ENVIRONMENTAL UNCERTAINTY AND STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION WITHIN PRIVATE CHARTERED UNIVERSITIES IN KENYA

BY

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DECLARATION

This research project is the product of my own work and is not the result of anything done in collaboration. It has not been previously presented to any other institution.

SIGNATURE …………………………………….. DATE …………...…………….

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

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DEDICATION

The work is dedicated to my best friends. My son Mark and my loving wife Elizabeth, thanks for your support and inspiration.

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To all my friends and colleagues who played a major role through your ideas and encouragement, I do thank you. I do sincerely thank my parents for giving me an opportunity and the ability to go to school. Thus far, my God, you are Ebenezer. Lastly, my heartfelt appreciation goes to my supervisor Professor Evans Aosa guiding, directing and supporting me accordingly. Prof. Aosa, I do acknowledge you for every merit this work may have.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

CUE   Commission for University Education

CPU   Chartered Private Universities

DVC – AA   Deputy Vice Chancellor – Academic Affairs

KARI   Kenya Agricultural Research Institute

KEMRI   Kenya Medical Research Institute

OST   Open Systems Theory of firms

HELB   Higher Education Loans Board

SPSS   Statistical Package for Social Sciences

VC   Vice Chancellor

ABSTRACT

Strategy implementation contributes greatly to business success. However, when strategies are poorly implemented, managers spend more time re aligning these strategies to meet the objective of their business. Many strategies are not successful in the business operations this is due to improper study of the business environment. This paper is focused on the adoption of effective strategies and what needs to be considered in an uncertain business environment. Early scholars of management like Knight (1912), made initial efforts to understand uncertainty. They described this event as the instability and the dynamic nature of the business environment. The study objectives were to establish the impact of environmental uncertainty on the adoption of strategy in the Kenyan Private Chartered Universities and to determine the approaches that private universities employ to reduce the effects of environmental uncertainty. The inquiry employed a cross-sectional study design.

This study considered the Universities that are Private, Chartered and are registered and authorized by the Commission for University Education (CUE) to run education in Kenya. There are a total of seventeen (17) Universities. The study collected data from the top managers; these included the Vice Chancellors, their deputies, registrars and Heads of strategy management teams. Questionnaires were used in gathering primary facts for the study. Standard deviation, mean scores, percentages, and frequency distribution tables were used in data presentation. Then the results from questions that were open ended were coded. Mean and Standard deviation were applied for the Likert scale responses. Recommendations and conclusions concerning the study were extracted from the outcome of the research. The study established that environmental uncertainties greatly influence strategy implementation within private chartered universities in Kenya and that universities employ various strategies in dealing with the effect of environmental uncertainty, they include: coming up with a register of risks and mitigating measures; concentrate on co programs; controlling of costs; ensuring quality education is offered; ensuring a good student body; have less aggressive strategy; have the right information about the costumers; tailor products to suit the current market. The study recommends that private Universities should be encouraged to lean more on areas like research and other areas of activities that are income generating instead of highly depending on tuition fees. This can be done through seeking affiliations with research institutes like KEMRI and KARI. They should also seek bilateral agreements with the government seeking the introduction of subsidized programmes for low income qualified students. This can be done through grants and scholarships instead of loans from HELB which is questionable on how they deal with private university students. Universities should conduct continuous monitoring and evaluation of strategies adapted to ensure that their strategies are always at per with the dynamic and uncertain environments they operate in. it is also recommended that Private Universities should embrace strategic leadership as this helps these institutions to become more competitive. The study recommends replication of the study in public universities. The study also recommends a comparative analysis between Private and Public Universities performance in relation to the effects of environmental uncertainty on their strategies.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Implementation of good strategic plans contributes greatly to business success.

As illustrated by Kiruthi (2011), organizations with appropriate plans and strategies fail as a result of poor implementation. According to Aosa (2012), developing good plans is useless unless they are translated into action in the implementation stage. To guarantee the survival of any entity, the ability, and efficient management of the firm, strategic skills for business management is put to test. This is seen by how effective they are in implementing strategies in a dynamic business environment. Environmental uncertainty influences and affects the decision making and strategy implementation process of any organization diversely as depicted by past researchers. Scott (2005) points out that escalated levels of uncertainty in organizations translates to inadequacy in strategy competitiveness and declining planning process of firms. Xu and Meyer (2013) noted that strategy implementation entails making resources and capabilities in order to achieve objectives and targets set. It requires that firm's internal and external environments are in sync.

The association among firms and the environment can be derived from the application of the Open Systems Theory of firms (OST). The theory clearly shows the idea that firms are strongly affected by their environments (Bastedo, 2004). To guarantee effective strategic control and management, firms need to have sufficient knowledge and understanding of their environment (Davis & Powell, 2012). The Open Systems Model is a more current and relevant centered on the changing management models which purposes to construct a fit, innovative and a robust system in a changing and unpredictable environment. It is very

important to master the model to enhance strategic goal attainment as the implementation process relies on the management model the organization adopts (Alexander, 2005).

The higher education sector is experiencing increased competition due to the dynamic activities in the environment which stimulates multiple changes as Fehnel (2001) contends. The private varsities have experienced massive growth in the recent past despite the difficulties they face. Among the problems, are fiscal shortages, inadequate capacity to enroll the desired number of students, and limited financial resources (Mathooko, 2013). According to Al-Fattal, (2010), further evidence exists in proving the high competition in this sector, escalating the challenges in the private universities. In addition, the private varsities strive to maintain their ranking in the market so as to attract more students and stakeholders into the institutions. Using the Kenyan example where there are thirty private universities across the country, seventeen (17) have been recognized and accredited by the CUE (Commission for University Education). So as to maintain the position and ranking status, these institutions require having in place viable strategy implementation policies ensure survival in the dynamic and uncertain environment.

1.1.1 Environmental Uncertainty

Various environmental variables affect organizations differently depending on their geographical locations; such as the dynamic nature of these environments. Many organizational choices encompassing strategic plans are influenced by these variables. The occurrence of uncertainty is sidelined in various studies on strategy management. It is costly to ensure successful implementation of organizational strategies in uncertain conditions. The costs emerge inform of unforeseen outcomes, lost opportunities as well as negative effects as illustrated by (Abbott, 2010).

Early scholars of management like March and Herbert (1958) made the initial efforts to fathom uncertainty. These scholars were aware of the instability and dynamic nature of the business environment, as illuminated in the study by Milliken, (1987), regarding the association amid organizational strategy and operating environment. An environmental uncertainty can be understood as instability in business environment as well as the uncertain alterations taking place in the outside environment. The outcome is shown in (and Srinivasan, Mukherjee, & Gaur, 2011) which states that organizations are unable to understand and measure the extent of environmental changes as well as its effect on the firms.

The differences in customer tastes and preferences, technological changes, product demand and supply fluctuation and resources form the characteristics of the dynamic nature of the business environment according to (Yeh, Hsu & Chang, 2013). These conditions demand that firms establish the capacity to incorporate the changes because they have a significant impact on the organizations strategic competitive advantage. More so, firms are needed to assess their strategies and employ various engagement rules due to the rapid changes in the environmental uncertainty (Xu & Meyer 2013). Based on Huang (2013), firms face concurrent multiple uncertainties in the business environment due to the multidimensional nature of the environmental uncertainty.

Evidently, studying organizational environment uncertainty is vital in addressing the selection of practical strategies that ensure good strategies. A firm's strategic decisions illustrate its future and therefore, need careful consideration as the future is uncertain and unprintable. Focusing and solving environmental uncertainty is very instrumental in

organizations. The very reasons studies are conducted on the effects of uncertainty on organizations strategy implementation process and activities.

The forces that sandwich the firm and influences its operations and survival are what makes up the environment hence every organization is driven by some environmental forces. Harrison (2006) reveals to us the composition of the business environment as comprised of various relationships created by stakeholders in the firm's environment, both at an organization's decision and individual level. The management of any institution dedicates resources and effort to reduce the effect of the environmental uncertainty forces on the institution's operations (Lambert, & Knemeyer, 2004). In an effort to be effective and efficient institutions need to cope with both internal and external events in the environment which are very instrumental and are always unexpected as stipulated by (Welch, 2005).

The institutions external and immediate internal environment is complex, dynamic, and rich in resources and usually drives the operation of the institution. Therefore, the institution cannot afford to operate independently without them (Lawal, 2010). The institution's uncertainty level increases with the level of complexity and instability in the environment, this uncertainty increases the firm's dependence on the environmental factors and forces, as they directly guide and influence strategic plans implementation. The institution's environment is part of the institution due to the symbiotic relationship that the environmental forces create between the two, and the dynamic nature of the environment makes institutions information volatile and becomes obsolete very fast (Drejer, 2002).

1.1.2 Strategy Implementation

To guarantee the success of any business, it's crucial to operationalize a strategic plan. The aspects sought in the process are "who, where, when and how" questions which address the attainment of firm objectives and goals. The environmental scanning, SWOT analysis and identification of strategic goals precede strategy implementation stage. Hrebiniak, (2006) revealed that strategy implementation is the hardest managerial job there is in developing the organization strategy. According to Noble, (1999), strategic plan implementation is an expertise while strategy formulation can be a science as it follows a certain procedure. This is why complications emerge during the strategy implementation stage even after a thorough process in the formulation stage. Strategy implementations as explained in the strategy implementation of the Chinese cooperation in the white paper 2006, is the current leading challenge in managing co-operations.

