

**STRATEGIC PLANNING AND PERFORMANCE OF PUBLIC  
SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN RARIEDA DISTRICT, KENYA**

**BY**

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**A RESEARCH PROJECT SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL  
FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT FOR THE AWARD OF  
MASTER OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION DEGREE, SCHOOL  
OF BUSINESS, UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI**

**NOVEMBER - 2013**

## DECLARATION

This project is my original work and has not been presented for the award of a degree or any other award in any University.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

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This research project is submitted for the award of Degree of Master of Business Administration in Strategic Management with my approval as University supervisor.

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## **DEDICATION**

This project is dedicated to my beloved children -Daniel, Daisy and Darius – each of you is a bundle of joy in my life.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

The knowledge and wisdom, strength and good health and inspiration to study that has born the success I hold today comes from the most high God and to Him I give the Glory.

Secondly, I sincerely acknowledge my instructor and supervisor Dr. Vincent Machuki for the expert input in this work. His unwavering guidance all the way in the study of this course is highly commendable and appreciated.

I also acknowledge my dear husband David Wabomba for his intense support in all aspects of this study. His patience, understanding and prodding to propel me to the next level are virtues I hold dearest.

My children Daniel, Daisy and Darius are my inspiration into this study. I highly appreciate their patience and understanding with which they withstood hours and days of an absent mother.

To my departed parents, my supportive brothers and sisters and my guardians Mr. James Andafu and Mr. Isaiah Makunga, I owe you my formative years. The care, guidance and encouragement each of you gave me, has made me who I am today and with you I share this accomplishment.

Finally, to all my friends and colleagues including Aketch, Sande, Onesmus, Catherine and Esther among others, I highly appreciate every piece of input and encouragement you gave me.

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## ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

<b>BoG:</b>	Board of Governors
<b>CSR:</b>	Corporate Social Responsibility
<b>DEO:</b>	District Education Officer
<b>DQUASSO:</b>	District Quality Assurance Officer
<b>EFA:</b>	Education For All
<b>ERS:</b>	Economic Recovery Strategy
<b>FDSE:</b>	Free Day Secondary Education
<b>FPE:</b>	Free Primary Education
<b>FSE:</b>	Free Secondary Education
<b>GoK:</b>	Government of Kenya
<b>IGA:</b>	Income Generating Activity
<b>KCSE:</b>	Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education
<b>KESSP:</b>	Kenya education sector support programme
<b>MDGs:</b>	Millennium Development Goals
<b>MNC:</b>	Multi-National Companies
<b>MoE:</b>	Ministry of Education
<b>NESSP:</b>	National Education Service Support Program
<b>NGO:</b>	Non-Governmental Organizations
<b>PTA:</b>	Parents and Teachers Association
<b>SMART:</b>	Specific, Measureable, Attainable, Researchable and Timely

## **ABSTRACT**

Many scholars and authors argue that the correlation of strategic planning and performance has not been clearly established and that although strategic planning is not the sole contributor to high firm performance, firms with excellently executed strategic plans perform better than their counterparts. Issues of contingency and dynamic, complex environment have necessitated strategic planning and thus the Government being concerned to provide quality education has made strategic planning a policy through the MoE to all public secondary schools in Ken. The objectives of this study were to establish strategic planning practices in public secondary schools in Rarieda district and to determine the influence of strategic planning on performance. Using cross-sectional descriptive survey design and structured (closed – ended) questionnaires the researcher collected primary data from 27 public secondary schools in Rarieda district. The data was analyzed using both inferential and descriptive statistics to determine the strength of linear relationship. The key findings of the study were: most schools (74%) practice formal strategic planning and strategic planning is positively correlated to performance. Besides this, it was also established that management do not carry out thorough environmental analysis and does not involve stakeholders to a large extent as required and more still, the strategic plans developed are not fully implemented. It's therefore a surmise to say that strategic planning is an important practice and all public secondary schools should engage in formal strategic planning. The main recommendation in this study is for the policy developers through MoE to enhance strategic planning in public secondary schools and the top school management to invest resources, time and energy in implementation of the strategies. Finally, future researchers should endeavor to establish the challenges of strategic implementation and how strategic planning can be implemented to enhance its contribution particularly to academic performance.

## **CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Background of the Study**

Every organization has an internal and an external environment that are interdependent (Albanese and Van Fleet, 1983). The continuous evolution and interaction of internal environment components and the turbulent and dynamic nature of the external environment occasioned by constant changes in competition, economy, technology, political-legal aspects and social-cultural-demographic factors, has made strategic management popular in comprehending an organization's strategic position and strategic choices in pursuit of excellent performance (Pearce II and Robinson 2009). The contingency theory postulates that organizations are open systems and there is no one best way of managing an organization (Burnes, 2000). This is because rapid environmental changes present them with various opportunities, threats and constraints (Barney, 2007).

Various organizational and economics theories have addressed firm performance, cementing the fact that performance is the main goal of every organization. In the 1960s, a firm's resource-base stood out as the most popular explanation as to why one firm could perform better than another. However, during 1970-80s, economists analyzed problems of the firm and the industry under the Industrial Organization Economics theory whose key framework is Structure-Conduct-Performance paradigm. The paradigm sought to identify the correlation between an industry's performance, conduct of its firms and industry structure, (Barney, 2007). The equivalent of the Structure-Conduct-Performance paradigm of the Industrial Organization Economics theory is the Environment Strategy Performance framework in which performance is shaped by strategic choices based on

environmental dynamics. This is anchored on Ansoff's (1993) proposition that all organizations are Environmental Serving Organization (ESO) which is within the premise of the open systems (Haines, 1972). After 1980, the input of behavioral scientists focusing on optimization and role of organizational behavior became profound, (Albanese and Van Fleet, 1983). Therefore, the essential question is whether or not strategic planning improves performance levels of firms.

The controversy on whether the strategic planning improves performance in schools has been ongoing. For instance, Bell (2002) focusing on English schools in the UK examined whether strategic planning and school management was just full of sound and fury signifying nothing. In Kenya education helps push further the government's economic and social agenda by providing a skilled workforce, generating a civilized society and promoting active citizenship, (Basic Education Act, 2013, Constitution of Kenya, 2010). The purpose of public secondary schools in Kenya is to equip learners with knowledge, skills and values to compete in obtaining quality courses and colleges, (Birgen, 2007). Ranking of schools and individual student performance at national, county and sub-county levels has heightened competition among public secondary schools. Stakeholders in education have consequently embraced strategic planning as a management tool to diagnose the competitive environment, allocate resources appropriately and secure a competitive advantage sustainable over a long period. Hence, the question under debate is whether or not strategic planning improves performance in schools.

### **1.1.1 Strategic Planning**

There are several definitions of strategic planning but there is no commonly accepted or universal definition of concept of strategic planning because different writers define it

from several points of view, (Quinn, 1980). Thompson et al (2007), defines it as competitive moves and business approaches that managers employ to grow the business, attract and please customers, compete successfully, conduct operations and achieve the targeted levels of performance. Strategic planning encompasses making of strategic choices to position a firm at an advantage against competitors in the long-term, (Johnson, Scholes and Whittington, 2008). Strategic planning can also be defined as a top management function concerned with making decisions with regard to the determination of the organization mission, vision, philosophy, objectives, strategies and functional policies, (Sababu, 2007). In a nutshell, strategic planning is a rational and long-term process, futuristic in nature and action-oriented as it transforms strategic thoughts into strategic actions and involves selecting from among possible courses of action to make strategic decisions that bring the firm closer to its overall aim, (Bruce and Longdon, 2000, Drucker, 1989, Namaswa, 1989).

Strategic management process entails four stages namely; environmental analysis, strategy formulation, implementation and evaluation and control, (Johnson et al, 2008). Strategic planning on the other hand entails defining the purpose of the organization, determining advantage, setting boundaries, choosing areas of emphasis and estimating a budget,(Bruce and Longdon, 2000). Environmental analysis is a critical ingredient in the strategic planning process because it ensures formulation of correct strategies made from an informed view-point of the prevailing organizational conditions and the firm's competitive external environment, (Ansoff 1990, Barney 2007, Bruce and Longdon, 2000). Strategy formulation entails making strategic decisions or strategic choices based on the firm's strategic issues and also the strategic options at hand, (Lynch, 2009).

Strategic planning aims at making strategic decisions or strategic choices through formulation of mission and vision, setting of policies, goals and objectives and identifying means of achieving those objectives.

Organizations engage in strategic planning in order to achieve clarity of future direction, design internal action approaches, make proper choices and priorities, deal effectively with organizational changes and uncertainties in external environment, build team work and expertise based on resources, processes and people and develop effective strategies to improve organizational performance, (Cole, 2004, Peng, 2007). Performance is the goal of every organization. It refers to the end result of activities while strategic planning aims to improve these results. Ansoff (1990) and Yabs (2007) records that strategic planning has gained popularity since the 1960s. This is because of its perceived relevance in diagnosing the prevailing competitive and turbulent business environment and enabling appropriate resource allocation to gear the firm towards achievement of its short-term objectives and long-term goals which determine a firm's performance level in the markets and industries it operates, (Barney, 2007, Kotter, 1996).

