

**CHALLENGES OF STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION AT THE
MUNICIPAL COUNCIL OF THIKA**

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DECLARATION

This research project is my original work and has not been presented for a degree course in this or any other university.

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

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The lord bless you all.

DEDICATION

This project is dedicated to Diana, my dear wife and friend

And

Our lovely son Anthony

You are my source of inspiration

ABSTRACT

Strategy implementation is a process of transforming strategic intentions into actions. Successful strategy implementation is critical in any organization. However it is the most challenging aspect in strategic management process. This is because it requires the bringing together of the resources needed, both human and capital, the structure, systems and other variables. Increased business competitiveness and dynamic external environment have made it necessary for corporates to rethink on their strategy thus corporates are forced to continually review their strategic plans or formulate new ones to suit the environmental trend. The process of strategy implementation is very critical to the success of both private and public undertaking however, it poses a number of challenges which are triggered by sources external and internal to the organization. The extent of such challenges depends on the type of organization and its prevailing circumstances. This study focused on challenges faced by Municipal Council of Thika in strategy implementation, a local authority which is a public entity mandated to offer services to the local residents. The study also sought to establish the measures taken by the council to overcome the challenges in strategy implementation. To achieve this primary data was collected by way of personal interview that was guided by an interview guide. This was administered to the departmental heads, who form part of the senior management of the council. Secondary data was also considered and in this case the strategic plan was reviewed. The findings of the study were that Municipal Council of Thika has embraced strategy implementation however; it faces challenges from sources both external and internal to the organization. The key challenges faced are; resource constraints both financial and human, unsupportive structures, unsupportive culture, delays in strategy implementation, lack of appropriate policies and political interference were all highlighted as a hindrance to effective strategy implementation. The findings of the study also revealed that Municipal council of Thika has taken some measures to overcome the challenges in strategy implementation. These include; outsourcing some activities where the management is overwhelmed, sensitizing the civic leaders on their role as far as running the council is concerned, educating the staff on quality service delivery, recruitment of competent staff among others. The study however recommends that there is dire need to clearly define the roles of the administration wing and civic wing as far as management is concerned. Civic leaders need to be trained that their role is policy making and not implementation. This would significantly reduce political interference and improve the process of strategy implementation. A comprehensive human resource policy needs to be put in place that will address issues of recruitment, motivation and continuous training of the staff. This will enhance capacity which was found to be a major hindrance to strategy implementation.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Declaration.....	i
Acknowledgements	iii
Dedication	iv
Abstract.....	v
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1 Background of the Study.....	1
1.1.1 The Concept of Strategy Implementation.....	2
1.1.2 Local Authorities in Kenya.....	4
1.1.3 Overview of Municipal Council of Thika.....	6
1.2 Research Problem	7
1.3 Research Objectives.....	9
1.4 Value of the Study	9
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW.....	10
2.1 Concept of Strategy	10
2.2 Strategic Management Process.....	11
2.3 Strategy Implementation	13
2.3.1 Institutionalization of Strategy.....	15
2.3.2 Operationalization of Strategy	16
2.4 Challenges of Strategy Implementation	17
2.5 Measures to Overcome Challenges.....	21
2.6 Empirical Review	22
CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	24
3.1 Research Design	24
3.2 Data Collection.....	24

3.3 Data Analysis	25
CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS	27
4.1 Introduction	27
4.2 Challenges of Strategy Implementation at Municipal Council of Thika.....	27
4.3 Overcoming Challenges in Strategy Implementation	33
4.4 Discussion	36
CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	39
5.1 Introduction	39
5.2 Summary	39
5.3 Conclusion.....	41
5.4 Recommendations for Policy and Practice.....	42
5.6 Suggestions for Further Research.....	44
REFERENCES.....	45
Appendix i: Letter of Introduction.....	47
Appendix ii: Interview Guide	48

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Many organizations both in public and private sector have been faced by a challenge in management of strategy. Many factors may be attributed to this situation including poor strategy formulation, poor strategic planning and poor strategy implementation. Some organizations have very good strategies which are never put into practice. A 1999 study (Corboy & O'Corrbui) found out that nearly 70% of all strategies and strategic plans are never successfully implemented. Sterling (2003) argues that, many of the most commonly cited causes for implementation failure are either myths or excuses that have gained credibility from being repeated often.

Understanding the strategic position of an organization and considering the strategic choices open to it are of little value unless the strategies managers wish to follow can be turned into action (Johnson and Scholes, 2002). Organizations today are faced by numerous unpredictable environmental changes that make strategy implementation increasingly complex. Ansoff (1993) notes that strategic success of an organization is more probable if the aggressiveness of the organisation's strategic behavior matches the turbulence of its environment, the responsiveness of the organization's capability matches the aggressiveness of the strategy and the components of the organization's capability are supportive of each other.

Management of strategy is an all encompassing process that is an important management responsibility. The process is likely to fail if it is not integrated into the organization's total management system. Aosa (1992) argues that strategy and total company management are

inextricably interwoven and should not be seen as separate. Strategy management should be properly integrated with other management systems in an organization. Being able to design good strategies is not enough; the management must be in a position to translate the strategies into workable solutions.

1.1.1 The Concept of Strategy Implementation

Strategy implementation is the translation of the logically developed strategies into action. It is the summation of activities in which people use various resources to accomplish the objective of the strategy (Higgins and Vincze 1986). William (1991) describes implementation as the execution of tactics both internally and externally so that the organization moves in the desired strategic direction. According to Steiner et al (1989) implementation of policies and strategies is concerned with the design and management of systems so as to achieve the best integration of people, structures, processes and resources in reaching organizational objectives.

The implementation process covers the entire managerial activities including such matters as motivation, compensation, management appraisal, and control processes. The implementation of organization strategy involves the application of the management process to obtain the desired results. Particularly, strategy implementation includes designing the organization's structure, allocating resources, developing information and decision process, and managing human resources (Shah, 1996). Strategy implementation is a very important aspect in the performance of an entity both in public and private sector.

According to Aosa (1992) once strategies have been developed, they need to be implemented; they are of no value unless they are effectively translated into action. Strategy implementation is

an internal administrative task and inherently behavioral in nature (John and Richard, 1986). Shah (1996) emphasizes this by denoting that the implementation tasks put to test the strategists' abilities to allocate resources, design structures, formulate functional policies and take into account the leadership styles required, besides dealing with various other issues. To effectively direct and control the use of the firm's resources, mechanisms such as organizational structure, information systems, leadership styles, assignment of key managers, budgeting, rewards, and control systems are essential strategy implementation ingredients (Pearce and Robinson, 2003).

Strategy implementation process can be hindered by a number of challenges in an organization. While these challenges may be diverse depending on the nature of the organization, they can to a large extent be avoided if there is proper harmonization between strategy formulation and implementation. Porter (1980) view strategy formulation as basically analytical and rational process, where managers employ various analytical tools and methods to make strategic decisions.

Unlike strategy formulation, strategy implementation is a more challenging process as it involves integration of structure and processes. Aosa (1992) argues that the grand strategy needs to be transformed into shorter –term operational strategies, objectives and activities. The grand strategy should be decomposed into a time-phased sequence of action programmes. For planning the implementation of their strategies effectively, strategists need to review and assess various factors which affect the implementation process of their strategies (Shah 1996).

