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Uwambajimana Odette & Dr. Hesbon Opiyo Andala

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Relationship between School Strategic Planning and Students' Academic Performance of Secondary Schools in Rwanda

¹*Uwambajimana Odette & ²Dr. Hesbon Opiyo Andala

¹Post graduate student, Mount Kenya University, Rwanda

²Lecturer and research coordinator, school of education, Mount Kenya University, Rwanda

*Email of the corresponding Author: uwambajimanaodette5@gmail.com

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Abstract

Effective school planning requires having strategies that enhance the students' academic performance as well as school performance. The current study sought to determine the relationship between school strategic planning and students' academic performance of Secondary Schools in Rusizi District in Rwanda. Correlation research design was employed. The target population was 988. From this population, simple random sampling and convenient sampling techniques were used to get 91 respondents. Questionnaires were used to collect the data. IBM SPSS version 23 assisted in management of quantitative data. The findings revealed that the effectiveness of strategic planning is explained by effective communication considering the mean of 2.96, vision considering the mean of 2.97, and mission considering the mean of 2.90. It was also noted that academic performance of students in selected secondary schools was explained by the following: well performance of students during mock exams considering the mean of 2.92, existence of competition character among students considering the mean of 2.76, low level of absenteeism in classes considering the mean of 2.89, and the existence of the discipline among students considering the mean of 2.83. The findings revealed that strategic planning practices like stakeholders' involvement and communication have positive and significant relationship with the academic performance. This was explained by ($r=0.298$, $p=0.006$) for stakeholders' involvement and academic performance and ($r=0.084$, $p=0.028$). Hence, the study recommends that secondary schools in Rusizi District should prepare strategic plans that involve all stakeholders since their ideas could be constructive and provide update on the progress in the implementation of strategic plans. The schools should make clear about the vision of strategic planning where this may facilitate the activities related to monitoring and evaluation of the action plan. There is the need to provide training and other capacity building facilities in order increase the abilities in preparing strategic plans.

Keywords: School, students, strategic planning, academic performance and secondary school.

1.0 Introduction

Strategic planning is a concept that has historical roots in the USA. Historical data suggests that formal strategic planning was adopted in American firms in the 1960s as well as in other developed states. Currently, the strategic planning practice has become prominent among business and organizations, both private and public, and most especially in developing states. The importance of strategic planning has been emphasized by numerous scholars among them Arasa and K'Obonyo (2012) who linked strategic planning with effective organization performance. Strategic planning has also been linked with improved employee performance and ability of organizations to achieve their objectives and missions. Globally, the integration of personnel practices into strategic planning enhances the achievement of goals and objectives in organizations (Kochhar, 2001). According to Antikainen (2008), performance is essential when determining the competitiveness of organizations. The ability of an organization to improve its performance is pegged on the ability to maximize profits by enhancing the production process instead of only reducing costs (Ramírez & Nembhard, 2004). The application of strategic planning within the school environment in China is provided within a framework that follows four processes including; conducting comprehensive needs assessment, management of the inquiry process, designing of school wide program, and evaluation of programs (Cook, 2006).

Europe has made significant improvements in enhancing school development planning amid the challenges presented technological roles in planning education and attitudes associated with planning education and practice (Deal and Peterson, 2008). Strategic management literature has documented the effective role played by strategic management in enhancing the performance of organizations (Mitchelmore and Rowley, 2013). Scholars suggest that better organizational performance is achieved through proper strategic planning (Signhvi, 2000; Miller and Cardinal, 1994; Wang, Walker and Redmond, 2007). Previous researchers have also examined the relationship between strategic planning and organizational performance. The debate over whether strategic planning promotes school performance is still going on. Bell (2002), for example, focused on English schools in the United Kingdom to see if strategic planning had any impact on school management or if it meant nothing. Strategic planning deals with a number of components including vision setting for an organization, external environment scanning, assessment of internal capabilities, goal setting, and putting in place performance measures.

The strategic planning process, according to Johnson et al (2008) comprises four stages: environmental analysis, strategy creation, execution, and assessment and control. Strategic planning, on the other hand, is concerned with factors such as defining the organization's mission, determining competitive advantage, establishing boundaries, selecting important areas, and estimating budgets (Bruce, 2000). Environmental analysis is an important aspect of the strategic planning process because it ensures that the best plans are generated based on a complete grasp of the firm's current organizational conditions and competitive external environment (Bruce, 2000). Making strategic judgments or choices based on the firm's strategic concerns and available strategic options is what strategy formulation includes (Lynch, 2009). By defining a mission and vision, establishing policies, goals, and objectives, and choosing how to attain those goals, strategic planning aims to create strategic decisions or choices.

