

**CHALLENGES OF STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION AT THE  
MACHAKOS COUNTY ASSEMBLY, KENYA**

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## **DECLARATION**

I, the undersigned, declare that this is my original work and has not been presented to any institution or University other than the University of Nairobi for examination.

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This research project has been submitted for examination with my approval as University Supervisor.

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Finally, I record my sincere appreciation to my family and friends for encouraging me. God bless you abundantly.

## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this work to my family who have been a source of inspiration for me and to my siblings for their continuous love, encouragement and support during the entire course.

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## **ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS**

<b>PEST</b>	Political, Economic, Social and Technological
<b>RBV</b>	Resource Based View
<b>SWOT</b>	Strength, Weakness, Opportunities and Threats
<b>UK</b>	United Kingdom
<b>UNDP</b>	United Nations Development Program
<b>UNHCR</b>	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
<b>CRA</b>	Commission on Revenue Allocation



## ABSTRACT

Strategic management practices focus on complex issues arising out of non-clarity and non-routine situations within the entire organization rather than a standalone challenge in a particular function. The objective of the study was to determine the challenges of strategy implementation at the Machakos County Assembly, Kenya. The study employed case study research design. This study used primary data. The primary data collection was done by use of an interview guide. The targeted respondents in this study were 8 employees of the County Assembly of Machakos. Various groups participated in developing strategic plans in the County Assembly of Machakos. The groups include staff and Members of the County Assembly. It was evident from the study that all staff, junior and senior management participates in implementing the County Assembly's strategic goals. External consultancy experts are also invited to help in advising on the best strategic plans to adopt. It was established that various challenges affected the implementation of the County Assembly of Machakos' strategic plan. From the results, it is identified that human resource can be a great challenge during strategy implementation. It was also established that the County Assembly does not experience leadership related challenges that may hinder effective implementation of strategic plans in Machakos County. Organization culture is important in the implementation of the County Assembly strategic plans. Organizational culture includes the organization values, visions, norms, working language, systems, symbols, beliefs and habits. The study established that organizational structure significantly affects the successful implementation of strategic plans in Machakos County Assembly. It is a challenge to implement strategic plans when organization structure is not well defined. The study concludes that organizational structure; leadership styles; organizational culture influences strategic plan implementation in the County Assembly. The study recommends that Machakos County Assembly in Kenya should put in place strategic plans that guide strategy implementation processes. The leadership of Machakos County Assembly should enhance their organizational structures by matching with the current status. Machakos County Assembly should ensure that their current organizational structure facilitates quick decision making to ease the processes of strategy implementation. Organizational structure should be dictated by the set strategy, review in strategy should be followed by a review in organizational structure so as to bring about efficiency and effectiveness in strategy implementation. There is need for smooth communication flow in the County Assembly of Machakos between top management and staff and amongst the employees themselves. The leadership of the County Assembly of Machakos should involve employees during strategy implementation process. Machakos County Assembly should put in place a strong organizational culture by having set of shared beliefs, values and norms. The national government of Kenya should avail more resources to the devolved units in Kenya to facilitate the process of strategy implementation in county governments in Kenya. The County Assembly of Machakos should diversify their sources of funds so that they not only depend on financial resources alone to successfully implement their strategic plans.

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of the Study

Strategic management is inextricably interlocked into the entire paradigm of management: it is a different and exclusive from the process of management (Steiner, 1999). Strategic planning is structured to assist businesses, public and non-profit enterprises (and communities) to effectively respond to new prevailing occurrences. It is an organized system that produces fundamental decisions and actions aligning the situations and direction of an enterprise (or other entity's) situations within the acceptable legal domains. These decisions mainly are concerned with an organization's mandate, mission and service or product level and mix, financing, cost, organizational structure and management (Jarzabkowski & Balogun, 2009).

Several theories have emerged expounding on strategic management practices. Resource-based theory of strategy focuses on firm's possession and use of resources and competencies as a competitive advantage (Barney, 2001). The theory is relevant in explaining successful strategic plan practice, and it is also a part of the larger strategic management theory family. The goal setting theory as advanced by Locke (1968) is based on a number of guiding virtues which include; clarity, challenge, commitment, feedback and task complexity. Goal setting approach is adequately important when it comes to explaining the firms' capability in setting the short-term and long-term goals as well as determining the effective mechanisms of going about achieving the goals set.

This study has been motivated by the fact that although there are several studies conducted both locally and internationally on strategic management practices and various challenges affecting successful implementation of strategic plans, most of these studies have focused on different contexts and their findings cannot be generalized to represent Machakos County Assembly. The previous studies also differed on the challenges affecting strategic management practices. Hrebiniak (2008) identified lack of ownership of strategic process at all levels of management as major obstacle to effective strategy execution, Dunlop et al., (2013) cited failure of translation of strategy to daily operations as a root problem while Schaap (2006) posits that lack of communication poses a great difficulty to successful strategy implementation.

### **1.1.1 Concept of Strategy**

Strategy has been associated with pre-empting various scenarios and action plans developed to counter them. The term strategy has never had a single definition, it has several meanings, ranging from tactics, objectives, policies, goals, programs, among others, in an attempt to express the concepts necessary for its definition. Bryson (2011) gives strategy the definition that; it is a plan which is designed for achieving a specified objective. According to Rumelt (2011) a strategy is a cohesive response to an important challenge. Kavale (2012) define strategy as the setting of objectives, formulation of courses of action and resources distribution for the realization of the goals. The various definitions given by the authors suggest that selective attention was given to aspects of strategy, and they are all relevant to us in understanding the concept (Aosa, 1992).

There are three perspectives of strategy. The corporate strategy deals with decisions relating to what businesses the organization should invest in, how to manage it, and its

relationship with the society. The corporate strategy is for the organization as a whole. Business strategy deals with how individual businesses will attempt to achieve their goals and objectives within their industries. Functional strategy is for providing support to the corporate and business strategies. It is the strategy for the various functional units of a business. Functional strategies are concerned with operations of the functional areas of a business which will deliver the desired competitive business level strategy and complement each other (Bowman & Ambrosini, 2007).

Hough et al., (2010) stated that a company's strategy highlights the competitive measures that organizations pursue to expand their businesses, achieve and maintain a competitive advantage, carry out their business and gain the desired performance levels. Generally, a consensus that strategies are about the future exists. Depending on the market conditions, strategies tend to be both proactive and reactive and over time they will evolve as firms endeavor to stay ahead of their competitors in relation to customer service, profitability and market share.

### **1.1.2 Strategic Management Process**

Strategic management has key elements or processes or practices that should be followed which include strategy formulation, implementation, evaluation and control. According to Johnson and Scholes (2009), the four elements of strategic management practices are described as strategic management process. This means that there is a certain process that strategy management practice must follow to eventually achieve that goal which the management seeks to achieve. Each part of the process is important and might determine the final outcome. According to Pearce and Robinson (2007), strategy formulation enables the management of an organization to define its overall goals and objectives and

the way to accomplish these goals. Therefore, strategy formulation merges the future outlook with the firm's operating environment.

Strategy formulation begins with deciding which business to pursue, the company's vision and mission. Vision is more of how and where the company would like to be in the future while the mission is a firm's intent of existence and its objectives or goal to all stakeholders involved be it the investor, the customer, the employees, the suppliers among others. At this stage, establishing core values is important as this will be part of building the organization's culture. This stage is more about setting goals, objectives, policies and procedures for the future of the company (Olson et al., 2005).

Strategy implementation is about putting the strategies into action. It needs that firms devise objectives, establish policies, motivate employees and efficiently allocate its existing resources to execute formulated strategies. Furthermore, if an effective strategy is not implemented, organizations will not be able to gain the benefits of carrying out an organizational analysis, determining organizational direction, and formulating organizational strategy. Although important, this phase alone cannot ensure success of the strategies. Strategies at this point have to be broken down into short term activities. Driving the implementation process requires leadership and a lot of commitment to implement strategies (Cole, 2004).

Bakar et al., (2011) state that strategic evaluation and control is about ensuring that the strategy is going as planned and if there are any unexpected plans, the same is managed accordingly. It is a phase that requires information on performance so as to adjust activities as well as goals accordingly.

