

**FACTORS AFFECTING STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION IN PUBLIC  
UNIVERSITIES IN KENYA**

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## DECLARATION

I declare that this is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other university.

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## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this work to my loving husband who sacrificed a lot both morally and financially to ensure that I completed this programme, my son for his patience, my mother for his motivation to fully exploit my potential, my brother and sister for encouragement and prayers. To all I say, thank you!

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

The process of this master's project writing has been wonderful learning experience which was coupled with both challenges and rewards. The completion of my study opens a new beginning and a step forward for my endeavors.

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## **ABSTRACT**

The guiding principles in any strategic management process, whether in the public or private sector, is about understanding what changes are needed, how to implement and manage these changes, and how to create a roadmap for sustaining improvements that lead to better performance. This statement can be construed to mean that many institutions know their business needs and the struggles required for success. When an organizations' strategic plan is not implemented successfully, a gap is created that makes it difficult to achieve success. For decision makers, the inability to steer the organization to the attainment of the plans causes a lot of anxiety focused around the difficulty in ensuring that the strategic plan becomes a living plan rather than a document that gathers dust on the shelf. The organization's strategic plan is expected to be a guiding document for the organization; however, poor implementation of the plan can result in it becoming an ineffective document. It therefore becomes important that an organization gives the implementation phase of its strategic process due importance and allocate adequate resources that will enable it achieve the desired objectives. The objective of the study was to determine the factors that affect strategy implementation in public universities in Kenya. The research design adopted was cross sectional survey design. The population of the study comprised of all the 21 public universities operating in Kenya. The study used primary data which was collected through self-administered questionnaires. Data was analyzed using statistical package for social sciences based on the questionnaires. The study found out that implementation of strategies in the universities was affected by organizational culture, structure, resources, top management commitment and communication. This was due to university context which is inappropriate for effective implementation and control of the strategy, lack of understanding of the role of organizational structure, design in the execution process and structural design not being tailored to meet its goals, key formulators of the strategic decision did not play an active role in its implementation, people are not measured or rewarded for executing the plan, university having redundant resources, leadership and direction provided by departmental managers were inadequate and university management is not committed to strategy implementation.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Declaration.....	ii
Dedication.....	iii
Acknowledgement .....	iv
Abstract.....	v
List of tables.....	ix
List of figures.....	x
<b>CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION.....</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 Background of the Study .....	1
1.1.2 Concept of Strategy.....	2
1.1.3 Strategy Implementation .....	4
1.1.4 Public Universities in Kenya.....	5
1.2 Research Problem .....	7
1.3 Research Objectives.....	9
1.4 Value of the Study.....	10
<b>CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW .....</b>	<b>11</b>
2.1 Introduction.....	11
2.2 Theoretical Underpinnings of the study.....	11
2.2.1 Open systems theory .....	11
2.2.2 Resource Based Theory.....	13
2.3 Strategy Implementation Practices .....	14
2.4 Challenges of Strategy Implementation.....	17

2.5 Measures to Overcome the Strategy Implementation Challenges .....	20
<b>CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY .....</b>	<b>23</b>
3.1 Introduction.....	23
3.2 Research Design.....	23
3.3 Target Population .....	23
3.4 Data Collection .....	24
3.5 Data Analysis .....	25
<b>CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS, RESULTS AND DISCUSSION .....</b>	<b>26</b>
4.1 Introduction.....	26
4.2 Demographic Characteristics .....	26
4.2.1 Length of service with the University .....	26
4.2.2 Duration of University existence .....	27
4.2.3 Number of employees in the University .....	28
4.3 Strategy Implementation .....	29
4.3.1 Strategy Implementation Success .....	29
4.3.2 Strategy Implementation Practices.....	30
4.4 Factors Influencing Implementation of Strategies .....	31
4.4.1 Influence of Organizational Structure .....	31
4.4.2 Influence of Organizational Culture.....	32
4.4.3 Influence of Resources .....	34
4.4.4 Influence of Top Management Commitment.....	35
4.4.5 Influence of Communication on Strategy Implementation .....	36
4.4.6 Measures to Counter the Challenges .....	37
4.5 Discussion.....	39

<b>CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.</b>	<b>43</b>
5.1 Introduction.....	43
5.2 Summary.....	43
5.3 Conclusion .....	45
5.4 Recommendations.....	46
5.5 Limitations of the Study.....	47
5.6 Suggestions for Further Research .....	48
<b>REFERENCES.....</b>	<b>49</b>
<b>APPENDICES.....</b>	<b>i</b>
Appendix I: Cover letter.....	i
Appendix II: Research Questionnaire.....	ii



## LIST OF TABLES

Table 4. 1: Length of service with the University .....	27
Table 4. 2: Duration of University existence .....	27
Table 4. 3: Strategy Implementation Success .....	29
Table 4. 4: Strategy Implementation Practices .....	30
Table 4. 5: Influence of Organizational Structure .....	32
Table 4. 6: Influence of Organizational Culture .....	33
Table 4. 7: Influence of Resources on strategy Implementation .....	34
Table 4. 8: Influence of Top Management Commitment .....	35
Table 4. 9: Influence of Communication on Strategy Implementation .....	36
Table 4. 10: Measures to Counter the Challenges .....	38

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 4. 1: Number of employees in the University.....	28
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# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of the Study

The guiding principles in any strategic management process, whether in the public or private sector, is about understanding what changes are needed, how to implement and manage these changes, and how to create a roadmap for sustaining improvements that lead to better performance (Bryson, 2004). This statement can be construed to mean that many institutions know their business needs and the struggles required for success. However, many institution including Public Universities, struggle to translate theory into action since implementing strategies successfully is vital for any organization, either public or private. Without implementation, even the most superior strategy is useless (Alexander, 1991). The notion of strategy implementation might at first seem quite straightforward: the strategy is formulated and then it is implemented. Implementing would thus be perceived as being about allocating resources and changing organizational structure.

Johnson and Scholes (2002) point out that the development and implementation of strategies by an organization or government to chart the future path to be taken will enhance the competitiveness of such firms operating in a competitive environment. However, they observe that many firms develop excellent strategies to counter and adapt to the environmental challenges but suffer a weakness in the implementation of the same strategies. Transforming strategies into action is a far more complex and difficult task.

Organizations seem to have problems in strategy implementation: such as weak management roles in implementation, a lack of communication, lacking a commitment and misunderstanding of the strategy, unaligned organizational resources, poor organizational structures and uncontrollable environmental factors (Beer and Eisenstat, 2000). Strategy implementation therefore focuses on the distinct relationship between implementation and other various organizational elements. The strategy implementation process is identified by Sabatier and Weible (2007), as a process being undertaken through a systematic approach and provides a link between strategic consensus and success.

### **1.1.2 Concept of Strategy**

A strategy is a framework through which an organization can assert its vital continuity whilst managing to adapt to the changing environment to gain competitive advantage (Ansoff, 2002). It is a mediating force between the organization and its environment through which consistent streams of organizational decisions are developed to deal with the environment. On the other hand strategic management is a systematic approach to the major and increasingly important responsibility of general management to position and relate the firm to its environment in a way which will assure its continued success and make it secure from surprises.

Gole (2005) proposes that strategic management is a process, directed by top management to determine the fundamental aims or goals of the organization, and ensure a range of decisions which will allow for the achievement of those aims or goals in the long-term, while providing for adaptive responses in the short-term. The three core areas

of corporate strategy as outlined by Gole encompasses: strategy analysis, strategy development and strategy implementation. Strategic analysis deals with examining the environment within which the organization operates.

Pearce and Robinson (2007) states that strategy formulation is concerned with determining where the organization is, where it wants to go and how to get there. It involves carrying out situation analysis that leads to setting of objectives. Vision and mission statements are crafted and overall corporate objectives, strategic business unit objectives and tactical objectives are also developed. Strategy implementation is the process of allocating resources to support an organization's chosen strategies. This process includes the various management activities that are necessary to put strategy in motion and institute strategic controls that monitor progress and ultimately achieve organizational goals. Strategy evaluation includes review of external and internal factors that are bases for strategies formulated, measuring performance and taking corrective action, if necessary. This is important as all strategies are subject to future modification depending on environmental turbulence (Robbins and Coulter (1996).

