

**CHALLENGES OF STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION AT THE
UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI**

BY

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DECLARATION

This research project is my original work and has not been presented for the award of a degree in any other university or any other higher learning institution for examination purpose.

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This research project has been submitted for examination with my approval as the university supervisor.

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DEDICATION

This research work is dedicated to my wife Jane and children, Lydia, Valentine, Sharon, Polycarp and Hoggla. It is through your support, prayers and selflessness that made my studies possible. I will forever remain indebted to you.

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The success of this study is not entirely my own. I would therefore wish to acknowledge the contributions of the following people who made my study possible. To them I express my deepest gratitude.

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To those that I have not mentioned due to lack of space, I say thanks for your genuine support. Thanks for helping me realize my dreams.

My greatest gratitude goes to the Almighty God who provided the wisdom and direction in this journey. To Him I say glory and honour unto you for ever more.

ABSTRACT

Organizations prepare very excellent strategies which in most cases are never implemented for various reasons. Translating strategic thought into organization action is the most difficult phase of strategic management and without successful implementation of strategies the organization will not achieve its objectives. The main purpose of this study was to establish the challenges of strategy implementation at the University of Nairobi and also to determine the measures taken to deal with these challenges. The study was modeled for a case study design which is a qualitative analysis involving a careful and complete observation of data. The case study allowed an investigation to retain the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real life events. The study used both primary and secondary data where primary data was collected by use of face to face interview between the researcher and the respondents. On the other hand, secondary data was obtained from University of Nairobi documents such as the strategic plan, service charter, performance contracts, ISO certification documents annual reports and annual performance evaluations. The data was qualitatively analyzed using content analysis techniques in order to give in-depth findings of the study. The information was evaluated and analyzed to determine its usefulness, credibility, consistency and adequacy. In coding qualitative data the researcher read all the responses, identified key information and related it to emerging patterns. The outcome was then compared in order to get more revelation on challenges of strategy implementation at the University of Nairobi. The findings provided an insight on how public universities should carry out a successful strategy implementation. The study found that some aspects of culture, structure, unsound reward systems, and insufficient communication are some of the major challenges faced by the University of Nairobi in its strategy implementation. Other challenges include; resistance to change, poor strategy leadership, existing policies and procedures and the external environment. It was established that the University of Nairobi has a five years strategic plan (2008-2013), which laid down four main goals and sets four objectives to be achieved within the planned period. They include; providing facility for university education, participating in the discovery, transmission and preservation of knowledge, conducting examinations and granting academic awards. It was further established that the University of Nairobi adopts a formal strategic planning process which involves members of the management team with other members of staff being represented by respective trade unions. The study further found out that the formality adopted by the university in its strategic planning resulted into a strategic document (strategic plan), whose time horizon is five years. Various methods were found to be used by the university in its strategy implementation. They include, change management, carrying out training for staff, improving on information technology, and culture change among others. Conclusions were drawn and specific recommendations made Overall findings showed that University of Nairobi has been effective in implementing its strategies. If adopted findings of this study will help organizations to manage their strategies as well as successfully implement them. Among the recommendations were; the university involves all its staff in strategy implementation to encourage ownership, Management avails resources needed for strategy implementation, identify strategy critical value chain as well as focusing on a lean, flat responsive, and innovative organization structure among others.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study

Strategy is the direction and scope of an organization over the long term that achieves advantage for the organization through its configuration of resources within a changing environment and to fulfill shareholders' expectations (Johnson and Scholes 2002). Most organizations have strategic plans. However Strategic plans do not ensure organizational success. In as much as strategies would be brilliant, they do not ensure effective performance. Organizations are environment serving and environment dependent. They manage in areas faced with changes in the external environment since the environment is turbulent and ever changing. Selznick (1957) argues that there is need of matching organization's internal factors with the external environment, popularly known as the strategic fit.

The success of an organization does not come by chance. There is a clear and compelling vision and strong commitment to achieve set objectives. Everyone needs to understand the business of the organization and its future direction, which is essential for success in today's turbulent and sometimes hostile environment. Strategy determines how organizations respond to the environment around them. Strategy is therefore essential in providing the direction and focus of any organization. It specifies how an organization will move from its present situation to its desirable future and how it will achieve its competitiveness in the market. According to Bryson (1995) strategic management is a process which involves formulation, implementation, review and control of strategic

plans. Pearce and Robinson (1997), argue that Strategic management process moves into organizational action once corporate business strategies have been agreed upon and long term objectives set.

Strategy implementation is important since it bridges the gap between strategy formulation and its success. Poor implementation of an appropriate strategy may cause it to fail (Kiruthi, 2001). Failure of strategy can arise from strategies that fail the test of the environment- strategy-capability match, failure to couple strategy development and implementation and poor implementation process. Strategy implementation though deemed difficult is a critical phase of organizational survival (David, 1997). After a comprehensive strategy has been formulated, difficulties arise during the subsequent implementation process. According to Ngumo (2006), strategy implementation though considered heavily demanding cannot be overlooked by any organization that seeks to achieve its goals. The University of Nairobi must therefore endeavor to implement its strategies if it has to remain competitive in today's ever changing and turbulent environment.

1.1.1 The Concept of Strategy Implementation

Strategy implementation refers to a set of decisions and actions that result in formulation and implementation of long term plans designed to achieve organizational objectives (Pearce and Robinson, 2007). It is defined as the process that turns strategies and plans into actions to accomplish objectives (Pride and Farrell, 2003). An excellent implementation plan will not only cause the success of an appropriate strategy, but can

also rescue it (Hunger and Wheelen, 1994). Aosa (1992) states that once strategies have been developed, they need to be implemented and they are of no value unless they are effectively translated into action. Successful strategy implementation involves creating a series of fits, hence between strategy and structure, skills and competencies, budget allocations, reward systems and corporate culture, policies and procedures (Bryson, 2005).

Harrington (2006), strategy implementation is a process of putting in place strategies, policies, programs, and action plans that allow a firm to utilize its resources in order to take advantage of opportunities in the competitive environment. Scaap (2006) defined strategy implementation as those senior level leadership behaviors and activities that will transform a working plan into reality. Although formulating a consistent strategy is difficult for managers, implementing it throughout the organization is even more difficult (Hrebiniak, 2006). David (2003), states that both managers and employees should be involved in implementation decisions and adequate communication between both parties is important. According to Godiwalla et al (1997), the human element of strategy implementation plays a key role in successful implementation and it involves both managers and employees of the organization.

David (1997) observes that organizations that do not use a strategic management approach in decision making, resource allocation is often based on political or personal factors such as overprotection of resources, emphasis on short run financial criteria, vague targets, reluctance to taking risks and lack of sufficient knowledge. In organizations that are well managed there exists a relationship between strategic planning

and planning done by managers at all levels (Mintzberg and Quinn, 1991). David (1997) indicates that strategic plans are of a commanding significance in strategic management. They provide a channel for effective communication within organization and outside.

1.1.2 The Higher Education Sector in Kenya

Higher education in Kenya goes back to 1922, when the then Makerere College in Uganda was established as a technical college. In 1956, Royal Technical College Nairobi was established and in 1963 it became University College of Nairobi. In 1970, the University of Nairobi was established being the first University in Kenya. In the 1970's the number of Kenyans in need of University education exceeded the capacity of the then only University of Nairobi and since then University Education in Kenya has continuously expanded with the rise in student enrollment. Expansion of Universities, diversification of programmes, and setting up of new Universities and Campuses has since been the norm rather than the exception. The social demand with respect to Higher Education in Kenya has intensified continuously and this can be proved by the constant rise in enrolment in both public and private Universities as well as the continuous establishment of Self Sponsored programmes in Public Universities.

Financing Higher Education in Kenya was originally free, with the public purse meeting both tuition and living allowances (Weldman, 1995). The rationale for free education in Kenya was based on among other things the desire to provide highly trained manpower that would replace the outgoing colonial managers of the economy. In 1974, the government introduced University Students Loan Scheme to provide full loans to students. The scheme failed due to lack of legal systems to recover matured loans from

loanees. In 1995, the government established the Higher Education loans board (HELB) to administer the students' loan scheme. The scheme was empowered to recover all outstanding loans given to former University Students since 1952 and establish a revolving fund to lend to needy Kenyan students in higher education thus reducing pressure on the exchequer.

Higher education in Kenya is run by the Commission for higher education (CHE) which was introduced in 1995, under the provisions of the University Act. Its major functions includes; accrediting universities, promoting the objectives of University education which are, development, processing, storage and dissemination of knowledge for the benefit of society, advising the Minister on development of public Universities as well as cooperating with the government in planning of University education. It also examines and approves proposals for courses of study and course regulations submitted to it by private universities. According to Sifuna (1998), only one CHE function, the accreditation of private Universities has been its main preoccupation since it became operational in 1986. The politicization of planning and development of University education has effectively denied the commission its mandate.

