A Focus On Actions And Reactions: A Propositional Study In Pursuit Of Kenya’s Vision 2030

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ABSTRACT

This propositional paper seeks to link Kenya’s long term plan ‘vision 2030’ with the three pillars: economic, social, and political systems as applied to decision making in the attempt to transform the country into an industrialized middle-income earner. Classical and behavioral management theories have played a major role in industrialization in countries such as Britain providing direction on wealth, the state and its people. However, these theories often tend to put more emphasis on solutions to major management issues; yet there are actions and reactions that seem insignificant, inconsequential, and beneath one’s notice. Chaos theory, as a systems theory, looks at the small actions and reactions that are often overlooked but in reality resurface in a more disastrous nature leading to loss of life, property, and corporate image. Through constructivist grounded theory approach, this study in progress focuses on identifying those small actions and reactions that are actually risky in the long-run and seeks to advocate for preventive measures to stop the worst from happening. Related studies reviewed indicate a country in ‘crisis’ and in need of total restoration and transformation, for unless the Lord guards the city, the watchman keeps awake in vain. The country is in need of men and women who will not be bought or sold! The researcher proposes sustainable agriculture for food security, review purpose of education curricular, and reform security system.

Keywords: Actions, reactions, chaos theory, vision 2030, transformation, industrialized, middle-income

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND OF STUDY

Kenya as a developing country has witnessed great change in all the sectors since its independence in 1963 and owing to the fact that change is inevitable and rarely controlled. Both public and private institutions have emerged and grown from small to complex structures that require more energy and structure to attain stability. Wheatley (2006) argued that as organizations continuously develop, the structure becomes complex and risky creating a tendency to split, combine or entirely fall apart; a situation that requires self-less leaders who do not lean on their own understanding but trust in the Lord for direction (Proverbs 3: 5-6).

Chaos theory can be useful in managing small, medium, and large organizations that may be public or privately owned as a measure to prevent and control disasters that often arise from actions and reactions which seem insignificant, inconsequential, minor or irrelevant. The fact that managers have been trained to handle major issues leaves a gap on minor issues that have a potential to grow and erupt as national disasters with serious economic, social and political implications. Kenya as a developing country faces many challenges in the attempt to revolutionize and become a middle-income earner; hence its long-term plan "vision 2030" that has the aim of improving quality of life for all its citizens.
In order to provide for and manage the over 40 million Kenyans, the Republic of Kenya (ROK) looks upon the philosophy of Vision 2030 to act as the country’s new development blueprint that covers the period 2008 to 2030. The aim is to transform Kenya into a newly industrialized middle-income country with the hope to provide a high quality life to all its citizens by the year 2030 (ROK, 2006). Thus, this propositional paper seeks to establish the nature of transformational change and influence brought about by economic, social, and political decisions in attainment of vision 2030. The researcher believes that by understanding that a) chaos theory will help to explain the relationship between vision 2030 and the economic, social and political decisions in trying to satisfy all the stakeholders; b) chaos theory can also identify those actions and reactions that are for or against attainment of vision 2030; c) chaos theory provides a way of creating measures and controls to prevent the worst from happening, and d) chaos theory is a quick reminder that all have sinned and fallen short of God’s glory; therefore the need for restoration (Romans 3: 23).

According to Anderson (2004) wealth and power have been the source of conflicts and wars since creation and this has caused untold suffering in places such as Afghanistan, Sudan, Somalia, etc tormenting people and destabilizing their economic, social, and political systems. The much awaited Kenya’s Vision 2030 depends on the role of individuals, institutions and the state in bridging the existing gaps in economic, social and political systems. This cannot be achieved without the role played by institutions of higher learning through research by reconciling theory and practice. Nevertheless, Kenya has never fully invested in its human resources and with special interest in higher education whose state, according to Jowi (2003) is described as being in a ‘crisis,’ a situation attributed to mass enrollment of university students with little attention to provision of facilities, assessment method and teacher workload. Wagenge-Ouma (2007) adds that this sorry state of affairs in education sector in Kenya is due to change in donor priorities and changing government regulations to cope with political, economic, social and technological trends in the country.

