

**STRATEGIC PLANNING PRACTICES ADOPTED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF
NAIROBI**

By

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**A Management Research Project Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for
the Award of the Master of Business Administration Degree, Department of Business
Administration, School of Business, University of Nairobi**

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DECLARATION

This research is my original work and has not been submitted for a degree qualification in any other university or Institution of learning.


Signed 

Date 15/11/09

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D61/70107/08

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

Signed 

Date 15/11/2009

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DEDICATION

To my husband Charles Mwangi, my Mum,Dad,my Sisters,and Brothers Jelious Miriam, Gladys, Simon, John and Joseph and to my boss Mrs. Oloo and to cap it all Dr. Martin Ogutu. who were a great source of encouragement

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ABSTRACT

Strategic planning is the cornerstone of every organization without which the organization will never know where it is going or whether it will ever get there. While strategic planning is important, what is of more importance is how it is practiced in the different institutions or organizations. Different scholars and author have advanced that strategic planning can be formed implicit as well as formulated explicitly (Mintzerberg 1991 and Johnson and Scoles, 1993). While several studies have been done in Kenya on the strategic planning practices, most of them have been to general to elicit a comprehensive view on strategic planning practices adopted by institutions.

The purpose of the study was to add on to the existing knowledge on strategic planning practices by investigating strategic planning practices adopted by the University of Nairobi. This was a case study on Strategic Planning practice adopted by the University of Nairobi. College Registrars from each of the six colleges in the university were involved. The study used primarily primary data sources collected through interviews conducted on the college registrars. The data obtained from the interviews were analyzed using content analysis.

The study found out that strategic planning process in the University of Nairobi is structured in such a way that the process flows from one logical step to the other; all the key personnel have clearly defined roles and the authority at the University is clearly top-down approach. The study thus recommended that given the unprecedented competition, the university should ensure that strategic planning is more of a process and less of an event and also change its strategic planning approach from top-down approach to bottom up approach model. The study further recommended that the university should allocate more time and resources to strategic issues and thinking in order to increase the success of the university.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Strategic planning is commonly practiced in order to enhance the Organizations performance. It is the cornerstone of every organization without which the organization will never know where it is going or when to achieve its objectives. An important concept of strategic planning is an understanding that in order for an organization to flourish, everyone needs to work to ensure the team's goals are met(Johnson and Scholes, 1997). In institutions of higher learning for instance, strategic planning is a formal process designed to help a higher learning institution identify and maintain an optimal alignment with the most important elements, the environment within which the learning institution resides. This environment consists of the political, social, economic, technological, and educational ecosystem, both internal and external to the university.

Today, organisations in developed and developing countries operate in a more turbulent, complicated and regulated environment. Thus, the goal of most organisations is to establish distinctive or unique capabilities to gain a competitive advantage in the marketplace through formulating and implementing effective strategic plans. However, increased volatility of the business environment makes strategic planning more difficult; rapid change requires strategies that are flexible and creative, characteristics which are seldom associated with formalized planning, that is, strategic planning is a 'calendar-driven ritual(Hamel, 1996). Eisenhardt(1989), points to the advantages of 'semi-coherent' strategic planning practices that are unpredictable, uncontrolled, inefficient, proactive, continuous and diverse.

There is a general agreement among strategic planning researchers that the strategic planning consists of three major components; formulation, which includes developing a mission, setting major objectives, assessing the external and internal environments, and evaluating and selecting strategy alternatives, implementation and control(Hopkins and

Hopkins, 1997). This chapter introduces the study and justifies why the topic needs to be researched on; it is thus structured into the background of strategic planning practices in the University of Nairobi, statement of the problem, the objectives of the study and scope and importance of the study.

1.1.1 Strategic Planning Practices

Strategic planning's roots are in the arena of large-scale military operations and it can be defined as the fit between an organization and its environment. It is a top-down approach concerned with the long-term mission and objectives of an organisation, the resources used in achieving those objectives, and the policies and guidelines that govern the acquisition, use, and disposition of those resources. It must also take into account the opportunities available to the organisation, and an assessment of its ability to exploit those opportunities with a view to gaining a distinct competitive advantage. Simply, strategic planning determines where an organization is going over the next year or more, how it's going to get there and how it'll know if it got there or not.

Johnson and Scholes(2002), view strategy as the direction and scope of an organization over the long-term which achieves advantage for the organization through its configuration of resources within a changing environment and fulfill stakeholders expectations. From the perspective of classical strategic management theory, strategy is considered a deliberate planning process (formal), initiated by top management (top-down), based on an elaborate industry analysis rationale and aimed at designing a cohesive grand strategy for the corporation consistency(Volberda, 2004).

Strategic planning is a management tool used to turn organizations into dreams and reality. It helps organizations to attain its set goals and objectives. A successful strategic planning looks at the long-term, midrange strategic goals and objectives. The results of strategic planning are a blue print that defines organizations activities, allocation of resources that are required to accomplish organizational strategic objectives. It can either be emergent or deliberate. Quinn(1980), argue that if a firm wants to remain vibrant and

successful in the long run, it must make impact assessment of the external environment, especially such relevant groups as customers, competitors, consumers, suppliers, creditors and the government and how they impact on its operations success is dependent on productivity, customer satisfaction and competitor strength. Hamel and Prahalad(1989) views organizations as composed of many individuals all of whom are engaged in making decisions that must be coordinated. For strategy to provide such coordination requires that the strategy process acts as a communication mechanism within the firm. Such a role is increasingly recognized in the strategic planning processes of large companies.