### **1.1.3 Strategy Implementation Process**

Strategy implementation is the way toward putting into practice the systems detailed with the goal that the execution can be moved from the current position to a future wanted position (Johnson and Scholes, 2008). As per Aladwani (2003), strategy execution implies putting the outcomes of arranging into a genuine action. This includes operationalization of the everyday exercises with the goal that an organization can accomplish its aggressiveness. In order to align the operations of an organization to the changing operating environment, it is important that the organization adapts according to remain competitive (Olson et al., 2005). Through strategic management, organizations are able to align their operations to push its competition above the industry peers.

The accomplishment of a strategy relies on the adequacy of usage and in this manner top need of strategy execution is building a skilled organization. It includes building up a responsive inward organization structure, constructing and supporting abilities and capabilities and choosing individuals for key positions (Aladwani, 2003). Globalization of the world has meant that organizations can sale to a wide market even from a local setting. Organizations need to rethink their strategies to drive the performance to a future desired position (Olson et al., 2005).

In contrast to strategy formulation, strategy usage is frequently observed as something of a specialty, instead of a science, and its examination history has recently been portrayed as divided and mixed (Noble, 2009). Powerful strategy execution ought to accomplish lucidity of future heading, structure inside activity approaches, settle on legitimate decisions and needs, bargain adequately with organizational changes and vulnerabilities in outer condition, construct cooperation and mastery dependent on assets, procedures

and individuals and create compelling systems to enhance organizational execution, (Cole, 2004). A strategy has little effect on an organizational performance until it is implemented

#### **1.1.4 County Government of Machakos**

Machakos County is one of Kenya's forty seven counties and among the eight counties in the Eastern zone. Machakos county borders Kiambu, Embu and Murang'a counties to the North, it borders Kajiado and Nairobi counties to the West, Kitui to the East and Makueni County to the South. It covers area of 6208.2 Km<sup>2</sup> which is mostly semi-arid. Machakos county has eight sub counties which are; Mwala, Mavoko, Kangundo, Masinga, Kathiani, Yatta, Machakos Town and Matungulu. It has 75 locations and 40 wards. The county is situated between latitudes 0°45'South to 1°31'South and longitudes 36°45'East to 37°45'East (Machakos County Integrated Development Plan, 2015). To perform their duties, county government of Machakos is required by law to formulate county strategic plans outlining their short-term, medium and long-term strategic goals.

According to Municipal Research and Services Center for Washington (2013) a County strategic plan is a roadmap of the community and is utilized to prioritize department operations and projects, initiatives, resources and goals. It enhances operational effectiveness of counties through addressing county human resource capacity and management, enhances county financial management and also aligns county organizational structure with its strategies (Osero, 2012). It also identifies performance goals and objectives and identify external factors that may affect the achievement of the set goals (Bwisa, 2013).

A county strategic plan is a document that sets the vision, mission, strategic objectives, strategies and activities of the county (Kara-UNDP, 2012). They further argued that it defines the financial resources, staffing levels and structures needed to undertake the functions and mandate of the county. A county strategic plan identifies priority programs and projects, lays down monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, determines the institutional framework required for strategy implementation and links a county's vision to the National Vision (Ministry of Devolution and Planning, 2013).

### **1.1.5 County Assembly of Machakos**

The County Assembly of Machakos is the legislative authority of the County Government of Machakos that has been vested with responsibilities of legislation, representation and oversight and can make any laws that enable the County Government to perform its functions effectively. Membership of the County Assembly of Machakos is constituted according to provisions of the Constitution of Kenya 2010 and the County Governments Act, 2012. The Assembly is made up of the political arm and the administrative arm. The political arm has a membership capacity of sixty Members: out of which forty are elected by registered voters of the forty Wards of Machakos; and nineteen are special elect members representing marginalised groups, including Persons with Disabilities, the Youth, and women. The Speaker of the County Assembly is an *ex officio* member. Out of the sixty Members twenty one are female while thirty nine are male.

The administrative arm of the County Assembly of Machakos comprises of one hundred and three staff establishment headed by the Clerk of the County Assembly. The



Assembly has a total of five departments created by the employment body, the County Assembly Service Board.

In 2013, the Machakos County assembly developed their first strategic plan 2013 to 2018 which among other things aimed at creating a focus and direction for the county assembly, to ensure that the powers and roles designated to the county assembly are well executed, to help in the development of frameworks for execution of stipulated roles, to assist the assembly in making informed decisions and to help the assembly to prepare for the future. The strategic plan development process involved stakeholder consultation and aligning it with key policy documents, the constitution of Kenya 2010 and the vision 2030 (Machakos County Assembly Strategic Plan, 2013).

## **1.2 Research Problem**

Strategic management practices focus around complex issues emerging out of non-clearness and non-routine circumstances inside the whole organization as opposed to an independent challenge in a specific capacity. Administrators who are fundamentally used to overseeing day by day schedule issues discovered it a noteworthy test to apply strategic management practice as a methods for dealing with the enterprise (Johnson et al., 2010). As per Scholes and Johnson, (2002) an organization should be familiar with internal resources, the expectations and influence of stakeholders, competences and external environment for the strategic management practices to be successful.

The creation of new 47 counties in Kenya as the new centers of devolving resources and subsequent election of the county government means that some of the government functions that were initially centralized are now being executed by the county government and this is meant to spur the economic growth at the county level. As a

result, the county assembly in each county government should incorporate the element of strategic management practices if they are to succeed in their quest to improving their counties. This is because strategic planning organizes the present based on the desired future. Karanja (2014) found that county's ability to provide quality services was deteriorating because of lack of a clear strategic plan and poor leadership. The county assembly of Machakos should therefore consider effective strategic management practices to provide efficient and quality services.

Several local studies have been undertaken on this major topic of strategic practices, these include; Opano (2013) undertook a study on the Kisii County's Government in Kenya on its strategic planning and implementation practices. The study was able to establish that county strategic plan was also given to civic leaders as well as professionals and community leaders for scrutiny and review. Wachira (2014) studied strategic planning practices at Laikipia County, Kenya. The study found that strategic planning at Laikipia County was formal and that the vision and mission statement, and strategic plans at the county were formally documented. Chogo (2015) undertook a study on strategic planning practices by Kajiado County Government in Kenya. The study found out that Kajiado County was actively involved in strategic planning, and it was formal and the vision and mission statement, and strategic plans were formally documented.

All these identified studies were quite relevant to the foregoing fields but none of them was able to depict the strategic implementation practices as envisaged by these respective counties. Therefore a knowledge gap exists on strategic implementation practices and challenges at Machakos County Assembly. This necessitates the need for this research study to be undertaken. It is on this basis that this particular study was undertaken to

address the questions; which are the strategic management practices and challenges facing strategy implementation at the County Assembly of Machakos?

### **1.3 Research Objectives**

The study objectives were:-

- 1) To establish the strategic management practices adopted by the County Assembly of Machakos.
- 2) To determine the challenges encountered by the County Assembly in strategy implementation.

### **1.4 Value of the Study**

The research will help current theories by either supporting or challenging them through research findings. This study may provide an insight in understanding strategic management process and the challenges that face strategy implementation. The study may also form a basis for future research on challenges facing implementation of strategic plans in public organizations.

Policy makers may benefit from the outcome of the study. They include the government and the national senate, in policy setting and overseeing implementation of strategic plans in the County assemblies. This may expedite the process of strategic management hence bolster efficiency, accountability and transparency.

Management of Machakos County assembly and other Counties may consider this research value adding. It might be utilized to generalize the need and importance of strategic plans and appreciate the challenges facing the strategy implementation process. This may help Machakos County assembly to develop effective strategic plans and be ready to deal with the challenges.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

The section covers theoretical and empirical review of literature on strategic management practices. This chapter begins by discussing the theories underpinning these concepts, strategic management practices in public organizations, challenges facing strategic management practices and finally a review of empirical literature on the concepts showing similarities and contradictions and the research gaps.

#### **2.2 Theoretical Foundation**

Literature review basically identifies and examines the work done by other researchers and scholars concerning strategic planning and challenges of strategy implementation. This review provides detailed knowledge of what has been done and act as a basis upon which the study findings was interpreted and also to overcome the previous studies' limitations. The following sections describe and discuss different theories such as resource based view theory and goal setting theory.

##### **2.2.1 Resource Based View Theory**

This theory was directed in the early 90's after Jay Barney's evaluation study on successful firm management. He examined the mechanisms that a firm could leverage on its resources for building on competitive edge. Barney (2001) posits that the Resource based approach was a factor that was critical and it led to the enhancement of the organizational ability to survive within a market that is highly competitive, when it came to developing organizational capacity. The Resource Based View (RBV) brought about

the Resource based Theory and it's key in the evaluation of firm capacity and resource management to build competitiveness (Armstrong & Taylor, 2014).

