

**STRATEGIC PLAN IMPLEMENTATION AND SCHOOL  
MANAGEMENT IN DAY SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN  
MASINGA AND YATTA SUB-COUNTIES, MACHAKOS  
COUNTY, KENYA**

<sup>1</sup>\*Charles Wambua Kinai, <sup>2</sup>Dankit Nassiuma & <sup>3</sup>Rosemary Mbogo

Educational Leadership and Administration, Africa International University

\*Email of the Corresponding Author: [crnkinai@gmail.com](mailto:crnkinai@gmail.com)

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**ABSTRACT**

**Purpose of the Study:** The purpose of the study was to establish how the implementation of strategic plans affects school management.

**Statement of the Problem:** Despite the growing emphasis on strategic planning in educational institutions, many schools continue to face management challenges in coordination, accountability, decision-making, and efficient resource allocation. Some schools develop strategic plans but fail to implement them effectively, limiting their ability to achieve institutional goals.

**Methodology:** The study employed a mixed-method research design using a convergent parallel approach. Both qualitative and quantitative data were collected simultaneously and analyzed to provide comprehensive findings. Regression analysis was conducted to assess the predictive impact of the independent variable, namely the development and implementation of strategic plans, on the dependent variable, the institution's management.

**Findings:** The study established that strategic planning had greatly influenced the management of Board of Management affairs, teachers' and school staff affairs, and students' affairs. The findings further revealed that the development and implementation of strategic plans were positively and significantly correlated with school management. Regression analysis also indicated that strategic planning positively and significantly predicted effective institutional management.

**Conclusion:** The study concludes that the development and implementation of strategic plans significantly enhance school management. Strategic planning enables schools to define long-term goals, improve resource allocation, strengthen accountability mechanisms, and promote effective coordination of institutional activities.

**Recommendation:** Schools should invest in training programs to enhance skills in data management, monitoring, and evaluation to improve strategic plan implementation.

**Keywords:** *strategic plans, school management, coordination, accountability, and decision-making processes*

## INTRODUCTION

Strategic planning is the process by which an organization defines its direction and allocates resources to pursue its goals. It also serves as a control mechanism that guides the implementation of strategies. Strategic planning enables leaders to be intentional about their goals and methods. As a management tool, its primary purpose is to enhance organizational effectiveness. In a rapidly changing environment, strategic planning helps organizations to focus their vision and priorities, thereby ensuring that members work towards common goals (Allison & Kaye, 2005).

In principle, strategic planning is the process by which an institution sets goals, determines the actions required to achieve them, and mobilizes the resources necessary to implement them. A strategic plan, therefore, outlines how goals will be realized using available resources. Ayitey (2008) notes that although several early scholars contributed to the literature, strategic management as a discipline emerged in the 1950s and 1960s. The term *strategos* is derived from a Greek word meaning "army general". Greek military leaders provided strategic guidance on managing battles to achieve victory (Blackerby, 2003). Blackerby further explains that strategic planning focuses on the broader perspective. According to a UNESCO working paper (Carron, 2010), strategic planning has retained two key characteristics from its military origins: The need for comprehensive thinking, ensuring that all possible options are considered within a dynamic environment, and a focus on achieving clear, long-term objectives.

In the early 1920s, Harvard Business School developed the Harvard Policy Model, one of the earliest strategic planning frameworks for private enterprises. In this model, strategy is defined as a set of policies and objectives that define an institution and its operations (Blackerby, 2003). By the 1960s, strategic planning had become a standard management tool in both small and large corporations and was incorporated into business school curricula (Carron, 2010). Successful implementation requires the involvement of those responsible for execution; otherwise, strategic plans risk becoming merely procedural documents.

Until the mid-1980s, strategic planning was largely confined to the private sector. However, governments later adopted strategic approaches in public sector planning (Blackerby, 2003). Prior to this shift, concepts such as customer orientation, marketing, risk management, and market share were rarely associated with public institutions.

Strategic planning was subsequently extended to non-profit organizations and the public sector. Strategy is defined as "a pattern of purposes, policies, programs, actions, decisions, or resource

allocations that define what an organization is, what it does, and why it does it” (Bryson, as cited in Narikae & Lewa, 2017). Although public institutions are not profit-driven, strategic planning remains essential due to limited resources and the need to achieve long-term goals efficiently.

