

**THE INFLUENCE OF STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION ON
PERFORMANCE OF CISCO ACADEMY SUPPORT CENTER IN
KENYA**

BY

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DECLARATION

STUDENT'S DECLARATION

This research project is my original work and has not been presented for a degree at any other university

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SUPERVISOR'S DECLARATION

This research project has been submitted for examination with my approval as the candidate's University Supervisor

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DEDICATION

This is a special dedication to my mum, Mrs. Juliet Wambui Macharia, you have been a key source of encouragement for me throughout my coursework and you have taught me to be persistent in everything I do in life, thanks mum. To my son Leroy Macharia, for allowing mum to focus on her studies. To my brother Francis Macharia, thanks man, I would not have done it without your guidance as I did my research. To my mentor and friend Gratitude Kudyachete, thank you for the continued guidance. God bless you all.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ASC:	Academy Support Center
CSR:	Corporate Social Responsibility
I/O:	Industrial Organization
ICT:	Information & Communication Technology
KPI:	Key Performance Indicators
KRA:	Kenya Revenue Authority
LMS:	Learning Management System
RBT:	Resource Based Theory
RBV:	Resource Based View
SCA:	Sustained Competitive Advantage

ABSTRACT

Strategy Implementation is a process of turning strategies and plans into actions in an effort to achieve strategic goals and objectives. Organization of the resources of the firm and staff motivation with a view of attaining its objectives is involved. Organizational performance is the ability of the organization to achieve its goals by making use of resources efficiently and effectively. It is the organization's ability to attain the set objectives and goals. This study was carried out to assess what influence strategy implementation has on performance of Cisco Academy Support Center in Kenya. The study adopted a case study as it sought to analyse data based on responses from a few top management members who were interviewed using interview guides. The data that was obtained from the interview guides was qualitatively analyzed to derive findings, conclusions and recommendations. The results indicated that successful strategy implementation practices are vital and pivotal to the success of the company. These practices inform the company direction and ensure that the focus is directed. Good implementation practices lead to achievement of goals and the ASC is able to respond better to the internal and external environment. Further results indicated that employees and managers were fully involved in the process of implementing strategy. The study found that to ensure long-term successful strategy implementation there has to be ownership by all employees, the relevant resources have to be provided for and communication has to be done effectively within the organization. The strategic objectives that are set need to be realistic and aligned with the institution priorities. Collaboration with different departments needs to be enhanced to leverage off common interests where both can benefit from aspects flowing from strategy implementation. There has to be proper budgetary support from the institution and employees need to be equipped with project management skills. The study recommends that the ASC creates a higher employee involvement level in any further development of strategy and review to avoid a do not care attitude and failure to have ownership on the employees part who are the implementers. The ASC must also sensitize employees and involve them in capacity building activities to improve skill and motivate them to ensure participation by all employees. Further study is recommended on implementation of strategic management plans and their effectiveness on performance of ASC's.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

The process of turning strategies and plans into actions with a view of accomplishing set objectives and goals is known as Strategy Implementation. Implementation of an organization's strategic plan is as crucial as the strategy. The strategic plan is moved from a document that is placed on the shelf to activities geared towards driving the business growth. The action stage of the strategic management process is implementation of Strategy. If the overall strategy fails to work with the current structure of the business directly indicates that a new structure has to be put in place in the initial stages of this phase. There is need to appreciate the responsibilities and duties of all staff members and have an understanding of how the various roles contribute to achieving of the goals of the organization. Strategy implementation translates plans into actions with a view of achieving specific results. Successful strategy implementation is tested by checking if at all organization performance goes in tandem with the targets highlighted in the strategic plan. Weak strategy or weak implementation of the strategy may lead to failures in performance.

This study was founded on two theories; Industrial Organization (I/O) Theory and Resource Based Theory (RBT). Organizations use these theories for strategic inputs generation. These inputs are required for successful formulation and implementation of strategies and maintenance of strategic flexibility (Hitt, Ireland and Hoskission, 2005).

The organization external market positioning is viewed by the Industrial-Organization Theory (I/O) as a key factor to attain and sustain competitive advantage. A model for assessing competition within an industry in strategic management is offered by the traditional perspective of Industrial Organization Theory (Porter, 1981).

The Resource-Based Theory indicates that organization's competitive advantage is in the internal resources and not in their external environment positioning. Besides evaluation of the environment's opportunities and threats in the affairs of the business, the organization's competitive advantage is highly dependent on the uniqueness of the capabilities and resources of the firm (Barney, 1995). The resource-based view of the firm has a prediction that competitive advantage of the firm coupled with superior firm performance can be generated by the resources that are owned and controlled by firms. (Ainuddin et al., 2007).

This study aimed at checking the Strategic Implementation influence on the Cisco Academy Support Center in Kenya's performance and to identify a pattern that can raise the implementation success and achievement of strategic goals already formulated in strategic planning. The study will focus on the ICT industry and specifically the Cisco Academy Support Center in Kenya.

Cisco Systems, Inc., is a multinational technology American company and has its headquarters in San Jose, California and is charged with designing, manufacturing, and sale of networking equipment. Society's Challenges are addressed by investing in scalable and self-sustaining programs that rely on technology.

Cisco Systems Inc., manages social investment programs and the focus is in areas where Cisco believes that its CSR arm can add maximum value while making noticeable and lasting impact. A Cisco Academy Support Center has officially been recognized by Cisco Systems Inc. It has the mandate of offering support and guidance to academies as they join the Cisco Program and make progress continuously. Cisco Academy Support Centers operate in the ICT industry in which competition takes place and with similar services.

It is therefore critical for Cisco Academy Support Centers to understand their recourses and the forces that shape industry competition. Developed strategy must be successfully implemented. It is therefore worth noting that the greatest difficulty that today's organizations face is not formulation of strategy but its implementation (Blahova et al., 2011).

1.1.1 Concept of Strategy Implementation

Strategy implementation can be said to involve the allocation of resources to support the strategies that are chosen. Various management activities required to get strategy in motion, put in place strategic controls for monitoring of progress and consequently achieve organizational goals are included. Steiner (1979), has indicated that the process of implementation covers the whole managerial activities which also includes issues like compensation, motivation, control processes and management appraisal. Higgins (2005) indicates that nearly all the functions of management – planning, controlling, organizing, motivating, leading, directing, integrating, communicating, and innovation – are applied in the process of strategy implementation.

Some of the factors that are critical to the strategy implementation process include mechanisms like information systems, styles of leadership, key managers' assignment, budgeting, rewards and systems of control (Pierce and Robinson, 2009). Organizations have been seeking to have greater flexibility within the organization as a response to turbulence within the organization by changing from hierarchical structures to those that are more modular (Balogun and Johnson, 2004). Decentralization has been witnessed through responsibility within the organization, firm resources and power.

In a competitive environment, it is assumed that the crucial determining factor in the success and survival of the organization is successfully implementing marketing strategies (Chebat, 2009). Close scrutiny is given to the employees in these new restructured organizations, the mid-level managers, who are charged with duties of strategy implementation.

Strategic Management researches have given a huge level of importance to the process of strategy formulation while viewing the implementation of strategy as just a byproduct or end result of the planning process (Wind and Robertson, 2003). This area has seen insights been achieved which have an effect of interfering with our strategy development knowledge with the reality of execution of what has already been crafted (Olson et al., 2005). Valuable insights in strategy implementation are generated by taking a broad view, regardless of the multifaceted and complex organizational process of this stage of strategic management process.

Strategy Implementation creates a problem due to the success rate of the strategies that are intended. Studies that have been researched indicate that it is at 10% (Judson, 2001). Despite of having this record, strategy implementation does not appear like a popular topic. Sometimes implementation is mistaken as a strategic afterthought and an approach that is purely top-down. Management seems to focus all its energies on strategy formulation. Bourgeois and Brodwin (2004) have classified research emphasizing strategy implementation as being part of studies that are proposing structural views as being enabler's that are critical for strategy implementation success.

(Noble and Mokwa, 2009) have indicated that interactive procedures and issues are necessary to any market implementation of strategy effort. Generalizations have hence been advanced by encouraging firm members to involve themselves early in the strategy process (Hambrick Cannella, 2009); perform an identification of adaptation and adjustment processes (Drazin and Howard, 2004) and do an observation of style and structure of leadership (Bourgeois and Brodwin, 2004). Overall reduced organizational performance is brought about by poor strategy implementation.

Therefore apart from developing strategies, every organization must ensure that such strategies are effectively implemented for it to remain competitive in the current era where competitiveness is very high. In a nutshell therefore, it can be stated that, strategic intentions are connected with strategy implementation and facilitate its existence. Customer satisfaction coupled with employee satisfaction and increased profits are all a result of firms that focus on perfecting the relationship between strategy and implementation (Beaudan, 2001).

1.1.2 Challenges of Strategy Implementation

The implementation of Strategy of Chinese Corporations white paper written in the year 2006 has indicated that implementation of strategy has become “the most significant management challenge which all kinds of corporations face at the moment.” According to the results of the white paper 83 per cent of the companies that were surveyed did not implement their strategy smoothly. A paltry 17 per cent had the feeling that their strategy implementation process was consistent (Li, Guohui, & Eppler, 2008).

According to Alexander (1985) there are two major obstacles to strategy implementation that is inadequate planning and communication. According to Marx (1991), hindrances of effective strategic planning have to do with the process of planning, business plans content and with process of rewards that is essential for the successful strategic plan implementation. Some of the causes of hindrances to effective strategic plans which depend on each other and are mutually reinforcing include; lack of commitment from top management, control of staff, instilled self-interests and corporate culture (Marx, 1991).

According to Nunes, the obstacles of implementation faced by most companies can be categorized into two: problems that affect the company internally and those that occur due to external forces within industry. The outside forces according to Michael Porter (1979) include: threats of new entrants, the bargaining power that buyers have, threats caused by substitute products or services and the bargaining power that suppliers have.

Hassanpour and Gorji (2007) have indicated that implementation of strategy that is successful depends on the strategy, structure and processes (Hansen, Boyd et al, 1998). According to Lebowhl, Clark, in order to have a strategy that is implemented in a successful manner, the organization's culture and structure need change (Lebowhl, Clark et al, 2007). Alexander has indicated that several leaders of organizations and managers disagree with the uncertainty of the models of implementation of strategy and tend to look at the uncertainty from variety and big number of elements and processes in the models as causing the effective strategy implementation failure (Alexander. 1991).

According to Snow and Hrebiniak (1980), the route to effective planning of strategy is full of bottlenecks. Chances of plans failing are increased by the process taken to execute plans. Having people at the execution and formulation of plans also creates problems in the effectiveness of strategic plans. The execution of strategy has to do with change-responsibilities, objectives, structures, and being considered a threat, it is resisted. Failure to share knowledge, having knowledge that is insufficient, and having strategies that are not clear strategies are all considered to stifle effective planning of strategy (Snow and Hrebiniak, 1980).

According to Cascella (2002) business leaders mostly regard the vitality of planning of strategy but a few managers had the capability to ensure implementation of plans as they are due to enhanced emphasis on the process of formulation rather than implementation and to ensure actions are taken as stipulated by plans.

