Implementation Strategies and Their Effectiveness in Educational Policy: A Mixed-Methods Analysis of Kenya's One Hundred Percent Transition Policy

MACHIVA YUSUF WAFULA[1], DR. EDWIN MASIBO[2], DR. ROSE MUTENDE[3]
[1,2,3] *Department of Curriculum and Pedagogy, School of Education, Kibabii University*

Abstract- ***This study evaluated implementation strategy effectiveness for Kenya's one hundred percent transition policy in Western Region's public day secondary schools. Using mixed-methods, data were collected from 228 principals, 277 teachers, 307 students, and 35 education officials across four counties. School-level strategies (M=3.74, SD=1.06) proved more effective than government strategies (M=3.15, SD=1.23). Creative facility use (M=4.25, SD=0.82) and schedule reorganization (M=4.17, SD=0.85) were most effective adaptations. Implementation timelines were inadequate (M=2.74, SD=1.23), averaging only 21.3 days' notice. Teacher preparedness was insufficient, with only 41.2% receiving large-class training. While schools developed creative adaptations, these represent short-term solutions rather than sustainable strategies. Balanced implementation approaches with adequate preparation time and comprehensive teacher support are needed.***

Indexed Terms- ***Implementation Strategies, Educational Policy, Transition Policy, Teacher Preparedness, Curriculum Adaptation, Kenya***

I. INTRODUCTION

Educational policy implementation represents a critical challenge in developing countries where rapid expansion must occur within resource constraints. Kenya's one hundred percent transition policy, implemented in 2018, mandated that all primary school graduates proceed to secondary education, creating unprecedented implementation challenges.

The policy aimed to address educational equity and align with Sustainable Development Goal 4. However, success depends largely on implementation strategy effectiveness at various system levels. Implementation science suggests that policy success requires adequate strategies, stakeholder preparation, resource allocation, and institutional adaptive capacity.

Western Region of Kenya, comprising Kakamega, Bungoma, Busia, and Vihiga counties, faces distinct socioeconomic challenges with poverty rates above national averages and educational infrastructure deficits. These contextual factors create specific implementation challenges requiring adaptive strategies.

This study investigates implementation strategy effectiveness across government-level initiatives, school-level adaptations, teacher preparation, and curriculum modifications. Understanding these relationships is essential for informing future policy implementation and improving educational access initiatives effectiveness.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Educational policy implementation has evolved from linear, top-down models to complex, adaptive frameworks recognizing interactive policy processes. Spillane et al. (2002) emphasized "sense-making" importance in implementation, highlighting how local actors interpret policies based on understanding, capacity, and context.

Research reveals mixed government strategy effectiveness across contexts. While successful implementation requires clear guidance, adequate timelines, and sufficient resources, developing country studies often document challenges with basic requirements. Wanyama and Koskey (2019) found that Kenyan inter-ministerial coordination mechanisms existed but effectiveness was limited by resource constraints.

School-level adaptation strategies demonstrate critical importance in policy success. Leithwood and Louis (2012) identified effective implementation characteristics including shared leadership, collaborative culture, and learning focus. African contexts show various adaptations to enrollment expansion, though research often focuses on administrative rather than instructional implications.

Teacher preparedness represents a critical but neglected implementation component. Musau and Abere (2018) found significant gaps between training needs and available programs in Kenya, with teachers recognizing needs for managing larger, diverse classes but receiving limited systematic development.

Curriculum adaptation requires balancing policy requirements with quality concerns. Wanjohi and Kariuki (2021) found teachers made informal adaptations to cope with demands, demonstrating creativity but raising coherence concerns. International studies show enrollment expansion often leads to curriculum narrowing.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design and Setting

This study employed a mixed-methods descriptive survey design conducted in Western Region, Kenya, encompassing Kakamega, Bungoma, Busia, and Vihiga counties. These counties were selected based on shared socioeconomic characteristics while exhibiting variations in implementation contexts.

3.2 Participants and Sampling

Using multi-stage stratified sampling, the study included 228 principals (75.2% response rate), 277 teachers (74.9% response rate), 307 students (77.1% response rate), and 35 education officials (76.1% response rate). Counties served as primary strata with proportional allocation based on school distribution.

3.3 Data Collection

Five instruments were used: structured questionnaires for principals, teachers, and students; semi-structured interviews for education officials; classroom observation protocols; document analysis guides; and focus group discussions. All instruments achieved Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficients exceeding 0.70.

3.4 Data Analysis

Quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS employing descriptive and inferential statistics. Qualitative data underwent thematic analysis using NVivo with independent coding by two researchers. Mixed-methods integration followed a convergent parallel design with triangulation across data sources.