The government's action in decision making has made it difficult to play an active role in public Universities budgetary matters. The creation of joint admission board has also affected CHE statutory requirement of making regulations related to admissions to public Universities, as well as maintaining standards for courses and examinations. The increased demand for higher education is a contributing factor to lack of planning. Sifuna (1998) revealed that rapid expansion of University education was in response to the

demand for higher education. The demand for higher education has consistently increased as Kenyans and the people of this region have put a lot of hope in higher education.

1.1.3 The University of Nairobi

The University of Nairobi is the oldest university in Kenya. It originated in the Royal Technical college of East Africa, which was established in 1956. In 1960, the Royal Technical College was affiliated to the University of London as a constituent college. In 1963, it became the Nairobi University College and Subsequently the University of Nairobi in 1970. From the first 215 who joined the Loyal Technical College on 23rd April, 1956 today there are 52,000 students enrolled in the University of Nairobi. Of these students 16,000 are government sponsored and 36,000 are self sponsored. The University of Nairobi is not only the largest public University in Kenya, but it also has the largest number of self sponsored students. Its ‘‘private wing’’ is larger than all private Universities in Kenya combined. With its 52,000 student’s enrolment, the University is one of the largest universities in Africa today. It offers the most diverse range of academic programmes in East and Central Africa. It has over 100 schools, faculties, institutes and departments distributed in six colleges.

The University of Nairobi developed its first five years strategic plan in 2005. The plan has since been reviewed twice in 2007 and 2010 respectively. The reviews were due to critical changes that had either occurred or were expected to occur in the University’s internal or external environment. There has therefore been need to align the plan with the changes and keep it relevant and valuable. The 2010 review was as a result of changes that occurred in 2008, particularly government sector specific standard documents and

sector performance standards that streamlined approach to performance contracting for public institutions. The review re-aligned the strategic plan to vision 2030 and the new constitution.

This was a corporate level strategy from which units at lower level were expected to develop their own strategic plans in a descending order. The process is cascaded down to the colleges, administrative units and basic operational units. Today each functional unit has a strategic plan which is directly linked to the overall university strategic plan. The basic logic here is that the strategies of the immediate higher unit becomes the strategic objectives for the immediate lower units. Changes in the external environment of the university created new opportunities and challenges alike, hence the need to review its strategic plan and recast it. In the review, relevant literature was consulted, such as government legislation, policy documents, pertinent university policies and programmes and pertinent reports. Key stakeholders were also interviewed, who includes staff, students, suppliers and the general public among others.

1.2 The Research Problem

For organizational success strategy implementation is key. According to Thompson and Strickland (1990), strategy implementation is an interplay between several forces where the chosen strategy is the centerpiece. Strategy implementation is hard and time consuming as David (2003) points out that work begins at implementation. Organizations large and small worldwide spend billions of money on strategy formulation and management recognizes the importance of implementation only as an afterthought. Raps and Kaufman (2005) argue that there is a low successful implementation rate of only

between 10 and 30 percent of the intended strategies worldwide. Contributing factors for this includes dwindling resources, rapid technological changes and advances that require an increasingly adaptive and sophisticated workforce, organizational culture, poor reward systems, poor policies, and poor leadership among others.

The environment in which organizations implement strategies is unpredictable and in most cases very dynamic. All organizations must struggle with the challenges of a changing environment. In spite of the effort the University of Nairobi has put in the strategic process, strategy implementation is still a challenge. This is evidenced by the fact that it is yet to achieve its world class status which has been its main objective in its 2005-2010 strategic plan and now in 2008-2013 strategic plan. Again according to the evaluation of past performance report as specified in the 2008-2013 strategic plan customer satisfaction index was rated at 68.62 percent. This is an indication that there are challenges hindering the institution from achieving 100 percent performances.

A number of studies have been carried out on the challenges of strategy implementation. . Koske (2003) studied strategy implementation and its challenges at Telkom Kenya Ltd Ngala (2010) studied challenges of strategy implementation at I & M bank Ltd; Gakii (2010) did a study on challenges of strategy implementation at the Kenya Revenue Authority. Ocholla (2010) studied challenges of strategy implementation at Kenya medical research institute. Essajee (2011) studied challenges of strategy implementation at the first community bank of Kenya. Ngari (2011) studied challenges of strategy implementation at Heritage insurance company limited.

The context and concepts in which the above studies were carried out differ. After reviewing the above and other similar studies carried out in the past none of them focused on strategy implementation in Public Universities and the University of Nairobi in particular, thus giving justification for this study. The study seeks to answer the following questions;

- i. What are the challenges of strategy implementation at the University of Nairobi?
- ii. How does the university deal with the challenges of strategy implementation?

1.3 Research Objectives

The objectives of the study were to:

- i. Establish the challenges of strategy implementation at the University of Nairobi.
- ii. Determine the measures taken to deal with strategy implementation challenges at the University of Nairobi.

1.4 Value of the study

The study facilitated theory building in the area of strategy implementation process at University of Nairobi. It tries to validate the theoretical perspective that informs the challenges of strategy implementation. This helps to develop appropriate policies to deal with issues that emerge and also deal with future strategic plans development.

Secondly, the study benefits other public institutions, particularly public universities seeking to improve formulation and implementation of their strategic plans. Institutions

implementing their strategic plans will find this study useful by providing insight into the implementation process.

Thirdly, the study adds to the pool of knowledge useful to other researchers for reference in areas of strategic plan implementation. It therefore seeks to enrich the study of strategic management. It also help identify areas of further research.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter deals with the review of literature related to the study. Literature on the need for organizational strategy, strategy formulation and implementation process, competitive strategy, implementation challenges, measures to curb implementation challenges and the theoretical framework for strategy implementation.

2:2 The Concept of Strategy

Strategy is the pattern or plan that integrates an organization's major goals, policies and action sequences into a cohesive whole. A well formulated strategy helps to marshal and allocate an organization's resources into a unique and viable posture based on its relative internal competencies and shortcomings, anticipated change in the environment and contingent moves by intelligent opponents. Chandler (1962) in defining strategy pioneered the idea that structure follows strategy. Ansoff (1965) on his part focused on strategy- capability gaps, where analysis is done to establish where the organization is, where it is anticipated to be and the strategies it adopts for repositioning itself. Strategy is about achieving competitive advantage through being different, thus deriving a unique value, and having a clear and enactable view on how to position yourself uniquely in your industry (Porter, 1985).

According to Johnson and Scholes (1998), Business Strategy is the direction and scope of an organization over the long term; which achieves advantages for the organization through configuration of resources, through a challenging of involvement to meet the needs of markets and to fulfill stakeholders' expectations. Strategy is the game plan

management has for positioning the company in its chosen market arena, competing successfully, pleasing customers and achieving good business performance (Thompson and Strickland, 1990). Strategy is what a company does and how it positions itself commercially and conducts the competitive battle (Koch Richard, 1995). Strategy is the commercial logic of a business that defines why a firm can have a competitive advantage.

Mintzberg and Quinn (1998) introduced the five P's of strategy, that is, strategy as a plan, as a pattern, as a ploy, as a position and as a perspective. As a plan strategy specifies a consciously intended course of action an organization wishes to take. As a ploy it specifies the maneuvers intended to outwit a competitor by an organization. As a pattern strategy emerges from a stream of actions developed by an organization in the absence of intentions and without any pre-conception and as a perspective strategy reveals the way an organization perceives the outside world. This holistic approach brings out the various angles that an organization adopts in achieving its goals.

Johnson and Scholes (1993) give different approaches to strategy. They include a cultural approach, which views strategy as a pattern of behavior arising from the culture embedded in the organization, natural selection, where the organization is pressurized to adapt to environmental changes, rational approach where deliberate planning systems are put in place in determining organizational strategy and political approach which stipulates that strategy emerges from trade-ins of individual and organizational demands and interests to strike a balance.

Tempoe and Macmillan (2000), view strategy in various aspects which are; strategy as a statement of intent where it is seen as a clarification of a corporate purpose as defined in

the organization's vision and mission statements, strategy as fit between capabilities and opportunities where strategy matches the capabilities of an organization and its abilities to achieve success and strategy as a responsibility of leaders where leaders define strategies that influence the daily activities of an organization.

2.3 Strategic Management Process

Strategic management process is not complete without effective implementation of an organization's strategy. This is crucial and hence the reason why the process and content of strategy needs to incorporate all forms of implementation. According to Ansoff (1990) strategic management is an organized approach vested on management to reposition the organization in a turbulent environment and in a manner that will ensure success. Ansoff points out the organization's capabilities against a turbulent environment and how a firm strikes the balance in order to remain competitive and stay in business. According to David (1997) strategic plans serve as communication channels which allow for cascading of information to lower units of an organization leading to participation by all employees. Thompson et al (2007) introduces the aspect of a strategic plan and states that it enable a company to cope with challenges in the industry and the competitive forces.