### **1.1.2 Organizational Performance**

An organization is a social unit within which people strive to achieve a given mission (Sababu 2007). Generally, organizations are commonly instruments of purpose coordinated by intentions and goals. Drucker (1984), defines organizational performance in terms of effectiveness and efficiency with which the organization's objectives are achieved, while Barney (2007), defines it as comparison of the economic value of firms and rating them to have competitive advantage, competitive parity or competitive disadvantage. March and Sutton (1997), notes that most organizational studies define

performance as a dependent variable and seek to identify variables that produce variations in performance but also further acknowledges that causal complexity surrounding performance and difficulty in explaining variation in performance or effectiveness still poses a challenge to obtain a more aggregate assessment of organizational performance.

The concept of performance is vital in all organizations whether commercial, profit-making or Not-for-profit organizations, private or public sector, (Johnson et al, 2008). Organizational performance is a measure of the extent to which the organization's goals and objectives have been achieved. Such measure of achievement informs all the stakeholders of the extent to which we are succeeding in the business we are in. Based on their context, different organizations use different modes of performance. (Mazzarol and Rebound, 2009), notes that, organizational performance can be measured as achieving sustainable growth over time using such indicators as annual turnover, the number of employees, size of assets and equity in the balance sheet, market share and profitability. However, Bolo, Muturia and Oeba,(2010),says that firm performance refers to how well or badly a firm is performing both financially and non-financially thus exclusive use of financial achievements or indicators as the sole yardstick to determine organizational performance would be lopsided because organizations desire to achieve broad objectives. As such, Thompson et al (2007), suggests that, use of a balanced scorecard for measuring company performance that tracks the achievement of both financial objectives and strategic objectives is optimal.

Measurement of performance in a school set-up will therefore include academic excellence, land infrastructure development, discipline and school culture, stakeholder



satisfaction, financial stability and excellence in non-academic activities. Firm performance is therefore a very essential aspect of a firm because as March and Sutton (1997), puts it, performance comparisons become a basis for evaluating executives, making decisions about resource allocation of human and other resources, for writing history and for stimulating arrogance and shame.

### **1.1.3 Public Secondary Schools in Kenya**

The Kenyan education system runs from early childhood to the primary or elementary education level, to secondary education and finally tertiary education at the college or university levels. The Kenya government endeavors to provide quality education to every Kenyan child irrespective of their social-economic status through initiatives such as Free Primary Education (FPE), Universal Primary Education (UPE), Education For All (EFA), Free Secondary Education (FSE) and Free Day Secondary Education (FDSE). Basic education embraces ECDE to Secondary school level, (basic education act No.14 of 2013). These initiatives have set time limits, for instance, UPE by 2005, EFA by 2015, (Sessional paper No. 1 2005).

The government developed Education Sector Strategic Plan [2003] and set targets outlined in the Sessional Paper No. 1 of 2005. It then launched KESSP in 2005 which is part of a multi-donor sector wide approach supporting Kenya in its effort to reach its Millennium Development Goals (MDG) by 2015, (Walekhwa, 2008). Up to 2012, KESSP dovetails with other MoE key programs to assist the government of Kenya in its implementation of the National Education Sector Strategic Plan of 2008-2012. However, with changes in the political and legal arena propelled by the inauguration of new constitution in 2010, there have been numerous changes in policy, for instance, the

implementation agent has changed to National Education Sector Support Program (NESSP) and Sessional Paper No. 1 of 2005 updated to Sessional Paper No. 14 of 2012 with reference to a new Basic Education Act 2013 and the new MoE's strategic plan 2012-2017.

The ministry's strategic plan is cascaded down to individual public secondary schools that are expected to enact a strategic plan in tandem with the Ministry of Education's Strategic Plan. Evidently, strategic planning in public secondary schools is largely determined by external pressures such as policy. Pressure on existing resources, desire for quality, challenge of rapidly changing policy and the highly competitive environment in the industry makes strategic planning relevant. As Les Bell (2002) notes, strategic planning is a key management process that draws together institutional values and goals and provides a framework for the quality of provision and the deployment of resources. The question of concern is therefore, whether strategic planning in public secondary schools leads to improved performance.

#### **1.1.4 Public Secondary Schools in Rarieda District**

Rarieda District is a relatively new district bordering Bondo district in Siaya County. It is one of the rural constituencies in Luo-Nyanza, one of the six districts in Siaya County and 208 districts in Kenya. Most of the Rarieda constituents live below the poverty line with direly low income levels due to minimal economic activities within the constituency. The high HIV/AIDS prevalence rates in the district accounts for the large number of orphans who drop out of school due to financial constraints. School drop-out rates and absenteeism are more grave in schools near beaches as boys drop-out to join the fisher folk since fishing underpins the local economy while girls are prone to teenage

pregnancies and early marriages. Most schools are also understaffed with inadequate learning facilities. These socio-economic challenges explain the low enrollment rates, low retention rates, low completion rates and the generally low education quality. These challenges make Rarieda a unique set-up for study.

The district has 34 public secondary schools as at January 2013 with some offering boarding facilities while others are day schools. According to the Rarieda District Strategic Plan, (2010-2015), the enrollment stands at approximately 5322 boys and 3954 girls, that is, 57% boys and 43% girls respectively, with 68 female teachers and 205 male teachers, There are no schools in the National category but only provincial level (currently county schools) and district schools (currently sub-county schools). The schools are expected to adopt and domesticate their own strategic plans from the districts strategic plan as a requirement by the MoE. Besides strategic planning being a government's policy, the dwindling resources coupled by the ever changing and highly competitive environment has made strategic planning a necessary practice in the endeavor to improve academic performance and all the other aspects of performance such as stakeholder satisfaction, staff motivation and co-curricular activities.

## **1.2 Research Problem**

Organizations are open systems; they are interdependent with external environment as a source of inputs and consumer of outputs, (Albanese and Van Fleet, 1983). However, the environment is complex, turbulent and dynamic, (Johnson et al, 2008). The exigencies in the remote, and immediate environment further intensify competition for supplies and markets creating uncertainties that present both opportunities, threats and constraints to firms, (Barney, 2007). It's against this backdrop that the concept of strategic planning has

become popular as a management's tool not only to steer a firm's survival but also improve performance. A number of scholars such as Cole (2004), Peng, (2009) and Ansoff (1990), have argued that there is a positive correlation between strategic planning and performance while others argue that the relationship between planning and performance is inconsistent and thus still debatable, (Barney 2007, Thompson et al, 2007).

Strategic planning practices in Kenya commenced slowly and gradually back in the 1960s but are presently gaining currency and popularity (Yabs, 2007). The public sector finds the concepts of strategy and strategic planning just as important as in commercial firms and hence public secondary schools in Rarieda District are required to formulate strategic plans in tandem with the MoE's strategic plan in order to foster the government's agenda to provide every Kenyan child with the right to quality education and training (Birgen, 2007). Besides adoption of strategic planning as a government's policy, the dwindling resources coupled by the ever changing and highly competitive environment have made strategic planning a necessary practice (Gode, 2009). Strategic planning is expected to positively influence performance (academic and non-academic) because it aids in selection of strategies that enable organizations to best allocate and exploit their resources and strengths relative to opportunities in their external environment (Akinyi, 2010). This makes strategic planning in Public Secondary Schools in Rarieda District inevitable because they can only attract quality students and receive support from their stakeholders if they meet acceptable standards of performance.

There have been studies on influence of strategic planning on performance and related areas in other parts of the country. For instance, Gode (2009), studied influence of

strategic planning on the performance of public secondary schools in Kisumu East, Ayieko (2009), studied strategic planning practices and performance of manufacturing firms in Kisumu city, Akinyi (2008), studied challenges facing private secondary schools in implementation of strategic plans in Kisumu West district but did not single out effect of strategic plans on performance, Mulaa (2009), studied strategic planning, environment and firm performance but did not focus on public secondary schools. Akinyi (2010), studied influence of tangible and intangible resources on performance in public secondary schools in Bondo district but did not address strategic planning. There is no study, to the knowledge of the researcher, that focused on influence of strategic planning on performance in Rarieda district and this clearly illustrates presence of a knowledge gap to be addressed in this study. Does strategic planning influence performance in public secondary schools in Rarieda District?

### **1.3 Objectives of the Study**

This study addressed the following objectives:

- i. To establish strategic planning practices adopted by public secondary schools in Rarieda District, Kenya.
- ii. To determine the influence of strategic planning on performance of public Secondary Schools in Rarieda, Kenya.

### **1.4 Value of the Study**

This study has established that strategic planning is positively correlated to strategic planning. It has thus contributed to theory building in the sense that the gap in the controversy concerning whether or not strategic planning improves performance has been

narrowed. It has also contributed to theory building because it asserts the theoretical propositions under study. For instance open systems theory is supported by the findings in this study (all departments in a school interact and contribute to general school performance) and the contingency theory and resource-based theory are also supported by the findings of this study because there are no identical schools and each formulate strategies, develops strategic plan and implements them relative to their own circumstances and resources.

This study has provided information to policy developers to enable them formulate relevant and viable policies. It has provided information that the Ministry of Education (MoE) and NESSP can use to assess and improve implementation of the national strategic plan at the school level. It can also help Head Teachers and Board of Governors (BoG) to develop better policies in the management of the school as well as help to the District Education Officer (DEO) and District Quality Assurance Officer (QUASSO) to effectively help in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of school curriculum in order to ensure better standards of education. The information can also help the above stakeholders in proper management of funds for free secondary education and the constituency development funds allocated for school projects.

