

CHALLENGES FACING IMPLEMENTATION OF FREE SECONDARY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY IN KANGEMA AND MATHIOYA DISTRICTS

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Abstract: This article explores challenges facing implementation of free secondary management strategy in Kangema and Mathioya districts. The implementation of Free Secondary management strategy is bound to create additional challenges such as demand for more teachers as well as facilities to cater for expanded enrollment. The case study collected data through questionnaire which was administered directly by researcher. The target population was all principals in public secondary schools in Kangema and Mathioya districts. The study targeted public schools because they are direct beneficiaries of FSE policy. Quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive statistics such as mean. Qualitative data was analyzed using content analysis. Data was presented using tables, charts and graphs. From the case study, all the 55 principals responded to the research questions. This marked 100% response rate. This justifies the validity and reliability of the information collected and analyzed. Principals are school managers on the ground who manages school operations on daily basis. On the ground, the researcher founded that all the key factors influencing effective implementation of FSE management strategy are operating above average. Leadership factors are the best implemented with mean of 74.62. This means there are less leadership challenges influencing effective implementation of FSE management strategy. Staff motivation factors are second best implemented with mean of 70.82. Budgetary factors are third on effective implementation with a mean of 65.18 while structural factors are the least on implementation with the mean of 60.3. This means that there are more structural Challenges to be overcome for effective implementation of FSE management strategy.

Keywords: free secondary management, strategy, implementation, budget, structure, motivation, leadership.

1. INTRODUCTION

Background of the study

According to Macmillan and Tampoe (2000), many scholars have intensively written on strategy implementation and they agree that Implementing strategy poses the toughest, more time consuming management challenge. Thompson and Strickland (1989), strengthens this argument saying that, "it is a whole lot easier to develop a sound strategic plan than it is to-make it happen." They add that- just being able to conceive bold new strategies is not enough. The general manager must also be able to translate his or her strategic vision into concrete steps that "get things done." If implementation is poor, all other elements of strategic management become a waste of time and effort. By itself strategic planning produces no actions, no visible changes in the firm. To effect the changes the firms' need appropriated capabilities; trained and motivated managers, strategic information, fluid and responsive systems and structures.

The importance of implementing was shown dramatically in a recent study into why chief executives lose their jobs. Charan and Colvin (1999) found that: “in the majority of cases-we estimate 70%- the real problem isn't the high concept boners the boffins love to talk about. It's bad execution. As simple as that: not getting things done, being indecisive, not delivering on commitments.” Holman (1999) writing on the importance of strategy implementation points out that: “80% of directors believe that they have good strategies- but only 14% believe they implement well, according to Quest Worldwide survey of 114 international companies.” In general, enterprises are successful when they can convert dreams into reality. Effective implementation is crucial to FSE management strategy since it is also eligible to strategy implementation challenges.

Ministry Of Education

Ministry of education is responsible for providing quality education through implementation of government policies at primary level, secondary level and at tertiary colleges. According to Ministry of Education booklet: Secondary Education Strategy 2007-2010. The Ministry vision is to provide quality education for students' empowerment and further management, with the mission being to provide and manage quality secondary education for the world work and further education. The development of a secondary sub –sector strategy is outlined in KESSP and it is a tool for operationalizing the government policies contained in sessional paper NO: 1 of 2005 in regard to secondary management in the country. The government goal of achieving 70% transition rate from primary to secondary school level in January 2008 is a challenging task in view of the myriads of obstacles the country is facing including inadequate NO. Of secondary schools.

There were 1.2 million children in Kenya's high schools system in year 2007. This number was expected to have risen by 200,000 in year 2008 with introduction of FSE management strategy. According to some estimates from Inter Press Service, at least 4000 new classrooms, the equivalent of 550 schools are needed to accommodate the 1.4 million pupils expected in public secondary schools during 2008. Kenya in 2007 had 4478 public high schools, many of which are in a state of despair and lack essential facilities. According to Ministry of Education booklet: Secondary Management Strategy 2007-2010, the implementation of free primary education resulted in substantial growth in enrollment. Accordingly, the implementation of Free Secondary Education management policy is bound to create additional challenges. For instance, the increase in student numbers creates a rapid demand for more teachers as well as facilities.