Jonson and Scholes (1993) define strategic management on the basis of deciding on the strategy to be adopted and how it will be executed. This is evident in the organization's strategic analysis, where strategic options chosen will enhance the organization's competitive position. It highlights major phase in strategic management which an organization must follow diligently if it wants to succeed. Strategic management consists of the entire organization's focus on both short and long term goals. Organizations must engage management staff to take charge of strategic management process. This involves

strategic planning, which is the process of developing and ensuring consistency between the organization's objectives and resources and its changing opportunities (Robison, 1997). It documents a system of doing business that leads to greater profit and growth. Strategic planning turns an organization's mission into achievable goals as contained in the strategic plan.

2.4 Strategy Implementation

Pearce and Robinson (2005) defines strategic implementation as a set of decisions and actions that result in the formulation and implementation of long term plans designed to achieve organizational objectives. David (2003) describes strategy implementation as an action stage of strategic management. Mintzberg (1987) coined the term 'crafting strategy' to suggest that it is ones involvement in a business that will determine the success of strategies formulated. According to Thompson and Strickland (2003), there are no ten step checklist, no proven parts and few concrete guidelines for strategy implementation. Strategy implementation is the least chartered, most open ended part of strategic management. The best evidence of what to do and not to do come from personal experience or case studies and the window they yield is inconsistent.

Kimeli (2008) points out that different business practices, different competitive circumstances, different work environments, cultures, policies, competitive incentives, different mixes of personality require customized approach to strategy implementation. One therefore needs to use best judgment and change techniques proficiently in order to effectively implement strategies. Implementation is successful if the organization achieves its strategic objectives and targeted levels of financial performance. Thompson and Strickland (2007) argue that what makes strategy implementation too demanding is

the wide scope of managerial activities that have to be attended to, the many ways managers can tackle each activity, the skills that it takes to launch the activities and the resistance to change that has to be overcome. Alexander (1995) identifies planning and communication as two major obstacles to successful strategy implementation.

The McKinsey 7-S Framework is a management model that describes seven factors that help organizations determine the way in which they operate. Managers should take into account of all the seven factors in order to successfully implement strategy. Alexander (1991) argues that one reason why strategy implementation fails is that practicing managers and supervisors do not have practical models to guide their actions. In the absence of adequate models, they attempt to implement strategies without understanding the issues to be addressed to ensure success. Noble (1999) argues that there is need for comprehensive conceptual models related to strategy implementation. Various conceptual frameworks were developed with key implementation factors. They include, Stonich (1982), Buckley (1988), Galbrath and Kazanjian (1986), Buckley and Reed (1986) and Hrebiniak and Joyce (1984). These were the first implementation frameworks to appear in the field of strategic management.

They all consist of similar factors like strategy formulation, organizational structure, culture, people and communication control systems. In their research, Miller and Dess (1996), Thompson and Strickland (2007), Atandi (2010) made reference to these implementation factors. Thompson and Strickland (1990) point out that the implementation stage of strategic plan is purely administrative where managers ensure a

fit between the chosen strategy and the organizational culture. Here culture is seen as the employees shared beliefs and values which dictate the pattern for actions within the organization. Mulcaster (2009) identified eleven forces that should be incorporated into the process of strategy implementation. He named them as, time, opposing forces, politics, perception, holistic effects, adding value, incentives, learning capabilities, opportunity cost, risk and style.

Strategy should be effectively operationalized and institutionalized in the organization for effective implementation. Operationalization deals with working out the strategy by ensuring that the organization's daily activities, work efforts, and resources are directed towards implementing the strategy. It involves developing operational plans and tactics through which an otherwise abstract strategy will be implemented. David (2003), states that both managers and employees should be involved in the implementation decision and adequate communication between all parties is important for successful implementation. Organizations need a strategy, but they need strategic thinking even more. They do not need complicated concepts or anyone to tell them what their strategy should be. Most of them use a disciplined approach to help surface and organize what they already know as owners and operators about their business. Applying this knowledge is the gist of operationalizing strategy.

Institutionalization of strategy is matching strategy to the institutions of the organization. Thompson and Strickland (2007) argued that the cornerstone of strategy implementation is building an organization capable of carrying out the strategy successfully. Strategy is

never complete until it gains commitment of organization's resources and become embodied in its activities. There is an urgent need for institutionalization of strategy because without it, the strategy will be undermined. Strategies should appeal to employees and attract their support thus making them own the strategy and create a commitment so essential for making it successful. Institutionalization of strategy involves, setting of proper organizational climate relevant for strategy implementation, developing operational plans, appropriate organizational structures in which various parts of the organization are interrelated or interconnected and periodic review of the strategy is done to find out whether it is relevant.

According to Machuki (2005), good strategies only guarantee success if they are translated into action and action that yield acceptable results. Periodic review is important because even a carefully developed strategy might cease to be suitable if events change, knowledge becomes clearer, or if environment will not be as originally thought. Conflicting empirical results founded upon contrasting theoretical premises indicate that strategy implementation is a complex phenomenon. Strategy therefore, should be effectively operationalized and institutionalized in the organization for effective implementation. Given the competitive environment the critical determinant in the success and survival of the firm is the successful implementation of strategies. Delicate and sensitive issues are involved in strategy implementation such as resource mobilization, restructuring, culture change, technological change, process changes, policy and leadership changes. If implementation is not effectively managed, the strategic plan may amount to being a mere "white elephant" and nothing more.

2.5 Challenges of Strategy Implementation

Strategy implementations often pose a number of challenges which arise from sources that are internal and external to the organization. Particular challenges that will face strategy implementation will depend on the type of organization and the prevailing circumstances. Thomson (1995), states that in all organizations, at all levels, there exists a natural resistance to change. Employees feel threatened with changes of the unknown and they get concern with loss of jobs or status. According to Thompson and Strickland (1998), the same is true of the management staff. They point out that organizational culture and change must be the leader's top priority, arguing that if managers see the need for change, give this change priority and use the required time, then the organization will change and strategy implementation will succeed. . Thompson and Strickland (1998) further argue that leaders' involvement in strategy implementation is crucial.

According to Kaplan and Norton (2004), the main causes of poor strategy implementation are; vision and strategies that are not achievable, not linked to departmental, team and individual goals, long and short term resource allocation and feedbacks that are tactical but not strategic. They do not mention leadership style as a barrier. Beer and Eisenstat (2000) state that leadership influences strategy implementation. Galpin (1998) points out that what makes the difference between successful and unsuccessful strategy implementation is the way management motivates and educates its people. Kaplan and Norton (2004), argue that the most important driver of success in strategy is top management leadership style, and not the tool itself, that leadership style has a larger effect than the analytical and structural strength of the tool.

They refer to the experience of leaders that have managed a successful strategy implementation and emphasize communication as the largest challenge.

Most organizations formulate strategies that are burdened with undue complexity and are bogged down by principles that are similar to those of competitors. At implementation problems occur and their success depends on how fast and how well plans are put into action. Strategy may fail if the design of the organization context is inappropriate for effective implementation and control. The strategy should be compatible with the internal structure of the organization, its business, policies, procedures and resources. Awino (2001) identified four challenges affecting successful strategy implementation as; lack of fit between strategy and structure, failure to impart new skills, inadequate information and communication systems. Koske (2003) observed that there are many organizational characteristics that constrain strategy implementation. They are connecting strategy formulation to implementation, resource allocation, match between strategy and structure, linking performance and pay to strategies and creating strategy supportive culture.

Kim and Mauborgne (2005) identified; failure to overcoming the four organizational hurdles, which are cognitive, motivational, resource and political hurdles, failure to understand the customer, inability to predict environmental reaction, overestimation of resource competence, failure to coordinate, lack of senior management commitment, failure to obtain employee commitment, underestimation of time requirements, failure to follow the plan, failure to manage change and poor communication as major challenges of strategy implementation. Aosa (1992) observed that lack of compatibility between

strategy and culture can lead to high organizational resistance to change and demotivation, thus frustrating strategy implementation. Strategy implementation often encounters challenges because of deep-rooted cultural biases. It is the strategist's responsibility to choose a strategy that is compatible with the unchangeable part of the corporate culture (Thompson and Strickland, 1989).

People working in organizations sometimes resist proposals for change thus making it difficult to implement strategy (Lynch, 2000). This may occur due to fear of economic loss, inconvenience, uncertainty, and break in normal social patterns (David 1997). According to Freeman (2003) there are a number of strategy implementation pitfalls which include isolation, lack of stakeholder commitment, strategic drift, dilution, and isolation, failure to understand progress, initiative fatigue, impatience and not celebrating success. Sometimes strategies fail because they are simply ill conceived. The importance of confronting reality comes into focus once one builds an execution culture across the wider organization (Bossidy and Charan, 2002).

