

EVALUATING THE STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT SKILLS EXHIBITED BY GOVERNMENT SECONDARY SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS IN MUTARE DISTRICT

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ABSTRACT

Strategic management skills are essential to the success of government secondary schools with regard to achievement of their visions, missions, goals and objectives. The study assessed strategic management skills exhibited by government secondary school administrators in Mutare district. The administrators constituted top management as follows: heads, deputy heads and senior teachers from each of the ten schools studied. A sample of ten heads, ten deputy heads and twenty senior teachers bringing the total to forty respondents was obtained by convenience sampling, purposive sampling, stratified sampling, census and simple random sampling. Simple random sampling was used in obtaining four schools intended for pilot study. A qualitative research design was employed by the study. Prior to the actual data, a pilot study was conducted to ascertain the reliability and validity of the instruments, in particular the two sets of questionnaires. The instruments used two sets of open-ended questionnaires, one for heads of government secondary schools and another one for senior teachers, an in-depth interview guide for deputy heads. Non-participative observations were adopted to complement other instruments. The qualitative data was analysed under themes consistent with the research objectives. The study established that government secondary school administrators in Mutare district are rigid in respect of knowledge and practices of strategic management skills despite administrators displaying a reasonable comprehension of the strategic management issues. Strategic management skills are a rare phenomenon in government secondary schools. The study also established that even though administrators displayed their visions, missions and values among others, these higher level policy documents were not being shared with the rest. Furthermore, the study established that most schools lacked enough finance resources to implement their strategic management skills. It also emerged from the study that most government secondary school administrators lacked strategic leadership which had a positive effect in strategic management. The study recommended that government secondary school administrators be involved in sensitizing all stakeholders about strategic management issues in schools through training and other awareness programmes. The teachers and local community members would mobilise support in preparation and implementation of strategic management skills. Government should decentralize authority and hence responsibilities especially when considering allocation of resources. Strategic planning and strategic plans should be made mandatory as a condition of government funding. Finally, promotions must consider managerial competence as opposed to the period one has remained in service or otherwise.

Keywords: Strategic management, Strategic management skills, School administrators, Government secondary schools, Leadership, Strategy.

INTRODUCTION

It appears that most research has concentrated on strategic plans and strategic planning in schools as opposed to strategic management skills. However these two are components of

strategic management (Robbins and Coulter, 2012). Strategic planning, as an organisation development tool started to be outlined in mid 1950s and for more than 30 years was mainly used in private business sector. The concept and performing culture of government administration was developing entirely on the basis of national constitutions and laws (Bryson, 2009). Strategic planning as a reform tool in education became popular in the 1990s in the United States and gained popularity such that in some states like the Rhodes Island, in the USA strategic planning in school districts has been protected by the state law (Bryson, 2009). It became popular because the users felt that it would stimulate strategic thinking, help develop effective strategies, clarify future directions, establish priorities, improve such performance, build teamwork and expertise and deal effectively with a rapidly changing environment. There are certain elements in strategic management which affect strategic planning. Head's attitude towards planning in a great way influences effectiveness of strategic planning to institutional planning. The head's perception toward the programme may greatly influence its implementation. It should be noted that the head's attitude as a responder, manager and initiator contributes to teachers and staff morale either by fostering a rough atmosphere or by supporting them and collaborating with them (Bryson, 2009). On the other hand, heads require the necessary professional knowledge, training and experience. Educational institutions that are essentially traditional in orientation must find new ways of dealing with the issues facing them (Lewa, Mutuku and Mutuku, 2009). There are many challenges facing strategic planning in organisations, one of which is lack of training for leaders. Sedisa (2008) has shown that effective administrators are those who have acquired certain basic skills to cope with the demands of their management tasks. Robbins and Coulter (2012) grouped these skills into four broad categories, namely, technical skills, human skills, diagnostic and conceptual skills. Such skills would be necessary for schools to implement strategic plans. In strategic plans, stakeholder participation affects the implementation procedure. The success of any strategic plan lies in the level of participation of all those who will be in charge with the responsibility of implementing it. Therefore, active involvement of stakeholders at all levels is emphasised (Kamau, 2012). Lack of resources is another factor that could affect the implementation of strategic plans. Verspoor (2008) has noted that most secondary schools in sub Saharan Africa operate with inadequate resources due to poor funding. Most schools face inadequacy in text books, classrooms, sanitation facilities, teachers and other teaching/learning resources. In such situations, schools would be expected to plan for what is available. When schools become overambitious in the planning process, then implementation of strategic plans becomes difficult. Another element of strategic management skills that may need observation concerns information and communication technology. According to Manduku, Kosgey and Sang (2006), "information and communication technology (ICT), has become very necessary in all aspects of life" However, in the field of education, ICT has begun to have a presence but the impact has not been as extensive as in other fields. Manduku, Kosgey and Sang (2006) establish that most of the government schools have computers that are used for typing examinations and other secretarial duties other than performing management functions. Strategic management skills achieved through incorporating ICT in government secondary schools administration are assumedly beneficial in improving data management and communication among others (Manduku, Kosgey and Sang, 2006).

The study which looks at education management through ICT decries the uncanny lack of influence and far less change than other fields such as banking, architecture, law, and business have experienced. Manduku, Kosgey and Sang (2006) argue that information and communication technology has direct role to play in education. If appropriately used, ICT can bring many benefits to the classroom as well as education and training process. Manduku, Kosgey and Sang (2006) further allude that ICT in schools management has been elusive since

most of the school management are either computer illiterate or technology ignorant. However, current global technological changes require modernisation and digitalisation of almost every sector, be it educational or business. On the other hand, most people are very familiar with advances in information technology in which gadgets may be used to advance strategic management skills, for example, phones, and electronic books. Social networking sites like face book, are just a few of the many recent innovations that have changed how people live and work. Breakthroughs in information technologies have resulted in leaner organisations, more flexible operations, increased collaboration among employees, more flexible work sites, and improved management processes and systems. On the other hand, they have also resulted in less personal communication, less down-time for managers and employees, and an increased sense of urgency in decision making and communication (Griffin and Moorhead, 2014).

Kavale, Mugambi and Namusonge (2014) add the development of a business concept, capabilities and the strategic investment decisions to the list of strategic management skills issues. Furthermore cost leadership strategy, product differentiation strategy and strategic synergy affect strategic management skills. It has emerged that most of the literature studied in strategic management relate to commercialised environments such as factories where output is seemingly immediate in comparison with educational experiences. It is of great interest to note that schools also require effective and efficient strategic management skills for quality output. Educational leadership has been viewed as routine and as such studies to develop or relate strategic management skills to the tenants of quality have remained inadequate (Kamau, 2012).