Free Tuition Secondary Management

The secondary education strategy is a plan for the development of secondary education in Kenya for the next five years. Prudent management of resources at the school level and the adherence to the set financial regulation is mandatory if the strategy is to achieve the desired results. According to Ministry of Education “secondary management strategy 2007-2010” argues that with successful implementation of the secondary strategy, it is expected that the transition rate from primary to secondary will rise to 70% by 2008 and 80% by 2010. The quality and management of secondary management will be improved through in-service training and provision of the required teaching and learning materials. The government as stated in KESSP and sessional paper No.1 of 2005 has long term plans of incorporating secondary education as part of basic management as means of achieving the millennium development goals and management for all by 2015 as articulated in the Economic Recovery Strategy paper. Some of key strategic issues the sector has to address with the limited resources available include access, quality and relevance and efficient management of both material and human resources.

The Kenya vision 2030 identifies improvement of access to secondary education management as a strong vehicle towards reducing illiteracy and sets to build and equip 560 new schools as one of the flagship project by 2012. A high level of collaboration among all the management stake holders is central towards realization of this goal in the management sub sector. Expansion of access to secondary management would not be effective unless issues of quality and relevance are addressed at various levels of management. A major strategy to minimize cost is to ensure more effective utilization of resources by making use of double shift schools, and creating new streams existing schools. In vision 2030 the overall goal for 2012 is to reduce illiteracy by increasing transition rate from primary to secondary. The government declared secondary management as part of basic management on 11/02/2008. The cost of tuition fee for students attending public secondary schools will be borne by government at a cost of ksh. 3600 per student.

Statement of the problem.

According to Ministry of Education booklet: Secondary Management Strategy 2007-2010, implementation of Free Secondary Management policy is bound to create additional challenges. For instance, the increase in student numbers creates a rapid demand for more teachers as well as facilities. Inter Press Service views that perhaps before introduction of the free secondary school initiative, the whole of the year 2007 should have been used to prepare for the program by building extra classes and hiring teachers – but this was not done. In the year 2007, the average teacher- pupil ratio stood at 1 is to 45. With larger class enrollment, the teachers work load is more. But presently, authorities have frozen the recruitment of additional teachers, only employing staff to replace those leaving the 235,000-strong service. There were 1.2 million children in Kenya's high schools system. This number was expected to have risen by 70% in year 2008 and by 80% in year 2010 with introduction of FSE management strategy. According to some estimates from Inter Press Service, at least 4,000 new classrooms, the equivalent of 550 schools were needed to accommodate the 1.4 million pupils expected in public secondary schools during 2008. Kenya in 2007 had 4,478 public high schools, many of which are in a state of despair and lack essential facilities.

School principles have also complained of delay in receiving government subsidies. Under this FSE management strategy parents still remains responsible for uniforms and lunches. What of children from poor families which cannot afford even the top up fees? A substantial number of Kenyans lives below the poverty line and this will compromise school attendance of many children from poor households. According to the latest United Nations Human Development Report, 22.8 percent of Kenyans make do on less than a dollar a day. These so essential issues have triggered the quest for the researcher to investigate on the ground how these and other emerging challenges are influencing effective implementation of FSE management strategy. Various detailed research have been done but have mainly concentrated on free primary strategy, the most outstanding one being the one done by UNESCO 2005. FSE management strategy have been in operation for the last four years and so far there has been no documented research carried to access its sustainability on the ground. This has motivated the researcher to have quest to pioneer in documenting such a research on challenges facing FSE strategy.

Objectives of the study**General objective**

The general objective of the study was to analyze challenges facing implementation of F.S.E management strategy.