The findings of this study are also highly relevant to school management. The findings highlight the ingredients of an effective strategic plan. Management should take careful consideration of each of the strategic planning practices (shown in the conceptual model) to ensure overall better school performance. For instance, stakeholder involvement and environmental analysis have been established to be highly significant in the strategic planning process thus should be emphasized during strategic planning process.

## **CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter examines various theories that underpin the study. It also reviews literature on various strategic planning practices and organizational performance. Finally, the chapter examines the correlation between strategic planning and organizational performance.

### **2.2 Theoretical Underpinnings of the Study**

The concept of strategy dates back to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. With the onset of industrial revolution, the military lexicon, strategy, was borrowed into business to mean configuration of resources to achieve advantage against competitors (Yabs, 2007). Later on, the concept of strategic planning emerged focusing on identifying competitive moves and business approaches to grow the business, compete successfully attract and please customers and conduct operations to achieve the targeted level of performance (Thompson, Strickland and Gamble, 2007). Strategic planning metamorphosed from the widely known financial planning of the 1950s and long-range planning of the 1960s into strategic management of today. Strategic management is a relatively new field of study that is still at a pre-paradigmatic stage, its multidimensional and unifies the concepts of strategy and strategic planning in the broad endeavor of an organization to achieve its purpose (Johnson et al, 2008).

The concept of strategic planning has found robust application in business arena due to the complex and dynamic nature of the business environment. This is because from open systems theory, organizations are open systems. They receive various inputs from

environment; transform them in some way and export outputs. Haines (1972), states that a deeper understanding of the interrelatedness of the influencing factors in the environment when applying open systems theory to the strategic planning model produces a richer and better appreciation of the sub-systems that compose the larger synergistic general system. Open Systems theory provides a deeper understanding of the trends and the critical nature of the interplay between these various components with the bottom-line being able to manage organizational changes, achieve an internal fit and adjust to external environmental changes.

Burnes (2000), referring to contingency theory, reiterates that there is no one best way of managing organizations. This is because organizational factors such as organizational structure and culture, size, type and complexity of the organization visa vie the situational factors shaping the industry landscape, renders the best practice or strategy in one organization in given industry at a given time irrelevant or obsolete in another set of situation. This theory affirms the complexity, dynamism and unpredictable nature of the environment as postulated by the complexity and chaos theory that questions the practicability and essence of formal planning under such environmental conditions and thus argues that the traditional approaches to strategic management may not be appropriate.

Similarly, firms are also viewed to be different based on the resources they are endowed with. Birger Wernerfelt (1984) is a proponent of the resource based theory which stipulates that firms perform better when they assemble resources that are valuable, durable, rare, difficult to imitate, non-substitutable and superior to competitor's resources and successfully bundle them into unique capabilities which they could use to generate



competitive advantage and superior performance, (Penrose, 1959). Its notable that resource based theory was popular in the 1960s when adoption of strategic planning practices was on increase both in the U.S.A. and overseas. However, in the mid 1970s – mid 1980s companies exhibited dissatisfaction with strategic planning majorly due to increased environmental turbulence, reduced business opportunities and increased competition although Michael Porter (1987), argued that strategic planning should be “re-discovered”, “re-thought” and “recast” even as Mintzberg (1987) argued that formal strategic planning gave rise to deliberate strategy but realized strategy is an outcome of both deliberate and emergent strategy (Johnson et al, 2008 and Thompson et al, 2007).

It is during this time that economists analyzed the problems of the firm and the industry under the Industrial Organization Economics theory whose key framework is the Structure-Conduct-Performance paradigm. The IOE theorists build on firm theory and price theory and sought to identify the correlation between the industry’s performance, conduct of its firms and conduct of its firms and thus establish how firms operate and make economic contribution (Barney, 2007). The equivalent of S-C-P paradigm is the Environment Strategy Performance (ESP) framework in which performance is shaped by strategic choices based on environmental dynamics. This is anchored on Ansoff’s (1993) proposition that all organizations are Environment Serving Organizations (ESO) which is within the premise of open systems theory (Haines, 1972).

After 1980, the input of behavioral scientists focusing on optimization and role of organizational behavior became profound (Albanese and Van Fleet, 1983). This is because individual and group work is central to the extent to which an organization’s strategy is effectively and efficiently implemented (Nzuve, 2007). Organizations are

therefore in constant dilemma to manage organizational changes (to achieve an internal fit) and also adjust to external environmental changes in order to remain competitive (Burnes, 2000). Since 1980 onwards, strategic management has continued to develop and has been shaped more by the works of Michael Porter, Arthur Thompson, Strickland II, Prahalad, John Pearce and Richard Robinson, Gerry Johnson and Scholes and others (Yabs, 2007).

## **2.2 Concept of Strategic Planning**

Generally, a plan is an intentional prior arrangement to achieve a particular purpose. Strategic planning is defined as a tool to determine the mission, vision, values, goals, objectives, roles and responsibilities, timelines and personnel responsible for moving an organization or institution from the current to the desired state in future (Chiuri and Kiumi, 2005). Strategic planning consists of competitive moves and business approaches managers employ to grow the business, attract and please customers, compete successfully, conduct operations and achieve the targeted level of performance. Strategic planning is fundamental in aligning organization's internal activities to the ever changing external environment.

Organizations engage in strategic planning in order to achieve clarity of future direction, design internal action approaches, make proper choices and priorities, deal effectively with organizational changes and uncertainties in external environment, build team work and expertise based on resources, processes and people and develop effective strategies to improve organizational performance (Cole, 2004 and Peng, 2009).

The concept of strategic planning has notably gained popularity in modern organizations due to scarcity of resources, increased competition, increased need to meet customer and stakeholder expectations and need to resolve issues effectively and efficiently. It is therefore evident that strategic planning is a vital tool to the present-day managers to navigate through the current complex, dynamic, competitive and uncertain business environment because as Gode (2009) correctly notes, strategic planners must adapt to a world where growth isn't steady; it can slow down, increase or be interrupted in an unpredictable manner.

Mintzberg (1998), notes that the realized strategy may be as a result of the deliberate (intended strategy) or emergent strategy. This because a well developed, logically complete strategy, can be tested by the market and adjusted by managers to improve its ability to generate competitive advantage (Barney, 2009). This also implies that practitioners that uphold the design school of thought (deliberate, deterministic or prescriptive strategic plans), should also appreciate the arguments brought forth by the process school (emergent, intuitive, contingency or descriptive strategic plans).

It is therefore, a surmise to say that strategic decisions should be sustainable, should offer competitive advantage, should develop processes to deliver the strategy, should exploit the linkages between the organization and its environment and should move the organization forward to a significant position (Lynch, 2009).

### **2.3 Strategic Planning Process**

The strategic management process entails four core stages including environmental analysis, strategy formulation, implementation and the evaluation and control stage,

(Johnson et al, 2008). However, practitioners emphasize various stages based on their context, content or the strategic process itself. First and foremost, the management should establish mission, vision and objectives from which it can derive meaningful strategies (Sababu, 2007). Next, environmental analysis is a critical stage as it ensures formulation of strategies from an informed view-point of the external and internal environment (Bruce and Longdon, 2000). The second and crucial stage in strategic planning is strategy formulation. It builds on the first stage where strategic issues are identified, opportunities, threats or constraint and strategic alternatives weighed to decide on best strategic action to be taken.

Although strategic planning ends in making of strategic choices, the strategic management process emphasizes on the implementation stage because brilliantly formulated strategies that are not implemented do not add any value to the firm. According to Wheelen and Hunger (2008), strategy implementation is the process by which objectives, strategies and policies are put into action through the development of programs, budgets and procedures. Finally, evaluation and control process seeks to ensure that a firm is achieving what is set out to achieve by comparing performance with desired results, revealing the performance gap and providing feedback necessary for the management to take correct action (Yabs 2007).

Strategic planning takes various approaches in different organizations depending on their size. Some firms undertake formal, semi-formal or informal strategic planning. Carter et al (2006) notes that small firms do not largely engage in formal strategic planning because the entrepreneur engages in creative ways of generating resources and sales in an unplanned and purely guesswork manner. Foster (1993), asserts that although strategy

making and planning in small firms is opportunistic and informal, strategic management process is significant in both small and large enterprises.

Formality defines the extent in which a strategy is deliberate, documented, communicated and the time spent on planning as well as degree and involvement of participants and specifications of the process, resources and responsibilities (Gode, 2009). According to Ansoff (1990), deliberate and systematic strategic planning was introduced in 1960s. However, Johnson et al (2007), reports that formal system of strategic planning can lead to misunderstanding of the purpose of planning, problem in design and the strategic planning system may fail to gain ownership of strategic plan leading to loss of innovativeness and authenticity.

## **2.4 Organizational Performance**

Performance can be defined as a collection of work activities, operational efficiency, and effectiveness, their measurement and subsequent outcomes attained (Dessler, 2008). Every organization has well defined mechanisms of measuring performance which enable it to evaluate current and past achievements relative to expected standards but the methods used to measure performance are relative to context in which the organization operates and the strategic objectives pursued (Akinyi, 2010). Carton and Hoffer (2010), reports the observation of Venkatraman and Ramanujam (1986) that there is little dispute that one of the core purposes of both entrepreneurship and strategic management theory and research is the improvement of organizational performance but there is no consensus regarding the best or even sufficient measures of organizational performance. They consent that different measures of organizational effectiveness and performance have

been used with little attention to the limitations these measures may impose on the interpretation or generalizability of the results of the research.