Gottschalk and Gudmundsen (2009), depicts that firms are reluctant in adjusting to the changes in the environment, and in most circumstances they find themselves trying to repair and solve the mess caused by their inability to adjust to these changes. This is especially due to institutions failing to prioritize in strategy implementation, evaluation, and monitoring process. Various explanations emerge that affect the effective strategy implementation process; these include institutions leadership systems, controls, and coordination in these firms. While strategy formulation comprises creativity, intellectual activity entailing analysis and synthesis of aspects, implementation is complicated and consumes most time of management units (Gottschalk & Gudmundsen, 2009).

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The connecting link between strategy formulation and control is the implementation process. A high percentage of around 80% of organizations have good strategies according to Cater and Pucko (2010), however, only 14% have succeeded in effectively implementing these strategies. Further at least 70% of institutions come up with good strategies but fail to implement them well. The questions posed by Egelholf (1993) include: "which is more difficulty, strategy formulation or implementation? Should firms formulate or develop innovative strategic plans or scan the external and internal environment before strategizing?" He highlights that a good and innovative strategy is useless and meaningless unless it's implemented effectively. Hailing on related studies, Zaribaf and Bayrami (2010) discovered a great number of top management executives use much resources and time formulating and developing innovative strategies but fail to avail enough means during the implementation stage.

Cater and Pucko, (2010), clarifies that implementation process is the hardest stage in the planning process. They indicate the requirements which incorporate an understanding of business, market opportunity assessment, creativity and flexibility in implementation among others as being vey pivotal. The implementation process entails the effort of the entire levels of management in the organization working together with the top management of the institution.

1.1.3 The Kenyan Higher Education Sector

Sifuna (1998) indicates the role assigned to higher education sector after Kenya attained independence in 1963 as one that should promote and enhance social economic growth and development in the country. The Kenyan higher education dates back to 1922 historically where Makerere University was established to represent the east African countries as a

technical institution. The Royal Technical College was established in Nairobi in 1956 to cater for the increased demand of training in the region; it attained the university college status in 1963, and thereafter in 1970 it became the University of Nairobi, being the first Kenyan university.

In an attempt to offer quality training to the entire qualified citizens, the Kenyan government increased the higher education sector in the next ten years that followed. This came with its problem, limited capacity to accommodate all. As a solution to this problem, 21 new universities were established with a few only operating with Interim Letters of Authority; this increased the enrolment rate to universities in the country. For instance, enrolment rate in 1970 was 3, 443 (Sifuna, 1998); in 2013 the number stood at 67,558; and 240,550 students were enrolled in 20013/14 with a potential to increase further. According to a survey done by the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (2014) Private Universities have seen increase in their enrollment. Within the academic year 2007/2008, a total of 21, 132 was enrolled in Eleven universities. As at the year this survey was done in the years 2013/2014, the numbers had increased to over 45, 672.

Due to increase in expansion ambitions; quality is the main casualty as the institution is likely to encounter problems such as shortage of funding, escalated demand for education both socially and privately, over-ambitious strategic plans and policies, and poor or low research ability and quality which derail the value and quality of education in the country. In an attempt to meet and satisfy the private education demand, the varsities introduced the module II and sandwich programs which resulted in increased enrolments as they were cheaper compared to the private universities' tuition fees. This program by public varsities

across the country negatively impacted on the private university enrolment rates, resulting in diminishing profits and revenues in these institutions. Many Kenyans cannot afford the cost of private university education due to high fees charged; this is influenced by the over-reliance on tuition fee as the main source of income in these institutions. Perception by many Kenyans that public universities render better quality of education in relation to private universities forms another challenge that is killing these institutions.

1.2 Research Problem

The complexity of the University structures, culture, size, values, and management systems involved in managing privately owned universities makes strategic plan implementation a huge and important undertaking. Implementation of a strategic plan is an important undertaking and is designed by many firms as a routine and not a pre-planned process (Cater & Pucko, 2010). Competitive and effectively implemented strategies targets gaining profits and stabilizing organizations against forces in the market that destabilizes the business environment in which they operate (Porter, 1980). The ability of firms to effectively implement strategies enables them to gain a competitive advantage over rivals in the uncertain markets. Despite the complexity in the strategy implementation process and time involved, the strategic management team need to keenly address the dynamic environmental nature of the market and uncertainty that the future holds (Dusek, 2006).

The gap that hinders attainment of organizations goals emerges when the organization strategies are not properly and effectively executed. According to Pferrer and Suffon (2006), failure to achieve firm goals creates anxiety in decision makers as they face the pressure to ensure the strategic plans of the firm becomes executed plans rather than shelved plans. Also, a gap in strategic plan implementation is created by the inability of the

organization to translate existing information and knowledge into useful action plans. Fehnel (2001) points out that there has been an escalating competition in universities and colleges under the rapid changes in the dynamic conditions in the environment in the recent past. The main ideal in the above suggestion is that the strategic plans require being fully executed using viable implementation models. The environmental realities ought to be put under consideration in the piloting, monitoring, evaluating, innovating, and implementing the strategies. Alternatively put, there is need to study the risks, uncertainties involved in order to ascertain that new strategies play a role in attaining the main objectives of the institution.

In a period where the higher education sector is facing rapid and uncertain changes due to government regulations and other factors, strategy implementation becomes an important issue if these universities are to achieve their purpose. According to an article published on the 19th of January 2018 by The Standard Newspaper, tough times lay ahead of Universities as they register low number of student enrollments. Out of the over 600,000 who sat for the Kenya Certificate of Secondary School Education exams, only over 70,000 were able to score a C Plus to join the public universities (The Standard Newspaper, 19th January 2018). This has left Private Universities hard hit and struggling to remain afloat the National Government seeks to bring in more regulations in the higher education sector.

Diverse studies have been conducted attributing to many organizational responses to changing environments and strategy execution process. The primary goal of strategy implementation studies, according to Karimi, (2007), is the desire to get solutions or remedy to inefficiency in strategy formulation and implementation processes. Additionally,

Mathooko (2013) holds a view that dynamism is brought by the institution's internal competition. Lastly, Holowka (2015), points out that at least 70 % of organizations that come up with good strategies fail during the implementation stage. This is caused by the diverse issues that they have to deal within the environment. To wrap it all up, the various views depict the reality that face institutions that are unprepared to handle the uncertainties in the environment while executing their strategies. Therefore, this investigation sought to respond to the following research probe: what's the influence of environmental uncertainty on implementation of business strategy within Kenya's CPU?

1.3 The Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the research encompassed:

i. To determine the impact of environmental uncertainty on strategy adoption within private chartered universities in Kenya.

ii. To determine the approaches that private universities employ to reduce the effects of environmental uncertainty.

1.4 Value of the Study

Limited understanding and experiencing uncertainty in the environment make decision making process very expensive as indicated by Abbott, (2005). The research would be of importance to other researchers who would be interested to carry out research in this field of study. It will be of help in identifying the research gaps that they would fill. It will also be used in deepening practical research in strategy implementation within organizations of higher learning.

The study results are important for the prosperity of Kenya's private chartered higher education learning institutions. They will clearly be used by strategists and policy makers within these institutions. The expectations hold that the outcome will avail the ways to

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handle the risk and uncertainties that result in poor strategic plan implementation process. The beneficiaries of the study encompass both private and public domains in the higher education sector as valuable information will be easily accessible regarding good strategy implementation. Since the topic of environmental uncertainty is very wide and limited research is available in the field, the academicians stand to benefit on this research as it will form one of the bases upon which to build their studies and researches on.

The research is intended to improve and add value to management systems by contributing to various management models like Collis approach and the uncertainty management models aboard. These approaches will aid organizations and strategic management units to counter environmental uncertainty in strategic plan implementation and business management processes. The interrelationship between organizations and their environment and environmental management is covered in this study under the open systems model or theory.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The section tries to give a recap of information from previous researchers on the same topic, and in the related field of study. The aspects that will be tackled under this chapter encompass strategy and uncertainty concepts, how uncertainty influence implementation of strategic plans, as well as the management models or approaches to handling uncertainty within organizations.

2.2 Theoretical Foundation

Open Systems Theory of Institutions forms the basis of this research and studies will revolve around this theoretical concept. The theory was initially developed by Bertanlanffy (1975) and was immediately applicable across all management theory. Under strategic management, this theory clearly shows the strong relationship between firms and their environments (Bastedo, 2004). He continues to note that the forces in the environment that surround the firm have the ability to affect the operations of the firm. For effective management of strategy and operations, the organization's management needs to have sufficient knowledge about the environment in which they operate (Pfeffer & Salancik, 2003). The external forces in the environment control the behaviors of institutions as the operations of any entity depend on the environment as Ansoff and McDonnell (1990) notes. In the modern world, this theory drives management practices designed to create big firms in the dynamic and uncertain business conditions. The firms in the environment behave like bodies or individuals that mutually relate and interact with each other and function as open systems in the environment depending on each other for raw materials, inputs, and markets for each other's output.

