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RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ACADEMIC QUALIFICATION IMPLEMENTATION AND PERFORMANCE OF PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN EMBU COUNTY

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ABSTRACT

Several academics have suggested that there's an affirmative association between academic implementation and performance, while others contend that the relationship is inconsistent and hence remains controversial. Practices of strategic implementation in Kenya, began gradually and progressively in the 1960s, but are now gaining popularity. As important as the theories of Strategy implementation in commercial firms, it is a requirement for public secondary schools to implement strategies as per the guidelines provided by the Ministry of Education's strategic plan that supports the government's goal of ensuring that every Kenyan kid has access to high quality education and training. Aside from the government's embrace of Strategy implementation as a policy, limited resources, stiff competition have made strategy implementation a necessity. The study sought to evaluate the relationship between Strategy implementation and performance of public secondary schools in Embu County. The specific objectives of the study were academic qualification and performance of public secondary schools in Embu County. The theory underpinning the study was systems theory. The study adopted descriptive research design. Multistage cluster and random sampling technique were employed to select a sample size of 100 that represents 200 respondents of the total population. Semi structured questionnaires were employed to collect data. Multiple linear regression model was employed to analyze the collected data. The findings revealed that academic qualification with ($P < 0.000$), significantly influences performance of public secondary schools in Embu County. The study's conclusion was that the variable influences performance of public secondary schools in Embu County. The study recommends that schools should allow exposure to external inspection from the government and other stakeholders to evaluate strategies, redesign a culture.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

According to Pearce (2009) a strategy is a series of measures that an organization aims to utilize so as to attain its set objectives. Strategy implementation is the manner which an organization opts for the best courses of action to attain its goals. It is accurate to propound the fact that for any organization to be successful, then the roadmap to success has to be elaborately defined. In this regard therefore, a strategic implementation facilitates the provision of direction as well as focus for parties involved in an organization on strategy implementation for a while now has been of keen interest to scholars in the field of strategic management, (Sije & Ochieng, 2013). It is evident there is presence of strategy in various organizations, however the most contentious issue is how strategy implementation is handled within the organizations. It is with this insight that the researcher will focus on how strategy implementation and in Embu County's secondary schools are done.

One of the major areas of focus by the government since independence has been the growth of the education. These efforts have resulted to the development of strategic programs to facilitate strategic orientation as well as the execution of these strategies that have the ability to propel these schools to their targeted visions and missions. In the strict sense managements require a definite strategy implementation so as to efficiently establish expectations for their various organizations.

The question on the relation between strategic implementation and performance in schools is one that has hang in the balance for quite some time. For example, Bell (2002) observed that schools in the United Kingdom came up with an evaluation on whether strategic implementation and school management practically signified



anything. In Kenya education it must be said facilitates the government's push to the attainment of both its social and economic agendas. This is in reference to the Basic Education Act, 2013. The objectives of public secondary schools in Kenya involve imparting the students with knowledge, skills as well as values.

In considering this study, we observe several conceptions that can be employed to enable us expound the process of strategy implementation and further it's imperative nature on organizations. Academic qualification is employed in the study for strategy implementation. Having staff with the right academic qualification impacts on organization performance, (Chesire & Kombo, 2015). In addition teachers who have experience in teaching for more than five years, have an insight of how strategy implementation may be undertaken by schools.

Strategy Implementation

Pearce (2009) defines strategy as set of activities or progressions that a company or firm tries to engage so as to attain its intended aims and goals. Strategic implementation in this regard is a strategy execution with the aim of ensuring all the stages are adhered as per the scheduled timeline to ensure fully adoption process, (Tapinos, Dyson & Meadows, 2005). This then points out to the need for an implementation timeline of a comprehensible document which offers guidance to all the stakeholders and as such state what the company seeks to attain and how it aims to attain it.

This aspect of strategy implementation essentially involves five main steps. These steps include; evaluation and communication of the strategy, a development implementation structure, coming up with implementation support policies and programs, budget and allocation of resources and reevaluation and discharge of functions and activities.