Hansen and Boyd have identified the difficulties of implementation as: failure to modify the plan periodically, moving away from objectives and lacking confidence in success achievement (Hansen, Boyd et al, 1998). Lau stated three major implementation levels of strategy which are: content, context and process. There exists a huge gap between knowledge of strategy of the top manager and whether they are able to use their knowledge (Lau, 1999).

According to Marx (1991); Al-Ghamdi (1998); Dyson and Foster (1980); Jones and Goldberg (1982); Hansen, Boyd et al (1998); Noble (1999a): The following are the major barriers to implementation of strategy; Lack of accountability, not having commitment from the management in the planning process, insufficient instructions to the employees, Influence and Power, Culture, inability to understand the role in the execution of strategy, moving away from the objectives that are planned, unclear changes in employee responsibilities, failure to reward people for the plans execution, insufficient instructions given by managers of departments, insufficient information systems in use, overall goals not well understood by employees.

1.1.3 Organizational Performance

Performance is viewed by organizational researchers as a contentious issue (Barney, 1997). Javier (2002) has indicated that performance complements the 3Es of Economy, Efficiency and Effectiveness of a program.

Daft (2000) has indicated that an organization's ability to achieve its goals by the efficient and effective use of resources is known as organizational performance. Organizational performance has also been defined by Ricardo (2001) as the ability of the organization to achieve the set objectives and goals.

Measures of performance may include behavior that is results oriented and measures that are relative, training and education, instruments and concepts, and also includes development of management and training in leadership, and these were the critical building skills and performance management attitudes (Ricardo, 2001). Hansen and Wernerfelt (1989) have identified two major factors that determine organizational performance. One is based on industry tradition, where there is emphasis on why external market factors are important in determining the organization performance. The other one considers the behavioral and sociological guidelines and views the organizational factors and the conformity with industry as the major determinant for success. A number of factors have been identified as affecting organizations performances, this include: inability to have the required resources when they are required or needed, poor communications, poor action planning, unclear accountability, among others.

1.1.4 Challenges of Implementation of Strategy and Organizational Performance

The strategy implementation role is conversion of plans into actions in order to get the results that are planned for. Successful implementation of strategy is tested by checking if actual performance of the organization has a match or exceeds the targets that are spelt out in the strategic plan. Any performance shortcomings may be a symbol of a strategy that is weak or an implementation process that is weak, or both. There should be an impact on performance on the expected dimensions depending on how effectively a strategy is implemented. Performance of business is used to examine various contents of issues concerning strategy and process.

Venkatraman and Ramanujam (1986) and Kaplan and Norton (1992) have undertaken discussions indicating that the evaluation of business performance measurement is done by delineating the concept of performance. According to their study, it was noted that the performance of business is a subset of effectiveness of the organization concept.

Researches by Venkatraman and Ramanujam have indicated that improved financial performance is key to strategy research. Just 63% of the expected strategy return is achieved through implementation of strategy. This is known as the Strategy-to-Performance gap and it shows that in most cases the issue lies with the implementation of the strategy and not the strategy itself.

Lack of knowledge by the employees regarding the company's strategy leads to failures in strategy implementation and hence poor financial performance. If the strategy implementation process is neglected the consequence is performance that is poor in the current strategy execution and in future formulation processes.

1.1.5 Global ICT Industry

Information Communication Technology can be defined as a system that is electronic based and involves information transmission and reception, procession of information and also retrieval. This has led to changes in how we think, live and in where we live. Globalization looks at a mixture of societal, political dynamics, economic environment and culture, and does not limit itself to financial markets only.

The revolution of Information and Communication Technology is a key globalization driver and is the change in all humanity areas. It is the current period of globalization of the ICT revolution's by-product. The system of telecommunication, the telecommunications and computer technology and its convergence into Information Technology, together with its parts and activities, stands out in its extended and complex format and is going through a fast and critical change. As a result, national borders between countries and continents are no longer important and the ability for transferring and processing information has increased exceptionally. Information communication and its global nature has been referred to as "the world's largest machine," and it is quite hard to capture and comprehend in the different subsystems of hardware parts and software.

Kofi Annan (1999) has indicated that "the Internet holds the greatest promise humanity has known for long- distance learning and universal access to quality education... It offers the best chance yet for developing countries to take their rightful place in the global economy... And so our mission must be to ensure access as widely as possible. If we do not, the gulf between the haves and the have-nots will be the gulf between the technology-rich and the technology-poor". ICT systems have continued to play a great part in firms and in the ability of the society to enhance production, accessibility, adaptability, and application of information. They have received praises as being the equipment for the post-industrial age, and the building blocks for an industry knowledge, because of their capability to enhance the transfer of knowledge and acquisition (Morale-Gomez and Melesse, 1998).

There has been global acceptance of these views, regardless of their location geographically and income levels difference and the nation's wealth. ICT may not be largely blamed for the changes being witnessed in today's business industry, but the fast ICT developments have contributed to the globalization wave currently being felt. The production and use of ICT plays a critical role in nation's ability to take part in global industry activities.

Besides enabling the acquisition of knowledge and its absorption, ICT can give developing countries an array of chances to review educational systems, amend the formulation of strategy and its execution of policies, and increase the business chances for the impoverished. It may also contribute to the learning process, networking of knowledge, knowledge coding, remote working and systems of science.

It could also contribute to the learning process, networking of knowledge, codification of knowledge, teleworking and systems of science. ICT could be used for global knowledge access and to facilitate communicating with other people. ICT is however available only on a very limited scale in major parts of developing countries and this causes doubts to be raised about their ability to take part in the global knowledge industry that is induced by ICT.

Concerns have been raised regarding the unequal distribution of ICT and the effect it may have regarding the poor countries marginalization as compared to countries that are developing, and to interference of the social mechanism. In conclusion therefore, the 'digital slavery' concept can be said to be inevitable to countries that are developing in the ICT field.

The visible gap in the availability and global use of ICT, and the influences of globalization, raise pertinent queries on if globalization involves uniformity for firms and societies in growing countries. Questions are also raised regarding how feasible and desirable the efforts to enhance ICT implementation through sharing best practices with western industrialized countries are to those that are growing and if firms can use ICT while considering the socio-cultural contexts requirements (Walshan, 2001). The Information and Communication Technology development is a global revolution. It is an area of great importance and is everyone's concern. Previous studies have indicated that the most profound effect of the ICT revolution will revolve around the equation of 'Digital Divide'.

1.1.6 The ICT Industry in Kenya

Information and Communications Technology (ICT) is a combination of computer hardware & software and telecommunications technology. It has been observed that ICT is the World's fastest growing activity economically and due to this sector, the country has become an increasingly interconnected network of individuals, organizations, schools and governments, continuously communicating and interacting together using various channels and enhancing provision of economic opportunities going beyond borders, languages and cultures.

The economy of Kenya has continued growing at an average of 3.7 per cent since 2000. The growth would have reduced to 2.8 per cent were it not for ICT and there would have been stagnation of per capita income. The first 10 years of the 21st century led to the growth of nearly a quarter of Kenya's GDP. The fastest growth in the telecommunication, infrastructure and mobile money innovations has been witnessed in a few countries with Kenya been ranked among the top five of those countries.

The penetration of mobile technology currently stands at 82.6 per cent in Kenya with subscribers totaling to about 33.6 million and this shows that the mobile phone has become a very important tool for changing lives. ICT plays a central role in our daily lives, handling challenges faced by Kenyans in general. Sectors such as finance, health, education, agriculture and the government are continuously embracing technology to share information, enhance delivery of services and effectively and efficiently reach their customers. The financial inclusion agenda has had remarkable results with two out of three adult Kenyans being included in the ecosystem of finance.

The growth of M-pesa in the country has caused a change in the business model of many financial entities in the country. About three-quarters of the access points for finance in Kenya are represented by mobile money agents and are a main driving force in ensuring that financial access points are brought nearer to the population. In the health sector, ICT has facilitated the provision of health tips and has also played a huge role in improving access by the general public to quality healthcare. In the procurement and distribution of medicine and medical supplies, ICT has played a huge role. It has also been used in monitoring and encouraging attendance of mothers at ante-natal and post-natal clinics and especially among pastoralist communities. In the education field ICT enables more children to have access to content to be used for learning affordably. There is huge growth potential in this area in facilitating education online and enabling massive and open online content.

Use of ICT has also been adopted in the agricultural sector. It is hugely relied on to monitor distribution of fertilizers and sharing of information to farmers regarding how they can increase farm produce and access markets through use of mobile devices. The ICT potential in driving the economy has been identified by the government and it has launched several ICT initiatives that are transformative. The launch of the Huduma Centres as one-stop shops with the objective of providing various services just show how ICT can be used substantially to improve delivery of public service. There is huge potential for growth in the digital economy, so it will be expected that ICT will be used in a big way to afford opportunities to the country's youth to be actively involved in the sector.

The demand for ICT know-how has increased in every country, in nearly every field, as people, process, data and things are continuously connected using the Internet of Everything. Workers are prepared to succeed in this increasingly networked economy by the Cisco Networking Academy. The development however faces many challenges, including infrastructure that is inadequate, high costs, inadequate skills, inadequate financing, global competition that has continued to increase, and IT Security problems. These challenges can be overcome to give room for Kenya to sustain and build on its position as one of Africa's top ICT hubs through the private sector and government participation through financing or technical assistance.

1.1.7 Cisco Academy Support Center in Kenya

Cisco Systems Inc., is a company that is headquartered in San Jose California and designs, manufactures, and sells networking equipment. There has been continuous investment in programs that scale well and are self-sustaining programs and which make use of technology to meet some of the biggest challenges faced by society. Cisco Systems, Inc. marshals their expertise, technological competence, partnerships and financial resources to help in building excellent and successful communities that lead to improved livelihoods among people supports the business of Cisco. The social investment programs run by Cisco focus in various areas where it is foreseen that Cisco CSR can add the most value and make an impact that is noticeable and lasting.

The Cisco Networking Academy Program is one of such CSR projects. This program builds the skills that employers demand by helping a million people each year in the development of the skills required to be successful in a job market that is led by networked connections, partnering with schools and business to cultivate talent through delivery of an unchanging curriculum to high school students, colleges set up within the community, universities and various other institutions in about 170 countries. More than 9000 educational institutions in the world run this program.

This is a truly international program as the same content is taught all over. The program's objective is to expose students to both theoretical and practical skills in a bid to prepare them for a job in the field of Communication Networking. Partnerships with local businesses help students in gaining work experience in the real-world and professional leads which contribute to ensuring that they secure jobs and lifelong careers. The impact is also multiplied since some graduates pursue successful ICT careers in various industries.

