

## **Levels of Involvement of Educational Stakeholders in Preparation of Strategic Plans in Enhancing Selected Aspects of Organizational Performance in Public Secondary Schools in Arusha Region**

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**ABSTRACT:** *This study investigated the levels of involvement of educational stakeholders in preparation of strategic plans for organizational performance in public secondary schools in Arusha Region. The study utilized McKinsey 7s Model which was created by Tom Peters and Robert Waterman in the 1980's. The reviewed literature indicated low level of involvement of educational stakeholders in the preparation of strategic plans. The study employed convergent research design under mixed research approach. The target population involved 163 public secondary schools, 978 student leaders, 4694 teachers, 163 heads of schools, seven DCSQAOs, and seven DSEOs. Probability and non-probability sampling procedures were employed to determine the study sample of 16 schools, 16 heads of schools, 469 teachers, 98 student leaders, six quality assurance officers and six DEOs, making a total of 595 respondents. The instruments used to collect data were questionnaires, interview guides, focus group discussion guides and document analysis guides. The quantitative data were analyzed descriptively and inferentially in frequencies, percentages, means, and presented in tables and interpreted in relation to research questions. The qualitative data were analyzed by coding contents into themes, interpreting direct quotations and presented in narrative form. The findings revealed that in most schools there was moderate level of involvement of educational stakeholders in preparation of strategic plans. The study concluded that heads of schools involved a few stakeholders in preparing strategic plans and left out most key stakeholders. The moderate involvement of stakeholders made stakeholders not owning the strategic plans leading to low morale for implementation hence poor organizational performance. The study recommended that the heads of schools should adequately involve stakeholders in the preparation of strategic plans so as to enhance ownership of strategic plans.*

**KEY WORDS:** levels of involvement, stakeholders, strategic plans, organizational performance

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## INTRODUCTION

One of the UN agenda is the invitation to all UN members to work towards the achievement of the seventeen Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Even though all SDGs are important, SDG number four focuses on provision of quality education in order to promote sustainable developments and sustainable lifestyles (UN, 2018). Quality education also gives emphasis to equal accessibility of education despite the diversity in economic, social and physical circumstances.

To realize this, educational institutions must set strategies to guide the process of attaining quality education. Based on the principle that the foundation of a well-informed society is built on young generation, educational stakeholders must set strategies to guide the achievement of quality education. One way of realizing quality education is by involving educational stakeholders in preparation of strategic plans. This paper is an attempt to investigate the levels of involvement of educational stakeholders in the preparation of strategic plans in public secondary schools in Arusha Region.

In Tanzania, the ongoing poor performance in public secondary schools is caused by inadequate number of teachers, physical facilities, and ineffective involvement of educational stakeholders (Gervas, 2019, URT, 2018/2019 & Lyimo et al., 2017). It is from this perspective; the government of Tanzania introduced strategic plans to all Ministries, Departments and Agencies in the 1990s with the aim of improving the public sectors' performance (URT, 2018, Paulson, 2016).

A study by Aikaeli et al. (2021) revealed that there is a spatial distribution of consistent poverty levels in most regions in Tanzania ranging from 4.40% to 23.50%. The study further revealed that the situation in the northwest regions, Arusha Region being among them, has poverty levels above 15%. The study further revealed that such levels yield vulnerability levels of above 36% leading to high risks of violence, early marriages, drug abuse and sexually transmitted infections. This situation raises concerns on the quality of education offered in secondary schools in Arusha Region. Thus, questions like, do secondary schools in Arusha Region prepare strategic plans, at which level do public secondary school prepare strategic plans would have remained unanswered without conducting a study.

Arusha Region aims at improving performance in national examinations to 100% by 2025 (URT, 2021). However, statistics from the Form Four NECTA results for 2019, 2020 and 2021 indicated that the academic target has not been achieved (URT 2020-2021). Information from Arusha Region Education Officer also revealed that a total of 8,425 students scored division zero at Form Four NECTA results from 2019 to 2022 (Visit to REO office, April 21, 2022). From these statistics, the total elimination of division zero by 2025 is below par. Since the performance is still

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wanting, the concerns for this study were on the levels of involvement of educational stakeholders in the preparation of strategic plans to establish the actual state of affairs.