Change, complexity, ambiguity, and uncertainty are the composition of the organizational environment making environmental prediction very difficult. Due to this, organization's management has to deal with various difficulties in reaching positive and constructive decisions. Institutions that are in very risky environments face higher risks of survival due to higher chances of management making wrong strategic decisions (Waldman *et al.,* 2001). According to the theory, uncertainty in any environment range from resource, competition, customer, and technological uncertainty making the organization experience practical challenges in their daily operations. When institutions such as private universities device growth strategic plans, they have to redesign their competitive advantage strategies as well.

Moreover, the Open Systems Theory emphasizes the importance of an institution to create and mold a relationship with its external forces that will help it adopt successively to the changing trends, values, expectations, and policies in the environment in which it operates (Preffer, & Salancik, 2003). The organization's human resources need to have a good association with the external environmental forces also as their behaviors shape the changes in the environment; either positively or negatively. Based on Bradley, Wiklund and Shepherd (2011), the relationship between employees and the environment restructures the firm's strategies and could add value or underscore the system's performance. Some organizations adapt well in this interaction and succeed while others fail terribly in this relationship and their strategies also fail. Shane and Stuart (2002) wrap it up simply; the organization needs to appreciate and value the association and interactions in the environment to improve the chances of strategic decisions for the survival of the organization.

But it's worth-noting that the open system has got some underlying limitations. This model can be limited when carrying out research on knowledge and experience. It has seen little use on research guides. Ashmos and Huber (1987) indicate that researchers have been unable to make proper use of the contributions of the theory on empirical research. Evan and Jones (2004) notes that for a researcher to make proper use of the model one need the help of the four general processes – outputs, feedback, inputs and transformations. Due to this, it is difficult to achieve a good balance on management of the internal and external environment.

2.3 Environmental Uncertainty

The concept of uncertainty has a firm foundation in our lives and influence majority of our decisions and choices we make. It begins from small, routine individual decisions and includes the strategic choices of international organizations. The issue of uncertainty is not new in the management and organizational domain. This is for the reason that lack of knowledge while dealing with uncertainty in the decision making process of a firm is costly. According to Abbott (2010), these costs come as a result of negative effects, lost opportunities, and unforeseen results.

According to Roveda and Vecchiato (2011), the initial efforts to hypothesize the concept of uncertainty draws back to original management scholars such as March and Hebert (1958); Knight (1921). Roveda and Vecchiato (2011) argue that these scholars had confidence that business environment is considerably volatile and its volatility generates uncertainty for leaders with constrained judgment. With passage of time, researchers within strategic management field and theorists of organization carried out examinations on the

environmental uncertainty phenomenon. As put forth by Milliken (1987), these studies are mainly those that present strategic planning models and studies concerning the association amid firms and their environment.

As proposed by Dequech (2011), uncertainty is differentiated on three levels. According to Dosi and Egidi (1991), the first difference is formulated amid procedural and substantive uncertainty. Procedural uncertainty comes as result of challenges in the cognitive and computational ability of issues where there is information while substantive uncertainty arises because of absence of information required to make and take decisions. Another important difference is between strong and weak uncertainty. The uncertainty is considered weak if there is exceptional and completely reliable probability distribution. Elsewhere, uncertainty is strong in absence of such distribution. A strong uncertainty is deemed procedural if it's due to the opposition amid computational and subjective ability as well as complexity of a situation; and its substantive if it's because of lack of information. Dequech (2000) posits that weak uncertainty is forever substantive, and is falls into two classes: Savege's uncertainty (including subjective probability) and Knightian Risk (including objective probability). In Savage's uncertainty, probability shows the manner of thinking regarding the globe whereas in Knightian Risk, probability is a part of the actual world. The last difference is formulated amid fundamental and ambiguity uncertainty, either of which are forms of substantive and strong uncertainty. Ambiguity is defined as uncertainty concerning the possibility of events triggered by lack of knowledge and information. When a person responsible for making decisions if faced with such uncertainty, she or he knows all likely events, however, isn't aware of the likelihood of each. However, the basic uncertainty is created when we are not aware of the list of events and believe the future will be created by people's actions.

Procedural uncertainty exists at the same time with all fundamental uncertainties (Dequech, 2011). The inter-reliance of individuals' choices and decisions produces procedural uncertainty regarding the effects of personal choice or action. Over time, the amount of procedural uncertainty changes even when there is no change in amount of complexity. This is because the ability of a person to compute increases with time and because this occurs for others, the sophistication of inter-reliance amid their choices increases unexpectedly.

2.4 Sources and Approaches to Environmental Uncertainty

All the decisions that are made and the aids that are given to counter and reduce uncertainty are a part of uncertainty (Ashill & Jober, 2010). On the other hand, Johnson and Scholes (1999), points out that extent to which an environment is analyzed can be perceived as a portion of its increasing dynamism. This situation illustrates the environmental complexity, which initiates more business uncertainties. Furthermore, dynamism is depicted by natural factors such as: needs of the clients, innovation, rivalry in the environment, and supply conditions. Business environment is unpredictable and not easy to forecast as Ashill and Jober (2010), concludes that an environment with many variables is faced with a high rate of change.

According to Lawal (2010), a leader finds he undecided over a range of things that rise susceptibility in the organizations. As said by Sinding et al (1999), sources of uncertainty are grouped into extra and intra to the firms. There are three classes of in-house sources of uncertainty: impacts on organization ideals, money associated effects, and data effects (Sinding, NAex, and Sharfman, 1999). Extra sources rise due to the difference amid the amount of information available concerning the various aspects of the structure; for

example, uncertainty in government approach, competition, and product. The degree of reaction to uncertainty is also an external source.

Plans and strategies are a requirement if management has to avoid failures (Leavey, 2007). He continues to note that organizations can make use of flexibility in order to deal with uncertainty. Organizations can also make use of mock forecasting in order to pre-determine uncertainty and avoid it, (Bowen, 2002). Korenak, (2000), relays that it is important that all employees are considered when negotiating a method of handling uncertainty. He continues to give an illustration which equates the willingness of an organization to welcome uncertainty and the ability of its human resources to accept it. In the first section called status quo, both the firms and the workers are involved in evading uncertainty. In the second segment named unsettling climate, the firms experience anomaly, forcing its workers to search for support. These workers become uneasy and this leads to lose of determination because of the abnormality of the business surroundings. In the third section, stifling climate; firms try to prevent uncertainty and yet the employees tend to support it. In the fourth Segment known as dynamic environment, both firms and workers support uncertainty. This support leads to continuous change, dynamism and energy within the firm as noted by (Clampitt, DeKoch & Cashman, 2000).

Additionally, Collis (1992) advocated an approach that should be well utilized by firms to aid in of control uncertainty. The model examines two scopes; namely, Amount of investment and time. Management of the organization always makes investment plans to partake in the future. In case there are delays, the open options provide a chance of rising flexibility. In the initial section; insurance, the organization commits many resources during the present time making the future predictable. Under the second quarter; dedicated,

there is commitment to ensure specific strategies prevail and therefore all resources are allocated to work. The organization get a lot of benefits if there is no uncertainty and if uncertainty exits the organization makes a lot of losses. The third part; incremental stage, portrays delays to undertake investments within a given environment and this marginally reduces the associated risks involved. In the final fraction called opportunistic, for the strategies to be successful, there should be a lot of uncertainties present. In this section strategy is accepted and eliminates the uncertainty and closes the available opportunities. The assumptions are that investments last for a short period and that minimization of fixed cost are influenced by variable costs.

Additionally Courtney (2003) undertakes a strategy centered on three aspects; shaping, reserving the right to play and adapting. He advocated that firms can counter uncertainty by applying any of the strategies. Also, (Raynor, 2007) recommends that firms should be concerned about the future by predicting some of the future events. To achieve this, management need to have the ability to understand the organization structures and also applications. After this comprehension, the organization must initiate suitable strategies for each circumstance. All the facts collected at the previous stages are then put into work immediately.

2.5 Strategy Implementation in Organizations

Execution of strategy entails the introduction of change in firms. Management officials may take long time analyzing options and coming up with a strategy. Often this strategy is communicated to organizational members with a view that they will see the positive side of it and implement it instantly. Alexander (2005) argues that ineffective introduction of

strategic change compels managers to expend much time trying to adopt changes due to new strategy compared to time expended in choosing it.

Effective implementation of the strategy begins with a good business strategic plan. The implementation process is likely to fail if the formulated strategy is not worth adopting. All organizational employees should be involved in the formulation process to ensure the strategy being formulated is implementable. In this manner, useful knowledge from all firm levels is utilized to formulate a strategy that matches the end goals of senior management, and can actually be introduced putting into consideration the market conditions and available firm resources. In addition, effective strategy implementation is possible through involvement of key personnel already in the process of strategic decisions. Alexander (2005); Giles (2010) note that involvement of key implementation personnel is necessary to increase their commitment. When determining strategic choices and planning implementation, a rigorous evaluation of the risks and barriers the firm encounter while adopting the strategy is crucial. The risks come from both external and internal environment. even though it's not possible to expect that all possible risks will be known, it offers the firm a chance to formulate eventuality plans for the recognized perils that could affect the organization at large or adoption of strategy in a negative manner (Hambrick & Cannella, 2011).