Cisco Systems Inc. has recognized the Cisco Academy Support Center (ASC) as an official entity that is created to offer support and guidance to academies as they join the program and progress continuously. The ASC in Kenya supports about 150 Cisco Networking Academies comprising universities, middle-level institutions, schools and community-based institutions in Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Rwanda, Ethiopia, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

The ASC, with its seasoned management and instructional team supports the Cisco Academies to: Monitor the Cisco Networking Academy Program, increase the program quality and increase success. The major roles of the ASC include: Remote consultation with the Cisco Academies aligned to it, monitoring and troubleshooting through the telephone, email, and/or other technology, physical visits for lectures, consultation or support, Access to Academy Support Center Information Portal, enhance access to training using TelePresence webinars, or presentations, Support with the continuation of Cisco Membership Agreement and the responsibilities described, Invitation to annual meetings to sharpen teaching skills and share new customer programs.

The ASC in Kenya also assists in navigation and set up of courses in the Cisco Academy Netspace LMS, Location of training or other services for Instructors, Provision of guidance on equipment ordering and constructing classrooms, tips on the use of Cisco Academy tools such as Dashboard. The ASC is able to identify the needs of the academies that are aligned to it, and to develop a portfolio of relevant services.

1.2 Research Problem

Mintzberg (1994), has defined implementation of strategy as the process of amplifying and understanding a new strategy in a firm. Galbraith & Kazanjian (1986) have indicated that this process involves developing new structures, processes and other organization alignments. Strategy Implementation is more crucial for the firm in comparison to strategy formulation. This is due to the fact that if the strategy is not properly implemented by the staff and management, the attendant costs and damages are likely to increase more as compared to strategy formulation failure.

Implementation of strategy is a phase in the planning and policy making process according to Kimble & Tight (2007). It is here that decisions are put into practice, allowing them to influence target group's behavior and affect the real world. Implementation has the capability of translating strategy into current operating decision Schellenberger and Boseman (1982). Factors that are considered during the process of strategy implementation are annual objectives, policies, resources allocation, management of conflicts, structure of the organization and management of resistance to change and the organization culture.

The Cisco Networking Academy is an IT skills and career building program for learning institutions and individuals worldwide. Above 5.5 million people have entered the Networking Academy programme and become a huge influence in global economy changes since 1997. More than 9000 institutions ranging from high schools to universities and organizations that are community based in 170+ countries have the Networking Academy course offerings in their curriculum. The efforts of Cisco Corporate Social Responsibility view it as the master program. Together, Cisco is building tomorrow's workforce. Academy Support Centers (ASCs) provide an important service to academies that join the Networking Academy. ASCs are leaders within the community who provide academies with guidance and ongoing support. When a learning institution becomes an academy, they may choose an ASC to provide operational support and services.

The Academy Support Center in Kenya has begun to get serious about strategic management practices because of the challenges it faces today. It must identify new ways to deal with the strategic issues that face it including increasing competition. One of the major steps that the academy support center can take to address the challenges faced in the enhancement of its competitive position is Strategic Management. This study is geared towards finding out the influence that strategy implementation has on the performance of Cisco Academy Support Center in Kenya.

Strategy implementation has been increasingly the focus of many studies both theoretically and empirically in the local and international contexts. Locally these studies include those done by; Nyika (2007), Magambo (2012), Okinda (2008), Wambugu (2006) among others. According to Papadakis et al (1998) there are various dimensions of grouping contextual factors: The decision perspective considers how the decision perspective is perceived by the organization members. It seeks to identify whether the decision is made in response to a crisis or an opportunity? According to Waldersee and Sheather (1996), there exists strong empirical evidence that supports this perspective's influence in strategy implementation. The strategic or management choice perspective considers decision makers' behavior and characteristics determine the decision. The perspective of corporate control looks at the type of the ownership of the organization. It seeks to identify whether it is a public or a private firm. It is important to consider the strategic context in strategy implementation.

The role of the management is to ensure that all staff members understand the vision of strategy, the themes of strategy and the role they play in delivering the vision of strategy. The expectations have to be clearly highlighted to all employees. Every employee should have an understanding of their functions within the strategy, the outcomes expected and how they are to be measured. According to Rapert and Wren (1998), organization where employees have access to the management throughout climates that are open and supportive have a tendency of outperforming those with more restrictive communication environments.

There is an indication that literature indicates that several studies have been conducted in various industries to identify the challenges of strategy implementation. However, few have been conducted with focus on the Cisco Academy Support Center in Kenya. There still exists a gap as far as strategy implementation in the Cisco Academy Support Center is concerned. In an attempt to bridge the gap, this research's focus will be on determination of the influence of implementation of strategy on performance in the Cisco Academy Support Center in Kenya. The research question will be; what is the influence of strategy implementation on performance of Cisco Academy Support Center in Kenya?

1.3 Research Objectives

This study's objective was to identify the strategy implementation influence on performance of Cisco ASC in Kenya.

1.4 Value of the Study

On policy, findings of the study can be expected to benefit various stakeholders. The Cisco Networking Academy can be guided in coming up with suitable strategies and management practices that can ensure profitability, survival and growth-going concern. Other related organizations can also benefit by assessing, evaluating and reviewing their strategic management practices as tools for competitiveness in the face of the changing business environment.

The study may also be invaluable to the managers for it can be a blueprint on how strategy should be formulated and implemented. The government can also benefit from the study in formulating policies and measures that would stifle strategic management of Cisco Academy Support Center. The study would be important to Cisco Academies in Kenya. It may help make them appreciate the role of the ASC in improving their performance. The study can also be expected to help the ASC in Kenya in understanding the challenges of strategy implementation and how they can be overcome. The scholars of strategic management may also get an insight of the process of strategy formulation and strategy implementation. This study can create an increase in the body of knowledge in the strategic management field in Kenya.

In summary, this chapter clearly describes the influence of strategy implementation on performance of an organization. According to suggestions by Bonoma and Crittenden (1988), the total abandonment of strategy implementation affects performance both in the current strategy execution and in future process of strategy formulation. If not discovered early, the continuous cycle of formulation-implementation-performance causes numerous trials at implementing a strategy that is mistaken. It then becomes difficult to identify if performance that is weak is caused by proper implementation of a strategy that is bad, or a poor strategy implementation that is good or working.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

Numerous studies, both empirical and theoretical have been conducted on strategy implementation and its challenges. Borrowing from literature that is existing, this chapter outlines the two broad theories on strategic management that is the resource-based model and the industry organization model which have relevance to this study. The strategy concept of strategy, strategy implementation and its challenges and organizational performance follow closely. This will include a discussion of some theories and frameworks in strategy implementation.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

For the purpose of this study, two theories on implementation of strategy are reviewed to form its conceptual basis. These are the resource-based theory and industrial organizational theory as explained in the proceeding sub-section.

2.2.1 Resource-Based Theory

The resource-based model views resources as key to superior firm performance. It emerged in 1980s and 1990s as an approach to achieving competitive advantage. According to this theory, firm's competitive advantage lies in their internal resources and not necessarily in their external environment position. The resource-based model indicates that organizations have resources, most of which facilitate achievement of competitive advantage, and also lead to long-term performance which is superior. Creation of competitive advantage can be enhanced by Valuable and rare resources.

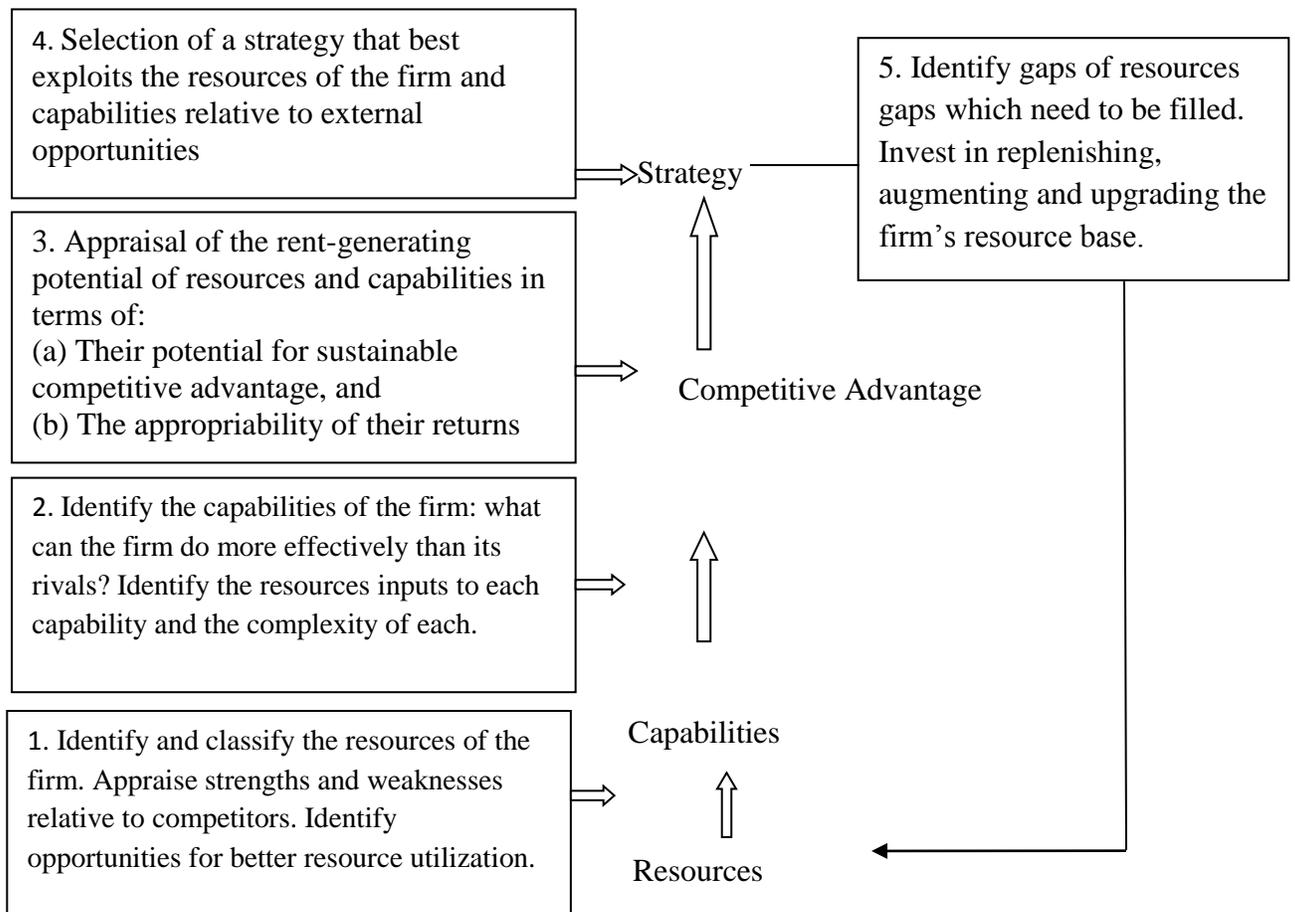
The competitive advantage can be sustainable over prolonged periods of time such that the organization has the ability to safeguard against imitation of resources, transfer or substitution (Barney, 1991). The resource-based view (RBV) predicts that some resources that belong to the firm have the ability to produce competitive advantage and consequently organization performance that is superior (Ainuddin et al., 2007).

