

Effects of Principals' Communication Abilities on The Adoption Of Strategic Management In Public Secondary Schools In Baringo County, Kenya

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Abstract: Strategic management is a critical factor for the effective performance of an organization. The Ministry of Education (MOE) in the Republic of Kenya expects that all secondary schools put in place strategic management for performance improvement and the realization of the national goals of education. This study was aimed at establishing the effects of the Principals' managerial competencies on the adoption of the strategic management in public secondary schools.

Key words: Principals, Communication abilities, Adoption, Strategic Management.

Introduction

Many successful organizations have consistently performed better than their competitors, mainly because they have integrated strategic management in their daily operations. Formal strategic management systems significantly influenced organizational performance (Ansoff, 1988 & Sababu, 2001). Strategic Management as defined by Frankel (2008) is a process which defines and clarifies an organization's values and mission, envisioning the future organization that it intends to be, and developing the goals and actions to move it toward the envisioned future. The strategic leader endears vision for the success of the organization. Leaders help stakeholders embrace change by setting forth a clear vision of where the business strategy needs to take the organization (Pearce & Robinson, 2000). For a school leader, the vision is the comprehensive picture of the school in future and the goals it aspires to accomplish for the pupils while the mission indicates what an organization does to realize its vision (Tomlinson, 2006). According to Tomlinson, communication ranks highest among other influential skills which include persuading others, developing others through delegation, coaching and counseling. Leader's ability to create and communicate meaning clearly to others is a key managerial competence for organizational success (Bennis, 1984). Hersey and Blanchard (1988) noted that, the skill of communication involves sharing of the strategies with others to the extent that they understand and accept the recommended actions. As leaders of schools, Principals are viewed by stakeholders as having influence on the adoption of the vision, mission and strategic management for the success of schools.

Methodology

Cross sectional survey design was used in the study. A total of 340 respondents were sampled from a population of 442 comprising of Principals and teachers of public secondary schools in Baringo County. The respondents were selected through purposive and cluster sampling techniques. A self-administered questionnaire combining open and closed ended items was used for teachers while an interview schedule was used for Principals.

Results and Discussions

The objective of this research was to establish the effect of Principals' communication abilities on the formulation of the school Vision and Mission for Public Secondary Schools. Table 1 presents the results

Table 1: Level of the Adoption of Vision and Mission Statements in the Schools

Level of the Adoption		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Has come up with the mission and vision statement	71	22.6	25.5
	Is considering the draft of vision and mission statement	7	2.2	2.5
	Has been with mission and vision statement for 5 years	200	63.7	71.9
	Total	278	88.5	100.0
Missing	System	36	11.5	
Total		314	100.0	

Table 1 shows that majority of the schools (63.7%) had been with school Vision and Mission statements for over 5 years, 25.5% had come up with Vision and Mission statements, while a small number (2.5%) were considering drafting their Mission and Vision statements. The general implication of these findings was that all Principals noted that these mission and vision statements were necessary for reference in their schools. Table 2 summarizes the results of prinipals' communication abilities.

Table 2: Response on Principals' Communication Abilities

Communication ability statements	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
The Principal articulated the school values during the development of the school vision and mission	300	3.9967	.90889
The Principal did not exhaustively discuss the school vision and mission	296	3.3311	1.24540
The Principal always makes reference to the school vision during presentations to the school community and other stakeholders.	300	3.7067	1.20504
The Principal does not continually make reference to the core values of the school as he talks to other school stakeholders	305	3.5869	1.20299
The Principal has caused the documentation and display of the school vision and mission at strategic places in the school.	302	3.8543	1.24103
The Principal has ensured that teachers in the school have memorized the school mission.	304	2.6842	1.19637
The Principal has not ensured that students in the school recite the school vision.	301	3.1296	1.45596
Many school stakeholders can distinguish between the school vision and mission.	300	2.6600	1.27140
The Principal has not facilitated the reflection of the school vision and mission in the school official documents.	302	3.5927	1.26137
The Principal has coached the school Senior Management Team to continually make reference to the school vision and mission.	304	2.9013	1.23620
Principals' communication abilities mean	308	3.2721	.77182
Valid N (listwise)	267		