In the education sector, strategic planning began at the university level in the United States in the late 1970s and extended to schools in the late 1980s (Carron, 2010). In developing countries, however, its adoption has been slower.

In Kenya, strategic planning in schools gained prominence following the Ministry of Education’s adoption of a five-year strategic plan (2008–2012). The vision was “to have a globally competitive quality education and training for Kenya’s sustainable development” (Ministry of Education [MoE], 2009, p. 9). Schools are therefore required to develop strategic plans aligned with their mission and vision over a five-year period. In 2013, the Government of Kenya mandated all public institutions to develop internal strategic plans to enhance results-based management and operational efficiency. Strategic planning is expected to improve both academic and non-academic performance by enabling schools to allocate resources effectively in response to internal strengths and external opportunities (Akinyi, 2008).

This study focuses on young day secondary schools in Masinga and Yatta Sub-Counties of Machakos County, established between 2004 and 2018 through the Constituency Development Fund (CDF). Many of these schools rely heavily on NG-CDF support and political goodwill for infrastructure development. Political transitions often disrupt the continuity of development projects and the implementation of strategic plans.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Although strategic planning and management are important in educational institutions, numerous challenges persist in the formulation and implementation of such strategies in day secondary schools in Masinga and Yatta Sub-Counties of Machakos County, Kenya. Many school heads, Boards of Management, teachers, and key stakeholders lack a clear understanding of their roles in the strategic planning process. Previous studies have not adequately addressed the significance of specific steps within the strategic planning process and their impact on implementation outcomes. This study seeks to establish how the implementation of strategic plans affects school management.

### **Purpose of the Study**

To establish how the implementation of strategic plans affects school management.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Strategic management, traditionally associated with private-sector organizations, has increasingly become a central framework for the administration and transformation of educational institutions. In contemporary educational environments, particularly in secondary schools, leaders are confronted with complex and rapidly evolving challenges. These include technological disruptions, increased demand for quality education, diverse student needs, limited resources, policy reforms, and heightened accountability expectations. In response, schools must adopt structured, evidence-based approaches to planning and decision-making. Strategic management provides such a framework by enabling institutions to transition from reactive administrative practices to proactive, future-oriented systems of governance.

Strategic management in education is a continuous, integrated process of environmental analysis, strategy formulation, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation. It is not merely about long-term planning but about ensuring that institutional goals are aligned with available resources and contextual realities. In this regard, strategic management promotes coherence in decision-making, enhances institutional adaptability, and fosters sustainable improvement in academic performance and organizational effectiveness.

Recent empirical studies in Africa, including East Africa, reinforce the growing importance of strategic management in improving institutional outcomes. For instance, a study conducted in Kenya found that effective strategic planning significantly improves school performance by enhancing coordination, resource allocation, and goal clarity (Mwangi et al., 2025). Similarly, research across East African organizations indicates that strategic planning practices are strongly associated with improved operational performance, suggesting that institutions that systematically plan and implement strategies are more likely to achieve their objectives (Koech, Kipchumba, & Kiprop, 2025).

In addition, the Kenyan education sector has institutionalized strategic planning through policy frameworks such as the National Education Strategic Plan (2023–2027), which emphasizes strategic leadership, performance management, and accountability as key drivers of educational transformation (Ministry of Education, 2024). This policy direction underscores the necessity for schools to adopt strategic management practices not only as a compliance requirement but as a tool for continuous improvement and competitiveness.

Strategic management also plays a critical role in managing change within educational institutions. Schools are inherently human-centered organizations, and any change initiative

must consider the attitudes, capacities, and motivations of stakeholders. Effective strategic management ensures that change is not imposed abruptly but is carefully planned, communicated, and implemented to foster stakeholder ownership and minimize resistance.

Strategic planning is the central component of strategic management and serves as a roadmap for institutional change and development. In the context of secondary schools, strategic planning should not be viewed as a bureaucratic requirement or a static document but as a dynamic, participatory, and iterative process that drives continuous improvement.