The shift of responsibility of strategic planning from corporate planning departments to line managers and the increased emphasis on discussion the businesses and the corporate headquarters (as opposed to the formal approval of written plans) are part of this increased emphasis on strategic planning as a process for achieving coordination and consensus within companies(Barker, 1992) The Focus of a strategic plan is on the entire organization. There are a variety of perspectives, models and approaches used in strategic planning. The way that a strategic plan is developed depends on the nature of the organization's leadership, culture of the organization, complexity of the organization's environment, size of the organization, expertise of planners etc. For example, there are a variety of strategic planning models, including goals-based, issues-based, scenario (some would assert that scenario planning is more a technique than model)

Goals-based planning is probably the most common and starts with focus on the organization's mission and vision or values, goals to work toward the mission, strategies to achieve the goals, and action planning,(who will do what and by when). Issues-based strategic planning often starts by examining issues facing the organization, strategies to address those issues, and action plans. Some planners prefer a particular approach to planning, example appreciative inquiry. Some plans are scoped to one year, others three years, and some to five to ten years into the future. Some plans include only top-level information and no action plans.

1.1.2 University of Nairobi

The inception of the University of Nairobi can be traced back to 1956, with the establishment of the Royal Technical College of East Africa, which admitted its first lot of A-level graduates for technical courses in April the same year. The Royal Technical College was transformed into the second University College of East Africa on 25th June, 1961 under the name Royal College Nairobi. In Kenya, the University of Nairobi was established by the University of Nairobi Act of 1970. This was repealed and replaced by the University of Nairobi Act in 1985 which established the current structure (Colleges) of the University.

The University comprises six Colleges, each headed by a Principal. These are: College of Agriculture and Veterinary Sciences situated at the Upper Kabete Campus, College of Architecture and Engineering situated at the Main Campus, College of Biological and Physical Sciences situated at Chiromo Campus, College of Education and External Studies situated at Kikuyu Campus, College of Health Sciences situated at the Kenyatta National Hospital Campus, College of Humanities and Social Sciences situated at Main Campus – Faculty of Arts, Parklands Campus – School of Law, Lower Kabete Campus – School of Business, Museum Hill Institute of African, Anthropology and Gender Studies.

At the University of Nairobi, University Management Board is responsible for co-ordination of university and college development plans, management of resources, initiation of policies and matters that relate to the general management of the entire University. The Students Affairs Management Board is responsible for students' welfare while the College Management Board is charged with the administrative functions of the respective college and College Academic Board responsible for the administration and management of academic programs of the respective college. The Vice-Chancellor is the academic and administrative head of the University and is assisted by Deputy Vice-Chancellors that is Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Administration and Finance) who heads the

administration and finance portfolio, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic Affairs) who is in charge of academic affairs and Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Student Affairs) who is in charge of student affairs.

In Kenya, university education is one of the most rapidly expanding sub-sectors of the Education sector. Demand for university education has continued to increase with many students who are unable to be absorbed in Kenyan Universities seeking admission in institutions of higher learning outside the country. Constituent university colleges and campuses affiliated to universities have been established to expand access to higher education and some middle level colleges have been upgraded to campuses and constituent colleges of public universities. Currently we have 7 public Universities, 18 private Universities of which 11 have received university charter and the rest are on letters of interim authority. However, this number is expected to increase (Directorate of Higher Education, 2008).

The University of Nairobi has taken this challenge in its stride and has upgraded its strategic plans to include plans that will enable it stem this increasing competition and make the most out of the increased demand for higher learning. The university has, for instance, been developing and evolving strong, diversified academic programs and specializations in sciences, applied sciences, technology, humanities, social sciences and the arts making the number of programs offered to range two hundred and over. Strategic plans saw the establishment of Kisumu campus in Kisumu and Pumwani campus in Mombasa.

Today, universities operate in a more complicated, more regulated environment and competitive. In order to stay ahead of competition, universities have resorted to strategic planning and responses so as to pre-empt and mitigate competing universities practices and organizations' knowledge requirement. Owing to fiercely aggressive business world, increased demand for quality education is the order of the day. This has increased the number of institutions offering higher education making education in Kenya to be very

competitive. Most universities in Kenya as a result establish distinctive or unique capabilities so as to appeal to the potential customers and offer relevant courses that will sell in the current volatile organizations' requirement(World Higher Education Database 2005).

The Strategic Plan is prepared at a time when the University is facing fundamental changes and challenges both from within and from outside. The changes include competitive appointment of senior management staff, negotiated performance contracts, performance appraisal system, University strategic plan and overall restructuring. The challenges in the planning context include declining government financing, legal complications concerning modules two, three and integrated programs with a section of legislators arguing that the modules should be scrapped off or highly regulated. Another challenge to strategic plans is the University's structural complexity which presents enormous communication, coordination and control problems. These changes and challenges provide opportunities and present pressure for the university to strategically position itself.

1.2 Research Problem

As much as strategic planning is important, what is of more importance is how it is practiced in the different institutions or organizations. Different scholars and author have advanced that strategic planning can be formed implicit as well as formulated explicitly(Mintzerberg,1991 and Johnson and Scoles,1993). Good progress has been made over a long period to improve the rigor of strategic planning. The statement of the problem is therefore to investigating strategic planning practices adopted in University of Nairobi.

While several studies have been done in Kenya on the strategic planning practices, most of them have been too general to elicit a comprehensive view on strategic planning practices adopted by institutions. Emily(2006) researched into the 'Strategic Planning Practices in Public Secondary Schools in Kenya' pointed to strategic planning practices

providing a mechanism for coordinating decentralized strategy formulation within a structure of demanding performance targets, however, the study shows that these strategic planning practices fostered adaptation and responsiveness, but showed limited innovation.