Drazin and Howard (1984) pointed out strategy – structure alignment as a precursor to the successful implementation of business strategies. They argue that changes in the competitive environment require adjustments to the organizational structure. Inappropriate systems of structure are one major challenge of strategy implementation. According to Johnson and Scholes (1999) successful strategy implementation is a factor of organizational structure, resource allocation and strategic change management. Chandler (1962) observed that structure follows strategy in the sense that structure is

deliberately adjusted to embrace strategy pursued by the organization. He emphasized matching structure to strategy. Mintzberg (1990) concludes that 'structure follows strategy as left foot follows right foot'. It is therefore important to check that the existing structure does not constrain the strategies being implemented. Pearce and Robinson (2002) argue that structure can enhance or inhibit strategy implementation. David (1997) indicates that structure determines resource allocation which also has an impact on strategy implementation.

2.6 Measures to Challenges of Strategy Implementation

For successful strategy implementation organizations should evaluate the challenges, failures and obstacles as well as strengths then address them without bias. Organizations should take appropriate measures to mitigate the challenges they face in implementing strategies. There should be tight fit between the strategy and how an organization does things. These involves creating a series of tight fit between organizational skills, competencies, strategy and organizational culture, strategy and reward systems, strategy and budgets, strategy and internal policies and procedures, leadership and support systems.

Organizations should train their strategy implementers on strategy formulation and implementation. The training should focus on management staff because if an organization is to realize successful strategy implementation, the people involved should be of relevant and right skills. Proper analysis should be done to determine the relevance, type, frequency and length of training as well as the costs involved. Management should

undergo continuous training to be updated on new developments in the business environment. Those with specialized roles in various areas should be given a leading role to play, in order to improve the performance and competitiveness of organizations.

On resources organizations should be linked to budgets and allocation of resources should be based on key issues and priorities identified. According to Thompson et al (2007), the funding requirements of a new strategy must drive how capital allocations are made and the size of each unit's operating budget. Underfunding organizational activities central to strategic success impedes strategy implementation. Resources needed for implementation should be readily available, ranging from finance, material to human. Control measures should be taken during implementation. Organizations should realize the importance of realigning organizational culture with what is needed for strategic success. Culture therefore has to be changed. Successful culture change has to be led by management since this task cannot be delegated to other staff. What management say and do plant the seeds of culture change. It is therefore only management that has the power and organizational influence to bring about change in culture.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter describes the research design, data collection and the various techniques for data analysis used in the study.

3.1 Research Design

The study was modeled for a case study design. According to Kothari (1990) a case study is a form of qualitative analysis which involves a careful and complete observation of a social unit be it a family, a person, a cultural group, or an entire community or institution. The study focused on strategy implementation challenges at the University of Nairobi. The results provided an insight on how public Universities should carry out successful strategy implementation in order to remain competitive in the current turbulent and sometimes hostile environment.

Yin (1994) also points out that a case study allows an investigation to retain the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real life events. It is a method of study in depth rather than breadth and lays more emphasis on a limited number of events and other interrelations. Previous studies of similar nature have successfully used this method Kandie (2001), Koske (2003), Muthuya (2004), Machuki (2005), Olali (2006), Atandi (2010) and Miako (2011) among others.

3.2 Data Collection

The study used both primary and secondary data. The primary data was collected by use of face to face interview between the researcher and respondents. The respondents included the deputy vice chancellors, the principal college of health sciences, dean, school of Business, Registrar administration, Director Students Welfare Authority, Assistant registrar, Deputy vice Chancellor Research and Extension's office, who were considered to be key informants. Secondary data was obtained from organizational documents such as the strategic plan, service charter, performance contracts, ISO certification documents, annual reports and annual performance evaluations.

The nature of data collected was qualitative using an interview guide. It consisted of open ended questions which elicited specific responses for both qualitative and quantitative analysis. The questions formulated were standard and hence the responses were homogenous. The interviewees were managers who were involved in strategy formulation, and also tasked to oversee the implementation process.

3.3 Data Analysis

Data obtained was qualitatively analyzed using content analysis techniques. Weber (1990) points out that the best content-analytical studies use both qualitative and quantitative methods. The information was analyzed and evaluated to determine its usefulness, credibility, consistency and adequacy. Content analysis technique was used because it assisted in making inferences by objectively identifying specific information and relating the same to occurrence trends.

According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003), the main purpose of content analysis is to study existing information in order to determine factors that explain a specific phenomenon. In coding qualitative data, the researcher read all the responses, identified key information and related it to emerging patterns. The outcome was compared in an attempt to get more revelation on the processes and challenges of strategy implementation at the University of Nairobi. Content analysis has in the past been used successfully by Kimeli (2008), Kiplotich (2008), Njuguna (2009), Atandi (2010), Ndonga (2010) and Maiko (2011).

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1 Introduction

The study intended to achieve two objectives; to establish the challenges of strategy implementation at the University of Nairobi and to determine measures taken to handle the challenges of strategy implementation at the University of Nairobi. An interview guide was designed to solicit data from the University's top management who included the Deputy vice Chancellor administration and finance, Deputy vice Chancellor academic affairs, Principal College health sciences, Director Students Welfare Authority, Director Institute of Computer science, Registrar administration, Registrar academic affairs and Dean, school of business.

A systematic qualitative description amounting to content analysis of data was conducted in order to give in depth findings of the study. The study established that some aspects of culture and structure, staff demotivation due to unsound reward systems, insufficient communication, and alignment of resources to strategy as major challenges faced by the organization. Others included resistance to change, poor strategy leadership, existing policies and procedures as well as external environment.

This chapter will discuss strategy implementation at the University of Nairobi, evaluation of past performance, challenges of strategy implementation at the University of Nairobi and finally the measures taken to mitigate the challenges of strategy implementation

4.2 Strategy Implementation at the University of Nairobi

University of Nairobi developed its first five years strategic plan in 2005. In this plan, the university charted its strategic direction to world class status. The plan provided a basis for the first performance contract the university signed with the government, preparation for ISO 9001:2008 Certification and various performance improvement initiatives. In 2007 the plan was reviewed and recast producing the current 2008-2013 strategic plan. The review sought to realign it with vision 2030 and address new challenges, while strategizing to consolidate the achievements of the previous plan.

The strategic plan was reviewed again in June 2010 to respond to the emerging challenges and opportunities. In particular the review plan is aligned to government sector specific performance standards and the new constitution. It also addresses critical issues of quality, relevance, access, equity, customer focus and competitiveness. This plan like the previous one is cascaded to lower operational units at the University of Nairobi. The 2008-2013 strategic plans laid down four main goals and set four objectives to be met within the planned period. The goals included; providing facilities for university education, participating in the discovery, transmission and preservation of knowledge, conducting examinations and granting academic awards, co-operating with the government in the planned development of university education and determining who may teach and what may be thought and how it may be thought in the university.

In order to achieve the planned change, University of Nairobi has been undergoing transformation by way of reforms, revitalization in manner in which it conducts business

with considerable emphasis on producing quality education. The institution has set up a reorganization strategy designed to aid in facing the challenges of transformation.

4.3 Evaluation of Past Performance

According to the information extracted from the University of Nairobi Strategic plan 2008-2013 the following evaluation report is documented. Alongside other public sector institutions, the University of Nairobi was put under performance contract in 2005/2006. The performance of the University was rated “very good”. In the same year, it was rated number one in all the departments and state corporations under the ministry of education, all public universities inclusive. In 2008/2009, the university was ranked the best public university and the second best performing state corporation nationally. In independent international ranking (Webometric and 41CU) the university is rated as a top institution in Kenya and the East African region. The major task of the University is to maintain this rating while aiming to be among the top ten universities on the continent. This therefore means that there are challenges it must overcome.

According to a customer satisfaction survey carried out by the Strategic Business Option research in 2009, the customer satisfaction index for the university was 68.62 percent. This was a good achievement and further improvement is being sought in order to achieve a world class status. A service charter has also been developed and is being implemented at all levels. University has also secured ISO 9001-2008 certification. Through sensitization and training, staff now adhere more to rules and regulations than they did in the past. Staff discipline has also improved significantly. Further, the state of

ICT has also improved significantly in recent times. This is important since ICT is a prime mover of performance improvement in the university. Investment in infrastructure also increased significantly over time. Stalled projects, particularly buildings, have been completed and new ones started. Various assets have been procured and old ones given facelifts. This was as per the 2005-2010 strategic plans and part of the 2008-2013 strategic plans.

4.4 Challenges of Strategy Implementation at the University of Nairobi

Implementation challenges arise from sources that are either internal or external to the organization. They may also be operational or institutional challenges. Particular challenges that will face strategy implementation will depend on the type of strategy, type of organization and the prevailing circumstances. The study found out that the University of Nairobi has a well formulated strategic plan. However, implementation of the strategic plan faces a lot of challenges as the study established.