In Africa like in Nigeria and Ghana, school development promotion initiatives involve the assessment of the current nature of school development plans and documenting relevant information, carrying out special programs to enhance the general rate of the development, and improving coordination in numerous stages of the planning process. However, Lawrence (2001) suggested that there existed challenges in the implementation of the strategic plans. In Zambia, studies suggest that teachers had adopted strategic plans and were effectively implementing the plans. However, the implementation was challenged by the inadequate accessibility of instructing and learning materials and hence underlining the importance of resource allocation in implementing strategic plans (William & Chansa, 2016). Regionally, the Kenyan education sector is fundamental to the achievement of the government's economic and social agenda through the provision of a talented workforce, creating a humanized society and embracing dynamic citizenship (Basic Education Act, 2013). Public secondary education in the country is structured in a way that equips learners with knowledge, values, and skills that enable them compete in getting enrolled for professional courses and colleges, Birgen, (2007). Numerous scholars have studied the strategic nature of the education system Kitonga, (2013); Mukokho, (2010).

In Rwanda, Government after the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi embarked on strengthening education sector through the formulation of the new Education Sector Strategic Plan (ESSP) 2013/14-2017/18, an update of the previous planned and was anchored on aligning plans for the education sector with the Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy (EDPRS 2). Rwanda depends on the education sector for its future growth and development, and hence the strategic outlook on how to enhance the quality of education provided to the masses. The ESSP documents information that informs and guides the populations regarding the development of education sector in the next five years. Despite being ambitious, the plan aims at addressing challenges and achieving results aimed at ensuring that the school-going population is equipped with satisfactory abilities and information with a specific end goal to end up profitable individuals from the economy in the near future. Locally, the Education Sector Strategic Plan emphasizes on the importance of equitable access to education and the quality of education provided by numerous institutions in the country. The plan is anchored on the national priority of ensuring that all children attend the twelve-year basic education regardless of their social and economic backgrounds (MINEDUC, 2015). The Ministry of Education is supported by three fundamental goals that look forth to propel its achievement of its mission in facilitating the development of human capital keeping in mind the end goal to upgrade the social and monetary improvement of the nation.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

In the past, schools have mainly been concerned with operational planning rather than strategic planning. As such those in charge of managing schools are interested in operational efficiency and effectiveness. As a result, there was lack of strategic thinking at higher levels of leadership. It is all mechanical planning method. However, as the societies have become more dynamic, many schools have already embarked on formulating strategic plans. Such an undertaking involves various stakeholders in the school's set-up. A strategic plan helps the various work units within an organization to align themselves with common goals (Pearce, 2009). In Rwanda school strategic planning is considered as a key to all schools if the country must succeed in its efforts (MINEDUC, 2015). The school should meet the expectations of the stakeholders. Strategic planning helps school managers to acknowledge the future, spot significant trends and tendencies, and the need

to respond to them skillfully, adapt, modify systems and structures so as to tackle new challenges and circumstances. The ESSP corresponds with the second EDPRS, covering the period 2013/14 to 2017/18 (MINEDUC, 2013). Due to the fact that strategic planning practices are indispensable for successful attainment of school/institutional goals, some schools show some setbacks and schools fail to meet with the government goals. Hence this study aimed to show relationship between strategic planning and students' performance in secondary schools in Rusizi District in Rwanda.

1.2 Research Objective

The research objective of the study was to determine the relationship between school strategic planning and students' academic performance of secondary schools in Rusizi, Rwanda.

2.0 Literature Review

2.1 Strategic Planning practices

Strategic planning is a concept that has a number of definitions. The lack of a universally accepted definition of strategic planning is because the different points of view that different writers view it Quinn, (1980). Strategic planning involves making of strategic choices, which place the business at a better competitive advantage against the competitors, Johnson, Scholes & Whittington, (2008). This further makes clear, the definition of strategic planning as a combination of moves and approaches that business managers use to make the business more attractive to the customers and compete well against competitors, which eventually drives it to achieve the set targets. A strategic plan, according to Thompson et al (2007), is a deliberate previous organization technique to achieve a certain aim. A technique for establishing the purpose, vision, values, objectives, targets, tasks and duties, events, and people responsible for moving an organization or institution from its current state to a desired future state is known as strategic planning (Chiuri and Kiumi, 2005). Another definition of strategic management is that it is a management function applied by top managers to make decisions, which are in line with the mission and vision of an association and additionally the philosophy that the organization is founded upon Sababu, (2007). Simply put, strategic planning is a process that focuses on an organization's long-term goals and bases its decisions on strategic thoughts which are turned into strategic actions with the sole aim being the achievement of the organization's goals (Bruce and Longdon, 2000).

The origin of strategic planning in education can be traced back in the mid-1980s. However, this does not mean that because it was not used in publications, it was not being used. After appearing in publications for the first time around 1984, there was massive uptake of the concept and by 1987, an expected five hundred schools in America were utilizing some type of vital arranging, Conley, (1992). The American Association of School Administrators (ASSA) and the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD) were the two organizations that played the biggest part in promoting strategic planning as an academic discipline through publishing and distribution of strategic planning handbooks, key among them being Strategic Planning for America's Schools, (1988). Under the auspices of the ASSA and ASCD, McCune and Cook organized workshops and training for strategic planning educators across the country, with Cook graduating nearly 400 Certified Strategic Planners from his ASSA-endorsed program. The ASCD's specialist journal, Instructive Leadership, dedicated its April 1991 issue to important arranging. At present, information from the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) more than 300

titles composed since 1989 is under the subject of vital arranging. This tends to vital arranging in various instructive gatherings, for example, schools, libraries, and colleges.