Moreover, this ‘crisis’ is replicated in other sectors such as health, security and governance, agriculture, environment, trade and industry; a situation that can be explained using chaos theory that was coined by Tom Peters in 1942 to help explain the relationship between actions and reactions in decision making process. Chaos theory has its basis in quantum physics, holds that the universe and its participants create and influence the reality; as explained by the butterfly effect—a butterfly, no matter how small and delicate flaps its wings in Somalia causing chaos in Kenya, for example. As an explanatory theory for management practice chaos theory describes, explains, and predicts how small actions/events are quickly forgotten only to resurface later as major lawsuits, noisy demonstrations, confrontations, strikes or terror attacks as witnessed in Kenya’s 2007 disputed presidential elections or in recent Nairobi’s Westgate terror attack on September 21st, 2013. Wheatley (2006) posits that leaders require competence, foresight, intelligence, knowledge and sensitivity to restore order in a disorderly world. The fact that managers and leaders have been trained to handle big issues
and not small things creates room for chaotic experiences i.e. small matters are seen as insignificant, inconsequential, and beneath one’s notice.

However, observations indicate that all chaotic events have their roots in very small triggering incidents. Thus, leaders and managers need to recognize the following: (i) that everything done as a leader, manager, individual, or group is under serious scrutiny by others; (ii) that leaders and managers are the people’s friend only when they (people) want you to be --- but any sensitive action can change the category from a friend to an enemy irreversibly; and (iii) that all actions, no matter how small or seemingly inconsequential must be self-monitored on a regular, consistent, and ongoing basis, for their content and continuous appropriateness in terms of reactions.

Vision 2030, as shown in diagram 1 below, is a dream that will depend on the three pillars: economic, social and political decisions; and like Abraham Lincoln each Kenyan will finally say:

‘I can see far because I stand on the shoulders of great men and women’

Diagram 1: Vision 2030 in relation to economic, social and political decisions

Source: Researchers Construction, 2014

1.2 RESEARCH APPROACH

The research is qualitative and employs constructivist grounded theory approach to explore the actions and reactions through interviews, observations, and case studies to obtain the participants’ and researchers’ point of views. Through purposive sampling, respondents will include experienced county education officer, security commissioner and SME (small and medium enterprises) representative who are willing and able to respond to the questions. Two counties, A and B will be selected randomly to participate in the research.
1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- Identify the actions and reactions associated with economic, social, and political decisions in pursuit of vision 2030?
- To what extend do Educators, Security Officers, and SME,s understand and own vision 2030?
- Explore if there is a significant relationship between vision 2030 and economic, social and political decisions?
- What underlying structure exists among the following variables: economic, social, political decisions, and vision 2030?

H0: There is no significant relationship between vision 2030 and economic, social and political decisions.

1.4 UNDERLYING THEORY

This study is supported by chaos theory, which is a systems theory borrowed from quantum physics to explain actions and reactions in management practice. The theory applies the concept of ‘butterfly effect’ to describe and predict how small actions and reactions, often overlooked, resurface in a more disastrous nature leading to loss of life, property, and corporate image. As Whitley (2006) explains, organizations develop into complex structures with the tendency to split and fall apart through the actions and reactions of its participants.

**PHASES 1-4**

**PHASE ONE**
Review of current actions and reactions in economic, social and political decisions

**PHASE TWO**
Semi-structured interview with three experts in charge of county education, security, and SME representative (county A)
Use Delphi Technique

**OBJECTIVES**

**Objectives:**
- Develop a list of important actions and reactions that influence economic, social and political decisions

**Objectives:**
- develop expert interview framework
- Pilot Study
- Gather data from three experts
- Analyze and interpret expert response
- Respond to Research Q1

Respond to research question one.
Phase one of the study involves actions and reactions associated with economic, social and political decisions in pursuit of vision 2030. The aim is to develop a list of all important actions and reactions that can be a barrier towards achieving the long-term plan. An expert will be engaged for face and construct validity. Since it will not be possible to apply a statistically representative population, convenience sampling is adopted whereby three experts in Nandi County are chosen for interview on matters relating to economic social and political decision.

Phase two of the study focuses on semi-structured interview framework which is subjected to pilot study to test the reliability of the research instrument and finally implementing on three experts at the county in respect to actions and reactions identified in phase one. This will involve one SME, educationist and security intelligence in county A to assess their understanding and ownership of vision 2030. Using Delphi approach the experts will be surveyed in two rounds keeping anonymity of participants and their forecasts from previous rounds until convergence is reached towards the correct answer (Rowe, 1999).