However, in spite of the above stand-off, performance can be measured by quantitative methods such as net and gross profit, Return on Investment, Return on Equity Employed, equity or capital and so on or by qualitative methods such as absenteeism levels, job satisfaction, industrial relations, teamwork, best management practices, new product development, operational sufficiency, efficiency in terms of cost reduction, employee and stakeholder satisfaction among others (Foster, 1993 and Johnson et al, 2008).

The need to measure both financial and non-financial aspects of performance has led to use of the balanced scorecard proposed by Kaplan and Norton, (1992). However, selection of appropriate performance measures to ensure consistency of measurement is a challenge due to context of operation and variety in strategic objectives pursued by firms. In spite of this challenge, researchers and scholars tend to agree that strategic planning is positively correlated to organizational performance (Ansoff, 1990).

## **2.5 Strategic Planning and Organizational Performance**

Strategic planning is a step by step process with objectives and end-products that can be evaluated. Performance is the end result of activities while strategic planning aims to improve the quality of these results. It can be measured by quantitative methods (net or gross profit, return on investment, equity or capital, return on equity employed, etc) or qualitative methods (absenteeism levels, job satisfaction, industrial relations, team work, best management practices, Corporate Social Responsibility, new product development,

operational sufficiency, employee and stakeholder satisfaction, among others) (Foster, 1993).

Performance is the heart of every organization. Researchers and analysts have over the past decades investigated the influence of strategic planning on organizational performance but up to date the correlation between strategy and firm performance is an on ongoing debate (Bolo, Muturia and Oeba, 2000). Whereas some authors argue that there is quite minimal (if any) correlation between strategic planning and high firm performance, others argue that firms with well conceived and excellently executed strategic plans have high probability of high performance (Ansoff, 1990). For instance, Mazzarol (2009), reports that some twelve research papers from 1950s to the early 1980's indicated that planning was positively correlated with better performance. Indeed, planning-performance findings are inconsistent and inconclusive.

Researchers suggest that strategic planning positively influences firm performance and that measurement methods and contingency factors are primarily responsible for the inconsistencies reported in literature. For instance, Armstrong (1982), argues that without a proper description of the planning techniques, it's not possible to assess value of planning in a scientific manner. Pearce, Freeman and Robinson,(1987), also assert that methodologies can limit impact on the researcher's ability to understand the effect of strategic planning on performance. Strategic planning viewed as systematized, step by step, chronological procedures to develop or coordinate an organizational strategy leads to the concept of formality in strategic planning (Johnson et al, 2008). Formality is the extent to which a strategy is deliberate, documented, communicated and the time spend

on planning as well as the degree of involvement of participants and specification of the process, resources and responsibilities (Gode, 2009).

Generally, greater formality in strategic planning positively correlates to high firm performance. Although Wheelen and Hunger (2008) cautions that some studies have found out that too much formalization of the strategic planning process may actually result in reduced performance. Ansoff (1990) notes that deliberate and systematic pre-planning of acquisition of strategy produces significantly better financial performance than unplanned opportunistic, adaptive approach. Sababu (2007), echoes the same views that, formal strategic management systems significantly influences organizational performance. Similarly, Ayieko (2009), reports a meta-analysis of 21 studies including 29 samples and 2,496 organizations done by Boyd (1971), who concluded that there were modest positive correlations between strategic planning and financial performance.

On the other hand, other authors argue that it would be naïve to conclude that formal planning is the sole cause of success in firms because firms may be using other management practices such as organization design, good human resource practice, or corporate culture to steer high performance (Nzuve, 2007, Robin and Coulter, 2012 and Hatch and Cunliffe, 2006). In the same vein, others such as Robinson and Pearce (1993), have argued for and against the concept that formal strategic planning is suited solely for large firms and that it improves performance in both large and small firms (Gode, 2009). Small firms do not focus on market positioning and competitive advantage but the entrepreneur engages in creative ways of generating resources and sales in an unplanned and purely guesswork manner. Indeed, s/he is the executer of the process and due to lack of formal structures to undertake the corrective adjustments formally; strategy changes



assume an experimental approach, (Carter et al 2006). In spite of this, Foster (1993), asserts that although strategy making and planning in small firms is opportunistic and informal, strategic management process is significant in both small and large enterprises. This is largely true if planning can be thought of as the reflective activity that precedes the making of decisions.

As such general recommendation is that strategic planning should be practiced in all firms regardless of size since it reduces focus on operational details and promotes strategic thinking, (Bruce and Longdon, 2000). Ideally strategy must be conceived informally (strategic thinking) before it's programmed formally (strategic analysis). However there are dangers in formality of a strategy. Johnson et al (2007), asserts Henry Mintzberg's concern that formal systems of strategic planning can lead to misunderstanding the purposes of planning, problems in the design and put into effect of strategic planning systems and the strategic planning system may fail to gain ownership of the strategy. Elaborate formality in strategy planning could lead to loss of innovativeness and authenticity as well as inflexible and time consuming plans being equated to strategy. Of essence therefore, is the fact that there is an inherent knowledge gap in the relationship between strategic planning and firm performance. This is the basis on which this study is designed; to establish whether practice of strategic planning in public secondary schools influences performance – a case study of Rarieda district, Kenya.

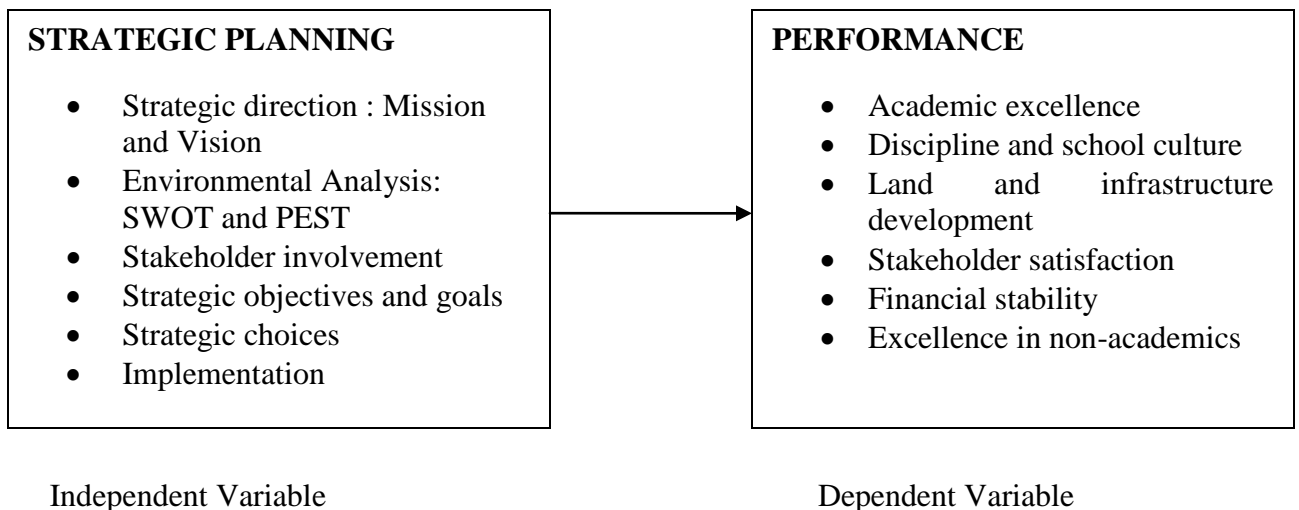
## **2.6 Conceptual Model**

The conceptual model in this section aims at illustrating the relationship between strategic planning and performance. In this model, strategic planning is the independent

variable while performance is the dependent variable. Strategic planning entails the entire process of developing a strategic plan for an organization. Presence of a mission statement and vision spells the strategic direction of the organization. Based on this, the organization conducts an extensive internal and external environmental analysis to establish the strengths and weaknesses of the organization and the opportunities and threats in the external environment. The findings of the analysis are used to make strategic choices from the alternatives at hand and strategic objectives are set. Proper implementation of the strategies decided upon in the strategic plan determines its influence on organizational performance. In this model, strategic direction (mission and vision), environmental analysis (SWOT and PEST), strategic choices and implementation are used as indicators of strategic planning (independent variable).

Similarly, academic excellence, discipline and school culture, land and infrastructure development, stakeholder satisfaction, financial stability and excellence in non-academics are used as indicators of performance. The model thus illustrates that strategic planning (independent variable) influences performance (dependent variable).

Figure 1: Conceptual Model



## **CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents the research design, describes the population of the study and outlines the data collection, procedures and examines how the data collected was to be analyzed.

### **3.2 Research design**

A research design is a plan or a blue print for the collection, measurement and analysis of data. This study employed cross-sectional descriptive survey design. Sounders, Lewis and Cooper (2007), asserts that this method presents facts concerning variables investigated as they exist at the time of study as well as trends that are emerging.