The Resource Based View theory has highlighted the organizational resources which lead to creation of the valuable factor that enables the business organization to keep on growing transactions as well as attracting new investments. Terziovski (2010) noted that organizational strategies contribute in a significant way in establishing how organizational resources are utilized and distributed when it comes to the facilitation of organizational business operations. The resources of a firm are indentified to be tangible and intangible by the Resource Based View theory. Ray et al., (2004) noted that all organizational resources had a substantial contribution to the overall efficiency and effectiveness of an organization. Per West (2012) posits that an organization or a business entity has a likelihood of achieving operational success through ensuring optimization on organizational resources' effective application and use.

All corporate organizations aspire achievement of growth through tapping into resources that are best operational as well as through implementation of comprehensive strategies which enable organizations realize their primary mandate as well as objectives (Rosemann & Vom Brocke, 2015). The Resource Based View theory posit that all organizational resources have a competitive factor, and are therefore important as they enable the execution organizational processes whose aim is to realize operational objectives. Ray et al., (2004) argues that the commencement phase which achieves competitiveness and corporate growth is the efficient utilization of existing organizational resources.

The Resource Based View theory has compatibility with the discussion on strategic management practices which is the focus of this paper. Implementation of strategic plans requires comprehensive physical systems to be integrated and supported by a support team that is well trained, skilled and competent (McKinney, 2015). The county assembly's capacity for executing her operations is greatly subject to its resource base in terms of physical and human resource. The RBV theory, effectively address one of the challenge in strategic management at the county assembly.

### **2.2.2 Goal Setting Theory**

This was pitched in 1968 by an American Psychologist Edwin Locke (Chemjor, 2015). It's founded on a number of guiding virtues, namely; clarity, challenge, commitment, feedback and task complexity. Goal setting theory originated from aspiration levels which Kurt Lewin advanced and has thereafter been advanced by Dr. Edwin Locke, who in the 1960's initiated research on setting. His research demonstrated an association that was inductive between setting of goals and attainment of higher organizational performance. According to Locke and Latham (2006), a goal is the result that an individual desires to attain. Goal setting entails the continuous process of benchmarking the desired performance levels which lead to attainment of desirable outcomes. The goal setting theory basically argues that motivation is initiated by the intention and desire to attain a goal (Chemjor, 2015). When individuals realize that they cannot achieve the desired goals under their current performance, then they will be motivated to change their strategy or increase effort (Locke & Latham, 2006).

Chemjor (2015) made submissions that support the goals setting approach prospect which

encourages individual goals by organizational employees which play a vital role in motivation of higher performances. Stakeholders are in constant look as to whether the goals are being attained and if this is not the case, they modify the goals to make them attainable or exert more effort. Performance improvement results in attainment of the goals of performance management system (Salaman et al., 2005). This theory can be applied across corporate environment putting in mind that any business organization's least unit function anchors on particular list of objectives. Operational objectives make up the primary goals which define all operational strategies which a firm adopts. This theory ensures that organizational drive for achieving operational targets is enhanced.

Goal setting approach is adequately important when it comes to explaining the County Assemblies' capability in setting both short term and long term goals and establishing the effective mechanisms of going about achieving the goals set. Reliable, specific and clear goals can contribute better performances. Measurable, unambiguous and clear goals together with strict deadlines prevent misunderstanding (Shahin & Mahbod, 2007). The County Assembly of Machakos undertakes its activities with strategic guidelines that are clear and follows certain operational plans which are established by the intended outcomes as well as goals. The strategic plans could be short, medium or long. Any county assembly is well positioned in leveraging on this theory to be the central mechanism and guiding principles when it comes to setting long-term and short-term strategies which can contribute in building operational competitiveness levels which are sustainable in the effort to fulfill the noble mandate enshrined in what it takes to be a county assembly.

### **2.3 Strategic Management Practices in Public Organizations**

Public organizations must of essence be externally oriented if they are to deliver value to their customers and the public. With the aim of improving their performance in the provision of public goods and services, public organizations employ various strategic management practices. Strategic management practices in public organizations include; strategic analysis, strategic choice as well as strategy implementation (Johnson & Scholes, 1999).

During strategic analysis, a public organization endeavors to understand its strategic position within its sector with a view to matching its capacities to the demands of the external environment. It is the process through which an organization analyses the strengths of its position through understanding internal and external factors which have an effect on this position (Isoherranen, 2012). Numerous tools exist that have been developed and that can be applied by public organizations to carry out strategic analysis. These tools include SWOT Analysis introduced by Luffman et al., PEST Analysis introduced by Johnson and Scholes, Porter's Value Chain Analysis, Hines's Value Chain Model and Blue Ocean Strategy Analysis.

The choice of tool or mix of tools depends on the organization and the industry within which it operates. Nevertheless, stakeholder analysis and participation is a critical element of all these tools since stakeholders provide skills, resources, commitment, demand and alternatives. Proper relationship management of stakeholders is therefore critical, especially for public organizations. It has also been observed that organizations that have a stronger external orientation and actively manage their stakeholders generally



allocated more resources to satisfy their emerging demand thus keeping them (Harrison & Wicks, 2013). This is in line with agency theory, contingency theory as well as the resource based view theory.

Strategic choice involves the listing of all possible strategic actions that can be pursued by an organization, considering environmental constraints, with a view to achieving its goals. Each possible strategic action is evaluated against the organization's goals, mission, capacities, experiences, objectives and values (Muogbo, 2013). The mix of strategic actions that would best deliver the mission and vision of the organization are selected from the available alternatives and adopted. The adopted mix of strategies then becomes the organizational strategy. Tools that can be used to aid strategic choice making include SPACE Matrix, BCG Matrix, GE Matrix, IE Matrix, Grand Strategy Matrix, Quantitative Strategic Planning Matrix, among others. It is important to note that these tools do not take into account the unique cultural aspects of any organization that have a strong influence on the making of strategic choices.

Strategy implementation involves putting the strategy into action and continuously managing the changes required to keep the organization aligned to the realization of its long term goals (Johnson & Scholes, 1999). It starts with planning whereby the strategy is broken down into shorter term objectives, actions and outputs that jointly lead to the achievement of the long term goal (Brinkshroder, 2014). The objectives, actions and plans are then cascaded to all levels of the organization using appropriate tools for every level. The plans and actions are resourced and assigned to responsibility centers for execution since strategy is as good as its implementation (Andersen & Lie, 2013). Effective implementation integrates continuous monitoring, evaluation and modification

to maintain focus on the set goal. Preset objectives, actions and outputs form the standard for performance management and measurement across the organization.

## **2.4 Challenges of Strategy Implementation Practices**

The process of implementing strategic plans in any organization is faced by many hindrances and challenges. The challenges from both within and outside the organization are specific and vary from one organization to another as discussed below. Organizational Leadership- Successful strategy implementation requires organizational leadership that is strong and policies which support the strategy and focus on the day to day activities of a level that is very high (Brache, 2002). Strategy implementation tests leaders' skills, ability to direct organizational change, motivation skills and ability of developing capabilities and organizational culture for supporting the strategy. Strategy implementation is challenging because there are ranges of activities which require to be implemented and various skills required for performing them, foremost the people's skills.

Need for a shared values among employees and leaders through effective organizational leadership is critical for successful strategy implementation (Brache, 2002). Effective organizational leadership involves promoting and nurturing employee's relationships. Working and unhindered organization information sharing networks provide good medium for management to share organization's vision with the employees. Open and frank discussions towards employee's conflicts resolutions ensure that harmonious and cordial employee's relationships are maintained which promotes successful implementation of strategic plans (Atlantic Canada Business Blog, 2007).

Organization Structure- An organizational structure is the reflection of the organizations reporting relationships and command structures. Every organization needs to ensure that its organization structure supports its strategy (Atlantic Canada Business Blog, 2007). Three focal points in relation to identification of the appropriate structure needed for strategy implementation include; first and foremost identification of organization's value chain critical activities. These are the primary and support activities which are critical to the successful implementation of the strategic process.

Secondly, the organization has to isolate the primary activities to be performed internally. Once the critical activities have been identified and isolated, management need to make a decision on whether it will outsource the non-critical activities in order to concentrate on core activities. What is of strategic importance is making decision on what activities to carry out internally and which ones are to be outsourced and it shouldn't be taken lightly by organizations. Besides lower costs, another advantage of outsourcing is that the competitive capabilities can be of benefit to both organizations. An organization can build its resource strengths as well as enhance its capabilities which deliver value to its customers through leveraging collaborative partnerships (Alexander, 1985).