Ogari(2005), stated that strategic planning in Kenyan universities consists of six stages environmental scanning, evaluation of issues, forecasting goal setting, implementation and monitoring. This study seeks to add on to the existing knowledge by narrowing its contextual scope to the University of Nairobi. The various studies established that various organizations are now faced with rapid changes both the external and internal environment. In spite of the many studies done on strategic planning practices by different scholars none has narrowed down to study on strategic planning practices adopted by University of Nairobi. The purpose of the study was to add on to the existing knowledge on strategic planning practices by investigating strategic planning practices adopted by the University of Nairobi. The study, therefore, addressed the following research question: What are the strategic planning practices adopted by University of Nairobi?

1.3 Research Objectives

The objective of this study was to determine the strategic planning practices adopted by the University of Nairobi.

1.4 Scope of the Study

The study sought to find out the strategic planning practices adopted by the University of Nairobi and its scope lay in obtaining information that elicited all the information pertaining to the strategic planning practices it has adopted. The scope of the study thus lay in explaining how the strategic planning practices can be effectively used to gain competitive advantage and provide relevant knowledge.

1.5 Importance of the Study

The University Managements is able to use this study as a management reference point for strategic planning being put in place, both present and future, thus ensuring their institutions preference over the others and clearly show justification why different competitive strategies have been put in place. It is also of value to management practitioners and consultants as it provide a corporate lesson of the strategies to be employed and those to be discarded and the relative importance of each.

The study also form good literature upon which further researches on strategic planning practices will be based. The literature is valuable to the academicians and researchers in Kenya for academic purposes.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the past or previous studies that have been done and theories advanced on strategic planning practices. The chapter is hence broken down into concept of strategic planning, strategic planning process, strategic planning practices and strategic planning outcomes.

2.2 The Concept of Strategic Planning

Strategy is a term that practically every business person believes they know and understand. Despite numerous studies there is no commonly accepted and universal definition(Quinn, 1980). As a matter of fact, the term “strategy” is often used in a contradictory manner because up to date, the definitions of strategic planning encompass terms such as strategic force, corporate focus or strategic intent. Generally, common aspects of most definitions are concerned with the long-term direction of the organization, defining what business the organization should engage in, matching the activities of the business to the environment in order to minimize the threats and maximize opportunities, as well as matching the organization’s activities to the resources available(McDonald, 1996).

From the perspective of classical strategic management theory, strategy is considered a deliberate planning process (formal), initiated by top management (top-down), based on an elaborate industry analysis (rational) and aimed at designing a cohesive grand strategy for the corporation consistency(Volberda, 2004). As the environment is continually changing, it is also necessary for strategic planning to continually change in order to maintain a “balance” or “fit” with the external environment. Mintzberg and Lampel(1999) and the afore-mentioned authors point out that when the term strategic planning is used the intent is to convey that a firm's strategic planning process involves

explicit systematic procedures used to gain the involvement and commitment of those principal stakeholders affected by the plan

Strategic planning thus implies an attempt to alter a company's strength relative to that of its competitors, in the most efficient and effective way. Strategic planning focuses on the direction of the organization and actions necessary to improve its performance. It is the process by which firms derive a strategy to enable them to anticipate and respond to the changing dynamic environment in which they operate (Hewlett, 1999). According to Johnson and Scholes (1997), strategic planning is the direction and scope of an organization over the long term; which achieves advantage for the organization through its configuration of resources within a changing environment, to meet the needs of markets and to fulfill stakeholder expectations.

From a strategic planning perspective, there are two fundamentally opposing strategic planning process views; the deliberate view (Ansoff, 1991) and the emergent view (Mintzberg, 1990 and 1991). A deliberate strategy is a strategy that was intended or planned and subsequently realized. An emergent strategy is a strategy that was realized but never intended either because no strategies were planned or those that were planned were not implemented. The deliberate approach to strategic planning might be described as top-down, rigid, mechanistic and efficient in contrast to a description of an emergent process that is informal, flexible and empowering (Dibrell, Down and Bull, 2007).

The emergent planning style is based on a more organic, reactive, learn-as-you-go approach with broad strategic objectives and means of accomplishing those objectives (Mintzberg and McHugh, 1985). The emergent strategy is, however, criticized for being too reactive to external threats and opportunities (Hendry, 2000). It is important to acknowledge that the realized strategies of most organizations will be some combination of emergent and deliberate. Even as Mintzberg advocates a shift away from deliberate move toward emergent strategies, he concedes that in practice, all strategy

making walks on 'two feet'; one deliberate and the other emergent(Mintzberg and McHugh, 1985).

Strategic planning has been associated with the field of strategic management from its earliest foundations. These early developments significantly include those of Learned, Christensen, Andrews and Guth(1965) and of Ansoff(1965). Strategic planning has also been known under various labels encompassing 'long range planning', 'corporate planning', 'strategic management' in addition to 'strategic planning'(Ansoff, Declerck and Hayes, 1976). Dincer, Tatoglu and Glaister(2006), advanced that an effective strategic planning system for an organization links long-range strategic goals with both mid-range and operational plans. Markides(1999), in reexamine the nature of strategic planning itself described strategy planning as an on-going, never-ending, integrated process requiring continuous reassessment and reformation.

Strategic planning is thus deliberate and emergent, dynamic and interactive. Moncrieff(1999), recognized that strategy is partially deliberate and partially unplanned. Moncrieff concluded that unplanned element comes from two sources; emergent strategies resulting from the emergence of opportunities and threats in the environment and strategy in action; actions by many people from all parts of the organization.

