

CHALLENGES OF IMPLEMENTATION OF OPEN SPACE OFFICE
LAYOUT STRATEGY BY TEACHERS SERVICE COMMISSION OF KENYA

BY

CATHERINE NASAMBU MAKOKHA

A MANAGEMENT RESEARCH PROJECT SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL
FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF THE
DEGREE OF MASTER OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION,
SCHOOL OF BUSINESS
UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI

AUGUST, 2010

DECLARATION

This research project is my original work and has never been presented in any other University or college for the award of degree.

Signature:  Date: 17/11/2010

MAKOKHA NASAMBU CATHERINE

REG. NO. D61/70844/2008

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

Signature:  Date: 17/11/2010

DR. MARTIN OGUTU

LECTURER

DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

SCHOOL OF BUSINESS

UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI

DEDICATION

I dedicate this project to my parents, siblings and friends, for their understanding encouragement and support while undertaking the MBA project

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am indebted to thank my good Lord for having brought me this far. His abundant love, care and grace He instilled in me not only carried me through out the MBA program but also cultivated in me profound hope and faith that my prayers will be answered at last.

Special thanks to my Supervisor Dr. Martin Ogutu for his exceptional advice and guidance throughout my compilation of this project. His advice, support and constructive criticism throughout the study enabled me complete my project in time. I am convinced that without his support, this study would not have been a success

It is my confession that the MBA program has been a very long, taxing and challenging journey, the successful completion of which has been the result of the support and encouragement from many friends. I am indebted not only to people who gave me the inspiration to take up this program but also to those who gave me the guidance and assistance on what I have reported here.

More so, I am grateful to the management of Teachers Service Commission who agreed to share their experiences and opinions and patiently answered all questions. Their time and effort are acknowledged with gratitude. I wish them God's blessings

I greatly appreciate the encouragement of my colleagues both at my work place and MBA class throughout the program, were it not their interactive discussions and encouragement, the program could have proved unmanageable, I also give tribute to all other colleagues in my work place who, in one way or another, offered constant encouragement and support whenever I approached them. May God bless them abundantly!

I am grateful to the University of Nairobi for giving me the opportunity to be a part of this highly prestigious institute of higher education.

Last but not least, I am grateful to my entire family for their patience and love that they showed more especially when I would not have time for them. I earnestly thank them for their wishful prayers and encouragement. May God's grace be with you all!

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Abstract

The study sought to determine the challenges of implementation of open space office layout strategy by Teachers Service Commission of Kenya. Another objective of the study was to establish what Teachers Service Commission is doing to overcome the open space strategy implementation challenges. Four respondents were interviewed out of which a response rate of 83% was achieved.

The study was a case study and interview guide was administered using personal interview method. The main findings of the study were that implementation of an organization strategy requires thorough scrutiny of the strategy by all the commission stakeholders so that all them are part of the strategy thus eliminating any resistance which may result due to non-inclusive consultation.

The study however shows that noise, lack of privacy, human behaviour, environmental factors and technological challenges have an impact on open space office layout structure.

Even though the commission has been discussing the matter with the employees regarding the issues affecting the organization at large as per the strategy implementation the researcher therefore recommends that commission should ensure that precautions are taken immediately in order to reduce greater loss to the organization. The commission should ensure that challenges are dealt with promptly in order to increase productivity.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study

The role of the physical property of work setting and environment, as well as management processes over time, in bringing about improved organizational performance in terms of management effectiveness and increased productivity, has been noted by several authors (Uzee, 1999; Leaman and Bordass, 1993; Williams *et al.*, 1985). This point has been re-enforced by the fact that more and more people are being employed in the services sector and spend most of their working days inside a building. Thus a working environment which is as healthy and comfortable as possible is of importance, if people are to function undisturbed and at their best within an organisation. There is also a growing awareness of the impact of the behavioural environment on occupants' productivity. If the office environment is to act as a conduit for knowledge creation, and knowledge transfer, then offices need to allow both collaborative work and individual work to coexist without causing conflict between the two.

The recognition of the importance of the working environment and the challenges brought about by globalization has shifted the focus of many organizations into adopting a flexible, large open space working environment. This new approach encompasses a variety of arrangements which are evolving from the traditional office practice where work was mainly undertaken by an individual who had an assigned desk in a specific enclosed location. Under such a closed location it was found out that productivity and success of a firm was low because the existence of a direct relationship between the

success of a business, and the design of the workplace, Shuman and Scott (2002). As pointed out by McGregor (2000), today's organizations have to operate under conditions of rapid and continuous change, where the introduction of new and superior technologies together with the increasing international competition calls for business concepts, employees and workplaces that can respond quickly to these changes. Therefore, architects, developers, investors and facility managers responsible for developing workspace strategies and layouts must ensure that the most suitable work environments are provided to meet the organization's current and future needs for, McGregor (2000).

The Teachers Service Commission in late 2009 relocated from a rented building in the city centre where it used to pay what was considered a high rental charge to its modern ultra-modern building in Upper Hill. With the movement, the organisation adopted an open office plan in the new location as opposed to the closed office structure it had adopted in the old building. However, the adoption of the new office plan has not been smooth sailing due to many implementation challenges that have been experienced.

1.1.1 Strategy Implementation

Strategy Implementation is an important component of the strategic planning process. It has been defined as "the process that turns implementation strategies and plans into actions to accomplish objectives" (Pride and Ferrell, 2003). It addresses who, where, when, and how to carry out strategic implementation process successfully. According to (David, 2003), both managers and employees should be involved in the implementation decision and adequate communication between all parties is important for successful implementation of a strategy.

Strategy implementation usually involves change as organizations and their environment are constantly changing. Implementation programmes vary according to the nature of the strategic problems that the organization faces. Organizations should be structured in such a way that it can respond to pressure to change from the environment and pursue any appropriate opportunities which are spotted (Lorsch, 1997). (Thompson and Strickland, 1980) note that while strategy formulation requires the abilities to conceptualize, analyze and judge, implementation involves working with and through other people and institutions of change. It is important therefore that in designing the structure and making it operational, key aspects such as empowerment, employee motivation and reward should be considered. (Owen, 1982) agrees that strategy and structure need to be matched and be supportive of each other in order to achieve objective set. Structure is the means by which the organization seeks to achieve its strategic objectives and implement strategies and strategic changes, Thompson (1997). Strategies are formulated and implemented by managers operating within the current structure. The structure of an organisation is designed to breakdown how work is to be carried out in business units and functional departments

In an ever changing and competitive business environment, organizations require a strategic leader who is able to provide and share a clear vision, direction and purpose for the organization (Thompson, 1997). Leadership is the key to effective strategy implementation. The role of the Chief Executive is fundamental because a CEO is seen as a catalyst closely associated with and ultimately is accountable for the success of a strategy. The right managers must also be in the right positions for effective

implementation of a new strategy (Jones and Hill, 1997). Top management goodwill and ownership to drive the process is critical to effective implementation of strategy.

In addition, the execution of a strategy depends on individual members of organization especially key managers. Motivating and rewarding good performance for individuals and units are key success factors in effective strategy implementation (Shirley, 1983). According to (Cummings and Worley, 2005), organizational rewards are powerful incentives for improving employee and work group performance. It can also produce high levels of employee satisfaction. Reward systems interventions are used to elicit and maintain desired levels of performance to the extent that rewards are available, durable, timely, visible and performance contingent, they can reinforce and support organizational goals, work designs and employee involvement.