Minsakova (2014) states that evaluation and communication of the strategy is the process of the identifying of both the information sharing channels and mechanism and key performance indicators. Having the best or the right communication mechanism determines the successfulness of the strategy implementation. Managers ought to come up with a good leadership strategy that ensures free flow of information from the top to bottom and from bottom to the top this propagates a good culture. Explaining to the employees the all process of strategy implementation and allowing them to ask questions where they don't understand.

Setting up or creating implementation structure this clearly outlines the scope and goals of the strategy implementation. It clearly shows how the main implementation activities and how they are supposed to be executed, the people involved, their responsibility and authority, (Wright, 2022). The timeline the activities are supposed to take the risks involved and how they are supposed to be addressed.

The aspect of coming up with implementation support policies and programs is about how employee are motivated to increase their output. The policy includes the reward policies such as bonus, salary, employee recognition are done in this stage. Mechanisms such conflict resolution mechanism are designed for administration purpose.

Strategy execution is about putting into motion the logically developed plans or readjusting current strategic plans to work according to the organizations goals. The success of strategy implementation depends on the budget and allocation of resources mechanisms put in place. The resources cater for the purchase of other essential materials and all the expenses needed for the successfulness of the strategy implementation.

Strategy control and evaluation involves evaluation of the strategic implementation so as to boost it and ensure it is done according to the plan, (Kanja, 2018). In this stage mostly it is about auditing the process to see if it going as planned and in case where issues might arise then the mechanism for rectifying issue is addressed.

Performance of public secondary schools in Embu County has become poor as the years go by. This has probed many researchers to try to establish the cause so as to restore the past glory which the county used to boost of. Performance has been said to have been affected by several things including increased use of drugs, strikes, shortage of enough, skilled and motivated teachers.

Strategy Implementation in Public Secondary schools in Kenya

It is imperative to acknowledge the fact that secondary school education in Kenya has undergone several adjustments that are prerequisite for progressive planning. After independence major focus for secondary education was fighting diseases, ignorance and poverty.

The sessional paper 1 of 2005 provides the various stages that are undertaken so as to deal with the issue of ignorance through task forces and various commissions These commissions constitute; the Ominde report 1964 was centered on furthering national integration and developing adequate human resource; Kamunge Report 1988



centered on improving education, provision of funding, quality and relevance and finally Koech Report 2000 which recommended TIQET (Totally Integrated Quality Education and Training) Government of Kenya (2005).

Of recently the government strategies are centered on achieving education for all in Kenya, this led to a declaration of free secondary education in 2008. This transformations must be an ongoing planning for public secondary schools to meet the government's objective to ensure all the class eight candidates go to secondary schools.

Statement of the Problem

Several academics like Cole (2004), have suggested that there is a good link between Strategy implementation and performance, while others contend that the relationship is inconsistent and hence remains controversial (Barney, 2007). Practices of strategic implementation in Kenya, began slowly and progressively in the 1960s, but are now gaining currency and popularity.

The public sector finds the concepts of strategy implementation as important as in commercial firms and hence public secondary schools in Embu County are required to implement strategies as per the guidelines provided by the Ministry of education's strategic implementation to support the government's goal of ensuring that every Kenyan kid has access to high-quality education and training, (Birgen, 2017). Aside from the government's embrace of strategy implementation as a policy, limited resources, along with a positive competitive environment has hampered the effectiveness of the process as a necessity.

According to Akinyi (2010), strategy implementation is projected to have a favorable impact on academic and non-academic performance since it helps schools to implement strategies that allow them to best deploy and maximize their strengths and resources in relation to external chances. This makes strategy implementation in Public Secondary Schools in Embu County essential for, not only attracting good students but also gaining support from their stakeholders if they reach acceptable performance requirements.