Several theorists and practitioners have argued for the need and appropriateness of strategic planning by using conceptually compelling and empirically persuasive premises of planning(Ackelsberg and Arlow,1985 and Wilson,1994). A major claim of such arguments is that strategic planning creates a viable link between an organization's objectives, goals, and resources. It is not only concerned with the formulation of strategies within the framework of organization policy but also focuses on analysis designed to lead to action for the purpose of achieving goals. One of the other predominant approaches is the conundrum approach. Organizations, their strategies, their structures, and their management teams are becoming more complex. Organizations need to know where they are, where they are going, and how to manage. Organizations are

increasing planning activity today because of the increasing complexity of their environments.

Another argument for incorporating strategic planning as an essential part of organizational activities is the navigational risk approach. In many organizations, successful implementation hinges on the ability to foresee changes in the larger system. Although much has been argued about culture and its impact on management, strategic planning practices in an institution are affected more by the institutional environment like government intervention, politics, state business relations, incentives than societal values. Strategic planning has been associated with the field of strategic management from its earliest foundations (Learned, Christensen, Andrews and Guth, 1965). It has also been known under various labels encompassing long range planning, corporate planning, and strategic management in addition to strategic planning.

From the perspective of classical strategic management theory, strategy is considered a deliberate planning process, initiated by top management, based on an elaborate industry analysis and aimed at designing a cohesive grand strategy for the corporation. Volberda (2004) points out that when the term strategic planning is used the intent is to convey that a firm's strategic planning process involves explicit systematic procedures used to gain the involvement and commitment of those principal stakeholders affected by the plan.

Agwu (1992), in his study on strategic planning in higher education by focussing on Arkansas senior colleges and universities found that today's colleges and universities have experienced rapid change and educational administrators are confronted with changes associated with aging facilities, changing technology, changing demographics, increasing competition, rising costs, funding cuts and so on. Like Agwu, other researchers have it that the educational sector has begun to recognize that strategic planning; in its emergent and deliberate elements, is necessary in order to maintain responsiveness to the rapidly changing environment (Busler, 1992, Hall, 1994 and

Williams, 1992). Ogari(2005), studied the strategic planning practices by universities in Kenya and concluded that the universities use both deliberate and emergent strategies to respond to the environmental pressure.

The study indicated that the universities strategic planning practices consist of six stages environmental scanning, evaluation of issues, forecasting goal setting, implementation and monitoring. Emily(2006), researching on the strategic planning practices in public secondary schools in Kenya pointed to strategic planning practices providing a mechanism for coordinating decentralized strategy formulation within a structure of demanding performance targets, however, the study shows that these strategic planning practices fostered adaptation and responsiveness, but showed limited innovation.

Allen and Seaman(2007), report that a growing number of higher learning institutions are looking at distance learning as a deliberate strategic plan that will increase student access, attract students from outside traditional service areas, and to expand continuing or professional education initiatives They cited that only 18% of degree-granting institutions reported that they had no interest in pursuing distance learning programs as part of their strategic vision and another 5% are not yet engaged in distance learning programs, but see them as part of their strategic future which leaves 77% of these institutions with some level of engagement in distance learning.

However, Powell's(1992) study suggests that planning is associated with higher performance in presence of environmental uncertainty. This view recommends that success in the future will require that companies institutionalize strategic policy planning. However, critics of long term planning have argued on several fronts as well(Bonn and Christodoulou, 1996, Boyd, 1991 and Mintzberg,1994). Planning has been accused of stifling creativity by eliminating true vision and synthesis from the process of change. According to this argument, the over-emphasis on rational analysis has led to the creation of strategies that are either repetitions of a largely irrelevant past or imitations of something being done by another organization. The attempt to institutionalize and

regulate innovation through traditional strategic planning is said to stifle the organization's ability to renew itself. Some of the other astute observers of the process argue that planning's inherently programmatic nature is at fault.

Management theorists such as Henry Mintzberg believe that strategic planning, by its very nature, is prone to devolving into an overly rigid focus on analysis and quantification; thus, it is innately inflexible and incapable of predicting crucial market shifts or of encouraging timely adaptation to them once they occur(Mintzberg 1994).

Glaister and Falshaw(1999) conducted an analysis of the extent to which tools and techniques of strategic development advocated by the classical model of strategy formulation were adopted in a sample of UK firms and the views and attitudes towards strategic planning of senior executives in these firms. Their study concluded that “despite the fluctuating popularity of strategic planning in its various guises since the 1960s, strategic planning is currently perceived to be of benefit and is still going strong. Glaister and Falshaw(1999) also concluded that companies can obtain benefits from a classical approach to strategic planning and that these benefits are apparent with the use of relatively unsophisticated tools and techniques.

2.2 Strategic Planning Process

The strategic management process is concerned with establishing objectives and goals for an organization and maintaining a set of relationships between the organization and the environment. This enables it to pursue its objectives that are consistent with organizational capabilities, and continue to be responsive to changing business trends(Ansoff 1990). The strategic management process is based upon the belief that key external and internal events and trends should continually be monitored. Organizations should pursue strategies that take advantage of external opportunities, minimize the impact of external threats, capitalize on internal strengths and mitigate internal weaknesses(Cole, 1996).

Cole(1996) observes that strategic planning process aims at identifying, articulating or developing an organization's uniqueness and wholeness. It also analyses business opportunities and threats, internal strengths and weaknesses or resource gaps and current values and management philosophy.

Hewlett(1999) suggests that a strategic plan and the strategic planning process itself offers a competitive edge and enables an organization to measure achievements against expectations. The benefits of strategic planning as reported by Lyles, Baird, Orris, and Kuratko(1993), on small organizations was that the elements of goal formulation, developing distinctive competencies, determining authority relationships, deploying resources and monitoring implementation receive more effective attention when such organizations engage in formal planning. Firms engage in strategic planning that clearly defines objectives and assesses both the internal and external situation to formulate strategy, implement the strategy, evaluate the progress, and make adjustments as necessary to stay on track.