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

strengthen competitive valuable competencies and organizational capabilities. Training therefore becomes important when a company shifts to a strategy that requires different skills, competencies and capabilities.

1.1.2 Open Space Office Layout

Current and emerging trends in technology are changing how, when and where employees work. Technology is the enabler in the current business environment as it allows businesses to undertake their work differently. In this context, businesses are learning today to work and react faster, smarter and less expensive. In order to achieve efficiency and better match workplace with the way people and corporations are doing business, organizations find it necessary to reconfigure their office landscape. Traditional office layouts, with enclosed individual work stations along a corridor, a few shared conference rooms and enclosed offices for managers are not a suitable environment to encourage teamwork and communication between staff in such a dynamic business set up. This has led to the development of new open space office arrangements that break from the traditional office model.

The term open plan office refers to an office space divided into relatively small cubicles or workstations by partitions and modular furniture. The arrangement of the workstations in the open office is flexible, where there are no full height walls and doors separating occupants (Brittal, 2004). The need to adapt the open space office plans has been necessitated by the fact that alteration of the main structure later on during the life cycle of the building is difficult and thus a design that is adaptable from the early stages of

building planning is desirable. Adaptability refers to the capability of ensuring that the workspace can be configured and re-configured to suit different building occupants, their changing needs, work processes and layouts. According to (Sogawa et al., 2002), the adoption of the open space office layout over the traditional office plan will enable an organisation to more efficient use space and other facilities (input); realize better performance and productivity from the employees, develop positive image in the eyes of clients, increase flexibility and as a consequence a reduction in the disruption time and annoyance from the change in an organisation.

While the espoused organizational benefits of open-plan environments relate to improved teamwork and communication, the actual effects experienced by the occupier can be that of increased crowding and loss of privacy. According (Nathan and Doyle, 2002), open-plan and shared offices have most complaints about lack of privacy – people have difficulty concentrating, dealing with personal matters and colleagues' annoying habits.

1.1.3 Teachers Service Commission

Teachers Service Commission (TSC) was established by an Act of parliament in 1967. Prior to these teachers were employed by the churches, local council, community and central government under different terms and conditions of service. Arising from these disparities in the teaching service, there was strong agitation by different stakeholder that teachers be placed under one employer. This resulted in the enactment of Cap 212 laws of Kenya in 1967

The Act mandated the Teacher service commission to register, recruit, deploy, remunerate, promote, transfer and discipline teachers in public institutions and also to maintain the teaching standards. The Act further provides for the establishment of secretariat to enable the commission perform its functions. At inception, the Teacher service commission had 3 commissioners and 35 secretariat staff against a teaching force of 39,725 teachers. Presently there are 24 commissioners and 2400 secretariat staff managing over 240,000 teachers. While the majority of the secretariat staff are based at the headquarters, others are stationed at Teachers Service commission units all district and major Municipalities in the country. Since 1967, Teachers service commission has re-engineered its organizational structure, function and operation in response to improving the delivery of services. The commission is composed of 24 commissioners and is headed by the commission chairman who is assisted by the deputy commission chairman. The main function of the commission is to formulate policy on Teachers matters.

Teacher service commission has a secretariat headed by the commission secretary who is its chief executive administrator and advisor responsible for the executive of its policies and decision. The Chief Secretary is assisted by senior secretary who is assisted by senior secretary who are heads of departments. The senior deputy secretary are assisted by deputy secretary who head the various division of the commission.

The Teachers service commission secretariat is structured into department, division and section which are set on functions lines. The commission has delegated some of its function to agents. These include: recruitment of teachers, deployment of teachers, and

discipline of teachers. The agents of the TSC are Provincial Director of education (PDE), Director of city education (DCE), Municipal Education Officer (MEOs), District Education Officer (DEOs), District Education Boards (DEB) and Board of Governors (BOG)

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Employees have the desire to control their physical working environment. The more control workers have over the office environment, the more likely they are to be satisfied and achieve greater productivity (Asid, 2005). However the need to research on challenges of implementation of open space layout at Teachers Service Commission has been necessitated by the fact that there was inherent in altering the main building structure, inability of the new workplace design to support IT configuration that require networks to be promoted and renovated regularly in order to meet the rapid improvement in this technology, flexibility of the building not being able to support the operational requirement of the building in a cost and time, there was complains from the employees of infringement on their privacy since the adoption of open space office. The implementation of an open space office layout -as one of the measures- has faced challenges at the Teachers service commission. The challenges faced ranged from Employees are in one large area, and phone conversations or a conversation between employees is overheard easily. When there are several conversations happening at one time, it's quite noisy that leads to distraction which may lessen productivity. People passing to and fro can also cause distraction of employees. Security is reduced. Each employee lacks a lockable door like they would have if each one had a separate office.

This can lead to risks and issues that the company may not want to face. Privacy is difficult to obtain with an open office plan. If family members call, or if a confidential call needs to be made, it can be difficult. With individual offices, these things are more possible. Employees may feel uncomfortable being in such close quarters with their coworkers when confidential calls need to be made. Sickesses and infections can spread like wildfire in an environment like an open office plan. When flu season hits, you can bet that most employees will catch it. Lighting, heating, and air conditioning to suit all of the employees' tastes can be difficult to achieve. This can cause problems among the employees, which can damage productivity and employee relationships.

There are few local studies that have been done in Kenya regarding the development and implementation of the open space office layout in the Kenya firms. However (Mungai, 2008) undertook a study on Office layout Redesign consideration in selected service organisation in Nairobi. The results of her study showed that majority of the buildings in Nairobi did not consider the concept of flexibility that meet the emergence of new technologies and increase in business competition. In addition, she found out that majority of organizations then still used the closed office design. Other studies done in other countries include the one done by (Roelofsen, 2004) in which he found out that speech (incidental and/or formal meeting discussions, telephone conversations, etc.) form the most disturbing source of noise in an open office accommodation. The disturbance is not, apparently, due to any increase of speech volume, whether individually or due to a multitude of voices speaking simultaneously but, and in particular, as a result of over-hearing a conversation which is distracting.

Recent studies done in the area of strategy implementation include Omollo (2007) studied the challenges of implementing strategic decisions at the Kenya Armed Forces Medical Insurance Scheme (AFMIS). The findings were that implementation of strategic decision is a continuous process which requires monitoring and evaluation at all stages to determine the best alternatives in the process. Other findings were that organizations need to formulate clear and well documented strategies from the very beginning of strategy formulation through to implementation and that managers at all levels of the organization must identify and embrace the strategy so that staff buy in the idea and connect with strategy being implemented.

A study by Aboud (2007) focused on the challenges facing the implementation of strategy for revitalizing agriculture (SRA). The findings of the study were: inadequate staff motivation, poor understanding of SRA by stakeholders and low acceptability of the strategy. Koske (2003) studied strategy implementation and its challenges in public corporations, a case of Telkom Kenya. He found that the major challenges faced were poor management and resources, poor leadership style, lack of financial resources, limited IT capacity, government regulations and unsupportive culture. As observed above, the studies conducted on implementation challenges have not considered the open space office implementation challenges faced by the Teachers Service Commission. The uniqueness of each industry and sector necessitates a separate study to be undertaken focusing Teachers Service Commission which is the largest employer of teachers in Kenya. This research will therefore seek to identify the challenges to open office layout

implementation at Teachers Service Commission. This problem statement thus leads to the following questions: what are the challenges of implementing open space office layout in the Teachers Service Commission and what Teachers Service Commission is doing to overcome the challenges of implementing open space layout?