Therefore this research study seeks to educate government secondary school administrators on the importance and relevance of strategic management skills in the education industry just as they are in agriculture and manufacturing industries. If schools in Mutare, Zimbabwe are managed wholly strategically, their products are likely to command quality which may be seen in highly improved pass rates, self-reliance, structural development and quality in general. It is with this background that the study on evaluating the strategic management skills exhibited by government secondary school administrators in Mutare district is conceptualised.

Research Questions

The following were the research questions in this study:

- 1.) Which strategic management skills are exhibited by government secondary school administrators in Mutare district?
- 2.) What are the practices of strategic management skills demonstrated by government secondary school administrators in Mutare district?
- 3.) How do strategic management skills promote quality in government secondary schools in Mutare district?
- 4.) What are the factors affecting strategic management skills exhibited by government secondary school administrators in Mutare district?

Research Design

A research design is the overall scheme plan of the programme of research. It includes an outline of what the researcher will do from the hypotheses and their implications to the final analysis of data (Oyedele, 2011). The study adopted a qualitative research design. This design is descriptive in nature. It involves small groups (Johnson and Christensen, 2007). Triangulation of some qualitative data sources was considered. These sources included: ten in-

depth interviews with deputy heads using a common in-depth interview guide; ten open-ended questionnaires with government secondary school heads; and twenty open-ended questionnaires for two senior teachers from each of the ten government secondary schools. The four administrators in government secondary schools constitute the top management which is responsible for strategic management in the operation of the schools (Mutare District Education Office, 2015). Hence they were used as target group to provide in-depth selected description or information on strategic management skills by government secondary school administrators in Mutare district. Descriptive research was preferred since the study sought to find out on the opinions of the respondents (Kombo and Tromp, 2006).

A qualitative research was considered the best in this study given the abstract nature of strategic management skills. Moreover it gathers in-depth information about flexible arrangements through the different opinions, experience and stand points of respondents. Action research and grounded theory were the methods of qualitative research used in this study. On the other hand, grounded theory sought to develop theory that was grounded in data systematically gathered and analysed. Besides the suggestion of a continuous interplay between data collection and analysis, grounded theory specifically focuses on theory development (Oyedele, 2011). Qualitative research puts emphasis on words and allows for theory to emerge from the data. It allows for new discoveries and developments to emerge as well as the creation of empirically grounded theories, (Flick, 2006). Cross-sectional survey designs were used in this study. Surveys are a form of observation. Observations were made at one point in time. These are single unrepeatable surveys which most suited descriptive and explanatory studies (Oyedele, 2011). They encompass systematic attempts to collect information from a sample of individuals to describe and explain their beliefs, attitudes, values and behaviour. Their relevance in this study fell in that individual people, respondents, were used as units of analysis. As such an observation guide was constructed and used as a checklist (Leedy, 2010). In the observation procedures the researcher remained non-participative. The researcher visited ten government secondary schools in order to interact with respondents and written records.

Population and Sampling

Population is a form of conglomeration of all the elements or subjects of interest to the researcher (Oyedele, 2011). The target population comprised the forty government secondary school administrators in top management in Mutare District. These were: ten school heads; ten deputy heads; and twenty senior teachers. Mutare district has a compliment of ten government secondary schools (Mutare District Education Office, 2015). Identification of the fourteen government secondary schools was by convenience sampling since the researcher was a resident of Mutare by the time of study. On the other hand purposive sampling was applied to distinguish between government secondary schools and others since they were also schools operating on private status in the same district. As such costs were maintained at minimum especially those incurred in travelling through fuel and the need for rented accommodation in the case where the study would have been carried out in places far from researcher's place of residence. This method is fast, time and energy saving, easy to employ and is cost effective. It is also useful for pre-testing a questionnaire (Oyedele, 2011). Since the researcher targeted respondents with knowledge in strategic management issues, who were the top managers in government secondary schools in Mutare District, purposive sampling was employed to come up with a population of fifty-six respondents four of which were considered in pilot study whereas the remaining ten appeared for the study. Stratified sampling was then used to categorise respondents into three, that is; heads, deputy heads and senior teachers. In each stratum, the census sampling technique was used so that all respondents were considered. Ten

heads responded to the first set of questionnaires which was hand delivered, ten deputy heads responded to face-to-face in-depth interviews with the researchers and twenty senior teachers, ten males and ten females responded to the second set of open-ended questionnaires which were hand delivered.

Data Collection Instruments

The tools of data collection used in this study were ten open-ended questionnaires for ten heads, one in-depth interview guide ten deputy heads, twenty open-ended questionnaires for twenty senior teachers of which ten were females whilst the other ten were males. Furthermore, one observation guide was used for the ten schools in the study to source mainly non-verbal data.

Open-ended Questionnaires

In qualitative research, a questionnaire mostly has open-ended questions. Questions will measure statements on attitudes, beliefs and knowledge (Oyedele, 2011). The researchers hand delivered two sets of open-ended questionnaires at ten schools. One set had ten copies for the ten heads and the other set had twenty copies for the twenty senior teachers. In this method, respondents were asked to complete questionnaires by themselves. The questionnaires for heads and senior teachers had two parts: part one collected demographic data whilst part two collected data on various issues of strategic management skills exhibited by government secondary school administrators in Mutare district. Demographic data included professional qualifications, gender and period in office as either head or senior teacher.

In-depth Interviews

An interview is a two person conversation initiated by the interviewer for the specific purpose of obtaining research-relevant information and focus by researcher on content specified by research objectives of systematic description, prediction or explanation (Cannel and Kahn, 2010). One in-depth interview guide for deputy heads was constructed and used for gathering information. In-depth interviews were adopted because of their insightful and targeted nature. These interviews were carried with the actual people who had experiences or had experienced a given phenomenon. The in-depth interviews were focussed and semi-structured. As such they were all conducted within one hour. The technique was characterised by extensive probing and open-ended questions. The emphasis was on obtaining answers to carefully phrased questions. Interviews were conducted on one-on-one basis between respondent and a highly skilled interviewer who was the researcher in this case.

Observation

One observation schedule was prepared and used for all the ten government secondary schools under study. Observation is the term applied to methods of gathering data without direct questioning. It is the primary technique for collecting data on nonverbal or social behaviour, (Oyedele, 2011). Non-participative overt observation was the focus of the study. An observation guide was used to gather data. The findings of the observation were also saved as a checklist confirming the responses in either the interviews or questionnaires. The researchers carried out a visit to each school for the observations. Observations were conducted in between questionnaire completion and interviews. Researchers took that opportunity to probe into areas that were not addressed satisfactorily in the questionnaires.

