

**STRATEGIC PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION  
CHALLENGES IN THE COUNTY GOVERNMENT OF NAIROBI,  
KENYA**

**BY**

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## **DECLARATION**

I, the undersigned, declare that this is my original work and has not been presented to any institution or university other than the University of Nairobi for examination.

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**D61/83879/2016**

This research project has been submitted for examination with my approval as the University Supervisor.

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## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this work to my late father, Morris Muendo Makiti for the support in the 19 short years that I got privileged to share with him. For showing me direction and providing me with the right tools of education that I needed to get this far. For the great example and encouragement, he offered me and for constantly reminding me that the sky is only the beginning.

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## **ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS**

**ICT** Information and Communication Technology

**IDP** Internally Displaced Persons

**KSG** Kenya School of Government

**NCC** Nairobi City County

**RBV** Resource Based View



## **ABSTRACT**

Organizations formulate and implement strategies to remain competitive in their ever-changing operating environment. Strategy implementation is the procedure that transforms the systems without hesitation to fulfill the objectives. The study sought to establish the challenges that face the County government of Nairobi in implementing its strategic plan. The theories that guided this study included stakeholder theory, resource based view theory and institution theory. The study made use of case study as the research design. This study adopted primary data which was collected by use of an interview guide. This study targeted 11 senior officers who were well conversant with strategic implementation challenges at the County government of Nairobi. The researcher personally conducted the interviews. Care and control was achieved by keeping a register of all the questions asked and their responses. This study adopted qualitative analysis since it enabled the researcher to describe, analyze and the subject matter of the research at the same time because it was difficult to do so numerically. Qualitative analysis of the study was carried out through the use of content analysis. Based on the study findings the study concluded that the Nairobi City County experienced challenges in implementing its strategic plan. The specific challenges included organization structure challenges, organization culture challenges, leadership challenges, communication challenges, lack of adequate resources and existence of conflicting organization objectives. The study also concluded that these challenges affect the implementation of strategic plans negatively in that it slowed the process as well as resulting to inefficiencies and increased costs. The study also concluded that there exists remedies to these challenges. These remedies were such as designing a new structure to allow integration of the duties of the Nairobi City Council with those of the devolved units. Adoption of a transformational style of leadership would help solve communication challenges and challenges emanating from use of poor leadership styles. There was also the remedy of adoption of a more flexible organization culture. The study recommends that Nairobi City County should come up with proper human resource policies which have provision for capacity building through training. The study also recommends that Nairobi City County should embrace diversity in its culture. Further, the study recommends that Nairobi City County should consider adopting a flexible organizational structure whereby decisions and functions of the County can be decentralized to enhance flexibility and efficiency in decision making and procedures. The management should consider reviewing the structure periodically to counter environmental changes.

# **CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION**

## **1.1 Background of the Study**

Organizations formulate and implement strategies to remain competitive in their ever-changing operating environment. Strategy implementation is the second aspect of strategic planning process after formulation, evaluation and control. Yabs (2010) defines strategy implementation as “the point when steps are taken to realize the sanctioned plans in strategic management process” (p.175). It’s the process of translating plans into actions in order to realize the envisioned organizational objectives. Successful strategy implementation involves communicating the strategic direction the organization plans to take, allocating resources and aligning organizational structure and culture to the strategies (Oslen, 2005).

Implementation of strategic plans is vital to any organization because it determines the success or failure of the organization. Organizations use strategy to determine goals and objectives. The strategies assist to identify necessary resources allocation and actions to be taken in order to achieve the set goals (Alexander, 2001). Kaplan and Beinhocker (2003) stated that challenges in strategic plans implementation mainly rotate on individual barriers like a lot of priorities which are conflicting, inter functional battles, poor communication and lack of enough development in management.

Beinhocker (2003) also posited that financial barriers to strategy implementation are inclusive of restrains in budget which limit the general strategy expenditure and limits on flexibility on usability of funds. Several theories have emerged expounding on strategic planning and implementation.

Resource- based theory of strategy focuses on firm's possession and use of resources and competencies as a competitive advantage (Barney, 2001). The theory was relevant in explaining successful strategic plan implementation, and it is also a part of the larger strategic management theory family. Institutional theory addresses the behavioral patterns of an organization and how its internal challenges affect strategy implementation. This theory identifies and examines implications that support legitimacy and survival of organizations culture, including factors such as social environment, culture, whilst recognizing the overall importance of resources (Baumol et al., 2009).

This study has been motivated by the fact that although there are several studies conducted both locally and internationally on various challenges affecting successful implementation of strategic plans, most of these studies have focused on different contexts and their findings cannot be generalized to represent Nairobi County government. The previous studies also differed on the challenges affecting strategy implementation. Hrebiniak (2008) identified lack of ownership of strategic process at all levels of management as major obstacle to effective strategy execution, Dunlop et al., (2013) cited failure of translation of strategy to daily operations as a root problem while Schaap (2006) posits that lack of communication poses a great challenge to successful strategy implementation.

In 2010, the people of Kenya fully participated in the enactment of a new constitution, which they envisaged would create a system of governance that would fast track the development agenda of the entire country. In 2010, there was an establishment of two tiered governments in Kenya. These are the county and the national government with each performing distinct assignments. In order to fast track the performance of the county governments, every county has to write down a strategic plan. This acts as a blue print which guides the individual counties to fulfil their mandate.

Nairobi City County was created by Kenyan constitution and it came after the non-operational Nairobi City County. Its operation is guided by the auspice of the cities and urban areas Act, the devolved governments Acts, and a host of other Acts. Since the formation, the devolved Nairobi City County has had two notable strategic plans; the strategic plan 2013 to 2015 and Strategic plan 2015-2025. Since the County cannot achieve the strategic plans without capacity, the Nairobi City County has partnered with the Kenya School of Government (KSG) to build capacity (Okoth, 2016). Despite the presence of the strategic plans, Nairobi County is faced with a myriad of challenges which can be addressed if the strategic plans are well implemented.

### **1.1.1 Strategic Planning**

Various scholars have defined strategic planning in different ways. Strategic Planning refers to an effort which is disciplined for producing crucial decisions and necessary steps which shape the nature and direction of activities of an entity within legal bounds (Bryson 1988).

It can also be defined as the practice of using logical principles and thorough investigation for the formulation, implementation and control of strategy and the official documentation of the expectations of an organization (Higgins & Vincze, 1993). Wendy (1997) describes strategic planning as steps taken to ensure that objectives and resources are consistent in an organization and its opportunities which are changing with the argument that strategic planning seeks to document and outline an approach to doing business which causes acceptable profits and growth. Arasa and Obonyo (2012) further clarify Strategic Planning as “a set of procedures of choosing the goals and strategies, establishing the needed programs in achieving specific objectives towards achieving the goals”. This process involves four main steps. These are; mission statement, implementation, internal and external analysis, control and evaluation (Abdalkrim, 2013). Hax and Majluf (1996) however argue that it’s comprised of three main elements that help change the vision or mission of an organization to solid goals which are achievable and strategic implementation.

As a management tool in private and public companies, use of strategic planning in the business world began after the Second World War. Strategic Planning has also been noted to help organizations make better strategies by using more rational, logical and systematic approach to strategic choice. According to Arasa and Obonyo (2012), when an organization carries out the different strides in strategic planning process, it facilitates realization of effectiveness. Properly designed strategic plans leads to an operational framework that ends up allowing the organization enjoy distinctive competitive advantages, and improved performance (Porter, 1996).

### **1.1.2 Strategy Implementation Challenges**

Having chosen a strategy, there is the issue of implementation. Very few schemes go exactly as planned. A monumental challenge in strategic change is the phase that comes after planning which is the proper and effective implementation of the formulated strategy (Brinkschroder, 2014). In fact, because of the changes in an organization's environment, the realized strategy differs markedly from the initially chosen strategy.

Kotter and Best (2010) saw that the major difficulty in strategic planning rests in changing tactic to a strategy and this needs efficient implementation which entails tasks which makes the plan work. The strategy of a firm is driven through implementing the tactics. Implementing a strategy may succeed if there is congruity among several elements important to this process.

Developing a strategy that has consistency is a hard thing but ensuring that it works and it's implemented throughout the firm is even harder. (Hrebiniak, 2006). There are many factors that can influence the process through which strategic plans converted into organizational action.