1.3 The research Objectives

The general objective of the study is to investigate the challenges faced by the Teachers service commission in implementing the open space office layout structure. The specific objectives will include;

- (i.) Determine the open space strategy implementation challenges faced by Teachers Service Commission?
- (ii) Establish what Teachers Service Commission is doing to overcome the open space strategy implementation challenges.

1.4 Importance of the study

The study will aid various stakeholders: many of the government offices are still adopting the closed office structure and have recently been prevailed upon to adopt the open space layout to improve their service delivery, Mungai (2008). Hence it will be of great importance to know in advance the challenges that bedevil such shift in office layout and also prepare in advance on how to counter such challenges by putting in place adequate measures. Considering that the government is the largest employer and the nature of the spread of its workforce in the country, the effects of the improved services will be felt all over the country and thus spur the needed economic growth.

The other beneficiaries from the study will be other local firms planning to change their office layout to open structure. This will be relevant to these firms in the sense that since they face same local challenges – due to a common education system and operating environment - the findings of study will be a crucial planning tool of the firms. For academicians, this study will form the foundation upon which other related and replicated studies can be based on them.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Concept of Strategy Implementation

Strategy Implementation is one of the important components of the strategic planning process. Chandler (1962) defined strategy as the determination of the basic long term goals and objectives of an enterprise and the adoption of action and the allocation of resources necessary for carrying out these goals. This means that strategy is about managing new opportunities. The strategy that is chosen should be one that optimizes the resources available in order to achieve organizational goals and objectives. Strategy implementation has been defined as “the process that turns implementation strategies and plans into actions to accomplish objectives” (Pride and Ferrell 2003, pg 156-180). Pride and Ferrell (2003) define strategy implementation as “the process of putting strategies into action”. Elements that require consideration during the implementation process include annual objectives, policies, resource allocation, management of conflict, organization structure, managing resistance to change, and organizational culture (David 2003). In developing policies during the implementation process, methods, procedures, rules, forms, and administrative practices are established.

Bartlett and Ghoshal (1987) noted that in all the companies they studied “the issue was not a poor understanding of environmental forces or inappropriate strategic intent. Without exception, they knew what they had to do; their difficulties lay in how to achieve the necessary changes”. Supporting this, Miller (2002) reports that organizations fail to implement more than 70 percent of their new strategic initiatives. Given the significance

of this area, the focus in the field of strategic management has now shifted from the formulation of strategy to its implementation (Hussey, 1998; Lorange, 1998; Wilson, 1994). There are some commonly used models and frameworks such as SWOT, industry structure analysis and generic strategies for researchers and practicing managers in the areas of strategy analysis and formulation in strategic management. By contrast, there is no agreed-upon and dominant framework in strategy implementation. Concerning this, Alexander (1991) has stated that: One key reason why implementation fails is that practicing executives, managers and supervisors do not have practical, yet theoretically sound, models to guide their actions during implementation. Without adequate models, they try to implement strategies without a good understanding of the multiple factors that must be addressed, often simultaneously, to make implementation work.

2.2 strategy implementation challenges

Formulating appropriate strategy is not enough. For effective strategy implementation, the strategy must be supported by decisions regarding the appropriate organization structure, reward system, organizational culture, resources and leadership. Just as the strategy of the organization must be matched to the external environment, it must also fit the multiple factors responsible for its implementation, (David, 1997). Strategic planning is process by which an enterprise develops a vision of the future and draws up goals, strategies and action plans for realizing the vision.

Performance contracts are drawn from strategic plans which are based on strategies and targets. Jones & Hill (1997), implementation of strategy is a way in which a company creates the organizational arrangement that allows it to pursue its strategy most

effectively. Successful strategy implementation therefore, must consider issues central to its implementation which include, matching organizational structure to strategy, creating a supportive organizational culture among other issues (David 1997)

The level of success of a strategy depends on the degree of participation in planning and on acceptance of the goals, indicators and targets set. Therefore effective implementation of strategy plan is likely to be successful if it rests on meetings and consensus between the management and staff, rather than a top down imposition of plans and targets (Song, 1983). Goal setting involves managers and subordinates jointly establishing and clarifying employee goals. The first element of goal setting is establishing goals that are perceived as challenging but realistic and to which there is high level of commitment. It involves having employees participate in the goal setting process so as to increase motivation and performance. Participation also convinces employees that the targets are achievable and can increase their commitment to achieving them. Employee participation is likely to be effective if employee involved and will therefore support goal setting. Participation in goal setting is likely to be seen as legitimate, resulting in the desired commitment to the implementation of a strategy (Cummings & Worley, 2005).

The execution of a strategy depends on individual members of organization especially key managers. Motivating and rewarding good performance for individuals and units are key success factors in effective strategy implementation (Shirley, 1983). Cummings & Worley (2005), organizational rewards are powerful incentives for improving employee and work group performance. It can also produce high levels of employee satisfaction.

Reward systems interventions are used to elicit and maintain desired levels of performance. To the extent that rewards are available, durable, timely, visible and performance contingent, they can reinforce and support organizational goals, work designs and employee involvement.

Reward system should align the actions and objectives of individuals with objectives and needs of the firm's strategy. Financial incentives are important reward mechanisms because they encourage managerial success when they are directly linked to specific activities and results. Intrinsic non-financial rewards such as flexibility and autonomy in the job are important managerial motivators. Negative sanctions such as withholding of financial and intrinsic rewards for poor performance are necessary to encourage managers' efforts (Pearce & Robinson, 2007).

Culture is a set of assumptions that members of an organization share in common (shared beliefs and values). Organizational culture helps in nurturing and dissemination of core values. Implementation of new strategy will be concerned with adjustments in the structure, employees, systems and style of doing things in order to accommodate the perceived needs of the strategy (Pearce & Robinson, 2007). Wehrich & Koontz (1993) look at culture as the general pattern of behaviour, shared beliefs and values that members have in common. Culture can be inferred from what people may do and think within an organization setting. It involves the learning and transmitting of knowledge, beliefs and patterns of behavior over time. This means organizational culture is fairly stable and does not change fast. It sets the tone for the company and establishes rules on

how people should behave. The top managers create a climate for the organizations and their values influence the direction of the firm.

Thompson et al (2007), effective strategy implementation depends on competent personnel and effective internal organizational systems. No organization can hope to perform the activities required for successful strategy implementation without attracting, motivating and retaining talented managers and employees with suitable skills and intellectual capital. The task of implementing challenging strategic initiatives must be assigned to executives who have the skills and talent to handle and can be counted on to turn decisions and actions into results to meet established targets.

Organizational structure on its own is not sufficient to ensure successful implementation of a strategy, effective leadership is required. Bateman and Zeithaml (1993) define a leader as one who influences others to attain goals. Leaders have a vision and they move people and organizations in directions they otherwise would not go. In a competitively chaotic environment, one essential contribution of a strategic leader is to provide and share a clear vision, direction and purpose for the organization (Thompson, 1997).