1.1.2 Local Authorities in Kenya

Local authorities in Kenya are independent entities under the ministry of local government that are mandated by the Act of Parliament (Cap 265) to collect revenue from the local residents and in turn offer various services. Currently there are a hundred and seventy five (175) local authorities in Kenya which comprise of one city council, sixty five county councils, forty nine municipal councils and sixty town councils. The difference between these categories is the size of the local authority. The city council offers services to the Nairobi city residents. The municipalities offer services to the medium size urban centers. The town councils offer services to the small towns while the county councils offer services to the local residents within the outskirts of the towns and urban centers (Cap 265).

Local authorities are managed by two wings namely, administrative wing that is concerned with the general administration and policy implementation, and civic wing that comprise of councilors who are the policy makers (Cap 265).

Local authorities are mandated to collect revenue from the locals in form of single business permits, produce inspection cess, barter market fees, car park fees, and land rates among others. In turn they are mandate to do the following; develop by-laws that are to be adhered to by the locals, planning the urban centers, development control, maintenance of infrastructure including streets and street lights, Environmental concerns including garbage collection and general cleanliness, inspection of buildings among others.

They are also expected to identify various pressing needs of the locals and liase with the government so that the government can fund them through the local authority transfer fund (latf),

which they use for the purpose of solving those needs by undertaking the necessary projects (Cap 265).

Local authorities just like other organizations practice strategic planning. As a government policy local authorities are required to formulate and implement strategic plans that are in line with the Kenya's vision 2030. (Gok,2006). These plans that run for a period of five years are meant to transform the local authorities into viable, autonomous, accountable and responsive service delivery tools. (Klgrp,2007). The strategic plans are prepared through a consultative process that takes into consideration the environment in which it will be implemented. This is in line with the government's aspiration of transforming Kenya into a newly industrialized, middle income country providing a high quality of life to its citizens (Gok,2006).

Local authorities have been faced by challenges which have become more severe in their quest to implement their strategies. For instant local authority indebttness has increased significantly to more than Kenya shillings fourteen billion (Gok,2010). This has been coupled by the limited finance the local authorities are able to raise from the locals in terms of business permits and rates. Over the past years local authorities have affected tremendously by in adequate capacity in terms of human resources, until recently that the government is trying to reform the same through the public service commission (Gok, 2007). This has led to most of the local authorities losing track of their mandate. Political interference is very prevalent in local authorities. This is due to their set up that, the councilors who are locally elected are the policy makers and overseers in management of the local authorities. (Cap 265). In one way or the other there is bound to be political interference in the management of its affairs.

1.1.3 Overview of Municipal Council of Thika

Thika Municipality was given its status by Government Gazette in 1924. Thereafter, it was elevated to a second class municipality when Kenya gained independence in 1963, and the first Mayor was enthroned in 1968. Thika municipality measures about 93 square kilometers. It has a population of approximately 150,000 people at night and 350,000 during the day (Mct,2009). Many of the people are employed in the factories. The town which is the headquarters of Thika District is externally serviced by a dual carriage to Nairobi, a highway to Garissa and also a railway line. Internally, the municipality has a well-maintained road network (Mct,2007).

The main economic activities of Thika include agriculture, in particular, horticulture (pineapple, flowers) and coffee. The town, which is branded as the “The Birmingham of Kenya” is home to heavy industries like tannery, textile cloth, footwear, food processing, motor vehicle assembly and cigarette manufacture. Thika municipality also hosts over a hundred light industries and twenty six major factories and has vibrant and fast growing commercial activities like commerce, banking, telecommunication and hospitality. Thika is also the gateway to other tourist attractions like Kilimambogo National Park, Fourteen Falls, Yatta Plateau, Ndaka-ini Dam, Mount Kenya and the Great Rift Valley (Mct,2007).

Thika, just like the other municipalities is mandated to ensure that the residents within its jurisdiction get the best services expected. it has the responsibility of ensuring that the town is clean and environmentally friendly. This is achieved through proper planning and control of developments for example ensuring that factories are not put up near residential areas. it is also expected to improve and maintain the existing infrastructure namely the streets, lanes, public toilets and also the street lights. The municipality also sets up the by-laws that are expected to

govern the conduct of business within the municipality. The municipality also approves and inspects the buildings especially when they are being constructed to ensure that they adhere to the laid down specifications.

To be able to achieve its mandate, municipal council of Thika is guided by a five year strategic plan. This plan has the mandate and various actions that the council needs to undertake in its endeavour to render the requisite services. However like many other organizations the council has not been able to live its mandate, meaning that it faces some challenges in its strategy implementation that need to be addressed. For instance there has been a high increase in population within the municipality caused by rural urban migration, in search of jobs and education. In some estates poverty levels has risen tremendously turning them into possible slums. This has been coupled by financial constraints due to the increase in number that requires services.

1.2 Research Problem

Strategy implementation is one of the most demanding aspects of strategic management. Many organizations initiate good strategies but more often little impact is felt in the organization. In the modern times organizations are operating under stiff competitive and turbulent environment. According to Shah (1996), the success of organizations today mainly depends upon the successful implementation of well conceived strategies. Successful implementation requires that the strategy, the organization, the people and their relationships, the systems and measures all must be aligned and made to work towards a common goal.

Municipal council of Thika just like the other public entities has a strategic plan in place. This plan is a blue print for the council in service delivery to the locals. In pursuit of its mandate, municipal council of Thika has been faced numerous challenges that have affected its strategy implementation. The implementation is normally aligned with the annual performance contracting that is signed between the government and the council. In the past years, the council has not been able to achieve its targets. This may be attributed to financial constraints and political interference and disconnect between strategic planning and implementation.

Whereas a number of scholars have researched and documented on strategy management and implementation in Kenya (Aosa,1992; Machuki,2005; Wanjiru,2008; Muthuiya,2004; Koske,2003 among others). Only few studies (Wanjiru,2008 and Koske,2003) have focused on strategy implementation in the public entities yet this is a significant area in strategic management. (Aosa,1992; Machuki,2005) focused on private sector, Muthuiya(2004) on non profit making organization. All these studies have mainly focused on the challenges to strategy implementation in a generalized manner. None of the studies has considered the unique challenges in the management of such entities as is in the case of local authorities, which are run both administratively and politically, hence being unique the public entities.

In essence strategy implementation in public entities especially the local authorities has not received the same attention as other components of strategic management and therefore a gap exists in our which this study seeks to bridge. It is against this background that this study sought to determine the following: What challenges does Municipal Council of Thika face in strategy Implementation?

1.3 Research Objectives

Studies have previously been carried out to document challenges in strategy implementation. Most of them have been on private sector and pointed out general challenges. This study focused on Municipal Council of Thika a local authority and in this regard two objectives were identified.

- i. To determine the challenges faced by Municipal Council of Thika in strategy implementation.
- ii. To establish the measures taken by the Municipal Council of Thika to overcome the challenges in strategy implementation.

1.4 Value of the Study

The findings of this study will go a long way in filling the existing gap of knowledge on challenges of strategy implementation in local authorities. More specific the study is expected to;

Provide important information to the management of Municipal council of Thika on how to successfully implement their strategies, by overcoming the likely challenges.