DISCUSSION AND INTERPRETATION

These are presented in relation to the five research questions and from the findings made through the questionnaires, interviews and observation carried out with the respondents, the four research questions will be discussed below one after the other after the demographic information of the respondents

Demographic information of the respondents**Table 1: Distribution on highest level of qualification**

Highest qualification	Percentage			
	Heads	Deputy heads	Senior teachers	
			M	F
Masters degree (Management)	30	30	0	0
Master degree (Non-management)	10	10	0	0
Bachelor's degree (Management)	0	0	10	0
Bachelor's degree (Non-management)	50	50	60	20
Post Graduate Certificate in Education	0	0	0	0
Diploma/certificate in Education	10	10	30	80
Total	100	100	100	100

It seemed from the distribution above that most government secondary school administrators were contended with bachelors' degrees. Very few would want to study beyond this level. There were only 30% of heads with masters' degrees with relevance in management. These included educational and business administration. Only 10% of the male senior teachers had bachelors' degrees and these were specific to teaching subjects. In other words they lacked substance in management. It seemed that appointment to higher offices had not considered the necessary qualifications. There were 50%, 30%, 60% and 20% of the heads, deputy heads male, male senior teachers and female senior teachers with non-management bachelor's degree respectively.

Table 2: Distribution on period in office at current school

Period in office at current school (years)	Percentage			
	Head	Deputy heads	Senior teacher	
			M	F
0 – 5	40	7	30	50
6 – 10	0	10	60	40
11 – 15	10	10	0	10
16 – 20	20	0	10	0
Over 21	30	10	0	0
Total	100	100	100	100

A greater percentage of deputy heads had limited experience in their current offices. There was evidence to this at 70%. Although 40% of the heads had less than 5 years service period, a significant percentage of them had over 21 years experience as demonstrated by the corresponding percentage of 30. Senior teachers, both males and females showed dominance in the lower level categories of 0 – 5 and 6 – 10 at 30% and 60% for males and 50% and 40%

for females respectively. It appeared that senior teachers had a high rate of replacement. This could have emanated from transfer or constant reshuffles.

Table 3: Age distribution

Completed years of age	Percentage			
	Head	Deputy heads	Senior teacher	
			M	F
30 – 39	10	0	30	50
40 – 49	40	60	50	20
50 – 59	40	40	10	20
Over 60	10	0	0	0
Total	100	100	100	100

The distribution above showed that government secondary schools are dominated by heads in the age groups 40 – 49 and 50 – 59 at 40% each. A negatively skewed distribution can be inferred from the section constituting heads as they were little no heads below the age of 39. On the other hand 60% and 50% of the deputy heads and male senior teachers respectively were found to be in the age range 40 – 49. A corresponding 40% and 10% was in the range 50 – 59. The situation was different with female senior teachers who dominated in the age range 30 – 39. This could be due to other challenges such as early retirement from leadership though a notable 20% has been realised in the age ranges 40 – 49 and 50 – 59 separately. Considering that strategic management issues in the education sector in developing countries have not been adopted early (Borgeirsdottir, 2012). The recruitment policy on appointment seemed to promote maturity. There could be other factors also which might have influenced the distribution. These may be experience and loyalty in the system. The distribution could be a reflection of top management with a lack of knowledge on strategic management skills considering the time these administrators were in training. On the other hand, there may be need for continued training (Kamau, 2012) to upgrade the management skills. Some teacher training institutions like Africa University, Zimbabwe Open University and the University of Zimbabwe had already incorporated courses in strategic management to bridge the gap left by the curriculum that dominated teachers college for a long time back.

Table 4: Sex distribution

Sex	Percentage		
	Head	Deputy heads	Senior teacher
Male	90	70	50
Female	10	30	50
Total	100	100	100

In Mutare district, 90% of heads were male whereas 10% constituted female heads. The number of males in top management dominated with deputy heads taking up to 70% compared to 30% females. It is only for senior teachers where the distribution was equal owing to policy in which case there must be a male senior teacher and a female senior teacher at each school for representation of the boy and girl child respectively. From the distribution above, it seemed ladies were still resenting from the most senior posts in government secondary schools. This might also be owing to the recruitment policy which may not be friendly for female leaders.

The distribution therefore could be used to forecast on strategic management skills which are biased towards male leadership.

Table 5: Distribution of year in which highest qualification was obtained

Year highest qualification was obtained	Percentage			
	Heads	Deputy heads	Senior teachers	
			M	F
Before 1995	10	10	0	30
1996 – 1995	10	40	20	30
2001 – 2005	60	50	20	20
2006 – 2010	10	0	20	20
2011 – 2015	10	0	40	0
Total	100	100	100	100

The majority of government secondary school heads acquired their highest qualifications between 2001 and 2005. The same applied with deputy heads. Meanwhile the distribution of heads dominated at 60%, it topped with a 10% difference from that of deputy heads which recorded a 50%. It appeared from the distribution that there was an urge for heads and deputy heads to acquire high level qualifications during the same period. This could have been due to policy demands as opposed to the intrinsic urge. In the senior teachers' category, 40% of the males recently obtained their highest degrees. Males took the lead in acquiring further qualifications with females continuing to lag behind. However, this distribution did not specify on the nature of qualification whether it was masters or diploma. Current studies may enhance the learning of strategic management skills (Manduku, Kesgey and Sang, 2006) including strategic application in information and communication technology.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

There were four research questions generated for this study and they are presented in a systematic manner as indicated.

Research question 1 which states that, “Which strategic management skills exhibited by government secondary school administrators in Mutare district.”

Responses from the questionnaires, interview guide and observations were used to provide findings to the question.

Understanding the concept strategic management in a school environment

Most administrators defined strategic management as identifying the strengths, weaknesses opportunities and obstacles. Another explanation of the concept which dominated viewed strategic management as setting up the game plan, implementing and evaluating to make necessary changes. Of the 80% heads who responded, 62.5% of them linked strategic management to management by objectives. The concept was further explained by deputy heads. Of the 70% responses 71.4% agreed with responses given by heads. Although the remaining 28.6% did not vary much from heads, they viewed strategic management skills as those skills as those skills used to handle management issues at strategic level.

Strategic management skills were defined by 16.7% of the senior teachers responding as the ability to solve institutional challenges in a pre-planned manner by the senior teachers. Another 16.7% viewed strategic management skills as those skills developed to enhance management of organisations at all levels. Common responses from 57.1% of the senior teachers defined strategic management skills as the act of determining fundamental aims or goals of the organisation and the implementation of the decisions and review of the results. The definitions centred on the one above summed it all. The idea of strategic management as understood by heads was centred on the process of setting clear goals and plans of action. Some heads further expanded it in terms of SWOT analysis. Generally, the contributions made on this item showed that heads of government secondary schools are familiar with strategic management. It was not a strange phenomenon in their vocabulary. It was important to note that heads had an appreciation at a greater extent of strategic management. Although no one showed understanding of the concept in terms of vision, the researcher had to liken the setting of goals to a vision. However, only 100% of heads who responded did not have the confidence in explaining the concept as a process. Robbins and Coulter (2012) outlined a strategic management as illustrated in table 2.1 of this study. Heads understanding could be enhanced if they could outline and observe the process.