Phase three repeats the survey done at phase two with the three experts but this round from county B, as pointed by Pidgeon and Harwood (1996) to be in line with Grounded Theory doctrine of data collection through multiple sources for rich data analysis. Finally, phase four will be a comparative study of the data outputs of phases two and three respectively, aiming to gather facts and identify outcomes that possibly can generate improvement economically, socially, and politically.
2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1 ECONOMIC DECISIONS

Kenya’s vision 2030 depends on the economic decisions made daily at micro and macro levels, public or private institutions, government, non-governmental organizations, and the church. Economic theories as explained by Bonk (2000) focus on growth and accumulation of wealth and how this is reflected fairly on the quality of life of the people as they are the source of wealth. Basically, Kenya as an agricultural country depending on land as the major factor of production, is often resolving conflicts among different tribes scrambling for arable land and water for livestock. This is a phenomenon that characterized both pre-colonial and post-colonial eras. With rapid increase in population and fixed resources Kenya as a country is challenged to seek alternative methods such as service provision and mining so as to transform into a developed country despite problems such as unemployment, food insecurity, tribal clashes, poverty, diseases and high rate of corruption in the public sector giving rise to ethical questions in management (Mathenge, 2011). Though agriculture is the backbone of the country’s economy, many people still die of hunger, most land is underutilized, roads are impassable, and resources are misappropriated. The Daily Nation Report by Ramenya (Friday, October 25th, 2013) is shocking that maize production which is a stable food for most Kenyans is estimated at 2.8 million bags, a decrease of over 35%, which is an insult when it comes to feeding the over 40 million Kenyans. This has been attributed to government’s inefficiency in distribution of fertilizers leading to late planting; hence poor yields. Poor infrastructure and lack of training also lead to poor harvest. Generally, organizations in Kenya are faced with notable challenges of attracting and retaining qualified personnel and frequent go slows and strikes in various public sectors. These are characterized by tribalism and nepotism, un-notified retrenchments and scandals of all kinds, and employees frequently changing jobs.

However, not all is lost for Kenya, since there is room for expansion in agriculture, service industry and mining. With globalization and advancement in technology, e-commerce can expand trade and industry, e-learning and distance learning has increased opportunities and provided a link with the rest of the world. With government’s support for rural electrification, and financial support for women and youth, Kenya has seen an increase in entrepreneurial activities which in turn generates more income to most families, enabling them to meet some basic needs such as education, health care, housing and food. As suggested by Gichure (1997), sanity can only be restored in a country when basic ethical concepts are used in management of both public and private organizations for the benefit of both employer and employee, and that balancing the objectives of the state and the individuals motivates people to invest.

Proposition 1: The researcher proposes that the government through the Ministry of Agriculture should improve service delivery in provision of farm inputs; employ more extension workers to train small scale
farmers on modern methods of production; and improve feeder roads for accessibility. It is also important that the ministry of education should revisit its curricular for agriculture in primary, secondary and tertiary levels as a measure for sustainable agriculture and food security.

2.2 SOCIAL DECISIONS

The Kenyan government has tried to invest in its people so as to create value in the quality of life through provision of education and training, health facilities, water and sanitation, environmental protection, housing and urbanization, and issues that affect gender, youth, sports and culture. However, education has been singled out as the most crucial ingredient in transforming all sectors to greater heights; hence the reason for linking vision 2030 to higher education so as to realize the dream.

Teaching and learning in institutions of higher learning has been a challenge to most governments particularly in the African continent where by and large, education is neither affordable nor accessible. According to Barnett (1992; 1994) more questions are being raised as to whether there is a balance between the quality and quantity of education standards. This has continued to worry higher education stakeholders who feel that the mass enrollment of university students witnessed since the late 20th century has negated teacher commitment. With rapid transformation brought about by political, economic, social, and technological change, institutions of higher learning are facing stiff competition; thus the need to realign courses to suit the job market. The World Bank (2004; 2010) has been very supportive to developing countries such as Kenya in funding tertiary education projects with the aim of making higher learning more efficient, relevant, equitable and responsive to change.

Since independence in 1963, the Kenyan government identified three major challenges that hindered development in the country: poverty, disease and ignorance all of which were attributed to the high rates of illiteracy. However, the Ministry of Education Science and Technology (MOEST) has played a major role in promoting education and research to speed up economic and social development (Sifuna, 1998). Despite financial challenges the Kenyan government has been committed to making education accessible and affordable through provision of subsidized fees in public primary, secondary and tertiary institutions. Despite the government’s support for education at all levels, there has been increased tension on the issue of balancing quality and quantity often catching the headlines on the local dailies, and as earlier stated that Jowi (2003) asserts that the Kenyan education sector is ‘in crisis.’