Assist other local Authority managers in embracing proper strategy implementation in their Councils, and how they can mitigate the challenges likely to be faced.

Assist other stakeholders like the locals, donors, business partners in understanding more on the management of local authorities.

Build up on the existing knowledge in strategy implementation especially in public entities which will be of help to scholars in future as they undertake further academic research.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Concept of Strategy

Strategy is a very broad concept that has been adopted by many organizations and interpreted in many varied ways. A number of authors on the other hand have viewed this concept in various ways. (Johnson, Scholes & Whittington, 2008), defines strategy as the direction and scope of an organization over the long term, which achieves advantage in a changing environment through its configuration of resources and competences with the aim of fulfilling stakeholder expectations. This can be interpreted as strategy being the path to future aspirations of what the organization intends to be and the place it will occupy within the environment. This is achievable through proper management of resources, both human and capital in order to beat competition.

Porter (1996) contends that strategy is about achieving competitive advantage through being different. This means delivering a unique value added to the customer, having a clear and enactable view of how to position yourself uniquely in your industry. Kay(2000) argues that strategy is no longer about planning or visioning. This is because we are deluded if we think we can predict or control the future. Strategy is all about using careful analysis to understand and influence an organization's position in the market place. Hamel (2000) asserts that the best strategy is geared towards radical change and creating a new vision of the future in which you are the leader rather than a follower of trends set by others. Winning strategy is a result of foresight and vision.

According to David (2003), strategy is a long term plan of action designed to achieve a particular goal. Strategy in this case is viewed as a means to an end. Originally the term strategy was not meant for business; rather, business and industry borrowed it from the military, helping the organizations to bridge the gap between policy and tactics (Nickols,2002). Strategy has been considered as a means of establishing the organizational purpose, in terms of its long term objectives, action programs, and resource allocation priorities.

This intent of strategy emanates from the definition given by Chandler (1962) strategy is the determination of the basic long term goals of an enterprise and adoption of courses of actions and the allocation of resources necessary to carry out these goals. Strategy has also been viewed in terms of competitive domain of the firm. It has long been recognized that one of the central concerns of strategy is defining the business the firm is in or is to be in.

2.2 Strategic Management Process

According to Hunger and Wheelen (2008) Strategic Management refers to the managerial process of forming a strategic vision, setting objectives crafting strategy implementing and executing the strategy. The current competitive realities appear to demand not only efficiency and high quality, but also fast cycle capability and attention to social environmental concerns (Banbury and Hart, 1994). Strategic management is a process in the sense that strategies are the outcomes of careful objective analysis and planning (Lynch 2000). Strategic management involves three broad considerations: Strategy formulation, Strategy implementation, evaluation and control of the strategy.

Strategy formulation is concerned with developing a corporation mission, objective, strategies and policies (Hunger and Wheelen 2008). It begins with situation analysis which is the process of finding a strategic fit between external opportunity and internal strengths while working around external threats and internal weaknesses. This should be an all encompassing process and not a sole responsibility of the top management. Bourgeois and Pugh (2011) argue that all too often, strategy development is conceived of as the purview of CEOs, planning departments, or external consultants; little thought is given to the role of the entire enterprise as a source of strategic direction. This framing is short sighted at best and, at worst, threatens the survival of the firm in the face of more nimble competition.

Strategy implementation is the sum total of the activity and choices required for the execution of a strategy. It is the process by which objective strategy and policies are put into action through development of programs budget and procedures (Wheelen and Hunger 2008).

Although implementation is usually considered after strategy formulation it is a key part of strategic management. A number of studies have recognized the interactive nature of the relationship between strategy formulation and strategy implementation. According to Dess and Origer, (1987)The end result of the process of strategy formulation and strategy should lead to the development of appropriate structures and systems as well as the allocation of resources to ensure its successful implementation. Thus, the outcome of the process of strategy formulation is of little use if it is not properly implemented.

Elbanna (2009) argues that evaluating strategies is a vital need for strategists as there is need to align organization's strategies with the organizational performance measurement. The

organization performance is compared with the desired result and a corrective action is taken in case of a deviation. The impetus for thinking about strategic control arose out of practical experience: often companies had serious difficulties responding in a timely manner to planning failures and unexpected developments, due to their lack of information about the ongoing validity of the chosen strategy. As a result, strategic control has become an important issue (Schreyogg and Steinmann, 1987).

Strategy control are measures established to focus on actual performance results (output) on the activities that generate the performance on all resources that are used in performance (Input). Controls specify how something is to be done through policies, rules Standard, operations, procedure and orders from superiors. Output controls specify what is to be accomplished by focusing on the end result of the behavior through the use of objectives and performance target or milestones while Input controls focuses on resources such as knowledge, skills, abilities, values and motives of the employees (Hunger and Wheelen, 2008).

2.3 Strategy Implementation

Strategy implementation is an administrative task and inherently behavioral in nature (John and Richard 1986). The implementation task put to test the strategists' ability to allocate resources, design structures, formulate functional policies and take into account the leadership styles required, besides dealing with various other issues. For planning the implementation of their strategies effectively strategists need to review and assess various factors which affect the implementation process of their strategies.

According to Dess and Miller (1993), many strategies in the business world fail because of a lack of consistency among the chosen strategy and many other important factors such as the organization's structure, reward system and capabilities. This emphasizes the importance of considering strategic factors in strategy implementation process.

The success of organizations depends largely on the effective implementation of strategies. It plays a vital role on the attainment of corporate objectives of a firm. Without the effective implementation of strategy organizations are unable to reap benefits of performing organizational analysis, establishing organizational direction and formulating organizational strategy.

According to Shah (1996) the most precisely articulated strategy is virtually worthless unless it is implemented successfully. Despite the knowledge by the organizations of the significance of strategy implementation, it is clear that majority of the organizations are unable to achieve the targets that they have laid internally. This can be attributed to the tendency by the management to ignore this vital component of the strategic management process. They pay much attention to strategy formulation and relax on the implementation.

Successful implementation of well conceived strategies requires that the strategy, the organization, the people and their relationships and the systems must all be aligned and made to work towards a common goal. In this context the identification of strategic issues and assessment of their importance in strategy implementation process assumes great significance (Shah 1996).

2.3.1 Institutionalization of Strategy

The first basic action that is required for putting a strategy into operation is its institutionalization. Since strategy does not become either acceptable or effective by virtue of being well designed and clearly announced, the successful implementation of strategy requires that the strategy framer acts as its promoter and defender. Often strategy choice becomes a personal choice of the strategist because his personality variables become an influential factor in strategy formulation. Thus, it becomes a personal strategy of the strategist. Therefore, there is an urgent need for the institutionalization of strategy because without it, the strategy is subject to being undermined.

According to Bourgeois and Pugh (2011) Strategy is not a thing; it is not a person, a meeting, a bound document, a powerpoint presentation, a letter from the CEO in an annual report. Strategy rather is an ongoing process. It is therefore the role of the strategist to present the strategy to the members of the organization in a way that appeals to them and brings their support. This will put organizational people to feel that it is their own strategy rather than the strategy imposed on them. Such a feeling creates commitment so essential for making strategy successful. Institutionalizing strategy requires the management to set an organizational climate relevant for strategy implementation.