Education Sector Performance Report of 2018/2019 shows that, 5,554 schools out of the 8,769 which were visited by quality assurance officers were rated below the target quality standard of 'Good', and a follow up for improvement, particularly in Arusha schools, was recommended. Specifically, Arusha Region had shortage of 9,910 students' chairs, 12,207 students' tables, and 171 science laboratories (URT, 2021). Physical facilities are fundamental in the realization of the academic objectives for they help in creating conducive learning environment to both students and teachers. Thus, the ESPR raised questions as to how secondary schools in Arusha Region planned for physical facilities; and whether such plans adequately involved stakeholders. Thus, the study on levels of involvement of educational stakeholders in preparation of strategic plans in enhancing organizational performance in public secondary schools was inevitable.

In schools, financial resources are central in the achievement of the academic targets and acquisition of physical facilities. In public secondary schools financial resource are used to pay salaries of non-teaching staff and other workers, to cater for administration costs, maintenance or construction costs and operational costs. The focus on financial resources in this study was based on its central role in the day to day operations of a school for without which most of the school operations can be at a halt. Well involvement of stakeholders in the preparations of strategic plans would turn this into reality. Tomusange et al. (2021) claimed that public secondary schools experienced inadequate financial resources. This creates a concern on whether stakeholder involvement contributed to inadequacy of financial resources in public secondary schools thus the urgency of the study.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Failure to meet academic targets, insufficient infrastructure, and shortage of funding in public secondary schools despite of government directives on preparing and executing strategic plans is a huge concern on the development of schools and the future life of young generations. Strategic plans ought to improve performance in schools yet the schools have not been able to eradicate division zero, to provide enough physical facilities and adequate financial resources. To establish improvement of school performance, there is a need to investigate the level of involvement of educational stakeholders in the preparation of strategic plans.

Studies on the role of strategic plans in enhancing organisational performance for instance Okendo (2018), Kamemba (2019), Mikongo (2020), and Ofem et al. (2021) have found that preparation of strategic plans significantly enhance academic performance. However, the studies did not address the levels of stakeholder involvement in the preparation of strategic plans which was an area of concern for the current study. On the aspect of physical facilities, studies by Alexander et al. (2016), Edward (2018), Arshad et al. (2019), Imende et al. (2020), and Kwaslema and Onyango (2021) have addressed the contribution of strategic planning to physical facilities in public

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secondary schools. Nonetheless, these studies have not addressed the levels of stakeholder involvement in the acquisition of physical facilities and financial resources which was another area of concern to this study. Therefore, this study investigated levels of involvement of stakeholders in the preparation of strategic plans in enhancing selected aspects of organizational performance in public secondary schools in Arusha region.

### **Research Question**

The research question that guided the study was: What is the level of involvement of educational stakeholders in preparation of strategic plans for organizational performance in public secondary schools in Arusha Region?

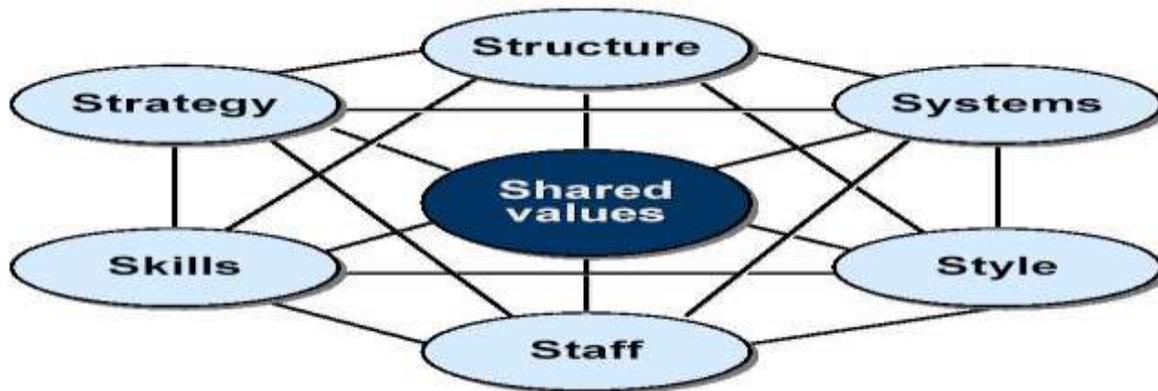
### **Significance of the Study**

The findings of the study will be of great significance to educational officers, heads of schools, quality assurance officers and board members in the supervision of educational matters. The findings will broaden their understanding on the importance of involvement of stakeholders in preparation of strategic plans.