According to Pearce and Robinson(1997), the strategic planning process can be depicted as a series of steps; Strategy formulation (company vision and mission, company objectives and internal analysis), situation analysis and environmental scanning (competitor analysis, industry analysis, market analysis and strategy selection); strategy implementation and strategy evaluation and control. The process of strategic management involves strategy formulation, implementation, evaluation and control of actions that will enable an organization to achieve its objectives.

According to Kaufman and Herman(1991), process of strategic planning includes selecting desired results, identifying a mission, assessing needs in order to formulate new purposes, developing and implementing action plans and evaluating the success of the strategic plan. Claver, Gasco, Llopis and Gonzalez(2001), also provide an excellent example of the strategic planning process that incrementally addresses strategic issues

involving current strategy, environmental analysis, internal analysis, gap analysis, strategic alternatives, resource considerations, and strategic choice.

According to Claver, Gasco, Llopis and Gonzalez(2001) the first step of the strategic planning process involves the strategist assessing the organization's current strategy and current resources; the same is stated by Herrmann(2005) and Powell(1992). Key issues to address during this first step include the current strategy's successes or failures and the strengths and weaknesses of the company's current resources that is, are current strategies and current resources supporting or diminishing the company's objectives?

In the second step, the strategist must perform a complete analysis of environmental forces that encompasses looking at political and regulatory influences, economic factors and influences, societal and cultural influences and technological innovations (PEST Analysis)(Mintzberg 1990, Porter, 1980 and Tichy, 1983). According to Pearce and Robinson(1997), the second step is also known as environmental scanning (analysis) which is the process by which strategists monitor the environmental sectors to determine opportunities for and threats to the organization.

The scanning gives planners time to anticipate opportunities and plan to take optimal responses to them thus developing appropriate measures to mitigate negative deviations. If a firm ceases to adjust its strategy to the environment, the result is minimal achievement of corporate objectives(Gabriel, Venkat and Pau, 2005). This according to Claver, Gasco, Llopis and Gonzalez(2001), Bremer(1988), Mintzberg(1990) and Regner(2003) environmental scanning is preceded by evaluation of organizational strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT Analysis)(Bremer1988, Mintzberg1990 and Regner,2003). The organization's strengths and weakness include internal organizational factors to address, whereas the opportunities and threats represent external environmental factors in the organization's periphery.

The SWOT Analysis also incorporates knowledge attained during the first two steps in the strategic planning process discussed earlier. To be successful over time, an

organization must be dynamic and change oriented. There must be a strategic fit between what the customer wants and what the organization has to offer, as well as between what the organization needs and what the market can provide(Powell, 1992).

During the fourth step in the strategic planning process, the strategist often uses Porter's Five Forces Model of Competition. The Five Forces Model diagnoses the competitive environment and identifies rivalry between competing sellers, organization/institutions offering substitute products, suppliers of resource inputs, buyers, and potential new entrants(Porter, 1979). Fifth, the strategist must ensure that they perform a thorough analysis of the organization's value chain to address the required resources required for strategy execution. Sixth, the strategist must ensure that the requirements of the strategic plan and its outcomes enhances shareholder value and is ethically feasible. These steps represent many of the micro and macro elements that a strategist uses during the actual strategic planning process and ensures the comprehensiveness component of the strategy (Hambrick and Fredrickson,2005). According to Mintzberg(1994), this phase of the strategic process represents programming and a great deal of effort remains to carry out this programming.

During the seventh and last phase of the strategic planning process, the strategist must compile the information and formulate the execution component of the strategic plan. The strategist must take the information gathered during the programming phase to synthesized and organized it into an integrated and comprehensive set of tactics that can be executed and measured throughout the strategy execution phase(Mintzberg, 1994). This execution phase of the strategic process represents the orchestration component of the organization's strategy(Hambrick and Fredrickson, 2005).

According to Dess(1987), strategy formulation is the development of long range plans for effective management of business opportunities and threats, in light of an organization's strengths and weaknesses. It is also called strategic or corporate planning. It includes environmental scanning, defining the corporate mission, specifying achievable

objectives, developing strategies and setting policy guidelines. Henderson, Venkatraman and Oldach(1996) argued that both organizational structure and competition are clearly important in shaping strategy formulation and performance.

According to David(2007), strategy implementation includes organizing, motivating and staffing. Implementation of the chosen strategy is by any measure one of the most vital phases in the decision making process. Strategy implementation embraces all of those actions that are necessary to put the strategy into practice. David(2007) also states that strategies are not the end result of the strategic planning process. Strategic thought has to be translated into strategic action. Once the strategic planning process is complete, the strategy must be implemented. No matter how creative and well formulated the strategic plan, the organization will not benefit if it is incorrectly implemented(Jay and Alec, 2005).

Strategy implementation involves several dimensions of an organization. It requires changes in an organization's behaviour, which can be brought about by changing one or more dimensions, including management's leadership ability, organizational structure, information and control systems, human resources and production technology. In strategy implementation, the management translates strategies and policies into action through development of programs, budgets and procedures. Although implementation is usually considered after strategy has been formulated, implementation is key part of strategic management. Effective leadership is necessary for strategy implementation. Managers have a role to influence members of an organization to adopt the behaviour needed for strategy implementation(Dess,1987).

Proper management involves communication and motivation as well as changes in corporate values and culture. Top managers seeking to implement a new strategy may find it useful to build coalitions and persuade middle managers to go along with the strategic plan and its implementation. If leaders involve other managers during strategy

formulation, implementation will be easier because managers and employees will better understand, and be more fully committed to the new strategy(David, 2007).