The organization culture is an important determinant of strategy success in an organization. Nowhere is this concept more important than in institutionalizing strategy. Mc lean (2005) defines culture as a collection of common values, policies, beliefs, traditions and attitudes that constitute a pervasive context for everything we do in an organization. When an organization's

culture is consistent with its strategy, the implementation of strategy is eased considerably. It is impossible to successfully implement a strategy that contradicts the organization's culture.

2.3.2 Operationalization of Strategy

Once the creative and analytical aspects of strategy formulation have been settled, the managerial priority is one of converting the strategy into operationally effective action. Kotler (2003) describes implementation as the process that turns plans into actions. Indeed a strategy is never complete, even as formulation until it gains a commitment of the organization's resources and becomes embodied in organizational activities. Therefore, to bring the result, the strategy should be put to action because the choice of even the soundest strategy will not affect organizational activities and achievement of its objectives. Therefore, effective implementation of strategy is a must for the organization. The scope of managerial activities associated with strategy implementation is virtually coexistence with the entire management process. This is because the entire management process is geared up according to the needs of the strategy.

Getz et al.(2009) argue that by creating and properly using clear statements of desired future identity and interrelated paths of action programs within management processes, organizations are able to overcome the dilemmas and challenges associated with traditional approaches to strategy implementation. Steiner (2003) describes some tasks that can facilitate operationalization of strategy as; putting structures necessary to turn strategy into reality, establishing a strategy-supportive budget, installing internal administrative support systems, devising rewards and incentives that are linked to objectives and strategy, shaping corporate culture to fit the strategy and exercising strategic leadership.

2.4 Challenges of Strategy Implementation

Today's strategists are at no loss for concepts and techniques to help them formulate strategies. Over the past years organizations have introduced a variety of powerful and pragmatic tools for answering the question, "Where and how should we compete?" Hambrick and Cannella,(1989) contends that many tools and methods of deriving business strategies have gained widespread use, however, many of these best laid plans are failing to see the light of the day. The widespread inability to implement strategy may be a sign that accepted approaches to strategy formulation are not as good as many think they are; for a well conceived strategy is one that is implementable.

Strategy implementation has its own challenges, which cannot be ignored if the strategy is to be successfully implemented. Strategy implementation is a challenging task for managers in many organizations that require careful handling. Sterling (2003) asserts that effective implementation of an average strategy, beats mediocre implementation of a great strategy every time. Yet organizations nonetheless often fail to operationalize their strategies in ways that improve the likelihood that they will be implemented effectively. The management needs to appreciate that a variety of obstacles generally known but commonly overlooked can crop up and prevent a new strategy from unfolding.

The success of strategy primarily depends on marshalling resources within the business itself. Human and material limitations make this difficult. According to Hambrick and Cannella (1989), the business may have the wrong configuration of physical resources, human resources and

systems and procedures. Of equal importance, however, is the fact that there will be internal resistance to correcting these deficiencies. Political resistance arises from individuals who feel they stand to lose something of value if the new strategy is implemented.

Ideological resistance arises from those who believe the new strategy is ill fated or in violation of deeply held values. Blind resistance arises from those who are intolerant or afraid of change.

Strategists must also navigate around obstacles outside the business unit. The most obvious counterforce is the competition, but the general economic and technological environment can also impede a new strategy. Less obvious sources of resistance are allies such as suppliers, distributors and trade associations. These allies have vested interest in the current strategy of the business and can resist for the same reasons as those inside the firm. Real reasons for failure of strategy during implementation are varied and a number of writers have mentioned some of them.

Unanticipated market changes may affect strategy implementation especially if this occurs before the strategy takes hold. This is common in today's turbulent environment where unprecedented changes normally occur. Sterling(2003) affirms this by noting that strategies often fail because the market conditions they were intended to exploit change before the strategy takes its roots. Downes (2001) reckons that technology challenges the old rules and assumptions and creates daunting external obstacles to execution of strategy. Unanticipated market changes affect strategy implementation especially if the management had pursued a fundamentally wrong business assumption of a thriving business which later turns to be wrong.

Poor understanding of the strategy is a major contributor to failure of the same. This results from insufficient ownership or understanding of the strategy among those who need to implement it. Before any strategy can be successfully implemented, it must be clearly understood by the implementers. Various studies have been undertaken on the impact of employee ownership and understanding of strategy. Giles (1991) argues that strategy implementation fails when implementers do not own the strategy. Guffey and Nienhaus (2002) found a strong link between organizational commitments (strong belief in the organization's goals and values, willingness to exert effort on behalf of the organization, and strong desire to maintain membership in the organization) and the employees' support of the organization's strategy. Poor understanding of the strategy leads to the failure of the employees' to link the tasks to be done to the overall organizational direction. Aaltonen and Ikavalko (2001) point out that many organizational members typically recognize strategic issues as important and also understand their context in generic terms however ,the problem in understanding arise when it comes to applying strategic issues in the day to day decision making.

One of the problems encountered in strategy implementation is lack of sufficient communication. According to Sterling (2003) effective communication of the strategy and its underlying rationale are also critically important especially when reaching out beyond the group directly involved in the development of the strategy. Communication should be an ongoing activity throughout the implementation process. However this is not normally the case and organizations find themselves challenged in this area. Communication should be a two way so that it can provide information to improve understanding and responsibility and to motivate staff (Wang 2000).

Lack of focus makes the strategists to loose direction in what they intend to do. Some organizations want to be ‘everything’ to all people and as a result they lack distinctiveness, but importantly they lack focus (Sterling 2003). This leaves the organization undistinguished in the market, as others pursue the same strategy. Strategists need to develop strategic focus. To achieve this, they need a degree of simplicity in defining strategy so that it will be easy to communicate to the others. Once everybody gets focused, it is easier to execute.

Some strategies fail because inadequate resources were allocated to implement them. According to Sterling (2003) lack of resources is generally a bigger threat to capital intensive strategies. A number of factors can be attributed to poor resource allocation. These include: organizational policies, vague strategy targets, reluctance to take risks, overprotection of resources, much emphasis on short run financial criteria and lack of sufficient knowledge (David 1997).

According to Johnson and Scholes (2002) established organizations may experience changes in business environment that can make a large part of their resource base redundant and unless they are able to free sufficient funds to invest in the new resources that are needed and their cost base will be too high. It is also worth noting that identifying the appropriate resources and competencies to support strategy implementation will not result in successful implementation unless the organization is also able to allocate resources and control in line with strategy (Daft 2000).

Organization culture has a major impact on the way an organization is managed. Organization culture comprises of the common values, shared beliefs, traditions and attitudes that are strongly

held within the organization. Culture sometimes hinders the smooth implementation of strategy .According to Aosa (1992) lack of compatibility between strategy and culture can lead to high organizational resistance and demotivation, which can in turn frustrate the strategy implementation. This is because culture gives the employees a sense of how they should behave, what they should do and where to place priorities in getting the job done. It is known to influence creativity and innovation (Mc lean, 2005).

2.5 Measures to Overcome Challenges

The strategic management process is not complete on determination and implementation of the strategies. The strategy must be made to work. Despite the various challenges that may be encountered, the management must put in place measures to ensure the strategy is sustained. According to Steiner (2003) the organizational design should be aligned with its capabilities. This is a critical step that is normally overlooked. This assists in identifying the organization's core competencies.