As a developing country Kenya has many opportunities in terms of education and investment to enhance social decisions that can transform the country into an industrialized middle-income earner. The mission to transform Kenya into a middle-income economy so as to face global competition gave rise to a philosophy of Vision 2030 whereby education sector is being realigned to the job market with the support of the new constitution that fights for equal opportunities for all Kenyans regardless of gender, ethnicity, tribe, or cultural
backgrounds (Republic of Kenya, ROK, 2006). The Kenyan education system has since independence undergone a series of refinement with the aim of producing qualified personnel to manage different sectors. However, stakeholders including teachers, employers and investors have complained about an emergent trend in education where students lack practical skills, character formation, survival skills, moral values, critical thinking, and research skills. The job market comprises half-baked graduates who have no respect for themselves, for the profession and people around them; hence lack motivation to improve performance due to bad academic habits acquired such as copy paste, and plagiarism.

Socrates once said, ‘unexamined life is not worth living.’ This is a reflection of higher learning in Kenya with mass production of poorly trained university students leading to mass unemployment. Teaching and learning in higher education should include personal involvement through reflection and discussion so that a person discovers the truth and at the same time acquire survival and problem solving skills. The African traditional education provided meaningful learning that was standardized to meet all society needs in practical and theoretical perspectives. Learning took place through personal involvement by way of life at home, on the farm or in the bush with elders and in the process individuals acquired knowledge, skills, norms, values, and attitudes of the society (Adeyemi and Adeyinka, 2003). As pointed by (Taylor, 2011) God created each one with unique talents and skills that can be developed through holistic training so as to grow spiritually, physically, mentally, and emotionally (Romans 12:7).

Webster dictionary defines education as a continuous process where individuals are actively involved in formal and informal training to acquire skills resulting in total character formation and ability to think critically. Meaningful learning requires the guidance of a committed teacher who will lead students to salvation and reconciliation with God, the master teacher (Luke 22:24). A committed teacher is like the good shepherd who patiently leads the way providing support and care for the slow learners (John 10:11). Moreover, committed teachers have self-identity and a heart that can easily connect to the profession, institution, and students, i.e. affective commitment.

Despite the efforts of teachers in higher education in Kenya there is much left to be accomplished with the support of the government. World Bank (2000) and Cheboi (2001) have termed financial resources directed to universities as meager and too inadequate to meet the ever increasing number of students seeking tertiary education. The growth in student numbers especially with the double intake introduced in 2011/2012 does not match the expansion of physical and academic facilities (Okwakol, 2008). Many institutions lack important facilities as the lecture rooms, library, and computer laboratories. In most cases, students rely on teacher’s notes since they have no access to relevant textbooks, internet, reading space or even the technology to accommodate distance learning (Manyasi, 2010). This has limited the students’ reading habits confining them to obsolete knowledge. Odebero (2010) cites teacher’s heavy load as one major drawback in higher
education where despite the standardized ratios provided by the Commission for Higher Education (CHE) the workload is far beyond manageable sizes. It is not uncommon to find a class of 1:200 teacher student ratios in both public and private universities in Kenya. This has led to development of survival mechanisms where graduate assistants have been assigned full teaching capacities and advisory responsibilities to supervise theses.

As a result, quality of education is sacrificed, teachers are unable to do research or complete their PhD programs not mentioning publishing of academic work. It is also noted by Olel (2006) and Eshiwani (2009) that heavy teacher workloads have led to reduction in quality, research and publishing mainly attributed to government funding. The research by Taylor and Turek (2010); Fox (2010) indicated that educational institutions have underestimated the importance of extracurricular activities in boosting academic performance. The research revealed that only 44% of sporting facilities were available for use by a student body of over 30,000 in public universities. Standa (2000) and K’Okul (2010) have both cited the absence of guidance and counseling services in public universities as a direct cause for frequent student unrest and vices such as drug abuse, prostitution and other unsocial behaviors.

According to Birungi (2006) student assessment of what they have learnt is an important element in higher education and quality assurance bodies. He cites examination process as marred by cheating, use of money and sex to obtain undeserved grades. The quality of higher learning in Kenya is further lowered by unethical people who write papers and projects for students in return for pay. In the 21st century Kenya’s education sector is in need of committed teachers who understand how students learn, grow, and develop from one level to another. According to Macfarlane (2008) committed teachers seek to work with and learn from colleagues; and at the same time have passion for continuous training and research for personal improvement. Saha and Dworkin (2009) asserted that committed teachers have a dream for sustainable development and well-being of societies they serve by embracing use of technology to facilitate learning.