Leadership is the key to effective strategy implementation. The role of the Chief Executive is fundamental because a CEO is seen as a catalyst closely associated with and ultimately is accountable for the success of a strategy. The CEO's actions and the perceived seriousness to a chosen strategy will influence subordinate managers' commitment to implementation. The personal goals and values of a CEO strongly

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

2.3 Types of Strategies

When implementing strategies, a firm may adopt a planned, entrepreneurial, ideological or umbrella strategy (Mintzberg and Waters, 1987). The planned strategy is clear intentions backed by formal control. The leader is the centre of authority with their intentions being very clear and precise and the goal is to transform the intention to collective action with minimum distortion. Programs and systems are built in to the plan to ensure that no one acts in another way than intended. For this type of strategic process to be effective the environment has to be extremely stable or the organization has to be able to predict it with great accuracy. When organization's put large quantities of resources in a mission or project they might not tolerate unstable environment. When they have plan several years ahead and don't allow avoiding behaviour and commit themselves firmly. An example of this can be mining companies.

In the entrepreneurial strategy, some level of tolerance for a little emergent strategy is incorporated but is still very much planned. The owner controls the organization tightly

and can impose his vision or direction on the organization. This type of strategy is very common in young organizations and in entrepreneurial organizations. The central actor is the one that places the organization where he/she wants to in the world. Compared to the planned strategy the intentions are harder to identify and are less specific, but as long as the actors in the organizations respond to the will of the leader the strategy appear to be rather deliberate. Because the strategy comes from a single person there can be sudden changes in it and reformulation isn't unusual. The adaptability of the entrepreneurial strategy is what distinguishes it from the planned one. Visions in the brain of a person are more flexible than articulated ones. The adoption and "emergence" of planned strategies are discouraged by the articulation. Psychologists have shown that articulation of strategy manifests it, impending willingness to change it.

Vision can be collective-when the members of an organization share a vision and the members identify so strongly with it that they pursue it as an ideology. This leads to patterns in their behaviour so that clear realized strategies can be identified. Since an ideological strategy is likely to over time becoming articulated one can see intentions. That is why one can say that this type of strategy is deliberate. These intentions would be viewed as organizational, differing from the entrepreneurial and planned strategy by being embraced by everyone in the organization and not originate from one centre and then being accepted passively. The collective vision makes it harder to change, because all members of the organization have to accept the changes. Moreover, the ideology is rooted in traditions and precedents. Therefore, people resist changing it (Mintzberg and Waters, 1987).

For the umbrella organization Mintzberg and Waters (1987) relax the condition of tight control over the actors in the organizations and in some cases control over the environment. Leaders have only partial control over the members of the organization and can design the umbrella type of strategy. An umbrella strategy is when there are general guidelines for behaviour, defined boundaries and the other actors in the organization can manoeuvre within them. This means that strategies can emerge within these boundaries. The umbrella strategy cannot only be labeled as deliberate and emergent but also “deliberate emergent” in the sense that the central leadership creates conditions which allow strategies to emerge.

2.4 Changing work style

More and more people are currently employed in the services sector and spend most of their working days inside a building. A working environment which is as healthy and comfortable as possible is therefore not unimportant, if people are to function undisturbed and at their best within an organisation. The boundaries that have traditionally separated work, family and leisure time are becoming increasingly blurred – driven by advances in technology, the global economy means that 24/7 has largely replaced the normal 8 hours cycle in the Kenyan set up. Working hours are not necessarily longer, but new methods of working let people take their job away from the physical office to virtually any other place – whether at home, in a restaurant or commuting.

The most prominent aspects of workspace settings are open-plan attributes. Office layouts are changing substantially and the dominant trend is towards more open-plan space (Knight Frank Hooker, 1995; Duffy and Tannis, 1993), which has been defined as a layout of office without dividing walls (Salmon, 1979).

Office layouts have encouraged participation as a means to facilitate work transactions and increase productivity. Participation is the mechanism of work dialog among workers, which gives them the opportunity to exchange information and ideas. Challenged by the effects of globalization and the “work anywhere” concept, the focus has now shifted on the ability to rapidly move into a flexible, large open space and start work instantly, where there is an emphasis on teaming. The twenty-first century workplace design is being affected by the changing economy. There is a strong belief that there exists a direct relationship between the success of a business, and the design of the workplace (Shuman and Scott, 2002).

With a variety of needs depending on job function, specific tasks, work-style and personal life, knowledge workers have greater freedom in choosing when and where to work, which helps in the achievement not only of optimum productivity, but also a healthy work/life balance. It naturally follows that the design of the physical workspace and infrastructure must also evolve to successfully accommodate this changing approach to work.

2.4.1 Effect of the work place on people

Cost to employers is that of the salaries of the employees occupying the space. Successful organisations have, therefore, recognised that an effective workplace helps attract and retain the right staff. As observed by the American Society of Interior Designers (2005), the physical workplace is one of the top three factors employees take into account when deciding to accept or leave a job, so this clearly has a massive effect on employee productivity, meaning that employers have to give serious thought to issues such as employee comfort, access to people and equipment, privacy and flexibility.

Steiner (2007) further observed that the checklist that modern employees look for in the prospective working environment will include whether the workspace and furniture ergonomic, healthy and comfortable, is the right balance of privacy and open space achieved, as per individual and group work, whether the environment support people – is there enough light, air quality, sound, physical space?

As a consequence of the above changing demands, Johansson (2002) stated that the process of designing contemporary workplaces in office buildings requires a new approach in order to adequately address challenges. The challenges are exemplified by the fact that today's organizations have to operate under conditions of rapid and continuous change, where the introduction of new and superior technologies together with the increasing international competition calls for business concepts, employees and workplaces that can respond quickly to these changes (McGregor, 2000).

4.2 Open-plan offices and cellular offices

Office spaces can be roughly divided into two categories. Open office spaces with high concentration levels of work areas, subdivided, or not, by screens and filing cabinets and, conventional individual compartmentalized offices separated from each other. Open-plan offices are often preferred, partly because the working areas within the office space are fifty per cent smaller than in conventional, individual, office accommodations (Folsom and Koenig, 2007).

According to Russell (1999), alterations to the layout within open offices are simpler to carry out. An open-plan office is also easier to rent. Furthermore, the economic advantages of open-plan offices can be improved by the shorter working distance and promotion of: communication, information routes, colleague relations, work involvement, transparency and openness. As was concluded by Brill et al (2001), when comparing the attributes of the open system and the closed system, it is important to compare a number of critical factors. These he observed included; ability to do distraction-free solo work, support for impromptu interactions, support for meetings and undistracted group work, workspace comfort, ergonomics and enough space for work tools, access to needed technology, quality lighting and access to daylight, temperature control and air quality. Office workers want to be able to undertake distraction-free solo work, but also value the opportunity to have an informal interaction with colleagues (Haynes, 2007).

The office environment can be used to establish brand identity, as well as a tool to attract and retain quality staff (Becker, 2002). Becker (2002) argued that the layout and use of the office can also provide workplace flexibility, thereby allowing firms to change and

adapt without being restricted by office space. Moreover, Becker argued that open-plan environments are a less expensive solution over time, as they require minimum alteration since occupiers can adopt a “hotelling” policy. The idea of “zero-time” space solution was introduced with the principles being that the space does not change over time, but the space policy does, i.e. employee desk ratio.