The resource-based view (RBV) indicates that the resources of the firm are fundamentally the ones that determine competitive advantage and performance. Analysis of the sources of competitive advantage adopts two assumptions. Firstly, it is assumed that firms within an industry may be heterogeneous when one looks at the controlled resources. Secondly it is assumed that heterogeneity of resources is likely to continue for sometime since the resources that are used to facilitate strategy implementation within the firm are not perfectly mobile across firms.

Heterogeneity of resources is viewed as a critical condition for a resource impact competitive advantage. The heterogeneity that is assumed coupled with lack of mobility are insufficient conditions for competitive advantage that is sustained. According to Barney (1991), resources of a firm have to be valuable, rare and imperfectly imitable and sustainable with a view of having an impact on sustained competitive advantage.

Resources contribute to performance whereby as part of building competitive advantage, they add on to the capability of the firm to charge prices that are exorbitant, and therefore contribute to performance by helping the firm in identification of the value that directly relates to competitive advantage. Resources may enable the entry barriers installation and to raise industry level performance.

It is assumed that there exists a strong link between strategic resources ownership and performance of the firm (Coff, 1999). In the Resource Based View analysis, it is crucial to put into consideration the competitive environment of the firm and the bargaining power of employees. The firm's created and retained value is a function of the power relationships between different industry actors participating in the business (Bowman, 2001). Resource-based approach to Strategic Analysis is illustrated in figure 2.1



Source: Grant (2001)

Figure 2.1 Resource-Based Approach to Strategic Analysis: A Practical Framework (Grant 1991)

The RBV was developed to compliment the Industrial Organization Model and some of the proponents of this model include Bain (1968) and Porter (1979, 1980 and 1985). The RBV seeks the sources of Sustained Competitive Advantage (SCA) within the firm and endeavors to offer an explanation why organizations in the same industry environment perform differently. Hence the RBV is not meant to take the place of IO view rather it compliments it (Barney, 2002; Mahoney & Pandian, 1992; Peteraf & Barney, 2003).

2.2.2 The Industrial Organization Theory

Porter (1980; 1985) has exemplified the industry-based theory of strategy as turning the economics of industrial organization “upside-down”. This is considered uncompetitive and not socially desired in the neo-classical, economics of the industrial organization and forms the normative strategy basis that is competitive. Porter (1980) defined five forces which are external in nature, and that should be considered during the process of making strategic decisions and this include, new entrants threats, the power of bargaining by buyers and suppliers, substitute products threats, and the level of rivalry amongst existing competitors. So as to manage these industry forces, Porter proposed strategies including developing barriers to entry (e.g. product differentiation, promotion of favorable government policy), raising buyers switching costs and eliminating suppliers switching costs. Porter linked the strategies to the industry development evolutionary stages.

In light of this, this perspective's importance is that if dominant performance of the financial sector results from factors that are environmental, selecting the environment where to compete and/or changing the selected industries structure needs to be considered in strategic decision making. This means that in managing the competitive environment this approach is involved and not really about provision of value that is superior to customers. The Industrial organization view indicates that above-average returns for any organization are in a huge way determined by characteristics that are external to the firm (Hitt et al 2005). This theory is illustrated by Figure 2.2

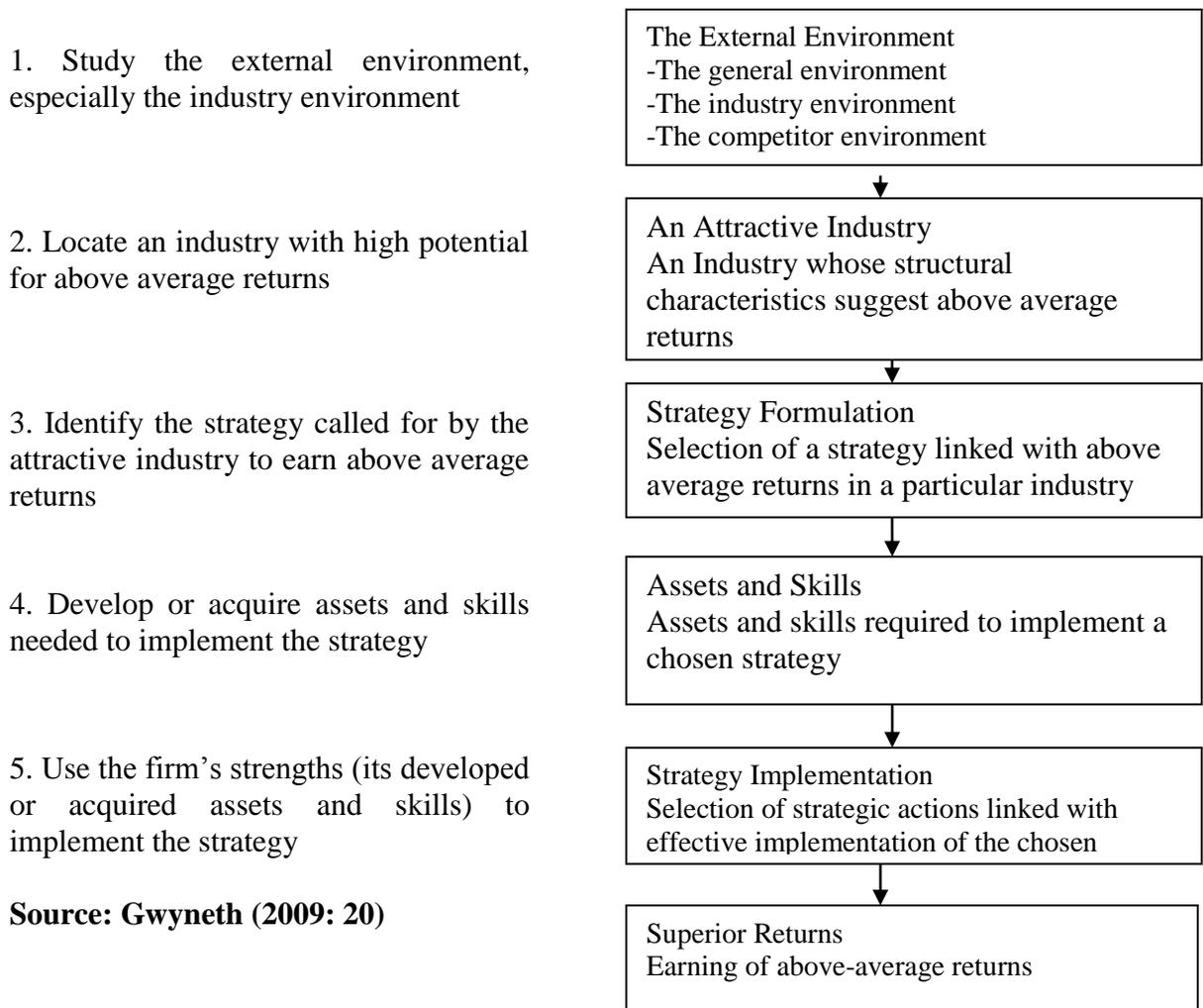


Figure 2.2: The I/O Model of Above Average Returns (Hitt et al 2005).

Industry Organization Theory has four assumptions: the industry environment creates pressures and constraints which have the effect of determining the strategies that are likely to have an effect of achieving returns that are above average. Many organizations that compete within a specific environment control similar resources and follow similar strategies. Strategy implementation resources are very mobile from one organization to another. The decision makers of the organization are rational and have a commitment to act in the organization's best interests.

According to Hitt et al (2005), the industry could explain 20% of the profitability of an organization, while 36% of the difference in profits could be associated with the characteristics and actions of an organization. The two models of the resource based view must hence be combined by executives and the Industry Organization model to develop an effective strategy. Companies that are successful are those that produce or get internal skills that are needed by the external industry.

2.3 Conceptualization of Strategy

The concept of strategy has emanated from military administration and it is noted that the word strategy comes from the Greek word strategos, "a general," (Mohamed et al., 2010) and this consequently originates from roots which mean "army" and "lead". Stratego is a verb in the Greek language meaning to "plan the destruction of one's enemies through effective use of resources." The strategy concept in a military or political context has seen prominence in history and has been variously talked about by writers. The concepts of strategy developed by these writers have been used many militarists and theorists of politics.

The importance of military strategy to strategy today within the organization is a divergent issue than the alternative origins of the term strategy. Planning of Strategy was a concept that was quite desired in the corporate world in the 1960s, and its focus was more on planning of budgets. Its popularity increased and it helped businesses in their market response and competitions by doing an assessment of their options and ensuring utilization of available resources in the 1970s. In the 1980s there was a reaction against planning of strategy and a shift towards strategy management where other than only putting a lot of importance on planning, and where there were resources for creation of competitive advantage. New strategic management paradigms were focused on (Bonn and Christodoulou, 1996; Wilson, 1998).

In 1990s, search of new paradigms on strategy management was the main emphasis (Bonn and Christodoulou, 1996; Wilson, 1998). Thompson & Strickland (1993) states that if there is no strategy, then there is no course that is to be followed, no roadmap to manage by and no clear plan to achieve the expected results. Further, they state that strategy is a management game plan for the business. Strategy provides direction on achievement of objectives. Objectives are referred to as the 'ends' while strategy is the 'means' of achieving them. The tool of management that is used for achieving targets of strategy is what is known as Strategy. Johnson, Scholes, & Whittington (2005) have summarized the strategy characteristic as the firm's direction and scope over the long-term, which has an advantage in an environment that is changing through configuration of resources and competences aimed at fulfilling stakeholders' expectations.

Strategy is a means within which an organization selects in order to achieve long and short term goals that face present and future situations. The strategy of a company consists of the moves that are competitive as well as approaches in business being employed by managers in business growth, in the attraction and pleasing of customers, successfully competing, conduct of operations and achievement of the targeted levels of organization performance, Thompson, Strickland & Gamble (2007).

According to Andrews (1971), strategy is a match between what a company is capable of doing within the reality of what it could do. This is accomplished by trying to match the company strengths and weaknesses with the company opportunities and threats. The process of determining basic long-term goals and objectives of a firm, and the process of adoption of courses of action and the assignment of resources that are needed to accomplish those goals. He views strategy as being about definition of goals and objectives as it is about provision of means for achieving them. Other approaches may be used by organizations.

Three models of strategic management were developed by Chaffee (1985); linear (or rational), adaptive (or learning), and interpretive (or cognitive). The process where organization functions and resources undergo integration and coordination with a view of implementing the strategies that are formulated and which have an alignment with the industry, so as to accomplish organization's long-term objectives and therefore gain a competitive advantage by adding value for the stakeholders is known as strategic management. (Ehlers and Lazenby, 2007).

The edge that an organization has over others is known as Competitive advantage. In order to achieve such a competitive advantage, it is important for the firm to meet the stakeholders need, and hence add value. For attainment of competitive advantage therefore, there has to be value added and this is achieved by the process of strategic management.

To support the value addition concept Ehlers et al (2007:2), Rowe, Mason, Dickel, Mann and Mockler (1994:2) have defined strategy management as, the process which firms make a determination of the value that is needed and addition of that value. This involves checking that the firm can cope effectively with the demands placed on them from inside the organization and outside. Chandler’s definition of strategic management was used for representation of the linear model. Here, the top managers are shown as being able to change the firm, either through decision making, identification of goals, methods used to achieve them and a decision on which decisions to implement (Chaffee, 1985). Table 2.1 illustrates the three models of strategic management.