People should be directly involved in strategy development. Getting people involved in the creation of the plan is a wise thing as they buy in and feel responsible for it. This gives them a chance to air their concerns about strategy and hence enhances the chances of success.

There should be proper understanding of the external environmental factors during the planning process. This enables the management to propose effective strategies and measures for enhanced performance (Wanjiru, 2008). The organization should understand the competitor's market positions and employ tools like customer care focus, corporate governance enhanced quality, in response to mitigation of any adverse effects.

Proper leadership is an asset in success of strategy. According to Johnson and Scholes (2002), successful strategy implementation is directly linked to the unique characteristics, orientation and actions of the CEO. Positions of authority and responsibility are important in strategy implementation, but also important are the people in those positions. The leader is expected to create a team spirit among the organization members and its effectiveness be seen in action. This however depends on the leader's personality, style, commitment, attitude, skills and experience. The leader should always influence action in the desired direction.

2.6 Empirical Review

It is evident that many organizations have been faced by numerous challenges in strategy implementation. It is worth noting that these challenges are contingent upon the organization's surrounding environment. Various studies have been done locally in different environments and hence generating different findings. Some of those studies include Aosa (1992), Koske (2003) Muthuiya (2004) Machuki (2005) Wanjiru (2008) among others.

Aosa (1992) carried out a study on empirical investigation into the aspects of strategy formulation and implementation within large, private manufacturing companies in Kenya. His study was on private sector and most of his findings revealed implementation challenges due to uncontrollable environmental factors, inadequate resources and poor coordination of implementation tasks.

Koske (2003) focused on public sector in his study on strategy implementation and its challenges: the case study of Telkom Kenya limited. His findings revealed a number of challenges including; un supportive organizational structure, poor leadership, mismanagement of resources, financial constraints among others.

Machuki (2005) carried a study on challenges to strategy implementation at CMC Motors Group limited. His findings revealed that most of the challenges affecting the company were internal including; un supportive structure and culture, resistance to change, un supportive processes and procedures, in adequate skills among others.

Wanjiru (2008) study was on challenges faced in strategy implementation; a case study of Jomo Kenyatta foundation.

Her findings also revealed challenges emanating from sources both internal and external to the organization namely; competition, inadequate resources among others.

The above mentioned studies shows that the organizations contextual environment has a major bearing on the strategy implementation challenges it is likely to face. This study seeks to focus on a more unique organization set up, that is a local authority that is run both administratively by the management staff and politically by the councilors.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

The study was conducted through a case study design. This is a study that involves collection of in depth information from one or several respondents, or a careful and complete observation of phenomena such as a person, an institution, a cultural group or community with the aim of understanding situations or phenomenon. From the study, data generation and inferences are made. It places more emphasis on a full contextual analysis of fewer events or conditions (Cooper and Schindler 2003).

The design was considered appropriate in that the study involved gaining an insight on the strategic challenges faced by Municipal Council of Thika. The council is a service delivery vehicle to the local residents and it has its own strategies of delivering the services. The design in this regard facilitated a detailed analysis of the qualitative data collected during the study. The design was appropriate taking into account the strategic approach of the study, as well as the complexity and the predominantly qualitative dimension of the phenomena under investigation. Aosa (1992) observed that a study with a narrower focus will provide an in depth insight of the strategic management practices in Kenya.

3.2 Data Collection

Primary data was collected by way of personal interview guided by an interview guide to comprehensively study the challenges faced by the council in implementation of its strategy and make valid conclusions. This is an important approach in a case study design as it requires that several sources of information be used for verification and comprehensiveness (Cooper and

Schindler, 2003). Personal interviews were conducted to the two top level managers of the Council who included the Town Clerk and the Municipal Treasurer. The others were middle level managers who are the departmental heads in the following departments: Administration department, Planning department and Engineering department.

The respondents were interviewed each at a time. The open ended questions guiding the interview were developed in accordance with the objectives of the study. These were accompanied by probing questions when the need arose to allow for elaboration and get in depth information. The interviews were conducted to this group as it was considered to be directly involved in strategy implementation.

Secondary data was also considered and in this case the council's current strategic plan was considered. This included aspects of the organization structure, the Council mandate, goals and objectives all the way to the implementation matrix. Conclusions and suggestions were collated based on the findings from the interviews, observation and documents.

3.3 Data Analysis

Content analysis of the data collected was performed. This is a technique that allows for making inferences by systematically and objectively identifying specified characteristics of information emanating from the respondents' information and using the same approach to relate trends. Rubin and Piele (1996) define content analysis as a technique that uses a set of categorization for making valid and replicable inferences from data to their context.

The technique was preferred as the study sought to solicit data that is qualitative in nature and the fact that although the respondents were drawn from the same organization, they were from different departments, and each respondent was responding to a different set of questions. The researcher made meanings from interviewees' responses through conceptualization and explanation building.

The analysis also involved comparison of the data obtained from the various respondents in their respective departments to enable a more detailed investigation to determine whether the challenges faced in strategy implementation are similar or differ across the departments. The data was in turn compared with the theoretical approaches cited in the literature review and other empirical findings. This type of analysis has been used in similar studies in the past including; Koske (2003), Machuki (2005), Wanjiru (2008), Kibathi (2009).

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1 Introduction

The study was guided by two research objectives namely; To establish the challenges faced by Municipal Council of Thika in strategy implementation and to establish the measures taken by the Council to overcome the challenges in strategy implementation. This chapter presents the findings of the study with regard to the objectives and discussions of the same. Content analysis of the qualitative data was used, collated with the secondary data obtained from the organizations strategic plan.

The presentation of this chapter starts with an analysis of the challenges faced by the Municipal Council of Thika in implementation of strategy as provided by the respondents. It also analyses the extent of operationalization and institutionalization of the strategy. Secondly the chapter discusses the measures that the Council has adopted in order to overcome the mentioned challenges in strategy implementation. During the interview various challenges were highlighted that affected the strategy implementation by the council.

4.2 Challenges of Strategy Implementation at Municipal Council of Thika

Strategy implementation is largely an internal administrative activity. It entails a process of converting the formulated strategies into viable operations that will yield the organization's targeted results. Fundamental and important issues are involved in strategy implementation such as; resource mobilization, process changes, policy changes, culture change, leadership changes among others. Operationalization of strategy is important. This involves working out the strategy by ensuring that the organization's daily activities, work efforts and resources are directed as

much as possible towards implementing the strategy. It is important to own the strategy and provide the required resources if a strategy is to be successfully implemented. This is because haphazard strategy implementation may be a predisposing factor that may make an organization to fall.

Municipal council of Thika has in place a strategic plan that outlines its strategy. The Council draws its strategy from the larger strategy of the ministry of local government. The ministry's strategy is aligned with the Kenya's vision 2030 that outlines where the country intends to be economically by the year 2030. The Council strategy is thereafter cascaded down to departments for easier execution. The departments are expected to design annual work plans in line with the strategy so that what is to be implemented every year is well defined.

The first objective sought to establish challenges faced by Municipal Council of Thika in strategy implementation, while the second sought to establish the measures taken by the council to overcome those challenges. To achieve this, the chief officers who form the senior management team were interviewed. These comprises of the Town clerk, Municipal Treasurer, Principal Administrative Officer, Municipal planner and Municipal Engineer. The interview was structured such that it captured majority of the aspects covering their respective department.