Internal challenges includes; organization culture, organization structure, internal communication, inadequate financial resources, unsound reward systems, insufficient human resource skills, resistance to change and the emergence of trade unionism. External challenges include; competitions from other universities, stakeholders' perception, change in technology, external environmental turbulence, government policies and procedures and economic turndown.

4.5 Discussion

Organizational culture is the organization's way of doing things. It consists of norms, values and beliefs that are held over time in the course of doing business. The match between strategy and culture is crucial for successful strategy implementation. The study wanted to find out whether or not such match exists, and if it does not how challenging is it to effective strategy implementation. The University has a mix of values and beliefs that have been propagated over time by people who have had senior management positions. The aspects have been instilled into other organizational members and have been defined as 'the way of doing things around here'.

The study found out that some aspects of culture promote negative attitudes amongst employees. A culture of WE vs. THEM relationship was noted, where the strategic plan is regarded by other officers as 'their plan'. This is particularly true of middle level managers visa vis top management. One respondent pointed out that resistance from junior members of staff was the most serious challenge management faces in strategy implementation. The study also found out that there was a lot of peer pressure from the staff, particularly the long serving ones who do things the way they have been used to despite the changes in the business environment.

Respondents were unanimous that there is a culture of resistance to change that is less adaptive and less concerned about the importance of changes in the work environment. This was attributed to the historical and traditional perception by individuals in the organization. It was confirmed that there are those staff members who are comfortable

with the status quo, including some of the influential top managers in the institution thus posing a serious challenge to strategy implementation.

Organizational Structure is another internal challenge the university faces in strategy implementation. It deals with the roles, responsibilities, boundaries, processes and procedures as well as relationships of the various positions. University of Nairobi has an organizational structure which is dictated by the nature of business the organization is engaged in. It was however established that some aspects in this structure impede successful strategy implementation. The task of developing the strategy takes place at the centre of the institution. The job of implementing it falls to the various functional areas. According to Chandler once a strategy has been developed, it is necessary to consider the structure needed to carry it out. It might require extra resources or new personnel or equipment which would alter the work of an organization, making a new organizational structure necessary.

Lack of autonomy in decision making among middle level managers raises questions on the positioning and definition of some of the functions in the structure. For example, decisions on staff matters raises conflicts between various departments hence leaving the issues unattended. This leads to low morale towards strategy implementation by employees. It was however established that the University's current organization structure supports implementation of strategies documented in the university's master plan. Most respondents indicated that the current structure in the University is clear with senior managers having roles that are clear to everyone. The study found out that the

University recently created the positions of two Deputy vice chancellors, research and extension and student affairs respectively, in order to improve on service delivery and fill gaps in the structure.

Another challenge to strategy implementation is internal communication. Most respondents maintained that the university keeps an open door policy. While this is true, the research established that not all staff is free to provide feedback to management for effective strategy implementation. Internal effective communication is crucial in, training, distribution of knowledge and learning in strategy implementation. Communication and corporation among diverse participants within an organization is an important element in maintaining organizational stability and adaptation to change. The study sought to establish whether, insufficient communication impairs effective strategy implementation. It became clear that while University of Nairobi's strategic plan was well formulated; the manner in which it was communicated was a problem.

According to respondents, some officers are not aware of the institution's strategic plan or even its contents. This gives an indication that the vision and mission of the institution remains unclear to some of those expected to implement the strategic plan. Findings also reveal that the overall objectives of the institution have been replaced by departmental and team goals which at times do not match with the institution's vision and mission. Insufficient communication about the strategy has been the greatest challenge to strategy implementation. The study found out that the purpose of the activities imposed on the officers is not provided and hence they cannot link the tasks at hand with overall

organizational direction. Most respondents however pointed out that the university management has made every effort to ensure that all employees are aware of the strategic plan, the university vision and mission as well as objectives.

Inadequate financial resources are yet another challenge. Before strategy implementation begins managers need to determine what resources will be needed and then consider whether the current budgets can provide those resources. The study found out that inadequacy of financial resource is a challenge in the university's strategy implementation. Underfunding of organizational activities impedes strategy implementation. The study indicates that University of Nairobi operations have been affected by dwindling resources, against the background of an increasing demand for higher education. Public universities have now to compete for scarce government resource. The alignment of these financial resources to the new strategies is a major challenge since university of Nairobi has not been able to marshal financial resources enough to support new strategies.

The diminishing capability of the exchequer to continue meeting fully the financial needs of public universities, largely due to budgetary pressure on the government and the shift towards the provision of free primary education and subsidized secondary education have led to a policy that devolves greater responsibility of financing higher education to each university. Overreliance on resources generated through private sponsored programs is currently the trend. This overreliance exposes the university considerably as was experienced in 2008 after the post election violence. It is also likely that module two

intakes will either plateau or decline in the foreseeable future thus leading to further financial challenges.

Over the years university of Nairobi has been operating on a deficit budget except for the last three years since July 2010 as indicated in the annual financial reports. This situation complicates the financial management of the university and impairs the achievements of the desired objectives.

The other internal challenge is Unsound Reward System. In order to ensure effective strategy implementation the skills and competencies of employees is key. The study established that University of Nairobi has a pool of skilled and competent staff and a lot of funds have been channeled towards updating their skills. It was however found out that implementation problems emanate from lack of motivation for staff. Findings revealed that staff is highly de-motivated and demoralized towards achieving the grand objectives of the institution. The respondent pointed out that the reward system in the University is not one of the best. However most of them were quick to point out that every effort is being made to ensure proper remuneration for staff, especially during this error of trade unionism.

Salary review in the university depends on the economic state of the country since it is a government corporation and particularly a non profit entity. However when it comes to strategy implementation employees expect much more than just a salary. For instance they expect job security, good medical scheme, a better pension scheme, training and

development opportunities for themselves and their children, good working environment and clear promotion procedures. In the absence of all these aspects the university will not implement its strategic plan in a timely manner. However according to respondents the university management has tried to improve the reward system particularly the allowances where it has the ability to improve using its internal resources without necessarily involving the government.

An insufficient human resource skill is the other internal challenge to strategy implementation facing the university. Increasing sophistication of the Kenyan economy demands more skilled personnel to meet the needs of the more enlightened market. The global trend is that knowledge based and value adding economic activities are increasingly becoming the stimuli of economic growth. It therefore means that national economies are relying on higher knowledge to expand and sustain their economic niches and competitiveness in the national and global arena. Technological advances require an even adaptive, strategically agile and sophisticated workforce. Employers demand workers with increased technical expertise, practical skills and enhanced abilities to learn as technologies emerge. Findings of the study established that the organization's management has the requisite skills for successful strategy implementation, but there is.

Resistance to change is also an internal challenge to strategy implementation. Some respondents indicated that lack of lower management commitment and resistances from staff were some of the main challenges of strategy implementation at the University of Nairobi. According to respondents, resistance is attributed to failure of management to

include all staff in the formulation stage of its strategy and to only surprise them with a shift of responsibility during implementation. The result is conflict of interest, fear of the unknown and mistrust hence poor implementation. One respondent pointed out that it is not possible to involve everybody in strategy formulation as the university works in committees, forgetting that committees do not implement but individuals and departments do. Everybody should also not be involved in strategy implementation, they argue and this is dangerous in achieving organizational objectives. There is need to continuously review and improve employee skills in order to match the ever changing technology.

An organization's ability to marshal the human resources needed to support new strategies and steer them to appropriate organizational units has a major impact on strategy implementation process. For example qualified managers who are assigned clerical duties permanently while other departments are inadequately staffed is a management problem. Another example is where university spends huge sums of money to buy desk top computers while what staff need are lap-tops to enable them work from a client's premises. A new strategy

The emergency of trade unionism among traditionally non-unionized staff and the increased number of unions in public universities is yet another major challenge. This has greatly influenced focus on terms and conditions of service for the staff. The University of Nairobi has three trade unions, University academic staff union, University non teaching staff union and Kenya union of domestic and allied workers union, all

representing employees of three categories, teaching staff, middle level management staff and shop floor staff respectively. It therefore means that practically all the staff are represented by a union and hence no clear cut line exists as to who represents the university management when negotiations are being carried out. There is, therefore need to strategize on how to deal with this new phenomenon in order to avert constant strikes and conflicts in the workplace.

Leadership, politics and corporate governance is also a challenge to strategy in the University. Leadership is the ability to influence people to follow you and the following here should be voluntary and not forced. Leadership style is a critical element in strategy implementation in an organization. At the top management, the University of Nairobi leadership is well spelled out. However at the strategic unit and operational levels leadership still remains a problem. According to the respondents university of Nairobi has faced leadership challenges. Some departmental heads lack the necessary exposure to influence other employees to undertake strategy implementation in the organization The University is also currently training departmental heads on leadership skills both on the job and in colleges. Some respondents indicated that leadership skills are tested during recruitment of all forms of managers.