Thirdly, organizations need to build structures around the identified core activities. Aligning structure to strategy pertains making the activities critical to strategy, to be the building blocks of the structure of the organization. Strategy implementation that is new mostly needs new skills and resources. Organizations can't afford a mismatch between their strategy and structure; this is because a mismatch can cause strategy implementation that is poor. Word of caution here is that if the structure that exists requires to be changed radically for a strategy implementation that is successful, then organizations may have to

rethink their strategy. The bottom line is the moment a strategy has been chosen then modifications must be done on structure to fit the strategy (Alexander, 1991).

Operational Efficiency- Managing a strategy's implementation and execution is an operations-oriented activity. Realization of financial performance targets exhibits good progress in achieving the strategic goals of management based on efficient and effective utilization of organization resources (Peppard, 2000).

Stakeholders' Interests - A stakeholder is an individual or an organization that stands to gain or lose from a system's success or failure (Nuseibeh & Easterbrook, 2000). Stakeholders approach to strategic management holds that managers must formulate and implement strategies which satisfy all groups who have declared or conceivable interest in the organization. The important task in this process is to take into account the relationships and interests of all interested parties who include members of staff, clients, shareholders, suppliers, communities and other interested groups without compromising the firm's long-term success (Freeman, 1984).

Stakeholders based strategies start with mapping the organizations primary stakeholders and then identifying their characteristics which includes urgency of response, threat or collaboration potential, importance to company survival and influence and interest. Specific stakeholders characteristic dictate the kind of relation that the firm needs to have with them. The formulation of strategies that are unified for knowledge and stakeholders management is guided by a common context that is established by organizational and networking strategies (Katsoulakos & Katsoulacos, 2007). Carnall (2007) holds that the macro-environment has many factors that will affect implementation of strategic decisions in any organization including political, economic and technological factors.

Political factors refer to government policies and laws which can impact positively or negatively on any core areas for business.

New technologies create demand for new processes as well as new products. Technology can decrease production and operational costs, cause innovation and cause quality improvement. The technological developments can help consumers and the firms which provide the products. Environmental factors are climate change as well as the weather. Freedman (2003) observes that with major climate changes which occur owing to global warming and with greater global environmental awareness, environmental concerns are fast becoming significant issues for organizations. Brache (2002) holds that operational efficiency is central and indeed a cornerstone to successful strategy implementation.

## **2.5 Measures to Mitigate Strategy Implementation Challenges**

To mitigate strategy implementation challenges the public sector should adopt a flexible organizational structure that supports strategy implementation while accommodating the current needs of the citizens. Prahalad (2009) noted that the structure of the public sector should allow flexibility among employees in order to multi-task. This improves reporting relationships between the employees and improves efficiency in the implementation of strategic plan.

The organizational culture represents the norms and values cultivated in the organization. The public sector should nurture a culture that unites employees towards similar goals. The cultural setting defines how employees' relate to one another and this has an effect on the performance of the organization. A supportive culture is inevitable in uniting and encouraging the employees to work towards implementation of strategic plans (Murray, 2011). To mitigate the leadership challenge of implementing strategic plans, the public

sector should consider adopting a democratic form of leadership should be adopted to increase inclusion by allowing all the stakeholders to participate in key decisions. This will motivate the employees' by giving them a sense of belonging (Bie & Qvenild, 2012).

A two-way communication is the most appropriate form of communication in the public sector. It provides a feedback mechanism to the higher level managers. Leaders are expected to uphold and maintain corporate governance practices that will allow open-up communication channels for improved efficiency in decision making and mutual agreements (Burnes, 2007).

A study by the Hay Group, a global management consultancy emphasized the importance of a two-way communication by leaders as an essential tool for successful implementation of a strategic plan (Lamb, 2009). The public sector should make adequate budgetary allocations to support implementation of strategic plans. Songer and Molenaar (2010) insist that the public sector should make sufficient budgetary allocations to support the activities involved in the implementation of strategic plans.

Human capital is an importance resource to the organization since they are the primary source of input to the organization. Employees' make an important contribution on the input of the organization, engaging employees' in training and development programmes helps to sharpen their knowledge and skills (Pearce & Robinson, 2005). The public sector should engage its employees' in constant training and development programmes to improve their skills in the implementation of strategic plans; this will improve their efficiency and minimize supervision costs.

## **2.6 Summary of Knowledge Gaps**

Several studies have been done on the concept of strategic management adopted by organizations. Glaister et al, (2009) compared strategic planning practices among firms from the UK and Turkey, they found out that in Turkey a higher proportion of firms had written missions in comparison to firms in the UK, however between Turkish companies and UK companies, there was no significant difference as per if the companies have a written mission statement. This contradicts the expectations, as it was expected that more companies in UK as compared to Turkey would have a written mission statement.

Zandi et al, (2013) did a study on strategic planning process and current practices: a comparative empirical study of UMW Toyota Motor and Chemical Company of Malaysia, they established that UMW Toyota had a perception that it was less formal because their process was said to be simplified. They concluded that their process was not structured than CCMF process that was systematic, formal as well as standardized with predefined each phase's tasks and outcomes. The strategies of the two companies were flexible as they were reviewed every quarter and the analysis phases of the companies were established to be very similar as to what was suggested by the literature. However for its external analysis, UMW Toyota was noted to rely more on sources of information that are for example published data as well as research centers, whereas CCMF relies more on its informal market intelligent records.

Macharia (2015) in his study of strategic planning practices at UNHCR found out that, the need to involve all stakeholders, budgeting and procurement lead times that need to be accommodated within the programming cycle dictated by the UNHCR, donor priorities, composition of beneficiaries, government policies and the changing political

environment are some of the challenges encountered by UNHCR during the strategic planning process. The study further recommended that given the reduced funding levels experienced globally, the funding situation dictated for more innovative ways of providing assistance to persons of concern so that UNHCR and other stakeholders can achieve more with less.

Arasa, et al, (2011) did a study on Participatory orientation to strategic planning process to determine whether it pays. The Study found that participation in the strategic planning process was fairly embraced across the studied companies, employee participation and involvement in strategic planning affects the strength of the said association and that for sure an association exists between firm performance and employee participation. Thus the assumption that the higher the participation level and involvement in the strategic planning process, the higher the level of realization of strategic planning intermediate result was researched. This analysis's results show that employee participation and involvement moderates the association between the two variables.



## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

In order to address the research objective of the study, a research methodology is necessary. This chapter consists of the research design to adopt, tools adopted to be used for data collection and how the data analysis shall be conducted. The philosophy should display the depiction of how the study was led, the arrangement of research, how information was gathered and from whom lastly the information examination strategy that might be received to break down the information keeping in mind the end goal to create the discoveries of the study.

#### **3.2 Research Design**

Cooper and Schindler (2003) described research design as that method that is procedurally acquired by the researcher and that which enables the researcher to be able to answers questions accurately, validly, objectively, and economically. According to Khan (2008), a research design aims at improving the ability of the research in conceptualizing an operational plan in order to be able to embark on the various techniques available and required tasks for the completion of the study while at the same time ensuring that that the procedures used are sufficient enough to acquire valid, objective and precise responses to the research questions.

The research design was based on a case study which is an in-depth analysis of an individual, group, institution or event (Cooper & Schindler, 2003). The core reason for carrying out a case study is for determining factors as well as relationship among factors

which have contributed to the behavior that will be under study. It is a framework applied at the point when the limits amongst setting and marvel are not plainly obvious and in which numerous wellsprings of confirmation are utilized.

Yin (1998) describes a case study investigation as an empirical enquiry that studies a phenomenon within its real life context of a unit study that could be an institution, family, community or a person. Case study analyses outline an issue; demonstrate a methods for taking care of an issue; or potentially shed light required on research, clinical applications or hypothetical matters. The case study option shall be the most appropriate for this particular intended research.

### **3.3 Data Collection**

Primary data was used. Its collection was done by use of interview guide shown in appendix I. The interview guide is preferred for this case study because of its capability to extract information from respondents as well as giving the researcher better insight and understanding of the results from the study. The interview guided the study and in addition enabled the researcher gain more current information and elicit information that might not have been captured with the other data collection techniques.