Zyen theory of strategic planning defines strategy as a means by which organizations deal with risks and rewards in order to achieve their objectives. The values of strategy, planning and strategic planning are paramount to any organization. Organizational relationships with clients often begin with strategic planning. Many successful companies are those that plan. Therefore, organizations use strategy as a means of dealing with uncertainty (Zyen, 2009). On the other hand, McNamara, (2009) indicates that strategic planning determines where an organization is going over the next year or more and how

it is going to get there. According to his theory, the process of strategic planning is organization- wide, or focused on a major function such as a division, department or other major function. Planning typically includes several major activities in the process.

### **1.1.3 Strategy Implementation**

Strategy implementation is the process of putting strategies and policies into action through the development of programs, budgets and procedures (Bradford *et al* 2000). Strategy implementation is an enigma in many companies. According to Judson, (1991), only one in every ten companies does an effective job of formulating strategy and equally implementing it. For the rest, presumably, the well –crafted strategy is lost in the press of day- today tactical concerns or its left to languish in a report on the dusty book shelf of the chief executive officer CEO. Yet very few people would deny that, in today’s fast moving and fast changing business world, strategy, with its long- range perspective, is critical. Strategic challenges are those pressures that exert a decisive influence on an organization frequently driven by the organizations future competitive position relative to other provisions.

Organizations seem to have difficulties in implementing their strategies, however. Researchers have revealed a number of problems in strategy implementation. The reasons for this are varied, but most hinge on the fact that strategy implementation is resource intensive and challenging (Gurowitz, 2007). None the less strategic planning remains a top priority among successful private universities based on the fundamental notion that an effective strategy offers unique opportunities for market differentiation and long-term competitive advantage. Based on this, many public universities are now asking which are

the best tools and methodologies to enable effective strategy implementation (Beer and Eisenstant, 2000).

Successful strategy implementation requires strong leadership that enables allocation of resources, business process and policies that support the strategy. According to Atreya (2007), internal leadership is needed to drive strategy implementation process towards the right direction. What makes it even tougher to implement strategy is the varied range of activities that need to be performed and the varied skills needed to perform them. Just because the management has decided on strategy does not mean that subordinates will follow and cooperate in its implementation. A number of issues are involved including vested interest; office politics, existing attitudes and ingrained practices all of which play a major role in strategy implementation (Atreya, 2007).

#### **1.1.4 Public Universities in Kenya**

The first step towards the introduction and development of university education in Kenya was undertaken in 1961 when the then Royal College, Nairobi, was elevated to university college status. The University College entered into a special arrangement with the University of London, which enabled it to prepare students for degrees of the University of London. With the establishment of the University of East Africa in 1963, which coincided with Kenya's independence from Britain, the Royal College became the University College, Nairobi. The other constituent colleges of the University of East Africa were Makerere in Uganda and Dar-es-Salaam in Tanzania. Following Kenya's independence, there was a rapid expansion of the education sector with consequent heavy budget allocation to university education in order to develop adequate manpower base to

enhance national development and provide solutions to such problems as, diseases, poverty and illiteracy.

The expansion in Kenya's university education can be understood within the framework of the country's education system and the general demand for education at all levels due to high population growth. Since the mid 1980s there has been significant expansion of public universities in Kenya in response to higher demand for university education. So far, there are 23 public universities namely; the University of Nairobi, Kenyatta University, Egerton University Moi University, Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology, Maseno, Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology, Dedan Kimathi University of Technology, Chuka University, Technical University of Kenya (Kenya Polytechnic University College), Technical University of Mombasa, Pwani University, Kisii University, University of Eldoret, Masai Mara University, South Eastern Kenya University, Multimedia University of Kenya, University of Kabianga, Karatina University and Meru University of Science and Technology. The universities have great opportunities stemming from the increasing number of students both within and without the country. However, the public universities continue to suffer from inadequate lecturers especially in specialized units. In addition there has been a challenge of the quality of the graduates who have been accused of not being competent enough to meet the challenges in the job market by being less practical.



## **1.2 Research Problem**

When an organizations' strategic plan is not implemented successfully, a gap is created that makes it difficult to achieve success. For decision makers, the inability to steer the organization to the attainment of the plans causes a lot of anxiety focused around the difficulty in ensuring that the strategic plan becomes a "living plan" rather than a document that gathers dust on the shelf. The organization's strategic plan is expected to be a guiding document for the organization; however, poor implementation of the plan can result in it becoming an ineffective document (Pfeffer and Sutton, 2006). They further point that organizations are often unable to transform existing knowledge into meaningful action, which creates a gap in implementation. One of the main causes they cite for the knowing-doing gap is that organizations come to the belief that if they just talk about doing something, this very action of discussion will magically lead to execution. It therefore becomes important that an organization gives the implementation phase of its strategic process due importance and allocate adequate resources that will enable it achieve the desired objectives. It will be inconsequential to an institution, for example, to come up with effective strategies but fail to achieve an effective implementation.

Public universities have emerged as a key driver in delivering the human resources required to drive the country economic social and economic growth as well as a key pillar in the attainment of the Vision 2030 dream. The courses that the public universities offer plays an important role in producing graduates who can be absorbed in the market place to steer the wheel of national development. However, it has been noted lately that some

of the graduates coming of the colleges do not measure to the expectations of the job market and therefore there is need to develop and implement effective strategies that will address the challenge. In addition, with the introduction of free primary education and increased subsidies to the secondary education, there has been an increased need of higher education in Kenya which has led to straining of the available resources in the public universities resources.

By looking at the universities strategies, one will see elaborate strategies of updating the courses currently offered as well as introduction of relevant new ones. In addition, the strategies have a clear roadmap to easing the congestion problems in the lecture halls as well development of the human resource base. However, the same initiatives have not been fully implemented or not at all. It therefore seems that the challenge in these public universities is not the absence of strategies but rather the implementation of the same strategies. It is on the basis of this problem that the current research will wish to establish the strategy implementation strategies at the Kenyan public universities.

Despite increased attempts to develop strategies for public universities, not much has been achieved in terms of effective implementation of the strategic plans (Waweru, 2008). Most research work has been carried out on challenges faced while implementing strategy; however these research works concentrate on other field such as health and government departments and even public universities. Example of such research include Nyangweso (2009) on the strategy implementation challenges at Cooperative bank who found out that in the case of Co-op bank just like in any other player in the banking industry, implementation of strategies should be fast, consistent and should be adaptable

on many fronts simultaneously. Kiprop (2009) researched on challenges of strategy implementation at the Kenya Wildlife service and identified that a firm should focus on formal organizational structures and control mechanisms of employees while implementing its strategy.

Waiyego (2009) studied strategy implementation at Kenya electricity generating company ltd observing that for dominant players in the market, the strategy implementation process has changed recently due to more scrutiny from the government and stakeholders in general. She therefore observed that such firms should be adaptable to the changing environment. An attempt to investigate strategy implementation in universities was by Muraguri (2010) who researched on Strategy implementation challenges in private universities and found that the same implementation challenges that is found in the private sector transcends to the private universities.

Hence not much attention has been given to the challenges of strategy implementation in public universities in Kenya. It's on this basis that this study will seek to find out challenges of strategy implementation in public universities in Kenya. Are there challenges of strategy implementation in public universities in Kenya?

### **1.3 Research Objectives**

The objectives of the study were:

- i. Establish the factors that affect strategy implementation in public universities in Kenya
- ii. Determine the measures adopted to overcome the challenges

## **1.4 Value of the Study**

The study will aid various stakeholders in the country.

Public and private universities in the country will obtain details on how they can be able to effectively implement their strategies in the face of numerous challenges facing them in the face of increased student population and changing demands from the employers. In addition the study will be an invaluable source of material and information to educational institutions operating in the country.