Effective communication is one of the most drivers for successful strategy implementation after it has been created. To start with, the top management ought to inform all workers regarding the meaning of, reasons, and content of the new strategic plan. Employees should also be allowed time to ask questions and have a discussion with those affected. Explanation of new responsibilities and tasks to affected workers is part of the

communication process. As proposed by Beer and Eisenstat (2010); Neilson et al (2008), in the entire implementation process, good communication ought to flow from juniors to seniors to permit management track the adoption process and ascertain if any alterations are required.

Another crucial factor to consider during strategy implementation is adequate resources. Adequate funding is required for the adoption process due to the large scope of most strategic choices. Human resource is the second crucial organizational resource. Employees with necessary skills should take part in effective implementation of new strategic decisions. More so, these personnel ought to have sufficient time required for adoption. They ought to have a good understanding of the priorities given to their various duties or be freed from other responsibilities. Higgins (2005) states that sufficient time ought to, in general, be assigned throughout the implementation process.

Formulating an implementation design can assist in the management of strategy adoption. This design ought to identify and describe, for instance, key implementation practices, key employees involved together with their duties and authority they have, planned communication plan, the scope and goals of adoption, contingency plans, risks that could negatively affect adoption, as well as monitoring and evaluation of the implementation process. The implementation design should nonetheless be balanced ie not too detailed but include detailed information. Too much information would make the design rigid and would not allow employees and management to respond to environmental changes. Too little information, on the other hand, would not offer the required guidance to workers involved and could result in inefficient and ineffective implementation (Alexander, 2005; Neilson *et a.l,* 2008).

2.6 Strategy Implementation and Environmental Uncertainty

Various scholars have defined strategy differently but commonly, strategy is a field of learning with many aspects. Each organization exists for a purpose which is influenced by its objectives and goals that are long term. Most of the time the objectives direct courses of action thereby enhancing the resources allocation for these goals (Chandler, 2008) identify that the capacity of every organization to allocate resources properly in reference to its opportunities, skills, uncertainties and threats every organization encounters shows the firms determination and strategy that it needs to accomplish. At this stage it is essential to define 'strategy' as it clearly shows its association with the environment. Smircich and Stubbard (1985), points that theoretical view of uncertainty is very important on papers as they focus on the relation between a firm's environment and strategy. With rapid change of environment, there has been an increase of uncertainties on the operations of businesses. Jauch and Kraft (2006), approves that uncertainty management is a duty that requires management to introduce techniques that aids in preventing uncertainty completely.

Matters such as analyzers, defenders and predictions can be of help in categorizing the behavior of various strategic associations between firms and their respective environments (Miles *et al.,* 2010). They further suggest that predictions as a group will vary as a result of environment uncertainties but recommend flexibility as a solution. The assumption of defenders is that it is not difficult to have business environment forecast. Lastly, the analyzers make use of the opportunities in the environment, hence adaptable. This confirms that strategy ought to be a constant process and all inclusive. Ojiako (2012) ascertain that when different parties are involved in formulation of a firm's strategy, there is a version of environmental uncertainty.

2.7 Empirical Studies and Knowledge Gaps

Many scholars have done various researches on environmental challenges concerning strategy implementation. Dunlop, Firth and Lurie (2013), noted that during the implementation stage there are major failures of strategies. They argued that the failure at implementation stage is as result of adaption difficulties, translation and a failure to sustain change. Bryson, (2010), advocated that organizations should improve their strategies and respond immediately by transforming, and aligning their strategies into suitable plans. According to David (2011), strategy implementation needs to incorporate understanding and commitment to avoid challenges.

Olsen, Slater and Hult (2015) carried out a study in which they were studying the performance of firms in relation to strategy implementation, organizational structure and behaviors of employees. They concluded that organizations that study the behaviors of their employees and try to match their structure and strategy usually succeed. This study keenly proved the connection between strategy, structure and behavior. Ireland and Hickson (2013) studied the connection between organization performance and strategy implementation excluding major environmental components that influence implementation as a continuous activity. A lot of research and studies have increasingly been done concerning strategy implementation for a solution. This is as a result of inadequate and inefficient processes in strategy formulation up to implementation stage.

A research was done by Karimi (2007) and Kitutu (2009) which revealed the problems concerning strategy implementation at the Department for Public Works in Kenya. The outcomes showed issues like inadequate communication, lack of coordination, government

interference and incorrect strategic choices as the major problems that impede strategy implementation. However, there is need for a research to be conducted to determine the impact of environmental uncertainty on implementation of various strategies.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The chapter intends to relay the procedures which were applied in carrying out the study. The chapter ruminates in details the techniques that were essential in gathering the primary and secondary data. After the data collection, this chapter showed how the data was analyzed detailing all the models and programs used.

3.2 Research Design

Creswell (2015) defines a study design as a master plan or a blue print that identify the modes and steps for collecting and examining the required information. The scholar noted that so as to determine the various research variables in the study, it is important to design a cross sectional survey within the study. Thus, the study adopted a cross sectional survey design

Doyle (2015) defines a cross-sectional survey as a body of methods that are used in gathering data concerned with human characteristics, thoughts, attitudes, and behavior. This is done by obtaining responses from questionnaires issued to persons. In addition, a cross-sectional survey may also emphasize on factual information or opinion depending on its use, many survey researches entail presenting a set of questions to individuals. Information can be collected from various sources when carrying out a survey thus making it to more flexible. Surveys are also standardized and errors free (Kothari, 2014). The investigator purposed to gather information from issues questionnaires so as to determine the effect of uncertainty implementation of environmental strategies in CPU in Kenya.

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3.3 Population on Study

The population of interest in statistics refers to particular populace concerning which data is needed. Population of interest included the 17 Private Universities in Kenya that are Chartered, registered and authorized by the Commission for University Education (CUE) to run education in Kenya (Appendix IV). Kombo and Tromp (2006) take population to mean a bundle of elements, group of things, households, events, services, or individuals under study. From this definition, it was assumed that study population was not uniform.

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However, in order to gain practical information on the study, the researcher employed purposive sampling. The sample size of this study comprised of 68 senior employees of these (17) private universities. These senior employees included Vice Chancellors, the Deputy Vice Chancellors, registrars and Heads of strategy management teams. This type of sampling was used due to the nature of information required. Table 3.1 below shows the sampling matrix and the total targeted population.

Table 3.1: Sampling Matrix

Category	Expected respondents per University
Vice Chancellors	17
Deputy Vice Chancellors - Academics	17
Registrars	17
Strategy Management Team Heads	17
Unit of observation	**68**

3.4. Data Collection

Questionnaires were used in gathering primary facts for the study. The study used the major aims spelt out in the literature review as a basis of his questionnaire for obtaining primary data. The questionnaire comprised both open-ended and closed ended form of

questions. The basic need for these questionnaires was to obtain responses from the required respondents. The questionnaire consisted of pre-coded questions that provide check boxes that the respondents mark. Open ended forms of questionnaires do not have spaces to be ticked.

The researcher employed mailing technique in administering the questionnaire. This approach instills confidence in the respondents and allows the questions to be answered appropriately without any undue influence. The survey intended to make unclear areas of the research to be understandable especially to the respondents. The approach also confirms the consistency and allows ease in computation of data through use of a Likert scale that consists of five points from the first one; disagree, to the fifth one; strongly agree.

After the questionnaire had been designed, the researcher distributed the questionnaires to the major players on strategy implementation within these institutions. These included, The Vice Chancellors, their deputies, registrars and Heads of strategy management teams. The correspondents were requested to examine the questionnaire to ascertain the questionnaires correctness in design and content. After this, the amendments were done to rectify any weakness.

3.5 Data Analysis

Under data analysis, the researcher used various steps to decrease the error margin of the survey. Filled questionnaires were then edited to enhance completeness of the survey and also to certify consistency. Then, the edited questionnaire was checked for any omissions and errors. Exploration of data was carried out. Standard deviation, mean scores, frequency distribution tables and percentages were utilized to inspect the data used and also

summarize the data. The research analyzed the questionnaires with respect to the aims set. Then the results from questions that were open ended were coded, the standard and the mean were applied for the Likert scale responses. Recommendations and conclusions concerning the study were extracted from the outcome of the research.

CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

Discussed in this section is data analysis, interpretation, and a discussion of the research outcomes. It presents the respondents' background details, results of the analysis basing on the study purposes. The investigator provided figures and tables that summarized the general views and reaction of the participants so as to simplify the discussions.

4.2 Response Rate

The research's sample size included 68 participants from which 60 filled in and returned the feedback forms forming a response rate of 88.2%. As per Mugenda and Mugenda (2003), a response rate of over 80% is considered excellent, 70-80% very good, 50-60% is acceptable, 40-50% deemed poor, and below 40% unreliable. The study's response rate (60 out of 60 participants) was very satisfactory, representative, and very good for making inferences for the research. Vice Chancellors, their deputies, registrars and Heads of strategy management teams

Table 4.1: Response Rate

Questionnaires	Frequency (Response)	Percent (%)
VC's	11	18%
DVC's - AA	16	27%
Registrars	16	27%
Heads of strategy management teams	17	28%
Total	**60**	**100.0**

4.3 Demographic Information

The examination aimed at determining the demographic and profile data of the participants.