Specific objectives

The specific objectives were as follows:

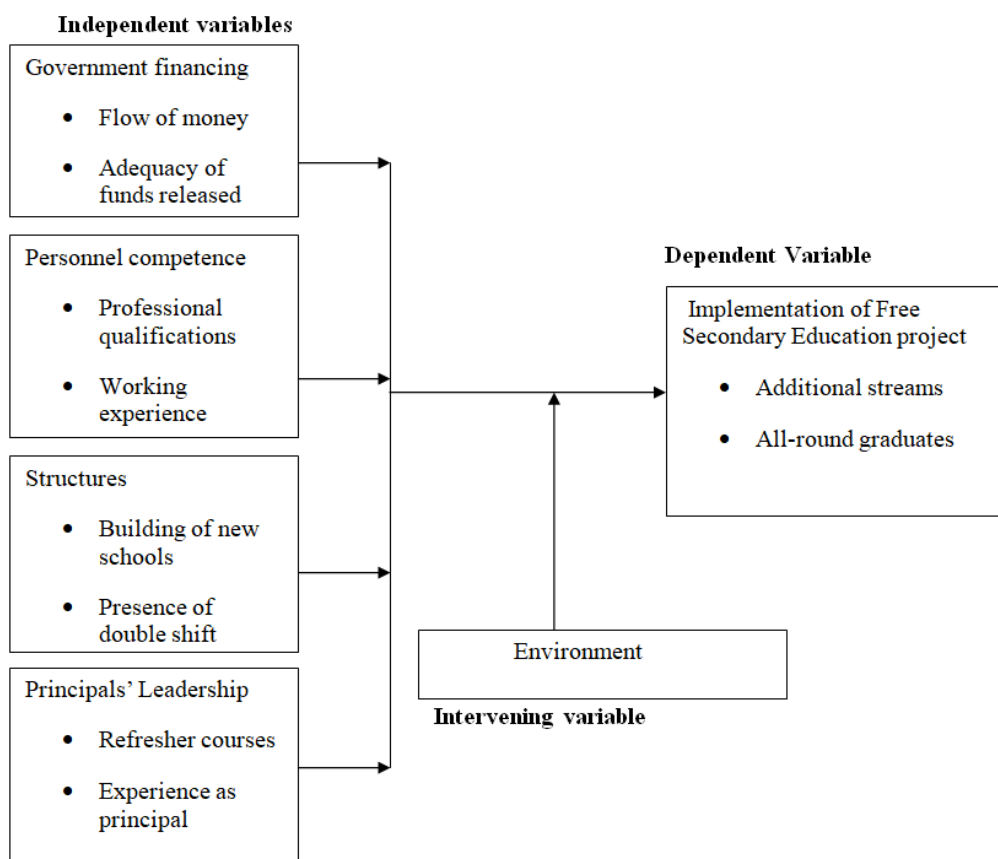
- i. To determine if resources allocation affects implementation of F.S.E management strategy
- ii. To establish if motivation affects implementation of F.S.E management strategy
- iii. To assess if organizational structure affects implementation of FSE management strategy
- iv. To investigate if leadership affects implementation of F.S.E management strategy

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Conceptual framework

The figure 1 below shows the conceptual framework with the relevant variables.

Figure 1. Conceptual framework



Concept of strategy and Strategic management

Many scholars have attempted to define the term strategy. Kenneth Andrews (1971) defines strategy as: "The pattern of major objectives, purposes or goals and essential policies or plans for achieving those goals, stated in such a way as to define what business the company is in or is to be in and the kind of company it is or is to be" In this definition, strategy is concerned with both purpose and means by which purpose is achieved. Igor Ansoff (1987:1965) offers a brief definition: "strategy is a rule for making decision." Ansoff also distinguishes between policy and strategy. A policy is a general decision that is always made in the same way whenever the same circumstances arise. A strategy applies similar principles but allows different decisions as the circumstances differ. Macmillan and Tampoe (2000) defines strategy as: "ideas and action to conceive and secure the future"

According to oxford dictionary 2000, management refers to the act of running and controlling a business. This strengthens the words of Koontz and O'Donnell (1984) who argues that, managing is an operational process initially best dissected by analyzing the managerial functions which are planning, organizing, motivating, and controlling. According to Henri Fayol (1916), to manage is to forecast and plan, to organize, to command, to coordinate and to control. Therefore management is the process that ensures that organization resources are put to optimum use and accomplishment of organizational goals.