The Tanzania Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST) and the President's Office –Regional Administration and Local Government (PO-RALG) equally will benefit from the findings of the study. The findings will enlighten them on the financial constraints secondary schools are undergoing. Thus, review the Fee-Free Basic Education Policy in Tanzania and the circulars and strengthen the implementation process of such policies and guidelines. The findings from the study will inform the NGOs and Donor Agencies on the levels of stakeholder involvement in preparation of school strategic plans leading to making informed decisions before offering another financial support to respective schools. To the wider body of knowledge, the findings on the involvement of educational stakeholders in preparation of strategic plans will be available to anybody everywhere else. One could freely access the material of the study either through a link or hard copy. In this manner, the teachers, students and the society at large equally will benefit from the study leading to social transformation.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The study utilized McKinsey's 7s model (1980) which was designed by Tom Peters and Robert Waterman (Peters and Waterman, 1982). The model looks at interaction of seven key elements that make organizations successful. Figure 1 presents the seven key elements of McKinsey model and demonstrates how they interact with one another in the organization.



**Figure 1**  
**7s McKinsey Model: Hard and Soft Strategies**  
 Adopted from Demir et al. (2019)

In figure 1 the seven key elements of McKinsey's 7S Model are strategy, structure, systems, style, staff, skills and shared values. These elements need to be aligned and mutually reinforced in order for the organization to improve performance. The reinforcement of the seven elements demands active involvement and participation of stakeholders so as to create democratically agreed decisions for high performance.

**Strategy:** Strategy is the plan to perform well. A sound strategy is the one that is clearly articulated, is long-term, helps to achieve competitive advantage and is reinforced by strong vision, mission and values of the organization. To realize success and workable strategies, a school must involve stakeholders in setting and implementation of workable strategies.

**Structure:** The structure of the school is the chain of command that indicates the way the school is structured and who reports to whom. To establish a sound structure, the school must involve stakeholders in answering the following: What is the hierarchy in the school? How do the various departments coordinate activities?

**Systems:** The systems include the daily activities and procedures that the management and staff members use to get the job done. They include financial systems, HR systems, communication systems or document storage systems. In a school set up, the involvement of stakeholders in creating systems is very important as it helps staff feel part and parcel of the system.

**Skills:** Refers to the competencies, talents and capabilities of the employees and management. Stakeholders need to be involved in answering the following: What are the strongest skills represented within the school? Are there any skills gaps? Do the current employees have the ability to do the job?

**Style:** This is the approach that management employs in leading the school. The style greatly influences performance of the school. The most recommended style in schools is the transformational leadership style for it inspires followers. The checklist on style includes the following: How participative is the leadership style in the school? Do staff members tend to be competitive or cooperative? Are there real teams functioning within the school or are they just nominal groups?

**Staff:** Refers to the personnel of the school. It plays a great role in the provision of service. The staff should be well managed and educated. The management need to continuously involve stakeholders in answering the following: What positions or specializations are represented within the team? What positions need to be filled?

**Shared values:** Shared values are the commonly accepted standards and norms within the school that influence the behavior of the entire staff and management. Shared values relate to the actual accepted behavior within the workplace. In examining shared values, stakeholders are involved in asking and answering the following questions: What are the core values of our school? How do the values play out in daily life? What are the founding values that the school was built upon?

#### **Strengths, weaknesses and relevance of the model**

The model can be used to identify weakness and opportunities that exist in school. The identification of weaknesses and opportunities help in creation of strategic plans for school improvement. The model can be used to change or modify practices in schools to improve performance. After identifying them, the school management can either change or modify some of the practices in order to improve the school performance. The model can be used to connect departments in school that are not connected. For example, if the IT department in the school is disconnected, the department can come up with a new IT system that can be accessed online by all staff and parents for communication purposes. In this way, the IT department will communicate effectively hence operate harmoniously with all stakeholders of the organization leading to improved performance.

The theory does not give clear direction to follow for it does not give clear steps or roadmap to follow for change management. It is tedious to use. If you have to check every step of change across each of the 7s' in the model, you would hardly have time for anything else. The model is relevant for assessing the well-being and coordination of departments in school for success. If one element within a school is not working properly, for instance, the strategy to achieve good results is not working properly, chances are that there is inconsistency and disorganization of the other elements leading to poor performance of students. On the other hand, if all elements are working properly, there would be consistency and strong coordination of all elements in the school leading to high performance thus, the success of the school.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Fransiskus et al. (2021) conducted a study in Indonesia on analysis of senior high schools strategic planning practices. The purpose of the study was to identify models used to formulate strategic plans in secondary schools at Ende Regency, East Nusa Tenggara. The study used qualitative approach while utilizing descriptive design. The study targeted 21 senior high schools with 8,062 students. All senior secondary schools were included in the study. Data were collected using interviews and document analysis guides. The results revealed that strategic plans were prepared by hired special teams/experts without involving stakeholders. The study by Fransiskus et al. (2021) underlines the importance of preparing strategic plans to enhance performance which is highly commended. However, from the study by Fransiskus et al. (2021), it is clear that experts were hired to prepare the strategic plans. Hiring experts to prepare strategic plans limits stakeholders' participation which as a result affects stakeholder ownership of the plans and can also derail the implementation of the plans. The current study focused on the level of involvement of stakeholders in preparation of strategic plans in public secondary schools.