Organizational structure is typically illustrated in an organization chart. This structure indicates individual managers' responsibilities and degree of authority and incorporates jobs into departments. Structure also pertains to the degree of centralization and whether a functional, divisional or matrix approach will be utilized. A proper mix of information and control systems must be developed to support the implementation of the strategic plan. Managers and employees must be rewarded for adhering to the new strategy and making it a success, or the intensity of implementation will be reduced substantially(Jay and Alec, 2005).

The human resource function plays a key role in strategy implementation. This function involves recruitment, selection, training, transfers, promotion and layoffs of employees to properly implement the strategic plan. New strategy may foster resentment and resistance among other managers and employees, and this is a matter that must be resolved quickly or it may hinder strategy implementation. Technology relates to the knowledge, tools and equipment used to accomplish an organization's assignments. If an organization adopts a strategy of producing a new product, managers must often redesign jobs and construct new buildings and facilities. New technology, because of its efficiency, may also be required for implementing a low-cost strategy(Deepak, 1990). As with other aspects of strategy implementation, the appropriate level of technology must be found for proper implementation of the strategic plan(Porter, 1980).

According to Pearce and Robinson(1997), evaluation and control is the process by which an organization's activities and performance results are monitored and actual performance compared with desired performance. In evaluation of strategy, managers try to ensure that the strategy chosen is properly implemented and is meeting the objectives of the organization. Control and evaluation process helps strategists monitor the progress of a plan. Evaluation and control processes are set up to ensure that the variance between

expected and desired objectives will be close according to the strategy(Pearce and Robinson,1997).

Though the above information may portray formality in strategic management, a number of factors determine how much formality is needed. These factors include the management style, complexity of the business environment and the size of the organization(Pearce and Robinson, 1997). Although evaluation and control is the final phase of strategic management, it can also pinpoint weaknesses in previously implemented strategies and thus stimulate the entire process to begin again.

2.3 Strategic Planning Practices

One of the commonly cited reasons for strategic planning is to enhance organizational performance(Hahn and Powers, 1999 and Schneider and De Meyer,1991). Well designed strategic plans provide an operational framework that allows the organization to enjoy distinct competitive advantages, thus experiencing improved performance(Porter,1997). In some cases, the objective might be to trim overhead or reorganize existing resources within the same general strategic domain. In other cases, the organization might be intent on diversifying its products or services(Byrne, 996).

Another rationale for developing strategic plans could be to provide staff members within the organization information about the direction of the organization (as spelled out by the strategic plan) Researches show that organizations practice strategic planning in the way they do the situation analysis where they address the question of where are we now?, how they come up with the mission and vision for the institution, that is, where do we want to be and what it hopes to do to get where they would want to be(Quinn, 1993 and Johnson 1987).

The main aspect of strategic planning is in its formulation, implementation and the evaluation of the strategies(Liedtka,1998). As much as the strategic planning practices are quite clear and specific, there is no one clear way advocated by scholars on how

institutions should go about in conducting or practicing its strategic planning. Different authors and scholars have advanced that strategies can form implicitly as well as be formulated explicitly (Mintzberg 1993 and Johnson and Scholes 1997). An additional, but equally probable, rationale for developing strategic plans is to appease different constituencies of the organization. A not-for-profit organization, like a chamber of commerce for example, might develop a strategic plan to enhance the likelihood that the members of the local community or members of the political community will have favorable impressions of the organization.

Finally, organizations might also develop strategic plans to appease funding sources or lending institutions. For example, a business with a relatively short financial track record might need a line of credit to fund future growth. The lending institution could, and probably would, require some type of business plan or strategic plan from this organization to protect the interests of the institution. To achieve improvement in performance, however, strategic plans must move beyond incremental improvements embodied in plans of the past to evoke revolutionary change within organizations, changes that make the organization unique and different (Hamel, 1996, Porter, 1997 and Slywotzky *et al.*, 1999).

The extent of strategic planning is dominated by top management reflects the military roots of strategy, strategic planning is the process adopted in identifying a strategy that best matches organizations capability with the environment it enables an organization to identify prevailing environmental opportunities and threats and also to figure out its resources capabilities. To align itself accordingly to battle with the environmental challenges. The components of Strategic management model include the company mission, objectives internal analysis, external environmental scanning, industrial analysis, competitors analysis, strategy selection implementation, strategic control and continuous evaluation.

Hamel(1996) also supported this need for revolutionary change by citing the widespread, confused change that is taking place across so many industries. It is important to note however, that the mere presence of a good plan does not necessarily indicate that success is certain or that improvement in financial performance will be realized(Mintzberg, 1993). Strategic planning is a commonly used management process, employed by managers in both the private and public sector to determine the allocation of resources in order to develop financial and strategic performance. There appears to be general agreement among strategic planning researchers that the process consists of three major components; firstly, formulation this including setting objectives and assessing the external and internal environments, secondly, evaluating and selecting strategic alternatives as well as implementation and control(Hopkins and Hopkins,1997).

Mintzberg(1994) views planning strategy as precise intentions that are formulated and articulated by central leadership and backed up by formal controls to ensure their surprise free implementation in an environment that is controllable and practicable. In planning few, strategies are proposed to develop through a rational and formalized sequence of analytical and evaluative procedures. The command view is where by strategy develops through the direction of an individual or group and not necessarily through formal planning. The strategy would be an outcome of an autocratic leader or dominant leader who becomes personally associated with strategy development of the organization. Such individuals may be the owner or co-founder or political appointee of the organization. Usually such organizations are small enterprise or public sector organization.