This explanation by deputy heads is commendable as it showed that deputy heads were clear with the management level in which strategic management skills are deliberated. The strategic level constitutes heads, deputy heads and senior teacher at top management. However the last definition lacked content. It could have been extended by highlighting on the nature of the skills which include strategic planning skills as noted by Mugambi (2014) in literature. Another 16.7% of senior teachers confused strategic management with skills. Skills were defined as a process which may not be the case. However in the definition, the researcher observed such terms as making decisions and providing adaptive responses. The two terms suggested elements of strategic management skills. Bryson (2009) noted that strategic management is associated with informed decision-making skills.

As the researcher inferred from the definitions collected from senior teachers, all such skills as effective communication, informed decision-making, innovativeness, and being proactive support these definitions (Mugambi, 2014). In overall, 70% of respondents at each management stratum showed the knowledge of strategic management as a concept.

Strategic management skills

The heads had a general understanding of specific skills derived from strategic management. This was evidence from 75% of all the heads who responded. The other 25% did not miss the idea though this category communicated broad areas of planning, directing and evaluation as skills. Common responses from 80% of heads who responded were centred on planning, directing, monitoring, evaluating and technical and conceptual skills. The last two agree with Griffin and Moorhead (2014) whereas the first four resemble those skills supported by Robbins and Coulter (2012). Cognitive skills and technical skills are applicable in the area of planning, directly, monitoring and evaluation.

Research objective 2 which states that, “What are the practices of strategic management skills demonstrated by government secondary school administrators in Mutare district.”

Responses from the questionnaires, interview guide and observations were used to provide findings to the question.

Developing strategic management skills

In schools, heads communicated that they make use of delegation in their endeavour to prepare for strategic management skills. They use departmental heads to make strategies for their departments. The strategies are then used to come up with school strategies. This response by 62.5% of the heads showed that they value active employee participation and team work. The same information was sought from senior teachers: planning, evaluation and implementation. Of these responses 14.3% added that in preparing for strategic management skills there was need to identify a programme or problem area, of which an action plan is taken, implementation which is closely monitored and evaluated allows for the development of the desired skills. Team spirit and stakeholder participation are common strategies in developing efficient strategies. For example informed decision making skills would borrow from team work. Responses given as dimensions of strategic management skills and preparedness for strategic management skills communicated the same conclusion as confirmed by 50% of the heads who successfully completed their questionnaires. In strategic management this approach promotes problem-based, specific skills to address the problem will be sought. For example, in stock or resource allocation, monitoring skills will result in control checks on inventory. Therefore information, communication and technology can then be applied in budgeting as a control tool in inventory. This has been noted by Borgirsdottir (2012) that technology can be applied in strategic management in schools.

Reviewing of strategic management documents

Literature in this study gathered that the documents that are critical in strategic management include the vision, mission, values and strategic plans in general (Hannagan, 2008). More so strategic plans may have to extend to 3 to 5 years. Instead of reviewing the plan frequently as noted from 37.5% of heads, strategic plans may be reviewed in 3 to 5 years time. There was 50% of heads who communicated that reviews may be done in five years. However the strategies as communicated in the vision and mission may require constant review to enable changes ahead of strategic plan objectives. Strategic management skills can also be prepared for by conducting staff development meetings as well as engagement in in-service training of members of staff. Another 33.3% of the senior teachers attempted to categorise the dimensions of strategic management by explaining the strategic management process. Additionally, 16.7% of senior teachers summarised the dimensions of strategic management and preparedness as follows:

These include the major purpose of the school, the principal aims, the fundamental values or culture of the school, the effectiveness and efficient utilisation of resources, the schools' interaction with its external environment, that is, the community.

Preparation for strategic management was outlined as below:

1. Setting objectives
2. Establishing target
3. Evaluating the school's current state in terms of resources and performance based on previous performance
4. Analysing the school's external environment
5. Forecasting future performances.

The responses showed greater mastery of the concept strategic management in some government secondary schools though 57.1% responded in this manner.

“Instead of reviewing the plan frequently as noted from 37.5% of heads, strategic plans may be reviewed in 3 to 5 years time. However the strategies as communicated in the vision and mission may be the ones that would require constant review to enable changes ahead of strategic plan objectives”.

Measuring strategic management skills in government secondary schools

At least 87.5% of heads viewed success in levels of achievement in academics as well as in sports. Supervision and evaluation are both instruments of Results Based Management (Griffin and Moorhead, 2014). They are viewed as strategies to achieve the intended objectives. It is through these strategies that heads will be able to determine the existence of strategic management skills in their schools. High pass rates will communicate excellent strategic management skills as much as low pass rates indicates non practice of such skills. However academic achievements and sport are not the only key measures of strategic management skills. Mostly, heads believed in results Based Management (RBM), supervision and evaluation activities. These approaches will also relate to achievements such as pass rates and successes registered in sports (Griffin and Moorhead, 2014).

Improving Strategic Management skills in government secondary schools

Strategic Management Skills can be improved by focusing on the areas suggested by government secondary schools heads. Firstly as recommended by 87.5% of the respondents there must be adequate resources. Another notable percentage identified these resources as finance, human and material. Secondly, 75% of the heads who responded recommended on the job training through workshops and supervision. All the suggested strategies seem valid in improving strategic management skills. Supervision would allow for evaluation to take place. As such skills are continuously placed on the exact problems they may be intended. Adequate resources in a way would enhance implementation of strategies. It will be easy to implement a skill when the necessary resources are available. Furthermore, a wide range of objectives is depended on resources.

Stakeholder participation in strategic management skills: Other managerial level

Heads responded that middle and first line managers are regularly consulted and schools set sub committees respectively to enhance participation by all. This was a common view by 62.5% of the heads. Another 37.5% concurred that strategies from departments are used to come up with school strategy as noted earlier on.

Monitoring School activities by government secondary school administrators

Over 62.5% of heads concurred that schemes should be checked at fortnightly, having lesson observation for heads of department twice per term. The same number of heads concurred that the accounts offices have to be supervised daily. Although the other 37.5% wanted to show essence in the monitoring, they were not specific. They just responded that such monitoring would have to be done monthly or frequently without looking into the activities per se. The frequencies advocated above were viewed as the most relevant for effective evaluation of school activities. Constant checking of activities was seen by 75% of the heads who responded as a cause for consistency.