Weyama (2018) conducted a study in Kenya on stakeholders influence in institutional strategic planning practices in public secondary schools in Migori County. The study employed a descriptive survey study. The target population was 1056 comprising head teachers, deputy head teachers and heads of departments in secondary schools. A sample size of 106 respondents was drawn using stratified random sampling. The study used both primary and secondary data. Questionnaire was the primary data collection tool and was administered using the drop and pick method. Secondary data was derived from documentations such as school strategic plans and minutes of BoG, PTA and staff meetings. Data collected was both qualitative and quantitative. Qualitative data was analysed using content analysis while quantitative data was analysed using descriptive statistics such as mean, mode and median.

The results of the study indicated that strategic planning process in public secondary schools involves stakeholders to a minimal extent due to time limit. That the most important stakeholders such as teachers, students, and non-teaching staff and community spokespersons are rarely involved in making major decisions that affect their interests and that of the school. The study recommended that heads of schools should involve all stakeholders in strategic planning practices in the secondary schools. The findings of the previous study on minimal involvement of stakeholders in strategic planning are useful. However, the study found out that most stakeholders were not involved because of time limit as they had other businesses to attend to. Heads of schools therefore need to create a conducive environment in terms of good scheduling of activities and communication beforehand to increase participation of all stakeholders. In this respect, the current study investigated the levels of stakeholder involvement in preparation of strategic plans in public secondary schools.

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Keter (2019) conducted a study on board of management participation in establishing institution direction and implementation of strategic plan in public secondary schools in Elgeyo Marakwet County in Kenya. The purpose of the study was to assess the participation of Board of Management (BoM) in strategic plan formulation and implementation in secondary schools. The study employed mixed methods by utilizing convergent design. The target population of the study was 1314 BoM drawn from 73 public secondary schools and were selected by using stratified and random sampling procedures. Questionnaires, interviews and document analysis were used to collect data. The data was analysed using descriptive statistics and mean and standard deviation were calculated. Qualitative information obtained through interviews was analysed by use of themes and theoretical narrative.

The findings indicated that BoM are rarely involved in the formulation of strategic plans but participated in the approval of the already prepared strategic plans. The lack of involvement of BoM in the formulation stage highly affected the implementation process as they lacked ownership. The study recommended that school leadership should create mechanisms to ensure that key stakeholders are involved and participate in the process of formulation and implementation of strategic plans. The study by Keter (2019), gave an inkling to the researcher on what could have been anticipated from the findings of the current study that is, minimal participation of the stakeholders.

Jonas (2022) conducted a study in Tanzania on the role of school management team (SMT) in managing students' academic performance in community secondary schools in Tabora Municipality. The study aimed at examining the role of school management team in managing students' academic performance in Tabora municipality. The study employed mixed method approach and convergent design to collect data. The study gathered both qualitative and quantitative data and applied simple random sampling and purposive techniques to collect information. The study employed questionnaires and interview guides as instruments for data collection. Quantitative data were analysed by using statistical package of social science (SPSS) version 20 while thematic analysis was used to analyse qualitative data. The findings of the study revealed that the head of schools involved school management teams to supervise all activities at schools. Under the supervision of school heads, SMTs ensured proper utilization of teaching and learning resources, controlling school discipline, preparing schools short and long plans, implementing school plans, preparing school budget, and organizing internal and joint examinations. The study recommended that the government should provide enough funds to the school management teams in community secondary schools to enable them plan and manage students' academic performance. The findings from the study confirmed that heads of schools were involving SMTs in the supervision of various school activities. This in turn yielded proper utilization of teaching and learning resources, involvement in preparation of short term and long-term plans. However, the previous study delimited itself to involvement of stakeholder in the aspect of academic performance. The current study expanded the investigation to include

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stakeholder involvement in preparation of academic targets, physical facilities, and financial resources. It is from the adequacy of these aspects the academic performance can also be realized.