The strategic planning process typically involves several key stages: environmental scanning, goal setting, strategy formulation, implementation planning, and evaluation. Environmental scanning enables schools to assess both internal capabilities and external opportunities and threats. This includes analyzing factors such as student performance trends, teacher capacity, infrastructure availability, community expectations, and policy requirements. In the African context, environmental scanning is particularly important due to the variability in resource availability and socio-economic conditions across regions.

Empirical evidence from East Africa highlights the importance of environmental scanning and strategic alignment. Studies have shown that schools that conduct systematic situational analyses are better positioned to allocate resources effectively and respond to emerging challenges. For example, research in Kenyan secondary schools indicates that institutions that align their strategic plans with contextual realities experience improved academic performance and operational efficiency.

Goal setting is another critical stage in the strategic planning process. Goals should be specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART). Clearly defined goals provide direction and serve as benchmarks for evaluating progress. When these goals are effectively communicated to stakeholders, they foster a shared sense of purpose and accountability.

Strategic planning also emphasizes stakeholder participation. Involving teachers, students, parents, and community members in the planning process enhances ownership and increases the likelihood of successful implementation. Research in Kenyan universities demonstrates that stakeholder involvement in strategic direction significantly improves institutional performance, particularly in areas such as teaching quality and organizational effectiveness (Abeid et al., 2025).

Furthermore, strategic planning is closely linked to change management. Change in educational institutions often involves shifts in teaching practices, curriculum delivery, resource allocation,

and organizational culture. For such changes to be successful, they must be carefully planned and managed. This includes preparing stakeholders through training, communication, and capacity-building initiatives.

Studies on strategic change management in Kenya reveal that effective communication, leadership, and stakeholder engagement are critical determinants of successful change implementation. For instance, research on public universities found that change planning, communication, and monitoring significantly influence organizational performance (Lubanga & Wambua, 2025). These findings are equally applicable to secondary schools, where similar dynamics exist.

The strategic plan document itself plays a vital role as a communication and implementation tool. It should clearly outline the institution's vision, mission, strategic objectives, implementation strategies, timelines, resource requirements, and evaluation mechanisms. According to contemporary strategic management literature, a well-developed strategic plan serves as both a roadmap and a performance management tool.

Monitoring and evaluation are integral components of the strategic planning process. Continuous assessment of progress enables schools to identify gaps, make adjustments, and ensure alignment with goals. Evidence from African organizations suggests that institutions that integrate monitoring and evaluation into their strategic planning processes achieve better outcomes due to increased accountability and responsiveness (Mwanza, 2025).

In summary, the strategic planning process provides a structured and systematic approach to managing change in schools. By integrating environmental analysis, stakeholder participation, clear goal setting, and continuous evaluation, schools can effectively navigate complex challenges and achieve sustainable improvement

## **METHODOLOGY**

The study employed a mixed-methods research design using a convergent parallel approach, in which qualitative and quantitative data were collected simultaneously, analyzed independently, and later interpreted together. The target population consisted of 80-day secondary schools in Yatta and Masinga Sub-Counties in Machakos County. Using Nassiuma's (2000) formula, a sample size of 20 schools was obtained through convenience sampling. For the qualitative phase, in-depth interviews were conducted with five school principals and four Board of Management chairpersons until data saturation was achieved.

For quantitative data collection, self-developed questionnaires were administered to principals and Heads of Departments (HoDs) from the sampled schools. The questionnaires were designed differently for principals and teachers and contained both closed-ended and open-ended items to capture quantitative and qualitative information. To ensure the reliability and validity of the instruments, the questionnaires were pilot-tested with a small group from the target population to identify omissions, ambiguities, and irrelevant items prior to the actual study. Data analysis involved both qualitative and quantitative approaches. Qualitative data were analyzed using framework analysis and thematic coding, while quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including percentages, means, medians, and modes, with SPSS. Correlation and regression analyses were further conducted to assess the relationships among the study variables. Ethical considerations, including informed consent, confidentiality, and research authorization from relevant institutions, were also observed throughout the study.

## RESULTS

### Impact of the school strategic plan

The respondents stated the impact that the school strategic plan had on management of the institution, physical development of the institution, and performance of the learners. The findings are shown in Table 1.