The context in which Municipal Council operate present a challenging environment. This is because local authorities are run both administratively by chief officers and politically by civic wing, which comprise of councilors elected by the public. The civic leaders are the policy makers where as the chief officers are the implementers of those policies. Municipal Council of

Thika is mandated to offer services to the local residents within the municipality and at the same time collect revenue in form of levies from single business permit, land rates, parking fee, barter market among others. The council is in turn expected to use the same finances to render the requisite services to the local residents.

The study revealed that this nature of set up presents the operations of the council with a challenge in that the locals expectations are too high, far beyond what the council can manage. The study also revealed that some challenges were unique to individual departments while others were common across the board. Bureaucratic and rigid structure was reported only in the treasurers department, lack of concrete policies was reported in the planning department only. Others like capacity problem, political interference cut across the board.

Successful strategy implementation can only be achieved when an organization has human resources who have the requisite skills and capacity. Inadequate staff in some departments like engineering and planning was indentified as a major challenge. On the other hand, although other departments are well staffed, it was discovered that majority lacked the necessary skills and had poor academic credentials. The study also revealed that although the council has in the past been recruiting staff, however it lacks a human resource strategy and does not have a recruitment policy. This has led to poor skills' being hired which is likely to translate to poor workmanship.

It was noted that even though the council has let aside two per cent of its total budget for staff training, it lacks a continuous training programme and it only trains staff who have personally forwarded request for facilitation for training. Most of the times the staffs are required to

facilitate their own training and apply for the fee refund. This appears that the amount is only set aside in order to comply with the government policy of setting aside the funds for staff training.

It is necessary for various functional units or department to collaborate and consult in order to implement the strategy successfully. The study revealed that consultation and collaboration lacks between departments hence making their work difficult. Poor coordination was reported especially between the town planning department and treasurers department that is in charge of finances.

These findings are in line with the literature by Bourgeois and Pugh (2011) that strategy implementation is conceived as the purview of CEOs, planning departments or external consultants; little thought is given to the role of the entire enterprise as a source of strategic direction. This framing threatens the survival of the firm. This however could be attributed to the organization structure and the nature of processes in place, some of which are too bureaucratic leading to delays in approvals and execution of tasks.

The study revealed major political interference in almost all departments in their normal operations. This arises as a result of civic leaders who are policy makers interfering with their daily decision making of the chief officers. This is normally common when they have vested personal interests which are detrimental to the council or they want to support opinion of the local residents even when they are on the wrong.

The interference is prevalent to the extent that some activities which are even not budgeted for find their way being done even when they are not part of strategic plan. In worst cases even the local members of parliament were found to be interfering with the operations of the council.

The study sought to establish whether the council has sound financial management system that ensures the strategy defined is properly financed and whether any challenges were faced in financial management. The study found out that there exist numerous financial management challenges that include financial commitments previously not budgeted for arising, hence interfering with strategy implementation. A practical case is a sixty per cent salary increment awarded in April 2010 to the employees by the government hence shifting the wage bill up by twenty six million.

The study also reviewed that due to increase in the cost of living and inflation the council revenue base has declined translating to less revenue being collected than what had been budgeted. This is because many locals are unable to sustain businesses, which are a main source of council revenue. It in turn translates to either delays in implementing some plans or a total failure to implement the same. This confirms Sterling (2003) argument that lack of resources is generally a bigger threat to capital intensive strategies.

Organizational culture is an important aspect in the successful implementation of a strategy. The study revealed a culture that is not supportive of the strategy. All the departmental heads acknowledged that majority of the employees at the lower level do not care or are not aware of what the strategy of the organization is. It was also revealed that majority of employees have to

be pushed to do their work and are unable to meet the set deadline. This has led to delays in strategy implementation and also unsatisfactory services being rendered.

The findings of the study are in line with the literature that the business may have the wrong configuration of physical resources, human resources and systems and procedures that hinders the success of a strategy (Hambrick and Cannella 1989). Municipal council of Thika has an elaborate vertical structure that clearly defines the responsibility and authority of various positions. The study however established that although the structure is clearly defined, it is not supportive in that excessive bureaucracy acted as a hindrance to successful strategy implementation. Of concern is the process of approving finances that is too long and tedious and sometimes results to activities being overtaken by time while others are not being accomplished at all due to delays.

The chief officers who are departmental heads acknowledged that they were involved during the formulation of the strategic plan 2010-2014. The targets for the year 2010 alone were reported to have been achieved up to approximately 60%, according to those interviewed.

For the purpose of operationalization, the council has a strategic plan covering period 2010 - 2014. This has been cascaded into departmental work plans to be achieved on an annual basis. The council goes further to include the annual target in the annual performance contract, as required by the government.

The study however revealed that some department do not have an annual work plan. Only the engineering department had a work plan for the year 2011/2012. The others were claiming that

they were in the process of making one. Lack of such plans would greatly hamper the operationalization of the strategy as the departments which are the implementers would result into haphazard operations.

The study reviewed that institutionalization of the current strategy is on course. It was found that a good number of the staff especially a senior staff have embraced the strategic plan, although there is an uphill task of educating the low level staff on the same. The council is working on the same by sensitizing the staff on the strategic plan and quality customer service delivery. This stems from the lessons learnt in the lapsed strategic plan running between 2005-2009 that had been met by numerous challenges. The staffs of Municipal Council of Thika were not aware of what is a strategic plan by then since it was the first one in the council. This was coupled by the lack of understanding of the importance of strategic planning to the council. In this regard most of strategies were never implemented.

4.3 Overcoming Challenges in Strategy Implementation

The second objective sought to establish the measures that Municipal Council of Thika has taken to overcome the challenges in strategy implementation. During the formulation of the strategic plan 2010-2014, the Council engaged an external consultant who guided on the process. This was aimed at ensuring that the weaknesses that were prevalent in the previous strategic plan were not repeated. The study revealed that this time round, the process of formulation was an all inclusive.

The departmental heads, senior officers, civic leaders, who are the policy makers and other stakeholders were all included in the process. This brings in an aspect of ownership and commitment of the stakeholders during implementation. It is believed that this is positive gesture towards collaboration between various departments.

Consultation with the local leaders and the public representatives enabled the Municipal Council of Thika to identify the local needs and in turn come up with effective strategies that would address citizen's needs.

The study revealed that the Council in the past one year has engaged in recruitment of qualified staff in some departments. This has been done in the planning and engineering departments, where they have employed a qualified officer in each department. It was reported that this exercise will continue in other departments with an aim of enhancing capacity. It is however worth nothing that, this is still far below the expected capacity as most departments lack capacity due to shortage of staff with the necessary qualifications.

It was also reported that the Council is in the process of drafting a training policy that will be implemented after conducting a training needs assessment. The policy will define a continuous program of training staff in all the departments.

The study findings revealed that the Council has adopted a sensitization program that aims at explaining the civic leaders on their role as policy makers and not policy implementers. Already induction training has been held to educate the civic leaders on their mandate and their limits as far as running the Council is concerned. This is aimed at reducing the level of political interference on issues of management especially on strategy implementation.