Implementation unlike formulation of a strategy is mainly taken as something of a craftiness, as opposed to a science (Noble, 2010). If a strategy is not implemented, it will definitely not perform highly. In 2004, a survey of 276 senior executives was conducted. It was unveiled that 57% of the organizations were not in implementing their strategies for a period of the past three years (Allio, 2010).

Many factors affect the success of strategy execution such as people who communicate or execute the strategy to the systems or mechanisms which co-ordinate and control (Allio, 2010). From the White Paper of Strategy Implementation of Chinese Corporations in 2010, implementing a strategy was the most crucial management challenge that all corporations were facing. 83% of the firms surveyed didn't execute their strategy smoothly and just 17% had a strategy execution process that showed consistency.

Previous studies have identified some challenges to strategy implementation. Dekhane (2014) lists some of the well-known reasons for the failure to attain and deliver well designed strategies. These include lack of comprehension of the formulated strategy by the employees and its relevance to their daily work routines, budgets not linked to the strategy, lack of incentives that are linked to the strategy, and little involvement in the formulation of the strategy by people involved in execution of the same strategy.

Other impeters of strategy execution identified by various researchers include environmental factors that cannot be controlled, poor communication, longer time frames needed for implementation, conflicts within the organizational power structure, inability to manage change, and lack or persistence in implementing the changes (Aaltonen & Ikavalko, 2010).

Some of these challenges are generic while some are specific to the context of an organization. Strategy implementation inevitably fails when organizations do not address the factors that bring about the impeters of strategy implementation.

In order to effectively and efficiently control how an organization uses its resources, mechanisms that include the firm's organizational structure, its information systems, leadership style, assignment of managers, budgeting process as well as reward and control systems are important strategy implementation elements (Pearce & Robinson, 2011).

#### **1.1.4 Nairobi City County**

Nairobi City County Government is among the 47 counties brought about by the new constitution. It's the host for the capital city of the country. Nairobi City County Government also hosts almost all the headquarters of the central government and the biggest industrial town in the country and hence heart of economy of the country. The Nairobi County government is estimated to have over three million residents and the number is expected to increase because of high numbers of rural to urban migration.

The strategic management challenges facing Nairobi County government include zoning, privatization of the public transport which saw commuter fares rise and increased road accidents, high crime rate, fire safety measure not in place in most city suburbs, inadequate housing and informal settlements, poor sewerage and liquid waste condition, poor solid waste management and poor planning of the city (Republic of Kenya, 2017).

The Nairobi City County is divided into sectors namely: Trade, Cooperative development and Tourism Sector, Devolved Agriculture, Fisheries and Livestock, Devolved Housing, Devolved Medical Services, Devolved Urban Planning, Devolved Public Works, Devolved Education, Youth Affairs, Social Services and County administration.



Others include; Public Service Management, Sub-County administration, Internal Audit, Roads, Security, Compliance and Disaster Management, Human Resource, ICT, Security and Compliance, Investigation and Information analysis, Legal Affairs, Urban renewal and Housing, Supply Chain Management, Finance and Economic Planning (Human resource charter, 2015).

Omenya (2010) asserts that Nairobi County government face challenges such as issues of ethnic passions, conflicts, land disputes, internally displaced people (IDPs), poverty exclusion within the city, environmental degradation, Sanitation and waste management, unemployment, informal settlements among others. Effective strategic planning and implementation practices will go a long way in ensuring the challenges are addressed. The defunct Nairobi City Council did not have a strategic plan until 2006, Strategic plan (2006-2012). Currently, the devolved Nairobi City County has since had two notable strategic plans; 2013-2015 and 2015-2025.

## **1.2 Research Problem**

Strategy implementation is the procedure that transforms the systems without hesitation to fulfill the objectives. Herbiniak (2006) argued that whereas strategy definition is difficult, to make strategy work and execute it is significantly harder. Cater and Pucko (2010) said that although eighty percent of firms possess the right strategies, just 14% execute them legally. To build up the association between strategy definition and implementation, Egelhoff (1993) researched the best time for associations to consider technique execution at the time of strategy plan or a while afterwards.

A more important question is if it's more difficult to plan or implement a strategy. For instance, an all-around detailed strategy is pointless on the off chance that it is not executed well. The creation of new 47 counties in Kenya as the new centers of devolving resources and subsequent election of the county government means that some of the government functions that were initially centralized are now being executed by the county government and this is meant to spur the economic growth at the county level.

As a result, the county governments should incorporate the element of strategic planning and implementation if they are to succeed in their quest to improving their counties. Karanja (2014) found that Nairobi County's ability to provide quality services was deteriorating because of lack of a clear strategic plan and poor leadership. The authority should therefore consider effective implementation of their strategic plan to provide efficient and quality services.

Although there are previous studies conducted in this area, there are significant research gaps along conceptual, contextual and methodological spheres which are what this study sets to investigate. Conceptually, Behn (2008) in his study on designing performances for public sector institutions strongly emphasizes importance of employees training and sensitization towards reducing resistance to strategic plans implementation process. In their study on the Implementation of Strategic Management in Local Governments in Europe, Vicente et al., (2011) identified lack of supporting organizational structure which calls for profound changes in organizational cultures and mobilization of adequate resources, strong leadership and commitment as major challenges in implementation of strategic plans in public sector institutions.

Nyaringe (2013) identified involvement of all employees in strategy formulation and implementation as key success factor towards ensuring successful strategy implementation. Contextually, the empirical studies reviewed focused on challenges facing strategic plan implementation in other contexts other than the Nairobi County for instance, Nartisa, Putans and Muravska (2012) studied on public and private sector organizations in Europe while Kisembe and Were (2014) studied on secondary schools in Kiambu County.

Aoko (2016) focused on limitations of strategy execution in NGOs in Migori County while Warui (2016) focused on challenges of strategy implementation at NACADA in Kenya. There are also methodological gaps. Semmar (2012) did a longitudinal study for the period between 1980s and 2011 in Morocco. Njogu (2016) used both primary and secondary data and a case study research design in his qualitative research.

The study by Amuti (2017) was a critical literature review on the problems facing the implementation of strategy at the constitutional commissions in Kenya. This current study will employ descriptive case study research design and primary data will be acquired by use of an interview guide to establish the challenges facing strategy implementation at the County government of Nairobi. This study is an attempt to address the gaps demonstrated along conceptual, contextual and methodological front. The research attempted to answer the research question; what are the strategic planning practices and implementation challenges facing the county government of Nairobi?

### **1.3 Research Objective**

The study sought to establish the challenges facing the County government of Nairobi in implementing its strategic plan.

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

The research won't be significant to the current theories by either supporting or challenging them through research findings. This study will provide an insight in understanding the challenges that face strategic plan implementation. The study will also form a basis for future research on challenges which face strategic plans implementation in public organizations.

This study's outcome will be advantageous to policy makers. They include the government and the national senate, in policy setting and overseeing the process of implementing strategic plans in the County government. This will expedite the process of strategy implementation hence bolster efficiency, accountability and transparency.

Management of Nairobi County and other Counties will consider this research value adding. It might be utilized to generalize the need and importance of strategic plans and appreciate the challenges facing their implementation. This will help Nairobi County to develop effective strategic plans and be ready to deal with the challenges.

## **CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 Introduction**

The section covers theoretical and empirical review of literature on strategic planning and challenges of strategy execution. The chapter begins by discussing the theories underpinning these concepts, review of empirical literature on the concepts showing similarities and contradictions and the research gaps and finally the conceptual framework showing the conceptualized relationship between the study variables.

The theories to be covered in this literature review were resource based view theory which highlights the organizational resources which lead to creation of the valuable factor that enables the business organization to keep on growing transactions as well as attracting new investments. Terziovski (2010) noted that organizational strategies contribute in a significant way in establishing how organizational resources are utilized and distributed when it comes to the facilitation of organizational business operations. Institutional theory, addresses the behavioral patterns of an organization and how its internal challenges affect strategy implementation. Institutional theory provides processes through which structures become authoritative guidelines for social behavior.

The chapter also discusses the challenges that face organizations in the process of implementing their strategic plans as well as mitigating measures that can be undertaken to overcome the strategy implementation challenges. There have been related studies conducted before and their findings have been discussed in this chapter. The research gaps which the current study intends to fill are also brought out in this chapter.