**Table 1: Impact of the school strategic plan**

		No impact	Little impact	Moderate	Great impact	Very great impact	Mean	Std. dev
The management of the institution	Management of BoM affairs.	5.6%	0.0%	22.2%	47.2%	25.0%	3.9	1.0
	Management of teachers and school staff affairs.	5.6%	2.8%	25.0%	47.2%	19.4%	3.7	1.0
	Management of students' affairs.	8.3%	5.6%	13.9%	55.6%	16.7%	3.7	1.1

The respondents: 47.2% stated that the school strategic plan had greatly impacted the management of BoM affairs; 47.2% agreed that the school strategic plan had greatly impacted the management of teachers' and school staff affairs; and 55.6% noted that the school strategic

plan had greatly impacted the management of students' affairs. The findings indicate that the SP plays a significant role in the school's management. It gives direction to planners and implementers of the said plans. BoM meetings have a baseline in their decision-making. As opposed to a situation where board meetings plan from nothing, an SP in place gives their meetings a clear point of reference. A strategic plan also serves as a basis for evaluating the institution's performance and progress. In public and private institutions, strategic planning is used to fast-track performance. In the event of a change in school leadership, such as when the principal is transferred, a strategic plan makes it easier to keep the school on the right track because it has been determined by stakeholders and put in place. New leadership will therefore only move forward, no matter the change.

### Strategic Plan with various Groups

The respondents were asked to indicate how often they discuss and draft changes or new aspects of the strategic plan with the various groups. Results are shown in Table 2.

**Table 2: Discussion of Strategic Plan with various Groups**

	<b>Don't know</b>	<b>Not involved at all</b>	<b>Partially involved</b>	<b>Involved</b>	<b>Fully involved</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. dev</b>
<b>Members of the BoM</b>	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	33.3%	66.7%	4.7	0.5
<b>Teaching staff meetings</b>	0.0%	0.0%	25.0%	41.7%	33.3%	4.1	0.8
<b>Students or their leaders</b>	0.0%	8.3%	41.7%	33.3%	16.7%	3.6	0.9
<b>The non-teaching staff</b>	0.0%	8.3%	75.0%	16.7%	0.0%	3.1	0.5
<b>Parents meeting</b>	0.0%	0.0%	25.0%	58.3%	16.7%	3.9	0.7

The respondents: 66.7% stated that members of the BoM were fully involved in the discussion of the strategic plan; 41.7% stated that teaching staff were involved in the discussion of the strategic plan; and 41.7% agreed that students or their leaders were partially involved in the discussion of the strategic plan. Further, 75% of the respondents noted that non-teaching staff were partially involved in the discussion of the strategic plan, and 58.3% cited that parents were involved in the discussion of the strategic plan. The findings indicated that the various groups were involved in discussing the strategic plan. A strategic plan should be a flexible

document that is bound to change as deemed necessary from time to time. The changing conditions an institution goes through will inevitably necessitate changes to the original draft. Any change, however, need not be a one-man affair; all stakeholders who are likely to be affected by the change need to be involved in making the decision to change. Any changes that are not well discussed with the affected stakeholders may trigger negative reactions, especially from those who feel they do not own the changes and that their original ideas are being discarded. The negative energy released will, to a large extent, affect the implementation and impact.

The respondents were further asked to identify the factors influencing the implementation of strategic planning in schools. Analysis of the feedback revealed several key determinants that affect the execution of strategic plans. Socio-economic factors included the social and economic background of parents and the surrounding community, which affected the level of support and resources available to schools. Resource-related factors were also found to be significant, particularly the availability of financial resources and the adequacy of school infrastructure necessary for the effective implementation of strategic activities.

Institutional factors, such as student numbers and enrollment trends, influenced planning and management processes within schools. Stakeholder-related factors, especially the level of support from parents and the wider community, were equally important in facilitating the successful implementation of school programs and initiatives. In addition, policy and political factors, including Ministry of Education policies and local political influences, shaped the direction and execution of strategic plans. Environmental factors such as prolonged drought and the resulting increase in material costs also affected schools by straining available resources and limiting the successful implementation of planned activities.

These findings underscore the critical role of the school environment in shaping the implementation of strategic plans. Factors such as poverty levels and climatic conditions (e.g., rainfall patterns) can significantly influence both resource availability and the feasibility of planned activities. Consequently, school leadership and implementation teams must develop adaptive strategies to mitigate the negative effects of such contextual challenges.