2.4.3 Layout of the physical workplace

Interior elements of workplace facilities directly impact workers' comfort and efficiency. Earle (2003) stated that while nothing will improve an organization's ability to attract and retain employees better than offering higher salaries and more benefits than its competitors, studies show that providing a flexible and unconventional new work environment can also be an extremely effective tool for attraction and retention.

The interior of a workplace should be designed to consider workers' needs. Elements that designers and facility managers need to consider in this category include layout of the workspace, materials used, lighting system, air quality, furniture, fixture, furnishings, sign planning, color planning, and operation and maintenance (Sogawa et al., 2002). A flexible layout of the workplace should incorporate: simplifying the range of settings provided and tailoring them to people's real use of the workplace. The trend for providing office space should be a single office size, rather than two or three sizes (Murray, 2002). In addition, organisations should design larger vertical risers, and larger uninterrupted floor plates suited to mixture of open-plan and cellular space (Markland, 1998). According to Brittain et al (2004) a building should also use walls of offices that are mobile ones, that is merging or separation of units can be managed by little effort. Designers also can specify furniture and desks that can be relocated and replaced easily.

Bitner (1992) suggests that the physical environment plays such a key role in influencing buyer behavior for service organisations, that it should be integrated into the organization's marketing solution. She discusses the issue of social interactions and concludes that the physical container, the environment, affects the quality, and duration, of interactions. Whilst Bitner (1992) believes that the physical setting can affect the behaviour of its occupants, she also acknowledges that creating an environment for a range of different behaviours is a complex issue. Bitner (1992) observes that the servicescape of buildings can identify three important dimensions, namely: ambient conditions, space and function, and signs, symbols and artifacts.

The ambient conditions and the space and function dimensions replicate dimensions in the physical environment, those being comfort and layout, respectively. The signs, symbols and artefacts dimension acknowledges the individual within the environment, and includes such things as personal artefacts and style of decor. An important behavioural pattern acknowledged in the servicescape framework is that of the social interaction between, and among, customers and employees (Bitner, 1992). Brenner and Cornell (1994) investigated the possible behavioural tensions within office environments by the evaluation of office environments that had been specifically designed to enhance privacy and collaboration (Brenner and Cornell, 1994).

2.5 The Impact of Office Layout on Productivity

The nature of office work has changed over the last century from that of a passive and static activity, to that of a dynamic and flexible activity. The changing nature of office work has created tensions in office design. The challenge, for modern office designers, is to create environments that support the ways that people work, and act as enablers of work processes, and not as disablers. Laing (1991) acknowledged the existence of the potential tension between office design and the work processes, and argued that the conventional office design, which was based on passive individual process work, was restricting organisations ability to be creative.

Office environments are more than just furniture and walls, they are also places where people interact to create and transfer knowledge. Ward and Holtham (2000) argue the importance of the linkage between space and knowledge creation, but acknowledge that managing space is probably the least appreciated tool of contemporary knowledge management. If the office environment is to act as a conduit for knowledge creation, and knowledge transfer, then offices need to allow both collaborative work and individual work to coexist without causing conflict between the two.

The working environment, human resources and business strategy established a linkage between the working environments (Gensler 2005). He notes that working environment has a fundamental impact on recruitment, retention, productivity and ultimately on the organizations' ability to achieve its business strategy. Ilozor et al (2002) attempted to make the connection between the use of innovative work settings and improved organisational performance. He found out that the more a work setting is perceived to be

innovative in terms of fostering staff interaction, the greater the measuring of staff productivity and the level of productivity Ilozor et al (2002)

Changing the workplace environment as an aid to organisational change is supported by Allen et al. (2004) who observed that workplace layout can be used to increase collaboration and openness, thereby enabling improved organisational performance. Bradley and Hood (2003) encouraged the need to keep the office free of clutter, which can restrict the organisation's ability to adapt and respond quickly to market forces. They argued that to ensure the workplace improves corporate agility four golden rules should be adopted. These included systematically and frequent purge "stuff" to enable mobility, reduce bespoke fixed fit-out components and adopt relocatable components and systematic evaluation of the utilization of space and technology alongside shifting work practices.

2.5.1 Noise

Noise, especially in an enclosed space, is an important aspect which affects both the feeling of "well-being" and concentration in regard to functional performance. Personnel costs are of a significantly higher factor than the costs for organisational accommodation, therefore any productivity losses, expressed in financial terms, clearly represents large amounts of money. Noise is often defined as undesired sound. Any sound, however, that is disturbing is, in principle, noise. This can often mean that it is not the particular sound or the magnitude of the sound which is defined as noise, but the perception of the sound by the subject listener to which extent the sound is experienced as noise. This is also relative to the working circumstances at that moment in time. Everyday noise or noise

within a noisy environment can be described as noise when it disturbs or affects the capacity of the person to perform the working function.

Noise causes personnel to become irritated and interrupted and to perform less well, especially in situations requiring creativity and thought, and may cause, occasionally, short-term memory loss. Noise has a negative and often a slowing down effect upon performance and memory. Noise in offices is a problem which is, currently and unfortunately, rarely recognized by the management in a corporate organisation (Russel, 1999).

Clearly a potential tension could exist between the organizational requirements, perceiving personalization as office clutter, and the individual who perceives personalization as a way of establishing their identity in the workplace. Wells (2000) concludes that organizations that adopt a more lenient personalization policy report higher levels of organizational well-being. The implication for organizations is that people want to be able to personalize their workspace:

To ensure office environments work, from both an organisational and individual perspective, consideration needs to be given to the types of behaviour the office needs to enable. Increasingly, offices are becoming environments that need to create and transfer knowledge to other team members. It is this acknowledgement that has led Ward and Holtham (2000) to conclude that physical space is the most neglected resource in contemporary knowledge management. Price (2001) calls for further research and proposes two possible test instruments, a workplace connectivity indicator, and a

workplace culture indicator. The proposal being that the cultural environment acts as an enabler for knowledge management, and the physical environment acting as a conduit for connectivity between its occupiers (Price, 2001). Haynes and Price (2004) acknowledge the weakness of previous office environment research, and call for a new research paradigm, one that acknowledges space as a resource that can be used as a conduit for knowledge management.

2.5.2 Privacy in open plan office design

Studies conducted over past 30 years reveal that open plan cubicle design only minimally facilitates communications and does so at the expense of privacy. In fact, employees often feel that open office design decreases communication because they prohibit confidential conversations (Marberry, 2004). As was further observed by Newsham (2005) majority of office workers spend most of their time doing individual work where they need to concentrate without distraction. Another big chunk of time is spent conducting one-on-one conversations, either in person or on the phone, where they would likely prefer not to be overheard. Armstrong (2000) conducted case studies and found out that freedom from auditory distractions was the most important feature in efficiently and effectively accomplishing their work tasks. Therefore, it is evident that privacy, especially acoustical privacy, is more important than other design aspects in the work environment to most office occupants.