## **2.2 Theoretical Foundation**

Literature review basically identifies and examines the work done by other researchers and scholars concerning strategic planning and challenges of strategy implementation. This review provides detailed knowledge of what has been done and act as a basis upon which the study findings were interpreted and also to overcome the previous studies' limitations. The following section describes and discusses different theories such as stakeholder theory, RBV theory, institution theory and electric implementation theory.

### **2.2.1 Stakeholder Theory**

The Stakeholder Theory was suggested by Freeman (1984) and expounded in his book “strategic management: A stakeholder approach. The theory defines stakeholder as any individual or group of individuals who have interest in the firm's objectives. Managers in an organization should put forth associations with the suppliers, employees and business partners (Sundaram and Inkpen, 2004).

Scholars observe that the theory is important; they hold that there should be accountability of the organization externally and internally as business entity activities impacts the external environment. This theory is condemned on the basis of assuming a single-valued objective this is where gains that accrues to a firm's constituencies (Jenson, 2001). Jensen's (2001) states that there are other measures to measure how a firm has performed besides by benefits got by stakeholders. These measures include information flow from senior management to subordinate staff, working organization environment and interpersonal relations within the organization.

Stakeholder theory is relevant to this study because it is aimed at ensuring that the diverse needs of all the stakeholders are well represented. This is achieved through establishing a network of relationships with the stakeholders of the firm they include the suppliers, employees and the customers. This is part of the corporate goals of the firm. In this study, the leaders at the county government aspire to successfully implement strategic plans. To achieve this goal; they should engage the public who is the end-user of these services.

### **2.2.2 Resource Based View Theory**

RBV came to fore in the early 90's after Jay Barney's evaluation study on successful firm management. He examined the mechanisms that a firm could leverage on its resources for building on competitive edge. Barney (2001) posits that the RBV was a factor that was critical which led to the enhancement of the organizational ability to survive within a market that is highly competitive, when it came to develop organizational capacity. The Resource Based View (RBV) brought about the Resource based Theory and it is key in the evaluation of firm capacity and resource management to build competitiveness (Armstrong & Taylor, 2014).

The resource based view theory has highlighted the organizational resources which lead to creation of the valuable factor that enables the business organization to keep on growing transactions as well as attracting new investments. Terziovski (2010) noted that organizational strategies contribute in a significant way in establishing how organizational resources are utilized and distributed when it comes to the facilitation of organizational business operations.

The resources of a firm are indentified to be tangible and intangible by the Resource Based View theory. Ray, Barney and Muhanna (2004) noted that all organizational resources had a substantial contribution to the overall efficiency and effectiveness of an organization. Per West (2012) posits that an organization or a business entity has a likelihood of achieving operational success through ensuring optimization on organizational resources' effective application and use.

All corporate organizations aspire achieving growth through tapping into resources that are best operational as well as through implementation of comprehensive strategies which enable organizations realize their primary mandate as well as objectives (Rosemann & Vom Brocke, 2015). The Resource Based View theory posit that all organizational resources have a competitive factor and are therefore important as they enable the execution organizational processes whose aim is to realize operational objectives. Ray et al., (2004) argues that the commencement phase which achieves competitiveness and corporate growth is the efficient utilization of existing organizational resources.

The Resource Based View theory has compatibility with discussion on strategic planning and execution which is the focus of this paper. The primary role of a county government is to offer a conducive environment for citizens to do businesses and to spur economic growth. The meaning of this is that there must be a pool of resources that is substantial to enable the counties to undertake their operations.



Implementation of strategic plans requires comprehensive physical systems to be integrated and have to be supported by well trained, skilled and competent support team (McKinney, 2015). The county's capacity for executing her operations is mostly subject to its resource base in terms of physical and human resource. The RBV theory, effectively address one of the challenges in strategy implementation at the county government.

### **2.2.3 Institution Theory**

Institutional theory addresses the behavioral patterns of an organization and how its internal challenges affect strategy implementation. Institutional theory provides processes through which structures become authoritative guidelines for social behavior. This theory identifies and examines implications that support legitimacy and survival of organization's culture, including factors such as social environment, culture, regulation including, history tradition, economic motivations/incentives, and the legal environment, whilst recognizing the overall importance of resources (Baumol et al., 2009).

According to institution theorists, Meyer and Rowan (1991); DiMaggio and Powell (1983) institutional settings can largely shape the advancement of formal constitutions in a business or organization, frequently more intensely than market dynamics and pressures. Institutional theory often defines what is appropriate or legitimate (Scott, 2007), and leaves other discharge actions intolerable or still outside consideration (DiMaggio & Powell, 1991).

This affects how organizations make decisions especially on the implementation of strategy. The theory gives helpful framework for examining organizational relationship with its environment while emphasizing on the social norms, rules, values, and expectations, as the main sources of pressure on institutiond (Elwak, 2013).

Institution theory is relevant to this study because it is aimed at ensuring that the diverse needs of all the stakeholders in the institution are well represented. This is achieved through establishing a network of relationships with the stakeholders of the firm who include the suppliers, employees and the customers. This is part of the corporate goals of the firm. In this study, the leaders at the county government aspire to successfully implement strategic plans. To achieve this goal; they should engage the public who is the end-user of these services.

### **2.3 Challenges of Strategic Plans Implementation in Organizations**

The process of implementing strategic plans in any organization is faced by many hindrances and these challenges. The challenges from both within and outside the organization are specific and vary from one organization to another as discussed below. Organizational Leadership- Successful strategy implementation requires organizational leadership that is strong and policies which support the strategy and focus to the day to day activities of a level that is very high (Brache, 2002).

Strategy implementation tests leaders' skills, ability to direct organizational change, motivation skills and ability of developing capabilities and organizational culture for supporting the strategy. Strategy implementation is challenging because there are ranges of activities which require to be implemented and various skills required for performing them, foremost the people's skills.

Need for a shared value among employees and leaders through effective organizational leadership is critical for successful strategy implementation (Brache, 2002). Effective organizational leadership involves promoting and nurturing employee's relationships. Working and unhindered organization information sharing networks provide good medium for management to share organization vision with the employees. Open and frank discussions towards employee's conflicts resolutions ensure that harmonious and cordial employee's relationships are maintained which promotes successful implementation of strategic plans (Atlantic Canada Business Blog, 2007).

Ackel et al. (2012) argues that top management support and commitment should be inclusive, proactive, regular and focused through the execution of the project. Werner et al. (2011) argued that after a strategy is prepared and embraced, it should be adhered to. Cleland (2006) stated that the success of a project can be meaningful if only it can be considered from two vantage points; the degree to which the project's technical performance objective was attained timely and within budget; the provision that the project made to the strategic mission of the enterprise.

Vaidya, Sajeev, and Callender (2006) discovered in their research that top management contribution and performance measurement is crucial. Successful projects need effective internal integration plans, like using external technical experts, choosing experienced project manager etc.

Organization Structure- An organizational structure is the reflection of the organizations reporting relationships and command structures. Every organization needs to ensure that its organization structure supports its strategy (Atlantic Canada Business Blog, 2007). Three focal points in relation to identification of the appropriate structure needed for strategy implementation include; first and foremost, identification of organization's value chain critical activities. These are the primary and support activities crucial to the successful execution of the strategic process.

Secondly, the organization has to isolate the primary activities to be performed internally. Once the critical activities have been identified and isolated, management need to make a decision on whether it will outsource the non-critical activities in order to concentrate on core activities. What is of strategic importance is making decision on what activities to perform internally and which to outsource and it shouldn't be taken lightly by organizations. Besides lower costs, another advantage of outsourcing is that the competitive capabilities can be of benefit to both organizations. An organization can build its resource strengths as well as enhance its capabilities which deliver value to its customers through leveraging collaborative partnerships (Alexander, 1985).

Thirdly, organizations need to build structures around the identified core activities. Aligning structure to strategy pertains making the activities critical to strategy, to be the building blocks of the structure of the organization. Strategy implementation that is new mostly needs new skills and resources. Organizations can't afford a mismatch between their strategy and structure; this is because a mismatch can cause strategy implementation that is poor. Word of caution here is that if the structure that exists requires to be changed radically for a strategy implementation that is successful, then organizations may have to rethink their strategy. The bottom line is the moment a strategy has been chosen then modifications must be done on structure to fit the strategy (Alexander, 1991).