Seni and Onyango (2021) conducted a study in Tanzania on the roles of parents in enhancing academic performance among public secondary schools at Nyamagana District, Tanzania. The study employed mixed research approach to organize the qualitative and quantitative data. The sample for the study included 88 students which were selected through simple randomly technique. Purposive sampling was also used to select the DEO, WEO and some teachers while parents were selected through convenient sampling. Data was collected through questionnaire and interview schedule. The findings of the study revealed that parents rarely or never communicated with teachers to make follow ups regarding their children's education. The previous study informed the current study on the unsatisfactory level of parents' involvement in students' academic progress leading to poor academic performance of students. Nevertheless, the study involved parents as the only stakeholders in academic performance, thus limiting the information from other stakeholders. The current study expanded the involvement of stakeholders to include heads of schools, teachers, student leaders, DSEOs, and DCSQAOs to establish their level of involvement in the preparation of strategic plans to school's performance.

### **Knowledge Gap**

The researcher reviewed McKinsey's 7s Model by Tom Peters and Robert Waterman (1982). The model informed the current study that the involvement of employees must be within structures, systems, styles, skills and strategies to yield desirable performance. On the contrary opinion, the reviewed model demanded a lot of time for effective preparation of strategic plans.

Most studies delimited themselves on one aspect of performance which is academic performance (Jonas, 2022, Seni & Onyango 2021). The current study focused on different aspects of school performance including academic targets, physical facilities and financial resources. The findings of the current study were therefore rich, unique and different.

Regarding the findings, most studies revealed that stakeholders were rarely involved in the preparation of strategic plans but did not inform on the level of involvement. Current study investigated the level of involvement to establish the adequacy.

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The study employed convergent research design under mixed research approach. The target population involved 163 public secondary schools, 978 student leaders, 4694 teachers, 163 heads of schools, seven CDSQAOs and seven DSEOs. Probability and non-probability sampling procedures were employed to determine the study sample of 16 schools, 16 heads of schools, 469 teachers, 98 student leaders, six CDSQAOs and six DSEOs, making a total of 595 respondents. Instruments used in data collection were questionnaires, interview guides, focus group discussion guides and document analysis guides. The quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive and

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 inferential statistics with the aid of Statistical Packages for Social Sciences version 25.0. The quantitative data were presented in tables then were coded and analyzed through frequencies, percentages, means, and interpreted in relation to research questions. The qualitative data were analyzed by coding contents into themes, interpreting direct quotations and presenting them into narrative form.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### Level of Involvement of Educational Stakeholders in Preparation of Strategic Plans

The research question sought to find out the level of involvement of educational stakeholders in preparation of strategic plans in public secondary schools. The respondents were heads of schools, teachers, district education officers, student leaders and quality assurance officers. While the teachers were subjected to questionnaire, the HoS, DSEOs and CDSQAOs provided information through interviews. Similarly, the student leaders responded through focus group discussion. The data from teachers are presented and described along with supportive findings from document analysis guide and other respondents.

In Table 1, the percentage of strongly Agree (SA) and Agree (A) are combined together to form agreement opinion, the percentage of Undecided (U) is presented the way it was responded, and the percentage of Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD) are combined to form disagreement opinion. This approach was preferred because it captured the general opinion of respondents. The combination of scores was guided by Warmbrod (2014) who postulated that scores derived from a Likert scale are summated scores determined by a composite of responses to multiple items rather than responses to single items. The mean score was classified into three levels: 3.5-5 high, 2.5-3.4 moderate and 1.0-2.4 low (Wanjohi & Syokau, 2021). This was to help in capturing the level of involvement. In this regard, Table 1 presents data from teachers on the level of involvement of educational stakeholders in preparation of strategic plans.

**Table 1**  
**Teachers' responses on the level of involvement of educational stakeholders in preparation of strategic plans (n=335)**

S/N	Statement	SD		D		U		A		SA		Mean
		F	%	F	%	f	%	f	%	F	%	
1.	Our school involves teachers in the formulation and implementation of strategic plans	103	30.7	157	46.9	38	11.3	23	6.9	14	4.2	2.07
2.	Our school involves the school board, school management team, parents, and students in formulation and implementation of strategic plans	127	37.9	128	38.2	41	12.2	24	7.2	15	4.5	2.02