The ascent in the requirement for vital arranging has been occasioned to a large extent by the constraints in resources and increasing demand for accountability by governments and donor agencies, who insist on value for the resources spent (Welsh, 2000). School districts that are faced with these challenges have found it necessary to interpret the regulations and policies before developing action plans within which the policies can be implemented. The solutions to those challenges involve definite diagrams for frameworks change which distinguishes execution pointers and benchmarks. To achieve positive academic and behavioral changes, there is a need for professional collaboration (Quinn, 2000). Environmental analysis, strategy design, execution, and assessment and control are the four steps of the strategic management process (Johnson, 2000). Strategic planning, on the other hand, comprises defining the association's objective, selecting an appropriate position, establishing constraints, identifying need zones, and budgeting (Bruce and Longdon, 2000).

Environmental analysis is an important part of the strategic planning process, according to Barney (2007), Bruce and Longdon (2000), because it ensures the formulation of correct strategies based on a thorough understanding of current organizational conditions and the firm's competitive external environment. Strategy formulation entails making strategic decisions or choices based on the firm's strategic issues and accessible strategic possibilities. By defining a mission and vision, establishing policies, goals, and objectives, and choosing how to attain those goals, strategic planning aims to create strategic decisions or choices. The reason why organizations apply strategic planning in their operations is that it enables them plan for the future by being able to focus ahead and make predictions of events that are likely to occur in the future. This enables them to effectively deal with the external business environment, eventually improving the organizations' performance (Cole, 2004).

The difference between performance and strategic planning is that the goal is the end result that the organization seeks to achieve while strategic planning is the actions that are aimed at the achievement of these goals (Yabs, 2007) records that strategic planning has extended popularity since the 1960s. This seems to be due to its relative value in able to diagnose the present competitive and rapidly changing economic environment, as well as enabling adequate resource allocation to assist the firm in achieving its short- and long-term goals, which determine the firm's performance level in the markets and industries in which it operates (Barney, 2007). Two aspects of strategic planning are crucial as far as improvement of the execution of the nation's biggest school locale is concerned. The first of these perspectives is ability. Recruitment and retention of the best quality human capital in the form of highly qualified academic staff in the nation's schools is one of the key objectives of strategic management. There is need to have top talent in all education levels, from the senior management to the teachers. Therefore, emphasis should be put on strategies that enable recruitment, placement, development as well as retention of the best talent in the school context (Barrington, 1997).

The second viewpoint is strategic management. It isn't sufficient to simply have top ability in educational institutions. There is a need to further manage the top talent in such a way that enables them to achieve the goals that the organization has set Childress, Stacey, Elmore, and Grossman,

(2006). What this means therefore, is that strategic management involves the administration of ability and human capital in state-funded instruction. Key administration plays all personnel management functions including recruitment, screening, selection, induction, professional development evaluation as well as appraisal. The main goal of strategic management is to restructure the whole human capital system so that there is acquisition of top talent that talent is deliberately put and circulated in the different jobs that are there in the school. This talent also needs to be retained over time, based on the effectiveness and performance of the teachers (Alutto and Belasco, 2003).

2.2 Strategic Planning Process

There are four main stages in the strategic management process. The steps involved are environmental analysis, strategy development, strategy implementation, and lastly evaluation and control (Johnson *et al.*, 2008). On the other hand, depending on the context, topic, or strategic process itself, practitioners place differing levels of emphasis on different stages. First and foremost, management must set a mission, vision, and objectives upon which effective strategies can be built Sababu, (2007). Environmental analysis is also important since it guarantees that policies are developed with a complete grasp of both the external and internal environments. Longdon and Bruce (2000). Strategy formulation is the second and most important stage of strategic planning. It expands on the previous stage, which involves identifying strategic concerns, assessing opportunities, risks, and constraints, and weighing strategic options to determine the optimal course of action. Although strategic planning concludes with strategic decisions, the strategic management process focuses on the implementation stage since well-crafted plans that are not implemented bring no value to the company.

The process of putting strategies, plans, and policies into action is known as implementation. This is done through the advancement of projects, spending plans, and strategies (Wheelen and Hunger (2008). Lastly, evaluation and control seek to ensure that an organization achieves its goals through comparison of performance and the results desired, while at the same time giving indication of performance gaps as well as feedback so as to facilitate correct action by the management (Yabs 2007). Depending on the size of the business, multiple techniques to strategic planning are used. Strategic planning can be formal, semi-formal, or casual in some businesses. According to Carter *et al.* (2006), small businesses rarely engage in formal strategic planning because the entrepreneur relies on unexpected and essentially guesswork methods to generate resources and sales.