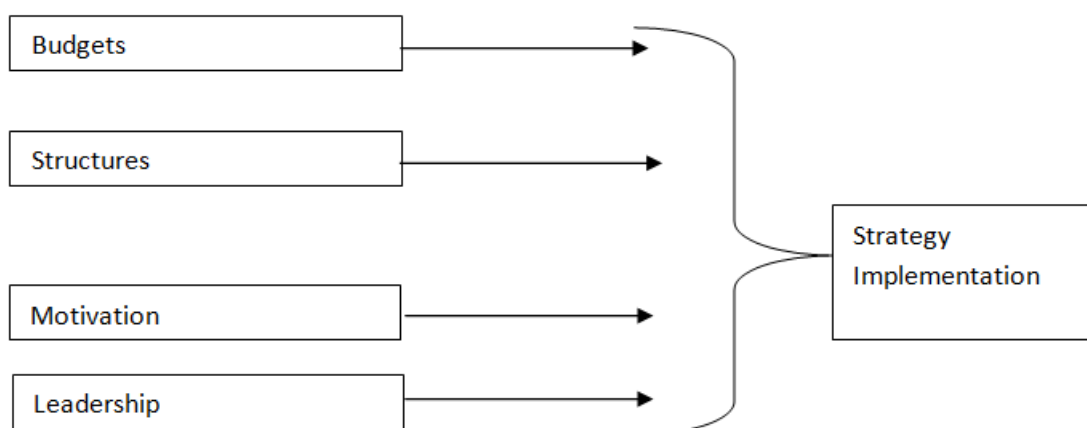
According to Sababu (2007), who strengthens Thompson and Strickland definition of strategic management who defines it as " a process of developing a vision and mission, setting objectives, crafting a strategy, implementing the strategy and evaluating performance by reviewing the situation" Earlier Digman had defined strategic management as a continuous process that involves attempts to watch or fit the organization with its changing environment in the most advantageous

way possible” During the same decade, Byers defined strategic management as that management which is concerned with making decision about the organization’s future direction and implementing those decisions. He explained that these decisions can be broken down into two phases: strategy planning and strategy implementation. Pearce and Robinson defined strategic management as a set of decisions and actions that result in the formulation and implementation of plans designed to achieve an organization’s objectives via formulating the mission, developing long-term objectives, implementing the strategic choices by means of budgeted resource allocations and evaluating the success of the strategic process as an input for future decision making. David on the other hand defined strategic management as “the art and science of formulating, implementing and evaluating cross-functional decision that enables an organization to achieve its objectives” Sababu (2007) makes an integrated definition in view of all the afore stated definitions. He defines it as the process of strategy implementation, strategy evaluation and control on the basis of the remote and industry variables via the SWOT analysis in view of each functional business area.

Parameters of Strategy implementation

In words of Thompson and Strickland (1989) the specific parameters of institutionalizing the strategy involves: To begin with is developing strategy supportive budgets and programs. Secondly is linking the motivation and reward structure directly to achieving the targeted results. And exerting the internal leadership needed to drive implementation forward and to keep improving on how the strategy is being conducted? In addition, Sababu (2007) points out the parameters of strategy implementation as shown below.

Figure 2. Parameters of Strategy Implementation.



Source: Sababu (2007)

Linking budget with free secondary strategy

Thompson and Strickland (1989) say that, organizational units must have resources needed to carry out their part of the strategic plan. This includes having enough of the right kind of people and having enough funds for them to carry out their work. Moreover, each sub unit must program its activities to meet its objectives, establish schedules and deadlines for accomplishments. Budgets specify the costs of planned activities. How well a strategy implementer ties the organization’s budget directly to the needs of strategy can either promote or impede the process of strategy implementation and execution. Too little funding of F.S.E strategy will deprive of departments of the capability to carry out their process of strategic plan. Too much funding will be a waste of organizational resources and reduces financial performance. Is F.S.E management strategy adequately funded? Are there enough personnel to implement the policy? Are areas that need investigation?