Many scholar have examined the influence of strategy implementation on performance and related areas in other parts of the country. For instance, Khan, Tahir and Zazar (2016) examined strategy implementation, strategy content and performance: empirical evidence from private sector organizations in Pakistan. The study focused on private sector organizations and not public secondary schools. Ohlson et al. (2016) investigated relationship between collaborative school culture, teacher quality and the influence these variables have upon student attendance and performance. The result indicated the teacher collaboration reduced student suspension. The study used a survey research model. Also the study's focus is collaborative school culture, teacher quality upon student attendance and performance. However this study will use descriptive methodology and its focus is strategy implementation and performance of public secondary schools in Embu County. Maina (2021) examined strategy implementation and performance of county secondary schools in Nairobi City Kenya. Kefa (2014) investigated challenges of implementation of strategic plans in public secondary schools in Limuru District Kiambu County. However, there is no study, to the knowledge of the researcher that focused on influence of strategy implementation on performance of secondary schools in Embu County. This points out to the knowledge gap to be addressed by this study. Therefore the study answered the question how does strategic implementation influence performance in public secondary schools in Embu County?

Study Objective

The study main objective is to evaluate the relationship between implementation strategy and performance of public secondary schools in Embu County.

Research Hypothesis

H₀ 1: Academic qualification implementation strategy does not influence performance of public secondary schools in Embu County

Theoretical Orientation

System Theory

According to Corlett (2001) systems theory focuses on different but similarly robust fixed concepts that are fundamentals on how an organization functions as a team. It brings out the relationship of individuals, their behaviors, developments and enablers to conform to the objectives of the organization. Strategy implementation in an organization is realizable if there are clearly outlined organization structure, culture and rule and regulations that ensures discipline is adhered to.



According to this theory when implementing a strategy, it is essential to pay primary attention to the structure, efficiency, rules, roles, and hierarchies. Any strategy change is viewed as an unusual events that is expected to foster or bring in a new order. The attention is given to taking care of the people, developing the people and ensuring that they fit in the organization structure. The thinkers of this theory assumption was that an organization is interdependent on others to function, (Kefa, 2014).

When implementing the strategy the leader must conform to the laid down rules and regulations to guarantee successfulness through interaction with the implementers, the learners, and organization experience and organization culture. This enhances positive response to the implementers bringing the aspect of viewing change as normal and transformational, (Corlett 2001).

Empirical Literature Review

Academic Qualification and Performance

Academic qualification of the teachers makes a big impact on the performance of schools more so the public secondary schools. Teachers who have more experience in teaching say ten years or more have had some insight on the teaching sector as compared to the fresh graduates who have just completed their studies.

Schools therefore which have more experienced teachers tend to perform better because they have already mastered the art of teaching. The teacher's level of education also tends to affect performance of secondary schools. Teachers with higher level of learning apart from the basic degree courses tend to have more impact on their students. Exposure to external inspection also ensures that the teachers have standard teaching skills as compared to other schools hence improving their skills and performance of their students.

Casian, Mugo and Claire (2021) posit teacher's qualifications influence students' performance. Academic qualifications are important because they enable the teachers to design teaching plans and how to execute the plans. In addition they improve the teacher's delivery to the learners through content mastering, at the same time it improves on the teacher's confidence. Teacher's qualification, mastering the subject and experience are the major factors enhancing student's performance, (Elangkumaran, 2020).

Kola and Sunday (2015) found that teachers academic qualification and knowledge in the subject specialized, years of career growth, profession experience have a positive link to students performance. In addition a teacher's individual quality is more important than the certificate, because it articulates the talent aspect.

Waweru (2016) found higher qualification of teacher's results to improved performance in developing plans, giving instructions, evaluation of the strategies and maintenance of discipline matters. Further the study noted that training is essential in improving the teacher's professionalism and this includes, conducting seminars and participating in professional courses.

Wandera, Akala and Imonje (2019) noted that the teachers with higher academic qualifications archived a higher mean score as compared with teachers with lower academic qualifications. In addition the study found that undergraduate teachers indicated high levels of self-discipline and confidence levels improved the student's performance in subject matter. Academics qualifications are important if the teachers masters the subject matter, have pedagogical skills gained from the teaching courses in higher learning institutions enhances performance of the students. Otiende (2016) argued that subject matters area of specialization affects teachers' delivery.

2.0 MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research Design

The study used descriptive research methodology to collect information from the respondents.

Target Population

The target population for the study was 135 public secondary schools in Embu County (County education report, 2019).