According to Foster, while strategy formulation and planning in small enterprises is opportunistic and informal, strategic management is critical in both small and large businesses (1993). Formality is a measure of how fully a strategy is recorded, communicated, and how much time is spent constructing it, as well as the degree of participant participation and involvement, process requirements, resources, and responsibilities (Gode, 2009). Strategic planning became intentional and methodical in the 1960s, according to Ansoff (1990). A formal strategic planning system, according to Johnson *et al.* (2007), can lead to a misunderstanding of the planning purpose, design challenges, and the strategic planning system failing to establish ownership of the strategic plan, resulting in a loss of innovativeness and authenticity.

2.2.1 Vision and School Performance

School districts in America have the potential to contribute to either success or failure of the learning process. However, despite being a central component in the development of education, there is little understanding of school districts as a key pillar of the nation's public education infrastructure. School districts are often seen as just middlemen in the education business, whose function is to pass funds to schools from the federal government. They also keep a record of accomplishment of schools' compliance with federal and sated regulatory frameworks (Kowalski, 2001). Vision is the first aspect that is required for there to be accountability and autonomy. For district education official s to hold principals accountable, the school leaders must have vision, which is pegged on high performance in the schools. It is just through a key arrangement that depends on a common vision that locale can lead schools towards progress. District education officers are often said to be reactionary rather than proactive. They most times respond to issues whenever they occur and each problem is handled in isolation. In this regards, school districts need to have long term strategies that include the schools' vision and the necessary interventions that schools need to put in place as well as the support that the said schools require from the districts. The importance of vision and strategic plan is that they enable principals to have a clear understanding of their mandate.

They are able to know where they are expected to operate in as well as identification of skills and expertise that their teachers need in order to effectively deliver on their mandate (SREB, 2009). Although schools are expected to create the right vision and support system, their effort alone is not enough. The education ministry has a responsibility to build capacity while at the same time helping the community build up a solid vision for the fate of their foundations. School principals and instructors at that point need to effectively partake in the advancement of the schools' visions and goals while holding themselves accountable for the results.

Schools that are highly supportive engage the whole community when setting the visions and goals with regard to student learning. The engagement also includes seeking of the ideas of the principals and teachers on major decisions that affect the running of the schools as well as encouraging principals to utilize authority groups that would lead their schools in drawing in with the network with an end goal to set a dream and additionally a school change plan (Bottoms and Schmidt-Davis, 2010). For there to be improvement in performance of a schools, there is need for the school to take full ownership of the improvement process. The principals and learning leaders should be allowed to make decisions and be accountable for them. For instance, the principals should be given the independence of working with their educators to recognize the necessities of their schools and come up with ways to solve those needs on their own. One thing to note about change is that it cannot be everywhere at the same time. Instead, it has to take place in steps and from one school to another. It is the responsibility of the districts to provide the necessary support to the schools through continuous capacity building so that the learning leaders can take responsibility for possessing issues (Fullan, 2007). There are school locale where heads have total control over every aspect of learning.

They focus on the top-down approach where they endeavor to possess every one of the issues and answers for the issues influencing schools in their areas. Different locale turns the issues to the school leadership and demanding results while offering little or no support. A majority of the

schools districts studies fell under these two categories while a few fell in the highly supportive category. The highly supportive districts had clear operational frameworks where the school leadership showed clear vision of what an effective school should be as well as establishment of a framework through which the said effectiveness can be achieved. In this category, the principals have autonomy to work with their team to improve the performance of their schools and collaborate with the district to achieve their goals (Bottoms & Fry, 2009). There are cases though rare, of principals who manage to rise above the inefficiency of the school districts. The districts spend a large portion of their chance and vitality on getting ready understudies to pass tests, without a clear goal and such institutions are more likely to fail in their overall the objective of enhancing the nature of training and the performance of their schools while providing a healthy learning environment (Elmore, Grossman & King, 2007).

2.2.2 Mission and School Performance

According to a number of studies, schools that are highly supportive of their students also place high expectations on them. The studies also show that those that show minimal support for the student also have very low expectations from them. Schools with high expectations from the student s also were found to have very powerful mission statements such as, “striving for excellence”, “no exceptions, no excuses among others”. These schools have made their missions a part of their cultures. In an interview with four respondents from highly supportive schools, there was unanimous reference to setting high expectations as a factor in their achievements (Bottoms & Schmidt-Davis, 2010). The other respondents from schools with lower expectations made very little references to high expectations. For schools that have high expectations have made recognition that the gaps that exist in achievement by some students are often a result of low classroom expectations. What this means is that lower expectations lead to lower achievement by the students. In the words of one high school principal, having high expectations from the students plays a big part in ensuring they succeed. It all starts with a belief that the kids have the ability to learn and the recognition that for that learning to take place successfully, the teachers have to play their roles. It is their responsibility to ensure that they help the kids achieve success. In this regard, teachers are viewed as the only opportunity for the success of those kids. This means that the teachers have to do everything they can to ensure the kids succeed and stay in school (Bill & Taylor, 2009).