The government and regulators of the higher education in the country will also find invaluable information in how good strategies can be adopted and as a result put in place policies that will guide and encourage other organizations within and without the government sector in implementing their strategies.

For academicians, this study will form the foundation upon which other related and replicated studies can be based on. Investors can also gain an insight on the business and its strategic position within the environment, which can assist them in determining viability of their investments.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter summarizes the information from other researchers who have carried out their research in the same field of study. The specific areas covered here are theoretical underpinnings, Strategy Implementation Practices, Challenges of Strategy Implementation and finally the Measures to Mitigate the Challenges of Strategy Implementation.

#### **2.2 Theoretical Underpinnings of the study**

The study is based on two theories namely, open systems theory and resource based theory.

##### **2.2.1 Open Systems Theory**

This study is based on the open systems theory. Open systems theory (OST) refers simply to the concept that organizations are strongly influenced by their environment (Bastedo, 2004). Open System Theory is a modern systems-based changed management theory designed to create healthy, innovative and resilient organizations and communities in today's fast changing and unpredictable environments. As organizations and communities conduct their business they influence and change their external environments, while at the same time being influenced by external changes in local and global environments in a two-way influential change known as active adaptive change (Pfeffer & Salancik, 2003).

The environment consists of other organizations that exert various forces of an economic, political, or social nature. The environment also provides key resources that sustain the organization and lead to change and survival (Scott, 2002). Organizations and communities are open systems; changing and influencing each other over time.

To ensure viability an open system must have an open and active adaptive relationship with its external environment because a healthy viable open system has a direct correlation with respect to changing values and expectations over time with its external environment (Pfeffer & Salancik, 2003). This means that if the values and expectations of a certain organization or community are out of sync with those that exist in the external environment then that particular organization or community will eventually become unhealthy and unviable.

People too are open systems. Through their actions they influence and change their external environment, and at the same time are constantly being influenced by changes in the external environment (Scott, 2002). From an employee's perspective, the organization itself is their immediate external environment. The aggregated effect of this influential change between people, their organization and/or community and the external environment is known as socio-ecological (people-in-system-in-environment) change. In today's globalised and networked world socio-ecological change is relentless and increasing exponentially (Pfeffer & Salancik, 2003).

### **2.2.2 Resource Based Theory**

The resource-based view theory regards the firm as a cognitive system, which is characterized by idiosyncratic and context-dependent competences that are core to strategic purpose. These are conditioned by hierarchical capabilities, or sets of routines, involved in the management of the firm's core business processes that help to create value. Competences typically involve the development of specialist expertise, and firms may become locked into a trajectory that is difficult to change effectively in the short to medium-term (Tushman & Anderson, 2006). The premises of the resource-based view is that successful firms develop distinctive capabilities on which their future competitiveness will be based; which capabilities are often idiosyncratic or unique to each firm, and may also be tacit and intangible in nature. Competitive advantage is seen to be founded on a complex of competences, capabilities, skills and strategic assets possessed by an organization, or in other words from the astute management of physical and intellectual resources which form the core capability of the business.

The resource based view Barney (1991) posits that, to gain competitive advantage, firms need to develop resources that are casually ambiguous, socially complex and difficult to imitate over time. One way to create such a resource according to Barney and Hansen, (1994) is through effective interaction with primary stakeholders. For example firms which are able to engage stakeholders beyond market transactions create socially complex, resources that are not time barred but based on reputation and trust. Similarly, Jones and Price, (2004) point out that firms which develop relationship with primary stakeholders based on mutual cooperation and trust is in a better position to gain

advantage over firms that do not. This is because the process of developing trust and cooperation between the firm and stakeholders take time, which in turn lead to mutual beneficial value exchanges. Such exchanges to the firm lead to improved performance.

The resource based view proponents argue that, it is not environment but the resources of the organization which should be considered as the foundation of the strategy (Boxall and Steenveld, 2009). Despite the apparent differences, these approaches to strategy have one thing in common; they all aim at maximizing performance by improving one organizations position in relation to other organizations in the same competitive environment and that is how the organization is differentiated from its competitors. Every business develops its own configuration of capabilities that is rooted in the realities of its competitive market, past commitments and anticipated requirements (Song and Benedetto, 2007). The resource-based view of the firm explains how firms allocate their scarce resources to obtain and exploit competitive capabilities. Therefore, the firm that has the resources and abilities to put its capabilities to best use, and that invests in capabilities that complement the existing capability structure will be able to exploit its distinctive competences (Song and Benedetto, 2007).

### **2.3 Strategy Implementation Practices**

Implementing strategies successfully is about matching the planned and the realizing strategies, which together aim at reaching the organizational vision. The components of strategy implementation – communication, interpretation, adoption and action – are not necessarily successive and they cannot be detached from one another. Okumus and Roper



(1998) observe that despite the importance of the strategic execution process, far more research has been carried out into strategy formulation rather than into strategy implementation, while Alexander concludes that the literature is dominated by a focus on long range planning and strategy “content” rather than the actual implementation of strategies, on which “little is written or researched” (Alexander, 1985). Reasons put forward for this apparent dearth of research effort include that the field of strategy implementation is considered to be less glamorous as a subject area, and that researchers often underestimate the difficulties involved in investigating such a topic – especially as it is thought to be fundamentally lacking in conceptual models (Alexander, 1985).

Mintzberg (1993) proposed that firms differ in terms of their structure and that theory should move away from the “one best way” approach towards a contingency approach, in that structure should reflect the firm's situation and strategies. The structure of a firm influences the flow of information and the context and nature of interpersonal interaction within it. Structure also channels collaboration, prescribes means of communication and co-ordination as well as allocating power and responsibility (Okumus and Roper, 1998).

Traditionally, firms have addressed these basic needs for coordination and cooperation by hierarchical configurations, with centralized decision-making, strict adherence to formally prescribed rules and procedures and carefully constructed roles and relationships. Others, due to the unpopularity of bureaucracy in large firms, started a movement toward de-layering hierarchies (Homburg *et al.*, 2000). Downsizing has resulted in the roles of employees altering dramatically as structure is re-engineered. These firms are characterized by decentralized decision-making, small senior executive

teams and an emphasis on horizontal rather than vertical communication. With firms evolving in terms of structure it follows that the style of strategy implementation will differ depending on the style of organisation and management that exists in the firm.

Strategic typologies are becoming ever popular in researching strategy (Speed, 1993). Taxonomy, the classifying of phenomena and the explanation of the classification used, facilitates the development of our knowledge. Taxonomic approaches have become commonplace in marketing theory and in the study of strategy especially. Nutt (1995) find that types of leadership style can play a critical role in overcoming barriers to implementation and latterly Moorman and Miner (1998) proposed an improvisational approach to implementing strategic change in an organisation. These studies, however, have focused attention entirely at the organizational or functional unit level to the detriment of a more micro-manager level focus. Our progressive work seeks to explore this issue, by proposing taxonomy of implementation styles and focusing attention on the role of those bestowed with the duties of implementation within large firms, the mid-level manager.

As previously outlined by Huse and Gabrielsson (2004), action research would be best suited to assess how effective board members are in fulfilling the previously discussed role in strategy implementation. One major difficulty corporate governance researchers face, however, is that the chance for participatory observations is an exception rather than the rule (Pettigrew, 1992). The reasons for these difficulties lie in the confidentiality of strategic issues as well as the fact that today's increased legal accountability of board members makes them even less inclined to allow researchers to observe their behavior.

Under the premise that only few researchers have opportunities to observe interactions between board members and between board members and executives, which could give an indication for their effectiveness in guiding strategy implementation, alternative methods are required for empirical investigations.