To enhance proper leadership skills, the management has included all departmental heads and their deputies as members of the performance contract secretariat. This ensures that the annual targets proposed in the performance contract, are in line with the strategy of the Council and the annual work plans. It also minimizes situations of un budgeted activities being included as part of the performance of the Council.

The study revealed that due to the spillover of the projects from one year to other as a result of in adequate capacity, the Council has adopted outsourcing of some activities, especially projects, to external contractors. Some projects like, roads repair, construction of social infrastructure for example public toilets, has been outsourced and this led to successful implementation of the planned projects in the year 2010.

The administration department has initiated an ambition plan to change the organization culture and make the staff to embrace the culture of customer focus and quality service. In pursuit of this, the Council has developed a customer service delivery charter, which has even been translated in Kiswahili. The charter has been assimilated and cascaded down to departmental level. This is aimed at making each and every member of the Municipal Council of Thika to feel part of the family and more so to embrace the culture of quality service delivery to the residents.

The staff have also been sensitized that the council is under performance contracting which is in line with the targets in the strategic plan. They are therefore expected to work towards achievement of these targets.

Prudent management of finances is important if the council is to achieve the intended objectives. The officers interviewed reported that measures have been taken to effectively manage finances. The management has agreed on strict adherence to the budget, in order to avoid unplanned activities deviating funds, resulting to financial crisis. There is continuous exercise of identifying community projects jointly by the council and the local residents. This has resulted to prioritization of feasible projects that the council can manage. It has also minimized the tendency of the locals expecting too much from the council, even what is beyond its ability, as they are able to understand the council's financial position and mandate.

4.4 Discussion

The findings of the study are in line with the literature provided that strategy implementation is the most challenging aspect of strategic management. Shah (1996) denotes that implementation tasks puts to test the strategists' ability to allocate resources, design structures, formulate functional policies and take into account the leadership styles required, besides dealing with other issues.

Most of the challenges facing Municipal Council of Thika are internal namely; poor capacity, internal politics, financial management, poor collaboration among others.

Other external challenges include; external politics, economic situation, customer expectation among others. These findings do concur with previous studies done; Aosa (1992) in his study on empirical investigation into the aspects of strategy formulation and implementation within large, private manufacturing companies in Kenya, found out that various organizations encounter implementation challenges due to uncontrollable environmental factors, in adequate resources and poor coordination of implementation tasks;

The Council is also challenged by its structure which is too bureaucratic, unsupportive culture in addition to having staff who lack the necessary skills. The findings are in line with the study by Machuki (2005) on challenges to strategy implementation at CMC Motors Group limited. His findings revealed that most of the challenges affecting the company were internal including; un supportive structure and culture, resistance to change, unsupportive processes and procedures, in adequate skills among others.

These findings concurs with other studies done previously; Koske (2003) in his study on strategy implementation and its challenges: the case study of Telkom Kenya limited, revealed a number of challenges in strategy implementation including; un supportive organizational structure, poor leadership, mismanagement of resources and financial constraints.

Wanjiru (2008) study was on challenges faced in strategy implementation; a case study of Jomo Kenyatta foundation. Her findings also revealed challenges emanating from sources both internal and external to the organization namely; competition, inadequate resources, failed structure and external politics. The challenges also depend on the context of the organization. However for successful implementation of its strategy the Council must address both sources of the challenges.

Johnson and Scholes (2002) argue that positions of authority and responsibility are important in strategy implementation, but also important are the people in those positions. Municipal Council of Thika has taken measures to enhance leadership skills of the middle level managers by

ensuring that they have been put as members of performance contract secretariat, whose targets are in line with the strategy of the council.

The research findings are in line with the researcher's expectations that, the council being a public entity will encounter challenges in strategy implementation that are common to other institutions. These include; resource constraints, un supportive structure, un supportive culture, among others. The researcher also expected some challenges to be unique to the council due to its nature. Political interference in the running of the council was reported as a unique challenge that is aggravated by the council set up.

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

Strategy implementation involves a process of converting the formulated strategies into viable operations that will yield the organizations targeted results. Strategy implementation being an important process is a challenging task for many organizations. The objectives of this study were to establish the challenges faced by Municipal Council of Thika in strategy implementation and also establish the measures taken by the Council to overcome the challenges. In this chapter, the research findings are summarized and conclusions drawn. Limitations encountered in the course of the study are highlighted. The chapter also includes recommendations for policy and practice as well as suggestions for further research.

5.2 Summary

The first objective of the study was to identify the challenges faced by Municipal Council of Thika in strategy implementation. The study findings were that numerous challenges from both internal and external sources affected strategy implementation. The findings also revealed that some challenges were unique to the respective departments, while were prevalent across the board.

Major challenges encountered by the council include; lack of qualified and competent staff, unsupportive organizational culture, unsupportive organizational structure, financial constraints, implementation delays, unanticipated obstacles arising during implementation, political interference by the local politicians, too much expectations from the public, lack of clear policies.

Changes in the macro-environment were also highlighted as a source of challenges to strategy implementation. This includes; high inflation rate, rise in the cost of living and government policies. These have resulted into rural urban migration as people seek for jobs and in turn the council is faced by a huge number of citizens increasing day by day who need its services. On the other hand, the same citizens have too much expectation from the council that is far beyond its ability.

The second objective was to identify measures that Municipal Council of Thika has adopted to overcome those challenges. The research findings indicate that the council has indeed tried to establish measures to overcome the challenges. Although the measures appear to be in adequate, it is a positive gesture towards the right direction in addressing the challenges faced in strategy implementation.

The council has embarked on gradual recruitment of qualified staff in departments that are adversely affected by lack of capacity. The council has also strengthened its financial management systems to ensure that finances are properly managed, right from collection, banking and subsequent expenditure of the same.

The management has initiated an exercise of sensitizing the staff on customer service with an aim of developing a culture that embraces collective responsibility on strategy implementation. The council has educated the local residents on its mandate and responsibilities and this has made them to know what their expectations towards service delivery are.

5.3 Conclusion

The overall findings indicate that Municipal Council of Thika has faced challenges in strategy implementation that emanate from sources both internal and external to the organization. The findings indicate that Municipal Council of Thika is experiencing challenges associated with its structure that comprise of administration and civil wing. This kind of structure is un supportive, organization culture that is un supportive also, lack of adequate capacity in terms of skills and competence which is cutting across the board, financial constraints, customer expectations, political interference in the management of the council among others.

The council has put in place or is in the process of putting measures that address the challenges experienced in strategy implementation. Recruitment of qualified and competent staff is on the process, induction of the civic leaders on their role is on course, gradual reinforcement of a supportive culture has been initiated by the management among other measures. It is still however evident that although the council has put up measures aimed at addressing the challenges it appears that the measures are in adequate considering the extent of the challenges.

The council needs to undertake a critical analysis of the challenges faced in strategy implementation and aggressively address them comprehensively. This should be in line with the recommendations given which are supported by the existing literature and other empirical evidence reviewed. Only then will Municipal Council of Thika will successfully implement its strategy with manageable challenges.

5.4 Recommendations for Policy and Practice

For the council to effectively address the challenges faced it requires to critically analyze its failures and challenges and address them comprehensively. Municipal Council of Thika ought to realize that, successful strategy implementation is only possible if the people involved have the right and relevant skills. To achieve this, the council needs to establish a human resource strategy that will clearly define issues of recruitment, motivation, training and development, staffing and performance management.