2.2.3 Core Value and School Performance

Districts that are highly supportive always provide a clear focus and structured strategies that include effective practices, which help in improving academic performance. This strategic framework could be contained in a simple motto such as “Striving for excellence no exceptions, no excuses.” It can also be contained in a collective form that is collectively developed and adopted with input from the network over some stretch of time. This system is constantly checked and rebuilt by a functioning school board (Blankstein, 2004). A key factor in achievement of good academic performance is trust. Trust in this context refers to the education office entrusting the duty of running the schools to the principals. The principals and the teachers should be trusted to make the best decision. The principals too need to confide in the training office to give any help that they may require from them. This would therefore mean that the principals and the education office work as partners in achieving the education goals of the district.

In a survey conducted with ten respondents from highly supportive districts being interviewed, five of those respondents made reference to the importance of trust between the district education office and the school leadership. Only one respondent from the IOuest supportive districts made reference to the aspect of trust. However, the issue of trust has not been adequately addressed. In a report provided by SREB in *The District Leadership Challenge*, there were a number of high school principals who were skeptical of the district education office providing the required support to improve the curriculum and teaching. Therefore, the education office needs to respond to these concerns by putting more emphasis on the establishment and maintenance of meaningful collaborations between the districts education office and the principals of the high schools in their area (Bottoms & Schmidt-Davis, 2010). The instruction office likewise has to realize that the school principals are capable of success and should therefore be supported. In schools where there are low expectations on the principals, there is high likelihood of failure to achieve academic success. This failure is often as a result of an absence of a plan to support the principals or to identify, recruit and develop the future principals. One way of ensuring that schools achieve success is through a strong leadership development and succession plan. This may include collaboration with tertiary education institutions such as universities and other institutions that offer the principals a chance to enhance their knowledge and leadership skills.

For the partnership between the district education office and the principals to be fruitful, trust remains a key factor. It is only when the district education officer knows that the person being entrusted to run a school is capable that they will be motivated to support them. On the other hand, principals would work even harder and give their best if they know that the district education office believes in them. The principals would be more open with their needs and would communicate them effectively to the district office, a relationship that is guaranteed to make a profoundly captivating and high performing education culture (Muller, 2004). The Ministry of Education should also play its role of helping the school leaders in developing a school culture where there is strong belief in the ability of students to achieve high success levels. It is through this self-belief that students can develop a sense of belonging, therefore enabling them to make greater efforts to succeed. A unique feature of learning leadership is that every stakeholder's responsibility is to sustain learning. Learning is the first priority and all other actions are aimed at supporting the students achieve their goal (Blankstein, 2004).

2.3 School Performance

An organization, according to Sababu (2007), is a social entity that gathers people together to work toward a common purpose. In general, organizations are instruments of purpose, led by intentions and goals. Barney (2007) defined organizational performance as a comparison of the economic value of firms and a rating of competitive advantage, competitive parity, or competitive disadvantage. Drucker (1984) defined organizational performance as the effectiveness and efficiency with which the organization's goals were achieved. Scholarly sources on organizations, according to March and Sutton (1997), look at performance as a dependent variable and try to identify variables that are related to performance, while acknowledging that the causal complexity surrounding performance and the difficulty in explaining variation in performance or effectiveness remain a challenge in obtaining a more aggregate assessment of organizational performance. All companies' success is determined by their performance (Johnson *et al.*, 2008).

The extent to which an organization achieves its goals and objectives is used to assess performance. The measure is important as it underlined the success of the business and informs stakeholders regarding the direction that the organization is taking. Depending on the environment and nature of operations, organizations apply different approaches of performance. According to Mazzarol and Rebound (2009), organizational success can be measured by a company's ability to generate long-term growth. This can be quantified using a variety of metrics, including annual investment turnover, asset size, personnel count, market share, and profitability. Bolo, Muturia, and Oeba (2010) connected corporate performance to financial and non-financial accomplishments and indicators. Thompson *et al.* (2007) suggested that the achievement of financial and strategic objectives of organizations could be determined through the application of balance score cards. Within a school setting, performance is measured using academic excellence, school culture, discipline, development of infrastructure and land, financial stability, excellence in non-academic endeavors, and satisfaction of stakeholders. As such, the performance of firms is important as executives are evaluated on the basis of performance comparisons, and the allocation of resources – both human and material is based on the same (March & Sutton, 1997).

Performance encompasses numerous activities related to work, the efficiency of operations, and how effective the outcomes can be measured and attained (Dessler, 2008). Organizations have diverse ways of assessing performance in order to evaluate their current and prior achievements and compare them to the expected standards and methods used to measure performance and how well they have achieved and pursued their strategic objectives (Akinyi, 2010). Carton and Hoffer (2010) suggested that entrepreneurship and strategic management theories look at improving organizational performance. However, the theoretical tenets of both the schools of thought do not have a common ground regarding the sufficient measures of organizational performance. Diverse metrics have clearly been used to assess the efficacy and performance of organizations without regard for the limits imposed by these measures, particularly in terms of the generalizability of research findings.