## **2.4 Challenges of Strategy Implementation**

For effective strategy implementation, the strategy must be supported by decisions regarding the appropriate organization structure, reward system, organizational culture, resources and leadership. Just as the strategy of the organization must be matched to the external environment, it must also fit the multiple factors responsible for its implementation. As was further observed by David (2003), successful strategy implementation must consider issues central to its implementation which include, matching organizational structure to strategy, creating a supportive organizational culture among other issues. According to Ansoff (1990) an organization structure is part and parcel of its internal capability and therefore has the potential of either facilitating or impeding successful strategy implementation. Structural designs typically begin with the organizational chart. It pertains to managers' responsibilities, their degree of authority, and the consolidation of facilities, departments and divisions, tasks design and production technology. Whereas Hall *et al.* (2003) identifies three organizational structure variables (formality, complexity, and centralization),

Kubinski (2002) observe that the most important thing when implementing a strategy is the top management's commitment to the strategic direction itself and stresses that this is undoubtedly a prerequisite for strategy implementation. Therefore, top managers must

demonstrate their willingness to give energy and loyalty to the implementation process. This demonstrable commitment becomes, at the same time, a positive signal for all the affected organizational members. To successfully improve the overall probability that the strategy is implemented as intended, senior executives must abandon the notion that lower-level managers have the same perceptions of the strategy and its implementation, of its underlying rationale, and its urgency. Instead, they must believe the exact opposite. They must not spare any effort to persuade the employees of their ideas (Kubinski, 2002).

According to Thompson et al (2007), effective strategy implementation depends on competent personnel and effective internal organizational systems. No organization can hope to perform the activities required for successful strategy implementation without attracting, motivating and retaining talented managers and employees with suitable skills and intellectual capital. As was reinforced by Cummings and Worley (2005), the task of implementing challenging strategic initiatives must be assigned to executives who have the skills and talent to handle and can be counted on to turn decisions and actions into results to meet established targets. Without a smart, capable result-oriented management team, the implementation process ends up being hampered by missed deadlines, misdirected or wasteful efforts. Building a capable organization is thus a priority in strategy execution. High among organizational building priorities in the strategy implementation is the need to build and strengthen competitive valuable competencies and organizational capabilities. Training therefore becomes important when a company shifts to a strategy that requires different skills, competencies and capabilities.

The execution of a strategy depends on individual members of organization especially key managers. Motivating and rewarding good performance for individuals and units are key success factors in effective strategy implementation. According to Cummings and Worley (2005), organizational rewards are powerful incentives for improving employee and work group performance. It can also produce high levels of employee satisfaction. Reward systems interventions are used to elicit and maintain desired levels of performance. Reward system should align the actions and objectives of individuals with objectives and needs of the firm's strategy. Financial incentives are important reward mechanisms because they encourage managerial success when they are directly linked to specific activities and results. Intrinsic non-financial rewards such as flexibility and autonomy in the job are important managerial motivators. Negative sanctions such as withholding of financial and intrinsic rewards for poor performance are necessary to encourage managers' efforts (Thompson et al, 2007).

Organizational structure on its own is not sufficient to ensure successful implementation of a strategy, effective leadership is required. Bateman and Zeithaml (1993) define a leader as one who influences others to attain goals. Leaders have a vision and they move people and organizations in directions they otherwise would not go. In a competitively chaotic environment, one essential contribution of a strategic leader is to provide and share a clear vision, direction and purpose for the organization (Thompson, 1997). Leadership is the key to effective strategy implementation. The role of the Chief Executive is fundamental because a CEO is seen as a catalyst closely associated with and ultimately is accountable for the success of a strategy. The CEO's actions and the perceived seriousness to a chosen strategy will influence subordinate managers'

commitment to implementation. The personal goals and values of a CEO strongly influence a firm's mission, strategy and key long term objectives. The right managers must also be in the right positions for effective implementation of a new strategy. Top management goodwill and ownership to drive the process is also critical to effective implementation of strategy. According to Thompson (1997), the strategic leader must direct the organization by ensuring that long term objectives and strategies have been determined and are understood and supported by managers within the organizations who will be responsible for implementing them.

Tavakoli and Perks (2001) stated that challenges of strategy implementation are also found in sources external to the organization. The macro-environmental forces such as the political-legal forces may hinder favourable legislative framework. Further, political instability may impact negatively on strategy implementation by affecting political goodwill towards resources mobilization for the strategic plan. Civil unrest may destabilize the human resource competence and cause destruction of infrastructure meant to facilitate the process of institutionalization. The macroeconomic may also impact on strategy implementation especially where economic sanctions and inflation interfere with the market share and hence overall profitability.

## **2.5 Measures to Overcome the Strategy Implementation Challenges**

Brander, Brown and Atkinson (2001) argued that as a first step in ensuring the successful implementation of the firm's strategy, firm leaders must take early and aggressive action to institutionalize the strategy within the firm. The Managing Partner, Chair, and other key leaders must demonstrate visible ownership of the firm's strategy, communicating

clearly with partners about the details, value and importance of the strategy to the firm. Members of management should also seek input and support from key opinion leaders and rainmakers early-on and request their help in championing the strategy to other partners within the firm. Over time, such actions will assist in generating buy-in among partners, leading to greater overall support for the strategic plan and the changes inherent in its execution (Miniace and Falter, 1996).

A fundamental and critical step in moving forward with strategy execution involves planning. Implementation planning entails developing a detailed outline of the specific actions and sub-actions, responsibilities, deadlines, measurement tools, and follow-up required to achieve each of the firm's identified strategies. Implementation plans often take the form of detailed charts which map the course of action for firm leaders over a 24-36 month time period. Achieving a level of detail in these plans provides for a tangible and measurable guide by which both the firm and its leaders can assess progress in implementation over time (Miniace and Falter, 1996).

Successful implementation of a firm's strategy also requires alignment of the firm's partner compensation system, performance management approach, and other related practice group and client team management structures and processes with the firm's chosen strategy. The most common (and perhaps critical) example of a structure necessitating alignment is that of partner compensation. Very often firms adopt strategic plans which require partner collaboration and teamwork in order to achieve success, yet fail to modify the partner compensation system to reward such activities. Failure to align management processes and structures with a newly adopted strategy frequently results in

a stall out of implementation efforts, as members of the firm direct individual behaviors to align with the firm's historic rewards system, and not the newly stated strategy (Wendy, 1997).

According to Swartz (1985), successful strategies require properly marched organization structure. If an organization significantly changes its strategy, it needs to make appropriate changes in its overall structural design since its existing organization structure may become ineffective. Symptoms of an ineffective Organization structure include too many people, too much attention being directed towards solving interdepartmental conflicts, too large a span of control, too many unachievable objectives. However, changes in structure should not be expected to make a bad strategy good, or to make bad managers good, or to make good managers bad, or to make bad products sell (Chandler, 1992).



## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

The chapter describes the proposed research design, the target population, data collection instruments and the techniques for data analysis.

#### **3.2 Research Design**

Research design can be regarded as a blue print, a master plan that specifies the methods, techniques and procedures for collecting and analyzing the needed information or simply a framework or plan of action for the research (Charmaz 2003). The research design adopted was cross sectional survey design. This choice was determined by three factors, namely, the purpose of the study, the time period over which the data was to be collected and the type of analysis.

The research design adopted was used to determine factors affecting strategy implementation in public universities in Kenya. The main advantage of the cross-sectional research design for this study was that the researcher was able to collect and compare several variables in the study at the same time.

#### **3.3 Target Population**

A population is a large pool of cases of elements from which the researcher draws a sample and results generalized from the drawn sample (Neuman, 2006). A research

study's target population should be clearly defined and the unit of analysis should be identified, which is not easy sometimes. The target population consists of all the units being studied. The unit of analysis is the entity or who is being analyzed.

The population of the study comprised of all the public universities operating in Kenya. According to the Commission of Higher Education (2014), there are 23 public universities operating in Kenya and all of them participated hence the study was a survey.

### **3.4 Data Collection**

The study used primary data which was collected through self-administered questionnaires. The structured questionnaires used to collect data. The questionnaires consisted of both open and closed ended questions designed to elicit specific responses for qualitative analysis. The pre-coded ones had tick boxes for respondents to fill in, whereas open questionnaires had a few open questions and spaces for respondents to make responses in their own words.