4.3.1 Respondent Place of Work

Participants were asked to indicate the name of the private university they are employed.

the results were as shown in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2: Name of the University

Name of the University	Frequency	Percentage
St. Paul University	4	6.7
African Nazarene University	4	6.7
Mt Kenya University	4	6.7
African International University	3	5.0
Catholic University of East Africa	4	6.7
KCA University	3	5.0
Strathmore University	4	6.7
Adventist University of Africa	3	5.0
Daystar University	4	6.7
Pan African Christian University	4	6.7
Kenya Methodist University	4	6.7
United States International University	4	6.7
Kabarak University	2	3.3
Scott Christian University	3	5.0
Kenya Highland Evangelical University	3	5.0
University Of Eastern Africa, Baraton	4	6.7
Great Lakes University Of Kisumu	3	5.0
Total	**60**	**100.0**

Source: (Survey Data, 2018)

From the results, most of the target respondents participated in the study. This indicates

that the study used respondents from various private universities.

4.3.2 University's Headquarters

Participants were requested to show the location of the university's main campus. Table 4.3 below shows the results of the study:

Table 4.3: Location of The University's Main Campus

Name of the University	Main Campus Location
Daystar University	Athi river
St. Paul University	Limuru
Strathmore University	Nairobi
Adventist University of Africa	Ongata Rongai
African Nazarene University	Rongai
Pan African Christian University	Roysambu
KCA University	Ruaraka
Mt Kenya University	Thika
African International University	Karen
Kenya Methodist University	Meru
United States International University	Kasarani, Nairobi
Kabarak University	Nakuru
Scott Christian University	Machakos
Kenya Highland Evangelical University	Kericho
University Of Eastern Africa, Baraton	Eldoret
Great Lakes University Of Kisumu	Kisumu

Source: (Survey Data, 2018)

From the findings it's clear that the universities have their main campuses located in various regions.

4.3.3 Programs Offered by the University

Participants were requested to show the number of researches programmes offered by the university. The results were as shown in Figure 4.1.
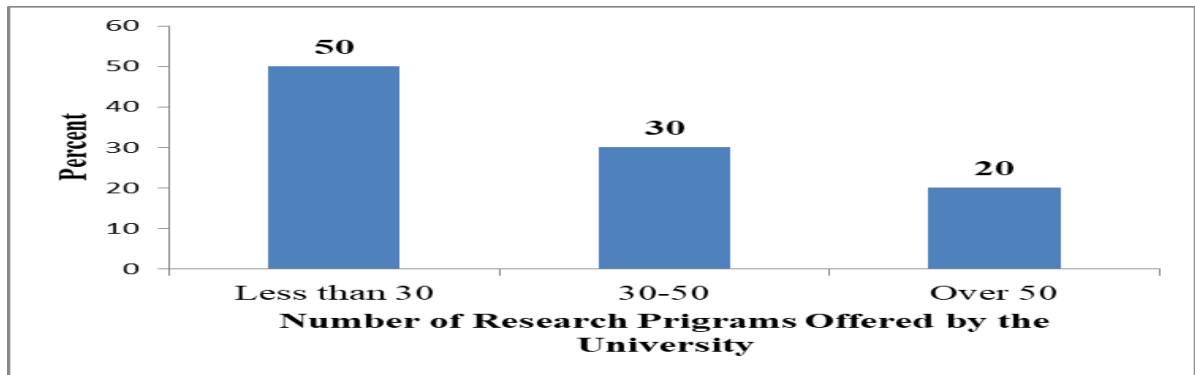
Figure 4.1: Number of Programs Offered by the University

Source: (Survey Data, 2018)

From the study results, 50% of the participants showed that number of research programmes offered by their university was less than 30, 30% indicated they were ranging from 30-50, and 20% indicated they were over 50. This is an indication that majority (50%) of the universities offer less than 30 research programmes.

4.3.4 Total Number of Employees at the University

Participants were requested to show the total number of workers the University has. Table 4.2 below presents the outcomes
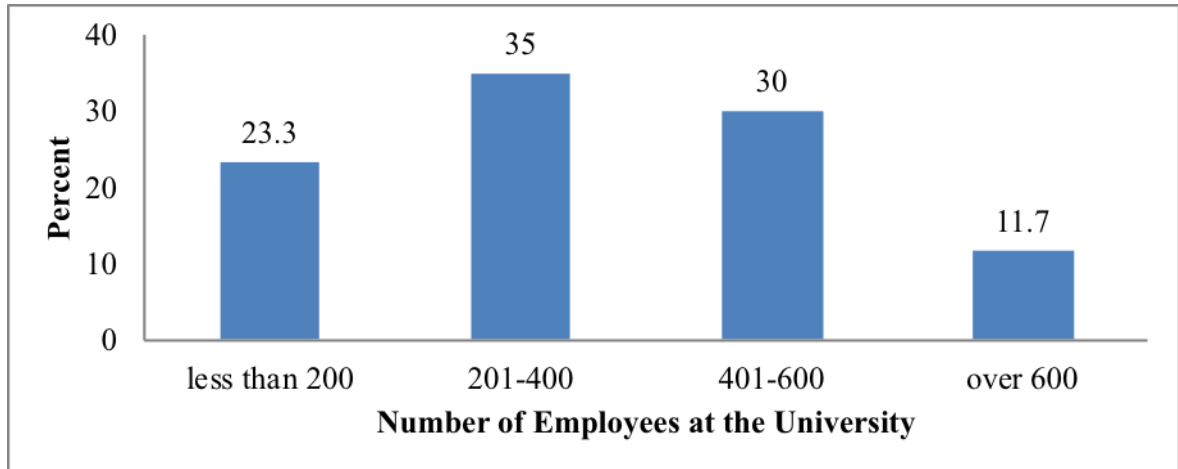
Figure 4.2: Number of Employees at the University

Source: (Survey Data, 2018)

From the study results, 35% of the participants showed that at their university the total number of employees are 201-400, 30% indicated they are 401- 600, 23.3% indicated they are less than 200, and 11.7% indicated they are over 600. This is an indication tht the universities used in he study have different number of employees with most(35%) having between 201 and 400 employees.

4.4.5 Respondents Number of Years Working with the University

Participants were requested to show the time they have been in service with their current university. The results were as shown in Figure 4.3.
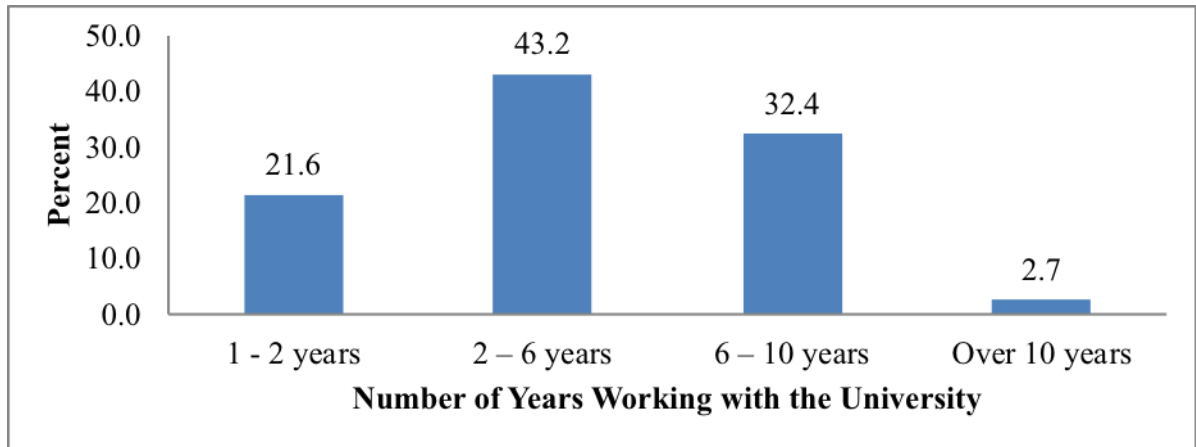
Figure 4.3: Respondents Number of Years Working with the University

Source: (Survey Data, 2018)

From the research results, 43.2% of the participants were in service with their university for 2-6 years, 32.4% for 6-10 years, 21.6% for 1-2 years, and 2.7% for over 10 years. This's a sign that the participants had worked with their universities for long enough to provide the needed information for this study.

4.4 Strategy Implementation in the University

Participants were requested to show degree to which their universities involve its employee during strategy implementation process. Table 4.4 below presents the results:

Table 4.4: Extent to Which Universities Involve Its Employee during Strategy Implementation

Extent	Frequency	Percent
Very Great extent	9	15.0
Great extent	20	33.3
Moderate Extent	25	41.7
Low extent	6	10.0
Total	**60**	**100.0**

Source: (Survey Data, 2018)

From the findings, 25(41.7%) indicated that that they involve their employee during strategy implementation process moderately, 20(33.3%) indicated they involve them to a great extent, 9(15%) indicated very great extent, and 6(10%) indicated low extent. This indicates that universities involve its employee moderately during strategy implementation process as indicated by most (41.7%) of the respondents. These findings agree with Hawkers and Guttman, (2004) & Ojiako, (2012) who ascertain that when different parties are involved in formulation of a firm's strategy, there is a version of environmental uncertainty.