The external challenges faced by the University of Nairobi during strategy implementation include; competition from locally incorporated and foreign institutions of higher learning. The most popular strategy used by competitors is an increase in student numbers and academic programmes. The international ranking of universities compounds

the competition which has significant implication for the strategic positioning of the university. In the recent past the most salient feature of university education in Kenya has been the rapid growth in the number of institutions and enrolment. Foreign universities have made inroads into the Kenyan economy in large numbers thus making competition more intense. There is also the aspect of global trends in the industry which remains a major challenge. Today the University of Nairobi is surrounded by many universities and university campuses especially around main campus all in the name of competing.

Stakeholders' perception is the other external challenge. While internal stakeholder's perception of the university is fairly positive, and the external perception is improving, there is still a challenge. The negative external perception is largely informed by past incidents of students' unrest. It is therefore clear that some external stakeholders have not internalized the positive changes in students' behavior and this perception affects the image of the university.

There is also the challenge of negative publicity both in the press, print media and public opinion websites. Unsubstantiated allegations about examinations cheating, sex scandals, substandard research and incompetence of the university graduates, as well as irrelevant courses being offered are quite common with the University of Nairobi. The perception of declining quality of education as well as the institutional crisis associated with them and the mentioned changes has been the subject of consideration and debate since 1990's is yet another challenge. However research and workshops as well as commissioned studies by various stakeholders have generated information and understanding on stakeholder's perception.

The other external challenge is Changes in Technology. The world of information technology is fluid. It keeps changing thus calling for an update to keep pace. This requires an increasingly adaptive and sophisticated workforce. Factors such as economic downturn, decline in exchequer releases, inadequate funding, limited philanthropy, corporate and alumni contributions and the need to keep tuition fees affordable, have seriously diminished financial resources for public universities education and imperiled its accessibility and affordability. The university was reported to be hampered by factors necessary for automation. Training of staff to embrace high class information technology is a challenge due to inadequate finances and staff resistance to change. One respondent pointed out that resistance was mainly due to fear of change in technology.

External environmental turbulence is also a challenge to strategy implementation in the University. In one instance the respondent pointed out that external environment turbulence and future uncertainty is a major challenge to strategy implementation in the institution. For example the diminishing capability of the Exchequer to continue meeting fully the financial needs of public universities largely due to budgetary pressure on the government and the shift towards the provision of free primary education and subsidized secondary education. This has resulted into a policy that devolves a greater responsibility of financing higher education to each university and hence posing a serious challenge.

Diminishing performance of the Kenyan economy which leads to lack of job creation for graduates is also an challenge to strategy implementation. This leads to many unemployed graduates. As a result society now questions the relevance of university

education. Respondents reported this questioning present the University of Nairobi with challenges that requires it to focus on its mandates in the economy and the need for greater efficiency and effectiveness in the fulfillment of the mandates. Respondents pointed at slow pace of some of the reform initiatives especially for donor funded projects as a challenge. This is due to stringent procedures leading to delay in reforms, delay in amendments, and lack of supportive infrastructure for ICT in Kenya as well as challenges of public sensitization on the reforms.

High cost of university education is yet another challenge. This prevents deserving and qualified students from accessing university education. The need then arises for the university to realign its planning and future development to the national goals of increased accessibility and affordability of higher education. Increasing demand for higher education by qualified high school graduates who cannot secure admission to the public universities due to limited facilities poses yet another challenge. Only very few students who qualify for university education secure admission into public universities. At the national level, therefore there is a growing pressure on public universities to provide greater access to their programs without compromising their academic standards and to provide support services to sustain a high student throughput.

Other External Factors include; government policies and procedures, clients who are more versed in technology than the institution, economic crisis that require university departments to cut down on their expenditure.

4.6 Measures taken to mitigate challenges of strategy implementation.

The challenges the University faces are a reminiscence of what most organizations face when implementing changes. The University must therefore find ways to deal with those challenges for effective and successful strategy implementation, otherwise the well formulated strategic plan will achieve nothing. The challenges to strategy implementation are numerous but the management of the University is able to overcome most of them hence the reforms are implemented. Some of the reforms are still ongoing at the moment.

The following are measures the University of Nairobi undertakes to deal with internal challenges; On the problem of organizational structure, the university has tried to decentralize its decision making process by strengthening the decision making capacity of many managers. This is against what used to happen before the implementation process began, where all the decisions were made by managers at the central administration. The institution is also working on modalities to flatten the organization structure further as well as balancing it with its span of control.

There is the effect of culture misfit which has been felt in the entire university and the measures taken include constant transfers to separate officers who may have stayed in the same branch for too long. In a circular recently the vice chancellor warned against any employees using vernacular in their workplace while discharging their duties. Training has also been mounted to create awareness on the importance of strategy implementation. The institution is now hiring qualified employees from private and public sector.

Willingness of organizational staff to accept change and take on the challenge of introducing and executing new strategies is the ultimate aim of the organization.

The challenge of Lack of Financial Resources has also been handled by the university. A change in strategy nearly always calls for budget reallocations and resource shifting. According to one respondent units not important in the prior strategy, but now have a bigger and critical strategic role have been given more people, new equipment, additional facilities and above average in their operating budgets. More resources have been devoted to quality control and technological improvement. A visible action to reallocate operating funds and move people to new organizational units is now a catalyst to the successful implementation process.

On the aspect of Unsound Reward Systems, properly designed reward structure is management's most powerful tool for mobilizing organizational commitment to successful strategy implementation. To obtain employees energetic commitment and unwavering loyalty, management has to be resourceful in designing and using motivational incentives both monetary and non-monetary. According to one respondent, the university follows laid down rules and procedures to ensure uniformity and avoid biasness in staff promotions and other reward systems. There is the issue of constant staff training as well as rewarding those who do well. Emphasis is put on annual staff appraisal programs which act as a record on employee performance. This tool to a small extent is used to determine who should be promoted. This is because the tool is only limited by

government policies and procedures that dictate the period in which one should serve under a certain level before they qualify for promotion.

The university has also developed a scheme of service which spells out the minimum qualifications which must be met before any recruitment or promotion. The scheme popularly known in the university circles as the Kagiko report is an important document used for staff promotions and other remunerations. The said document was prepared by a committee chaired by Prof. M.M. Kagiko to flash out the previous university promotion which was pegged on existence of vacancies. In this previous practice staff stagnated in one grade for too long due to lack of vacancies in the establishment.

To deal with external challenges to strategy implementation the University has put in place several measures.

Increased Autonomy is indeed one such measure. The government has directed that state corporations must embrace modern business management practices. To this end, state corporations boards have been accorded relative autonomy in running their respective organizations, including the appointment of the Chief executive officers and other management staff. In addition, each public university now has its own chancellor. These changes are meant to revitalize the universities by giving them greater autonomy and freedom of operation. The University of Nairobi is taking this opportunity to reposition itself as a major player in the knowledge industry.

To deal with the challenge of rapid technological changes the university has embraced high speed internet connectivity (undersea fibre cable) and national fibre backbone. The landing of the fibre cable into the East African region has seen a reduction of internet bandwidth costs to about 10 percent of what it was in 2008. This reduction has enabled increased access to ICT services in the university, which can be harnessed for efficient and productive services.

Rapid technological advances have now transformed the way people live and work within the university. The university has also taken advantage of these technological advances to enhance the quality of university academic programmes and hence the competitiveness of the university's graduates in the job market.

4.7 Discussion

Respondents were unanimous that though the process of strategy implementation is not easy, university of Nairobi must successfully implement its strategic plan if it has to survive in today's competitive environment. This is in line with the theory of strategic management where strategy implementation though deemed difficult (David, 2003), marks a critical phase in an organization. Compared to strategy formulation all respondents concur that real work begins at its implementation stage. Management is required to show results for that which they have put in paper, hence a call for them to successfully implement strategic plans. According Richard (2009), by whatever methods strategies are selected, there will come a time when every organization will need to put its

strategies into practice, therefore to implement them. Nothing stands still in strategy, including organizational policies.

The findings further revealed that strategic plans have helped university of Nairobi to strategically position it. This is because the environment in which it operates is dynamic and requires strategy for it to succeed. The University of Nairobi has to embrace strategic implementation as a management tool. In reference to the environment in which the University of Nairobi operates, respondents revealed that strategic plans have provided a road map to practice management in a turbulent environment in a way that leads to success in accordance to Ansoff (1990) strategic management theory. From these arguments it is evident that the findings concur with theory to a large extent.

According to Richard (2009) several implementation programmes can be carried out, but the most preferred is the incremental implementation programmes which are used where there are conditions of great uncertainty. Here implementation is characterized by small changes and short time spans within the general strategic direction implied by the organizational strategy. University of Nairobi makes use of an action plan matrix, which is a plan on periodic implementation process of the strategic plan.