The questionnaire were administered through “drop and pick later” method to the University employees. There was follow-up to ensure that questionnaires are collected on time and assistance to the respondents having difficulty in completing the questionnaires will be offered. Follow-up calls will be made to ensure that the questionnaires are dully filled within a reasonable period of time. All the items in the questionnaire were measured with a five-point Likert scale ranging from disagree (1) to strongly agree (5) to ensure consistency and the ease of data computation.

### **3.5 Data Analysis**

The data collected was analyzed using descriptive statistics (measures of central tendency and measures of variations). Once the data was collected, the questionnaires were edited for accuracy, consistency and completeness. However, before final analysis was performed, data was cleaned to eliminate discrepancies and thereafter, classified on the basis of similarity and then tabulated. The responses were coded into numerical form to facilitate statistical analysis.

Data was analyzed using statistical package for social sciences based on the questionnaires. In particular mean scores, standard deviations, percentages and frequency distribution was used to summarize the responses and to show the magnitude of similarities and differences. Results were presented in tables and charts.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **DATA ANALYSIS, RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

The research objective was to determine the factors that affect strategy implementation in public universities in Kenya. This chapter presents the analysis, findings and discussion. The findings are presented in percentages and frequency distributions, mean and standard deviations. A total of 21 questionnaires were issued out and only 16 were returned. This represented a response rate of 84%.

#### **4.2 Demographic Characteristics**

This section covered length of service with the university, duration of university existence, and the number of employees in the university.

##### **4.2.1 Length of service with the University**

The respondents were requested to indicate the duration they have been working in their respective university. This was important to the study in order to determine the respondents' knowledge of the university functions and strategies implementation.

**Table 4. 1: Length of service with the University**

<b>Years</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Cumulative percent</b>
2 – 5	5	31.3	31.3
6 – 10	4	25.0	56.3
Over 10	7	43.7	100.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>100.0</b>	

The results in table 4.1 show that 43.7% of the respondents have worked in the public universities for more than 10 years, 31.3% of the respondents indicated that they have worked in the public universities for a period of between 2 and 5 years while 25% of the respondents indicated that they have worked for a period of 6 to 10 years. The results indicate that majority of the respondents have worked in the public universities for a long time and therefore they have knowledge on the factors that affect implementation of strategies in the universities.

#### **4.2.2 Duration of University existence**

The respondents were requested to indicate the duration of university existence. This was important for the study in order to determine the influence that the duration would have on the implementation of strategies in the university.

**Table 4. 2: Duration of University existence**

<b>Years</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Cumulative percent</b>
Under 5	6	37.5	37.5
11-15	3	18.8	56.3
Over 16	7	43.7	100.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>100.0</b>	

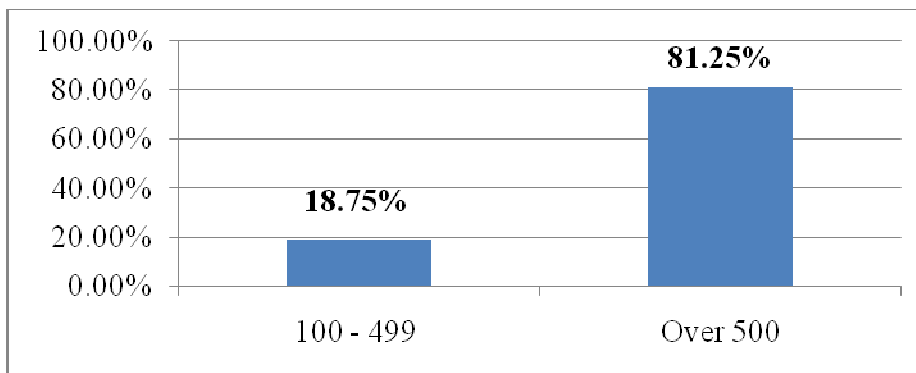
The results in table 4.2 indicate that 43.7% of the respondents indicated that the public university they work for has been in existence for over 16 years, 37.5% of the public

universities were indicated as being in existence for a period of less than 5 years while 18.8% of the respondents indicated that the universities have been in existence for a period of between 11 to 15 years. The results indicate that majority of the universities have been in existence for more than 10 years and therefore they understand the challenges that affected implementation of their strategies.

#### 4.2.3 Number of employees in the University

The respondents were requested to indicate the number of employees in their university. This was important for the study as it indicates the size of the university and the need to come up with strategies that will ensure the university achieves its objectives.

**Figure 4. 1: Number of employees in the University**



The results in figure 4.1 indicate that 81.25% of the respondents said that the public universities have employed over 500 employees while 18.75% of the respondents said that the public universities have employed between 100 and 499 employees. The results indicate that majority of the public universities have employed over 500 employees and

this indicates that in order to manage the employees and ensure that they achieve they have to come up with effective strategies which is affected by several factors.

### 4.3 Strategy Implementation

Implementing strategies successfully is vital for any organization, either public or private. Without implementation, even the most superior strategy is useless. The development and implementation of strategies by an organization to chart the future path to be taken will enhance the competitiveness of such firms operating in a competitive environment.

#### 4.3.1 Strategy Implementation Success

The respondents were requested to indicate the extent to which the public university has succeeded in implementing its strategies. The results are presented in table 4.3.

**Table 4. 3: Strategy Implementation Success**

<b>Years</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Cumulative percent</b>
Very great extent	2	12.5	12.5
Great extent	8	50.0	62.5
Moderate	6	37.5	100.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>100.0</b>	

The results in table 4.3 indicate that 50% of the respondents noted that the public universities have succeeded in implementing its strategies to a great extent, 37.5% of the respondents noted that the public universities have succeeded in the implementation of strategies to a moderate extent while 12.5% of the respondents indicated that implementation of strategies in the public universities have been achieved to a very great extent. The decisions that have been executed in the recent past by the universities varied

and this includes introduction of new course, opening and starting a new campus, discontinuing a course or withdrawal from the market and acquisition or merging with another institution.

#### 4.3.2 Strategy Implementation Practices

The respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which the practices have affected public universities strategy implementation in a five point Likert scale. The range was ‘not at all (1)’ to ‘very great extent’ (5). The scores of not at all have been taken to represent a variable which had mean score of 0 to 2.5 on the continuous Likert scale; ( $0 \leq S.E < 2.4$ ). The scores of ‘moderate extent’ have been taken to represent a variable with a mean score of 2.5 to 3.4 on the continuous Likert scale: ( $2.5 \leq M.E. < 3.4$ ) and the score of both great extent and very great extent have been taken to represent a variable which had a mean score of 3.5 to 5.0 on a continuous Likert scale; ( $3.5 \leq L.E. < 5.0$ ). A standard deviation of  $>0.9$  implies a significant difference on the impact of the variable among respondents. The results are presented in Table 4.4.

**Table 4. 4: Strategy Implementation Practices**

<b>Strategy Implementation Practices</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>
Periodic progress review using the performance metrics built into each action step	3.6597	.8419
Direct supervision	3.9571	1.0271
Formal and informal organizational	3.5286	.8516
Use of performance targets	3.8857	1.1217
Planning and control systems	3.7429	.6333
Social cultural processes and self-control	3.6652	.8419
Self control and personal motivation	3.5714	.9376



The results in Table 4.4 indicate that the strategy implementation practices in use in the public universities include direct supervision with a mean score of 3.9571. The respondents further noted performance targets and planning and control system with a mean score of 3.8857 and 3.7429 respectively was being used in the universities. Other implementation practices that are being used by the universities are social cultural processes and self control (mean 3.6652), periodic progress review using the performance metrics built into each action step (mean 3.6597), self control and personal motivation (mean 3.5714) and formal and informal organizational with a mean score of 3.5286. The results indicate that the universities adopt different practices in order to implement their strategies.

#### **4.4 Factors Influencing Implementation of Strategies**

Strategic challenges are those pressures that exert a decisive influence on an organization frequently driven by the organization's future competitive position relative to other provisions. The task of implementing challenging strategic initiatives must be assigned to executives who have the skills and talent to handle and can be counted on to turn decisions and actions into results to meet established targets.