In the analysis of the office, Brill (1985) distinguished three conditions that contribute to privacy. These three aspects are control over accessibility, visual distractions and interruptions, and speech privacy. Control over accessibility refers to ability to limit the

undesired impact of the presence of others, specifically when others intend to reach workers. It includes control over access and the ability to screen out unwanted visitors and phone calls. Visual distractions and interruption refer to unintended and accidental effects of the presence of others or of the activities of others. For example, some people report that while at work, if they can see other people they find this distracting. Speech privacy refers to the ability to hold confidential conversations, hence to protect sensitive and confidential information

2.5.3 Aligning office layout and human behaviour

The trend towards open-plan environments has largely been driven by organisations aiming to reduce accommodation costs Veitch et al (2002). He argued that facilities managers have responded to such pressure by creating open-plan environments with reduced space allocations. They suggested that by adopting the cost reduction paradigm, organisations run the risk of creating office environments that are ultimately uncomfortable and unworkable. They maintained that the effects on the individual could be direct, caused by adverse physical conditions, or indirect through psychological process such as lack of privacy or stress Veitch et al (2002).

Changing the workplace environment as an aid to organisational change is supported by Allen et al. (2004). While evaluating a number of UK Government parastatals they concluded that workplace layout can be used to increase collaboration and openness and thereby enabling improved organisational performance. The notion that the workplace should not hinder an organisation's ability to respond to the changing business world was developed by Bradley and Hood (2003). They developed the idea of workspace flexibility

(Becker, 2002) by proposing a minimalist approach to office design. Their main proposal was the need to keep the office free of clutter, which can restrict the organisation's ability to adapt and respond quickly to market forces.

2.5.4 Factors affecting the development of flexible workplace facilities

There is a need to consider the concept of designing sustainable, flexible workplaces to quickly and effectively accommodate various future changes demanded by corporate clients, and to meet the emergence of new technologies and the increase in business competition. Sustainability of the workplace involves ensuring that the workspace and its amenities are operated and maintained to enhance the individual, as well as the corporate productivity, and the health and well-being of staff at all times, in an environmentally responsible manner throughout the entire life of the building.

The term "flexibility" in the context of this paper is used to reflect the concept of the physical layout and functional opportunities of the workspace, rather than the concept of organizational flexibility as it relates to where and when staff would work regardless of their employment contract. Arge (2005) defined flexibility as the ability of the building to meet changing functional user or owner needs by changing its property easily. Further, the most important measures giving high flexibility in office buildings are modularity, plug and play building elements which allows for fast changes of layout or technical services parts, and flat and soundproof ceiling for rapid and easy moving of internal walls (Arge, 2005).

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter provides the methodology of the study, which was used in gathering the data, analyzing the data and reporting the results. It considered in details the methods that were used to collect primary data and secondary data. It also discussed the research design, data collection methods, data analysis and population size.

3.2 Research Design

The study was a case study. A case study was considered appropriate because a study investigated challenges of implementing open space; it aimed to obtain in-depth information not just about challenges but also the underlying factors behind those challenges. Kothari (1990) observes that a case study enable the researcher to conduct an in-depth in investigation of many different aspects of a phenomenon. Kothari (1990) argues further that a case study is a powerful form of qualitative analysis and involves careful and complete observation of a social unit be it a person, family, cultural group or an entire community and/or institution. The study focussed on challenges of implementing open space office layout by Teachers service commission. The results were expected to provide an insight in understanding how Teachers Service Commission responded to the implementation challenges under the new office layout.

3.3 Data Collection

The study used both primary and secondary data; these were collected through a face to face interview with the researcher. Secondary data was collected from already documented material such as journals, books and reports, and this was used to supplement primary data received; secondary data was qualitative in nature and an interview guide was used to collect data on the challenges of implementing open space office layout at Teachers Service Commission and deduce possible ways of overcoming the same challenges in future. The respondents that were interviewed were sent a copy of the interview guide questions a week before the date of the appointed interview date, this will give an opportunity to the respondents for doing some advance thinking over the various issues involved so that at the time of interview they were able to contribute effectively. The researcher held in-depth interview with 4 interviewees, and these were Senior Deputy Secretary Finance, Senior Deputy Secretary Internal Audit, Deputy Secretary Human Resource Management, Assistant Deputy Secretary IPPD, Respondents selected were competent, conversant with all the strategic planning and were also involved in the strategy formulation and implementation of the open space layout strategy that is adopted by the Teachers Service Commission.

3.4 Data Analysis

The data collected was qualitatively analyzed by use of content analysis techniques. Before the actual analysis, information was evaluated to determine their usefulness, consistency, credibility and adequacy. The content analysis technique was used because it

assists in making inferences by systematically and objectively identifying specific messages and then relating them with their occurrence trends. Content analysis is the effort to develop an "objective, systematic and quantitative description of the manifest content of communication", Hoslti (1974). Similar studies in the past like those done by Amurle (2003) on The response of the family planning association of Kenya to changes in its operating environment and Njuguna (2009) in his study on Strategy implementation process at St. James community centre used this technique of content analysis to analyze data collected from a case study.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1 Introduction

The research objective was to establish challenges faced by Teachers Service Commission in implementing its open space office layout strategy and how it has been able to overcome the challenges. This chapter presents the analysis and findings with regard to the objective and discussion of the same.

4.2 The Respondents Profile

The respondents comprised the top management of Teachers Service Commission, some of who were instrumental in the formulation and the implementation of the organizations open space office layout strategy. Initially, the intention was to interview 5 respondents from Finance, administration, Internal Audit, Human Resource Management and Integrated payroll and Personnel data (IPD) departments. However, due to limitations of time and unavailability of some respondents, only four were eventually interviewed who included two managers and two assistant managers. Though, the manager IPPD department was available for the interview, she had only worked with the organization for three months and hence the researcher found out that she could not provide adequate information towards the realization of the research objective. Instead, the researcher interviewed her assistant who had been with the organization for twelve years. The other three respondents had worked in the organization for years ranging from four to thirty

three and hence these formed a group that was felt to have adequate information on the open plan office strategy under consideration.

All the respondents were equally found to have attained University education plus other professional qualifications. From these, the researcher found that the respondents were knowledgeable on the type of questions contained in the interview guide. Finally, both genders were represented in the respondents interviewed and hence the data obtained was felt not to be gender biased since two out of the four respondents were female.

4.3 Strategy Implementation

This section sought to establish the various methods used by the organization to communicate the strategy to be implemented to the other staff members. The interviewees said that the organization uses internal memo, circulars, workshops, departmental, divisional or section meetings, image magazines, sensitization by appointed individuals to the section and through policies per department and creating awareness through training image magazines. The modes of communication were vied to be very effective as the modes were able to achieve the following: trickling down of information, update progress/status of issues, indicates departments that have either exceeded targets or below targets, opens up communication between management and the employees.

The organization employees are an important asset to the organization and therefore the factors which affects their performance should be taken care of immediately they are

detected otherwise the organization will not achieve its desired objectives. The factors highlighted as affecting the employee performance are lack of enough working space, lack confidentiality as some of the clients issues are sensitive hence privacy is required, poor working environment for guidance and counseling of teachers, lack of proper security, noise and other employee disruption when the clients are being attended to.

The employee working office should have enough space where each employee or client can move with ease and also accommodate all the material which a staff member would need in order to carry out its activities sufficiently. The current office layout used by the staff does not give enough working space as some employees are crowded and also there is no proper ventilation to guarantee free air and light. Lack of proper ventilation will lead to spread of disease in case one employee is infected and also it will lead to straining by the employees in order to do paper work.