Challenges faced in implementing strategic management skills in schools

Common responses were; inadequate resources, for example finance, staff turnover and resistance to change. Financial resources were raised by many as the most common one. This could be as a result that almost all other resources mainly depend on finance. However in some situations heads should be able to improvise. Rather than waiting for an allocation from the school budget, there are certain material resources like textbooks or sport equipment that the heads may involve parents and members of the community to pledge material for schools.

Recommendations on strategic management skills for government secondary schools

The need for continuous training through workshop, in-service or advancement was recommended by 75% of heads who responded. Adequate resources including infrastructure was another common area of recommendation with 87.5% emphasising on resources in order to manoeuvre. Some responses at 25% from those who responded had their recommendations dismissed on the basis of lacking clarity on terms used. The recommendations that strategic management should start from the responsible authority, School Development Committees (SDC) and the head together with their administrators and academic staff also appeared with 62.5%. Continuous training has been favoured because it continuously empowers administrators with new knowledge and skills in strategic management in particular.

School policy documents and strategic management skills

Of the 80% respondents, 87.5% had a clear understanding of school documents which support strategic management. They included visions, mission statements, other school policies and organisational structures. However, only 12.5% attempted all the necessary documents in strategic management. The rest only suggested one or two documents. The responses in this section showed that the majority of heads of government secondary schools lacked in sharing the vision of their schools with the rest of the stakeholders. This was also observed where only two schools had their vision, mission and core-values displayed right in front of the reception. The reception area was a strategic position since all visiting stakeholders pass through this area. It was quite disturbing to note that a significant percentage contradicted itself. Heads displayed vision, statements and mission statements in their offices when yet there were supposed to be displayed on notice boards that were accessible by the majority of stakeholders. As noted during observations 75% of government secondary school heads did not consider the vision and missions as strategic documents which communicate the purpose and strategies to achieve organisational goals. In fact according to Robbins and Coulter (2012) drafting a vision and mission statements marks the initial stage in the strategic management process.

Research question 3 which states that, “How do strategic management skills promote quality in government secondary schools in Mutare district.”

Responses from the questionnaires, interview guide and observations were used to provide findings to the objective.

Community participation and strategic management skills

The majority of heads in the study noted that strategic management skills result in rise in pass rates. With high pass rates more students will be attracted from the immediate community. In a way, strategic management encourage parents to pay fees hence improvement of finance

resources. In concluding the above, 25% of heads indicated that these skills do motivate communities a great deal. On the other hand, the school is its own immediate community. Of the 80% of heads who responded, 12.5% realised a benefit of strategic management skills when the schools were accorded an Advanced Level, Zimbabwe School Examination Centre (ZIMSEC) status. Another 62.5%, identified achievements in pass rates and in sports as benefits of strategic management to schools. It emerged from the data collected that the community plays an important role in fee payment. However, it should be noted also that within the same community, government secondary school administrators may benefit by identifying experts. For instance, sports specialists, contractors in building or suppliers of uniforms if they cannot be made from the school. A school can also engage members of the community to sew uniforms at low costs. Local communities can mould bricks for any construction in school. Furthermore, school administrators may benefit from the local community by engaging it through School Development Committees. The perception that the local community is only responsible for fee payment is a misconception in strategic management and it does not promote active participation by the same community. ZIMSEC status for Advanced level is usually accorded following significant achievement at Ordinary Level performance.

School policy documents and strategic management skills

The policy documents observed included the vision, mission, core values and master time table. Although 100% of the sample showed well in displaying all documents as noted above, a challenge noted remained with their accessibility to the general government which include teachers, students, parents and other key stakeholders. 80% of the schools displayed these policy documents in either the head's office only, the three top management offices or in either of the three. In other words, top management had the understanding of the essence of these documents. What remained outstanding was the need to share the policies with the rest of the stakeholders.

It appeared to the researchers that the majority of the government secondary schools did not believe in a shared vision. Top management has remained the sole originator of policies. Displaying these policy documents in top management offices only revealed ignorance by these office bearers. There was a belief that it remained top management's duty to remind all stakeholders and both middle and first-line managers about these policies. However it was necessary for all documents to be displayed in areas like the reception or main notice board meant for the general government. Only 20% of the government secondary schools had their policy documents in strategic places where every visitor to the school passed through these places. As visitors entered the reception they would be intercepted by well positioned and vividly presented vision, mission and core values statements. In strategic management, this fraction of the sample, believed in common or shared visions. In drafting these policy documents, all stakeholders would have a self-drive towards achieving school goals. It would be important for members to access the policy documents regularly on their own as it may be difficult for top management to meet all stakeholders more frequently. Additionally, 90% of the government secondary schools had master time tables in either the deputy head's or senior teachers' office.

Movable assets and strategic management skills

Movable assets included school buses and other vehicles mainly meant for school business and generators. One bus and on average two small vehicles were noted at 60% of the schools. The

same vehicles were secured for the purpose of easing transportation of students when they attend sporting meetings with other schools, during educational tours whilst small vehicles were used by top management or other members when they attend meetings, for procurement purposes, rushing students to local clinics and other internal duties. This development impacted positively on budgeting as it minimised costs usually incurred in hiring. Finance resources sourced this way would be channelled towards other developments.

On the other hand, 80% of the schools had power generators in place. Having noted challenges in electricity supply which had become inconsistent, most schools sought an alternative. This way, computer laboratories and any other electrical gadgets would continue operating in the absence of electricity. Power generators were also being used in running boreholes at 60% of the schools. Despite the target population being in urban set up, 30% of these schools either did not have electricity connections at all or had unfinished developments.

ICT and strategic management skills

The researcher observed that only 10% of the sample had a computer in the head's office. There were no such gadgets in the other offices except for 10% in the deputy heads' offices. It was also noted that the 10% at deputy heads' level used laptops for personal studies. Generally government secondary schools administrators in Mutare have not adopted information, communication and technology (ICT) in their managerial roles. Most organisations in the commercial sector are taking advantage of technology to improve communication through e-mails, web sites and software systems that run payrolls and accounting systems on budgeting which include statements of final position, and trading accounts.

The researchers observed that government secondary school administrators in the contemporary world need training in computer systems so that they can be motivated towards introducing ICT for the improvement of communication skills as well as training skills. It should be the responsibility of these administrators to engage all stakeholders in the school on platforms which benefit stakeholders through technology. Computers were observed at secretaries' offices. These gadgets were being used for typing of circulars and internal examination questions. It is recommended that government secondary school administrators make use of communication to all stakeholders, manage finances on fee payment, enrolment systems, human resources, procurement procedures and inventory records of the necessary material. Robbins and Coulter (2012) supported the idea when they noted that e-business promotes online bidding and other processing to eliminate the need for sales calls and to decrease sales force expenses or even standardised office functions such as payroll or budgeting. Government secondary school administrators in Mutare cannot continue to avoid technology when yet it is taking control globally. Of the 90% schools having computer laboratories, only 22.2% have internet facilities. Otherwise computers are only benefiting students in lessons and for the HEXCO certificates as well as ZIMSEC. Technology is not benefiting the administrators themselves.