The University also uses annual performance contracts as an implementation tool with contractual activities for each unit or department curved out of the five years strategic plan. Incremental implementation programme ensures the university implements its strategy in piecemeal and gradually in line with the available financial resources per year. This is to ensure that strategy is implemented within a given and financed budget.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

Strategy implementation is concerned with planning what choice of strategy was put into effect and managing the change required. This process is full of serious challenges. The objectives of this study were to determine the practice that the University of Nairobi adopts that hinders strategy implementation. This chapter summarizes the findings of the study and conclusions are drawn. It also has recommendations for policy and practices as well as suggestions for further research.

5.2 Summary of findings

This section dwells on summary of the findings obtained from data analysis. The first objective of the study was to establish the challenges of strategy implementation at the University of Nairobi. From this study the researcher found that University of Nairobi takes various tasks for effective strategy implementation. For example one question as to whether University of Nairobi is open to change management, all the respondents were emphatic that without embracing change university would not be where it is currently. This is an indication that university management is committed to strategy implementation as a tool of change management.

On the question as to whether Teamwork is encouraged and practiced in the University of Nairobi, respondents pointed out that this is considered as an important management aspect. One respondent pointed out that the University operates in form of committees and hence teamwork. Emphasis was laid on the importance of team players to remain

committed and keep confidential information for management use only. In order to deliver efficiently and effectively teams were committed into an annual performance contract by the top management. For example all the unit Management teams of Students welfare Authority were found to have signed one year performance contract with the SWA secretariat. According to one respondent performance contract is a commitment by members of the team to achieve specific objectives which are within their means and within a period of one year.

Respondents pointed out that university of Nairobi in striving to achieve its desired position; the advancement of the whole institution takes precedence over the advancement of any single unit and the progress of any single unit fits into the plan of the whole. The university's diversity must inform the entire planning effort to build on synergies that will transform the university of Nairobi into a truly world class university. According to respondents, the strategic plan assumes that the need for change is a genuine concern for all stakeholders, that the concern parties will seek appropriate solutions, and that they are capable of working together for a common good. The university has taken cognizance of these issues and responded to them adequately.

Overall, the critical strategy implementation areas were identified as management commitment to strategy implementation, achievement of strategic objectives through teamwork, training and sensitization of staff on strategy implementation, development of strategic plans, signing and fulfillment of performance contract tasks and the use of internal auditing systems for constant reviews and evaluation of strategy implementation.

The second objective of the study was to determine measures taken to deal with strategy implementation challenges at the University of Nairobi. Study findings indicate that the University has undertaken various measures to deal with the challenges. On the question as to how the University is dealing with the problem of rapid technological changes, respondents pointed out that the university has embraced high speed internet connectivity and national fibre backbone. From the findings it was clear that university is committed to advancement in technology. Respondents also stated that the university has invested heavily in the training in information technology and the acquisition of related equipment.

The question on what plans the university has put in place to ensure adequate skilled manpower, respondent pointed that a lot of emphasis is laid on the skill during human resource procurement. There is also constant training of staff in all operational areas.

The study also established that University of Nairobi adopts a formal strategic planning process which involves members of the management team, while other staff members are represented by respective trade unions. The study further found out that the formality adopted by the institution in its strategic planning resulted into a strategic document (the strategic plan), whose time horizon is five years. It was established that university of Nairobi adopted various methods in its strategy implementation. These include; change management, carrying out training, improving on information technology and attempting to undertake culture change among others.

The study established that a review of the strategy and taking collective action was not initially in place but is now being carried out by the evaluation and monitoring team on a quarterly basis. Annual reviews are based on quarterly reviews. Annual implementations are carried out by use of performance contracts signed between the university and the government of Kenya. To ensure effective implementation internally the contracts are signed between the university management and the respective schools and colleges. The contracts are further cascaded down and signed between individual employees and the university in that order. The items in the annual performance contracts are picked from the strategic plan to ensure successful implementation of the same over the five years plan period

The second objective was to determine the measures taken to deal with strategy implementation challenges at the University of Nairobi. It was noted that even though the university had developed strategies that, upon implementation would position it completely within the dynamic operating environment, the respondents pointed out a number of challenges faced during strategy implementation. The study found support for this. The challenges range from internal to external institutional behavior. Some of the challenges established includes, resistance to change, lack of motivation, high degree of staff turnover, organizational politics, change of leadership, slow dissemination of important information (poor communication), inadequate resources and unclear policies among others.

5.3 Conclusion

In conclusion, it is clear from the findings of this study that for any organization to survive the turbulent environment, it must put in place necessary efforts to respond to the changes in the environment. All these challenges can make an organization fail in implementing its strategic plan and hence not realize its vision. It will also be very expensive for an organization to abandon a strategic plan because of challenges. This study proposes that an organization should be more proactive than reactive in dealing with challenges to strategy implementation. Strategy managers should seek to detect challenges before they arise and take appropriate action. The organization must direct all its resources and systems towards strategy implementation challenges, with special emphasis on those that have greater impact in order to achieve its objectives. It is however important to note that there is no one best way of dealing with strategy implementation challenges. The effort should be geared towards deploying a combination of the above listed strategies.

The overall findings of the study showed that, the University of Nairobi has been effective in implementing its strategic plan. However there are challenges affecting the process which include; challenges of culture, structure, procedures and processes, resistance to change, corruption, inadequate information, non motivated staff, mismatch between the workload and available personnel in some departments among others. Information system in place was noted to be efficient, but its interpretation, acceptance, and adoption among the implementers were necessary for it to achieve its objectives.

Findings further revealed that the said challenges affect other organizations as well. They are therefore not unique to the University of Nairobi alone.

5.4 Limitations of the Study

This study though deeply researched could not have been finalized without limitations. For completeness and better understanding of the implications of research findings, it is crucial that the limitations of this study be highlighted. The study covered a period of three months and this duration could not allow the researcher to collect enough data for comprehensive analysis. It only focused on the extent of strategy implementation and the challenges encountered thus ignoring other important areas like effectiveness of strategy implementation, the effect of turbulence in the environment on implementation of strategies. The effect of government control on strategy implementation was also not studied.

The other limitation that the researcher encountered was the presence of organizational rules that do not allow release of information to the public hence it was difficult to obtain some of the useful information. Even after getting clearance from the Vice Chancellor to collect data some of the information would not be released to the researcher. Most of the organization's activities are also not recorded when accomplished hence results would not be subjective as respondents gave what they would remember.

The other limitation noticed during the research was inaccessibility of some respondents. The Director Students Welfare Authority only delegated the interview to the customer relations and the Chief personnel officer. Giving of inaccurate information by some

managers for fear of victimization or contradicting management was also evident. For example it was not possible for a senior manager to agree that the reward system was a challenge in strategy implementation even when expression on their faces indicated otherwise. Some of the respondents were unable to provide enough information since their position in management does not warrant them to do so. For others there was a feeling that the study would be used to change the status quo in the organization thus affecting their current positions.

The researcher established that there was deficiency of skills in the workforce which led to a gap between management expectations and the strategy in action. For example Students Welfare Authority pointed out that ageing and demotivated staff was major weakness in discharging its operations. This makes strategy implementation very difficult. Lack of awareness among some managers was a major limitation. The absence of a separate monitoring and evaluation department was yet another limitation. Due to limited resources the study also collected data from a section of management team as opposed to all members of the organization particularly managers and supervisors.

5.5 Recommendations for policy specific to University of Nairobi

Empirical evidence from this study indicates that the University of Nairobi has documented all tools necessary for successful strategy implementation. This includes formulation and documentation of annual objectives, policies and functional strategies. It has gone a head and institutionalized its strategy by changing its policies, organizational

structures and training of staff. The study reveals that organizational culture and procedures now support strategy implementation to a large extent.

For University of Nairobi to fully implement its documented strategy it is recommended that it obtains enough resource, particularly financial resources. It should formulate financial plans and policies that will enable the institution access funds for implementation of the strategic plan. The findings of the study reveal that the challenges encountered during strategy implementation eventually works against the implementation team. It follows that when issues concerning this team are ignored, the implementation process is bound to be affected. It is therefore recommended that the management of University of Nairobi be on the lookout on strategy implementation issues with the main focus being to empower and strengthen the implementation team and empowerment includes providing enough resources

Respondents were divided as to whether the university involves her staff in strategy formulation. It was however apparent that some of the managers see the strategy document after it has been fully formulated and they are required to implement it in their respective units. This is perhaps the reason why the strategy is not implemented fully. It is important to note that separation of strategy development and implementation may lead to a situation where critical issues may be left out of consideration during formulation phase. The institution should ensure that the staff and especially that involved strategy implementation discuss the strategies already formulated for them to own the process.

The main task of strategy implementation is to align the activities and capabilities of the organization with its strategies. The average performance of University of Nairobi in strategy implementation may be attributed to lack of fit and coordination among various departmental strategies. The university should Endeavour to align departmental strategies with its corporate strategy. It should also ensure that there is congruence and coordination at the level of functional strategies. This will ensure that the university implements its programmes as documented in its corporate strategy as well as ensuring that there is harmony in implementation of departmental strategies.

