring on school's performance. The finding, revealed that majority of participants in this survey agreed that effectiveness of strategic plan is affected by the eminence of personnel engaged in the whole process (M= 4.28 SD=0.22), Competent leadership is fundamentally imperative in fostering successful performance (M= 4.00 SD=0.61) and that the top leadership actions and level of commitment toward strategic plan indirectly influence the commitment of the subordinate employees to realize quality performance

(M= 3.96 SD=0.39). Further assessment school restructuring revealed that successful strategy execution relies largely on quality of the laid structure (M=3.88 SD=0.72). The structure of the school seeks to attain the set long term goals and embrace dynamic changes (M=3.76 SD=0.14). Strategy implementation procedure often results in challenges if the tasks or responsibilities are not clearly illustrated (M= 3.72 SD=0.15). The results were in line with Ongwae, (2016) who noted that staff turnover enhances performance amongst organization staff to a very high extent

School Process Re-Engineering

School heads were required to indicate their level of agreement with the following statements relating that investigate the impact of school process re-engineering on school's performance. The finding, revealed that majority of participants in this survey agreed that implementation of Process Re-engineering helps in enhancing organizational approach thus leading to improved environment and high productivity in the institution (M=4.19 SD=0.33) and that reengineering process avails the need for new technology which fosters increased operations efficiency (M= 4.00SD=0.19). Further assessment process re-engineering in the institution revealed that Re-engineering process has assisted in identification of excessive operational expenses for fostering initiation of early mitigation measures (M=3.95 SD=0.38) and that Implementation of Process Re-engineering result in the growth of the present school status (M=3.77SD=0.11). The result concur with Nadeem and Ahmad (2016) that reengineering process avails the need for new technology which fosters increased operations efficiency.

School Performance

School heads were required to indicate their level of agreement with the following statements relating to School Performance. The finding, revealed that majority of participants in this survey agreed that retention contributes to improved school performance (M= 4.18 SD=0.35), the schools reduces cost of operation (M=4.09 SD=0.25). Service delivery influence schools performance (M= 4.00 SD=0.99), availability of resources influence schools performance (M= 3.99 SD=0.17) and that employee motivation equally influence schools performance (M= 3.94 SD=0.17).

INFERENCE STATISTICS

In this study, a simple linear regression analysis was conducted to test the influence among predictor variables. The research used statistical package for social sciences (SPSS V 20) to code, enter and compute the measurements of the regressions.

Table 1: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.884(a)	.781	.705	.11274

Adjusted R squared is coefficient of determination which tells us the variation in the dependent variable due to changes in the independent variable, from the findings in the above table the value of adjusted R squared was 0.705 an indication that there was variation of 70.5% on performance of public secondary schools due to changes in technology adoption, school’s culture, organizational restructuring and process re-engineering at 95% confidence interval. This shows that 70.5% changes in performance of public secondary schools in Awendo sub county, Migori County could be accounted by technology adoption, school’s culture, school restructuring and process re-engineering.

Table 2: ANOVA

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	19.708	4	4.927	5.420	.048 ^b
	Residual	90.9	100	0.909		
	Total	110.608	104			

As shown in the ANOVA statistics, the regression model from the study findings was established to be valid at (F = 5.420, P < 0.05). The implication of this is that the independent variables are good predictors of the public school performance. Additionally, the study used the coefficient table to determine the study model among the independent and dependent variables. The study results are as shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	Constant	0.513	0.091	0.441	5.637	.156
	Technology Adoption	0.503	0.096	0.457	5.240	.031
	Culture Change	0.458	0.106	0.427	4.321	.146
	Organisational Restructuring	0.412	0.121	0.373	3.405	.074
	Process Re-Engineering	0.601	0.216	0.581	2.782	.331

From the data in the above table the established regression equation was:

$$Y = 0.513 + 0.503X_1 + 0.412 X_2 + 0.512X_3+ 0.601X_4$$

From the above regression equation, it was revealed that a unit increase in technology adoption would improve the performance of public secondary schools by factors of 0.503, unit increase in school’s culture would improve the performance of public secondary schools by factors of 0.458, unit increase in school restructuring processes would promote the performance of public

secondary schools by factors of 0.412, and that further strategic incorporation of process re-engineering practice would improve performance of public secondary schools by factors of 0.601,

CONCLUSION

The objective of this study was to investigate on the effect strategic management practices and performance of public secondary schools in Awendo sub county, Migori County, Kenya. The study established that technology adoption have a significant influence on performance of public secondary schools. It can be concluded that organizations should always ensure that the technology is up to date and is sound and facilitate participation of teachers and students in adopting the technology. .

Based on the findings that school's culture have a significant influence on performance it can be concluded that schools should always ensure that the parents teachers and students are conversant with school culture to facilitate participation performance of schools. On organizational restructuring, based on the findings that organizational restructuring have a significant influence on performance of schools it can be concluded that schools should always shed off non performing staffs and adopt proper performance measure for the remaining staff. Process Re-Engineering have a significant influence on performance. It can be concluded that schools should focus on teachers output, quality and also ensure that they are getting quality services at reduced costs.

RECOMENDATIONS

The study contributes to empirical literature on strategic management practices on performance. Specifically, the study found that strategic management practices greatly influence performance of schools. Therefore, the study findings contribute to the knowledge of strategic management by providing empirical evidence on effect of strategic management practices on performance.

The study contributes to the theoretical literature by supporting the proposition of the institutional theory that focuses on more resilient and deeper aspects of the social structure. On resource-based view, organizations can adopt strategic management in the management of its resources affecting service delivery. Stakeholder's theory believes that and individual or group engaging in strategic management in a firm does so to obtain certain benefits and the primacy of the stakeholders is not obvious.

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