Thus, teachers in higher education have a role to play in encouraging active learning through differentiated learning such as group discussion, lectures, seminars, projects, case studies, role play, etc, in order to develop reflective minds and help students unlearn and learn (Kember and McNaught, 2007). Through careful development of course syllabus and lesson planning, a committed teacher introduces himself/herself, the course, subject matter, activities, assessment method, and all necessary information so as to reduce student questions including diversity (Nilson, 2010). As the modern classroom is becoming more complex, a committed teacher needs to integrate ethics, technology, and problem solving skills for flexibility, variety and adaptability to tactfully accommodate students with disabilities (Tempelaar, 2006; Buskists & Benasi, 2012). Furthermore, Black (2010) notes that technology may not replace effective learning; but adds meaning and creativity to learning providing a meeting point for diversity.
As important assets of any organization, teachers need support from their employers through provision of important learning facilities, moral and financial support, and above all respect and dignity (Noe, 2006). He further says that employees generally seek recognition, fairness, and job satisfaction as opposed to money rewards. In order to improve teacher commitment, employers such as the Teachers Service Commission of Kenya (TSC) should identify training and research needs so as to facilitate quality of higher education (Sim, 2002; Invancevich, 2004).

**Proposition 2**: The researcher proposes that the government revisits the purpose of higher education by reviewing the whole curricular, philosophy and ethics as a way to facilitate social decisions in improving quality of life through provision of basic education, health care, sanitation and housing to all citizens.

**2.3 POLITICAL DECISIONS**

Politically decisions in Kenya have always lacked transparency in its rule of law, electoral, political, security and conflict management processes. This picture was well painted during 2007 disputed presidential elections in which the winner was not known! (Njoki, 2007). All these are attributed to the little actions of bribery, corruption, land grabbing, nepotism, tribalism, gender inequality, shadow employees, political assassinations, environmental degradation, etc which are daily actions and eventually graduated to national disasters characterized by loss of life, property, business, and image.

According to Rok (2002) Kenyan politics have been competitive and conflicting often leading to clashing of supporters of different political parties and loss of life as a result. As Katumanga (2005) points such scenario has been repetitive and associates the country’s poor economic performance to political interference together with financial scandals in government institutions. The Daily Nation (August 9th, 2011) reported the former President Kibaki raising concerns on the increasing number of Somali refugees and linked the high rate of crime and insecurity in Kenya to the conflicts in lawless neighboring Somalia that has been a haven for international terrorists. Other reports by the Kenya National Commission on Human Rights (KNHCR, 2008) also accuse the Kenya Defense Forces (KDF) and the police for failure stop extrajudicial killings of innocent people, engaging in bribery, and looting property.

**Proposition 3**: That there is need for a more responsible, accountable and reformed military to take care of internal security so as to restore order especially in major towns that are known to be the havens for terrorists including drug and human traffickers.

**2.4 EXPECTED OUTCOMES**

The outcomes of the proposed study are expected to provide authority as to what actions and reactions surround economic, social, and political decisions and will provide guidelines as to whether vision 2030 is achievable or only a dream on paper. Furthermore, the proposed study seeks to serve following: a) contribute new knowledge and concepts in the field of management; b) provide a framework for problem solving to
guide education, business and governance; and c) create awareness and ownership of long-term plans amongst all stakeholders for participative and visionary strategy.

3. CONCLUSIONS
Strategic plans are major components of economic, social and political decisions of a country requiring thoughts of men and women who will not be bought or sold (White, 1952). However, the presence of small actions and reactions that often seem insignificant, inconsequential, and beneath one’s notice presents a challenge to Kenya’s strategic plan, ‘vision 2030’ of which without due care, may remain a dream on paper. Therefore, this paper proposes a research project to examine the philosophy behind actions and reactions that are detrimental to achievement of vision 2030, and consequently identify and tabulate emerging concepts. Using a four-phased grounded theory approach the emerging concepts will be validated. Finally, the study will eventually proposition that certain actions and reactions form a major framework in the attempt to transform Kenya into a middle-income earner by the year 2030. Thus, unless the Lord builds the house, those who built it labor in vain; and unless the Lord guards the city, the watchman keeps awake in vain (Psalms 127:1-5).

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4. REFERENCES


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