Participants were requested to show the degree to which their university has succeeded in implementing its strategies. The findings were presented in Table 4.5.

Table 4. 5: Extent to Which University Has Succeeded In Implementing Its Strategies

Extent	Frequency	Percent
Very Great extent	9	15.0
Great extent	18	30.0
Moderate Extent	29	48.3
Low extent	4	6.7
Total	**60**	**100.0**

Source: (Survey Data, 2018)

From the study results, 29(48.3%) of the respondents showed that their university has succeeded moderately in implementing its strategies, 18(30%) indicated they have succeeded to a great extent, 9(15%) indicated very great extent, and 4(6.7%) indicated low extent. This is an indication that universities have succeeded moderately in implementing its strategies as indicated by most (48.3%) of the respondents. The findings concur with Cater and Pucko (2012) who indicated that a high percentage of around 80% of organizations have good strategies however, only 14% have succeeded in effectively implementing these strategies

Respondents were asked to select the strategic decisions their university has recently implemented. The findings were presented in Table 4.6.

Table 4.6: Strategic Decisions Recently Implemented By the University

Strategic Decisions	Frequency	Percent
Opening a new teaching staff / campus	27	45.5
Close a campus or discontinue a course	22	33.3
Set up modern costly buildings	34	56.7

Source: (Survey Data, 2018)

From the findings, 34(56.7%) of the participants showed that their universities have recently Set up modern costly buildings as strategic decision, 27(45.5%) adopted opening a new teaching staff / campus, and 22(33.3%) Closed a campus or discontinued a course. This indicates that various universities adopted various decision strategies with majority (56.7%) setting up modern costly buildings.

The study further found that some of the universities recently implemented strategic plan as strategic decision. Others employ people based on region and ethnicity; they target new investors for expansion purpose; others involve administrative staffs who are qualified in

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teaching as a way of reducing costs. The other strategy implemented was starting a new program that is marketable like clinical medicine. The study agrees with Smith and Tamer, (1984), who depicts that firms are reluctant in adjusting to the changes in the environment, and in most circumstances they find themselves trying to repair and solve the mess caused by their inability to adjust to these changes.

Respondents were asked to indicate the degree to which the following statements have impacted implementation of strategy in their university. Where: *1 – Low extent, 2 – Moderate Extent, 3 – Great extent, 4 – Very great extent, 5 – Not aware.* The results were as shown in Table 4.7.

Table 4.7: Strategy Implementation in the University

Statements	Mean	Std. Dev.
To what extent is your University strategy implementation process management driven or people driven?	2.7333	.8995
To what extent do the Education Sector and government policies change	3.1167	.9037
The extent of competition among stakeholders in the education sector.	3.3500	.9536
The extent at which the business environment has become very dynamic, turbulent and difficult to forecast	3.0167	.9654
The extent the University conduct market analysis before introducing a new programme or investing into a new market.	3.3167	1.1716
The extent at which your university does development and research	2.9500	1.1560
To what extent would you say the University is up to date with the Technology?	3.4667	.9107
The extent at which the university meets the expectations and needs of the students?	3.4667	.9649
The extent of existence of counter strategies in your university.	3.0333	1.1927

Source: (Researcher, 2018)

From the study outcomes, the participants showed that their universities are up to date with Technology to a very great extent as indicated by a mean of 3.4667, the university meets to a very great extent the expectations and needs of the students as shown by a mean of 3.4667, the competition among stakeholders in the education sector is to a great extent as shown by a mean of 3.3500, the University conducts market analysis to a great extent before introducing a new programme or investing into a new market as shown by a mean of 3.3167, the Education Sector and government policies change to a great extent as shown by a mean of 3.1167, the existence of counter strategies in universities are to great extent as shown by a mean of 3.0333, the business environment has become very dynamic, turbulent and difficult to forecast to a very great extent as shown by a mean of 3.0167, the universities do development and research to a great extent as indicated by a mean of 2.9500, and University strategy implementation process management driven or people driven is to a great extent as shown by a mean of 2.7333.

Respondents were asked to indicate in respect to their University, what they would consider as their major environmental issue they constantly encounter. Table 4.8 below presents the study findings:

Table 4.8: Major Environmental Issue Constantly Encountered

Issues Encountered	Frequency	Percent
Multiple government regulations on higher education	43	71.7
Technological changes	33	55.0
Customer preferences	34	56.7

Source: (Researcher, 2018)

From the findings, 43(71.7%) of the participants showed that the main issue they constantly encounter is multiple government regulations on higher education, 34(56.7%) indicated customer preference, and 33(55%) indicated technological changes. This indicates that various universities are faced with various challenges with majority (71.7%) encountering the challenge of multiple changes due to changing government regulations. The study agrees with Ashill and Jober (2010), who indicated that business environment is unpredictable and not easy to forecast, they conclude that an environment with many variables encounter an increased rate of exchange.

The study further found that universities face the challenge of stiff competition due to many universities; another challenge they face is small number of students qualifying for university education because of mass failure of KCSE students and unwillingness by students to enroll for university education because of less job opportunities and some find the courses offered by the university unmarketable.

4.5 Approaches of Managing Environmental Uncertainty

Participants were requested to show the response of their university regarding dynamics of strategy implementation. The universities are able to meet needs of staff and students by involving them in any kind of implementation that needs to be carried out; this helps them to put focus on the students and therefore meet their needs. Ensuring they are informed of the changes that are currently there in the education sector and become adept to technological changes and change the systems to meet the changes made in technology. The university works with the government adhering to ISO certification and also to the CUE regulations and standards. The study agrees with Korenak, (2000), who relays that it is important that all employees are considered when negotiating a method of handling

uncertainty. Additionally, (Collis, 1992) advocated an approach that should be well utilized by firms to aid in of control uncertainty.

Regarding market analysis, they conduct proper market analysis and research before introducing new programs; this enables them to meet the students' needs. Some of the universities have strategic plan implementation and management meetings to ensure that they get maximum development and research. In those meeting, they discuss on the strategies to be implemented are discussed and agreed on in order to safeguard the interest of the institution. Strategies used by the institution are re-strategized to help the university adopt the environment with minimal negative implications. The findings concur with (Raynor, 2007) who recommends that firms should be concerned about the future by predicting some of the future events. To achieve this, management need to have the ability to understand the organization structures and also applications. After this comprehension, the organization must initiate suitable strategies for each circumstance. All the facts collected at the previous stages are then put into work immediately.

Other universities have introduced customer centric environment and also aid students in mentorship and accessing internship opportunities after completing their course work. Knowing what the competition what the competition is offering and improve what is offered in the institution. Another way they respond is by stepping up and be in tandem with requisite government regulations and also strategies and work with the terms and conditions of renovating the institution.

Respondents were asked to indicate the degree to which they disagree or agree on the following statements. Where: *1 – Very low extent, 2 – Low extent, 3 - Moderate Extent, 4 – Great extent, 5 – Very great extent.* The results were as shown in Table 4.9.

Table 4.9: Extent of Agree or Disagree

Statements	Mean	Std. Dev.
To what extent has the university set up good approaches to deal with environmental uncertainty.	2.8333	1.1072
To what extent are the employees consulted in coming up with strategic responses towards market dynamics	3.0500	1.0156
The commitment and involvement of top management in formulating counter strategies to deal with market uncertainties.	2.8833	1.0266
The extent at which the university respond to market changes.	3.4000	0.8477
The flexibility of strategic plans to effectively suit market changes?	3.1167	0.8654
The extent of which the implemented strategies suit the University environment.	3.1833	0.9476
At which extent would you say the university monitors the environment continually to identify changes and respond to them on time?	2.9667	0.8823
The level of extent at which the University involve the student body in formulating programmes that are required by the society?	2.8500	1.1764
The appreciation of Student body towards the University Strategies.	3.4407	1.0549

Source: (Researcher, 2018)

From the findings the respondents indicated that the appreciation of Student body towards the University Strategies is to a great extent as shown by a mean of 3.4407, the university responds to a great extent to market changes as shown by a mean of 3.4000, the implemented strategies suit the University environment to a moderate extent as shown by a mean of 3.1833, the flexibility of strategic plans to effectively suit market changes are

moderate as shown by a mean of 3.1167, employees are moderately consulted in coming up with strategic responses towards market dynamics as shown by a mean of 3.0500, the university monitors the environment continually to a moderate extent to identify changes and respond to them on time as shown by a mean of 2.9667, the commitment and involvement of top management in formulating counter strategies to deal with market uncertainties is to a moderate extent as shown by a mean of 2.8833, the University involve to a moderate extent the student body in formulating programmes that are required by the society as shown by a mean of 2.8500, the university has to a moderate extent set up good approaches to deal with environmental uncertainty as shown by a mean of 2.8333.