Landscaping and strategic management skills

The environment outside the classroom deserves a lot of attention. All government secondary schools observed did not show any flair in landscaping. Natural grasses were dominating, no flowers or lawn to beautify the environment. However, 100% of the sample has made efforts to maintain a common hedge demarcating roads. The schools could further be maintained by retaining competent caretakers. It seems government secondary school administrators are

lacking in monitoring skills. Vegetation, both natural and artificial, if maintained serves as teaching resources in such subjects as science and agriculture.

Directional and informative signs and strategic management skills

Only 10% of the sample had directional signs placed from the next main road serving the government. It was easy to locate the schools as opposed to the rest as 100% had sign boards beginning right at entrance points. Furthermore, just 10% of the government secondary schools had informative signs and directional signs in and around the tutorial area. In 90% of the schools labels were only observed at the administration blocks. Otherwise visitors would have to struggle in finding their way from place to place.

Sports fields and strategic management skills

Evidence of sporting activities was communicated by the vast trophies and certificates displayed in administration blocks. Only 10% of schools observed did not have adequate ground space for sports. As such, they rely on hiring grounds which may be expensive. There were no trophies or certificates at these schools. Although 90% of the schools had vast space for co-curricular activities, 33.3% of these schools proved to be domineering in this department. The several trophies and certificates in displays included certificates of excellence in handball, basketball and soccer among others. The researcher however, noted that, resources were crippling such unique sporting games as hockey, cricket and swimming.

In as much as all sporting games are important, certain games are unique and surpass others. It was observed that 100% of the schools had their trust on traditional games such as netball, volley ball and soccer at the expense of such games as cricket and swimming. Strategic management skills require administrators to move with time in all facets of management. Uniqueness creates a competitive edge above the rest.

Notice boards and strategic management skills

Only 10% of the sample had a huge notice board accessible to the government. The rest of the government secondary schools had their notice boards right in the administration block adjacent to top management offices. A contradiction was observed here in which in as much as such notice boards were intended for the government, top management section was almost a no-go area. Only members with issues that may not be attended to at grassroots would seek to visit higher offices. As such these notice boards would only serve the few. Above all, most of these notice boards have been converted into picture frames. Over 90% of displays were photographs from school events whereas notice boards are also meant for communication purposes. In other words, circulars could be displayed in notice boards. They would be removed after a given period when the message is believed to have been successfully communicated. This would not be the case with photographs as in some schools the pictures dated back to 2008. It appeared top management continued to pride themselves with old achievements at the expense of current communication.

School regulatory systems and strategic management skills

These include master time tables, duty rosters as well as log in books. Only 10% of the government secondary schools had their master time table and duty roaster in accessible notice boards. The rest had these documents restricted to top management's offices. It seemed

strategic for all government secondary schools in the sample to have the staff check in books next to the deputy head's office. Although the intention here seemed noble, thus making sure that every teacher or member gets to these offices for transparency, neither the deputy head nor the head would remain in office to verify on all members of staff proceeding to the point where the control book was kept. More so, the offices of the top managers were always closed. This leaves members with all room for any truancy. Improvement in this area would require top management to avail the control book at specific times upon which it would be retrieved. Members would be more disciplined and time conscious then. Furthermore it would be easier to monitor the trend on members. It seemed regulatory systems were being used to manage time resourcefully.

Research question 4 which states that, “What are the factors affecting strategic management skills exhibited by government secondary school administrators in Mutare district.”

Responses from the questionnaires, interview guide and observations were used to provide findings to the question.

Basic requirements of strategic management skills by government secondary school administrators

Senior teachers were required to respond to this item. Respondents included the need for administrators to have good strategic thinking (Mugambi, 2014) and good strategic management to see that the overall task of managing a strategy was adequately done. Another response which dominated was the need for administrators to be observant of situations within the school, planning actions to take then evaluating the play before implementation. Additionally 16.7% had the thinking that administrators must show the zeal for further training in planning and implementation. Other requirements were central on administrators who have the ability to establish and evaluate planning, criteria, create, implement and monitor alternatives to a problem and in the process, controlling progress of these alternatives.

All responses noted above from the senior teachers are applicable. Borgeirdottir (2012) asserts that training and strategic thinking are pre-requisites in strategic management and hence skills. Government secondary school administrators have been reminded in this section to be overall decision makers, being accountable for all activities in their schools. In other words, is strategic management, administrators must have an eagle's eye, being responsible for all the same time. Use of sub committees and constantly evaluated reports will aid in this area.

Osei (2006) stressed a point on the need for continuous training of administrators. Limited resources, especially finance, deter accomplishment of goals. Training should be in conjunction with current issues in strategic management including the use of technology for budgeting controls and inventory. This will cover the gap in cases of lack of modern technique in handling situations. The same training will likely enhance skills to provide for learning communities and communicate oriented curriculum development. As such, local resources will be extracted to serve the immediate community's needs. Strategic management skills will enhance community involvement since one of its dictates is alertness to the needs of the immediate community. However, in strategic management, such policies and any other material should not be viewed from one angle. Neither should they just be accepted as they come. Rather evaluation and monitoring will result in advance being sought and therefore strategically directed.

The effect of leadership styles on strategic management skills

Common responses were that some leaders would not easily embrace change and competition. This would further impact on the extent to which administrators determine relevant strategic management skills. Another 25% of the heads who responded wanted to suggest that some leadership styles avoid supervision which results in lack of implementation of strategies accordingly. Robbins and Coulter (2012) advocated strategic leadership as the best. Strategic leadership is a family of skills which embrace strategic management issues.

Organizational structure and strategic management skills

Of the heads who responded, 75% shared the view that there was less flexibility at lower levels of organisational structures since most initiatives require approval by authorities. On the other hand, 37.5% of heads professed ignorance on the influence of organizational structures on strategic management. The response was just that the two are not related. The rest considered organisational structures to be positively influencing strategic management skills though the response was not clear on the extent influence. If strategic management in a way is promoted by team work and collaborative tendencies, then in a way organizational structures must impact on the relevant skills. However, organisational structures for government secondary schools are characterised by bureaucracy at highest levels. In 100% of the structures observed in government secondary schools' notice boards in deputy heads' offices, there is emphasis on protocol. In a way protocol is detrimental to strategic management as it delays progress. To a greater extent, it promotes centralisation of authority.