Operational Efficiency- Managing a strategy's implementation and execution is an operations-oriented, make-things-happen activity. Realization of financial performance targets exhibits good progress in achieving the strategic goals of management based on efficient and effective utilization of organization resources (Peppard, 2000).

Stakeholders' Interests - A stakeholder is an individual or an organization that stands to gain or lose from a system's success or failure (Nuseibeh & Easterbrook, 2000). Stakeholders approach to strategic management holds that managers must formulate and implement strategies which satisfy all groups who have declared or conceivable interest in the organization. The important task in this process is to take into account the relationships and interests of all interested parties who include members of staff and other interested groups without compromising the firm's long-term success (Freeman, 1984).

Stakeholders based strategies start with mapping the organizations primary stakeholders and then identifying their characteristics which includes urgency of response, threat or collaboration potential, importance to company survival and influence and interest. Specific stakeholder's characteristic dictates the kind of relation that the firm needs have with them. The formulation of strategies that are unified for knowledge and stakeholder's management is guided by a common context that is established by organizational and networking strategies (Katsoulakos & Katsoulacos, 2007). Carnall (2007) holds that the macro-environment has many factors that will affect implementation of strategic decisions in any organization including political, economic and technological factors. Political factors refer to government policies and laws which can impact positively or negatively on any core areas for business.

New technologies create demand for new processes as well as new products. Technology can decrease production and operational costs, cause innovation and cause quality improvement. The technological developments can help consumers and the firms which provide the products. Environmental factors are climate change as well as the weather. Freedman (2003) observes that with major climatical changes which occur owing to global warming and with greater global environmental awareness, environmental concerns are fast becoming significant issues for organizations. Brache (2002) holds that operational efficiency is central and indeed a cornerstone to successful strategy implementation.

Organizational Culture- Any organizational culture which is not supportive to strategy implementation becomes serious challenge to successful strategy implementation. Existence of camps and divisions among employees due to various reasons is poor organization culture that is not supportive to strategic changes. Organizational leadership need to build strong teams with skills and capabilities required to implement and support strategy. An organization where performance is never measured and rewarded or sanctioned leads to poor organizational culture where performance is at bare minimum.

Organizational culture is a major impediment towards successful realization of the strategic plan. The observations made by Richards (2006) found that at least 60 percent of the firms were unsuccessful in the execution due to inadequate supportive culture for directing the employees' action to affect their support of the current plan to enable its execution. Sharma (2007) argues that the managers are highly involved in establishing strategic plans; it's their duty to align the organizational culture with the strategy in place.

Reeves (2012) opined that training and on-going support for programs is important, more so incase a project is expected to go for a number of years and involves large groups of people. Reeves further added that training is key for raising awareness across all staff and board members and it must be timely. Extent of achievement or otherwise of strategic goals should be continuously monitored and measured and area for improvement identified. It is therefore important to inculcate excellent performance culture amongst employees and introduce performance reward and sanctions system for successful strategy implementation. Reward and sanction system will result to exceptional performance while motivating employees to work hard so as to get rewarded.

Resources – Lack or inadequate resources can impact negatively on the implementation of strategic plans. There are various resources that are considered key contributors towards the implementation of strategic plans. This study will look at human capital resources and budgetary allocation. A study by Lorette (2016) found that financial and human capital was an essential resource of the organization. Well trained employees' are more efficient while their input is valuable towards successful strategy implementation.

The major influencer of strategic success is financial resources and their management. Johnson, Langley, and Melin (2007) defined problems that face organizations in terms of the relationship between strategy and finance. These issues are management for value, funding strategic developments and financial expectations of stakeholders

In order to allocate the capital, it is important to develop a detailed and realistic budget so as to affect the internal changes of strategic plan execution. Further, proper inspection and evaluation of the expenditure process is significant to the achievement of the objective (Badri, Bashiri, & Hejazi, 2013). The costs of strategy implementation includes: establishing what resources and what amounts of each ought to be used in performing firm activities; establishing an estimate of the costs of the resources required in completing the strategy activities; allocating the overall cost estimate to individual work items; and regulating changes to the execution budget (Hrebiniak, 2006).



## **2.4 Measures to Mitigate Strategy Implementation Challenges**

To mitigate strategy implementation challenges the public sector should adopt a flexible organizational structure that supports strategy implementation while accommodating the current needs of the citizens. Prahalad (2009) noted that the structure of the public sector should allow flexibility among employees in order to multi-task. This improves reporting relationships between the employees and improves efficiency in the implementation of strategic plan.

The organizational culture represents the norms and values cultivated in the organization. The public sector should nurture a culture that unites employees towards similar goals. The cultural setting defines how employees relate to one another and this has an effect on the performance of the organization. A supportive culture is inevitable in uniting and encouraging the employees to work towards implementation of strategic plans (Murray, 2011). To mitigate the leadership challenge of implementing strategic plans, the public sector should consider adopting a democratic form of leadership should be adopted to increase inclusion by allowing all the stakeholders to participate in key decisions. This will motivate the employees' by giving them a sense of belonging (Bie & Qvenild, 2012).

A two-way communication is the most appropriate form of communication in the public sector. It provides a feedback mechanism to the higher-level managers. Leaders are expected to uphold and maintain corporate governance practices that will allow open-up communication channels for improved efficiency in decision making and mutual agreements (Burnes, 2007).

A study by the Hay Group, a global management consultancy emphasized the importance of a two-way communication by leaders as an essential tool for successful implementation of a strategic plan (Lamb, 2009). The public sector should make adequate budgetary allocations to support implementation of strategic plans. Songer and Molenaar (2010) insist that the public sector should make sufficient budgetary allocations to support the activities involved in the implementation of strategic plans.

Human capital is an importance resource to the organization since they are the primary source of input to the organization. Employees' make an important contribution on the input of the organization, engaging employees' in training and development programmes helps to sharpen their knowledge and skills (Pearce & Robinson, 2005). The public sector should engage its employees' in constant training and development programmes to improve their skills in the implementation of strategic plans; this will improve their efficiency and minimize supervision costs.

Ngenoh (2014) studied the challenges of executing devolution and planning objectives by the Ministry of Planning and Devolution in Kenya. The research design of this research was a case study. The data acquired from interview guide was analyzed qualitatively through content analysis. It was unveiled that the ministry had come up with mechanisms and strategy of achieving organizational objectives. The respondents revealed that the Ministry had made efforts in mobilizing resources from the government and its international development partners and the savings from better management of available resources.

## **2.5 Empirical Studies and Knowledge Gaps**

Studies on the concept of strategy execution by Pearce and Robinson, 2011; Hill and Johns, 2009; Lynch, 2009; Barney, 2010; Thompson et al, 2009; Machuki and Aosa,2012; Musyoka, 2011; David, 2009; have general perspectives on variables such as structure, culture, leadership and technology and how they affect strategy implementation. Studies focusing on strategy implementation practices such as communication, planning, resource allocation and assignment of tasks have been advanced by Kilali, 2011; Coulter, 2008; Gichohi, 2015; Morill, 2010). Although these studies were conducted on the concept of strategy implementation, they left a gap on the challenges facing strategy implementation which is the focus of the current study.

Similar empirical studies on challenges of implementation of strategic plans have focused on challenges facing strategic plan implementation in other contexts other than the Nairobi County for instance, Kitembe and Were (2014) studied on secondary schools in Kiambu County. Aoko (2016) focused on limitations of strategy execution in NGOs in Migori County while Warui (2016) focused on challenges of strategy implementation at NACADA in Kenya.

There are also methodological gaps. Nartisa, Putans and Muravska (2012) study was both a descriptive survey and comparative. Aoko (2016) was a descriptive cross-sectional study while Semmar (2012) did a longitudinal study for the period between 1980s and 2011 in Morocco. Njogu (2016) used both primary and secondary data and a case study research design in his qualitative research.