Table 2 is a summary of the Principals' communication ability descriptive statistics. These mean descriptive statistics were classified as high (3.5-5.0), moderate (3.0 – 3.4) and low (2.0 –2.9). Responses on Principals' communication abilities were high on five statements: 3.9967, 3.7067, 3.5869, 3.8543, and 3.5927. Mean descriptive were moderate on two statements: 3.3311 and 3.1296, while they were low on three statements: 2.6842, 2.6600 and 2.9013. Generally the overall mean on communication descriptors was moderate (3.2721). The implication of these statistics is that Principals' communication abilities play a significant role in strategy adoption. Principals were rated high in 50% and moderate in 20% of the communication descriptors. This implied that on 70% of the items, Principals communicated effectively. These were mainly on documentation and verbal communication to specific groups of stakeholders. Therefore, to a large extent they had raised clear awareness on the existence of vision and mission statements which are key drivers in the adoption of strategic management in organizations. It was noted that Principals had performed dismally in 30% of the items on communication abilities.

Testing of Research Hypothesis

H₀: There is no statistically significant effect of the Principals' communication abilities on the formulation of the school Vision and Mission for Public Secondary Schools.

Principals' mean competencies in formulation of school vision and mission statements are presented in Table 3. From the Table, 37.7% of Principals were rated high with a mean of 4.17; 48.5% moderate with a mean of 3.69; and 13.79 % rated low were with a mean of 2.99. These variances in rating indicated that Principals' communication abilities had an effect on the formulation of school vision and mission statements. To compare the means, ANOVA was carried out. The results are presented in Table 4. The study found out that the difference in means among the low, moderate and high was significant at the alpha (α) 0.05 level, $F(2,302) = 55.83, p = 0.000$. This meant that the Principals' communication abilities had a significant effect on their formulation of vision and mission statements for public secondary schools.

Table 3: Principals' Mean Competencies in Formulation of School Vision and Mission

Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error
Low	42	2.9921	.89787	.13854
Moderate	148	3.6441	.64583	.05309
High	115	4.1783	.53290	.04969
Total	305	3.7557	.75570	.04327

The greatest difference occurred between the Principals who were rated high and those rated low in communication abilities. A higher difference was also noted between the Principals rated low and those rated moderate. The difference in means was minimal between the Principals rated moderate and those rated high in communication abilities. Hence, the Principals who had the greatest deviations were those rated low in their communication abilities. The low communication abilities affected the adoption of vision and mission statements and thereby hampering the effective adoption of strategic management.

Table 4 : ANOVA on Principals' Competencies in Formulation of Vision and Mission

Groups	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p
Between Groups	46.868	2	23.434	55.839	.000
Within Groups	126.740	302	.420		
Total	173.608	304			

Critical values (N=304, df2, 302; p=0.05; F=3.03)

Calculated values (df 2, 302; F=55.839; p= 0. 000)

The qualitative data gathered by use of the Principals' interview schedule was also analyzed in order to establish their responses on communication and mission statements. The number of Principals who indicated that there was a challenge in communication were 18(69.23%) out of the total 26 interviewed. The remaining 8(30.76%) responded that the statements were well understood. Multiple comparisons "post hoc" tests were performed in order to establish where the differences were between groups. The Scheffe 'post hoc' test results are summarized in Table 5. The results show that the differences between groups were significant at $p < 0.05$. The greatest difference occurred between the Principals who were rated high and those rated low in communication abilities. A higher difference was also noted between the Principals rated low and those rated moderate. The difference in means was also minimal between the Principals rated moderate and those rated high in communication abilities. This implies that the Principals' communication abilities had a significant effect on their formulation of vision and mission statements for the public secondary schools they headed.

Table 5: Principals' Communication Abilities Multiple Comparisons Using the Scheffe "post hoc" Tests

Groups	Mean Difference	Std Error	p- value
Low versus Moderate	-.652	.113	.000
Low versus High	-1.186	.116	.000
Moderate Versus High	-.534	.080	.000

Critical values (N=304, df 2, 302; p=0.05; F=3.03)

Calculated values (df 2, 302; F=55.839; p= 0. 000)

Conclusions:

The study revealed that the Principals' communication abilities had a significant effect on their formulation of vision and mission statements for the public secondary schools they headed. Principals who had the greatest deviations were those rated low in their communication abilities. The low communication abilities negatively affected the adoption of vision and mission statements and thereby hampering the effective adoption of strategic management.

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