Descriptive survey design was the most appropriate design for this study because the research question was structured and specific and required primary data. The cross-sectional census approach was employed as opposed to case study or time series because the population of study was large and observation was not to be made over a long stretch of time. Wangila (2011) states that a survey study is conducted to collect detailed descriptions of the existing phenomena with the intent of employing data to justify the current conditions and practices or to make more intelligent plans for improving them. Most studies in social science such as Gode (2009), Akinyi (2010), Wangila, (2011) and many more, targeting to collect quantitative data from a variety of respondents have employed this research design.

### **3.3 Population of the Study**

The populations of study were Public Secondary Schools in Rarieda District (34 Schools) (Rarieda District KCSE Analysis, 2012). Since the population was relatively small a census survey was employed. All the 34 schools are county and sub-county schools since there are no schools in the national category. However, only 28 schools were studied because six schools are newly established and had not undertaken KCSE.

### **3.4 Data Collection**

Primary data was collected by use of a structured questionnaire containing closed-ended items that aimed to measure objective responses of the respondents without consideration of their subjective opinions. The questionnaires were administered to principals or deputy principals in each school through a drop and pick system since they are directly in-charge of developing and implementing a school's strategic plan. Data on strategic planning and performance for the past five years was thus collected from 27 schools (respondents) with only one questionnaire uncollected. Data was collected

### **3.5 Data Analysis**

The researcher obtained data that was largely quantitative in nature. Therefore, both inferential and descriptive statistics were used in analysis of the data. Since the data sought to establish the relationship between the independent variable (Strategic planning) and the dependent variable (performance), the measures of relations and associations, that is, correlation and regression were used. Regression analysis emphasizes estimation of an equation that describes the relationship between two variables while correlation helps to

determine the strength of linear relationship that is, how strongly correlated these variables are (Mutai, 2000).

The regression equation is as shown below:

$$Y = a + b_1X_1 + b_2X_2 + b_3X_3 + b_4X_4 + b_5X_5 + b_6X_6 + \epsilon$$

Where: a is the constant

term,

$b_1, b_2, b_3, b_4, b_5$  and  $b_6$  are co-efficients of  $X_1, X_2, X_3, X_4, X_5, X_6$ , which are the indicators of strategic planning.  $X_1$  is the strategic direction,  $X_2$  is environmental analysis,  $X_3$  is stakeholder involvement,  $X_4$  is strategic choice,  $X_5$  is strategic objectives and goals and  $X_6$  is implementation.  $Y$ - is the dependent variable. The dependent variable has a number of indicators namely;  $Y_1$ - academic excellence,  $Y_2$ - discipline and school culture,  $Y_3$  - land and infrastructure development,  $Y_4$  -stakeholder satisfaction,  $Y_5$  –financial stability and  $Y_6$ - non-academic activities.

## CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS, FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the analysis on the data collected in this study, the interpretation of the findings and a discussion on the same.

#### 4.1.1 Type of School, Number of Students and School Category.

The table below shows a summary of the background information on the type of school, number of students and school category.

**Table 4. 1: Type of school, number of students and school category**

		Frequency	Percentage %
Type of school	Mixed Day	20	74.1
	Mixed and Boarding	3	11.1
	Girls boarding	3	11.1
	Boys boarding	1	3.7
	Total	27	100
Number of students	Below 100	2	7.4
	101-300	16	59.3
	301-500	6	22.2
	Over 500	3	11.1
	Total	27	100
School category	County	9	33.3
	Sub-county	18	66.7
	Total	27	100

The study set out to establish the strategic planning practices and their influence on performance in public secondary schools. The researcher collected data from 27 out of 34 public secondary schools in Rarieda district because the other 7 schools are up coming and lack data on KCSE performance and strategic planning. It was established that majority of the schools are mixed day schools with a population of less than 300 students and most of them are sub-county schools as shown in the table above.

## 4.2 Strategic Planning Practices

Strategic planning practices are majorly formal and informal. The extent of informal or formal strategic planning was determined by the extent to which the schools engage in establishing strategic direction, carrying out environmental analysis, setting strategic objectives and goals, documenting a strategic plan and implementing the same.

### 4.2.1 Strategic Direction

Presence of vision, mission and core values, defines a strategic direction for a given firm but various schools engage in this exercise to various extents as indicated in table 4.2.

**Table 4. 2: Presence of Vision, Mission statement and Presence of core values**

	Presence of Vision		Presence of mission statement		Presence of core values	
	F	%	F	%	F	%
Yes	27	100	25	92.6	21	77.8
No	0	0	2	7.4	6	23.2
Total	27	100	27	100	27	100

100% of the public secondary schools in Rarieda district have a vision, 93% have a mission statement and 78% have core values as shown in table 4.2. It is thus evident that a great proportion of the schools have set their strategic direction. However, from the table below only 82% of the schools have documented their vision, 74% have documented their mission statement and only 63% have documented core values.

**Table 4. 3 Presence and documentation of Vision, Mission and Core Values**

	Presence		Documentation	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Vision	27	100	22	82
Mission	25	93	20	74
Core values	21	78	17	63

Evidently, some schools have vision, mission and core values set and displayed on notice board or open walls but not documented. Similarly, the extent of presence of a documented strategic plan is shown in the table 4.4.

**Table 4. 4: Presence of documented strategic plan**

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	20	74.1
No	7	25.9
Total	27	100



Schools having documented vision, mission, core values and a strategic plan can be said to practice formal strategic planning while those that lack the above are said to practice informal strategic planning. However, formality of a strategic plan is further defined by the extent to which the school carries out environmental analysis and involves stakeholders in the development of the strategic plan.

#### 4.2.2 Stakeholder Involvement

From table 4.5, only 22.2% of the schools involve all stakeholders to a large extent, 37% involve them to a moderate extent, and 18.5% to a less extent and 11% do not involve them at all. A mean of 2.8 implies that on average, stakeholders are involved to a moderate extent and a standard deviation of 1.0 implies that some schools may involve them to a less extent while others may involve them to a large extent. It is therefore clear that in spite of a high number of schools (74%) practicing strategic planning, the extent of stakeholder involvement is only moderate and not to a large extent as advocated for in strategic management discipline, as shown in table 4.5.

**Table 4. 5: Stakeholder involvement in development of strategic plan**

	Frequency	Percentage	Mean	Standard deviation
Not at all	3	11.1	2.83	1.049
Less Extent	5	18.5		
Moderate	10	37		
Large Extent	5	18.5		
Very large Extent	1	3.7		
Missing	3	11.1		
Total	27	100		

### 4.2.3 Environmental Analysis

Table 4.6 shows that, most schools (63%) carry out environmental analysis to a large extent. A mean of 3.79 indicates that on average the schools engage in environmental analysis to a moderate extent with a standard deviation of 1.179 which means that some schools may carry out the same to a large extent or to a large extent.

**Table 4. 6: Environmental analysis**

	Frequency	Percentage	mean	Standard deviation
Not at all	2	7.4	3.79	1.179
Less Extent	1	3.7		
Moderate	4	14.8		
Large Extent	10	37.0		
Very Large Extent	7	25.9		
Missing	3	11.1		
Total	27	100		

### 4.2.4 Implementation

Table 4.7 shows the frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation of implementation of strategic plans in the public secondary schools in Rarieda district. . About 63% of the schools implement their strategic plans to a moderate extent while 11% implement to a less extent and 15% do not implement at all. A mean of 2.96 implies that implementation is carried out to a moderate extent in most of the schools while a standard deviation of 1.197 implies that some schools may implement their strategic plans to a less

extent while others may implement to a large extent. However, the key observation is that none of the schools implement it to a very large extent as the case should be.

**Table 4.7: Implementation of strategic plans**

	Frequency	Percentage	mean	Standard deviation
Not at all	4	14.8	2.96	1.197
Less Extent	3	11.1		
Moderate	9	33.3		
Large Extent	6	22.2		
Very Large Extent	2	7.4		
Missing	3	11.1		
Total	27	100		

### 4.3 Influence of Strategic Planning on Performance

The performance variable (dependent variable) was measured using 6 indicators namely: academic performance, discipline and school culture, land and infrastructural development, stakeholder satisfaction, financial stability and excellence in non-academics. Similarly, the independent variable (strategic planning) was measured using a number of indicators namely: presence of vision, mission and core values, environmental analysis, stakeholder involvement, presence of objectives and goals, presence of strategic plan and implementation of strategic plan. The relationship between independent and dependent variables was then established using regression model analysis. Regression analysis yields the terms R, R-square, F, B and Sig. R is the correlation between the observed and the predicted value of the dependent variable, R-square gives the proportion of variance in the dependent variable explained by the independent variable s entered in

the model while a high F-ratio and a low sig- value indicates the significance of the independent variable in the model.

#### 4.3.1 Academic Performance

The academic performance as a dependent variable ( $Y_1$ ) was determined by obtaining the average for the KCSE mean scores achieved during the strategic planning period up to a maximum of 5 years ago. Its regression against the independent variable indicators outlined above yielded the results in the table 4.8.

**Table 4. 8: Academic performance and strategic planning (Multiple effects)**

R	R-Square	Frequency	B	Sig
0.54	0.254	0.794	7.288	0.590

An R- Square of 0.514 is the correlation between the observed value (the highest mean score achieved during strategic planning period) and the predicated value. The R-Square 0.254 implies that 25.4% of variance in the dependent variable (academic performance) can be predicted from the independent variables entered into the model. And F-Ratio of 0.794 and a sig value of 0.590 show the significance of the independent variable in the model and thus since the sig value is larger than the typical or conventional value of 0.05, then the independent variables used do not predict the dependent variable to a large extent. When all the independent variables are held constant then academic performance would be equivalent to the constant value of 7.288, (B Value). The table below illustrates the independent effects of each of the strategic planning indicators on academic performance.