Furthermore, the factors identified by respondents warrant deeper investigation to determine the extent and nature of their influence on the strategic planning and implementation process. Understanding these relationships is essential for designing context-sensitive strategies that enhance the effectiveness and sustainability of school strategic plans.

### Correlation Analysis

The findings of the correlation between the independent and dependent variables are presented in this section.

The researcher sought to establish from the principals how the development and implementation of schools' strategic plans affect school management. Table 3 presents the correlation results between the development and implementation of strategic plans and school management.

**Table 3: Correlation Results; Strategic plan implementation and management of schools**

			School management	Development and implementation
<b>Spearman's rho</b>	School management	Correlation Coefficient	1	.520**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	0.001
		N	36	36
	Development and implementation	Correlation Coefficient	.520**	1
		Sig. (2-tailed)	0.001	.
		N	36	36

**\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).**

The findings indicated that the development and implementation of a strategic plan ( $r = .520^{**}$ ,  $P = .001$ ) had a positive and significant correlation with school management. The significance was supported by a p-value of 0.001, which was less than the critical p-value of 0.05. This implies that improvements in the development and implementation of the strategic plan are significantly correlated with school management. It is true that a good strategic plan provides school management with direction and a smooth flow of activities. In the event of changes in administration, the school's growth is seamless because the document serves as the guideline for its leadership. In the recent past, schools have experienced many changes, especially among principals. And the BoM terms are only three years. Without a school strategic plan, the changes would cause confusion in the school's progress because each change would bring different ideas and directions. To some extent, these changes also affect learners' performance, sometimes negatively if they are not well managed.

### Regression Analysis

From the principals' data, Table 3 presents regression results on the effect of the development and implementation of strategic plans on school management.

**Table 4: Regression Results; development and implementation of strategic plans and the management of schools**

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
<b>School management</b>					
<b>(Constant)</b>	1.853	.434		4.272	.000
<b>Strategic plan</b>	.579	.127	.617	4.570	.000
<b>R Square</b>	0.381				
<b>Adjusted R-Square</b>	0.362				
<b>F statistic</b>	20.885				
<b>P value</b>	0.000				

The findings indicated that the development and implementation of strategic plans explained 38.1% ( $R^2 = .381$ ) of the total change in the institution's management. The results also revealed an F statistic of 20.885 and a p-value of  $0.000 < 0.05$ . This implied that the independent variable (the development and implementation of strategic plans) was a good predictor of the dependent variable (institutional management).

Further, the constant of 1.853 denoted the value of management of the institution when holding development and implementation of strategic plans to be zero. Finally, the findings indicated that the development and implementation of strategic plans ( $\beta = 0.579$ ,  $p = .000$ ) had a positive and significant effect on the management of the institution. This suggested that a marginal increase in the development and implementation of strategic plans would lead to an improvement in school management by 0.579 units.

Based on the regression results, the null hypothesis that the development and implementation of strategic plans in day secondary schools has no effect on school management was rejected. This was supported by a p-value of 0.000, which was less than the critical p-value of 0.05. Therefore, the alternative hypothesis was adopted, implying that the development and

implementation of strategic plans in day secondary schools have a significant effect on school management.

A school strategic plan serves as a road map that ensures envisioned changes are planned for and effectively managed and that all stakeholders are involved. From the regression results it is clear that strategic planning is an important tool of management. A properly developed strategic plan, with all stakeholders involved, provides a clear roadmap for school managers to follow. Even when new management takes over, such as a new principal or BoM, the school remains on course because of the strategic plan that has been set and accepted by the stakeholders.

## CONCLUSION

The study concludes that the school's strategic plan had a significant impact on the management of BoM affairs, teachers' and school staff affairs, and students' affairs. The study also concludes that the development and implementation of a strategic plan have a positive and significant correlation with school management. Furthermore, the study concluded that the development and implementation of strategic plans had a positive and significant effect on the institution's management. Strategic planning significantly enhances school management by improving coordination, accountability, and decision-making processes. Schools with effective strategic plans demonstrate better organizational performance.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Schools should invest in training programs to enhance skills in data management, monitoring, and evaluation. The study recommends that the school leadership also engage independent consultants who are experts in strategic planning. This will ensure efficiency and professionalism in the formulation and implementation process.

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