Linking motivation with F.S.E strategy.

In the words of Thompson and Strickland (1987), the range of options for getting people and organizational sub-units to push hard for successful strategy implementation involves creatively using the standard reward and punishment mechanisms such as salary raises, fringe benefits, praise recognition, constructive criticism, and demotions and so on. The skill is to inspire employees to do their best and be winners, giving them in the process a sense of ownership in the

strategy and a commitment to make it work. The researcher needs to know on the existing rewarding and punishing practices in F.S.E strategy

Linking structure with F.S.E strategy

Thompson and Strickland (1987:283) strengthen Drucker argument- Drucker has summed the intricacies of organization design by arguing that the simplest organization structure that will do the job is the best one. The simpler the structure, the less that things can go wrong. To obtain both the greatest possibly simply simplicity and the greatest strategy fit, organization design has to start out with a clear focus on key activities needed to produce results. How well F.S strategy is structured in terms of department's interrelations? How are the communication hierarchies? And who is responsible for what?

Linking strategic leadership with F.S.E strategy

Thompson and Strickland further claims that Leadership involves getting things done by coaching others to-do them. A strategy manager has many leadership roles to play such as, crisis solver, resource allocator, motivator, policy maker and so on. Sometimes it is useful for him to be authoritarian, at other times being perceptive listener and a compromising decision maker and at times a participative approach is called for. The researcher needs to investigate on how clear is definition of roles among F.S.E leaders at different levels of operations?

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research design

This research was accommodated within a descriptive survey design as proposed by Kombo and Tromp (2006). Orodho (2003) defines descriptive survey as a method of collecting information by administering a questionnaire to a sample of individuals. Kerlinger (1969) points out that descriptive studies are not only restricted to fact findings, but may often result in the formulation of important principles of knowledge and solutions to significant problems. The survey method was chosen because the information provided would answer the research question posed. The school setup would be accessible to the researcher and was used to generate information to answer research questions. This design would enable the study of population (principals) to be able to make inferences on challenges facing implementation of F.S.E strategy.

The population

The target population for this study was all principals in 55 government secondary schools in Kangema and Mathiyoa districts. The researcher would conduct a census survey of the target population. The study targets public schools because they are direct beneficiaries of the F.S.E policy. This population would adequately tackle the questions the research is addressing. This population was accessible to the researcher and has adequate knowledge on the topic being investigated.

Data Collection procedure

The objective of the study formed the basis from which the instruments are designed. This would be done through filling of a questionnaire by school principals. It included both closed and open ended questions which would allow respondents to answer in their own words. The questionnaire collected information on demographic variables, techniques, and challenges facing FSE management strategy. Questionnaires were self administered by the researcher to the respondents. The questionnaires were gathered after the given response time is over.

Pre-testing of instruments

Pre-testing of instruments would be carried out in three government secondary schools in Kiharu district. The main purpose of pre-testing would be to enhance content validity of the instruments by refining vague statements in the questionnaire. After administering the instruments, necessary adjustments was made on each instrument.

Data analysis

Data collected was analyzed using descriptive statistic. Quantitative data would be analyzed using mean, tables and charts. Qualitative data was analyzed based on content analysis. Data would be analyzed with the help of electronic spreadsheet-SPSS program- which has analysis tools.

Data Presentation.

The collected data was presented using Statistical techniques which would include frequency distribution and tables and graphical technique would include pie chart and bar graphs.

4. FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**Summary of major findings /Answers to research questions.**

From the case study, all the 55 principals responded to the research questions. This marked 100% response rate. This justifies the validity and reliability of the information collected and analyzed. Principals are management managers on the ground who ensures government management policies are well implemented. This is a clear indication that the generated information. views and opinions are highly reliable.