The council should initiate a continuous training program for each department based on training needs priority. The management should appreciate that knowledge and skills are an important aspect in determining the out put an individual will give. Right placement of individuals in jobs is also important if the staff is to be more productive and develop his career.

Resources meant for strategy implementation should be properly catered for in the budgets. The budget should be used as a tool of control. Means should be devised to achieve collection of the intended revenue, for example the council; should come up with revenue enhancement plan that will see it boost its revenue rather than sit back and complain of financial constraints. The council should exhaust all the areas that it can potentially collect revenue, and even identify new sources. Strict measures should in turn be laid down to ensure that the revenue is used for the intended purposes. The finances should be properly allocated to the functional units in line with the approved budget.

The management should organize frequent forums where they sit with the civil leaders and educate them on their mandate and limits. The management should also ensure that in the

formulation of the strategic plan and annual work plans the civil leaders are involved and informed so that they own the plans and support the administration wing in implementation. The senior management should enhance their leadership skills through training as this will give them an upper hand in handling management issues.

Organization culture dictates a lot on the successful implementation of strategy. The management should be proactive in embracing the appropriate culture. They should be a leading example to the rest of the staff. In addition to sensitizing the staff on customer services delivery charter they should organize workshops regularly that will assist in transforming the workers attitude gradually until they all embrace the new culture. The culture should be instilled in the entire Council rather than appear to be imposed as that is the only way everybody can own it.

5.5 Limitations of the Study

Limitation for the purpose of this study is considered as a factor present in the study that makes the researcher get inadequate information, or that could have contributed to the researcher getting different information if the research was conducted in a different situation. The study was designed as a case study. Only the senior managers of the council were interviewed. These were considered as the number that represents the feeling of the rest of group in the council. The small number may reduce confidence in the results and hence limit generalizability of the results.

The interview was limited to the senior officers of the council. These are officers who are involved in the management of the council directly. Their role is policy implementation for the smooth running of the council. The civic leaders on the other hand are the policy makers for the

council. These were not interviewed although they indirectly affect the running of the council and hence are major determinant in the strategy success.

5.6 Suggestions for Further Research

There is need to undertake further research on strategy implementation in public entities especially in local authorities. The findings of this research can be considered as inadequate given that there are a hundred and seventy five local authorities in Kenya. This study being a case study, there is need to conduct a cross sectional study to establish whether the challenges encountered by Municipal \Council of Thika in strategy implementation are the same in other councils.

A replication of this study should be carried out in future, to determine if changes on issues of strategy have taken place in Municipal Council of Thika and other local authorities, especially now that the local authorities are converting into county governments. The study should involve a wider group including the councilors and other stakeholders in addition to the management.

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Appendix i: Letter of Introduction

Gakahu W Thomas
School of Business
University of Nairobi
P.o Box 30197
Nairobi.
30th August 2011.

Clerk to Council
Municipal Council of Thika
P.o Box 240
Thika.

Dear sir,

Ref: Request for Research Data

I am a post graduate student pursuing a degree in master of Business Administration at the University of Nairobi. As one of the course requirements, I am supposed to carry out a research project in the area of Strategic Management. In this regard, I have chosen Municipal Council of Thika as a case study on challenges of strategy implementation in local authorities. I intend to collect data through interview. I am hereby requesting your office to allow me to undertake the research in your organization. The information gathered will not be used for any other purpose other than for this Research. I look forward for your positive response.

Yours faithfully

Gakahu w Thomas

Appendix ii: Interview Guide

Town Clerk

1. How long have you been in the council?
2. How would you describe the council in terms of level of strategy implementation in accordance with the strategic plan?
3. Do you think the council has adequate resources that are needed to facilitate successful implementation of strategy?
4. What practices have you adopted to ensure successful execution of strategy?
5. How do you describe the relationship between administration wing and the political wing as far as strategy implementation is concerned?
6. What is your comment as regards to overall organization culture in terms of its support to strategy implementation?
7. As the CEO of the council, what challenges do you face in implementation of the overall strategy of the council?
8. What suggestions would you give that will help the council minimize or avoid those challenges?
9. Is there inadequacy of any resources such as funds, Human resources, skills that are adversely affecting your effort to implement strategies?
10. To what extent is each of the above problems to the current strategy implementation? How is organization coping with the issues? What measures have been taken to mitigate the impact of this problem?
11. To what extent is strategy implementation affected by:-
 - a) Key formulators of the strategic decision not playing an active role in implementation?
 - b) Overall goals not sufficiently understood by employees?
 - c) What is the council doing to eliminate or minimize the effect of these issues?
12. In your opinion would you say that the existing policies, guidelines, procedures rules and administrative practices pose any challenges in facilitating strategy implementation?
13. Are there uncontrollable factors in the external environment that have adverse impact in strategy implementation?
14. Are there other challenges that the council is facing in the implementation of strategy?

15. What is the council doing to cope with the challenges you have described?
16. Please give any other comment that you may have regarding the subject of this research

Municipal Treasurer

1. What role does your office plan in the councils strategic planning?
2. Do you have in place documented financial strategies?
3. Does the council have a financial management system that ensures proper utilization of funds, accountability and monitoring which are geared towards strategy implementation?
4. What action plans have you drawn that will facilitate achievement of strategies?
5. What challenges does your office encounter in the process of implementing the action plans?
6. What suggestions would you give that can help the council avoid or minimize the strategy implementation challenges?
7. Please give any other comment that you may have regarding the subject of this research

Principal Administrative officer

1. Does the council have documented HR strategies?
2. Are there action plans for implementing the strategies?
3. Does the council recruit staffs? Does it have a recruitment policy? Does this policy support strategy implementation?
4. Does the council conduct appraisal of staff? How does this assist in strategy implementation?
5. Does a council have a training programme for its staff that is continuous? How does it assist in strategy implementation?
6. Does the council have database of the current skills and competency? Is it updated to support strategy implementation?
7. Does the council have a reward system? How effective is it on supporting strategy implementation?
8. Are the other departmental heads in the forefront in providing leadership to facilitate strategy implementation?

9. What challenges are faced in implementing the documented action plan in your department?
10. Please give any other comment that you may have regarding the subject of this research

Town Planner

1. What is the role of your office in the council planning process?
2. Do you participate/involved in strategy formulation of the council?
3. Are the resources availed to your department adequate for the purpose of strategy implementation?
4. Are there major obstacles that surface during the implementation that had not been identified before?
5. What other challenges not mentioned does a council face in its strategy implementation exercise?
6. What suggestion would you give that would minimize the challenges?
7. Please give any other comment that you may have regarding the subject of this research?

Municipal Engineer

1. Does your office have an annual work plan that guides you in your daily activities?
2. Do you get support from top management when it comes to strategy implementation?
3. In your opinion is the council's structure supportive in terms of strategy implementation?
4. Do you think the resources availed to your department are adequate to facilitate successful strategy implementation?
5. Considering the organization culture of the council, do you find it supportive in terms of strategy implementation?
6. What are the specific plans has your department put in place to facilitate overall implementation of the council strategy?
7. Does the department have specific procedures that guide on implementation of its programmes?
8. Please give any other comment that you may have regarding the subject of this research

Thank you for your cooperation