School environment and strategic management skills

There was 80% non-response on this item. However, the 20% that responded cited that the schools environment is only affected by non-payment of fees by parents to acquire relevant resources. Some heads preferred to label the environment as one that is not very conducive. Since school fees is the major source of income in Government Secondary School, such government policies which interrupts with consistence in fee payment cripples the environment. Resources like chalks, text books and any other especially in the procurement department will remain scarce. Scarcity of resources in finance results in shortage or inconsistencies in human resources and material resources.

Infrastructure and strategic management skills

Of the 80% heads who responded to questionnaires, 87.5% showed discomfort which is caused by double sessions due to limited classrooms. Even in observation, the researcher noted double sessions at 70% of the government secondary schools. This, as noted by other heads, would result in challenges in the application of strategic management skills. There was consensus at 100% that inadequate infrastructure would compromise strategic management skills. Already there are two groups of students and teachers. A greater percentage of heads explained that few classrooms result in double sessions with other teachers overlapping lessons. In the case of overlapping of teaching periods, the master timetable would come in as a control tool to keep stakeholders within stipulated time for duty or tasks. Inadequacy of infrastructure implies that learning time is reduced to accommodate both sessions. Quality has continued to deteriorate due to inadequacy in classrooms. However, it should be noted that infrastructure also refers to sporting facilities as well as furniture. It is not only about teaching and learning classrooms. The study observed great shortage of learning classrooms. Hot sitting characterised

70% of the sample schools. Moreover, the classrooms would be congested especially from form 1 to 4 where a class would accommodate 50 to 60 students against a 1:33 ratio (Mutare district, 2015). This on its own makes it difficult for class management by teachers as it impacts negatively on text books and marking and even distribution of time on individuals considering individual differences. Teachers' morale is not spared by this overcrowding. In addition, efficiency would lack as it would be difficult for teachers to allocate time accordingly in mixed classes constituting fast and slow learners. There was no hot sitting at 30% of the schools.

There was evidence of construction of new learning blocks at 10% of the schools. One school had just completed one of its targets on its five year strategic plan which include a double storey hostel block. All other structures were newly painted. On the other hand, 30% of the government secondary schools had infrastructure which was deteriorated. Of these, 10% was already in a dilapidated state. This was a reflection of management that operates from the offices and never minding the status of the infrastructure. However, hot sitting may not be as a result of shortage of learning classrooms, it could also be a result of an increase in the local population. It could be controlled by the establishment of new schools lest the already existing ones be congested. Only 20% of the schools had room for expansion since they had very limited class rooms. Furthermore, 20% of the schools were operating from temporary administration blocks. Though there were indications on attempts to construct proper offices, this did not appear prudent since the same schools had no strategic plans neither were there any material ahead of the possible constructions. It was also observed that the same schools had these temporary structures at between 100m and 120m from the classroom blocks. These structures are also too close to the main entrance. Students and junior staff are left by themselves in the classrooms and offices. Monitoring by administrators in this case becomes a constraint. The distance that teachers move between the staffroom and the classrooms is a cause for concern. A lot of time is wasted. Communication between members of staff especially top management and students is compromised.

In schools with proper administration blocks, 60% of them appeared small for the teaching staff as evidenced by the congestion staffrooms observed. It was also observed that in schools with hot sitting, teachers from the first session may want to remain in school for marking and other errands. If this happen, there is highly likely that congestion is experienced when the staff from the second session would also want to use the same staffroom. Thus, members may have to leave the station early to make up for the next session. As such planning is compromised. Top management will also find it difficult in monitoring the same members. Most schools did not have proper waiting areas at their receptions. Only 50% of the schools in the sample had furnished reception areas. Of these, 20% had enough room for this purpose. The rest needed improvement through expansion and adding more furniture. Furthermore only 20% of those schools with reception waiting areas entertained visitors by availing reading materials at the front desk. These included newspapers and news letters from the school. Newsletters showed enhanced communication skills and marketing strategies.

Parking area and strategic management skills

This is an area that also motivates staff and visitors. In the sample, 50% had pronounced parking space. Of these 60% had well placed car ports. Members of staff with cars would feel favoured and hence motivated by realising the concern over their property by top management.

Stakeholders and strategic management skills

Heads of schools added to the requirements by suggesting factors influencing strategic management skills in schools. Repeated responses were the relevant or necessary qualifications, infrastructural set up, resources and training.

Ministry policies and strategic management skills

Of the 80% of heads who responded, 87.5% viewed these policies as inhibitive. For example the policy that no child should be sent back home for non-payment of fees builds laxity in parents. The remaining 12.5% looked at the same policies differently by concluding that they were actually helping since they constantly give guidelines. On relating internal and external policies in schools, 75% of the heads who responded indicated that they follow the guideline from policies as determined by the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education. The rest of the 25% was split equally with 12.5% non-response and the other 12.5% revealed that they always manage to merge the two sources of policies by planning and evaluation at local level. Most heads confirmed that they build on the policies as determined at higher levels in the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education. The uncertainty in the job security of a teacher in Zimbabwe today was cited by some respondents as the reason behind the reluctance in completing questionnaires as they initially received the researchers with scepticism. The responses to this statement suggested that government secondary school heads are passive recipients of policies. Borgeirsdottir (2012) indicate that when policies are imposed, a gap often remains between policy and practice. In other words they have little influence on altering the policies. Otherwise, they have to make do with balancing the two. Furthermore, it appears the survival of school-level policies is highly depended on higher level policies.

Administrators and strategic management skills

Of the 70% of deputy heads who responded 71.4% revealed that they were involved in strategic management issues on daily basis. There was need for such experiences since strategic management skills need one to be critical of situations to avoid lapses. This matched with 75% of heads who confirmed delegation of duties to deputy heads. Meanwhile 50% of the heads supported their deputy heads by ensuring team work, 37.5% concurred by supporting interaction on regular basis. Heads responded that middle and first line managers are regularly consulted and schools set sub committees respectively to enhance participation by all. This was a common view by 62.5% of the heads. Another 37.5% concurred that strategies from departments are used to come up with school strategy as noted earlier on.

CONCLUSIONS

The study established that the majority of government secondary school administrators were not familiar with strategic management issues. As such they were not practising strategic management skills meaningfully. The study further discovered that only 37.5% of government secondary school heads had sound knowledge of strategic management issues. Of those heads lacking strategic management skills, 50% of them constituted long standing heads with more than 15 years of experience. Meanwhile the remaining 25% comprised of those appointed as substantive heads due to the period they had saved in the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education. Furthermore, 87.5% of government secondary school heads seemed to have attitude problems. The greater percentage was ignorant of the issues and their responses showed that they lacked strategic planning skills. On the other hand, an average number had an appreciation

of strategic management issues but would not make an effort to be engaged accordingly. This behaviour resulted in them using reactive as opposed to proactive skills.