Herold(1972) observed that planners were better than non-planners at identifying opportunities, setting goals and objectives, and setting proper strategies and effective tactics to achieve them as evidenced by their higher growth rate and higher operational efficiency ratios. He also points out that planners are also more aggressive than non-planners in pursuit of business objectives. Imposed strategy the external environment dictates patterns in the actions either through direct imposition or through implicating pre-empting or bounding organizational choice(Mintzberg 1994). Strategic planning

processes will be designed to fit the specific need of the organization. It's argued by(Morrison, Renfro and Boucher, 1984 and McCarthy,1996) that every successful model must include vision and mission, environmental analysis, setting objectives and strategic analysis choice.

Identification of the institutions vision and mission is the first step of any strategic planning process; what is our business and what will it be?(Thompson, 1993). This help in infusing the organization with a sense of purpose and direction and giving it a mission. A mission is a statement broadly outlines the organizations future course and serves as a guiding concept. Once the vision and mission are clearly identified the institution must analyze its external and internal environment(Kaplan and Norton, 2001). The environmental analysis performed within the frame work of the SWOT analysis, analyses information about organization's external environment; economic, social, demographic, political, legal, technological and internal organizational factors.

Ramachandran(1991) study covering 117 small scale enterprises located in Ahmedabad attempted to answer some of the questions related to strategic planning practices of such firms. According to the study, most of the firms do undertake analysis of the constituents of the environment such as suppliers of materials, customers and implications of government policy changes. The study further advanced that the firms also undertake analysis of their own strengths and weaknesses.

Kaissi, Begun and Welson(2008), surveyed a sample of 138 Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) of hospitals in the state of Texas about strategic planning in their organizations and collected financial information on the hospitals for 2003. Among the sample hospitals, 87 percent reported having a strategic plan and most reported that they followed a variety of common practices recommended for strategic planning; having a comprehensive plan, involving physicians, involving the board and implementing the plan. About one-half of the hospitals assigned responsibility for the plan to the CEO.

According to the study, the practice of the hospital involved three dimensions of; having a strategic plan, assigning the CEO responsibility for the plan and involving the board of management. The study further found that in some of the hospitals, physicians were moderately involved in the planning process and the plan was reviewed and/or approved by the governing board. According to Roach and Allen(1983), the strategic planning practice is the product of the best minds inside and outside the corporation. The process considers future implications of current decisions, adjusts plans to the emerging organisation environment, manages the business analytically and links, directs and controls complex enterprises through a practical, working management system. Cartwright(1987) suggested that effective planning as a practice is not as rational and analytical as it has been portrayed in the literature. He argues for the lost art (rather than science) of planning. He contends that planning is both a generic activity whose success determinants are partially independent of the area in which it is applied and an area where judgment, intuition and creativity are still important.

Situational analysis includes the external and internal analysis and will address the question, where are we now. The internal analysis identifies the firm's strength and weaknesses and reveals opportunities and threats through swot analysis(Tarcy and Brian 1999). The purpose of situational analysis is to understand the organisation situation which includes environmental scanning; industrial analysis helps to understand the companies' opportunities and threats, Strategic objectives among others. The specific objectives statement indicates among others the organisations aims to achieve given the results the firms through environmental scanning the firm should match its strengths opportunities weaknesses should be addressed with external threats.

Turkish management practices in general and strategic planning practices in particular, commentators and researchers tend to agree on certain characteristics of managerial and strategic planning practices in Turkey(Ramazanoglu, 1985). Among the frequently mentioned characteristics of Turkish managerial practices are a highly centralised organisational structure(Pasa et al., 2001), reliance on short-term planning(Lauter, 1970),

less clear organisational strategies (Sozen and Shaw, 2002), reactive rather than proactive strategies and long-term vertical relationships (Iseri and Demirbag, 1999). The nature of decision making in Turkish business organisations has been described as top-down and less participative (Sozen and Shaw, 2002) and hierarchical relations are reported to be formal and status rigid (Pasa et al., 2001). Turkish business organisations, probably due to overstaffing and top-down communication, have been found to have high administrative intensity (Sozen and Shaw, 2002). In their work of understanding cultural diversity among 38 nations, Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (1998) noted Turkey to have the steepest hierarchy in its organisations and to resemble more the “family type” category. Sozen and Shaw (2002) argue that submissive and paternalistic tendencies, the avoidance of initiation and innovation are derived from a patriarchal benevolent and close-knit family system and authoritarian and rote learning based education system. Such an administrative value appears to create action avoidance in terms of decision making and strategic planning.

Strategic analysis and choice are done in two levels corporate level and business level. Strategic analysis aims at identifying and generating strategic options for the corporate and business level. Strategic choice is concerned with the evaluation of the strategic option and selections of the most appropriate strategies for achieving organizations objectives (Tatoglu and Demirbag, 2009). On analysis of strategic planning practices in companies from the UK and Turkey, Tatoglu and Demirbag found significant differences between the strategic planning practices of Turkish firms and UK firms. The study found out that Turkish firms rather than UK firms are more favorably disposed to strategic planning attributed to development of the market economy in Turkey and the increased competition from foreign firms as globalization proceeds. Gunduz and Tatoglu (2003), advanced that as a close-knit society, business organisations in Turkey are dominated by private holding companies run by family members and professional managers.

Strategic Implementation involves organisation of the firm’s resources and motivation of the firm’s resources and motivation of the staff to achieve objectives. The way in which,

implementers of strategy may be different people from those that formulated it. Otherwise implementers might backfire if care is not taken in communicating of the strategy and the reason behind implementation. If implementation is not successfully understood or if the lower level managers resist its' implementation they may not understand why a particular strategy was implemented.

Evaluation and Control is where managers assure the strategy chosen is properly implemented and formulated and is meeting the firm's objectives. The implementation of the strategy evaluation and control assures the gap between expected and desired objectives will be closer to the strategy(Pierce and Robinson, 1997)

The implementation should be monitored and corrected if need be. Evaluation and control contains the following steps defining parameters to be measured, target values for the parameters performing measurements comparing measured results to those defined and then making the necessary changes.