The targeted respondents in this study were 8 employees at the County Assembly of Machakos that are well conversant with strategic planning practices at the Assembly. These are the Internal Auditor, Senior Researcher, Librarian, Senior Clerk Assistant, Hansard Editor, Senior Human Resource Development officer, Head of Procedure and Committee Services and Deputy Clerk.

The interview guides were structured into various sections. The first focused on the respondents' demographic information while the other sections focused on the study research objectives. To ensure that the research instrument captured information from respondents as intended, the researcher asked open ended questions that gave room for further prodding if any response is not clear. The researcher personally conducted the interviews. Care and control was achieved by keeping a register of all the questions asked and their responses.

### **3.4 Data Analysis**

Data was analyzed qualitatively since we can be able to make general conclusions on how data categories are related. The study adopted qualitative analysis done by use of content analysis.

Content analysis was used to evaluate the response, draw conclusions and to derive recommendations. Content analysis consists of analyzing the interview responses looking for similarities and difference in order to find themes and to develop categories. According to Khan (2008), content analysis consists of analyzing the contents of documentary materials for example newspapers, magazines, books and face-to-face information obtained in the course of the interviews. Further, Burns and Burns (2008), insist that content analysis is step by step qualitative description of the content of the study's objects or materials.

This chapter discussed the research methodology used. It detailed the research design which is a case study that was found to be the most ideal research methodology for identifying the challenges encountered by the County Assembly of Machakos in its strategy implementation. Primary data collection was done through interviewing

Machakos County Assembly staff while content analysis was used for data analysis purposes.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

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

#### **4.1 Introduction**

The section presents the findings and discussions, and this is done objectively. The study objective was to explore challenges of strategy implementation at the County Assembly of Machakos. The specific objectives were to establish the strategic management practices adopted by the County Assembly of Machakos and to determine the challenges encountered by the County Assembly in strategy implementation. The data collected via interview guide were analyzed through content analysis and the findings compared with past studies.

#### **4.2 Demographic characteristics**

Four County Assembly staff participated in the study. They include heads of sections as follows; Senior Research Officer, Internal Auditor, Librarian and a Senior Hansard Editor who are also members of the strategic planning and implementation team. The participants had worked at the County Assembly for an average of six years. The heads of sections were part of secretariat involved in formulating and implementing strategic plans at the County Assembly of Machakos. The senior research officer participated in strategy planning process including gathering information of suitable strategic plans, conducting situational analysis and drafting the strategic plan. The senior research officer also to some extent participated in strategy formulation process and implementation of strategic plans. The senior research officer was also actively involved in monitoring progress, reviewing and evaluating the strategic plans of the County Assembly. It was also established that internal auditor was a chair to the secretariat in charge of strategic planning. The internal auditor also participated

in formulating strategic plans and implementing strategic plans. Moreover, the internal auditor was also actively involved in formulating vision and mission of the County Assembly. In the study it was also established that the librarian and the senior hansard editor were actively involved in the core functions of the Assembly as outlined in the strategic plan as Key Result Areas including legislation, representation, oversight and institutional capacity in the County Assembly.

#### **4.3 Strategic Planning at the County Assembly**

Various groups participated in developing strategic plans in the County Assembly of Machakos. Senior hansard editor indicated that the County Assembly Service Board and Heads of departments participated in developing strategic plans for the County Assembly while the Senior research officer noted that top management and management are in charge of developing strategic plans. Additionally, the Internal auditor observed that Every department had a representative who participates in developing strategic plans. The Librarian also noted that the County Assembly invites experts in strategic management, adding that strategic planning team guide consultancy experts in developing strategic plans of the county Assembly as per the objectives stated.

Strategic plans are very important in the management and success of the County Assembly. Strategic planning is a management tool that helps a County Assembly to improve its performance by ensuring that its staff are working towards the same goals and continuously adjusting the direction outlined in the mission and vision of the County Assembly.

According to senior research officer, Heads of Departments and Sectional heads participate in spearheading the implementation of the County Assembly strategic plans and also

mobilize their staff to participate in implementing the strategic plans. Internal auditor further added that the Clerk of County Assembly participates in the implementation process. The Librarian and the senior hansard editor were also of the opinion that Everyone participates in implementing strategic plans. This is inclusive of staff, heads of departments, section heads and senior management.

It is evident from the reporting of the interviewees that all staff, junior and senior management participates in implementing the County Assembly's strategic goals. External consultancy experts are also invited to help in advising on the best strategic plans to adopt. The results agree with Opano et al, (2015) that the county executive, staff and civic leaders are involved in the strategic planning and implementation process in Kisii County.

It was established that the County Assembly was in the process of developing the 2018-2023 strategic plan. The current strategic plan borrows also from the 2013-2018 strategic Plan. Internal auditor noted that some strategic objectives from the 2013-2018 strategic plan will be carried to the 2018-2023 strategic plan.

Counties are relied upon to compose strategic plans that would control them in regard to improvement programs in the County and how to do the devolved functions from the national government. Strategic Plans are along these lines a way as far as possible of accomplishment of county goals. Non-execution renders strategic planning valueless. Uniting County designs, for the most part the strategic plans will guarantee quicker fulfilment of the guarantees made by the county government. Results agree with Opano et al, (2015) that successful implementation of strategic plans determine the level of service delivery at the County.

#### **4.4 Strategic Plan Implementation Challenges**

It was established that various challenges affected the implementation of the County Assembly of Machakos' strategic plan. According to the Senior Hansard editor, delayed disbursement of funds and political interference undermine the execution of strategic plans in the County Assembly. Senior research officer indicated there are several challenges affecting implementation of strategic plans in the County Assembly including scarce human resource being a major challenge especially in some departments and late disbursement of funds from the Treasury which undermine the effective implementation of strategic goals. He also noted that in some occasions, there is mismatch of responsibilities in the Assembly where some sections whose functions are unrelated are lumped together. On the other hand, the Internal auditor. Observed that there were inadequate resources both financial and human resources. As a result of inadequate resources, the county assembly is forced to prioritize on key issues. Little funds remain to effectively monitor the implementation of strategic plans. There was also a challenge of limited office space especially in the first strategic plan 2013-2018; however this was reported to have been solved through construction of new blocks. Low uptake of technology was also reported to undermine the digitalization of operations and strategic plan implementation.

The Librarian observed that low stakeholder participation undermines effective implementation of strategic plans. He noted that the staff were not actively involved when implementing the strategic plans. Inadequate resources and tight budget constraint also hinders successful implementation of strategic plans. Resource allocation is depended on revenue collected and recommendation from Commission for Revenue Allocation.

Strategy implementation is an expensive venture. Successful strategy implementation requires adequate resources. Most government entities fail in strategy implementation



due to limited resources. Limited resources herein refer to financial resources and human resources. Resource allocation influences implementation of strategic management plans through the preference of institutional leadership of the county executive management. Resource distribution influences strategic plan execution in government elements, specifically, those reliant on the government for financing. This is so somewhat in light of the fact that such elements are liable to political elements, making subsidizes accessibility and assignment progressively troublesome when contrasted with the private sector. For example, political help may lack in supporting strategic plan execution.

Machakos County Assembly may have limited resources as the amount of funds allocated to them by the Commission on Revenue Allocation (CRA) is not sufficient enough to enable them effectively implement their strategic plans. The results are in agreement with Elwak (2013) that staff and management were fully involved in strategy implementation. The results agree Opano et al, (2015) that financial and human resources are the major assets needed in the execution of the strategic plan in the County.

The study established that organizational structure significantly affects the successful implementation of strategic plans in the County Assembly of Machakos. *The Senior* hansard editor noted that organizational structure of the County Assembly is not harmonized. Some departments had more staff with other departments having fewer work forces. As a result, there was misalignment of tasks a situation that affects the implementation of strategic plans in the County Assembly. Political interference was also quoted where politics of the day by Members of the County Assembly, depending on the majority voice undermined the functioning and the process of strategy implementation.

Senior research officer indicated that poorly structured organizational structure causes improper coordination of duties, where with poorly coordinated functions, the implementation of county assembly strategic plans is negatively affected. Internal auditor also observed that organization structure sets the hierarchy of responsibilities within the county assembly. Each employee for instance reports to one particular supervisor who reports to head of department. As a result of defined responsibilities, the implementation of county strategic plans becomes easy.