Respondents were asked to indicate the effective approaches the University employed to deal with influences of environmental uncertainty. Some of the approaches indicated by the respondents were:

The university comes up with a register of risks and mitigating measures; concentrate on co programs; controlling of costs; ensuring quality education is offered; ensuring a good student body; have less aggressive strategy; have the right information about the costumers; tailor products to suit the current market; having boundary spanning i.e. creating competitive intelligence; hiring skilled workers; introduce new programs that encourage students to progress to higher learning in the institution; involve all the parties in the university strategic plan; keep up with latest technology; introduce new policy (customer centrism) aimed at addressing the needful; using sound proof renovation; training and development of employees; trying to get constant feedback on applied strategies; and use of consumer retention before acquiring new customers. The study agrees with Leavey, (2007) who indicated that plans and strategies are a requirement if

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management has to avoid failures. He continues to note that organizations can make use of flexibility in order to deal with uncertainty. Organizations can also make use of mock forecasting in order to pre-determine uncertainty and avoid it, (Bowen, 2002).

Respondents were further asked to indicate how beneficial the approaches employed by the university were. The benefits of the approaches mentioned above were:

By hiring skilled staff, it ensures that the hired lecturers know their content and are qualified for what they are teaching; having less aggressive strategies ensure that the university is able to cut costs on purchase of various items; researching on the market helps to be in per with what is new in the technology sector and not be left behind; students involvement helps in fighting for the right of students and ensuring their issues are addressed and helps to improve approach to different issues in relation to performance such as customer service and new systems; it ensures that incase of any changes in the education system they stay informed; it helps the institution get the target market and what is in the market; organization differentiation to promote flexibility and efficiency; set out all possible views in all aspects; the students are able to concentrate during evening classes with minimal noise from outside because of sound proof buildings; there will be less workers to be hired and avoid expanding to other locations; they will have the best manpower at their disposal to get the job well done; and they are able to do proper research to ensure customers' needs are met.

Respondents were asked to state the recommendations they would give the university to enhance how it deals with the impact of environmental uncertainty. The following are some of the recommendations provided by the respondents:

Always be abreast with what is new all around and what other universities are embracing; change of programs to match the market; closely monitor current trends; encourage students to join environmental clubs that help them share ideas on how to figure environmental uncertainty; ensure lecturers go through a rigorous interview to ensure they are qualified; ensure that before any expansion is done they have targeted those available locally; ensure that those being hired are the best at their job so as to meet all the targets of the institutions; establish which programs sell in the market and ensure they target the students for those programs; have constant talks to educate the university staff and students on changes to the environment; create formal strategic alliances with other institutions; and maximize or leverage on technology to enhance its competitive intelligence.

Respondents further recommended university to have seminars and trainings to educate those working in the organization; having an effective risk assessment of environmental uncertainty and putting up good modules for this risks; involve all stakeholders in implementation; involve students and staff more in brainstorming and marketing; meet with student leaders regularly to address student issues; need to set up a branch on market research, innovation and technology centre to understand the current market dynamics; offering good services; be persistent in what they are doing; do more marketing planning; to increase participation of low level employees; and updating the risk register annually.

4.6 Discussion of Findings

This part discusses the findings of the study by linking the objectives of the research and the literature. Participants were unanimous that though the process of strategy implementation is not easy, private universities must successfully implement their strategies in order to survive this uncertain environment.

The study has established that universities involve its employee moderately during strategy implementation process. The need for more involvement is vital has this will help these institutions do an analysis of their strategies before implementation. According to the study, 48.3 % of the universities have succeeded moderately in implementing their strategies. However, the study shows that amid the uncertain environment, most private universities have continued expanding and having new buildings which did not seem strategic. 45.5% of these universities have recently been opening up new campuses despite the drop in student enrollments. 56.7% are geared towards setting up modern and costly buildings as seen in table 4.6.

The study also reveals that private universities are faced by numerous challenges top on the list being multiple government regulations on higher education. According to the study, this stood at 71.7%. This has posed a great challenge has it has greatly reduced the number of students being enrolled in these private universities each academic year. This on the long run poses as a great risk to these institutions has they sorely depend on tuition fees to run their expenses. Technological changes posed as the second environmental change that the private universities are facing standing at 55.0%. Customer preferences also posed has an issue that these institutions need to address. This will cause these institutions to strategically increase their programs on offer to increase the areas of study that customers choose from. This was seen has one of the major reasons why customers fancy public universities over private universities. The universities are also able to conduct proper market analysis and research before introducing new programs; this enables them to meet the needs of the students. The need to also come up with a register of risks and mitigating measures; concentrate on core programs, controlling of costs and ensuring quality education is offered will ensure a good student body.

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The study also revealed the need for private universities to embrace flexible strategic plans. Flexibility allows changes to be done as the strategy is being executed. According to (Chuck, 2015), having an annual strategic implementation process is vital because it ensures you understand your capabilities and mend the strategy making it competitive. Another important approach towards good strategies is the need to continually monitor the environment to ensure on time response towards any changes in the environment. The study realized that private universities can perform better if they were able to manage their strategies better.

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter, summary of the research findings, conclusions and recommendations as observed by the researcher are made. It also provides recommendations and suggestion for further research.

5.2 Summary of Findings

5.2.1 Strategy Implementation in the Universities

The study found that universities involve its employee moderately during strategy implementation process. In the process of implementing strategies, the study established that Universities have succeeded moderately in implementing its strategies. The study also established that universities implement various strategic decisions with the highly adopted strategy being set up of modern costly buildings followed by opening new teaching staff/campus, and the last strategy adopted being closing a campus or discontinuing a course.

It was further established that universities are to a very great extent updated with technology and meet the expectations and needs of their students to a great extent. The extent in which stakeholders in the education sector compete is great, the University conducts market analysis to a great extent before introducing a new programme or investing into a new market, the Education Sector and government policies change to a great extent, the existence of counter strategies in universities are to great extent, the business environment has become to a very great extent dynamic, turbulent and difficult to forecast, the universities do development and research to a great extent, and University strategy implementation process management driven or people driven is to a great extent.

The study also revealed that universities encounter various challenges with the main challenge encountered by majority of them being technological changes, followed by customer preference, and lastly multiple government regulations on higher education.

5.2.2 Approaches of Managing Environmental Uncertainty

Regarding the dynamics of strategy implementation, the study found that the universities are able to meet needs of staff and students by involving them in any kind of implementation that needs to be carried out; this helps them put focus on the students and therefore meet their needs. Universities ensure they are informed of the changes currently in the education sector and also ensure they are adept to technological changes and change the systems to meet the changes made in technology. The university works with the government adhering to ISO certification and also to the CUE regulations and standards.

It was further established that universities ensure they conduct proper market analysis and research before introducing new programs; this enables them to meet the needs of the students. Some of the universities have strategic plan implementation and management meetings to ensure that they get maximum development and research. In those meeting, they discuss on the strategies to be implemented and agreed on them in order to safeguard the interest of the institution. It was also revealed that strategies used by the institution are re-strategized to help the university to adapt with the environment with minimal negative implications. It was further established that other universities have introduced customer centric environment and also help students in mentorship and accessing internship opportunities after completing their course work. Another strategy is to know what is offered by the competition and improve what is offered in the institution. Another way

they respond is by stepping up and be in tandem with requisite government regulations and also strategies and work with the terms and conditions of renovating the institution.

The study further established that the appreciation of Student body towards the University Strategies is to a great extent, the university responds to a great extent to market changes, the implemented strategies suit the University environment to a moderate extent, the flexibility of strategic plans to effectively suit market changes are moderate, employees are moderately consulted in coming up with strategic responses towards market dynamics, the university monitors the environment continually to a moderate extent to identify changes and respond to them on time, the commitment and involvement of top management in formulating counter strategies to deal with market uncertainties is to a moderate extent, the University involve to a moderate extent the student body in formulating programmes that are required by the society, the university has to a moderate extent set up good approaches to deal with environmental uncertainty.

The study further established that universities employ various strategies in dealing with environmental uncertainty. These strategies include coming up with a register of risks and mitigating measures; concentrate on co programs; controlling of costs; ensuring quality education is offered; ensuring a good student body; have the right information about the costumers; tailor products to suit the current market; having boundary spanning i.e. creating competitive intelligence; hiring skilled workers; introduce new programs that encourage students to progress to higher learning in the institution; involve all the parties in the university strategic plan; keep up with latest technology; introduce new policy (customer centrism) aimed at addressing the needful; using sound proof renovation;

training and development of employees; trying to get constant feedback on applied strategies; and use of consumer retention before acquiring new customers.

Based on the various approaches employed by universities, the study found that those strategies were beneficial. By hiring skilled staff, it ensures that the hired lecturers know their content and are qualified for what they are teaching; researching on the market helps to be in per with what is new in the technology sector and not be left behind; students involvement helps in fighting for the right of students and ensuring their issues are addressed and helps to improve approach to different issues in relation to performance such as customer service and new systems; ensures that incase of any changes in the education system they stay informed; helps the institution get the target market and what is in the market; organization differentiation to promote flexibility and efficiency; set out all possible views in all aspects; the students are able to concentrate during evening classes with minimal noise from outside because of sound proof buildings; hiring qualified staff ensures the best manpower who will get the job well done; and because of well done research, customers' needs are met.