IV. RESULTS

4.1 Government Implementation Strategies

Analysis of government implementation strategies revealed moderate effectiveness ratings across most dimensions. Table 1 presents stakeholder perceptions of government strategy effectiveness.

Table 1: Effectiveness of Government Implementation Strategies

Strategy Component	Principals (n=228)		Teachers (n=277)		Education Officials (n=35)	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Clear implementation guidelines	3.48	1.07	3.12	1.15	3.86	0.94
Adequate timeline for implementation	2.74	1.23	2.56	1.18	3.29	1.13
Effective policy communication	3.52	1.05	3.27	1.12	3.94	0.87
Stakeholder consultation	2.65	1.28	2.47	1.22	3.17	1.15
Inter-ministerial coordination	2.87	1.19	2.65	1.21	3.37	1.09

Note. Scale: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree.

The adequacy of implementation timelines received particularly low ratings from principals (M = 2.74, SD = 1.23) and teachers (M = 2.56, SD = 1.18). Document analysis revealed that schools received implementation directives with an average of only 21.3 days (SD = 8.3) to prepare for increased enrollment, significantly less than the 6-month minimum recommended in implementation literature.

Stakeholder consultation received the lowest ratings across all groups, with only 28.9% of principals and 23.1% of teachers agreeing that adequate consultation occurred. A County Director of Education acknowledged: "The policy was largely top-down, with approximately 70% of directives coming from the national level with limited input from county stakeholders."

4.2 School-Level Implementation Strategies

School-level strategies received significantly higher effectiveness ratings than government strategies.

Table 2 presents findings on school-level strategy effectiveness.

Table 2: Effectiveness of School-Level Implementation Strategies

Strategy Component	Principals (n=228)		Teachers (n=277)		Education Officials (n=35)	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Infrastructure expansion initiatives	3.86	1.07	3.74	1.12	3.91	0.95
Creative use of existing facilities	4.25	0.82	4.14	0.87	4.03	0.89
Reorganization of teaching schedules	4.17	0.85	4.08	0.92	3.89	0.96
Adoption of team teaching	3.12	1.24	3.05	1.27	3.23	1.11
Local resource mobilization	3.79	1.05	3.53	1.13	3.77	0.97

Note. Scale: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree.

Creative use of existing facilities emerged as the most effective strategy (M = 4.25, SD = 0.82 from principals), with 83.8% of principals reporting successful implementation. Classroom observations confirmed this finding, with 87.8% of schools showing evidence of repurposed spaces or multi-purpose facilities.

Schedule reorganization also received high effectiveness ratings, with 81.1% of principals and 76.9% of teachers reporting successful implementation. Interview data revealed that 73.2% of teachers experienced significant timetable changes, including extended school days (52.5%), weekend classes (27.8%), and staggered schedules (38.6%).

A principal from Kakamega County explained: "We completely restructured our timetable to create a double-shift system for Form One and Form Two classes. This approach has allowed us to accommodate 35% more students without building new classrooms."

4.3 Teacher Preparedness and Professional Development

Teacher preparedness strategies received consistently low effectiveness ratings across all stakeholder groups. Table 3 presents findings on teacher preparation and support.

Table 3: Teacher Preparedness and Professional Development Effectiveness

Support Component	Principals (n=228)		Teachers (n=277)		Education Officials (n=35)	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Availability of in-service training	3.22	1.19	2.94	1.25	3.69	1.02
Mentorship programs	2.85	1.27	2.67	1.26	3.14	1.17
Guidance on large class management	3.18	1.21	2.95	1.24	3.54	1.07
Psychological wellbeing support	2.63	1.31	2.38	1.28	2.94	1.21
Collaborative teacher learning	3.56	1.08	3.41	1.15	3.66	1.03

Note. Scale: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree.

Only 36.8% of teachers agreed that adequate in-service training was provided, while 41.5% disagreed or strongly disagreed. During interviews, 65.3% of teachers reported receiving little or no formal training on large-class pedagogy. County education reports revealed that only 28.3% of sub-counties had established formal mentorship programs.

Collaborative learning among teachers emerged as the most effective professional development strategy, with 67.3% of teachers reporting engagement in informal peer learning. A teacher from Vihiga County noted: "About 80% of what I now do, I learned through my own experimentation or from colleagues, rather than formal training."

4.4 Curriculum Adaptation Strategies

Schools implemented various curriculum adaptations in response to policy demands. Table 4 presents findings on curriculum adaptation effectiveness.