It is a challenge to implement strategic plans when the organizational structure is not well defined. There is mismatch of tasks and reporting to the wrong department hindering effective implementation of strategic plans. According to Drazin and Howard (2009), a proper strategy-structure alignment is a necessary precursor to the successful implementation of new business strategies. The results agree with Atieno and Juma (2015) who conducted a study on the impacts of organization structure on strategy implementation in the County Government of Nakuru and established that organization structure is important in strategy implementation. The results agree with Abass et al, (2017) that organization structure influences implementation of the strategic plans of county governments in Kenya. The results also agree with Waiganjo et al, (2017) who conducted a study on the impacts of Organizational Structure On Strategy Implementation by County Governments in Kenya and established that organizational structure has notable effects on their strategy implementation.

The results indicated that the organizational culture adopted by County Assembly of Machakos affect the implementation of strategic plans. Senior hansard editor indicated that he staff work as a team. However some staff are overloaded. The working culture of the

county assembly in the implementation of strategic plans is at times hindered by political interference. Senior research officer also indicated that the County Assembly had a culture of teamwork. There are groups established to handle a given assignment. There are times especially when working in committees that support Members of the County Assembly are required to constitute a secretariat to specialize in a given task. Departments also divide key tasks inside the strategy implementation plan". Internal auditor noted, that Machakos County is a cosmopolitan area where they valued team work. Roles interlinked depend of on departments, sections and even the Executive arm of the County Government. The Librarian also indicated that there was a culture of equity, transparency, accountability and team work. He noted that the values are very critical in implementation of the strategic plans. Adhering to core values are favorable in the implementation of strategic plans. However, in some instances the organization culture is affected by political interference.

Organizational culture is the aggregate conduct of people who are a part of an organization and the meanings that the general population attach to their activities. Culture incorporates the organization esteems, dreams, standards, working language, frameworks, images, convictions and propensities. It is an example of aggregate practices and suspicions that are educated to new organizational individuals. Team work, sharing of duties and clear process streams are critical during strategy implementation.

Organizational culture-strategy alignment prompts staff with emotional allegiance to the culture to feel genuinely better about their jobs, the company they work for, and the merits of what the company is trying to accomplish. The organization must establish a vision, agree on a mission, develop key strategies to be implemented in the organization,

come up with strategic goals to be achieved and institute values to hold on to. The organization is then required to share policies and procedures within the organization and ensure that the top leadership is in support of the strategy. The results agree with Abass et al, (2017) that organization culture influences implementation of the strategic plans of County Governments in Kenya. Machakos County Assembly has a political culture that is based on County Assembly's objectives and goals. This culture herein influences the County Assembly's strategic plan implementation. Poorly established culture derails the strategy implementation process in the County Assembly. According to Mwachibibo (2017) organizational Culture-Strategy alignment is a priority during strategy formulation as well as during strategy implementation. The County Assembly should consider culture change and embrace values that are consistent with their Organizational and strategic goals.

It was established that leadership styles adopted by County Assembly of Machakos influenced implementation of strategic plans. Senior hansard editor and the Internal auditor shared the opinion that leadership style was well defined and that there were no interference from the leadership wing and they were very supportive. The also observed that the leadership was transformative and the staff were encouraged to meet targets. The employees were also encouraged to be innovative.

The County Assembly does not experience leadership related challenges that may hinder efficient execution of strategic plans in Machakos County. The successful implementation of strategic plan tools in decision making on financial and human resources management decision is an indicator of mature leadership management which

is a pre-requisite for strategic management success, confirmed by a leadership style that is supportive in the implementation of the County Assembly strategic plans. The capacity to foresee, imagine and keep up adaptability to enable others to make strategic change needed. Strategic initiative essentially implies utilizing strategy in the management of workers through motivation, coordination, innovation and communication with staff so as to accomplish certain County Assembly targets. The research meaning of leadership is that it includes inspiring the staff to a mutual vision of the County Assembly; in this way guaranteeing all staff adds to strategy execution.

Effective leadership involves a lot of management. Rajasekar (2014) states that, coordination of exercises, streamlining of procedures, adjusting the organizational structure, and keeping employees persuaded and focused on strategy execution are key duties of the leadership. Effective administration includes redesigning the organizational engineering in a way that moves workers with the proper information to set off esteem improving propos. Pioneers in organization are dependable in guaranteeing that strategy is successfully communicated. They should likewise guarantee that individuals in their organization are prepared for strategy execution. The leadership style in a given organization will impact how the picked procedures will be actualized. Organizational structure, assignment of obligations and freedom of leaders to settle on choices will all be impacted by leadership style in a specific organization. The results agree with Psiwa et al, (2017) that leadership-related challenges affect the process of implementing strategic plans in the County Government of Narok. The results agree also with Abass et al, (2017) that leadership style influences execution of the strategic plans of County Governments in Kenya. According to Obiga, (2014) who carried out research on challenges of Strategy

Implementation at the Nairobi County Government it was noted that organizational leadership influences the strategy implementation to a great extent.

The study noted that the communication style adopted by the County Assembly affected the implementation of strategic plans. Senior hansard editor noted that there were some problems in communicating with the County Executive. He also reported that there was a communication department to communicate progress in the implementation of strategic plans. The communication department is tasked in keeping the staff informed regarding strategic implementation planning. The review of strategic plans on midterm and end term is communicated across all sections in the county assembly. Senior research officer also noted that the communication of strategic plans were good. All stages of strategic implementation including, setting vision, mission, and environmental analysis and setting objectives formulation and final implementation were properly communicated to everyone. Internal auditor further indicated that Strategic plans were discussed on weekly basis. During board of management meetings any resolution on strategic implementation were passed on to the staff by heads of department.

The staff requires to be part of the strategic plan implementation and thus a message effectively communicated will stimulate employees into fully taking part in the County Assembly activities. The Board of Management must select those to be involved in communication of County Assembly strategic plans otherwise the strategic plan may be bent if incompetent people are involved. The results agree with Kaplan and Beinhocker (2003) who stated that challenges in strategic plans implementation may emanate from poor vertical communication. The results also agree with Anyieni and Areri (2016) that communication style influences the successful implementation of the strategic plans. The

results further agree with Mugoi (2015) that challenges in communication affect strategy implementation. However, the results disagree with Gedi and Muturi (2016) that communication to stakeholders did not significantly influence strategy implementation. Robinson and Pearce (2004) saw that miscommunication happens between the point where communication begins and the point where it's received. The management must know about individuals' convictions, frames of mind, conduct, demands and arguments so as to convey viably the message of strategic plan execution to the staff.

It was established that adequate resources (including both human and finance resources) are required to effectively implement the County Assembly's strategic plan. According to the Senior Hansard editor, County assembly had enough resources in terms of finance but limited by the human resources required. The number of human resources is capped by the County Assembly Service Board and the Commission on Revenue allocation. Budget projection is done on time, but disbursement may delay while Senior research officer said that the resources were inadequate. The county assembly also lacked adequate capacity building and technology know how remain underutilized.

Most strategic implementation fails as a result of limited resources. Resource allocation is very critical in strategy implementation. If financial resources, human resources and technological resources are not well allocated, the strategy implementation process may stall. Financial resources are also a constraint when it comes to implementation of strategic plans in the County Assembly. County Assemblies depend on the national government for financial resources in form of transfers and grants. This therefore means that requisition for funds done for the County Assembly tend to take more time before the funds are released. Even when released they are still not enough to complete the set

plans. There is an elaborate process on how different department and arm of the County Government gets their allocation of funds. Members of the County Assembly debate on allocations and may increase or reduce these allocations depending on the available funds.

Human resources play a major role in strategy implementation. Lawler and Mohrman (2000) state that the human resource functions should be positioned and designed as a strategic business partner that participates in both strategy formulation and implementation. Human resources are inadequate in the County Assembly. For strategic plans to be implemented fully there needs to be enough man power to carry out the duties involved in the plans. There are regulations and capping done by various government commissions including the Commission on Revenue Allocation and the Salaries and Remuneration Commission leaving some departments in the Assembly understaffed. The implication of this is that some staff are allocated more duties. This has a negative effect on strategy implementation since staff have more on their plates. Some programs are put on hold or stall due to this. The results are in agreement with Gichuhi (2015) who conducted a study on challenges of strategy Implementation in Murang'a County Government that the main challenges that face the implementation of strategy include lack of adequate resources in physical, financial and human capital. The results also agree with Otieno and Oloko (2015) that staff training is critical in facilitating proper strategic plans implementation practice. Further the results agree with Birisha (2017) that capacity development is critical when implementing County strategic plans. However, effective resource allocation does not guarantee successful strategy implementation because



programs, personnel, controls, and commitment must breathe life into the resources provided (Hill, & Jones 2008).