**Table 4. 9: Academic performance and strategic planning ( Independent effects)**

	R	R-Square	B	Sig
Strategic direction	0.95	0.09	6.082	0.681
Environmental analysis	0.64	0.04	5.631	0.781
Stakeholder involvement	0.058	0.03	5.440	0.803
Strategic objectives	0.109	0.012	5.926	0.638
Strategic plan	0.087	0.008	5.774	0.708
Implementation	0.259	0.067	4.088	0.258

From table 4.9, setting strategic direction contributes 9% to the variance in academic performance while environmental analysis contributes 4%, stakeholder involvement 3%, setting strategic objectives 1.2%, having a strategic plan 0.8% and implementation 6.7%. The table also shows the variance (R-value) caused by each indicator in the observed and predicted values of the dependent variable (academic performance), the B-value which is performance when the independent variable is kept constant and the significance of each variable (sig-value).

### 4.3.2 Discipline and School Culture

**Table 4. 10: Discipline, school culture and strategic planning**

R	R-Square	B	F	Sig
0.703	0.494	4.861	1.831	0.149

The correlation between the observed and predicted value of discipline is 0.703. 49.4% of this variance can be explained by strategic planning while 50.6% cannot be explained by the strategic planning indicators used in this regression model. When the predictors are

kept constant then the level of discipline would be equal to the B-value (4.861). However a low F-value (1.831) and a high Sig-value of 0.149 implies that the predictor variables used in this regression are not statistically significant.

**Table 4. 11: Discipline, school culture and Strategic planning (independent effect)**

	R	R-Square	B	Sig
Strategic direction	0.267	0.071	3.596	0.412
Environmental analysis	0.321	0.103	2.390	0.126
Stakeholder involvement	0.364	0.133	2.418	0.080
Strategic objectives	0.177	0.031	3.100	0.683
Strategic plan	0.311	0.096	3.486	0.115
Implementation	0.526	0.276	2.244	0.008

Table 4.11 shows the independent effect of each of the strategic planning indicators on discipline and school culture. It can be observed that implementation is the most significant variable ( has lowest sig-value), such that when it is held constant the results in the dependent variable (B-value) is lowest (2.244) and it also yields the highest variance (R=0.526) in the dependent variable.

### 4.3.3 Land and Infrastructural Development

**Table 4. 12: Land and Infrastructure Development and strategic planning (multiple effect)**

R	R-Square	B	F	Sig
0.550	0.302	2.602	0.812	0.603

The strategic planning indicators used in this regression model contribute 30.2% to the dependent variable (land and infrastructural development). Therefore, of the 0.55 variance between the observed and the predicted values of the dependent variable, the predictors used can only explain 30.2% while the rest cannot be explained by strategic planning. The sig-value 0.603 and the F-value 0.812 imply that the independent variables used are not statistically significant.

**Table 4.13: Land and Infrastructure Development and strategic planning (Independent effect)**

	R	R-Square	B	Sig
Strategic direction	0.220	0.048	3.446	0.553
Environmental analysis	0.442	0.178	1.559	0.04
Stakeholder involvement	0.440	0.193	1.697	0.032
Strategic objectives	0.384	0.148	3.200	0.843
Strategic plan	0.262	0.069	3.314	0.863
Implementation	0.430	0.185	1.799	0.036

The results in the table 4.14 indicates that the most significant variables to determine land and infrastructure development are stakeholder involvement, implementation of strategic plan and environmental analysis respectively with sig-values 0.032,0.036 and 0.04 respectively.

#### 4.3.4 Stakeholder satisfaction

**Table 4. 14: Strategic Planning and Stakeholder Satisfaction.**

R	R-Square	B	F	Sig
0.788	0.621	3.922	3.076	0.029

The correlation between the observed and the predicated stakeholder satisfaction is 0.788. The independent variables used in this model can explain 62.1% of this variance but when there is no change in the independent variables, and then the level of stakeholder satisfaction would be observed to be 3.922. A high F-value of 3.076 and a low Sig-value of 0.029 indicates that the independent variables used in this regression model are statistically significant. However, the sig-values of each independent variable indicate that environmental analysis (0.04) and implementation (0.002) are the most statistically significant independent variable indicators in determining stakeholder satisfaction.

Independent effects of strategic planning practices on stakeholder satisfaction are shown in table 4.15.

**Table 4. 15: Strategic Planning and Stakeholder Satisfaction (Independent effect)**

	R	R-Square	B	Sig
Strategic direction	0.319	0.101	4.368	0.277
Environmental analysis	0.173	0.03	2.915	0.418
Stakeholder involvement	0.327	0.107	2.648	0.119
Strategic objectives	0.282	0.08	4.000	0.370
Strategic plan	0.282	0.08	4.000	0.154
Implementation	0.633	0.401	2.085	0.001

The most significant variables in achieving stakeholder satisfaction are implementation of the strategic plan and stakeholder involvement in the development of the strategic plan.



#### 4.3.5 Financial Stability

**Table 4. 16: Financial Stability and Strategic Planning (multiple effect)**

R	R-Square	B	F	Sig
0.655	0.43	0.636	1.412	0.269

The variance between the observed and predicated level of the dependent variable (financial stability) is 0.655. R-Square value of 0.43 indicates that the independent variables explain 43% of the variance. The B-value (0.636) is the constant level of performance in financial status when all the independent variables remain constant. The sig-value 0.269 indicates that the independent variable used in the regression is not the most statistically significant in determining the financial stability in a school.

**Table 4. 17: Financial Stability and Strategic Planning (independent effect)**

	R	R-Square	B	Sig
Strategic direction	0.129	0.017	2.808	0.816
Environmental analysis	0.381	0.145	2.390	0.067
Stakeholder involvement	0.520	0.271	2.306	0.009
Strategic objectives	0.524	0.274	2.500	0.021
Strategic plan	0.232	0.054	3.286	0.244
Implementation	0.466	0.217	2.424	0.022

Table 4.17 shows the independent effects of the strategic planning practices on financial stability of a school. It is evident that stakeholder involvement, setting strategic

objectives informed by environmental analysis and implementation are the most significant independent variables in determining the financial stance of a school. The highest variance in the observed and predicted values of financial performance is caused by strategic objectives based on environmental analysis.

#### 4.3.6 Non – Academics

**Table 4. 18: Non-Academics and Strategic Planning (Multiple effect)**

R	R-Square	B	F	Sig
0.921	0.647	2.670	10.415	0.000

R-Value 0.921 is the variance between the observed and the predicted performance in non- academics implying that the variables used are the most statistically significant in determining non-academics. The independent variables employed in this regression model can explain 64.7% of the variance but when they are held constant then the performance would be observed to be equivalent to the B-value, 2.670. A high F-Value of 10.415 and a very low sig-value of 0.000 imply that the independent performance in non-academics. Setting goals, having a strategic plan, involving stakeholders and implementing the strategic plan have sig-value 0.000 indicating that they are the most statistically significant independent variable indicators in determining performance in non-academics.

The table below indicates that implementation is the most significant aspect of strategic planning practice in ensuring good performance in non-academic activities

**Table 4. 19: Non-Academics and Strategic Planning (Independent effect)**

	R	R-Square	B	Sig
Strategic direction	0.360	0.13	4.409	0.189
Environmental analysis	0.215	0.046	2.441	0.313
Stakeholder involvement	0.015	0.021	3.046	0.945
Strategic objectives	0.216	0.047	3.900	0.563
Strategic plan	0.365	0.133	4.029	0.061
Implementation	0.434	0.188	2.088	0.034

#### **4.4 Discussion**

The data analysis above has established that the majority of the public secondary schools in Rarieda district are mixed day schools with a population of less than 300 students and are mainly sub-county schools.

In addition, the study established 4 key findings. First, most of the schools (74%) practice formal strategic planning while 26% practice informal strategic planning. Secondly, the extent of stakeholder involvement and environmental analysis during strategic planning is only moderate. Thirdly, the extent of implementation of the strategic plans is only moderate. The fourth finding is that strategic planning is positively correlated with performance although the extent of contribution to each of the performance indicators (academic, discipline, non-academics, infrastructure, stakeholder satisfaction, financial stability) is different. Similarly, each indicator of strategic planning (strategic direction, stakeholder involvement, environmental analysis, strategic objectives, strategic choices and implementation), contribute to various extents to each of the performance indicators above.

These findings are largely in agreement with the theories of strategic management discipline including open systems theory, contingency theory, resource-based theory, IOE theory among others. For instance, it's evident that schools like other organizations are open systems in continuous evolution and interaction and also operate in a dynamic, complex and turbulent environment that is highly competitive (Albanese and Van Fleet, 1983) This has necessitated the embrace of strategic planning in order to set strategic direction, define competitive moves, satisfy stakeholders, compete successfully and achieve targeted levels of performance (Thompson et al 2007). This is evident from the high number of schools striving to conform to the MoE's requirement that each school should draft a strategic plan in tandem with its current 2012 – 2017 strategic plan. This is based on the argument that schools like any other organization in Kenya struggle with environmental challenges thus need to develop competitive advantage against their competitors in order to survive.