Table 2.1: Three Models of Strategic Management

Variable	Linear	Adaptive	Interpretive
Nature of Strategy	Decisions, actions, plans integrated	Achieving a match	Metaphor Interpretive
Focus for Strategy	Means, ends	Means	Participants in organization
Aim of Strategy	Goal Achievement	Alignment with the environment	Legitimacy
Strategic Behaviours	Change markets, products	Change Style, marketing, quality	Develop Symbols, improve interactions and relationships

Source: Yii Teang (2004:12)

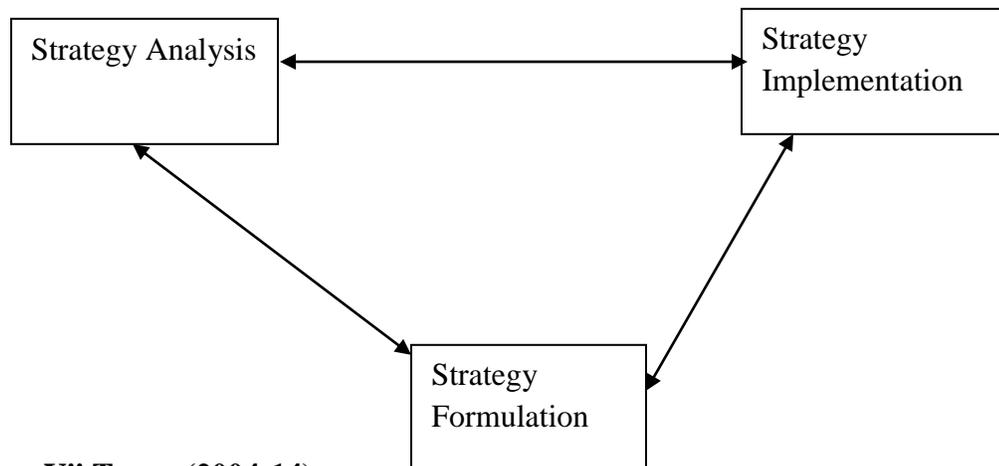
Mintzberg et al. (2002) see strategy as the set of company decisions that determine and reveal its aims, intentions or goals, outlines the principals, plans and policies for achieving the goals and gives a definition of the various businesses to be followed by the organization, the type of economic and human organization and the nature of the industry environment and non-industry environment contribution it plans to make to the shareholders, the employees, customers, and communities.

Strategy is therefore about defining goals and objective and providing the means for achieving them. Previously, studies regarding management of strategy provided a variety of definitions (Ansoff, 1991; Mintzberg, 1987, Whittington, 1993). Porte (1991) has described management of strategy as the process of configuring a collection industry activities that are discrete but interrelated. Comilius (1997) believes that management of strategy represents the ability of the organization to do an analysis of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats facing the organization. Developing the scope, the resources, the competitive advantage, synergy and Development of the scope, resources, competitive advantage, synergy and organizational flexibility creation enable firms to respond to industry changes.

According to Thompson and Martin (2005), strategic management that relies on success from the past and current period will not provide a guarantee of continuously prospering and succeeding. Organization which is constant and which involves learning widely, vision of the future, flexible strategy for delivery and teamwork when dealing with employees and stakeholders would help in sustaining prosperity and establishing a competitive advantage that is sustained. This can only be achieved if there is proper formulation and implementation of strategy.

The definition of Mintzberg et al. (1998) that management of strategy signifies the actions that are required in order to achieve the overall vision of the organization and to remain competitive tallies with the above definitions. Management of Strategy is a process that consists of three main stages – analysis of strategy, formulation of strategy, and implementation of strategy (De Wit and Meyer, 2004; Dess and Lumpkin, 2003).

There exists interdependence in the three stages as shown in figure 2.3.



Source: Yii Teang (2004:14)

Figure 2.3 Strategic Management Process

Strategy Implementation deals with the annual objectives establishment, together with policies, programs, staff motivation, and resources allocation in order to facilitate the strategies. In this phase, a determination of each employee and manager to work together with a view of converting the strategies into coherent actions is conducted by the strategists. The decisions that are conducted in this phase (David, 2008: 263) include: creation of an organizational culture that can sustain the strategy; creation of the budget for marketing; establishment of the budget for the company; development and use of the informational systems and the employees' salaries correlation with the company performance.

Managers are offered information by strategy evaluation that is valuable regarding how strategy has proven its efficiency. Managers compare the results with the established goals in the process' first phase. This is a very necessary step since actual current success of strategy does not guarantee future success. The dynamics of the external environment will be the determining factor in the context changes in which companies act. Strategy evaluation includes (Borza, 2008: 19): (1) the analysis of internal and external factors on which the development of the strategy has been done; (2) the assessment of the company performance and (3) implementing actions that are corrective. Formulation of Strategy consists of determination of the mission, goals, and objectives of the organization and selecting or crafting an appropriate strategy.

Strategy formulation involves a lot of research and decision making, and it is primarily a process to answer the question, “How are we going to accomplish our goals and get where we want to go?” Prior to asking this question, however, there has to be a determination of the goals and objectives. Crafting of the strategy can be viewed as an effort that is continuous in building directions, drafting a blueprint, or drawing a road map.

Various factors influence Strategy Formulation including: (1) evaluation of the organization’s internal and external environment (especially the future environment that is projected); (2) establishment of the firm’s predetermined mission and goals; (3) organization strategic policies or guidelines setting; and (4) Needs assessment including an assessment of values, and skills that belong to those developing the strategy. The same factors have an influence on the development of strategic objectives (Alkhafaji, 2003)

2.4 Challenges of Strategy Implementation in organizations

Implementation of strategy is more crucial to the organization than strategy formulation since failure to successfully implement the strategy successfully by the staff and management will be costly and damages are likely to grow more than the strategy formulation failure. The factors that lead to strategy implementation failure include: Feurer et al (1995) identified failure to communicate among the strategy makers and staff and of the firm. It can either be the complete lack of communication of not communicating effectively.

Jooste and Fourie (2009), have indicated that there are numerous organizations that have a number of strategies but because there is lack of commitment of the policy makers coupled with insufficient strategic leadership these strategies do not give results that are fruitful. According to Kalali et al (2011), other factors that have led to failure in strategic implementation include; failure to integrate, having goals and priorities that are conflicting, industry uncertainty, non-convergence, failure to properly manage teams, unclear target of success, among others.

2.5 Organizational Performance and Strategy Implementation

Making of strategy and implementation of strategy do not offer a guarantee of firm performance that is superior continuously. Well managed firms can occasionally hit the skills for short periods as a result of unfavorable conditions that are beyond the management's ability to foresee and react to the environmental changes. The responsibility of management is the adjustment of unfavorable conditions by putting in place managerial strategic defenses and approaches to overcome adversity. The criticality of making good strategies is building a position that is strong and flexible to provide performance that is successful despite the effect of external factors that are unforeseeable and unexpected. The task of strategizing is usually an exercise that is ongoing. "The whats" of an organization's mission and objectives that are long-term, once chosen, may remain the same for several years. But the strategy "hows" evolve constantly, partially as a response to an ever-changing environment.

The management of strategy process partially depends on the managers efforts to create new opportunities, and partially from fresh ideas regarding how to make the strategy work in a better way (Chaneta I., Strategic Management Process, Journal of Comprehensive Research, Volume 5, p. 18-19). Organizations adopt specific sets of key indicators of performance. The indicators analyse if the driving activities led to the results that were expected. Indicators of performance should follow critical factors of implementation which include: measurement of the necessary strategy execution time, organizational structure adequacy, organizational culture adequacy, resources planning and leadership.

It is critical to apply quantitative and qualitative indicators. Measuring of organization performance by using indicators has moved through various distinct phases (see Doyle 1995). Firstly is being their use as a mechanism that allocated resources in the late 1960s; moving through using them as an input information source into decisions of funding and assessing of national priorities achievement in the 1980s; to distinctively shifting in their use in the 1990s for assurance of quality and control mechanisms.

2.6 Emperical Studies and Research Gaps

Various studies have been conducted to study the influence of strategy implementation on performance. Different scholars have explored the factors that affect strategy implementation and performance in various organizations. Several studies support the assumption that changes in strategy can cause higher levels of performance. There is also moderate support for the notion that extra financial resources leads to higher performance levels, Boyne (2003).

According to Maringa (2008), investment in ICT at KRA significantly influenced revenue collection and tax compliance thereby concluding that there exists a positive relationship between strategy and performance. A change in the business environment is a reason that the elements which relate with strategy implementation which were initiated by Mintzberg (1994), are still highly important from the point of view of the effective strategy implementation.

In the strategic management concepts suggested in the literature, there is a collision two main trends, where focus is placed on the competences and resources exceptional importance - as the factors determining the strategy, and on the imperative principle of adapting to changes in the environment (Prahalad, Hamel, 1990; Collins and Montgomery, 1995), which is still opposed.

According to Thompson and Strickland (1998) many organizations adopt one of several strategies that are generic in nature to display their delivery of service approach to the community served by them. The organization strategic orientation is seen here as a holistic statement. The basic direction for strategic actions is provided by grand strategies. Many academics have continued to appreciate the central role of business processes in improvement of performance. Kaplan and Norton's book "Strategy Maps: Converting Intangible Assets into Tangible Outcomes" puts the processes of the business at the centre of their approach of measurement of the firm progress in implementation of strategy (Spanyi) 2004.

There was need to stress the fact that in a process of moving to a process enterprise, hence, managers need to carry out an analysis for determining the aspects of process performance that are most directly linked to achievement of the overall objectives of the organization (Hammer and Stanton, 2001).

In summary, this chapter describes the review of the literature of strategy implementation and performance. It describes the relationship between strategy implementation and performance and how strategy implementation influences performance within the Cisco Academy Support Center in Kenya. The formality of structure of an organization can strengthen the relationship between strategy implementation and performance of an organization. Beer and Eisenstat (2000) have described silent killers of strategy implementation. Managers confronting these killers instead of using avoidance or using techniques of replacing managers could overcome these killers and therefore become an organization that is capable.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the research methodology used in the study. A description is provided of systematically solving the research problem. It may be seen as a science of studying how research is done scientifically. It can be described as the architecture or the research framework layout. Methodology is the way of obtaining, organizing and performing analysis of data. The geographical area in which the study was conducted is described including the design study and the population and sample is given. A description of the instrument that was used to collect data, including methods implemented to ensure validity and reliability of the instrument are given.

3.2 Research Design

This study was a case study since the unit of analysis is biased to one organization that is the Cisco Academy Support Center in Kenya. This study was conducted with a view of getting detailed information regarding the influence of implementation of strategy on performance of Cisco Academy Support Center in Kenya. A case study emphasizes detailed analysis of the context of few events or conditions and how they relate. Researchers have used the case study method of research for several years across various disciplines. Social scientists particularly, have widely used this qualitative method of research for examination of real-life situations which are contemporary and provision of the basis for application of ideas and extension of methods.