The organization employees are the ones who carry out the task of implementing the approved strategies of the organization and therefore their involvement during the designing of the layout strategy is so crucial to ensuring the success of the strategy. The findings from the interviewees indicated that the employees relied upon the service area representatives who were not involved in planning and laying down the strategies on the space layout.

The employee participation in the implementation of the strategy is so crucial that they should not be left out but at the same time the commission should ensure that the

employees does not sabotage the process. The commission had put in place procedures to ensure that the process is not derailed, which includes workshops and sensitization used to build the employees capacity and participation, seeking employees' view, providing adequate resources, creating awareness among all the employees by carrying out sensitization/training, employees being made to own the strategic plan by involving them fully in the preparation stage and training.

Resistance to a strategy by the employees arises due to non involvement of the employees in the formation and implementation of a strategy. The commission faced resistance in the implementation of the open office strategy due to the space been small, lack of confidentiality, inadequate facilities like the computers, poor ventilation and airing, distraction, insecurity of personal effects and office documents, sitting arrangement makes it hard for the employees to work effectively and open electricity wires which poses a threat to staff safety.

The success of an organization will depend with how they will deal with the employee resistance to office layout which they have encountered during the implementation of its strategies and in TSC, whenever evaluations recommend certain actions to be taken, the management does so. For example the employees were advised that action would be taken in future after contractor hands the building to the management, the management have been discussing with the employees and have promised to address restructuring in view of creating more space, the management is reactive, no strategy laid down, the

management promising to recognize the sitting and space arrangement and introducing the re-engineering committee to propose structural changes/procedures.

Resistance to a strategy could adversely affect an organization performance severely and therefore an organization has to design mechanisms to ensure that the employees are involved in every stage of development in order to reduce if not to abolish resistance to strategy. The resistance which was exhibited in the implementation of open office layout was to a great extent but according to the interviewees it has subsided. The resistance to strategy change according to the interviewees was attributed to demotivated staff and poor working environment.

4.4 Implementation Challenges and Measures

Employees have the desire to control their physical working environment. The more control workers have over the office environment, the more likely they are to be satisfied and achieve greater productivity. Poor environmental services lead to low performance and many staff members falling sick frequently. The interruptions, distraction, crowding affects the employee performance greatly as it reduces productivity, the environment becomes unfriendly to operate on and this affects production, kills employees morale, leads to lack of concentration and poor service delivery and highly demotivated staff.

The commission has undertaken some drastic measures to ensure that the environmental factors do not affect the performance of the employees. These measures include introduction of workstations with small tables, identifying any other vacant space the

management is organizing to move the officers who are affected to better places within the organization and re-organizing the building in order to create more office space on the ground floor.

The factor which affects mostly job satisfaction and performance in the work place was comfort followed by flexibility then mobility while privacy was listed as a factor which affects the least job satisfaction and performance. The noise which emanates from various forms like other staff working, a customer being served, staff talking on phone and others affects the concentration of the employees which leads to poor performance. Noise causes personnel to become irritated and interrupted and to perform less well, especially in situations requiring creativity and thought, and may cause, occasionally, short-term memory loss. Noise has a negative and often a slowing down effect upon performance and memory. The lack of speech privacy affect the performance of other employees when one of them is using the phone as the talking will attract the attention of other staff members thus other staff members listening to the conversation which was meant to be private. The objective of the organization adopting the open space strategy has not been achieved since the entire staff is not comfortable with the working conditions they were subjected.

The technological challenges stems from the fact that the world is constantly changing, and therefore the commission also needs to style up by moving with technology. The commission face the following challenges; Loss of data due to use of virus infested hard and software's, inadequate computes, few network points, risk of access to data, lack of

extensions and no proper communication channels between service areas since the intercom have never been installed.

The success of an organization will depend with how they will deal with the technological challenges which they have encountered during the implementation of its strategies and in TSC, whenever evaluations recommend certain actions to be taken, the management does so. For example they have purchased new computers, installed cables, ensuring use of security password and implementation of Information Technology policy.

5.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a summary of the findings, conclusions and recommendations of the challenges of implementation of open space layout strategy at Teachers Service Commission of Kenya and what its doing to overcome the open space strategy implementation challenges. Based on the above objectives data was collected, analyzed using content analysis. This chapter also includes section on limitation to the study and recommendation for further research.

5.2 Summary of Findings

The study shows that the commission communicates the strategy to be implemented using internal memo, circulars, workshops, departmental, divisional or section meetings. image magazines, sensitization by appointed individuals to the section and through policies per department and creating awareness through training image magazines. These modes of communication were very effective as it enabled the commission to achieve its objective of information trickling down, update progress/status of issues and opening up communication between CEO and employees.

The respondents unanimously agreed that there are factors which affect employee performance in the strategy which the commission launched. These factors include lack of enough working space, lack of confidentiality as some of the clients issues are sensitive hence privacy is required, poor working environment for guidance and

counseling of teachers, lack of proper security, noise and other employee disruption when the clients are being attended to. The office layout which the commission advanced to be used by the employees was expected to have more advantages than the closed office but from the findings, the layout does not give enough working space to the employees as some employees are crowded and also there is no proper ventilation to guarantee free air and light.

The interviewees unanimously agreed that the commission employees relied upon the service area representatives to represent them in coming up with the strategy but they were not involved in planning and laying down the strategies on the space layout. The findings on whether the commission had put in place procedures to ensure that the process is not derailed, it was found out that the commission had put in place procedures to ensure that the process is not derailed. These procedures included workshops and sensitization used to build the employees capacity and participation, seeking employees' view, providing adequate resources, creating awareness among all the employees by carrying out sensitization/training, employees being made to own the strategic plan by involving them fully in the preparation stage and training.

The commission faced resistance in the implementation of the open office strategy due to the space been small, lack of confidentiality, inadequate facilities like the computers, poor ventilation and airing, distraction, insecurity of personal effects and office documents, sitting arrangement making it hard for the employees to work effectively and open electricity wires which poses a threat to staff safety. The commission dealt with the

resistance to strategy by advising the employees that action will be taken in future after contractor hands the building to the management by promising them to address restructuring in view of creating more space, the management being reactive, no strategy laid down and the management promising to recognize the sitting and space arrangement and introducing the re-engineering committee to propose structural changes/procedures. The resistance to the strategy by the employees was to a great extent but the management intervention led to it subsiding. However the commission should ensure that what they promised the employees in order for them to reduce the resistance is met so that the employees feel that the company appreciates them.

Employees have the desire to control their physical working environment. The more control workers have over the office environment, the more likely they are to be satisfied and achieve greater productivity. The environmental services however led to interruptions, distraction, crowding and low employee morale, lack of concentration and poor service delivery and highly demotivated staff. The measures taken by the commission in order to reduce environmental factors effects on performance included introduction of workstations with small tables, identifying any other vacant space the management is organizing to move the officers who are affected to better places within the organization and re-organizing the building in order to create more office space on the ground floor.

Job satisfaction and performance in the work place is affected by several factors but the factor which affects it mostly is comfort followed by flexibility then mobility while

privacy was listed as a factor which affects the least. Noise causes personnel to become irritated and interrupted and to perform less well, especially in situations requiring creativity and thought, and may cause, occasionally, short-term memory loss. Noise has a negative and often a slowing down effect upon performance and memory. The lack of speech privacy affect the performance of other employees when one of them is using the phone as the talking will attract the attention of other staff members thus other staff members listening to the conversation which was meant to be private.