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3.	In our school, teaching and non-teaching staff openly question and discuss the decisions made by the head of school on the school developments	82	24.5	135	40.3	59	17.6	38	11.3	21	6.3	2.35
4.	Our school board and the school management team and other stakeholders meet at least twice a term to review the implementation of strategic plan.	115	34.3	128	38.2	51	15.2	22	6.6	19	5.7	2.11
5.	Teaching and non- teaching staff only read and agree with the content in the school strategic plan	63	18.8	109	32.5	77	23.0	58	17.3	28	8.4	2.64
6.	Only the school management team meets at least twice a term to review the implementation of strategic plan	61	18.2	127	37.9	66	19.7	47	14.0	34	10.1	2.60
7.	Before implementation, the head of school communicates the intention of important changes in strategic planning and school activities	97	29.0	162	48.4	47	14.0	17	5.1	12	3.6	2.06
8.	Students' views are considered in the formulation and implementation of school strategic plans	43	12.8	155	46.3	72	21.5	42	12.5	23	6.9	2.54
9.	The teachers do not know the goals and objectives that are found in the strategic plan	122	36.4	101	30.1	43	12.8	43	12.8	26	7.8	3.75
10.	The teachers do not know the process of preparing a strategic plan	115	34.3	106	31.6	43	12.8	48	14.3	23	6.9	3.72
<b>Average Mean</b>											<b>2.59</b>	

**Source: Field Data, (2022). Key: SD- Strongly Disagree, D- Disagree, U- Undecided, A-Agree, SA -Strongly Agree**

Data in Table 1 indicate that 77.6% of teachers strongly disagreed and disagreed on the statement that schools involve teachers in the preparation of strategic plans. From the data, majority of the teachers disclosed that they were not involved in the process of strategic planning. The negative responses in this particular item show that the level of involvement of teachers in the process of strategic planning was low. Based on the fact that teachers are the ones who bear much responsibility in the implementation of strategic plans, their negative responses tend to disclose some loopholes in the process of strategic planning. The low level of teachers' involvement in preparation of strategic plans was further evidenced by mean score of 2.07. This indicates that, there was low level of teacher involvement in the preparation of strategic plans. The low teacher involvement in the preparation of strategic plans was associated with inadequacy knowledge of the strategic plans. This could be among the reasons why teachers did not actively participate in the preparation process of strategic plans thus, leading to poor school performance. The low mean score on the involvement of teachers in preparation of strategic plans concur with Fransiskus et al. (2021) who established that strategic plans in some schools were prepared without involving key stakeholders resulting to poor organizational performance.

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The researcher sought further information from focus group discussion. The findings equally pointed out low involvement of various stakeholders. From focus group discussion with student leaders, the following issues arose as one of the members in FGD1 had this to say:

Ever since I commenced my leadership as head boy in this school, which is about two years ago, I have never heard the headmaster or the teachers talk about strategic plans. In short, I have never been involved in formulation of strategic plans for the school (FGD1, focus group discussion, September 7, 2022).

The response from the student leaders highlights a shortfall in the involvement of key stakeholders in the process of formulation and implementation of strategic plans. Strategic plans are the roadmap pointing the direction to which the school is moving. Lack of knowledge on the existence of strategic plans would mean students had no idea on the school set targets regarding their academic achievements. Lack of knowledge could further limit student leaders' ownership of strategic plans. This would mean they were not able to help the school administration in influencing their fellow students towards the realization of the strategic plans.

On contrary, FGD9 gave confirmatory opinion on students' involvement in the process of preparation of strategic plans. When asked to comment on their involvement in the preparation of the strategic plans one student leader had the following to say:

We are involved in preparation of strategic plans. We do have school meetings which we call bonanza, class meetings, and parents meetings. In all these avenues we talk about school development plans and we are given an opportunity to ask or suggest anything for the school. In most cases our voices are heard and considered. (FGD9, focus group discussion, September 22, 2022).

The response from FGD9 indicates that in some schools there was full involvement of students in the preparation and implementation of strategic plans. In schools where student leaders were involved in the formulation of strategic plans students had impressive results. The performance of such schools was confirmed by document analysis guide whereby the researcher observed 5 schools with very consistent impressive NECTA results as the schools did not have division four neither division zero for three years consecutively. The physical facilities and financial resources of the schools were also satisfactory. The document analysis guide indicated that the schools had sufficient classrooms, offices, desks, chairs, laboratories, and student toilets among others.

Furthermore, the research conducted one on one interviews with heads of schools. From the interviews the heads of schools gave information on the extent to which they involved other stakeholders in the process of strategic planning. From the discussion HoS15 said that:

I normally involve teachers in the preparation and implementation of strategic plans. Teachers are reachable and are well informed. They have good ideas and are the main implementers of the plans.

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I find it difficult to involve students and parents because of lack of ideas and difficult to reach (HoS15, personal communication, July 21, 2022).

The positive views from the HoS15 confirms that heads of schools knew what was expected of them, that is stakeholders' involvement in strategic plans. From the response it is clear that HoS15 involved teachers in strategic planning. However, the head of school 15 only involved teachers based on the fact that they were considered more resourceful than others. This could be attributed to the fact that the teachers are trained to execute most of the schools activities through teaching and learning so they were frequently involved compared to other stakeholders.