Regardless of the disparity, performance can be measured quantitatively using techniques such as return on investments, net profit, gross profit, Return on Equity Employed, equity or capital, and so on, or qualitatively using methods such as absenteeism, job satisfaction, industrial relations, teamwork, best management practices, new product development, operational sufficiency, cost-cutting efficiency, employee and stakeholder satisfaction, and so on (Foster, 1993 and Johnson *et al.*, 2008). The balanced scorecard, introduced by Kaplan and Norton, has been used to measure both monetary and non-monetary performance characteristics (2002). Due to the environment of operation and the range of strategic objectives pursued by organizations, selecting appropriate performance metrics to ensure consistency of assessment is a difficulty. Despite this issue, academics and scholars have come to a consensus that strategic planning and organizational performance have beneficial links (Ansoff, 2000).

2.4 Strategic Planning Practices and Academic Performance

Strategic planning encompasses matching organizational objectives with the results that can be evaluated for a specific duration. Performance defines the end results while strategic planning looks into ways that improve the quality of the results. Thus, performance relies on strategic planning. It can be quantified (net or gross profit, return on investment, equity or capital, return

on equity employed, and so on) or qualitatively measured (absenteeism rates, labor relations, teamwork, best management practices, CSR, new product development, operational sufficiency, employee and stakeholder satisfaction, and so on) (Foster, 2003). The core of any organization's success is its ability to perform. For a considerable duration of time, scholars have dug deep into establishing how strategic planning influences organizational performance. However, despite the efforts that must have been invested, the relationship between the two concepts has remained an ongoing debate to date (Bolo, Muturia and Oeba, 2000).

Some authors suggest that the correlation between strategic planning and increased performance of firm is either minimal or nonexistent while others are well-convinced that there exists a significant positive relationship guided by strategic plans enhancing the performance of firms (Ansoff, 2000). According to Mazzarol (2009), planning was positively connected with improved performance in twelve research publications published between the 1950s and the early 1980s. The foregoing findings lead the researcher to believe that the planning and performance findings are inconclusive. Strategic planning has been associated with increased firm performance by a number of scholars. Armstrong (2002) suggested that the lack of proper description of planning techniques makes it difficult to scientifically assess the value of planning. Pearce, Freeman and Robinson (2007) suggested that researcher's abilities to understand the relationship between the two concepts is limited by applied methodologies. Strategic planning involved the logical and chronological development and coordination of strategies that formalize the strategic planning concept (Johnson *et al.*, 2008).

Formality is linked with the degree to which strategies are documented, communicated, duration taken in planning, and the degree of participant involvement, as well as the stipulation of the responsibilities and required resources (Gode, 2009). A high level of formality in strategic planning is associated to higher organizational performance. A lot of studies have showed inconsistent results and hence negative associations, according to Nevetgeless, Wheelen, and Hunger (2008). According to Ansoff (1990), careful and systematic pre-planning of strategy acquisition leads to better financial success than adaptive techniques that are not properly planned and performed. Formal strategic management systems have a considerable impact on organizational performance, according to Sababu (2007). Ayieko (2009) cites a meta-analysis by Boyd (2001) that found modest positive correlations between strategic planning and financial success in 21 studies with 29 samples and 2,496 firms.

Conversely, scholars have suggested that it would be inconclusive to link formal planning with organizational success given the fact that other management practices such as excellent human resources and organizational design or corporate culture to steer high performance. Strategic planning, according to Rogers (2001), is a wellspring of fresh ideas and uniqueness. These fresh ideas are then put into action, resulting in new products or services. The personnel with original ideas would not have brought it up willingly if it hadn't been for strategic planning. Strategic planning forces a company to examine its surroundings in order to identify the framework within which it may define its specific goals. Management is thus required to turn its goals into concrete targets, along with the techniques that will be used to attain them.

Others, like Nzuve (2007), Robin and Coulter (2012), Hatch and Cunliffe (2006), Robinson and Pearce (2009), have expressed varying views on formal strategic planning and its use in boosting

the performance of both large and small businesses (Gode, 2009). Small enterprises do not place a premium on market positioning or competitive advantage, instead relying on haphazard and wholly improvised means of generating resources and sales. Strategy shifts employ an experimental approach because there are no institutional entities to carry out the remedial modifications (Carter *et al.* 2006). Regardless, Foster (2003) claims that strategic management is important in both small and large businesses, and that strategy formulation and planning in small businesses is haphazard and unstructured. This is generally true if planning is considered the introspective process that precedes decision-making. Consequently, strategic planning should be used by all businesses, regardless of size, to eliminate operational concentration and enhance strategic thinking (Bruce and Longdon, 2000). Before it is explicitly programmed, strategy should ideally be conceived informally (strategic thinking) (strategic analysis). However, the formality of a strategy might be dangerous.