The technological challenges stems from the fact that the world is constantly changing, and therefore the commission also needs to style up by moving with technology. The commission face the following challenges; Loss of data due to use of virus infested hard and software's, inadequate computes, few network points, risk of access to data, lack of extensions and no proper communication channels between service areas since the intercom have never been installed. These challenges have been countered by purchasing new computers, installing cables, ensuring use of security password and implementation of information technology policy.

5.3 Conclusions

From the research findings and the answers to the research questions, some conclusions can be, made about the study. From the study it can be concluded that noise, lack of privacy in open plan office design, aligning office layout and human behavior, environmental factors and technological challenges have an effect on open space office layout structure.

The implementation of an organization strategy requires thorough scrutiny of the strategy by all the commission stakeholders so that all of them are part of the strategy thus eliminating any resistance which may result due to non-inclusive consultation. The study however shows that the commission does not involve all the stakeholders in fact the employees to be precise, lack of enough working space, lack confidentiality as some of the clients issues are sensitive hence privacy is required, poor working environment for guidance and counseling of teachers, lack of proper security, noise and other employee disruption when the clients are being attended to.

Although the commission had laid down procedures to ensure that employees does not derail strategy implementation, the commission faced resistance from the employees as a result of space been small, lack of confidentiality, inadequate facilities like the computers, poor ventilation and airing, distraction, insecurity of personal effects and office documents, sitting arrangement making it hard for the employees to work effectively and open electricity wires which poses a threat to staff safety. The commission therefore should ensure that the causes of resistance are adequately addressed so that the commission does not fail to achieve its objectives due to employee sabotage.

The working conditions of an organization is influenced by different factors and the environmental factors led to many staff members falling sick frequently due to overcrowding, interruptions, distraction, the environment becomes unfriendly to operate

on and this affects production, kills employees morale, leads to lack of concentration and poor service delivery and highly demotivated staff. However the organization has devised some mechanisms to counter these challenges which in many instances should not be reactive measures.

The world is changing and the technology is moving and therefore the commission should ensure that they are not left behind. The challenges which they encountered included Loss of data due to use of virus infested hard and software's, inadequate computes, few network points, risk of access to data, lack of extensions and no proper communication channels between service areas since the intercom have never been installed. These challenges should be dealt with promptly by the commission so that the employees can communicate and also work throughout without having to wait for the other to finish using the computer in order to work.

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5.4 Limitations of the Study

The study suffered from a couple of limitations. Most of the major limitations were related to data collection. Due to tight schedule most of senior managers could not avail for the interview. The other interviewees were also skeptical about the intentions of the researcher hence took a lot of time to answer, some questions as interviewees were heads of department in the organization finding the time to be interviewed was also a problem thus they had to be reminded a couple of times by the researcher to respond. It thus took a lot of time than was earlier expected. Then non responsive respondents who failed to respond to questions adequately due to fear, and lastly, funding was also a problem.

5.5 Suggestions for further Research

Open space office layout strategy has continued to be implemented by private and government organization in Kenya and even world wide a further study can be carried out to investigate Workspace Design & Human behaviour. Alternatively a cross sectional survey covering a manufacturing firm and a service firm could be conducted to allow generalization to be made.

5.6 Recommendation for Policy and Practices

Communications channels within the organization should be improved from top-bottom such that there is flow of decisions from the management to the employees. It is also recommended that the management consults the employees representative whenever they want to implement a strategy so that there is no resistance on the part of the employees as it can delay the achievement of the desired objectives. The commission should not renege on its undertaking of looking for a space in other areas so that overcrowded areas can be decongested so that the employees can work in harmony.

The commission should have considered the effects on environmental factors on the welfare of the employees but now that the open office space is in place, they should do all that they can in order to reduce employees suffering as a result of the factors which leads to employees demotivation thus productivity. The technological challenges stems from the fact that the world is constantly changing, and therefore the commission also needs to style up by moving with technology which in these case ensuring that each

employee has a computer to use, increasing network points, installing ant-virus in all computers and installing intercom in order to make communication for the employees easier.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: LETTER OF INTRODUCTION

12/8/2010
Catherine N. Makokha
C/O TSC
Private Bag
NAIROBI

To

The Commission Secretary
Teachers Service Commission
Private Bag
NAIROBI

Dear Sir,

RE: RESEARCH ON CHALLENGES OF IMPLEMENTING OPEN SPACE
LAYOUT STRATEGY BY TEACHERS SERVICE COMMISSION

I am a postgraduate student in the School of Business, University of Nairobi. I am conducting a Management Research on Challenges of Implementing Open Space Layout Strategy at Teachers Service Commission.

To undertake this study your feed back is needed. I kindly request that you assist in filling the Attached Interview Guide. The information you give will be treated with a strict confidence and is needed purely for academic purpose.

A final copy of the report will be available to you at your request.

Your assistance is highly appreciated

Yours faithfully,

CATHERINE N. MAKOKHA

APPENDIX 2: INTERVIEW GUIDE

Section A: Demographic Information

NAME OF RESPONDENT	
GENDER	(TICK APPROPRIATELY) MALE /FEMALE
DEPARTMENT/SECTION	
POSITION/TITLE/DESIGNATION	
DATE JOINED ORGANIZATION	

Section B: Implementation of Open Space

1. How does Teachers Service Commission communicates strategy to be implemented.....
.....
.....
2. What factors affects employee performance in an open office layout at Teachers Service Commission.....
.....
3. Does the office layout gives enough working space to each employee?
.....
.....
4. Were all employees representatives involved before arriving at the open space Layout strategy by Teachers Service Commission.....
.....
.....

5. In what ways are you involved in the implementation of the open space layout.....
.....
.....
6. In your opinion what procedures are laid down to ensure that employee's participation does not derail strategy implementation?
.....
.....
.....
7. Has the open space implementation faced resistance from the employee? Yes/no
If yes, what main factors contributed to such resistance?.....
.....
.....
8. How did Teachers Service Commission deal with resistance?
.....
.....
.....
9. To what extent has resistance affected success in the implementation of open space office layout.....
.....
.....

Section C: Implementation Challenges and Measures

- 1(a) How does the following environmental services, ventilation, heating, natural Lighting and artificial lighting affects the performance of the employee
.....
.....
.....
- (b) How does distraction, interruptions, crowding and overall atmosphere affects Employee's performance?.....
.....

- c) What measures is Teachers Service Commission taking to ensure that employees are satisfied with the current working space.....

- 2(a) How do you rank the following design factors in terms of their impact on your job Satisfaction and performance in the working space: mobility, comfort, privacy, flexibility to control over physical working space?.....

- (b) Does noise impacts on the concentration of the employees in the organization as they carry out their duties?.....

- (c) Does the lack of speech privacy affect the performance of other employees when one of them is using the phone?.....

3. In your opinion, has the strategy met its overall objectives.....

4. What challenges does Teachers Service Commission face from the Technological factors

5. To respond to the above factors and challenges, what measures has Teachers Service Commission laid down.....

- 6 In your own opinion is adoption of the open space layout to Teachers Service Commission of any value.....

Thank you for taking time to answer the interview question, your views and opinions are highly valued.