Sampling Frame and Technique

The Cochran's formula for the sample size

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where

n = Sample size

N = the population size



e = Error term or precision level of confidence level 95%

$$n = \frac{135}{1 + 135(0.05)^2}$$

$$= 100.934$$

Research Instrument

The researcher used primary data in this research. Primary data is the raw information that is collected from the respondents. This data was collected or observed directly from first-hand experience. The researcher collected primary data through semi structured questionnaires

Pilot Study

According to Connelly (2008) a sample for pilot study should be between 10 to 30 participants in a research. The study used Viechtbauer (2015) formula to select a sample size that was used in the pilot study.

$$n = \frac{\ln(1 - Y)}{\ln(1 - \Pi)}$$

n = Pilot sample size

Π = Probability (0.15)

Y = Level of confidence (0.95)

$$n = \frac{\ln(1 - 0.95)}{\ln(1 - 0.15)} = 18.435$$

18.435 Or 19

A sample of 19(10%) of the sample size of the respondents will be used to determine the reliability and consistency of the study instruments to measure the study phenomena, (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003)

Validity

A pilot study was undertaken to assess the validity of the study instruments. The purpose is to find out if the study instruments are capable to collect the information needed in the study. The study used content validity to test if the instruments are able to test what they are intended to test. All the instruments guided by the variables were scrutinized by the students or peers and the supervisor whose comments or suggestions were incorporated in the instrument to increase validity.

Reliability

The study used internal consistency reliability in the questionnaires to ensure all the items are well and clearly captured to undertake the test as planned. Each item within the questionnaire test was then be linked to evaluate the coefficient of reliability, through the use of Cronbach Alpha coefficient to ensure internal consistency.

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where

n = Sample size

N = the population size

e = Error term or precision level of confidence level 95%

Data Collection Procedure

A research permit was obtained from the research from National Commission for Science, Technology, and Innovation (NACOSTI), with the help of a letter of introduction from the university.

Data Analysis and Presentation

The researcher used multiple linear regression method to analyze the data obtained from the target population. The linear regression equation that shows the relationship between Strategy implementation and performance was estimated as:

$$Y = \alpha + \beta_1X_1 + \beta_2X_2 + \beta_3X_3 + \beta_4X_4 + \varepsilon$$

Where Y is the dependent variable, a is the intercept, b is the slope is the independent variable and e is an error,

Y = Performance of public secondary schools



X_1 = Academic qualifications

X_2 = Training

X_3 = School category

X_4 = Discipline

e = Error term

3.0 RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Respondents

The study issued 181 questionnaires to the respondents, out of the expected 181 questionnaires 173 representing (96%) were completely filled, 5 questionnaires representing (3%) were uncomplete and 3 questionnaires representing (2%) were not returned for editing and analysis. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003), a sample response rate of (60%) is good and 71% over and above is excellent for generalizing the findings of the study. In this case, the study's response rate was (96%), thus fulfilling the requirement of the study.

Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive analysis is done as per the study objective academic qualification and presented as follows. The analysis and presentation is presented as follows;

Academic Qualification

Academic qualifications are the testimonials an individual acquires after completing a course or education in a certain level of education. The levels include, certificates, diplomas, and degrees and they are conferred by the institutions of higher learning institution. The study sought to examine how academic qualification influences performance of public secondary schools in Embu County. The findings are presented in Table 1

Table 1
Academic Qualification

Item	N	SD	D	N	A	SA	Mean	Std. Deviation
The schools has experienced teachers who understands Strategy implementation	173	2%	4%	8%	50%	36%	4.1329	.88246
The school rating of teaching quality ensures strategies are executed effectively	173	1%	1%	13%	67%	18%	3.9884	.68190
The school allows exposure to external inspection from the government and other stakeholders	173	1%	1%	6%	38%	54%	4.4277	.75616
The school has the best qualified personnel who evaluates strategies	173	2%	7%	15%	43%	33%	3.9711	.98493
The schools has qualified members of the board who are involved in Strategy implementation	173	1%	0%	7%	38%	54%	4.4393	.72582
Grand Mean	173						4.19188	.806254

Source: Researcher (2022)

Performance

Performance also refers to the metrics of measuring how successful an act has been or the outcome of a task undertaken guided by the objectives of the institution. Performance is measuring if an organization has attained its intended objectives. The response on performance is presented in Table 2;