Generally, it is important to involve all the stakeholders. This concern is equally shared by Seni and Onyango (2021) who emphasized that good strategic planning should capture the voice, the views and opinions of all concerned stakeholders including students, government representatives, parents, board members, and the community at large.

Information from the DSEOs confirmed that there was involvement in strategic planning of schools as the DSEO1 said that:

Most schools seek my input when preparing their strategic plans. In most cases, heads of schools want to know the focus of the government so that they can plan accordingly. I share with them the focus and the priorities as directed by the MoEST or PO-RALG (DEO1, personal communication, September 14, 2022).

The information from DSEO1 denotes that there was involvement of DSEOs in strategic planning of schools. This could be attributed to the fact that the DSEOs are the immediate supervisors of heads of schools and participate in the evaluation of the effectiveness of heads of schools. They were therefore involved in school plans to keep them informed of school developments and also to establish a positive work relationship with them. This concurs with Jonas (2022) who observes that involvement of key stakeholders ensures proper implementation of strategic plans leading to achievement of organizational performance.

The researcher wanted to triangulate the information given by various respondents. Thus, the researcher analysed various documents to ascertain whether there was involvement of stakeholders in preparation and implementation of strategic plans. The researcher checked through the availed minutes of stakeholders' meetings. The researcher established that three schools out of the 16 sampled schools did not have stakeholders' meetings minutes. Furthermore, the researcher established that even the schools that had stakeholders' minutes did not have evidence of students' leaders' participation in the meetings. Arising from the information obtained from the document analysis guide is that strategic plans in public secondary schools were prepared by some stakeholders leaving out other significant stakeholders like students who might be instrumental in school developments.

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The researcher similarly had a one on one interview with the DCSQAOs. From the discussion it emerged that there was involvement and participation of one category of respondents in the preparation of strategic plans. According to DCSQAOs stakeholders were involved at various levels. While elaborating on the level of involvement the DCSQA01 said that:

During preparation of strategic plans, we as quality assurance officers provide recommended standards including classroom sizes, teacher-student ratio, recommended teaching and learning resources among others. When we visit schools for inspection, we check on compliance to recommended standards. I trust other stakeholders are also involved in their own ways. (DCSQA01, personal communication, September 8, 2022).

The views from DCSQA01 suggest that quality assurance officers were involved at their own level to give input in the preparation of strategic plans. Their involvement in the school strategic planning enabled schools to be at par in the compliance to the recommended standards. The recommendations from the DCSQA0 could have impacted on the performance of such schools. Indeed, the study established that the schools adhered to the report given by DCSQA0 during their visit.

Generally, responses from various focus group discussions, interviews, questionnaire and the findings from document analysis reveal that, some schools involved various stakeholders in preparation of strategic plans; Whereas, in other schools there was minimum involvement of stakeholders. The teachers were mostly involved. However, some key stakeholders like students were not adequately involved as they were not aware of strategic plans existing in schools. This is attributed to some heads of schools not recognizing the vital contribution of some stakeholders hence failing to involve them. Preparing strategic plans without seeking the views of all stakeholders would lead to less participation in the implementation process consequently, poor school performance. The findings are in agreement with Weyama (2018) who found no evidence of active participation of stakeholders in the implementation of strategic planning leading to poor performance of schools.

Data in Table 1 indicate that (77.4%) strongly disagreed and disagreed that before implementation of strategic plans the heads of schools communicated the intention of making important changes on planed school activities. This was also confirmed by a mean score of 2.06. This means that there was low involvement of stakeholders to check on whether the strategic plans were realistic and where necessary suggest some amendments. This can be interpreted that the heads of schools made important school changes by only seeking the opinion of few stakeholders. This further implies that the changes made in schools lacked collective opinions from all the stakeholders hence the stagnation of school development plans. The findings contradicted the findings by Jonas (2022) who claimed that the heads of schools involved school management teams to supervise all activities in schools. This contradiction implies that some schools had good leaders who

Publication of the European Centre for Research Training and Development-UK encouraged teamwork for the betterment of the schools and some had selfish leaders who lacked transparency in decision making leading to schools poor performance (Seni & Onyango, 2021). The researcher sought more information from student leaders on whether heads of schools adequately communicated the important changes before they were made in schools. The response from focus group discussions shows that there was prior communication as FGD10 said that, “*we are involved through class meetings. If the issue requires money, our parents are involved through parents meetings*” (FGD10, focus group discussion, September 9, 2022).