The case study method of research has been defined by Yin (1984) as a scientific enquiry that investigates a phenomenon that is modern within its real-life context; when there is no clear evidence in the boundaries between phenomenon and context; and in which various evidence sources are used. Investigations are allowed to retain the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real life events. Social units are clearly observed. Data that is collected from such a study is usually more reliable and updated.

3.3 Data Collection

Primary data was used in this study. This type of data is original and is collected or obtained from a first-hand experience. Instruments like interviews where the person collecting data sits face to face with the respondent are used to receive the data first hand. The data collection instrument that was used in the study was the interview guide and this is a collection of questions asked by the interviewer when interviewing.

These vary from a highly scripted to relatively loose and helps to know what to ask about and in what sequence. An in-depth interview allows more interaction between interviewer and interviewee. This method needs to be put in consideration many times by researchers as it gives more information that is qualitative, increased depth, increased representation, continuous efficiency, more statistics, and more value.

In an effort to establish the strategy implementation influence on the performance of the ASC, top management, who are directly involved in Strategy Development were interviewed. This comprised of the Director of the company, the Finance Manager, The Human Resources Manager, The IT Manager, the Operations Manager and the Marketing Manager. The interview guides had open-ended questions (see appendices). Secondary sources of data were also employed by using previous documents or materials as a supplement to the primary data that is received from interviews.

3.4 Data Analysis

The complete interview guides underwent editions to check how complete and consistent they were. Data obtained from the interview guide was qualitatively analyzed. Data is analyzed qualitatively with a view of making generalized statements on the relationship between categories or themes of data. This kind of analysis will enable the researcher to describe, interpret and also criticize the subject of the research.

The qualitative analysis used content analysis. This kind of analysis was used to analyze the views of the respondents regarding the influence of strategy implementation on performance of the Cisco ASC in Kenya. Data coding then followed to enable grouping of the responses into different categories in order for the researcher to search for important information relevant to the study.

Qualitative research for this paper was conducted in the form of interviews. Qualitative research goes more into detail during the interview and hence is able to acquire stronger information. Interviews give the researcher an opportunity to meet people from practice and do a comparison of theory with practice and therefore obtain a deeper understanding. The research was undertaken to do a comparison of the important factors from theory and practice and also challenges, to get solutions that are developed in practice to the influence of implementation of strategy on performance.

This chapter in summary clearly outlines the methods that were used to carry out the research. Polit and Hungler (2003), have defined methodology as a way of obtaining, organizing and analyzing data. The geographical area where the study was carried out is described and at the same time the study design and the sample of the population is given. The interview guide, which is the instrument that was used for data collection is clearly described.. There is also a description of the methods that were implemented for maintenance of validity and reliability of the instrument.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS, RESULTS AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 Introduction

This section contains the findings and discussions on the data gathered to address this study. The study findings matched the objectives of the study; the influence of strategy implementation on performance of Cisco Academy Support Center in Kenya.

4.2 Response Rate

Information was gathered from top management staff at the ASC in Kenya who are the Director of the company, the Finance Manager, the Human Resources Manager, the IT Manager, the Operations Manager and the Marketing Manager who are familiar with the issue of strategy implementation and performance of the ASC.

4.3 Influence of Strategy Implementation on Performance of the ASC

This section provides the discussion of findings from the respondents on the influence of implementation of strategy on performance of the Cisco ASC in Kenya.

4.3.1 Findings of the Study

Responses from the interviewees indicated that to ensure long term successful strategy implementation within the ASC there has to be ownership by all employees within the company. If the employees are involved in the process they will assist the organization to gain competitive advantage, assist in defining the organization's business and also help in achieving the right direction.

The study also found out that the company gains by having its strategies constituted and by having employees accept them, thereby ensuring successful future implementation of strategy. Employees show exemplary performance if they feel involved by the management in the process of strategy implementation. They further stated that contribution by all employees in the strategy implementation process will ensure its success. Staff have to be integrated in daily operations. There has to be functional infrastructure.

The ASC in Kenya is able to position itself to both the internal and external industry environment to ensure there is continuous success and also safeguard itself against unforeseen situations which may occur due to changes in the external industry environment during strategy implementation. This positioning has been achieved by recruiting skilled personnel, with the relevant experience required for various positions and continuous training of existing staff. The ASC is positive that the current operating performance will be sustained in the future. The criticality of management competence in achievement of successful strategy implementation is the strategic choice made by top management. It shows the choices that have been made by other departments within the organization. The demographic characteristics of the strategic level manager should be checked for strategic decisions implementation.

The employees must comprehend all the important details in the intended strategy for the management. There has to be collective responsibility within the organization; the strategy must make sense to all employees in the company within their own context as well as the members of top management.

4.3.2 Factors Affecting Strategy Implementation

The stages of strategy implementation in the ASC are SWOT: making an analysis of the Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. Doing an analysis of the gap between the internal environment and the external industry environment. By doing an analysis the ASC is able to identify courses of action through scenario planning, and what is possible is chosen. If there is no cohesiveness and coordination of activities within the ASC, then things can really go wrong and the set strategies will not be successfully implemented. The right resources need to be put in place as well as having the right staff and incentivizing them so that the firm can commence implementation.

Implementation is then analyzed to see if it is being done as expected or as anticipated to see if the outcomes are actually what had been planned for, and the activities used during the SWOT are checked to see if there are any changes. The people involved in the strategy implementation process within the organization are top level managers, middle level managers and heads of departments and other employees. The plans of each level directly feed into the other levels; all employees in the organization depend on each other's efforts to attain success. Communication is a critical factor in the process of strategy implementation. Communication is done at various levels that is institutional; directly to employees, at a departmental level and at unit level. Good communication depends on the particular line manager.

Communication in the process of implementation of strategy at the ASC is playing a huge role as it acts as a vehicle for directing the attention of the employees on the value of the strategy that is selected and how it is to be implemented. The corporate culture of the company impacts the organization in that individuals within the organization must become vehicles of transformation. Developing and sustaining a transformative institutional culture that optimizes the full potential of staff is critical. Workshops should be conducted that address corporate culture to enable strategy implementation.

The corporate culture impacts effective strategy implementation at the organization through creating and sharing organization goals, acting as a role model, encouraging innovation, diversity, collaboration, community involvement and social engagement. The effect of organization members' involvement in the process of strategy on implementation of strategy that is successful is good performance at the organization. The employees require a combination of technical and interpersonal skills to succeed. They quickly and accurately perform their tasks and also relate well with customers.

The employees who directly deal with customers represent the organization and have a direct influence on customer satisfaction; they are marketers and are therefore careful with recruiting, training processes and ongoing mentorship of employees and can have a positive contribution towards productivity improvements in and also service quality. Staff motivation and creating an incentive structure is therefore important to ensure successful implementation of the set strategies.

Additionally also, effective leadership to drive the implementation process and commitment of employees to ensure total participation in the strategy implementation process. Cultivating strong cultural values to meet the ever changing needs of the organization. Requirements for a successful strategy implementation at the ASC are availability of resources, staff development and training, proper functionality of infrastructure, research building and integration of staff in daily operations.

The strategy implementation style in use at the ASC is a top-down approach. This leads to a number of challenges which include distance between what is strategized and the daily experience; strategic priorities being enforced since someone higher up needs to achieve their objectives; budgetary issues – at times budgetary support does not fully match the requirements; financial constraints; insufficient resources; poor communication. All the above factors affect strategy implementation and if they are not controlled then they will negatively affect the firm's performance.

The strategy implementation practices employed by the ASC include understanding the given strategy and committing to work on it, having an organization structure that makes implementation flexible, using an annual budget, having strategic plans and priorities, understanding customer expectation, marketing research and market segmentation. Customer needs and wants are broad and diverse and therefore a firm may not have the ability to serve a whole market for one specific service.

The market segment must be identified in order for the organization to shine in that area. It comprises of a large group which is identifiable in a market that has the same needs, wants and purchasing power. Service positioning is also used where an organization establishes and upholds a distinctive place for itself and what it has to offer in the market, it is said to be positioned in a way that it can succeed. The other factors leading to successful implementation of strategy at the ASC in Kenya are strong roles of management in implementation, communication effectively, committing to the strategy, having an understanding of the strategy, organizational systems and resources that are aligned, good coordination and responsibility sharing, capabilities that are adequate, and controllable industry factors.

4.3.3 Challenges of Strategy Implementation

Strategy implementation faces a myriad of challenges some caused by internal factors within the organization while others are caused by external environmental factors. The respondents indicated that there is usually a big gap between what is strategized and the daily operational experience of the people on the ground. Sometimes the strategic plans are drafted by the top management but no adequate follow-up is done to ensure that the strategies that are put in place are actually implemented. Strategic priorities tend to be enforced since someone higher up needs to achieve their objectives. Usually when this happens the employees will not fully participate in the implementation of the strategies.

The interviewees also cited the issue of financial constraints. Sometimes the budgetary support does not fully match the requirements. The budget is drafted but there may not be adequate finances to support the budget or the budget may be underestimated or overestimated. There may be an underestimation of the commitment, time, emotion and energy needed to deal with force in the firm and have a translation of plans into actions. Additional factors that were cited include failure to meet set targets on time. This may be caused by having conflicting priorities whereby employees may not understand what activity comes first.

Additionally, failure to advertise and market the organization adequately and regularly, well versed customers and the organization trying to manage competition in its environment and therefore hence losing focus of its strategy. Failure to develop and agree on metrics to be used to measure success is another challenge. Employees may also be resistant to changes that may occur from time to time within the organization. If some strategies are set and they appear not to be working for the business, there needs to be an overhaul of the strategic plan to ensure that the set plans work as they should.

During the process of changing the plans, some employees may resist the changes and thereby make implementation very complex. The process of strategy implementation therefore needs to be monitored through and through to ensure that it is working for the organization. Interviewees also cited the lack of adequate resources to facilitate the strategy implementation process.

The lack of adequate resources may lead to delays in strategy implementation, disgruntled and demotivated staff and inability to deal with the external environmental forces. Another challenge is having cultures and practices that are rigid. Any attempt to introduce a new way of doing things is rejected first hand.

4.3.4 Effect of Strategy Implementation on Organizational Performance

Regarding performance, the interviewees stated that to ensure optimal performance on the part of the employees within the organization they have to clearly understand their role in the implementation of the set strategies. Employees have to realize that failure to achieve the set targets by one department means failure by the whole organization. They stated that in order to evaluate how effectively a strategy has been implemented, progress needs to be analyzed.

Performance review is critical and it has to be done throughout. Implemented strategies need to be measured for success. To check the self sufficiency of departments, financial performance also needs to be evaluated. Customer service is also critical in ensuring optimal performance. If customers are satisfied, they will promote the organization by either getting more products or connecting the organization to other people. The ASC serves many countries that may not be homogenous and therefore the customers have to be satisfied. Adequacy of resources needs to be ensured also to maintain optimal performance.