Internal auditor indicated that there were inadequate resources in terms of finance and human resource. Some departments were inadequately funded. This forced the Assembly to prioritize on key issues. Resources in terms of technology are underdeveloped which affects strategy implementation especially in monitoring strategic plan implementation.

Strategy implementation involves organization of the firm's resources and motivation of the staff to achieve objectives. Successful strategy implementation is important because its success or failure rate may have a significant impact on the success and sustainability of the County Assembly processes. The financial-related challenges arise from insufficiency of funds as well delay of disbursement of funds from the national government. Financial barriers to strategy implementation include budget restrictions limiting the overall expenditure on the strategy, financial restrictions on specific instruments, and limitations on the flexibility with which revenues can be used to finance the full range of instruments. The results agree with Mucai (2015) that resources allocation influences the implementation of strategic plans.

The participants also noted that conflicting organizational goals and responsibilities affect implementation of the County assembly's strategic plan. According to Senior hansard editor, conflicting interests among staff and county assembly members at times derailed strategy implementation. Some officers consider personal benefits at the expense of work. At times the assembly is not in agreement with the Members of the County Assembly undermining strategy implementation. Members want their issues addressed and given priority at the expense of strategic planning. Senior research officer further added that he

had not witnessed any conflicting organizational goals. However agreed that in case of any conflicting interests, strategy implementation is negatively affected. Internal auditor also agreed that she had not witnessed conflicting organizational goals at the county assembly. It is well structured with role and mandate clearly defined.

Conflicting organization goals negatively affects the implementation of County Assembly's strategic plans. The results agree with Kaplan and Beinhocker (2003) who stated that challenges in strategic plans implementation mainly rotate on individual barriers such as too many and conflicting priorities.

To address challenges to strategy implementation, there are quite a number of issues to be addressed. Senior hansard editor advised that the County Assembly Service Board should advise the Assembly on how to handle challenges at the evaluation stage. The Clerk of the County Assembly should be required do periodic reports to the County Assembly Service Board where he is the Secretary advising the Board accordingly in order to enhance strategic planning". Senior research officer on his side noted that there should be public-private partnership to support key strategic policies. There should be lobbying of institutions for instance the County Assembly Service Board to engage CRA in to employing more staff to contain human resource scarcity. He noted that there should be periodic training of staff to enhance capacity building. This can be done by partnering with other development partners like AHADI Kenya for capacity building. This is critical when implementing county assembly strategies. Further, Internal auditor observed that as a result of inadequate issues, there should be prioritization of key issues. This will ensure there are sufficient funds for strategy implementation.

## **4.5 Discussion**

From the outcomes, it is recognized that human resource can be an extraordinary challenge amid strategy execution. Further, the County Assembly of Machakos requires utilizing communication as tool so as to deliver human resource needs. These discoveries bolster those of Olson et al, (2005) who express that human asset is critical in strategy implementation. Human resource thus requires the management to consider the organization's communication needs so that those charged of building up the corresponding activity steps completely comprehend the strategy to actualize. Strategies, if not all around conveyed and all around controlled to staff to encourage ease in appropriation can be a test amid strategy execution.

It was also established that the County Assembly does not experience leadership related challenges that may hinder effective implementation of strategic plans in Machakos County Assembly. The successful implementation of strategic plans tools in decision making on financial and human resources management decision is an indicator of mature leadership management which is a pre-requisite is for strategic management success. This is supported by a leadership style that is supportive in the implementation of County Assembly strategic plans. The results agree with Psiwa et al, (2017) that leadership-related challenges affect the process of implementing strategic plans in the county government of Narok. The results agree with Abass et al, (2017) that leadership style influences implementation of the strategic plans of county governments in Kenya. According to Obiga, (2014) who carried out research on challenges of Strategy Implementation at the Nairobi County Government noted that organizational leadership influences the strategy implementation to a great extent. The outcomes concur with

Okumus' (2003) who discovered that the major challenges to strategy execution comprises of absence of coordination and support from the leadership wing.

Organization culture is important in the implementation of County Assembly strategic plans. Organizational culture includes the organization values, visions, norms, working language, systems, symbols, beliefs and habits. Strategic plan implementation requires organization culture or mindset, to carry through a programme of change. Team work, sharing of duties and clear process streams are critical during strategy implementation. The results agree with Abass et al, (2017) that organization culture influences implementation of the strategic plans of county governments in Kenya. According to Mwachibibo (2017) organizational Culture-Strategy alignment is a priority during strategy formulation as well as during strategy implementation. The County Assembly should consider culture change and embrace values that are consistent with their Organizational and strategic goals.

The research discovered that organizational structure significantly influences the successful implementation of strategic plans in Machakos County assembly. It is a challenge to implement strategic plans when organization structure is not well defined. The structure of any firm influences strategy execution. According to Drazin and Howard (2009), a proper strategy-structure alignment is an essential precursor to the successful implementation of new business strategies. The results agree with Atieno and Juma (2015) who conducted a study on the impacts of organization structure on strategy implementation in Nakuru county government and established that organization structure is important in strategy implementation. The results agree with Abass et al, (2017) that organization structure influences implementation of the strategic plans of county

governments in Kenya. Further the results agree with Waiganjo et al, (2017) who conducted a study on the influence of Organizational Structure On Strategy Implementation by County Governments in Kenya and established that organizational structure significantly influences their strategy implementation.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

The study was undertaken with the aim of determining the challenges of strategy implementation at the County Assembly of Machakos, Kenya. This chapter summarizes the research findings, conclusion and recommendations for policy and practice, limitations and suggestions for further study.

#### **5.2 Summary of the findings**

The research employed case study research design. This study used primary data whose collection was done using an interview guide. Targeted respondents in this study were 8 employees at the County Assembly of Machakos. The conversation during the interview was transcribed.

Various groups participated in developing strategic plans in the County Assembly of Machakos. The groups include staff and Members of the County Assembly. It was evident from the study that all staff, junior and senior management participates in implementing the County Assembly's strategic goals. External consultancy experts are also invited to help in advising on the best strategic plans to adopt. Strategic plans are very important in the management and success of the County Assembly. Strategic planning is a management tool that helps a County Assembly to improve its performance by ensuring that its staff are working towards the same goals and continuously adjusting the direction outlined in the mission and vision of the County Assembly.

It was established that various challenges affected the implementation of the County Assembly of Machakos' strategic plan. Based on the findings, human resource can be a significant challenge in strategy implementation. Furthermore, the County Assembly of Machakos requires employing communication as a tool for bringing forth human resource needs. The County Assembly also lacks enough manpower to carry out the processes involved in implementing strategies. Being understaffed, the success of strategic implementation of the County Assembly plans and programs is undermined.

Human resource in this way requires the management to consider the organization's communication needs so that those charged with building up the relating action steps completely comprehend the strategy to actualize. Strategies if not all around conveyed and very much directed to staff to encourage ease in adoption can be a challenge amid strategy execution.

It was also established that the County Assembly does not experience leadership related challenges that may hinder effective implementation of strategic plans in Machakos. The successful implementation of strategic plan tools in decision making on financial and human resources management decision is an indicator of mature leadership management which is a pre-requisite for strategic management success. This is supported by a leadership style that is supportive in the implementation of County Assembly strategic plans.

Organization culture is important in the implementation of the County Assembly strategic plans. Organizational culture includes the organization values, visions, norms, working language, systems, symbols, beliefs and habits. Strategic plan implementation requires

organization culture or mindset, to carry through a programme of change. Team work, sharing of duties and clear process streams are critical during strategy implementation.

The study established that organizational structure significantly affects the successful implementation of strategic plans in Machakos County Assembly. It is a challenge to implement strategic plans when organization structure is not well defined. Adjusting organizational structure as per the strategy can ensure successful strategy implementation. The structure of any organization influences strategy execution.

The results showed that Machakos County Assembly is still trying to find a footing in terms of implementing the County Assembly strategic plans. Key among the challenges faced is lack of financial resources. The limited resources mean that the County Assembly needs to align their programs with the available finances. The limited financial funds derail the successful implementation of strategic plans.

The County Assembly has undertaken various measures to address the various challenges faced in the implementation process. The County Assembly has resolved to involve the other stakeholders including public-private partnerships in the implementation process. Their participation is sought through organized workshops where members engage the implementation committee and management in discussions on how best to implement the County Assembly's priority programs. The human resource department is working on clarifying responsibilities and accountability. This will aid the management team in creation of coordination mechanisms to ensure County Assembly programs and plans are fully implemented. With roles and responsibilities duly clarified, they will be less



duplication of duties. Accountability will help the County Assembly in reducing wastages of resources meant for the implementation process.