The findings of this study are also in agreement with findings from other studies. For instance similar to the study by Gode (2009) in Kisumu East District, it established that strategic planning is positively correlated with performance. Similarly, the extent of strategy implementation which is a challenge to the impact it has on performance was also reported by Akinyi (2008) studying the challenges facing private secondary schools in implementation of strategic plans in Kisumu West District.

This study has therefore contributed to the body of knowledge and to theory building. For example, it affirms that organizations indeed need to engage in strategic planning because it is positively correlated to performance and its a tool to combat the ever changing internal environment and the turbulent external environment and also partly because a

strategic plan can be made contingent to an organization's resources and other organizational factors like size, structure and leadership. The findings have helped to narrow the gap on controversy concerning influence of strategic planning on performance.

The findings of this study have also provided significant information to policy developers. For instance, the MoE is hereby informed of the extent of strategic planning in public secondary schools in Rarieda District and also the extent of implementation of the same. It can therefore put the appropriate policies and remedies in place to enhance the practice through its implementers such as NESSP and Quality Assurance Officers. Similarly, the school management has been furnished with information on the limitations in the development and implementation of strategic plans leading to dismal contribution to performance. They can henceforth purpose to improve on the processes of strategy development (especially stakeholder involvement and environmental analysis) and also step up implementation efforts to realize the full potential of strategic plan

## **CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents the summary of the findings of this study, conclusion and recommendations.

### **5.2 Summary**

The researcher targeted 34 public secondary schools in Rarieda district but obtained responses from 27 schools since the other schools (7) are upcoming and have not commenced undertaking KCSE thus lack data on academic results and strategic planning. Based on the data collected and analyzed from the 27 schools, the researcher established that majority of the public secondary schools are mixed day schools (74%), with 67% of the schools having a population of less than 300 students each and that 67% of the schools are sub-county schools with no national schools in the district.

There are two key findings in this study based on the study objectives. First, majority of the schools (73%) practice formal strategic planning and secondly, strategic planning is positively correlated to performance. The other important finding is that although strategic planning is positively correlated to performance, it is not the sole contributor to performance. Other significant findings include the observation that there is low level stakeholder involvement in development of strategic plans, only moderate environmental analysis during strategic planning process and implementation levels are only moderate.

The study also established that each of the strategic planning practices employed have varied contribution to the variance observed in each of the indicators of performance. For instance to determine academic performance in a school, establishing strategic direction

contributes 9%, environmental analysis 4%, stakeholder involvement 3%, setting strategic objectives 1.2%, strategic choices 0.8% and implementation 6.7%. Cumulatively, strategic planning can explain about 25% of the variance in the dependent variable (academic performance). Similarly each of the strategic planning indicators was observed to contribute to various extents to each of the performance indicators as illustrated in data analysis in chapter 4 above.

### **5.3 Conclusion**

One of the key findings established by the researcher is that most of the public secondary schools in Rarieda District practice formal strategic planning and that strategic planning is positively correlated to performance. It is thus a surmise to say that strategic planning is an inevitable practice in today's businesses (Schools) and must be enhanced. This is more so because it is positively correlated to each performance indicator in the school set up making it a significant tool in creating competitive advantage since schools struggle with many challenges such as attracting and retaining the best students, competing with other public and private secondary schools, improving performance to earn stakeholder satisfaction among others.

It could also be argued that the large extent of formal strategic planning observed is attributed to the MoE policy requiring every school to formulate a strategic plan in the overall Government's endeavor to improve quality of education and achieve the MDGs and the vision 2030. It could also be due to the dynamism and complexity in the environment presenting numerous opportunities and threats to schools hence the need to determine individual strength and weaknesses and channel the scarce resources in

meaningful strategies to develop competitive advantage against competitors in the education industry.

The other key finding of the study was that strategic planning is positively correlated to performance in public secondary schools in Rarieda. This finding is supported by other findings of earlier studies as indicated in section 4.4 above. This further establishes strategic planning to be an inevitable management tool. However, in spite of the finding that strategic planning is positively correlated to performance, it is also noted that strategic planning is not the sole contributor to performance. For instance, it was established that strategic planning can only explain 25.4% of academic performance, 49.4% of discipline and school culture, 30.2% of land and infrastructure development, 62.1% of stakeholder satisfaction, 64.7% of non-academic performance and only 43% of financial stability. Its noteworthy that the above percentages represent regression variances (variance in dependent variable explained by strategic planning) while the remaining percentage is residual variance (proportion that cannot be explained by strategic planning) which can be accounted for by the other organizational factors.

Finally, it is also evident that for a strategic plan to have a meaningful impact on performance, it should be well developed and implemented to a very large extent. However, it was established that stakeholder involvement in the development of strategic plans and environmental analysis are only carried out to a moderate extent. Similarly, implementation of strategic plan is only moderate and this could possibly explain why its impact on performance is reportedly low. Theory stipulates that implementation is the cornerstone in strategic planning because brilliantly formulated strategic plans that are not implemented do not add any value to a firm.



## **5.4 Recommendations for Policy and Practice**

It was established that majority of the schools practice formal strategic planning. However, 17% practice informal strategic planning and 9% do not practice strategic planning at all. Its recommended that all public secondary schools should engage in formal strategic planning because not only is it a policy but also its ability to help establish strategic direction and align resources to meaningful strategies to develop competitive advantage and compete successfully cannot not be overemphasized.

Secondly, it was established that each aspect of strategic planning has a different effect on performance. Management should thus take keen interest in each of the aspects of strategic planning in order to ensure that the accumulative and multiple effects are enhanced and harnessed in the entire strategic planning practice. For instance, the analysis established that implementation is the most significant aspect of strategic planning to all the dependent variable indicators but is only carried out to a moderate extent. The management should therefore invest heavily to ensure that the strategic choices in the strategic plan are implemented to the later.

Similarly, stakeholder involvement was established to be significant to all the other performance indicators with only little effect to academic performance. Management is thus compelled to ensure intensive stakeholder involvement in the endeavor to excel in discipline, finances, stakeholder satisfaction and other non-academic activities besides their academic excellence. This is because stakeholder involvement creates unity of purpose and ownership of the whole process and fosters the implementation process leading to multiplicative effect of strategic planning.

Environmental analysis was also observed to be consistently significant to most of the performance indicators especially in establishing financial stability and improving land and infrastructure which are fundamental in enhancing other aspects of performance such as stakeholder satisfaction and academic performance. Management should therefore endeavor to carry out elaborate and extensive environmental analysis to ensure formulation of acceptable, economical and rewarding strategies.

The policy developers should organize for workshops and seminars to train and sensitize management on importance of stakeholder involvement in development of strategic plan, significance of intensive environmental analysis during strategic planning and the importance of striving to implement the agreed upon strategies. Strategic planning requires top management commitment to be able to channel resources into strategy implementation in order to realize the impact of strategic planning on performance otherwise; brilliantly formulated strategies that are not implemented do not add any value to a firm.

Finally, based on the findings of this study, the researcher recommends that future studies should endeavor to find out the challenges of strategy implementation, significance of stakeholder involvement in strategic planning, significance of environmental analysis during strategic planning, challenges of strategy implementation and the possible remedies to improve the percentage contribution of strategic performance besides the other performance indicators.

## **5.5 Limitations of the Study**

The limitations in this study are basically conceptual, contextual and methodological. First and foremost this study focuses on strategic planning and organizational performance. The findings of this study can only be interpreted within the above concepts such that generalization of strategic management concepts in the interpretation of the findings of this study would yield erratic conclusions. For instance the study did not encompass other concepts such as corporate governance, organizational behavior and other organizational factors that would otherwise vary the findings of impact of strategic planning and performance. Similarly, the study was confined to a school set in which organizational performance is measured in terms of grades in national examinations and performance in other co-curricular and extra-curricular activities as opposed to commercial organizations that measure performance using financial indicators like gross and net profit.

Secondly, the research was carried out in public secondary schools in Rarieda district in the year 2012-2013. The findings of this study are thus within this confines such that another similar study in a different district in Kenya, or in Rarieda district but studying private secondary schools or studying public secondary schools but at a different period in time is likely to yield different results.

Finally, the researcher used cross-sectional descriptive survey design and structured questionnaires as instruments. The structured contained closed ended items that measure objective responses only. As such, the subjective opinions of respondents were not captured. Its thus evident that a similar research employing the same design but using a different research instrument like interview schedule is likely to put forth different

findings. Similarly, a similarly research employing a different research design would yield different results.

## **5.6 Suggestions for Future Research**

Future research should endeavor to focus on other concepts of strategic management that affect organizational performance. For instance, a research on governance or organizational behavior and performance of public secondary schools would shed more light on performance in public secondary schools. Similarly, such concepts determine the extent of formal strategic planning in an organization as well as the extent of implementation of strategic plans. Such studies in addition to the findings in this study can help determine whether the whole concept of strategic planning and strategic management in general is relevant in public secondary schools.

Secondly, there is also need to conduct a similar study in private secondary schools in Rarieda district as well as in public secondary schools in other districts in Kenya. This would enable a comparison of the findings to other past findings from similar studies to establish a common stand on the relationship between strategic planning and performance in both private and public secondary schools in Kenya which would in turn justify the energy, time and financial resource invested in the strategic planning practice.