On the question of checking that resource constraints do not affect the strategy implementation process and performance, the interviewees indicated that the strategy success needs to be independent of resources availability as much as possible and provide innovative options. Internal resources need to be evaluated for competitive advantage and they need to be prioritized on a needs basis and depending on the level of urgency. There also needs to be proper planning that is done from the onset to facilitate proper allocation of resources to the various departments. Innovation should also be encouraged in an effort of generating more resources. According to the interviewees, departments need to be repositioned an annual or bi-annual basis. Infrastructure also needs to be funded for.

On the question of ensuring that employees are fully involved in the strategy implementation process, interviewees indicated that performance management systems need to be used where staff KPI's (Key Performance Indicators) and objectives are directly linked to the departmental and institutional strategic priorities. Departmental strategic planning as well as holding regular staff meetings to appraise staff on their role in strategy implementation. Employee motivation is also achieved through recognition which is not always financial in nature.

If employees are motivated then they will definitely contribute to the implementation of the set strategies. Documents detailing the direction of the organization produced and special events held to promote activities related to strategy implementation. Feedback structure, bottom-up approach, company policies, standard operating procedures and strategic reports availed to employees during company events.

On the question of checking the efficacy of information systems to facilitate strategy implementation the interviewees stated that, members of staff need to be involved in system development to ensure the system is user centered. Information Systems need to be evaluated often to ensure adequacy in monitoring strategy implementation.

Implementers need to know the effectiveness of strategy implementation to avert loss of opportunities, untimely feedback and falsely reporting on the progress and ultimately failure. The IT department needs to understand the business side of what is being done. Instead of purchasing Information Systems, the organization should strive to develop information systems within the organization to support the achievement of strategic objectives.

4.4 Discussions of Findings

According to Okumus & Roper (199), great strategies do not have any worth if they cannot be successfully implemented. There is more sense in effectively implementing a second grade strategy than to ruin a first class poorly implemented strategy. According to Mintzberg, 1994; Miller, 2002; Hambrick & Canella, 1989, less than 50% of the strategies that are formulated get to the stage of being implemented. Whenever there is a failure of implementation, it means there is a failure in formulation. Obviously therefore, today's organizations view implementation of strategy as a key challenge.

The factors that affect strategy implementation can be categorized as style of leadership, information availability and accuracy, having uncertainty, structure of the organization, the culture of the organization, human resources, and technological advancements. Even if most authors concur with the fact that these factors affect implementation of strategy, the impact of each factor is at a different level and weighs differently. According to Lorange (1998) human resources are becoming the central focus of implementation of strategy and stressed that people, and not financial resources, are the major strategic resources in implementation of strategy.

This study agrees with the fact that so as to achieve successful strategy implementation, employee matters need to be taken care of. Issues of motivation and incentives have to be clearly defined. The set strategies have to be supported by both senior management and other staff members. There has to be coordination and cohesiveness within the organization. There is need to ensure continuous development of staff and training to ensure that the employees hold the skills required to facilitate strategy implementation. A training and development program which is comprehensive for employees helps in the deliberation of the knowledge, attitudes and skills that are necessary for achievement of organizational goals and also creation of competitive advantage (Peteraf 1993).

The study further established that all employees at the ASC take part in the process of implementation of strategy; from the director, to the departmental heads to the line managers and the employees, everyone has a stake. Performance management systems where staff key performance indicators and objectives are directly linked to the departmental and institutional priorities are used.

Documents detailing the direction of the organization are produced and special events are held to promote activities related to strategy implementation. Ownership within the company, size of the organization, technology dynamics and the structure of the organization are other features that have an influence on employee activities and performance of the organization and lead to successful strategy implementation within the organization (Fombrun, Tichy and Devanna 1984; Delery and Doty 1996).

On the role of how organizational vision, mission and key policies are communicated during the strategy implementation process, communication has a huge role to play in the strategy implementation process in the ASC in Kenya. Scott (2005), has defined communication as the process used to send, receive, and understand information and its meaning. He indicated that “receiving” and “understanding” are the most critical operations in the communication process, since the response of the receiver defines if the attempt of communication is successful or not. The study found that communication is done through emails, departmental meetings, reports, using the strategy implementation matrix, in walls and meeting rooms and through workshops with employees.

Proper strategic awareness communication can act cohesively and succeed in the connection of those with the sole responsibility for organizations with those directly involved in the implementation of policies. In every aspect of implementation of strategy, communication is important and is related to processes of organizing, context of the organization, and strategy implementation objectives which, in turn, impacts the process of strategy implementation and also facilitates on time feedback on the progress and challenges met in the process of strategy implementation. According to Nelson (2010), an organization's communication style directly relates to its growth. Therefore, a style that is based on communication that is clear and open cultivates trust and concern.

Through this study, it was discovered that in an organization where the communication is effective then all stakeholders including middle managers, whose role is critical and ensures that everybody has an understanding of success levels all the time, understand their key roles and responsibilities. On ensuring support staff involvement and participation in implementation of strategy in the organization, this study found that the ASC uses an integrated approach. Every staff member is viewed as contributing to strategy implementation in one way or the other. Employees are involved from the outset, at the strategy formulation level. Well motivated and positive support staff can ensure positive performance and success. Halepota (2005) has indicated that motivation is the active participation and commitment of a person to achieve the set objectives. There is no single strategy that is capable of producing guaranteed results that are favorable and different strategies produce different results at different times.

The ASC uses awareness workshops, news bulletins and broadcast information emails, organizes training seminars, to develop the knowledge of employees and to have their appreciation of multiple functional areas in the organization to ensure successful strategy implementation. Training has a connection to both corporate strategy and organizational performance: it must have an alignment to the organization strategy so as to yield high performance (Delery and Doty 1996). The ASC also visits different ASC's and the main Cisco center to gather adequate skills on how to manage the ASC, uses the bottom-up approach in strategy formulation and budget preparation so that everyone participates in the process right from the start, rewards extra remuneration for engagement in specific tasks, and ensures an integrated approach through representation from HR and finance at management committee meetings. Senior staff also contributes to the department's administrative burden by being a departmental representative.

“New entrants to an industry bring new capacity, the desire to gain market share, and often substantial resources.” (Porter, 1979, p. 138) Entry barriers limit the number of firms in the industry and hence influences the ‘Rivalry among competitors that are existing’ (Johnson et al., 2008). Hence on the issue of dealing with the threat of new entrants, the ASC has adopted these methods to counter that; it stays up to date with the relevant technology, it has defined the organization's market segment thereby building a good working relationship with the clients to ensure new entrants are not able to easily take the organization's market share, adjusts strategy vigorously in order to survive, lowers fees for service delivery and repositioning the organization.

On the challenges of strategy implementation at the ASC, some of the factors that were cited from this study include; the gap between what is strategized and the daily operational experience of the people on the ground being too big, strategic priorities sometimes being enforced since someone higher up needs to achieve their objectives, having too many conflicting priorities, financial constraints whereby budgetary support does not fully match the requirements, the budget may either be underestimated or overestimated, challenges meeting targets on time, difficulty developing and agreeing on metrics used to measure success, change management, sometimes employees may resist change, inadequate resources, cultural practices within the organization being rigid. According to Pascale (1984), firms for which a strong culture is important pay attention both to training of their employees and to recruitment. The company's corporate culture has to allow for growth of the employees and growth of the organization.

Other problems experienced during the process of implementation of strategy at the firm include poor planning, inadequate support, lack of involvement, lack of adequate knowledge on the key stages, improper coordination, lack of communication, strategic intentions that are not clear, failure to understand the strategy, organizational systems and resources that are not aligned, activities that are competing and environmental factors that are uncontrollable. Some of these problems that relate to strategy implementation have similarities with those identified by earlier research conducted by Alexander (1985) and Al-Ghamdi (1998).

The research further found out that the possible solutions to the problems of implementation of strategy at the ASC in Kenya include setting strategic objectives that are realistic and aligned with the institution priorities, ensuring that collaboration with different departments is enhanced to leverage off common interests where both can benefit from aspects flowing from strategy implementation, incentives for the employees to be more committed since some of them are largely seconded from other departments, proper budgetary support from the institution,

Having employees that are equipped with project management skills, institute communication channels with academies to allow for quicker interventions, availability of resources and consulting with the academies and supporting them through engagement with institutional management. The phase of strategy implementation needs an institutionalization of strategy which is, development of capability of the organization to a point where it fully supports the new strategy. (Burgelman, Grove & Meza, 2006), have stated that the actualization of strategy lies in its strategic actions and not in its strategic statements.

Summarily, this chapter discusses the results of the data that was collected from the interview guides. It outlines the responses that were gathered and interprets them for alignment with the goal of the study which is to analyze the influence of implementation of strategy on performance of Cisco Academy Support Center in Kenya.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

A summary of the study's findings are provided in this chapter. Conclusions are also drawn and thereafter recommendations given. The study's objective was to point out the influence of implementation of strategy on performance of Cisco Academy Support Center in Kenya.

5.2 Summary

The results found that successful strategy implementation practices are vital and pivotal to the success of the company, informs the company direction and ensures that the focus is directed, ensures that there is coordination and cohesiveness to ensure achievement of the set goals. These practices also lead the company to responding properly to the internal and external environment. Support by senior management and other staff members is critical to ensuring successful implementation of strategy.

The ASC in Kenya positions and relates itself to the industry in order to ensure its continued success and also safeguard itself from changes that occur as a result of the changing environment during the process of implementation of strategy. The ASC uses a combination of inspirational models and conventional models of strategic planning to ensure effective implementation of the set strategies.

Strategic and operational plans are reviewed from time to time during the implementation of strategy. The study also established that to measure the performance of employees, the balanced score card is used. The internal, financial and customer perspectives are checked to see if they align with the strategic objectives. The performance management system ensures that staff KPI's and objectives are linked to the departmental and institutional strategic priorities. A bottom-up approach is used to ensure that all the employees participate in the process of strategy implementation. Feedback structures are also put in place to get the views of employees on various matters.

Employee motivation is also encouraged and is achieved through recognition which is not always financial in nature. Documents detailing the direction of the organization are produced and special events are held to promote activities related to strategy implementation. Company policies, standard operating procedures and strategic reports are availed to employees during company events.

To achieve successful strategy implementation, resource availability is pertinent; strategy success depends on resource availability as much as possible and innovative options are provided with a view of generating more resources. Internal resources are evaluated for sources of competitive advantage within the company, resources are prioritized on a needs basis and depending on the level of urgency. Departments are also repositioned on an annual or bi-annual basis.

The formulated strategies at the ASC in Kenya are implemented through yearly operational plans which are monitored quarterly, by understanding the given strategy and giving commitment, designing the organizational structure in a way to make implementation flexible, using the implementation matrix, assigning specific tasks to employees and allocating appropriate resources, monitoring and reviewing progress at scheduled review meeting and following strategic priorities and plans.

Organizational performance is pertinent in ensuring successful strategy implementation at the ASC in Kenya. This is because strategy implementation affects all units within the ASC. If one unit fails, then the entire organization's performance is affected. Decisions at the ASC are taken at strategy level. Performance is used to measure the success of implemented strategies. Financial performance is critical at the ASC in Kenya since it is evaluated independently and must demonstrate self sufficiency. Customer service is also key since the ASC in Kenya supports many countries that may not be homogenous.