The study by Amuti (2017) was a critical literature review on the problems facing the implementation of strategy at the constitutional commissions in Kenya. The observations made by Richards (2006) found that at least 60 percent of the firms were unsuccessful in the implementation of a strategic plan because of inadequate supportive culture to guide the employees' behavior and action to affect their support of the current strategy to enable its execution. Sharma (2007) argues that the managers are highly involved in establishing strategic plans; it is their duty and responsibility to align the organizational culture with the strategy in place.

In their study, Hill and Jones (2010) explain that organizations are unable to implement a strategic plan because of failure by management to integrate their culture with their strategic plans. They insist that organizational culture should support the implementation of strategic plans. Pearce & Robinson (2005) note that organizations fail to succeed in the implementation of strategic plans because of failure by their leaders to promote an innovative culture that allows them to engage and show interest in the employees by expressing support and giving feedback as well as collaborating with the employees rather than controlling them. This is in line with the citation made by Sharma (2007) further argue that unsupportive culture limits interaction, communication this discourages exploratory and learning behavior which contributes negatively towards successful strategy implementation.

Akwara (2010) investigated the challenges of strategy implementation at the Ministry of Co-operative Development and Marketing in Kenya. A case study research design was used to conduct the study and an interview guide administered to the heads of departments. The study findings revealed that the organizational culture, Human resource policy, financial resources policies and procedures, information and operating systems and performance incentives were all an impediment to strategy implementation.

The Ministry of Co-operative Development and Marketing response to these challenges has been minimal and therefore the researcher recommends involvement of all relevant stakeholders in strategy implementation; sourcing for funds from other sources to supplement Ministry of Finance; budgeting in order of priority; establish a Ministerial taskforce to harmonize departmental policies and procedures; revise the human resource policy to make it more responsive; introduce rewards and recognition policy for excellent performers; develop a communication policy; and formulate a monitoring and evaluation policy.

A study by Kirui (2013) sought to investigate the significant institutional factors that influenced the overall push of the authorities to their pre-determined strategic goals. The thematic focus was on organizational culture, structure, leadership and financial resources. Towards achieving this, the study purposively targeted a case of Migori County to form a basis for objective generalization. The county had five local authorities which constituted the target population of 180 staffers.

Sampling was done by proportional stratified sampling to develop ultimate respondents of 90 whose views and opinions led to the study's generalizations. From the identified respondents, interviews and questionnaires were used in collecting data, which was processed and analyzed through descriptive statistics and content analysis.

The study by Kirui (2013) found out that organizational culture, structure, strategic leadership, and financial resources affected implementation of strategic plans in Migori County local authorities. Culturally, poor internationalization of mission and strategic content, lack of participation in making of rules and regulations, lack of operational manuals, insensitive employee development policies, and highly structured downward communication affected employees' mobilization to executing strategic plans. Management did not give employees required independence in performing their implementation duties. In addition, authority was more centralized than decentralized, making employees wait for instructions from the top. The spans of control were relatively big and difficult for efficient control. The long hierarchy derailed most of the essential decisions as information flow delayed to a large extent. Structurally, the authorities were more rigid than flexible as they hardly conducted reviews regularly.

Further, the study by Kirui (2013) revealed that employee leadership dictated execution of strategic plans by involving management, employee support, downward communication, conflict resolution, and employee representation in key decision making. The degree of managerial commitment to strategy execution was inadequate resulting to workers resistance, implying that management didn't have enough support from the shop-floor employees.

Further, the downward communication was strictly formal and missing the requisite personal touch, while conflict resolutions didn't meet the employees' benchmark. Finally, financial resources influenced strategic implementation by budgetary allocations, financial controls, revenue efficiency and external donor support.

This chapter has discussed the theoretical foundations of stakeholder theory, RBV theory and the institutional theory upon which the study is founded. Challenges of implementation of strategic plans as well as measures to mitigate the challenges have been discussed as established by similar local and international studies. The chapter has concluded by reviewing other related empirical studies, summarizing and identifying knowledge gaps which have necessitated undertaking of this study.

## **CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1 Introduction**

In order to address the research objective of the study, a research methodology is necessary. This chapter consisted of the research design to adopt, tools adopted to be used for data was collection and how the data analysis conducted. The philosophy displays the depiction of how the study was led, the arrangement of research, how information was gathered and from whom lastly the information examination strategy that might be received to break down the information keeping in mind the end goal to create the discoveries of the study.

The chapter starts by discussing the research design that was utilized in determining strategic planning and implementation challenges at the Nairobi City County. A research design is the chronological order of things that result to answering research questions. A research design aims at improving the ability of the research in conceptualizing an operational plan in order to be able to embark on the various techniques available and required tasks for the completion of the study.

The chapter also covers the data collection procedure and data analysis. Under data analysis, the researcher explained the method that was used in transforming the collected data to useful information that can be used in decision making. The researcher conducted content analysis to establish the challenges facing the County government of Nairobi in implementing its strategic plan.



### **3.2 Research Design**

Cooper and Schindler (2003) described research design as that method that is procedurally acquired by the researcher and that which enables the researcher to be able to answer questions accurately, validly, objectively, and economically. According to Khan (2008), a research design aims at improving the ability of the research in conceptualizing an operational plan in order to be able to embark on the various techniques available and required tasks for the completion of the study while at the same time ensuring that the procedures used are sufficient enough to acquire valid, objective and precise responses to the research questions.

The research design was based on a case study. A case study refers to an in-depth analysis of an individual, group, institution or event (Cooper & Schindler, 2003). The core reason for carrying out a case study is for the determination of factors as well as relationship among factors which have resulted in the behavior that was studied. It is a framework applied at the point when the limits amongst setting and marvel are not plainly obvious and in which numerous wellsprings of confirmation are utilized.

Yin (1998) describes a case study investigation as an empirical enquiry which researches a situation within its real life context of a unit study that could be an institution, family, community or a person. Case study analyses outline an issue; demonstrate a method for taking care of an issue; or potentially shed light required on research, clinical applications or hypothetical matters. The case study option shall be the most appropriate for this particular intended research.

### **3.3 Data Collection**

Primary data was adopted in this research. The primary data was obtained by use of an interview guide shown in appendix I. The interview guide is preferred for this case study because of its capability to extract information from respondents as well as giving the researcher better insight and understanding of the results from the study. The interview guide enabled the researcher to obtain more current information and elicit information that might not have been captured with the other data collection techniques.

The targeted respondents in this study consisted of 11 senior officers who were well conversant with strategic implementation challenges at the County government of Nairobi. Each ministry produced one respondent giving a total of 11 interviewees. The 11 ministries that provided respondents are; Finance and Economic Planning; Agriculture, Livestock, Cooperatives & Fisheries; ICT, e-Government and communication; Public Service and administration; Land, Housing, Urban Areas and Physical planning; Education, Science and Technology; Trade, Industrialization and Tourism; Health Services; and Social Services, Youth, Sports etc.

The interview guides were structured into various sections. The first focused on the respondents' demographic information while the other sections focused on the study research objectives. To ensure that the research instrument captured information from respondents as intended, the researcher asked open ended questions that gave room for further prodding if any response is not clear.

### **3.4 Data Analysis**

The data was analyzed qualitatively since it was possible to make general conclusions on how data categories were related. This study adopted qualitative analysis since it enabled the researcher to describe, interpret and also criticize the subject matter of the research at the same time because it was difficult to do so numerically. The qualitative analysis was carried out through the use of content analysis.

Content analysis was used to evaluate the response, draw conclusions and to derive recommendations. Content analysis consisted of analyzing the interview responses looking for similarities and difference in order to find themes and to develop categories. According to Khan (2008), content analysis consists of analyzing the contents of documentary materials for example newspapers, magazines, books and content of all verbal materials that can either be printed or spoken. Further, Burns and Burns (2008), insist that content analysis is the systematic qualitative description of the composition of the study's objects or materials.

This chapter has discussed the research methodology that was applied in this study. It has detailed the research design which is a case study that was found to be the most ideal research methodology for identifying strategic planning and challenges facing implementation of strategic plans at Nairobi City County. Primary data collection was done through interviewing Nairobi City management staff while content analyses was used for data analysis purposes.

## **CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS, RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **4.1 Introduction**

The section entails data analysis, findings and interpretation. Findings are displayed in form of continuous prose form. The data is in accordance to the research objectives. This chapter also describes analysis of data followed by a discussion of the research findings. The data was collected by use of an interview guide and was analyzed to establish the strategic planning process and implementation challenges in the county government of Nairobi.