Another area of concern was lack of appreciation of ICT as a critical management tool in enhancing effective communication skills and other strategic issues such as strategic monitoring and controlling skills. Manduku, Kosgey and Sang (2006) alluded in literature that ICT in schools management has been elusive since most of the school management were either computer illiterate or technology ignorant. Heads professed ignorance on the impact of ICT on strategic management skills. Despite having 100% of schools with computer laboratories, only 30% had internet facilities. Government secondary school administrators should take advantage of technology to communicate with stakeholders on internet through e-mail and Web sites. Other strategic management issues that could be used in line with technology included procurement, online purchasing, monitoring and controlling inventory, budgeting, preparation of finance management accounts and pay roll systems. Government secondary school administrators lacked basic skills in computer studies. As such they continued to avoid such gadgets in their offices. Information and communication technology had not been of any relevance in strategic management as the belief among administrators from the schools studied that objectives could still be achieved without it. However, that approach wholly remained management as opposed to strategic management. ICT could bring in efficient strategies. Hence there was need for the provision of in-service workshops aimed at developing ICT skills in government secondary school administrators. There was general belief in all schools that computers were meant for students. If ever there were brought in administrative issues, they are used to capture data and mainly for typing circulars and minutes. Government secondary school heads showed that they were not practising cost effective skills which required online purchasing. Strategic marketing skills were demonstrated in the case when administrators would showcase their products. Even though government secondary schools did not, to a greater extent, directly compete for students, uniqueness would bring about a competitive advantage. A government school that has a history of quality is likely to attract students of quality.

Travelling costs would be dealt with when quotations can be sourced and compared over the internet, through e-business. Transparency, as a value in most government schools in the study had strategic placements of these policy documents. It remained unfortunate that 80% of the schools kept the policy documents hidden in top management's offices or placed at high levels that were rarely checked by stakeholders or visitors to the schools. This was an indication that a greater percentage of policy documents in government secondary schools were just put on display for the sake of meeting Ministry's requirements but without necessarily being moved by the quest to set direction for the organisation. During observations, it was noted that no one outside top management was familiar with their school's vision and mission statements. Even the administrators themselves had difficulties in recalling the long winding statements without constantly referring to the documents. The conclusion was that the policy documents were more of theory and never existed in practice. Where achievements were realised in 40% of the sample, it appeared the majority favoured academics and traditional sports. Strategic management as a phenomenon remains important and relevant to the operations of government secondary schools even though it is currently being sparingly applied. Government secondary school administrators, though to a lesser extent, had a clear picture of the strategic management process. Current strategic management issues which include; strategic leadership; strategic flexibility, innovation; customer service and e-business are all important strategies which had to be problem-based approaches making strategic management skills more relevant in education.

The study further found out that most of the schools in Mutare district lacked enough finance resources to implement strategic management skills. However strategic leadership plays a role in strategic management skills to provide better awareness of needs of the facilities related to strategic management issues and the environment. This would enhance defining the overall mission of the organisation and focuses on the objectives, providing a sense of direction continuity and effective staffing and leadership. Despite the success in data collection using qualitative research design it was a struggle as the researcher kept on making follow-up reminding respondents on the need to complete questionnaires. Most respondents could advise the researcher of the simplicity in a quantitative research design where they would be guided in options. However the return rate in interviews was 90%, questionnaires by heads had 80% and questionnaires from senior teachers had 60%. It was discovered that the return rate was highly affected by the level of qualification of school administrators especially at senior teachers' level. The majority of senior teachers lacked the knowledge of the concept strategic management. However there were some who made efforts to learn while practising.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Government secondary school administrators should make good use of the local resources in schools and the community around instead of always looking up to the national budgets. Promotions in government secondary schools for the offices of administrators especially in top management which comprise heads, deputy heads and senior teachers should also bring into consideration the prerequisite of administration. In other words the necessary credentials for strategic management should be considered. In most cases classroom practitioners are elevated to senior management following long term of service. Appointments should be based on one successfully going through a selection process in which case items of interview guides must be comprehensive in relation to management. Teacher capacity building programmes should be compulsory, in particular at top management levels so as to equip the leadership with current issues in leadership and management for instance, strategic management issues (Robbins and Coulter, 2012). This will enable government secondary school administrators to be empowered in respect of moving from management to strategic management. Strategic management skills may be more efficient, as opposed to mainly effectiveness only obtained in management.

Heads of government secondary schools may need to be wholly exempted from teaching of classes. In as much as it may appear as minimizing costs by utilizing the heads, a lot in administration has suffered. For instance, 100% of the sample showed lack of monitoring of strategies in the schools. The environment outdoor appeared pathetic. Strategic management in a way requires a lot of practice, attention and solutions that are problem-based and local resources must be harnessed towards the immediate needs of the community. Government secondary school administrators, probably with the assistance of teacher capacity building, should embrace information and communication technology to enhance effective communication through e-mails or websites (Manduku, Kosgey and Sang, 2006). On the other hand administrators should take advantage of technology to supervise activities in their schools. This will have to include recruitment, payrolls, financial statements, procurement procedures as well as keeping and monitoring inventory. This will enhance resource management. The concept of strategic management should be accepted wholly in government secondary schools despite them being non-profit making organisations. It should not remain with commercial entities only. In a way, if government secondary school administrators were to be strategic managers, total quality management is realised. More so teachers' training colleges should design a curriculum which allows every teacher to receive training in strategic management

aspects. This will be positive for internal sourcing which has continued to dominate when promotions are considered.

Government secondary school administrators should display documents on school policies in places accessible to every stakeholder. In addition to this, there must be staff development meetings and general meetings with all stakeholders including parents, students and teachers to focus them on the vision, mission and values of the school. This promotes a shared vision and hence active participation by all stakeholders. Moreover government secondary school administrators should avail strategic plans which clearly outline strategic management issues such as strategies or skills to achieve school's long term objectives which should be extended from one year to at least three to five years. The strategic plans will then require consistence in terms of monitoring and evaluation. In other words, formative evaluation would best aim at quality as opposed to summative evaluations. There should be a network system linking the head to all administrative structures like the accounts department for reporting of finances at regular basis (Borgeirsdottir, 2012). There is need to consider in-service workshops for already practising administrators on basic computer skills for them to have an appreciation of their relevance in communication and finance management. On the other hand, decentralisation of authority and responsibility may enhance development in schools as the local community will have a sense of belonging and hence the zeal to participate with maximum effort.

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