**Table 2**
Performance

Item	N	SD	D	N	A	SA	Mean	Std. Deviation
Adopting new strategy has improved the school's performance	173	0%	0%	10%	49%	41%	4.3064	.65042
Students attendance and enrollment has increased	173	0%	0%	15%	44%	41%	4.2346	.70839
The facilities are adequate	173	5%	25%	25%	43%	2%	3.1040	.98278
Teachers are satisfied ,motivated and ready to teach	173	2%	15%	23%	49%	11%	3.5145	.95605
The students are motivated and satisfied	173	1%	12%	34%	52%	1%	3.4046	.75358
The performance is on the right track	173	10%	23%	20%	38%	9%	3.1272	1.15940
Grand Mean	173						3.61755	.868437

Source: Researcher (2022)

The respondents were required to indicate if adopting new strategy has improved the school's performance .The findings shows (M=4.30, SD=0.65), this means the respondents agreed the schools realized objectives. Further the respondents agreed the students attendance and enrollment increased with (M=4.23, SD=0.708).

Also the findings shows the respondents were reserved on the matters dealing with adequate facility, with (M=3.10, SD= 0.98).The respondents were required to indicate if the teachers are ready to teach, the findings shows (M=3.51, SD=0.96), implying they agreed with the statement. In addition the findings indicated the respondents agreed the students are motivated and satisfied with (M=3.40, SD= 0.75).Lastly the respondents were required to indicate if the school performance is on the right track, the findings shows (M=3.12, SD=1.15) implying they were reserved on the issue of performance. The conclusion is that the respondents agreed the performance is on the right track with (GM=3.61, SD= 0.87).

The findings agree with Ng'ang'a, (2019) who noted that performance is realized if an organization has the right strategy and utilizes its resources to attain its intended objectives. The objective being to improve the students' general performance. Performance is achieved when employees are given opportunities to harness their skills through training. This boosts the employee's knowledge and confidence when undertaking tasks delegated to them. This is achieved through organization learning that is well structured and integrated in the organization culture, (Sande, Onditi, & Raburu, 2016).

Correlation Test

This part presents a correlation test. A correlation test was conducted to test the degree of association of the variables understudy .The independent variables (academic qualification, training, school category and discipline and dependent variable performance of public secondary schools in Embu County. The findings are presented in Table 4.14

Table 3
Correlation Test

	Performance	Training	School category	Discipline
Academic qualification	Pearson Correlation	1	-.116	.126
				.306**

Correlation coefficient yields a statistic that ranges -1 to 1. As shown in Table 3; academic qualification is positively correlated with (0.58) at 0.01 significant level 2-tailed.In addition discipline was weakly correlated with (0.31) respectively. It implies that only academic qualification was correlated to performance of public secondary schools in Embu County. Discipline was least correlated and school category and training indicated absence of correlation.

Regression Analysis

Linear regression was conducted to establish if the independent variable predicts the dependent variable. Multiple linear regression of the study variables independent variables (academic qualification, training, school category and discipline) and dependent variable performance was conducted. The summary model is presented in Table 4



Table 4
Model Summary- Academic Qualification

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.720 ^a	.518	.507	.51309	2.209

a. Predictors: (Constant), Academic qualification

Table 5
ANOVA –Academic Qualification

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	47.553	4	11.888	45.158	.000 ^b
	Residual	44.228	168	.263		
	Total	91.780	172			

a. Dependent Variable: Performance

b. Predictors: (Constant), Academic qualification

Table 6
Coefficients –Academic Qualification

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	1.420	.262		5.418	.000		
	Academic qualification	.506	.045	.619	11.315	.000	.959	1.043

a. Dependent Variable: Performance

The model used in the study is presented as follows;

$$Y = 1.420 + 0.506 - 0.170 + 0.126 + 0.200$$

As shown in Table 4.17; the findings indicates that if all things were held constant, an adjustment in academic qualification implies a unit increase (0.506) in performance of public secondary schools in Embu County. In addition a change or adjustment in training depicts a unit decrease (-0.170) in performance of public secondary schools in Embu County. A change or adjustment in school category means a unit increase (0.126) in performance of public secondary schools in Embu County. Further a change or adjustment in discipline implies a unit increase (0.200) in performance of public secondary schools in Embu County. The variables, academic qualification, training, school category and discipline have a ($P < 0.000$) it infers that they are statistically significant and they influence performance of public secondary schools in Embu.