A total of 11 interview guides were prepared targeting the 11 ministries in Nairobi city county. The ministries are; Finance and Economic Planning; Agriculture, Livestock, Cooperatives & Fisheries; ICT, e-Government and communication; Public Service and administration; Land, Housing, Urban Areas and Physical planning; Education, Science and Technology; Trade, Industrialization and Tourism; Environment, Water and Natural resources; Transport Infrastructure, Public works and energy; Health Services; and Social Services, Youth and Sports.

Each Ministry produced one respondent, to make the study more comprehensive and to cover all stakeholders involved in strategy formulation and implementation in Nairobi city county. The head of these ministries who are the CECs were not available due busy work schedules.

The next in command in the county government are chief officers who are senior managers in charge of strategy implementation, evaluation and control. They were suitable to respond to the interview questions as have a key role in the strategy implementation process. The researcher personally conducted the interviews. Care and control was achieved by keeping a register of all the questions asked and their responses.

#### **4.2 Respondents of the Study**

The researcher had targeted to conduct 11 interviews. However, it was only possible to reach out to 8 key informants. It was not possible to reach the rest 3 senior manager as they had travelled out of Nairobi on official duty. This reveals an overall successful response rate of 72.7% which was adequate for the study.

The respondents comprised of key chief officers in the county government in charge of the various ministries in the county which are: Finance and Economic Planning; Agriculture, Livestock, Cooperatives & Fisheries; ICT, e-Government and communication; Public Service and administration; Land, Housing, Urban Areas and Physical planning; Education, Science and Technology; Trade, Industrialization and Tourism; Environment, Water and Natural resources; Transport Infrastructure, Public works and energy; Health Services; and Social Services, Youth and Sports.

The information provided by the 8 respondents was sufficient and relevant enough to make the conclusions deduced by the researcher reliable. They highlighted the various challenges facing the county government of Nairobi and also gave suggestions of mitigation measures that can be undertaken to ensure that strategies are formulated and implemented successfully in Nairobi city county.

#### **4.3 Background Information of the Respondents**

The researcher sought to find out the position held by the key informants, the period of time they had worked in the county government and their role in County's strategic implementation process. The findings reveal that all the key informants were senior managers and they had served in the County government for a period of between 3 and 8 years. This can be explained by the fact that County government have been existent for only 8 years.

The findings also revealed that the senior managers had several roles in County's strategic implementation process. These included communicating the tactical objectives to the junior employees, allocation of resources necessary for the implementation the strategy, and monitoring the implementation work with quick response to emerging deviations from the objectives. The senior managers were also responsible for creating strategic evaluations as well as making structural adjustments.

The key informants also stated that the current time frame for Nairobi City County strategic plan is 5 years. It was observed that five years was the set out time plan that Nairobi City County was expected to implement its strategic plan. This period of time was considered sufficient for enabling Nairobi City County to plan for all the activities, resources and employees as well as aligning them towards strategic goals.

#### **4.4 Strategic Planning at the County**

The researcher implored the key informants to state who was in charge of developing strategic plans in the Nairobi City County. They were asked to state who is responsible for the implementation of the Nairobi City County strategic plans. Further, they were asked to state the time frame of the current Nairobi City County strategic plan.

In response, the key informants stated that the county executive committees develop strategic plans. On the other hand, the senior managers were responsible for implementation of strategic plans. They were also keen to note that other stakeholders like business community, religious groups and opinion leaders took part in the development of strategic plans.

The key informants also stated that the current time frame for Nairobi City County strategic plan is 5 years. It was observed that five years was the set out time plan that Nairobi City County was expected to implement its strategic plan. This period of time was considered sufficient for enabling Nairobi City County to plan for all the activities, resources and employees as well as aligning them towards strategic goals.

#### **4.5 Strategic Plan Implementation Challenges**

The researcher sought to find out if Nairobi City County encountered any challenges when implementing its strategic plan and if Yes what were the specific challenges. In response, the key informants stated that Nairobi City County experienced various challenges. These challenges included organization structure challenges, organization culture challenges, leadership challenges, communication challenges, lack of adequate resources and existence of conflicting organization objectives.

On establishing the various challenges that hampered the process of strategic plan implementation, the study researcher was keen to establish the impact of each of the challenges on implementation of strategic plans. To start with, the key informants were asked to indicate how organizational culture affected implementation of strategic plans by Nairobi City County. In response the key informants stated that the effect was negative.

They consented that there existed many cultures whereby some employees were pro-change while others were opposed to change and advocated for maintenance of the old way of doing things. Bureaucracy lengthened the process of implementation and thus it was not possible to attend to urgent issues that came up. The key informants also stated that was lack of provision for departmental autonomy in decision making and thus decisions were skewed on one side without being inclusive of the sentiments of everyone.



Another challenge was uncertainty of future political environment as different political regimes come up with different modes of operations and this creates inconsistencies in the implementation of strategic plans. However, the key informants noted that the employees had shared values, beliefs and principles which guided the manner in which the employees executed their roles and responsibilities at the Nairobi City County. This painted a picture that culture was outdated and did not support change instead it created a poor perception concerning change.

This led to resistance to change since employees thought through change they would lose their positions. It was discovered that the employees were satisfied with the old ways of doing things (status quo) and feared change. This also affected employees' behaviours and the manner in which the top management interacted with the employees. Although most of the employees embraced the old ways of doing things they indicated that culture united them however this form of unity did not support implementation of strategic plans since most employees were opposed to change. This made it difficult to integrate culture to support implementation of strategic plans.

Secondly, the key informants were asked to indicate ways in which organizational structure affected implementation of strategic plans by Nairobi City County. In response the key informants pointed out the effect was negative. This was characterized by duplication of duties and functions of the employees which led to inefficiencies and increased costs. This implied that the middle level management lacked flexibility and conformed to the decisions of the top level management even when the current needs of a situation did not allow.

This affected efficiency in strategic plan implementation while it denied middle level management flexibility to make decisions that could suite specific needs of a situation. The middle level management had to wait for instructions from the executive to act. A mechanistic organizational structure affected how employees related in the organization; it limited the top management from interacting with their subjects and explaining to them about on the importance of change and how change would affect their roles and responsibilities in the organization.

There also lacked flexibility whereby the employees had to adhere to an already established chain of command. This worked against effective strategic plan implementation as the employee's relations were very poor. As a result some of the employees did not follow the chain of command which was critical in ensuring that orderly execution of organizational activities and decisions. The employees also complained that they felt out of place and failed to understand the significance of introducing change at Nairobi City County. They felt that the management enforced things on them for their own gains.

The finding revealed that the organizational structure adopted by the Nairobi City County hindered adoption and implementation of change. Because of the rigid nature of the structural setting at Nairobi City County, it was impossible to align the organizational structure in a manner that it could support implementation of strategic plans. Further, the findings revealed that the structural framework did not accommodate the changing needs of the customers.

Thirdly, the key informants were asked to indicate how leadership styles affected implementation of strategic plans by Nairobi City County. In response the key informants indicated that effect was negative. The specific effect included lack of ethical and moral conduct, lacked of clear vision articulation to foster the execution of the strategic plan, lack of inspiration and motivation to the employees involved in the execution of the strategic plan, lack of clear policies to conduct monitoring and evaluation geared towards successful execution of the strategic plan and corruption and nepotism among the senior management. Other leadership challenges included poor planning and prioritization of development intervention, political influence, external political opposition, insubordination and unequal distribution of resources and inability to plan.

The interviewees also indicated that the executive made little efforts to involve the employees in key decision for instance implementation of strategic plans. The also indicated that the executive did not explain to the employees about the vision and the mission. In this regard, they just gave instructions without showing any form of commitment that the executive had in ensuring that Nairobi City County was successful in implementing strategic plans. The interviewees contended that Nairobi City County's top management failed to effectively provide an enabling environment to support implementation of strategic plans.

The executive adopted a transactional leadership style where all the processes and processes were centralized in one place. This style of leadership led to inefficient decisions which impacted negatively on implementation of strategic plans.