Principals oversees day to day operations of schools hence had factual information of situation as it was on the ground. On budgetary matters 66% of principals expressed that there is need for government to release funds on time especially at beginning of term. On accuracy of funds to number of student, 56% of principals felt the need for government to observe accuracy of amount given to match with number of students a school has. In regard to accountability and transparency of funds, 90% of principals felt that there already exist effective channels to ensure accountability and transparency of funds released. On matters relating to timely auditing, 72% felt that the funds are timely audited for. In case of disciplinary steps, 60% felt that proper disciplinary measures are taken on those who mismanage the funds. On quantity of personnel, 82% of principals felt the need for government urgently to hire more teachers and 74% felt there is need to add new classrooms to accommodate the increasing number of students.

On staff motivation factors, 87% of principals felt that the current working environment is conducive for effective implementation of FSE management strategy. In relation to remuneration, 85% of principals felt that the current staff remuneration package is relatively adequate. On amount of workload, 60% viewed that teachers are already overworked due to expanded enrollment. In relation to chances for teachers to advance their management, 86% of principals felt that teachers are highly demoralized especially by current withdrawal of permission for study leave with or without pay by TSC. Relating to rate of staff turnover 70% of principles expressed that there is high rate staff turn over of teachers to other professions and 76% felt that regular staff appraisal motivates effective implementation of FSE management strategy.

Regarding structural factors, 58% of principals expressed that there is regular and timely communication from government. In relation to structures of communication 66% of principals felt that there are effective structures of communication on the ground. Relating to presence of departments, 86% felt that presence of subject departments have promoted implementation. On issues relating to presence of quality circles, 74% of principals viewed that presence of quality circles and work groups further promotes implementation. On double shift system, 95% of principals felt that any attempt to introduce double shift system in schools would hinder and collapse FSE management strategy and 66% of principals felt that presence of high management bureaucracy slows down decision making hence hindering effective implementation of FSE strategy.

Regarding leadership factors, 66% of principals viewed out that their academic levels mattered on implementation, majority of them were degree holders. On matters relating to experience, 92% felt that their years of experience promoted effective implementation. Relating to presence of quality assurance officers, 78% of principals pointed out that presence of quality assurance officers promote effective implementation. On consultation in policy making, 88% of principals complained that they are hardly consulted on policy making matters. On principals networking, 92% supported that principals networking have promoted implementation since it helps them solve some challenges they encounters. Regarding in-service management training, 88% felt that in –service management training they undergoes further have boosted implementation and 88% felt that support from DEO'S office have helped a lot in effective implementation of FSE management strategy.

Conclusion

From the above findings, it is concluded that implementation of FSE strategy have been successful to great extent but not without various challenges which needs to be urgently addressed in order to sustain this success. These challenges

includes shortage of teachers, need to consult principals on policy making matters, easement of management bureaucracy and rethinking the government plan to introduce double shifts system which principals argued could easily collapse the entire FSE management strategy

Recommendations

From the findings, the researcher would like to make the following recommendations: The government should hire more teachers to handle the increasing number of students. There is urgent need to add new classrooms to accommodate increasing number of students. There is need to involve principals on policy making matters since they are a part of management. There is need to adjust the rules in order to allow principals to make decisions without much delay and there is need to make secondary management entirely free in future in order to reach out even those who cannot afford the top up fee

Areas for further study.

Management is context based and its operations vary with emerging changes in the business environment. Due to limitations stated above the researcher was not able to do a conclusive study in entire country. In future further research can be done to cover other districts. In future a comparative research can also be done to compare various challenges facing implementation of FSE strategy in different districts. A researcher can also research on the challenges the Ministry of Management is facing in implementing FSE strategy. With the first group of FPE beneficiaries set to sit their KCPE this year 2010, advance FSE planning is required. It is obvious that the no of students seeking form one admission in 2011 will rise significantly, putting strain on limited vacancies and facilities. The researcher suggests that in future further research should be carried out to cover entire country especially after 2011 on challenges that will be facing FSE management strategy.

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