The findings also indicate that the tolerance and VIF ($T = 0.959$, $VIF = 1.04$, $T = 0.897$, $VIF = 1.11$, $T = 0.929$, $VIF = 1.07$, $T = 0.980$, $VIF = 1.02$) indicates there might be no multicollinearity in the data. In addition the study tested the null hypothesis and alternative hypothesis. The conclusion is that the null hypothesis is rejected, and the alternative hypothesis is accepted. The findings coincide with Sameer (2021), inference that a suitable model qualifies the researcher to make an informed decision regarding the study variables. It implies that all the study variables are statistically significance and they explain that all the variables induce the performance of public secondary schools in Embu County.

Hypothesis Testing

The study's main intention was to evaluate the relationship between strategy implementation and performance of public secondary schools in Embu County .The study sought to prove or disapprove the hypothesis. The findings are presented as follows;

Academic Qualification

The study sought to examine how academic qualification influences performance of public secondary schools in Embu County. The findings indicated that there was a statistically significant relationship between academic qualification and performance of public secondary schools in Embu County with ($P < 0.000$); it means we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis as follows;



H₀ 1: Academic qualification does not have significant influence on performance of public secondary schools in Embu County

The findings agrees with Casian, Mugo and Claire (2021) who asserts that teacher's qualifications influence students' performance. Academic qualifications are important because they enable the teachers to design teaching plans and how to execute the plans. In addition they improve the teacher's delivery to the learners through content mastering, at the same time it improves on the teacher's confidence. Teacher's qualification, mastering the subject and experience are the major factors enhancing the school performance, (Elangkumaran, 2020).

4.0 CONCLUSIONS

The study made conclusions of the study area guided by the analysis of the objectives. The conclusion is based on the hypothesis after using descriptive, and inferential statistical analysis. The conclusion is presented as follows;

Academic qualification - It is concluded that public secondary schools in Embu County have experienced teachers who understands strategy implementation. The schools also practice rating of teaching quality to ensure strategies are executed effectively. In addition the schools have exposure to external inspection from the government and other stakeholders and the best qualified personnel who evaluates strategies. Also the study concludes that the schools have qualified members of the board who are involved in strategy implementation. The finding concurs with Waweru (2016) who found higher qualification of teacher's results to improved performance in developing plans and implementing strategies, giving instructions, evaluation of the strategies and maintenance of discipline matters. In addition the conclusion is that that there was a statistical significant relationship between academic qualification and performance of public secondary schools in Embu County with ($P < 0.000$). The general conclusion was to reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis. The finding agrees with Casian, Mugo and Claire (2021) who asserts that teacher's qualifications influence students' performance. Academic qualifications are important because they enable the teachers to design teaching plans and how to execute the plans.

The study recommends that schools should increase more exposure to external inspection from the government and other stakeholders who are best qualified to evaluate strategies. In addition they should continuously review their strategies to include other external and internal factors that may interfere with, their strategies. In addition the study recommends the schools should increase training their staff on strategy implementation with the emphasis being leadership skills. Also the schools should reevaluate and update their training policy in strategy implementation to increase its efficiency. The schools should also redesign a culture that is accepted and adopted by all.

Further the study recommends that the schools should improve their mode of communication to guarantee easiness and efficiency of message delivery such as using the information and communication technology. The schools should also adhere to the timeline or review their strategy implementation time line to reduce redundancy or failure to meet the objective. In addition the schools should look for others ways of funding their strategies other than relying on the government to fund them .It may enhances timely completion of strategy implementation therefore realizing performance. Lastly the study recommends that the schools should keep on updating their punishment policy to factor other factors such as detention.

5.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

Schools should increase more exposure to external inspection from the government and other stakeholders who are best qualified to evaluate strategies. Schools should continuously review their strategies to include other external and internal factors that may interfere with, their strategies. The schools should also redesign a culture that is accepted and adopted by all.

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