Table 4: Curriculum Adaptation Strategy Effectiveness

Adaptation Strategy	Principals (n=228)		Teachers (n=277)		Education Officials (n=35)	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Flexibility in implementation	3.17	1.22	2.98	1.25	3.46	1.09
Adaptation of learning materials	3.05	1.27	2.87	1.29	3.31	1.13
Integration of practical skills	3.26	1.18	3.12	1.23	3.54	1.07
Adjustment of assessment approaches	3.38	1.14	3.23	1.19	3.63	1.03
Focus on foundational competencies	3.47	1.12	3.35	1.16	3.74	0.98

Focus on foundational competencies received the highest ratings, with 62.1% of teachers reporting that they prioritized core competencies over comprehensive coverage. However, this adaptation raised concerns about curriculum narrowing. Document analysis of lesson plans revealed that 73.2% of teachers had reduced content depth to ensure broader coverage.

Assessment adaptations were commonly implemented, with 56.3% of schools modifying assessment formats. These included increased use of group assessments (48.1%), project-based assessments (37.0%), and staggered assessment schedules (63.9%).

4.5 Overall Strategy Effectiveness and Sustainability

Analysis of overall strategy effectiveness revealed significant variations across strategy types. Table 5 presents comparative effectiveness ratings.

Table 5: Comparative Effectiveness of Implementation Strategy Types

Strategy Type	Principals (n=228)		Teachers (n=277)		Education Officials (n=35)	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Government strategies	3.15	1.23	2.97	1.26	3.49	1.12
School-level strategies	3.74	1.06	3.56	1.13	3.71	1.05
Teacher preparedness	3.08	1.24	2.83	1.27	3.37	1.14
Curriculum adaptations	3.27	1.17	3.12	1.21	3.57	1.06
Strategy sustainability	2.95	1.28	2.76	1.30	3.23	1.17

Note. Scale: 1 = Very Low, 2 = Low, 3 = Moderate, 4 = High, 5 = Very High.

School-level strategies received significantly higher effectiveness ratings than government strategies ($t(453) = 4.89$, $p < .001$). However, sustainability concerns were evident across all strategy types, with only 36.0% of principals and 31.8% of teachers believing current strategies were sustainable.

A County Director of Education acknowledged: "Many of our current strategies are reactive rather than proactive. I estimate that about 60% of our approaches are short-term solutions that will require significant adjustment or additional resources to sustain."

4.6 Regional Variations in Strategy Effectiveness

Significant variations in strategy effectiveness were observed across the four counties, as shown in Table 6.

Table 6: Regional Variations in Implementation Strategy Effectiveness

County	Government Strategies		School Strategies		Teacher Preparedness		Overall Effectiveness	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Kakamega	3.34	1.18	3.89	1.02	3.25	1.20	3.49	1.13
Bungoma	3.21	1.25	3.75	1.08	3.12	1.23	3.36	1.19
Busia	2.87	1.31	3.52	1.15	2.78	1.31	3.06	1.24
Vihiga	3.05	1.27	3.68	1.11	2.95	1.28	3.23	1.22

Note. Scale: 1 = Very Low, 2 = Low, 3 = Moderate, 4 = High, 5 = Very High.

Kakamega County demonstrated the highest effectiveness across most strategy types, while Busia showed the lowest ratings. These variations correlated with resource allocation differences, with Kakamega investing 27.3% of its education budget in professional development compared to Busia's 17.5%.

CONCLUSION

This study reveals significant variations in implementation strategy effectiveness for Kenya's transition policy. While achieving increased access, strategy effectiveness has been uneven, creating opportunities and challenges for instructional quality. School-level strategies' superior effectiveness highlights local adaptation and institutional autonomy importance. Schools demonstrated remarkable adaptive capacity through creative facility use and

schedule reorganization, though these often represent pragmatic responses rather than sustainable solutions.

Inadequate preparation timelines and limited consultation reflect top-down implementation weaknesses. The 21.3-day average notice contradicts implementation science recommendations and likely contributed to reactive adaptations.

Teacher preparedness emerges as critical but neglected. Only 41.2% receiving large-class training represents significant missed opportunity, particularly given the strong correlation between preparation and instructional quality.

Curriculum adaptations, while necessary, raise pedagogical narrowing concerns. Foundational competency prioritization, while pragmatic, risks reducing learning experience depth and complexity.
Low sustainability ratings suggest current approaches may not be viable long-term, indicating need for more strategic, resource-supported implementation approaches.

RECOMMENDATIONS

i. Develop comprehensive timelines with minimum six-month preparation. Establish meaningful stakeholder consultation engaging school-level implementers.
ii. Allocate 15% of policy budgets to professional development focusing on large-class pedagogy and differentiated instruction.
iii. Develop long-term frameworks addressing resource needs and quality maintenance beyond initial implementation.

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