

**CHALLENGES FACED BY SECONDARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS IN
THE IMPLEMENTATION OF SCHOOL STRATEGIC PLANS: A
CASE OF MATHIRA SUB-COUNTY, NYERI, KENYA.**

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ABSTRACT

A strategic plan is a management tool that charts the course of direction a school intends to take to enhance productivity and increase efficiency. To achieve the desired results, a strategic plan must be implemented. However, some researchers have noted that organizations fail to implement up to 70% of their strategic plans and this is due to several challenges that have to be addressed. This study sought to investigate the challenges faced by principals in the implementation of strategic plans in public secondary schools in Mathira Sub-County in Nyeri County. The variables examined were: school's structure, school's culture, availability of resources, and the principal's management skills. Descriptive research design was used in this study. The target population comprised of 40 principals, 520 members of Board of Management and 320 Heads of Departments. A sample of 12 principals, 12 chairpersons of Board of Management and 96 heads of departments were selected through both simple random sampling and purposive sampling methods. The researcher collected data by administering questionnaires to the principals and Heads of Departments, and an interview schedule for the chairpersons of the Board of Management. A pilot study was carried out prior to the main study in order to test the reliability and validity of the instruments. The data collected was quantitative and qualitative in nature. It was analyzed using descriptive statistics and by organizing it into appropriate categories or themes, accordingly. The analyzed data was presented in frequency tables, pie charts, bar graphs and in prose form. The study established that public secondary schools in Mathira Sub-County had formulated strategic plans but had failed to implement them as planned. The study also established that the school structure was not flexible and the culture was not aligned to the implementation of strategic plans. Besides, schools lacked adequate resources and all these factors posed a challenge to the implementation of strategic plans. The study also established that most of the implementation process was done by the top level managers. Based on these findings, it was concluded that structure, culture, availability of resources and management skills affect the implementation of strategic plans. The study recommends that the structure of the schools be made flexible and the school culture is aligned to the implementation of strategic plans. The government should also channel more funds to schools and offer capacity building courses for education managers. Finally, all managers should be involved in the implementation process.