##### **4.4.1 Influence of Organizational Structure**

The respondents were requested to indicate the influence of organizational structure on the implementation of strategic decisions in public universities.

**Table 4. 5: Influence of Organizational Structure**

<b>Influence of Organizational Structure</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>
Lack of understanding of the role of organizational structure and design in the execution process	3.7286	.9376
The design of university context is inappropriate for effective implementation and control of the strategy	3.9143	.7262
University strategy is not compatible with the internal structure of the university and its policies, procedures and resources	3.5173	.9376
The university structural design is tailored to meet its goals and objectives	3.7138	.9405

The results in table 4.5 indicate that organizational structure influence the implementation of strategies in public universities as the design of university context is inappropriate for effective implementation and control of the strategy with a mean score of 3.9143. The respondents also noted that in the public universities there is lack of understanding of the role of organizational structure and design in the execution process (mean 3.7286). The respondents also indicated that the university structural design was not tailored to meet its goals and objectives (mean 3.7138) and that university strategy is not compatible with the internal structure of the university and its policies, procedures and resources (mean 3.5173). The results show that organizational structure affects implementation of strategies in the public universities and these calls for a change to the current structure in order to accommodate changes in the education sector.

#### **4.4.2 Influence of Organizational Culture**

The respondents were requested to indicate the influence of organizational culture on the implementation of strategies in public universities.

**Table 4. 6: Influence of Organizational Culture**

<b>Influence of Organizational Culture</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>
The culture of the university is not conducive for strategy implementation	3.9143	1.3688
Misalignment on human resources front on strategy implementation existed at the university	3.6827	1.1217
The strategy chosen by strategy makers in the university was not compatible with the sacred or unchangeable parts of prevailing corporate culture	3.6286	1.2838
In the university people do not feel personally motivated to change	3.7728	1.0377
There is no culture of accountability for results and performance is not rewarded in the university	3.6503	1.5045
Competing activities distracted attention from implementing this decision	3.6429	1.0818
Conflicting activities and events that diverted attention from strategy implementation	3.5571	.9287

The results in table 4.6 on the influence of culture on the public university implementation of strategies were that the culture of the universities was not conducive for strategy implementation with a mean score of 3.9143. They respondents further noted that the university people do not feel personally motivated to change and that misalignment on human resources front on strategy implementation existed at the university with a mean score of 3.7728 and 3.6827 respectively. The respondents further indicated that there is no culture of accountability for results and performance is not rewarded in the university (mean 3.6503), competing activities distracted attention from implementing this decision (mean 3.6429), the strategy chosen by strategy makers in the university was not compatible with the sacred or unchangeable parts of prevailing corporate culture (mean 3.6286) and that conflicting activities and events diverted attention from strategy implementation (mean 3.5571). The results indicate that the

culture that exists in the university was affecting successful implementation of strategies and this will affect the achievement of university objective.

#### 4.4.3 Influence of Resources

The respondents were asked to indicate the influence of resources on implementation of strategies in the public universities.

**Table 4. 7: Influence of Resources on strategy Implementation**

<b>Influence of Resources on strategy Implementation</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>
People are not measured or rewarded for executing the plan	3.7857	1.1387
There is insufficient financial resources to execute the strategy	3.5491	.9376
In the university there are redundant resources that hinder strategy implementation	3.7539	1.0716
There is no coherence of decisions and actions of all employees at all levels of the organization	3.6148	.9607
Key formulators of the strategic decision did not play an active role in implementation	3.9286	.7300
Lack of alignment between strategy and the organizational compensation system	3.6375	.8516

The findings presented in Table 4.7 indicate the distribution of responses on the level of agreement with the influence of resources on the implementation of strategies in public universities. The findings indicate that the respondents were in agreement that key formulators of the strategic decision did not play an active role in implementation with a mean score of 3.9286. They further agreed that people are not measured or rewarded for executing the plan and that in the university that are redundant resources that hinder strategy implementation with a mean score of 3.7857 and 3.7539 respectively.

The results further agreed that in the public universities there is lack of alignment between strategy and the organizational compensation system (mean 3.6375), there is no coherence of decisions and actions of all employees at all levels of the organization (mean 3.6148) and that there is insufficient financial resources to execute the strategy with a mean score of 3.5491 from the results, it can be concluded that resources affected the implementation of strategies in the universities and this will affect availability of hostels for students and lecture halls since the introduction of double intake of students.

#### **4.4.4 Influence of Top Management Commitment**

Top management commitment is essential for successful implementation of strategies in any organization. The study required the respondents to indicate the influence of top management on the implementation of strategies in public universities. The finding to this is as presented in table 4.8 below.

**Table 4. 8: Influence of Top Management Commitment**

<b>Influence of Top Management Commitment</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>
In the university, management support is not granted in some strategic focus areas	3.6857	.8254
Leadership and direction provided by departmental managers were inadequate	3.6429	1.0082
Strategy implementation co-ordination was insufficiently effective	3.7143	1.0690
In the university, top managers do not view employees as the strategic resources	3.5271	1.1767
The university management is not committed to strategy implementation and has a significant influence on the intensity of subordinates	3.5486	1.2838

The results in table 4.8 indicate that the respondents agreed that strategy implementation co-ordination was insufficiently effective with a mean score of 3.7143. The respondents further agreed that in the public universities management support is not granted in some strategic focus areas with a mean score of 3.6857. The respondents noted that leadership and direction provided by departmental managers were inadequate (mean 3.6429), university management is not committed to strategy implementation and has a significant influence on the intensity of subordinates (mean 3.5486) and that top managers do not view employees as the strategic resources. The results indicate that top managers in the public universities were not giving the strategies that have been put in place the necessary support that will ensure that the strategies are implemented fully.

#### **4.4.5 Influence of Communication on Strategy Implementation**

Communication has been indicated as influencing implementation of strategies. The study therefore aims at establishing the influence of communication on implementation of strategies in public universities.

**Table 4. 9: Influence of Communication on Strategy Implementation**

<b>Influence of Communication on Strategy Implementation</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>
In the university, there is efficient and effective communication of organizations strategy to all within the organization	3.9429	1.0994
Information systems used to monitor implementation were inadequate	4.1183	.5547
Overall goals were not sufficiently well understood by employees	4.0714	.8287
Changes in responsibilities of key employees were not clearly defined	4.0428	.8770
Problems requiring top management involvement were not communicated early enough	3.8149	1.0271

From the findings in table 4.9, the respondents unanimously agreed that information systems used to monitor implementation were inadequate with a mean score of 4.1183. The respondents further noted that overall goals were not sufficiently well understood by employees and that changes in responsibilities of key employees were not clearly defined with a mean score of 4.0714 and 4.0428 respectively. The respondents further indicated that in the universities there no efficient and effective communication of organizations strategy to all within the organization (mean 3.9429) and that problems requiring top management involvement were not communicated early enough (mean 3.8149). It can be concluded that effective communication in the universities between the managers and the lower level is lacking and this affects implementation of strategies as there is no communication of the strategy to be implemented.

#### **4.4.6 Measures to Counter the Challenges**

The respondents were requested to indicate the measures that can be taken by the public universities to counter the challenges encountered in the implementation of its strategies. The results are presented in table 4.10.

**Table 4. 10: Measures to Counter the Challenges**

Measures to Counter the Challenges	Mean	Std. Deviation
University leadership has taken early and aggressive action to institutionalize the strategy within the firm	3.6286	.9972
The leadership of the university have taken ownership of the firm's strategy	3.5143	.7688
Communication of strategy is effective in the university	3.6429	.7924
Members of the management have taken support from key opinion leaders and rainmakers early-on and request their help in championing the strategy to other partners within the firm	3.7681	.9405
In the university there is alignment of compensation system, performance management approach, and other related practice group	3.7429	.9506
The organization structure of the university properly march the strategies	3.5861	.6066
The university has adopted several ways of staff motivation	2.9286	.8716
The organizational culture is conducive for strategy implementation	2.8571	.9492
The university has sufficient financial resources to execute the strategy	3.5714	1.0163
University employees are rewarded for executing a plan	2.7857	.8453
The university use adequate information systems to monitor strategy implementation	3.8429	1.1673

The results in Table 4.10 show that the respondents were in agreement that in order to address the factors that affect implementation of strategies in their university they have used adequate information systems to monitor strategy implementation with a mean score of 3.8429. The respondents further agreed that members of the management have taken support from key opinion leaders and rainmakers early-on and request their help in championing the strategy to other partners within the firm and that there is alignment of compensation system, performance management approach, and other related practice group with a mean score of 3.7681 and 3.7429 respectively.