Henry Mintzberg was concerned, according to Johnson *et al.* (2007), that formal strategic planning systems could lead to misunderstandings about the goals of planning, design issues, and that when implemented, strategic planning systems might not obtain ownership of the strategy. Excessive formality in strategy planning may result in a loss of originality and authenticity, as well as the combination of rigid, time-consuming plans with strategy. As a result, the fact that there is a data gap on the relationship between strategic planning and firm performance is critical. It is on the bases on filling the knowledge gap that the current study aims at investigating the relationships within the two concepts, but within the education sector in Rwanda.

3.0 Research Methodology

The study employed correlation research design. The target population was 988 respondents. From this population, simple random sampling and convenient sampling techniques were used to get 91 respondents. Questionnaires was used as data collection instruments. IBM SPSS version 23 assisted in management of quantitative data.

4.0 Research Findings

This paper was to determine the relationship between school Strategic Planning and students' academic Performance of Secondary Schools in Rusizi in Rwanda. The data findings were computed using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) software version 23 and presented in form of tables.

4.1 The strategic planning practices in Secondary Schools in Rusizi District

The strategic planning in this study was evaluated in terms of stakeholders' involvement, communication practices, mission and vision of the school.

Table 1: Stakeholders’ involvement in Secondary Schools in Rusizi District

Stakeholders’ involvement	Mean	Std. Deviation
All stakeholders including parents are invited to participate on strategic plan	2.87	.687
The ideas of stakeholders are considered while taking decisions regarding strategic plan	2.99	.691
All stakeholders are informed on the agenda of strategic planning	3.20	.619
Awareness campaign are conducted to inform all stakeholders about the strategic plan	2.26	.554
There is regular feedback to staff regarding the development of the strategic plan	1.29	.602
Average mean	2.52	.366

According to the above Table 1 the stakeholder’s involvement as the indicator of effective strategic planning practices is made effective through inviting stakeholders with the inclusion of parents to have participation in strategic plan since the mean is 2.87, evaluating and respecting stakeholders' views in light of the mean of 2.99, which is interpreted as high mean, and informing stakeholders about the meeting's agenda in light of the mean of 3.20, which is interpreted as high mean. However, the involvement of stakeholders in strategic planning was found to be critical on the following: Considering the mean of 2.26, which is seen as a high mean, and regular feedback of protecting strategy plan considering the mean of 1.29, which is interpreted as a very low mean, there is a low degree of campaign awareness on strategic planning for informing all stakeholders. Those two last indicators influence the whole results on stakeholder’s involvement where the Average mean of 2.52 is interpreted as low mean. This leads to partial conclusion of saying that stakeholders are not fully involved in strategic planning of schools. Hence the following table gathers the perceptions of respondents on the effectiveness of communication during the preparation of strategic plan.

Table 2: Perception of respondents on effective communication during strategic planning in Rusizi District

Communication	Mean	Std. Deviation
The school leaders officially use to launch the strategic plan.	3.02	.632
The strategy is properly communicated to all people that are involved	3.21	.624
The leaders use effective tools to communicate strategy.	2.97	.690
The monthly staff meetings is used as an effective platforms to disseminate strategic planning information	2.67	.684
Average mean	2.97	.332

Table 2 shows the perceptions of respondents on the effectiveness of communication during strategic planning; where it has been discovered that communication is made effective due to the following: school leaders use to officiate the launch of strategic planning considering the mean of

3.02 which is interpreted as high mean, the strategies are communicated to all people to be involved considering the mean of 3.21 which is interpreted as high mean, the use of effective tools to communicate the content of the strategy considering the mean of 2.97 which is interpreted as high mean, the use of effective tools to communicate the content of the strategy considering the mean of 2.97 which is However, considering the mean of 2.67, which is perceived as low, it has been revealed that the commutation is not fair on the occurrence of monthly meetings for distribution of information relevant to the implementation of strategic planning. Combining all the above results; the Average mean of 2.96 which is interpreted as high mean shows that the head teachers use effective communication regarding strategic planning. Below table shows the perceptions of the respondents on the vision of strategic planning in selected schools of Rusizi District.

Table 3: Perceptions of respondents on vision of schools on strategic planning

Vision	Mean	Std. Deviation
A vision statement is developed for all the organizational' department	3.02	.789
The vision statement outlines the organization's visionary aims as well as its future stance.	3.12	.647
The vision statement is widely distributed and discussed among the members of the internal organization.	2.70	.587
The vision statement has been widely distributed and presented to external stakeholders.	3.12	.697
The vision statement should be revised or modified accordingly the situation	2.92	.654
Average mean	2.98	.274

Table 3 shows the perceptions of respondents on vision set by schools in their strategic planning. It has been revealed that the strategic planning's vision is characterized by the following in selected schools: the statement of vision is developed to all department of schools considering the mean of 3.02 which is interpreted as high mean, the vision statement clarifies the future and goals of the school considering the mean of 3.12 which is interpreted as high mean, vision statement is widely circulated and communicated among external stakeholders considering the mean of 3.12 which is interpreted as high mean, and the vision statement should be revised or modified accordingly the situation considering the mean of 2.92 which is interpreted as high mean but lowly the vision is communicated to all school members considering the mean of 2.70 which is interpreted as low mean. Partially it is to conclude that the vision of strategic planning and related practices is effective considering the mean of 2.97, which is interpreted as high mean. Below table shows the perceptions of respondents on the mission related practices during strategic planning.