University of Nairobi is an organization operating under planned activities. For it to implement its strategic plan effectively, it is being recommended that it should evaluate its plan over the implementation period, consider its successes, failures and then change course.

The university should be specific while looking at how it can undertake measures to mitigate its challenges. It should set clear goals, allow university management board and the senate to delegate authority for the management of particular departments, expedite decision making process, allow corporate managers to concentrate on corporate level strategic decisions and avoid rigid and unsupportive bureaucracy. Corporate managers include the Chancellor, the Chairman of the council, Vice Chancellor and the Deputy Vice Chancellors as well as principals of various colleges.

The University should identify, strategy critical value chain, which is the main building block in the organization structure and decide how much authority to centralize at the top

and how much to delegate to line managers. It should decide on how to deal with inter-departmental coordination and collaboration to strengthen internal competencies and capabilities. It should also create external collaboration with the outside world particularly institutions of higher learning. The University must identify its core business and work towards achieving a competitive edge in the current competitive environment.

In today's competitive world the focus of organizations is a lean, flat, responsive and innovative organization structure. University of Nairobi has to consider cutting down on its bureaucracy and recognize the fact that the necessary tools of organizational design are those where managers and employees are empowered to make individual judgment. Re-engineered work processes and procedures, self directed work teams, incorporation of internet technologies and networking with the outside to improve existing organizational capabilities as well as create new avenues should be the University's ultimate goal.

Higher education faces increasing expectations, demands and experiences serious resource shortages. Planning must therefore take cognizance of these challenges and respond to them adequately. Due to greater need for accountability and sensitivity to stakeholders' needs, the University finds itself with greater responsibility while the level of financial support from the government is decreasing in real terms. The University should therefore have greater autonomy as well as recast its mission, vision and core values. This has been achieved by recasting the 2008-2013 strategic plan's vision and mission. The institution is further compelled to chart out a new strategic direction guided

by a shared vision, strategic thinking and agility. It should also be aware of its position in the world context and try to maintain and improve it further.

On culture and resistance to change, the University should recognize the fact that when an organization culture is out of tune with what is needed for strategic success, the culture has to be changed. Successful culture change must be driven by top management. Only the top management has the power and organizational influence to major changes in the organization's culture. Management is therefore required to think strategically and create a paradigm shift in realizing that there is always other ways of doing things. Change in technology, procedures and policies such as reward policy, job evaluation, unbiased promotions and open door policy are necessary motivational tools to employees. Changes however, should be introduced gradually but at a pace faster than the competitor to minimize resistance to change. To overcome challenges associated with resistance to change, strategic change is often implemented at a slower base. According to Richard (2009) 'Strategy is the art of the possible'. More consultation, more explanation and more monitoring of reactions are therefore involved in this process.

The very prospect of change confronts established positions in an organization. Both formulation and implementation inevitably raise questions of power within the organization. Such forces can provide obstacles to change and wreak havoc in the change management process which is a major ingredient in strategy implementation. In an organization individuals do not like the consequences of strategic change and seek to resist the proposals for change as they consider them to be the cause of their problems.

University top management should therefore take charge of change management since they are the drivers of strategy implementation.

On training the University should invest more on sharpening employees' skills. University needs to understand that successful strategy implementation is only possible if employees involved have the right and relevant skills. The training should be frequent, content oriented, and adequate to support growth oriented strategies. Respondents pointed out that the university is very passionate about staff training and colossal sums of money are allocated to this cause every year. On resources the University should link strategy to budgets and this should be able to act as a tool for resource allocation. The resources required for successful implementation of strategy should be readily availed. They range from financial, material to human capital.

On staff motivation, the University should recognize the fact that motivational techniques build a wholehearted commitment and a winning attitude among employees. There is also the aspect of well structured reward systems that recognizes each employee's contribution and rewards them accordingly. The University should understand that a well designed reward system is management's most powerful tool for mobilizing organizational commitment to successful strategy implementation. Individuals will make rational decisions in strategy implementation but they will include in this process their personal goals which are not necessarily the same as those of the organization. Implementation therefore needs to ensure that there is consistency between personal and organizational goals.

More importantly, senior management support to strategy implementation efforts is crucial. There should be fully flagged support from management to plan and support strategy implementation. Strategy implementation need to be considered not just as a single event with fixed and rigid plans, but rather as a series of implementation activities whose outcome will shape and guide the strategy (Richard, 2009). The full strategy will not be 'known' in advance but will 'emerge' out of the implementation process.

Communication process in the organization should be enhanced to ensure that all the staff is aware and they understand the contents of the strategic plan so that goal congruence can be obtained. This will also ensure that staff is involved from formulation stage thus developing a strong sense of ownership and support at the implementation stage. Whenever the vision is clear, the staffs do not view things as imposed on them, but rather they embrace it and long for it to reach completion.

5.6 Suggestions for further research

It is generally believed that no research is an end in itself. What this research has achieved in this area of study is minimal thus requiring further research. From the knowledge gained from the study, the researcher recommends the following which should act as a direction for further research.

There is need to undertake further research in strategy implementation in both public and private universities in Kenya. Across-section study should be conducted so as to make comparisons between various public Universities as well as private ones. This will reveal

hidden problems common to the entire higher education sector. It will also reveal mitigating factors which can deal with the challenges of strategy implementation, variances that have taken place and a comparison with the current data done. Evaluation of such research work from time to time is also suggested to ensure that they conform to the emerging challenges in the environment. The study can also be replicated in University of Nairobi, focusing the views of lower level managers and other general staff. The suggested studies if carried out soon can promote objectivity as well as validate the findings of this study.

There is need to study the practices adopted to evaluate progress towards strategy implementation in organizations as they provide a feedback to inform revision. Further, adoption of such progress report will validate the findings and make it possible for future researchers to undertake studies along the same line.

The most critical phase of strategic management process is translating strategic thought into organizational action. Once a strategy has been formulated, they need to be implemented and without successful implementation, the vision of the organization can never be realized. This study reveals in the literature review that most well designed strategies fail at implementation stage. In this regard, similar studies of strategy implementation challenges should be carried out in other organizations.

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**APPENDIX1: INTERVIEW GUIDE ON CHALLENGES OF STRATEGY
IMPLEMENTATION AT THE UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI.**

PART A: Strategy Implementation

1. Does University of Nairobi/ your college/ school have a strategic plan?

2. I am aware that your college/ school is linked to the University's central Administration. Are your strategic goals linked to that of the University corporate strategy?

3. Does the central administration support you in implementing your strategies? How has the college/ school management been able to support the strategy implementation in the school/ college?

4. Is the University of Nairobi open to change in terms of management? What has been the management style in the University of Nairobi?

5. Does University of Nairobi recognize and make use of abilities and skills of staff in the organization? How sensitive are they to the employees' problems?

6. Increased sophistication of the Kenyan economy demands more skilled personnel to meet the needs of a more enlightened public. What plans do you have to ensure that the University/ College has adequate and skilled manpower?

7. For any strategy to be implemented there should be teamwork: Is teamwork encouraged and practiced in the University of Nairobi? Does your employer put more emphasis on individual success or teamwork?

8. Is planning one of the ingredients of strategic management at the University of Nairobi? How are plans being implemented in the organization?

PART B: Challenges of Strategy implementation and measures taken

9. How has the University of Nairobi been implementing its strategies?

10. What are some of the serious challenges that the institution has been experiencing in strategy implementation? What are the main causes of these challenges?

11. Is there a communication problem in the University? Do the university employees have the right information to enable them implement strategies?

12. Does the University have the right facilities for communication to staff? What are some of the communication gadgets in use in the organization?

13. How often is feedback on strategy implementation communicated to your employees?

14. Does the University have adequate space for its activities? What are some of the plans you are likely to put in place to ensure adequate space?

15. Does University of Nairobi always make use of appropriate technology to improve efficiency? What are some of the appropriate technology in use at the University of Nairobi? How is the University dealing with the challenge of rapid technological changes?

16. Does University of Nairobi operate on a fully functional structure? How can you relate your organizational structure with the strategy implementations in your schools/ colleges?

17. Most organizations have been affected by corporate governance issues, would the University of Nairobi be listed as one of the organizations which have suffered corporate governance challenges? What measures has the University put in place to deal with issues of corporate governance?

18. Is corruption a major challenge in your organization? Kindly mention a few areas of your organization which are prone to corruption? What measures have you put in place to curb corruption?

19. Are employee representatives involved in strategy formulation? What role do they play in the implementation process?

20. What factors have influenced the speed of implementation of the strategic plan? What major challenges do you encounter in the process of strategy implementation?

21. To what extent are employees committed to strategy implementation? How does the University avail the resources committed for implementation of the strategic plan?