The respondents also agreed that public universities communication of strategy is effective (mean 3.6429), leadership has taken early and aggressive action to institutionalize the strategy within the firm (mean 3.6286), organization structure properly march the strategies (mean 3.5861), have sufficient financial resources to execute the strategy (mean 3.5714) and that leadership has taken ownership of the firm's strategy (mean 3.5143). The respondents moderately agreed that the public universities have adopted several ways of staff motivation with a mean of 2.9286 and that organizational culture is conducive for strategy implementation with a mean score of 2.8571. Rewarding of employees for executing the plan with a mean of 2.7857 was further indicated as a measure of countering strategy implementation challenges by the universities. From the analysis, it can be concluded that the public universities have realized that successful implementation of strategies have been affected by factors that are within their control and some out of their control and therefore they have adopted various measures which are geared towards ensuring that there is effective implementation of strategies.

#### **4.5 Discussion**

Implementing strategies successfully is about matching the planned and the realizing strategies, which together aim at reaching the organizational vision. To ensure success of the strategy implementation, the strategy must be translated into carefully implemented action this is because the firm strategy is implemented in a changing environment and therefore the need for strategic control during the implementation. The adoption of practices by the universities will ensure that their strategies are implemented as planned.

The practices that were found to be implemented by the universities include direct supervision, performance targets, planning and control system, social cultural processes and self control, periodic progress review, self control and personal motivation and formal and informal organizational. The results were found to be consistent with Johnson and Sholes (2002) findings that formal and informal organizational strategy implementation practices are crucial for effective implementation of strategy and these practices are performance targets, planning and control system, social cultural processes and self control, periodic progress review, self control and personal motivation and formal and informal organizational.

Successful strategy implementation depends to a large extent on the organizations structure because it is the structure that identifies key activities within the organization and the manner in which they will be coordinated to achieve the strategy formulated. The study found out that the organizational structure of the public universities affected implementation of strategies as a result of design of university context which is inappropriate for effective implementation and control of the strategy, lack of understanding of the role of organizational structure and design in the execution process and structural design not being tailored to meet its goals. This was found to be consistent with the findings of Thompson and Strickland (2003) who noted that an organization should be structured in such a way that it can respond to pressure from the environment in order to change and pursue any appropriate opportunities which are spotted. Culture impacts on most aspects of organizational life, such as how decisions are made, who makes them, how rewards are distributed, who is promoted, how people are treated and

how the organization responds to environmental changes. The study found out that the public universities culture influenced implementation of strategies as it was not conducive for strategy implementation, people do not feel personally motivated to change, misalignment on human resources front on strategy implementation, competing activities distracted attention from implementing this decision and that conflicting activities and events diverted attention from strategy implementation. The findings were consistent with Johnson and Scholes (2002) findings that culture is a strength that can hinder strategy implementation when important shared beliefs and values interfere with the needs of the business, its strategy and the people working on the company's behalf.

Resource allocation is a central management activity that allows for strategy execution. The study found out that key formulators of the strategic decision did not play an active role in its implementation, people are not measured or rewarded for executing the plan, university having redundant resources that hinder strategy implementation and insufficient financial resources to execute the strategy. Judson (1991) noted that successful strategy implementation is due to the design, development, acquisition, and implementation of resources that provide what is needed to give effect to the institution's new strategies. The value any organization places on role models, through the system of complements, and coupled with employee expectations has a big impact on developing the morale of workers.

Leadership is the key to effective strategy implementation in an organization and this point came out strongly during the research. The study found out that public universities management support is not granted in some strategic focus areas, leadership and direction

provided by departmental managers were inadequate, university management is not committed to strategy implementation and has a significant influence on the intensity of subordinates and that top managers do not view employees as the strategic resources. Hill and Jones (1997) noted the right managers must also be in the right positions for effective implementation of a new strategy since the top management goodwill and ownership to drive the process is also critical to effective implementation of strategy. On the other hand Noble and Mokwa (2009) established that there is no relationship between top managers commitment and successful strategy implementation as an individual manager will not influence the overall success of the implementation effort.

The execution of a strategy depends on individual members of organization especially key managers and therefore in order to overcome the challenges encountered in the implementation of strategies, the public universities have used adequate information systems to monitor strategy implementation, alignment of compensation system, performance management approach, and other related practice group, effective communication of strategy, leadership taking early and aggressive action to institutionalize the strategy, sufficient financial resources to execute the strategy and organization structure properly marching the strategies. The results are consistent with Swartz (1985) findings that successful strategies require properly marched organization structure. If an organization significantly changes its strategy, it needs to make appropriate changes in its overall structural design since its existing organization structure may become ineffective. Brander, Brown and Atkinson (2001) argued that as a first step in ensuring the successful implementation of the firm's strategy, firm leaders must take early and aggressive action to institutionalize the strategy within the firm.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter summarizes the findings and analysis of chapter four. It sets out to discuss the summary of the findings, draw conclusions, make recommendations and highlight the limitations of the study.

#### **5.2 Summary**

The study shows that successful implementation of strategies in the public universities hinges on the practices that are adopted by the universities. In the public universities direct supervision, performance targets, planning and control system, social cultural processes periodic progress review, self control and personal motivation was being used in the implementation of its strategies. The study established that implementation of strategies in the public universities was affected by several factors. The structure of the public universities was found to be an impediment to successful implementation of strategies due lack of understanding of the role of organizational structure and design in the execution process and structural design not being tailored to meet its goals. This has seen the universities not implement strategies which would have enabled them to compete effectively with the private universities which are flexible in structure.

The culture which is being practiced in the public universities was found to have affected successful implementation of strategies as it is not conducive for implementation of strategies; people are not motivated, competing activities distracted attention from

implementing this decision and that conflicting activities and events diverted attention from strategy implementation. The culture in the public universities has seen students' loose marks for units they have done and the tedious ways of rechecking the marks forces students to undertake the units again. Lack of resources is one of the major challenges that have threatened the successful implementation of strategies at public universities. Even though there are other sources of revenue like module II, public universities still depends on the government to allocate its resources which are not enough to ensure that it undertakes its mandate effectively. At the same time the universities have not involved key formulators of the strategic decision in its implementation, people are not rewarded for executing the plan and universities having redundant resources.

The top management of the public universities is the driving force for successful implementation of strategies and when they are not putting effort on the other employees then the university will not achieve its plans. This was found in the study as the universities top management support is not granted in some strategic focus, inadequate leadership and direction and top managers not viewing employees as the strategic resources. Communication in the public universities was found to have affected implementation of strategies in public universities as there is no effective communication of strategy, monitoring of the strategy was inadequate, overall goals were not sufficiently well understood by the employees and problems requiring top management involvement were not communicated early enough.

This ineffective communication causes confusion and people pulling in opposite direction especially if adoption of a particular strategy results in uncertainty on the job security

status of the employees. A number of measures were identified that will help in reducing the factors that affect the success of strategy implementation at public universities. Some of the measures suggested included the adequate information systems to monitor strategy implementation, alignment of compensation system, performance management approach, and other related practice group, effective communication of strategy, leadership taking early and aggressive action to institutionalize the strategy, sufficient financial resources to execute the strategy and organization structure properly marching the strategies.

### **5.3 Conclusion**

Strategy implementation is very vital for the functioning of any organization. From the findings, it was established that public universities have adopted practices that are geared towards effective implementation of strategies. These strategies include direct supervision, performance targets, planning and control system, social cultural processes periodic progress review, self control and personal motivation was being used in the implementation of its strategies.