Finally, future researchers should consider conducting a similar research using different methodological approach. For instance use of open ended questionnaires or interview schedules to capture the respondents' subjective feelings and responses or alternatively employ a different research design.

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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX I: INTRODUCTION LETTER

UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI,  
SCHOOL OF BUSINESS,  
P.O BOX 30197-000100,  
NAIROBI.

JULY 2013.

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Dear Sir/Madam,

#### RE: INTRODUCTION LETTER

Kindly consider this letter a humble request to participate in this research. Am a master's student at the University of Nairobi studying, "strategic planning and performance in public secondary schools in Rarieda District."

Your school has been selected as one of the respondents in this research. I therefore kindly ask for your assistance in collecting information by completing the questionnaire herewith attached as honestly as possible

The responses and all information you provide will be purely for academic purposes and will be treated with utmost confidentiality. Your assistance and cooperation will be highly appreciated and the final report availed to you on request.

Thank you in advance.

Your's faithfully,

Okwako A. Damary

MBA student

University of Nairobi.

cc. Dr. Machuki Vincent

Supervisor.

## APPENDIX II: UNIVERSITY LETTER OF INTRODUCTION



# UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI

## SCHOOL OF BUSINESS

### KISUMU CAMPUS

Telegrams: "Varsity" Nairobi  
Fax: 4181650  
Kisumu, Kenya  
Telex: 22095Varsity  
Mobile: 0720348080  
Email: [ajaleha@uonbi.ac.ke](mailto:ajaleha@uonbi.ac.ke)

P.O Box 19134-40123  
Kisumu, Kenya

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Date: 20<sup>th</sup> September, 2013.

### TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

The bearer of this letter Mrs. Damary Awinja Okwako.

REGISTRATION NO: D61/64643/2011

The above named student is in the Master of Business Administration degree program. As part of requirements for the course, she is expected to carry out a study on **"Strategic planning and performance in Public Secondary Schools in Rarienda District, Kenya"**

She has identified your organization for that purpose. This is to kindly request your assistance to enable her complete the study.

The exercise is strictly for academic purposes and a copy of the final paper will be availed to your organization on request.

Your assistance will be greatly appreciated.

Thanking you in advance.

Sincerely, **CO-ORDINATOR**

*Alex Jaleha*  
20 SEP 2013  
**MR. ALEX JALEHA**  
**COORDINATOR, SOB, KISUMU CAMPUS**  
KISUMU CAMPUS  
UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI  
CC: THE COPY OF NAIROBI

ISO 9001:2008

*The Fountain of Knowledge*  
*Providing leadership in academic excellence*

### **APPENDIX III: LIST OF SCHOOLS TO BE VISITED**

Ramba Boys

Lwak Girls

Chianda Boys

Ndigwa mixed

Kitambo mixed

Raliew mixed

Nyakongo Girls

Kandaria

St. augustines Gagra mixed

Okela mixed

Nyagoko mixed

D.O Makasembo mixed

Rarieda mixed

Majango mixed

St. sylvestor Madiany Girls

Wera mixed

Oboch mixed

Nyamasore mixed

Saradidi mixed

Nyabera mixed

Ramogi Achieng Oneko mixed

Migowa mixed

Mirando mixed

Mahaya mixed

Wangarot mixed

Masala mixed

Rachar mixed

Naya mixed

## APPENDIX IV: RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE

This questionnaire consists of three sections namely: section A - background information, section B - strategic planning practices and section C – performance. The responses in this questionnaire are exclusively for academic purposes. Kindly fill it as honestly as possible by ticking according to the key provided.

### SECTION A: BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1. Name of the school \_\_\_\_\_

2. Job title of respondent \_\_\_\_\_

3. In what category is your school? (please tick appropriately)

a) National ( ) b) County ( ) c) Sub-county ( )

4. How many students does your school have?( please tick appropriately)

Below 100 ( ) 101-300 ( ) 301-500 ( ) over 500 ( )

In what category is your school?

a) Day school ( ) b) boarding school ( ) c) mixed ( ) d) Girl's school e) Boy's school

### SECTION B: STRATEGIC PLANNING PRACTICES

1. Does your school have a vision?

Yes ( ) No ( )

2. If yes in (1) above, how was it developed?

By an expert ( ) Strategic planning team ( )

By the principal ( ) consultant and selected teachers ( )

3. If yes in (1) above, how is it communicated to stakeholders?

i) Notice board ( )

ii) School gate ( )

iii) Internet ( )

iv) Strategic plan ( )

v) Newsletter ( )

4. If yes in (1) above, is it documented?

Yes ( )

No ( )

5. Does your school have a mission statement?

Yes ( )

No ( )

6. If yes in (1) above, how was it developed?

By an expert ( )

Strategic planning team ( )

By the principal ( )

consultant and selected teachers ( )

7. If yes in (1) above, how is it communicated to the school's stakeholders? Tick more than one if applicable.

i) Notice board ( )

ii) School gate ( )

iii) Internet ( )

iv) Strategic plan ( )

v) Newsletter ( )

8. If yes in (1) above, is it documented?

Yes ( ) No ( )

9. Do you have school core values?

Yes ( ) No ( )

10. If yes in (9) above, how are they developed?

By an expert ( ) Strategic planning team ( )

By the principal ( ) consultant and selected teachers ( )

11. If yes in (9) above, how are they communicated to the stakeholders?

i) Notice board ( )

ii) School gate ( )

iii) Internet ( )

12. If yes in (9) above, are they documented?

Yes ( ) No ( )

13. Has your school set goals that it focuses to achieve (short term and long term)?

Yes ( ) No ( )

14. If yes in (13 above), are they documented?

Yes ( ) No ( )

15. Does your school have a Strategic Plan?

Yes ( ) No ( )

16. Since when did your school commence strategic planning?

Last year ( )

2 years ago ( )

3 years ago ( )

4 years ago ( )

More than 5 years ago ( )

17. Using a scale of 1-5 from the key: 1- not at all, 2- less extent, 3- moderate extent, 4- large extent, 5- very large extent, indicate the extent to which the following stakeholders are involved in the strategic planning process:

	1	2	3	4	5
Experts					
Principal					
Teachers					
Support staff					
parents					
Students					
BOM members					
MoE					
The community					
School suppliers					
Supporting NGOs and CBOs					



18. Using the same scale as in (17) above, tick to indicate the extent to which you carry out the following activities during strategic planning.

	1	2	3	4	5
Resource analysis					
Analysis of leadership skills and abilities					
Needs assessment					
Problem analysis					
Analysis of core competencies					
Analysis of adequacy of staff members					
Analysis of external environment e.g MoE policy, CBO, NGO, CDF and community support.					

19. Have you set school objectives?v

Yes ( ) No ( )

20. If yes in (19) above, are they informed by the analysis in (16) above?

Yes ( ) No ( )

21. If yes in (19) above, are they documented?

Yes ( ) No ( )

22. In this question, tick to indicate the extent to which the strategic plan is implemented in your school.

	Not at all	Less extent	Moderate extent	Large extent	Very large extent
An action plan is developed and adhered to.					
Timelines are set and met					
Objectives are set and met					
Changes established are implemented					

**SECTION C: PERFORMANCE**

1. For the last how many years has your school undertaken KCSE exams?

One year ( )

2 to 5 year ( )

5 to 10years ( )

More than 10 years ( )

2. What is the highest mean score ever attained?.....

3. In which year was the above mean achieved?.....

4. Record the school's mean score in the last 5 years:

YEAR	2012	2011	2010	2009	2008
KCSE MEAN SCORE					

5. Does your school participate in co- curricular activities?

Yes ( )

No ( )

6. If yes in (5) above, tick to indicate the highest level ever attained in each of the following sports:

	Zonal	Sub- County	County	Regional	National	Not participated
Football						
Netball						
Volleyball						
Music Festivals						
Drama						
Athletics						

7. In a scale of 1-5 shown below indicate the extent to which you rate the following:

1- Not at all, 2-Less extent, 3- Moderate extent, 4- Large extent, 5- Very large extent.

	1	2	3	4	5
Student truancy					
Student response and adherence to instruction					
Student drop-out rates					
Student respect to staff					
Student self-drive					
School reward or motivation system					
Positive reading culture among students					
Appraisal system					

8. Using the scale in (7) above, tick to indicate the extent to which the school has achieved the following within the last 5 years.

	1	2	3	4	5
Acquisition of more school land					
Constructing tuition blocks					
Constructing administration blocks, ICT room or laboratory					
Constructing sanitation and ablution blocks or toilets					
Constructing pavements, store rooms, fence etc					
Water system development					
Acquisition of main electricity					
Acquisition of school bus or van					

9. By ticking, indicate the extent to which you rate the following attributes in your school within the last 5 years;

	Not at all	Less extent	Moderate extent	Large extent	Very large extent
Increased enrollment rates					
Increased support by PTA					
Increased responsiveness by BOM					
Increased partnership with NGOs and CBOs					
Increased support by community and sponsors					
Commitment and dedication of staff					

10. Tick in the table below to indicate the extent to which you rate the following in your school;

	1	2	3	4	5
School fee payment level					
Presence of income generating activities					
Sponsorship from CDF and government bursaries					
Sponsorship from NGOs and other sponsors					