Table 4: Perceptions of respondents on mission of strategic planning

Mission	Mean	Std. Deviation
For the organizational level, a mission statement was created.	3.03	.690
The created mission statement defines the reason for being.	2.95	.639
The created mission statement spells forth the most important objectives.	2.96	.714
The defined mission statement serves as a framework for developing strategies.	2.99	.810
The mission statement is widely distributed and disseminated among the members of the internal organization.	2.48	.765
Average mean	2.91	.270

Table 4 shows the perceptions of respondents on the mission of strategic planning in selected schools of Rusizi District. It has been discovered that the mission of strategic planning is made effective by the following: the mission statement is developed for the organizational level using the mean of 2.90, which is interpreted as high mean; the development of the mission statement clarifies the purpose of existence using the mean of 2.95, which is interpreted as high mean; the developed mission statement clarifies the optimum goals using the mean of 2.96, which is interpreted as high mean; and the developed mission statement clarifies the optimum goals using the mean of 2.96. As a result, the mission statement is poorly communicated to external stakeholders, as seen by the mean of 2.48, which is considered low. Partially, the Average mean of 2.90, which is viewed as a high mean, leads to the conclusion that the mission for strategic planning among selected schools is prepared in an effective manner.

4.2 Level of Academic Performance of Secondary Schools in Rusizi District – Rwanda

This study is to analyze the academic performance of in secondary schools of Rusizi District. This was achieved through the perceptions of teachers where each provided views on different selected variables.

Table 5 Perceptions of respondents on academic performance in selected secondary schools in Rusizi District

Academic performance	Mean	Std. Deviation
The results for national examinations are always good in this school	2.57	.601
During mock examination students perform well	2.92	.685
This school has a high average for school examinations.	2.44	.670
There is the character of competition among students	2.76	.584
The level of absenteeism in class is low	2.89	.690
Students show the character of discipline	2.83	.677
Average mean	2.7352	.27388

According to the above Table 5, the performance of students in selected secondary schools in this study is explained by the following: The existence of competition character among students was examined using the mean of 2.76 which is interpreted as high mean, low level of absenteeism in classes using the mean of 2.89 which is interpreted as high mean, and the existence of discipline among students using the mean of 2.83 which is interpreted as high mean but with low performance. In fact the performance of students in Rusizi secondary schools is good since the Average mean is 2.73 and is interpreted as high mean but cautions could be made on the main measurements of academic performance that include results for national examinations and results on class exams.

4.3 Relationship between Strategic Planning and Academic Performance of Secondary Schools in Rusizi District in Rwanda

Table 6: Relationship between Strategic Planning practices and academic Performance of Secondary Schools in Rusizi District in Rwanda

		Academic performance	Comments
Stakeholders' involvement	Pearson	.298**	Positive correlation
	Correlation		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.006	Statistically Significant
	N	91	
Communication	Pearson	.084*	Positive correlation
	Correlation		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.028	Statically significant
	N	91	
Vision	Pearson	.144	Positive correlation
	Correlation		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.175	Not statistically significant
	N	91	
Mission	Pearson	.152	Positive correlation
	Correlation		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.151	Not statistically significant
	N	91	

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

* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

According to the above Table, which is about the correlation between practices of strategic planning and academic performance shows that practices like stakeholders' involvement and communication, have positive and significant relationship with the academic performance. This is explained by ($r=298$, $p=0.006$) for stakeholders' involvement and academic performance and ($r=0.084$, $p=0.028$). Vision and mission also have positive correlation and this was not found to be statistically significant.

5.0 Summary of findings and Conclusion

The study results shows that strategic planning practices like stakeholders' involvement and communication have positive and significant relationship with the academic performance. This is explained by ($r=298$, $p=0.006$) for stakeholders' involvement and academic performance and ($r=0.084$, $p=0.028$). The study concludes that strategic plan is considered as one of the tools that are mostly used for effective education management. Mainly, it the responsibilities of the head teachers to meet all requirements for effective strategic planning where this help schools to perform efficiently and students as the first beneficiaries of efficient management of the schools may expect effective performance. This means that the strategic planning should be prepared attentively in order to avoid any critical performance due to how is formulated and implemented.

6.0 Recommendations

The study recommends there should be preparing strategic plans that involve all stakeholders since their ideas could be constructive and provide update on the progress in the implementation of strategic plans. The schools should make clear about the vision of strategic planning where this may facilitate the activities related to monitoring and evaluation of the action plan. The mission of the strategic plan should be communicated effectively and this help in the achievement of the schools 'goals. There is the need to provide training and other capacity building facilities in order increase the abilities in preparing strategic plans. Besides, the academically schools are recommended to develop the culture of mock exams and work with parents in order to motor the performance of students.

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