Implementation of strategies in the public universities is influenced by several factors that affect the achievement of its objectives. These factors include organizational structure, culture, resources, top management commitment and communication. The structure of the university was found not to be flexible to adjust to the changing environment while the culture which has been practiced in the universities in the years before is the same and this hinders implementation of strategies as the employees are used to doing things the same way. Although the universities get funding from the government and have enrolled students in module II, it can be concluded that the resources was not enough for the

universities to undertake its intended strategies. Communication in the public universities was not trickling down to the lower level employees and therefore it can be concluded that communication of strategy in the universities was not being communicated to the implementers which affects the implementation of its strategies.

The implementation of strategies in the public universities is being influenced by several factors that necessitate the universities to come up with strategies that will counter the challenges. In order to respond to the challenges, the universities have ensured that have used adequate information systems to monitor strategy implementation, align compensation system, ensured there is effective communication of strategy, leadership is taking early and aggressive action to institutionalize the strategy, availing sufficient resources to execute the strategy and organization structure being properly marched with the strategies.

#### **5.4 Recommendations**

The study established implementation of strategies in the universities was being influenced by resources and it is recommended that the government should increase allocation of resources to the universities in order to put in place infrastructure that will accommodate all the students especially after the double intake which has seen many students rent rooms outside the university. The universities at the same time should seek for partners who will provide resources that will ensure that the universities are equipped to provide the students with skills that will enable them to be competitive in the market.



The study established that the structure, culture and the top management of the public universities influenced implementation of the strategies and it is recommended that the top management should be at the forefront to ensure that there is a change in the structure and culture so that the employees change their mindset and undertake their duties towards the achievement of its objectives.

The study established that the factors affecting implementation of strategies in the public universities goes beyond the universities and it is recommended that the government and other policy makers should come up with policies that will ensure that the universities operate within the capacity that has been approved while at the same time admitting students which will not strain the resources that are available.

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

The study was undertaken in all the public universities in Kenya. The respondents were top managers in the universities and although they provided the information required for the study, they were afraid to reveal more due to victimization from the management for disclosing the information and therefore there was limited accessibility to information in the organization due to confidentiality being maintained which strained accessibility of data there was also a lack of cooperation from some staff during data collection as they had to go out of their work schedule to respond. The limitations however did not affect the data collected to undertake the study.

## **5.6 Suggestions for Further Research**

The study was done on the public universities. Every organization has its uniqueness on culture, staff, structure, resources and the environment it operates in is different from others. It is therefore recommended that the same study be undertaken among the private universities operating in Kenya in order to determine the factors that affect implementation of strategies in the universities and comparison be made on the factors.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix I: Cover Letter

Lucy W. Mwangi

P.O. Box 30344,

Nairobi.

September, 2014

Dear Respondent,

#### **RE: RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE**

This questionnaire (attached) is designed to gather information on factors affecting strategy implementation in public universities in Kenya. This study is being carried out for a management project paper as a requirement in partial fulfillment for award the Degree of the Master of Business Administration (MBA), University of Nairobi

Please note that this is strictly an academic exercise towards the attainment of the above purpose. You are hereby assured that the information will be treated with the strict confidence. Your co-operation will be highly appreciated.

Thank you for your anticipated kind response.

Yours Sincerely,

Lucy W. Mwangi

## **Appendix II: Research Questionnaire**

### **Section A: Demographic and Respondents Profile**

Name of the public university.....

Headquarters of the university.....

Number of degree programmes offered by the university .....

Length of continuous service with the university?

Less than two years [ ]                      b) 2-5 years                      [ ]

c) 6- 10 years                      [ ]                      d) Over 10 years                      [ ]

For how long has your university been in existence?

a) Under 5 years                      [ ]                      b) 6-10 years                      [ ]

c) 11-15 years                      [ ]                      d) Over 16 years                      [ ]

How many employees are there in your university?

a) Less than 100                      ( )

b) 100 – 499                      ( )

c) Above 500                      ( )

### **Section B: Strategy Implementation**

To what extent has your university succeeded in implementing its strategies?

a) Very great extent                      ( )                      b) Great extent                      ( )

c) Moderate extent                      ( )                      d) Little extent                      ( )

e)Not at all ( )

Which one of the following decisions has been executed recently?

Introduce a new course ( )

Open and start up a new campus ( )

Expand operations to enter a new market ( )

Discontinue a course or withdraw from a market ( )

Acquire or merge with another institution ( )

Change the strategy in an operational department ( )

Other (please specify)\_\_\_\_\_ ( )

To what extent has each of the following practices affected strategy implementation in your University? Use 1- Not at all, 2-Little extent, 3-Moderate extent, 4- Great extent, 5- Very great extent

<b>Strategy implementation practices</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
Periodic progress review using the performance metrics built into each action step					
Direct supervision					
Formal and informal organizational					
Use of performance targets					
Planning and control systems					



Social cultural processes and self-control					
Self-control and personal motivation					

### Section C: Strategy Implementation Factors

Please evaluate the extent to which the following factors influenced the implementation of the strategic decision. Please use the five-point scale as shown. Use 1-Not at all, 2-Little extent, 3-Moderate extent, 4- Great extent, 5- Very great extent

<b>Organizational Structure</b>	1	2	3	4	5
Lack of understanding of the role of organizational structure and design in the execution process					
The design of university context is inappropriate for effective implementation and control of the strategy					
University strategy is compatible with the internal structure of the university and its policies, procedures and resources					
The university structural design is tailored to meet its goals and objectives					
<b>Organizational Culture</b>					
The culture of the university is conducive for strategy implementation					
Misalignment on human resources front on strategy implementation existed at the university					

The strategy chosen by strategy makers in the university was compatible with the sacred or unchangeable parts of prevailing corporate culture					
In the university people feel personally motivated to change					
There is a culture of accountability for results and performance is rewarded in the university					
Competing activities distracted attention from implementing this decision					
Conflicting activities and events that diverted attention from strategy implementation					
<b>Resources</b>					
People are not measured or rewarded for executing the plan					
Insufficient financial resources to executethe strategy					
In the university there are redundant resources that hinder strategy implementation					
There is coherence of decisions and actions of all employees at all levels of the organization					
Key formulators of the strategic decision did not play an active role in implementation					
Lack of alignment between strategy and the organizational compensation system					

<b>Top management commitment</b>					
In the university management support is granted in some strategic focus areas					
Leadership and direction provided by departmental managers were inadequate					
Strategy implementation co-ordination was sufficiently effective					
In the university, top managers view employees as the strategic resources					
The university management is committed to strategy implementation and has a significant influence on the intensity of subordinates					
<b>Communication</b>					
In the university, there is efficient and effective communication of organizations strategy to all within the organization					
Information systems used to monitor implementation were inadequate					
Overall goals were not sufficiently well understood by employees					
Changes in responsibilities of key employees were not clearly defined					
Problems requiring top management involvement were not communicated early enough					

To what extent has your university taken the following measures to counter the factors encountered in strategy implementation? Use 1- Not at all 2-Little extent, 3-Moderate extent, 4- Great extent, 5- Very great extent

<b>Measures to counter the factors</b>	1	2	3	4	5
University leadership has taken early and aggressive action to institutionalize the strategy within the firm					
The leadership of the university have taken ownership of the firm's strategy					
Communication of strategy is effective in the university					
Members of the management have taken support from key opinion leaders and rainmakers early-on and request their help in championing the strategy to other partners within the firm					
In the university there is alignment of compensation system, performance management approach, and other related practice group					
The organization structure of the university properly march the strategies					
The University have adopted several ways of staff motivation					
The organizational culture is conducive for strategy implementation					
The University has sufficient financial resources to execute the strategy					

There is coherence of decisions and actions of all employees at all levels of the organization.					
In the University there are no redundant resources that hinder strategy implementation.					
University employees are rewarded for executing a plan.					
The University use adequate Information systems to monitor strategy implementation.					