### **5.3 Conclusion**

The study concludes that strategic plan is in place at County Assembly of Machakos. Organizational structure influences implementation of the strategic plan. There are good organizational structures in the County Assembly of Machakos. However, the current status of the organizational structure at times inhibits strategy implementation. There is a smooth communication flow in the organization between top management and employees and amongst the employees themselves. The current organizational structure facilitates quick decision making critical in strategy implementation. Leaders engage the employees during strategy implementation process in the organization. Leaders give employees the freedom to do what they want to do in the Assembly. Leaders support and facilitate employees with necessary skills and knowledge to ensure successful strategy execution. There was organizational culture in place in the organization studied. Individuals and teams have clearly defined goals that relate to the goals and mission of the organization. Organization tries its best to adhere to its mission, vision and values all the time and this aids in effective strategy implementation. Strategy implementation is an expensive venture and requires more resources. Financial resources are the central most important factor in strategy implementation. The County Assembly depends on both financial resources and human resources to successfully implement its strategic plan. Financial resource availability in the County Assembly influences strategy implementation. However the provision of human resources remains poor in the County Assembly.

The study concludes that organizational structure; leadership styles; organizational culture influences strategic plan implementation in the County Assembly. The study therefore concluded that financial-related challenges, human resource related challenges, leadership-related challenges had a significant effect on the implementation of the County Assembly of Machakos strategic plans. Finally, financial and human resources are the major resources required in the execution of the strategic plan. Major difficulty in strategic planning and execution is scarce human resource availability. Stakeholders such as the staff, management, Members of the County Assembly, professionals and civic leaders take part in strategic planning and implementation process.

#### **5.4 Recommendations of the Study**

The study recommends that the County Assembly of Machakos in Kenya should put in place strategic plans that guide strategy implementation processes. The leadership of the County Assembly of Machakos should enhance their organizational structures by matching with the current status. County Assembly of Machakos should ensure that their current organizational structures facilitate quick decision making to ease the processes of strategy implementation. Organizational structure ought to be managed by the set strategy, survey in strategy ought to be trailed by an audit in organizational structure in order to achieve proficiency and adequacy in strategy execution. The study infers that structure is crucial in anticipating strategy implementation in the County Assembly, and suggests that the County Assembly of Machakos ought to build up a decent blend of structure which would improve strategy execution. In perspective of the above conclusions the scholar prescribed that the County Assembly of Machakos should build the level of centralization and concoct a blend of structure that will improve strategy

execution. Further investigations should be done on individual component of structure to look at the degree to which they independently impact strategy implementation.

There is need for smooth communication flow in the County Assembly of Machakos between top management and staff and amongst the employees themselves. The County Assembly publishes the strategy but neither does publish the implementation process nor does it communicate the strategy timely to stakeholders. This poor communication has made communication to stakeholder to have the unintended effect on strategy implementation. County Assembly should plan for proper communication plan and budgeted public relations. This arm should be tasked with communicating the plans and strides made by the County Assembly as it is expected to increase support for the Assembly. Communication should be pervasive in every aspect of strategy implementation, as it relates in a complex way to organizing processes, organizational context and implementation of objectives. The study further recommends that communication barriers should be reported more frequently than any other type of barriers in the County Assembly for effective dissemination of information for the day to day decision making.

The leadership of the County Assembly of Machakos should involve employees during strategy implementation process. The staff of the County Assembly of Machakos should be chances to explore their potential within the organizations they work in order to enhance their human resource capabilities. County Assembly of Machakos should support and facilitate employees with necessary skills and knowledge to ensure successful strategy execution. Machakos County Assembly leadership must also cast the right shadows and ensure that policies, procedures and decision rights support the

advocated values. The study further recommends that County Assemblies provide for preventive measures against barriers that may arise in the course of implementation of their plans especially during strategy formulation. This is because any looming issues that arises during strategy implementation hinders the effectiveness of the strategy implementation efforts which may give rise to low percentages of plans implemented as well as not being within the specified periods of the strategic plan objectives to be met in a given timeframe.

Machakos County Assembly should put in place strong organizational cultures by having set of shared beliefs, values and norms. The County Assembly of Machakos should be motivated to support and maintain strategic initiatives of the organization. There is need to put in place clearly defined team and individual goals within the County Assembly units. The County Assembly of Machakos should strictly adhere to their missions, visions and values all the time for effective strategy implementation. County Assembly of Machakos should consider culture change and embrace values that are consistent with their Organizational and strategic goals.

The national government of Kenya should avail more resources to the devolved units in Kenya to facilitate the process of strategy implementation in county governments. The County Assembly of Machakos should diversify their sources of funds so that they not only depend on financial resources alone to successfully implement their strategic plans.

Based on the study findings, it was evident that delay by the national government in disbursement of funds for the implementation of the county strategic plans was the most pertinent financial challenge. Drawing from these findings, the study recommends that the national government ought to negate from delaying disbursement of funds to the

county governments. This would assist to ensure that county governments implement their strategic as stipulated in their budgets and within the stipulated timeline.

The study findings revealed that the most pertinent human resource-related challenge was lack of training forums to build up capacity of personnel. The study therefore recommends that the County Assembly of Machakos should come up with proper human resource policies which have provision for capacity building through training. This would ensure that the staff are competent, which would translate to successful implementation of the County assembly strategic plans.

Drawing from the findings that political influence especially based was significant leadership challenge that the County Assembly of Machakos encountered, the study recommends that Machakos County Assembly should review their style of leadership to a transformational and consultative style. This would help to curb the challenge of political interference, and as a result the process of implementing the strategic plans would become effective.

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

Some of the respondents were unwilling to participate in the study. However, this was mitigated by assuring them of confidentiality and that the data collected was meant for the purposes of academic research only.

The study relied much on qualitative data is depended on personal opinion. However, the study requested the respondents to be truthful as much as possible.

The limitations of the study allude to those attributes of plan or system that affected the application or translation of the outcomes of the study. Time requirement was one of the

fundamental impediments to the study which added to trouble in getting to data. This was for the most part because of inaccessibility of the respondents for meeting at the settled upon time, attributable to their bustling timetables in taking care of official obligations that might not have been foreseen, which on occasion were led outside the County Assembly workplaces and/or away. This in this way prompted rescheduling of the meeting time to fit into the respondent's journal, the study was in this way not given satisfactory time to catch all the data that may have been required for this study.

### **5.6 Suggestions for Future Research**

The study used the qualitative research method. The use of interview guide was quite limited. There was a need to complement it with a questionnaire. Further research can combine a questionnaire and in interview guide to determine the challenges of strategy implementation at Machakos County Assembly, Kenya.

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## **APPENDICES**

### **Appendix I: Interview Guide**

This interview guide was designed to collect data that helped in better understanding strategic management practices at the County Assembly of Machakos, Kenya. The data collected by this interview guide was held with strict confidentiality.

#### **PART A: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION**

- 1) What is your current position in the County Assembly of Machakos?
- 2) How long have you worked at County Assembly of Machakos?
- 3) What is your role in the County Assembly's strategic implementation process?

#### **PART B: STRATEGIC PLANNING AT THE COUNTY ASSEMBLY**

- 4) Who is in charge of developing strategic plans in the County Assembly of Machakos?
- 5) Who is responsible for the implementation of the County Assembly of Machakos?
- 6) What is the time frame of the current County Assembly of Machakos strategic plan?

#### **PART C: STRATEGIC PLAN IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES**

- 7) What are some of the challenges that affect the implementation of the County Assembly of Machakos' strategic plan?
- 8) Please share with me ways in which organizational structure affects implementation of strategic plans by County Assembly of Machakos. Expound on your answer.
- 9) In your opinion, how does organizational culture adopted by County Assembly of Machakos affect the implementation of strategic plans?
- 10) Please share with me how leadership styles adopted by County Assembly of Machakos affect implementation of strategic plans?

11) Please share with me how communication style adopted by this County assembly affects implementation of strategic plans? Please explain.

12) Does your County assembly have adequate resources (including human resources) to effectively implement the Assembly's strategic plan?

13) In your opinion, do conflicting organizational goals and responsibilities affect implementation of the County assembly's strategic plan?

**PART D: OVERCOMING THE STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES**

How do you address challenges to strategy implementation?

Thank you for your co-operation