Fifth, the key informants were asked how communication style adopted by Nairobi City County affected implementation of strategic plans. The key informants reiterated that the effect was negative. To expound on their response they stated that there was a one-way form of communication from the top management to the lower level employees. The top management was not interested with feedback from the lower level employees. In some cases, the top management ignored insights and ideas from their juniors making it very difficult for them to exercise control and monitor their juniors. There was also lack of proper communication mechanisms among departments which resulted to lack of proper coordination among the departments involved in the execution of the strategic plan.

The findings also revealed that majority of the employees at the County did not have an idea of the existence of the current strategic plan which was an indication that they were completely ignored in key decisions. The lower level management was not involved in meetings and their suggestions and recommendations were not given key consideration. This created impediments towards implementation of strategic plans. The findings indicated that the management did not consider feedback mechanism from the lower level employees among other stakeholders whose views was important in enhancing success in the implementation of strategic plans.

Sixth, the key informants were asked to state whether the County has adequate resources (including human resources) to effectively implement the County's strategic plan. In response the key informants stated that the county government was deficient of various resources including financial and human resource. They also added that there was the challenge of inappropriate utilization of the available resources.

The financial resources deficiency was characterized by lack of proper budgeting for the implementation of the strategic plan, insufficient funds for the implementation of the strategic plan, delay by the national government in disbursement of finances for implementing strategic plan and lack of direct control of finances under ones authority for the implementation of the strategic plan. Other financial challenges included low resource mobilization and financial reserve collapses, bureaucratic financial processes, lack of funding for programmes and projects and poor prioritization of funding financial projects. On the other hand, the human resource deficiency was characterized by lack of relevant skills required in the execution of the strategic plan, lack of a proper employee development system, absence of performance measurement system for the employees, poor reward system for employee performance and failure to follow the project management approach in the execution of the strategic plan. Poor collection of revenue. Other human resource challenges included disparity of salary scales between the old and new employees, inadequate technical personnel, lack of staff induction/orientation for skills development and lack of skill alignment.

Finally, the key informants were asked to indicate whether conflicting organizational goals and responsibilities affect implementation of the County's strategic plan. All the informants were on the affirmative. To explain their response they stated that conflicting organizational goals and responsibilities resulted to duplication of roles and creation of uncertainties as the employees were not sure of what is expected of them. These dampened the process of implementation of the strategic plan.

#### **4.6 Remedies to Strategic Plan Implementation Challenges**

The researcher inquired if there existed any solutions to strategic plan implementation. The key informants responded agreed that indeed there exists solutions to these challenges. They cited several solutions which included designing a new structure to allow integration of the duties of the Nairobi City Council with those of the devolved units. This would help to counter the organization structure challenges. The study also recommended that the county government should adopt the transformational style of leadership where the top leaders lead by example and have an ear to the junior employees. This would help solve communication challenges and challenges emanating from use of poor leadership styles. The key informants also suggested that the county government should adopt a more flexible organization culture.

#### **4.7 Discussion of Findings**

The major aim of this research was establishing the challenges facing the County government of Nairobi in implementing its strategic plan. Strategies assist to identify necessary courses of action and allocation of resources necessary to achieve the set goals (Alexander, 2001). To start with, the study established that Nairobi City County experienced various challenges. These challenges included organization structure challenges, organization culture challenges, leadership challenges, communication challenges, lack of adequate resources and existence of conflicting organization objectives. These challenges affected the implementation of strategic plans negatively in that it slowed the process as well as resulting to inefficiencies and increased costs.

The specific organization culture challenges included existence of many cultures, bureaucracy, lack of provision for departmental autonomy in decision making, uncertainty of future political environment. The observations made by Richards (2006) found that at least 60 percent of the firms were unsuccessful in the implementation of a strategic plan due to lack of a supportive culture to guide the employees' behavior and action to influence their support of the current strategy to enable its implementation.

The specific leadership styles included lack of ethical and moral conduct, lack of clear vision articulation to foster the execution of the strategic plan and lack of inspiration and motivation to the employees involved in the execution of the strategic plan. Vaidya, Sajeev, and Callender (2006) found out in their study that top management support and performance measurement is critical.

Other leadership challenges included poor planning and prioritization of development intervention, political influence, external political opposition, insubordination and unequal distribution of resources and inability to plan.

As indicated by the findings, the specific communication style challenges included existence of a one-way form of communication from the top management to the lower level employees and lack of proper communication mechanisms among departments which resulted to lack of proper coordination among the departments involved in the of the strategic plan.

Lack of adequate resources encompassed both financial and human resource. The important task in this process is to take into account the relationships and interests of all interested parties who include members of staff and other interested groups without compromising the firm's long-term success (Freeman, 1984).

The specific financial challenges included inappropriate utilization of the available resources, lack of proper budgeting, insufficient funds for the implementation of the strategic plan, delay by the national government in disbursement of finances for implementing strategic plan and lack of direct control of finances under one's authority for the implementation of the strategic plan.

Other financial challenges included low resource mobilization and financial reserve collapses, bureaucratic financial processes, lack of funding for programmes and projects and poor prioritization of funding financial projects. A study by Lorette (2016) found that financial and human capital was an essential resource of the organization.

The specific human resource challenges included lack of relevant skills required in the execution of the strategic plan, lack of a proper employee development system, absence of performance measurement system for the employees, poor reward system for employee performance and failure to follow the project management approach in the execution of the strategic plan. According to United Nations Human Settlements Programme [UN-HABITAT] (2010), development planning requires that the skills and capacities of planning professionals, as well as those of other urban stakeholders, are continuously revisited. Lack of training forums to build up capacity of personnel.



Other human resource challenges included disparity of salary scales between the old and new employees, inadequate technical personnel, lack of staff induction/orientation for skills development and lack of skill alignment. Further, the study findings showed that there was the challenge of conflicting organizational goals and responsibilities affect implementation of the County's strategic plan. Brache (2002) holds that operational efficiency is central and indeed a cornerstone to successful strategy implementation.

#### **4.7.1 Comparison with Empirical Studies**

These findings agree with those of the observations made by Richards (2006) who found that at least 60 percent of the firms were unsuccessful in the execution of a strategic plan due to lack of a supportive culture to guide the employees' behavior and action to influence their support of the current strategy to enable its execution. The findings are also concurrent with the assertion of Hill and Jones (2010) who argued that organizations are unable to implement a strategic plan because of failure by management to integrate their culture with their strategic plans. They insisted that organizational culture should support the execution of strategic plans.

The outcomes concur with those of Akwara (2010) who investigated the challenges of strategy execution at the Ministry of Co-operative Development and Marketing in Kenya. The study findings revealed that the organizational culture, Human resource policy, financial resources policies and procedures, information and operating systems and performance incentives were all an impediment to strategy execution.

Further, these findings agree with those of Kirui (2013) who revealed that employee leadership affected execution of strategic plans through managerial involvement, employee support, downward communication, conflict resolution, and employee representation in key decision making. The study by Kirui (2013) also found out that organizational culture, structure, strategic leadership, and financial resources affected implementation of strategic plans in Migori County local authorities.

#### **4.7.2 Comparison with Theories**

The study findings are consistent with the propositions of institutional theory that behavioral patterns of an organization and its internal challenges affect strategy implementation (Baumol et al., 2009). The study findings are also concurrent with the propositions of the Resource Based View theory which posits that all organizational resources have a competitive factor and are therefore important as they enable the execution organizational processes whose aim is to realize operational objectives. Ray et al., (2004) argues that the commencement phase which achieves competitiveness and corporate growth is the efficient utilization of existing organizational resources.

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

### **5.1 Introduction**

The section gives a summary the findings done objectively. The study also outlines conclusions of the study based on the findings. Further, the chapter gives the recommendations which the researcher harmonized by suggesting further studies that can be looked at by scholars.

The main objective of the study was to establish the challenges facing the County government of Nairobi in implementing its strategic plan. Based on the study findings the study concluded that the Nairobi City County experienced challenges in implementing its strategic plan.

The study recommends that Nairobi City County should come up with proper human resource policies which have provision for capacity building through training. This study experienced various limitations. To begin with, due to sensitivity nature of the information, the study was hampered by getting the right information from the city county.

### **5.2 Summary**

The main research objective was establishing the challenges facing the County government of Nairobi in implementing its strategic plan. The study established that Nairobi City County experienced various challenges.