The response from student leaders indicate that there was some involvement of students in decision making. This means that in some schools, students were partially involved in decision making. Involvement of students through class meetings is inadequate as class meetings discuss general issues concerning student welfare. Involvement in preparation of strategic plans requires separate meetings specifically for strategic plans. In this manner, students came to understand the meaning of strategic plans and their contribution to the plans. This would make them own the plans and implement them accordingly. The findings concur with Weyama (2018) who revealed ownership of decisions when stakeholders were fully involved in decision making.

The DSEOs were also asked to give their opinion on whether important changes in the schools were communicated before reaching decisions. The response from DSEOs shows that there was communication as DSEO5 said that:

The government operates through policies and guidelines. Sometimes the policies and guidelines change or are updated. When this happens, official communication through circulars is given and we disseminate the same to concerned stakeholders. The heads of schools are the main implementers of government policies. We forward the updated guidelines to them and we follow up the implementation (DSEO5, personal communication, August 30, 2022).

The information from the DSEO5 shows that there was communication of important changes happening in schools. The heads of schools were receiving communication from the government through the DSEOs; likewise, the heads of schools gave feedback to the DSEOs. It was from these communications decisions were eventually made. This is to say, the implementation of the government guidelines were communicated in such a way that if they impacted on strategic plans the plans were also revised with mutual consent. This made it possible to implement the changes to the initial plans thus achievement of organizational performance. The finding is in agreement with Keter, (2019) who argued that the success of anything involves effective communication with stakeholders.

Data in Table 1 show that 51.3% strongly disagreed and disagreed on the proposition that teaching and non- teaching staff only read and agree with the content in the school strategic plan. On the other hand, 25.7% agreed and strongly agreed on the proposition. The findings on the same statement indicate a moderate mean score of 2.64. This means that the level of involvement was

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moderate as some heads of schools involved staff members in the preparation of strategic plans and some prepared them on their own. Since the preparation of strategic plans did not involve all staff members, the implementation became unsuccessful leading to unsatisfactory schools performance.

During focus group discussion, the student leaders also agreed to the statement that they only read and agreed with the contents in the strategic plans. For instant FGD1 said that, “*the contents in strategic plans are prepared by teachers and posted on the wall for us to read and implement. Our task is to obey the directives*” (FGD1, focus group discussion, September 7, 2022). The quotation from FGD1 shows that there was no involvement of students in the creation or modification of the contents of strategic plans. This means that in some schools students were not regarded as having ideas to contribute. The disregard of students’ ideas might have created inferiority complex among students leading to lack of confidence in expression of personal ideas thus poor academic performance.

On the contrary opinion, some focus group discussions expressed a strong involvement in creation of strategic plan contents as FGD10 said that:

Student leaders participate in the creation of the contents in strategic plans. The headmaster invites us to represent the students in various meetings. We were invited to participate in the meetings to prepare strategic plans. We gave our views and our views were reflected in the strategic plans (FGD10, focus group discussion, September 9, 2022).

The information from FGD10 show that some schools involved student leaders in the creation or modification of contents of strategic plans. This means that some heads of schools were aware of the benefits of incorporating students’ views and therefore they involved them to the maximum. This can further be interpreted that the schools which valued students’ opinions were being headed by headmasters/headmistresses with Master in Education degree for they had been properly trained on the importance of participation in educational management and so they knew the benefits of involving all stakeholders including students.

The average mean score of 2.59 in Table 1 proved that there was moderate level of involvement of educational stakeholders in the preparation of strategic plans. This infers that educational stakeholders were moderately involved in the preparation of strategic plans. This could be caused by various reasons including inadequacy in skills on strategic planning, negligence of some heads of schools or use of non-participatory leadership styles. This is contrary to the McKinsey’s 7s model which postulates that the school is an interconnected organization; it requires active participation of stakeholders in the creation of strategies, structures, systems, staff, styles, skills and shared values within the school organization.

## CONCLUSION

The study concludes that in most public secondary schools, there was moderate level of involvement of educational stakeholders in preparation of strategic plans. Heads of schools prepared strategic plans without involving other stakeholders. The study found out that some staff and students did not know whether their schools had strategic plans in written.

### Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusion, the study recommends that heads of schools should involve stakeholders in formulation of strategic plans. This would make them own the plans hence cooperate in the implementation process. The ownership of the plans would lead to high morale during the implementation process, thus improved school performance.

### Recommendation for Further Study

Another study could be carried out on monitoring and evaluation of strategic plans in public secondary schools. This would help in tracking progress and interventions of strategic plans during the implementation process.

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