The study also found that there are various recommendations that will help the university in dealing with the impacts of environmental uncertainty. Always be abreast with what is new all around and what other universities are embracing; change of programs to match the market; closely monitor current trends; ensure lecturers go through a rigorous interview to ensure they are qualified; ensure that before any expansion is done they have targeted those available locally; establish which programs sell in the market and ensure they target the students for those programs; have constant talks to educate the university staff and students

on changes to the environment; create formal strategic alliances with other institutions; and maximize or leverage on technology to enhance its competitive intelligence; having an effective risk assessment of environmental uncertainty and putting up good modules for this risks; involve all stakeholders in implementation; involve students and staff more in brainstorming and marketing; meet with student leaders regularly to address student issues; need to set up a branch on market research, innovation and technology centre to understand the current market dynamics; offering good services; be persistent in what they are doing; do more marketing planning; to increase participation of low level employees; and updating the risk register annually

5.3 Conclusion

The study sought to establish the influence of environmental uncertainty on strategy implementation within private chartered universities in Kenya. The study found that in order for the universities to keep up with the changing environment they had to implement various strategic decisions. The study also revealed that universities encounter various uncertainties with the main challenge encountered being technological changes, followed by customer preference, and lastly multiple government regulations on higher education. The Education Sector and government policies change to a great extent, and also the business environment has become to a very great extent dynamic, turbulent and difficult to forecast, the universities do development and research to a great extent. The study therefore concludes that environmental uncertainties greatly influence strategy implementation within private chartered universities in Kenya.

The study also sought to determine the approaches that private universities employ to marginalize the effects of environmental uncertainty. The study concludes that universities

employ various strategies in dealing with the effect of environmental uncertainty. They include: coming up with a register of risks and mitigating measures; concentrate on co programs; controlling of costs; ensuring quality education is offered; ensuring a good student body; have less aggressive strategy; have the right information about the costumers; tailor products to suit the current market; having boundary spanning i.e. creating competitive intelligence; hiring skilled workers; introduce new programs that encourage students to progress to higher learning in the institution; involve all the parties in the university strategic plan; keep up with latest technology; introduce new policy (customer centrism) aimed at addressing the needful; using sound proof renovation; training and development of employees; trying to get constant feedback on applied strategies; and use of consumer retention before acquiring new customers. The study also found that the strategies employed benefited the university.

5.4 Recommendations

The study recommends that private Universities should be encouraged to lean more on areas like research and other areas of activities that are income generating instead of highly depending on tuition fees. This can be done through seeking affiliations with research institutes like KEMRI and KARI.

The study further recommends that they should also seek bilateral agreements with the government seeking the introduction of subsidized programs for low income qualified students. This can be done through grants and scholarships instead of loans from HELB which is questionable on how they deal with private university students.

Universities should conduct continuous monitoring and evaluation of strategies adapted to ensure that their strategies are always at per with the dynamic and uncertain environments

they operate in. it is also recommended that Private Universities should embrace strategic leadership as this helps these institutions to become more competitive.

The study recommends that the university should set up a branch on market research, innovation and technology centre to understand the current market dynamics. This will enable the university to understand the market well and also monitor the current trends and establish which programs sell in the market and ensure they target the students for those programs.

The study also recommends more involvement of students and staff in brainstorming, marketing and in coming up with strategies, this will make sure that the strategies put in place meet the needs of the students and the expectations of the society. The study further recommends maximization or leveraging on technology to enhance its competitive intelligence, the university should also do more marketing planning.

5.5 Limitations of the Study

The study only focused on private universities in Kenya. Some of the respondents could not participate in the study due to their busy work schedules. It also proved difficulty in some universities to collect data from the top management. This necessitated the need for referral respondents especially from the Vice Chancellors who had busy schedules. The study only used questionnaires for data collection. Cross sectional survey design was adopted in this study.

5.6 Suggestions for Further Research

This study sought to establish the influence of environmental uncertainty on strategy implementation within private chartered universities in Kenya and also to determine the

approaches that private universities employ to marginalize the effects of environmental uncertainty. The study recommends replication of the study in public universities. The study also recommends a comparative analysis between Private and Public Universities performance in relation to the effects of environmental uncertainty on their strategies.

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APPENDICES

Appendix I: Introductory Letter

UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI
SCHOOL OF BUSINESS

Telephone: 020-2059162 Telegrams: "Varsity", Nairobi Telex: 22095 Varsity	P.O. Box 30197 Nairobi, Kenya

DATE 7/9/2018

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

The bearer of this letter ... MWENDA M. TITUS

Registration No. ... D61/71141/2014

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.

07 SEP 2018

PROF. JAMES M. NJIHIA
DEAN, SCHOOL OF BUSINESS

Appendix II: Cover Letter

Mwenda M. Titus

Nairobi - Kenya.

September, 2016

Dear Respondent,

RE: <u>RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE</u>

The below enclosed questionnaire is meant for collection of information pertaining the implications of the environmental uncertainty on the successful strategy implementation in Kenyan private universities. The research work will be conducted on the project as a basic requirement for award of a Degree in Master of Business Administration in the University of Nairobi. Please note that this is strictly an academic exercise towards the attainment of the afore-mentioned degree. You are hereby assured of the confidently of the information given. I will appreciate for your corporation.

Thank you and I look forward to your kind response.

Yours faithfully,

Mwenda Muthomi Titus

Appendix III: Research Questionnaire

Section A: Demographic and Respondents Profile

    i.   Name of the Private University ……………………………………………………….

    ii.   University's Headquarters (Main Campus) ……………..……………………...

    iii.   How many research programmes does the University offer…………..……………

    iv.   The Total Number of employees that University have…..………………………….

    v.   Number of years worked with the University

        a)   1 - 2 years   b) 2 – 6 years

        c)   6 – 10 years   d) Over 10 years

Section B: Strategy Implementation

    i.   To what level of extent does the university involve its employee during strategy implementation process?

        a)   Very Great extent   b) Great extent

        c)   Moderate Extent   d) Low extent

    ii.   To what extent would you say your university has succeeded in implementing its strategies?

        a)   Very Great extent   b) Great extent

        c)   Moderate Extent   d) Low extent

    iii.   Select the strategic decisions your university has recently implemented? (Tick where appropriately)

        a)   Opening a new teaching staff / campus?   ( )

        b)   Close a campus or discontinue a course   ( )

        c)   Set up modern costly buildings   ( )

d)   Other (Please specify)   ( )

………………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………………

iv.   State the extent to which the following have influenced strategy implementation in your university? *Tick 1 – Low extent, 2 – Moderate Extent, 3 – Great extent, 4 – Very great extent, 5 – Not aware*

Statement	Response Ratings				
	1	2	3	4	5
To what extent is your University strategy implementation process management driven or people driven?					
To what extent do the Education Sector and government policies change?					
The extent of competition among stakeholders in the education sector.					
The extent at which the business environment has become very dynamic, turbulent and difficult to forecast					
The extent the University conduct market analysis before introducing a new programme or investing into a new market.					
The extent at which your university does development and research					

To what extent would you say the University is up to date with the Technology?				
The extent at which the university meets the expectations and needs of the students?				
The extent of existence of counter strategies in your university.				

v. In respect to your University, what would you consider as your major environmental issue you constantly encounter? (You can tick more than one aspect)

    a)   Multiple government regulations on higher education   ( )

    b)   Technological changes   ( )

    c)   Customer preferences   ( )

Others (Kindly explain)

………………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………………

Section C: Approaches of Managing Environmental Uncertainty

i. What is the response of your University regarding the dynamics mentioned in the Section B Above? (Please Explain)

…………………………………………………………………………………………..

…………………………………………………………………………………………

ii. State the extent to which you agree or disagree on the statements below. *Tick 1 – Very low extent, 2 – Low extent, 3 - Moderate Extent, 4 – Great extent, 5 – Very great extent,*

Statement	Response Ratings				
	1	2	3	4	5
To what extent has the university set up good approaches to deal with environmental uncertainty.					
To what extent are the employees consulted in coming up with strategic responses towards market dynamics					
The commitment and involvement of top management in formulating counter strategies to deal with market uncertainties.					
The extent at which the university respond to market changes.					
The flexibility of strategic plans to effectively suit market changes?					
The extent of which the implemented strategies suit the University environment.					
At which extent would you say the university monitors the environment continually to identify changes and respond to them on time?					
The level of extent at which the University involve the student body in formulating programmes that are required by the society?					
The appreciation of Student body towards the University Strategies.					

iii.   What effective approaches has the University employed to deal with influences of environmental uncertainty? How beneficial are these approaches?

………………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………………

iv.   What are the recommendations you would give to the university to enhance it deal with the impact of environmental uncertainty?

………………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………………

Appendix IV: Accredited Private Universities in Kenya

NAME OF UNIVERSITY	YEAR ACCREDITED
St Paul's University	2007
Africa Nazarene University	2002
Mt Kenya University	2011
Kenya Methodist University	2006
Africa International University	2011
Catholic University of East Africa	1992
United States International University	1995
KCA University	2013
Strathmore University	2008
Adventist University of Africa	2013
Daystar University	1994
Kabarak University	2008
Scott Christian University	1997
Kenya Highlands Evangelical University	2011
Pan African Christian University	2008
University of Eastern Africa, Baraton	1991
Great Lakes University of Kisumu	2012

Source 2016: (www.cue.or.ke/index.php/services/accredation/status-of-universities).