The ASC in Kenya is also keen on ensuring that the company's corporate culture contributes towards the successful implementation of strategy; individuals in the institution are vehicles of transformation. A transformative institutional culture is developed that optimizes the full potential of staff and students. Institutional priorities align with the corporate culture. Workshops are conducted that address institutional culture towards enabling strategy implementation.

The corporate culture at the ASC in Kenya has elements of innovation, diversity, collaboration, community involvement and social engagement. Innovation and diversity incorporates the interests of the broader group. The ASC in Kenya has a flat structure where the CEO is easily accessible. This therefore leads to reduced bureaucracy since consultation with top management is faster and having a unique corporate culture influences the approaches, mindsets and strategies that are adopted and implemented. It does not challenge the norms and culture otherwise employees may resist it.

In order to ensure that the Information Systems that are put in place are adequate for the strategy implementation process, the ASC in Kenya involves staff in system development or procurement to ensure the system is user centered. The systems are evaluated often and Information Systems resources are planned for during the strategy formulation stage. The ASC in Kenya also focuses on developing Information Systems within the organization in order to support the achievement of strategic objectives.

To effectively deal with competitive rivalry, the ASC in Kenya explores and implements innovative ideas. This gives a gauge on how the implementation is working in comparison to competitors. When rivalry within the organization is understood, it gives greater stimulus to employees to see to it that the implementation succeeds. Competitive rivalry usually requires strategic repositioning at short notices and the ASC in Kenya is able to deal with that.

To deal with external environment forces, the ASC uses the SWOT analysis where it does an analysis of the Strengths and Weaknesses of the internal industry environment and matches them against the Opportunities and Threats of the external industry environment. Set strategies are therefore adapted to address threats and competition. The ASC in Kenya also has a top notch marketing department and skilled personnel with good technical and management skills. The ASC in Kenya positions itself uniquely in terms of training approaches and levels of support offered for the academies that are supported. Communication at the ASC in Kenya is vital as it ensures that the employees fully comprehend what is required of them in the process of strategy implementation. Communication is done at various levels; institutional, departmental and at unit level.

The marketing department plays an integral in enhancing communication within the organization. Multiple communication channels within the ASC in Kenya are created and feedback from employees is solicited either through emails, websites and intranets, department meetings and also orally. Some of the challenges that cropped up during the process of strategy implementation had not been foreseen including the gap between what is strategized and the daily operational experiences of the people on the ground being too big, strategic priorities being enforced since someone higher up needs to achieve their objectives, financial constraints where budgetary support does not fully match the requirements, challenges in meeting targets in a timely manner, some employees resisting changes, inadequacy of resources, and having cultures and practices that are rigid.

Other problems experienced during the process of implementation of strategy at the firm include poor planning, inadequate support, lack of involvement, lack of adequate knowledge on the key stages, improper coordination, lack of communication, strategic intentions that are not clear, failure to understand the strategy, organizational systems and resources that are not aligned, activities that are competing and environmental factors that are uncontrollable.

5.3 Conclusion

In conclusion therefore, the study indicates that successful implementation of strategy is vital and pivotal to the company's success. It informs the company direction and ensures that the focus is directed. The ASC in Kenya positions itself to the environment to ensure there is continuous success and to also secure itself from changes that come about due to the changing environment during strategy implementation.

Coordination and cohesiveness within the company is encouraged as it is essential for successful strategy implementation. Good implementation practices lead to achieving goals and the company responds well to the internal and external industry environment. Support by senior staff and other employees is crucial to attain success in strategy implementation.

Other factors that have led to successful strategy implementation at the ASC in Kenya are having a corporate culture that is broadly accepted by the employees, enhancing inclusivity in the process of strategy implementation where each and every employee has a role in ensuring its success, organizing awareness workshops, news bulletins and broadcast information emails.

The ASC in Kenya ensures that the resource constraints do not affect the strategy implementation process by ensuring that the strategy success is independent of resources availability and providing innovative options, evaluating internal resources for sources of competitive advantage, prioritizing resources on a needs basis and depending on level of urgency, by facilitating proper planning, by repositioning units on an annual or bi-annual basis and ensuring funding for infrastructure is secured.

5.4 Limitations of the Study

The study's limitations are those attributes of design or methodology that had an impact or an influence on the application or interpretation of the study's results. The study was limited to the ASC in Kenya which is officially recognized by Cisco Systems Inc., to offer support and guidance to academies as they enter and progress continuously in the program.

Time constraint was one of the major limitations of the study which contributed to delay in getting the information required. The researcher could agree with the respondents to have an interview but for some reason the interview at some point would have to be rescheduled due to work commitments. The study was therefore not given adequate time to capture all the information that may have been required for this study.

The target group also did not trust the confidentiality of their responses apart from the Director. Some of the respondents were not ready to participate fully in the study due to victimization, based on past experience. The researcher therefore had to assure the respondents of the strict confidentiality of the information collected which would only be used for study purposes.

5.5 Delimitations of the Study

In order to counter the limitation of time constraints, the researcher organized meetings with the respondents after working hours in order to conduct the interviews and get the required responses. The researcher also signed non-disclosure agreements in order to assure the respondents that the study was only to be used for study purposes.

5.6 Area for Further Studies

The study makes specific recommendations guided by the objectives of the study. The study recommends that organizations need to involve employees in the process of strategy implementation. The employees have to be involved from the strategy formulation stage in order to understand what is required to achieve success in the process of strategy implementation. Organizations need to establish a way of allocating the resources that are required to make strategy implementation a success. This is fundamental and must be provided for at all times.

Further, the study recommends that there be a balance between the operations of the internal environment and the external environment where the organization operates in. Organizations need to find ways of positioning themselves in the external environment and need to create a niche for themselves.

Another recommendation is to scholars, this study has indicated a number of challenges faced in the implementation of strategy by the ASC in Kenya. Further recommendation is that there is need to establish the relationship between strategic management plans and the execution of performance management, which can be clarified through further studies.

5.7 Implication of the Study on Policy, Theory and Practice

It is important to have an understanding of the most important factors, problems and their answers for effective strategy implementation. This paper clearly details how firms go about implementing strategy and the most critical factors for effective strategy implementation were collected from the literature. The knowledge acquired by the literature review builds the basis with which the research is conducted. Interviews were carried out and insights from practices regarding answers to problems was achieved. This study does a connection of theory and practice and does a summary of all the important aspects of previous studies. There is a connection of work from other scholars and addition of insights from organization's current practices and methods.

The strategy implementation development and importance can be seen in this paper. Managers and implementers of strategy might have something to learn from this paper. They will be able to see the critical factors that need to be considered, then see a summary of problems that are likely to occur, what can assist them in identification of challenges on their own in the firm and develop an approach that is more proactive. Finally they get an insight to answers from other managers. Managers need to do a consideration of several aspects, since there are multiple relations and connections between factors that cause challenges. If one factor is ignored unpredictable causes for other components might occur. None of the factors should be seen in an isolated manner, implementation of strategy is a complex, dynamic and changing task for organizations.

In summary, this chapter discusses the findings of the study on the effects of implementation of strategy on performance of the Cisco Academy Support Center. It also clearly highlights the conclusions that are drawn from the study, discusses the limitations of the study and highlights areas for further studies and clearly defines the recommendations. The study has shown that there exists an important relationship between implementation of strategy and performance of Cisco Academy Support Center. This paper has shown that strategy implementation has a positive relationship with performance, that is to say, the more effectively a strategy is implemented, the better the firm performs.

For effective strategy implementation and improved performance to be achieved, employees have to be involved from the onset in the strategy formulation phase. This ensures that each employee has an understanding of the strategy implementation process. Hence, implementation of strategy is not an opponent that needs to be conquered or tackled. Rather, it is a crucial cornerstone and ally in the building of a capable organization and then use of the appropriate levers of implementation will be the pivotal hinge in the development of that organization.

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APPENDICES

Appendix I: INTRODUCTION LETTER

The Cisco Academy Support Center

P.O Box 58902 – 00200

Nairobi, Kenya

Dear Sir/Madam,

RE: REQUEST FOR RESEARCH DATA

My name is Carolyn Wangechi Macharia and I am a postgraduate student at the University of Nairobi undertaking research in the topic;

“THE INFLUENCE OF STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION ON PERFORMANCE ON CISCO ACADEMY SUPPORT CENTER IN KENYA” You have been selected for this study. I would therefore highly appreciate if you could provide me with information requested in the interview guide at the earliest convenience. I wish to guarantee that the information provided would be treated confidentially. It will be used only for research purposes. I look forward to your favorable response.

Thank you.

Yours sincerely,

Carolyn Macharia

Appendix II: INTERVIEW GUIDE

This research is meant for academic purposes. The objective is to identify the influence of strategy implementation on performance of Cisco Academy Support Center in Kenya.

This interview seeks to get information from the top management staff at the Cisco Academy Support Center regarding the influence of Strategy Implementation on Performance of the organization. Respondents are encouraged to be as open as possible and to ask for clarification if need be.

Kindly answer the following questions by ticking in the appropriate box or filling the spaces provided.

Job Title: _____

1. Which areas are of vital importance to long-term successful strategy implementation at your company?
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2. How are the organizational vision, mission and key policies communicated during the strategy implementation process?
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3. What strategic Planning Models are adopted by your company and what are their effects on Strategy Implementation?
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4. How does your company go about implementing the formulated strategies?

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5. How appropriate is the current organization structure to support the implementation of strategic initiatives?

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6. In what ways does strategy implementation practices affect the success of the company?

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7. What are the Challenges of Strategy implementation in your company?

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8. In your own view is organizational performance important in strategy implementation in the Cisco Academy Support Center? Explain

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9. In what ways does the company's corporate culture influence strategy implementation in your company?

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10. How do you ensure that Resource Constraints do not affect the strategy implementation process?

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11. What measures do you put in place to ensure that the employees are fully involved in the strategy implementation process? How do you ensure that the employees understand the company's strategy in order to perform optimally?

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12. How do you ensure that the Information Systems that are put in place are adequate for the Strategy Implementation process?

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13. How do you ensure support staff involvement and participation in strategy implementation within the organization?

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14. What is the effect of competitive rivalry in ensuring successful strategy in your company?

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15. What measures does the Cisco ASC need to take to deal with challenges of strategy implementation and performance?

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16. How does the company deal with competitive forces in the industry? How does it ensure that the strategies that are put in place are successfully implemented?

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17. What measures are taken to ensure that functional areas have the slack resources needed to be able to contribute to a strategy implementation effort?

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18. What strategies do you use to develop employees knowledge and appreciation of multiple functional areas within the organization in an effort to ensure that the set strategies are successfully implemented?

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19. Proper communication is one of the factors that lead to successful implementation of strategy in an organization. What measures do you put in place to ensure that this is maintained within the organization?

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20. How do you deal with the threat of new entrants to ensure that it does not affect the success of strategy implementation?

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