These challenges included organization structure challenges, organization culture challenges, leadership challenges, communication challenges, lack of adequate resources and existence of conflicting organization objectives.

The specific organization culture challenges included existence of many cultures, bureaucracy, lack of provision for departmental autonomy in decision making, uncertainty of future political environment. The specific organization structure challenges included duplication of duties and functions of the employees and lack of flexibility. The specific leadership styles included lack of ethical and moral conduct, lacked of clear vision articulation to foster the execution of the strategic plan, lack of inspiration and motivation to the employees involved in the execution of the strategic plan, lack of clear policies to conduct monitoring and evaluation geared towards successful execution of the strategic plan and corruption and nepotism among the senior management. Other leadership challenges included poor planning and prioritization of development intervention, political influence, external political opposition, insubordination and unequal distribution of resources and inability to plan.

As indicated by the findings, the specific communication style challenges included existence of a one-way form of communication from the top management to the lower level employees and lack of proper communication mechanisms among departments which resulted to lack of proper coordination among the departments involved in the execution of the strategic plan. Lack of adequate resources encompassed both financial and human resource.

The specific financial challenges included inappropriate utilization of the available resources, lack of proper budgeting for the implementation of the strategic plan, insufficient funds for the implementation of the strategic plan, delay by the national government in disbursement of finances for implementing strategic plan and lack of direct control of finances under ones authority for the implementation of the strategic plan. Other financial challenges included low resource mobilization and financial reserve collapses, bureaucratic financial processes, lack of funding for programmes and projects and poor prioritization of funding financial projects.

The specific human resource challenges included lack of relevant skills required in the execution of the strategic plan, lack of a proper employee development system, absence of performance measurement system for the employees, poor reward system for employee performance and failure to follow the project management approach in the execution of the strategic plan. Lack of training forums to build up capacity of personnel. Other human resource challenges included disparity of salary scales between the old and new employees, inadequate technical personnel, lack of staff induction/orientation for skills development and lack of skill alignment.

Further, the study findings showed that there was the challenge of conflicting organizational goals and responsibilities affect implementation of the County's strategic plan. These challenge caused duplication of roles and creation of uncertainties as the employees were not sure of what is expected of them. These dampened the process of implementation of the strategic plan.

### **5.3 Conclusion**

From the results, a conclusion is drawn that the Nairobi City County experienced challenges in implementing its strategic plan. The specific challenges included organization structure and organization culture challenges. Other challenges included leadership challenges, communication challenges, lack of adequate resources and existence of conflicting organization objectives.

The study also concluded that these challenges affected the implementation of strategic plans negatively. Hence, existence of these challenges slowed the process as well as resulting to inefficiencies and increased costs. The existence of these challenges such as bureaucracy introduced loopholes which promoted corruption.

Further, the study concluded that there exists remedies to these challenges. These remedies were such as designing a new structure to allow integration of the duties of the Nairobi City Council with those of the devolved units. Adoption of a transformational style of leadership would help solve communication challenges and challenges emanating from use of poor leadership styles. There was also the remedy of adoption of a more flexible organization culture.

#### **5.4 Recommendations of the Study**

A recommendation is given that Nairobi City County should come up with proper human resource policies which have provision for capacity building through training. This would ensure that the employees are competent, which would translate to better performance and successful implementation of the strategic plan.

The study recommends that Nairobi City County should embrace diversity in its culture. This would give room for quick adjustment to changes and inclusion of all stakeholders in decision making irrespective of their culture. Through this the implementation of the strategic plan would be enhanced and more effective.

Further, the study recommends that Nairobi City County should consider adopting a flexible organizational structure whereby decisions and functions of the County can be decentralized to enhance flexibility and efficiency in decision making and procedures. This will improve efficiency in operations at the County government and boost the quality of services offered to the public. The management should consider reviewing the structure periodically to counter environmental changes.

## **5.5. Limitations of the Study**

This study experienced various limitations. To begin with, due to sensitivity nature of the information, the study was hampered by getting the right information from the city county. Further, the suspicion normally associated with research was experienced and was solved by assuring the respondent of utmost confidentiality and disclosing the academic purpose and intention of the study.

Secondly, there was trouble in accessing the targeted respondent. The limitation was moderated by contacting the respondents beforehand and making appointments with them on the appropriate time to conduct the interviews. Additionally, some respondents were biased in giving the right information to the researcher which may have resulted to inaccurate data that could not be relied on by the study. To counter this challenge the researcher compared the responses with past literature related to this study, although the area of study is unique.

The researcher also experienced hesitance by respondents to give their feedback as they feared it would be used against them. To mitigate this, the researcher acquired a letter of introduction from the university that guaranteed the respondents that the feedback would be utilized for scholarly purposes and would be held in confidence. The researcher also sought permission from the management of Nairobi City County before interviewing them.



## **5.6 Suggested Areas of Further Research**

The study recommends that a similar study be conducted but focus on a different county. This would help to compare whether different counties experience similar challenges. Thus, this would guide the policy makers in the government to formulate policies that aid in successful implementation of strategic plans.

Being that this study was qualitative, the study suggests that a quantitative study should be conducted. This would assist in measuring the magnitude of influence of the various challenges on the implementation of strategic plans. This would also help to establish which challenge hinders the implementation of strategic plans to a greater extent.

The study also recommends that a study seeking to establish the impact of other challenges not captured in this study be conducted. For instance, a study seeking to establish the effect of external challenges constituted of political, legal, ecological and economic challenges on implementation of strategic plans. The study also recommends that a study seeking to establish the impact of successful implementation of strategic plan on achievement of vision 2030 be conducted as all government strategic plans are aligned with the vision 2030.

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## **APPENDICES**

### **Appendix I: Interview Guide**

This interview guide is designed to collect data that will help in better understanding strategic planning and implementation challenges in the county government of Nairobi, Kenya. The data collected by this interview guide will be held with strict confidentiality.

#### **PART A: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION**

- 1) What is your current position in the county government of Nairobi?
- 2) How long have you worked at Nairobi City County Government?
- 3) What is your role in the County's strategic implementation process?

#### **PART B: STRATEGIC PLANNING AT THE COUNTY**

- 4) Who is in charge of developing strategic plans in the Nairobi City County?
- 5) Who is responsible for the implementation of the Nairobi City County strategic plans?
- 6) What is the time frame of the current Nairobi City County strategic plan?

#### **PART C: STRATEGIC PLAN IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES**

- 7) What are some of the challenges that affect the implementation of the County's strategic plan
- 8) Please share with me ways in which organizational structure affects implementation of strategic plans by Nairobi City County. Expound on your answer.
- 9) In your opinion, how does organizational culture adopted by Nairobi City County affect the implementation of strategic plans?

10) Please share with me how leadership styles adopted by Nairobi City County affect implementation of strategic plans?

11) Please share with me how communication style adopted by this County affects implementation of strategic plans? Please explain.

12) Does your County have adequate resources (including human resources) to effectively implement the County's strategic plan?

13) In your opinion, do conflicting organizational goals and responsibilities affect implementation of the County's strategic plan?

**PART D: OVERCOMING THE STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES**

How do you address challenges to strategy implementation?

Thank you for your co-operation



## Appendix II: Introduction Letter



**UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI**  
**SCHOOL OF BUSINESS**

Telephone: 020-2059162  
Telegrams: "Varsity", Nairobi  
Telex: 22095 Varsity

P.O. Box 30197  
Nairobi, Kenya

DATE...15/11/2018

**TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN**

The bearer of this letter ...CATHERINE MWENDE MORRIS.....

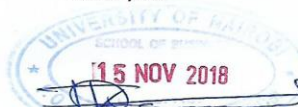
Registration No.....DGL/83879/2018.....

is a bona fide continuing student in the Master of Business Administration (MBA) degree program in this University.

He/she is required to submit as part of his/her coursework assessment a research project report on a management problem. We would like the students to do their projects on real problems affecting firms in Kenya. We would, therefore, appreciate your assistance to enable him/her collect data in your organization.

The results of the report will be used solely for academic purposes and a copy of the same will be availed to the interviewed organizations on request.

Thank you.



**PROF. JAMES M. NJIHA**  
**DEAN, SCHOOL OF BUSINESS**

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## Appendix III: Plagiarism Report

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 By Catherine Mwendu Morris

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