2.4 Strategic Planning Outcomes

Jenster and Overstreet(1990) focused on formal strategic planning of US credit unions. They observed from their study of 283 institutions that the propensity to plan is related to key organizational processes, structural configurations, administrative procedures, managerial perceptions of environmental predictability and multiple performance measures. In addition to formal planning having differing roles among various types of organizations, communication between management and board was important for enhanced organizational performance.

Hopkins and Hopkins(1997) found the relationship between strategic planning intensity and performance not only to be strong, but also reinforced the importance of strategic planning intensity to the financial success in the financial service firms. Strategic planning expertise and belief in a positive planning-performance relationship was found to have the strongest direct effect on strategic planning intensity. In addition, as

organization increase in size and structural complexity, planning intensity becomes weaker rather than stronger.

Schwenk and Shrader(1993) recently meta-analyzed fourteen studies on formal strategic planning and performance in small firms. While they did not find that planning necessarily improves performance, they argued against the assertion that strategic planning is only appropriate for large firms. As such, they concluded that strategic planning promotes long-range thinking, reduces the focus on operational details and provides a structured means for identifying and evaluating strategic alternatives.

Kallman and Shapiro(1978) find no significant benefits from strategic planning and observe no significant differences in performance between planner and non-planner firms. Boyd(1991) uses meta-analysis to aggregate the results of 29 samples and finds modest correlations between planning and performance. After a review of planning-performance studies, Schrader et al.(1984) conclude that there was no systematic relationship between long range planning and organizational performance. Ackelsberg and Arlow(1985) analyze the performance of 124 small businesses and found that firms with an instilled formal planning process had higher earnings and sales growth than those that did not involve planning processes. A 1993 study based on a survey of Business Week's top 1,000 companies shows that the best planning firms had a higher three year average ROI than firms with weaker planning systems(Pekar and Abrahams,1995).

A study by Wooldridge and Floyd(1990) of 20 organizations and 157 managers, showed a statistically significant relationship between middle management involvement in strategy and organizational performance. Burgelman(1994), who performed a comparative study of Intel Corporation's strategic planning in two semi-conductor businesses, also concluded the same. During a time of shrinking market for its Dynamic Random Access Memory (DRAM), resources were diverted away from the core DRAM business to new, more profitable opportunities in the microcomputer business hence enhancing Intel Corporation's profitability.

An empirical study by Basham and Lunenburg(1989) exploring the relationship between strategic planning and student performance in the school literature in a survey of 127 public school districts in Kentucky in the late 1980s, found an inconsistent and weak association between district participation in strategic planning and student achievement, as measured by standardized test scores in reading, language arts and mathematics in grades 3, 5, 7, and 10. Basham and Lunenburg wrote in their review of prior research that no other study shows a direct tie-in between strategic planning in school districts and school district performance on standardized achievement tests.

The Kentucky study, co-relational by design, could only determine if districts that happened to use strategic planning also happened to have higher standardized test scores, and not if strategic planning caused higher test scores(Basham and Lunenburg, 1989). Moreover, Basham and Lunenburg found insufficient evidence to support the hypothesis that strategic planning and student achievement were even related. They did, however, discover a positive relationship between strategic planning and local property wealth. This finding suggests that any differences in standardized test scores in districts that use strategic planning may be explained by socioeconomic status, a factor long associated in the literature with student performance(Basham and Lunenburg, 1989).

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents methods that were adopted by the study in obtaining the research data. The chapter is outlined into research design, population of the study, data collection techniques and data analysis.

3.1 Research Design

This study was a case study since the main purpose of the study was to describe the factors affecting strategic planning practices in University of Nairobi. According to Kothari(1990) a case study is a powerful form of qualitative analysis that provides a systematic way of looking at events, collecting data, analyzing information and reporting the results. A case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a phenomenon within its real-life context on a unit of study that could be an institution, family, district, community or a person(Yin,1984). Baxter and Jack(2008) argued that a case study is a form of qualitative analysis where studies are done on institutions and from the study, data generalization and conclusions or implications drawn. The study method gave in-depth information on the strategic planning practices adopted by the University of Nairobi.

Critics of the case study method, however, believe that the study of a small number of cases can offer no grounds for establishing reliability or generality of findings(Yin,1984). In this study, although the researcher narrowed down to strategic planning practices adopted in University of Nairobi, the research instruments were constructed comprehensively and exhaustively enough to give representative information that ensured both reliability and generality of findings on the strategic planning practices that might apply to other universities in Kenya.

3.2 Data Collection Techniques

The study relied mostly on primary data sources. Primary data was collected using interview guides. An interview guide is a set of a research instrument consisting of a

series of questions to be asked during an interview for the purpose of gathering information from the interviewees. The data was collected from University of Nairobi College Registrars who were the interviewee representing each college in the university. The researcher booked an appointment with each registrar upon where an interview on strategic planning practices was conducted using an interview guide. To ensure that the interviewees were well prepared for the interview, the researcher had sent all interviewees a copy of interview guide as per the appendix attached.

3.3 Data Analysis

The data collected from the respondents were qualitative in nature. The researcher used content analysis to analyze the data through describing phenomena, classifying it and seeing how the concepts interconnect as was indicated by the interviewees. This approach of analysis was preferred because it gives results that are predictable, directed, or comprehensive. Content analysis also enabled the researcher to shift through large volumes of data with relative ease in a systematic fashion.

CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATIONS

4.0 Introduction

The chapter comprises of the results of the study. The analysis of the study is based on questions contained in the interview guide. The researcher managed to interview 5 of the six college registrars that were targeted for the interview. The demographic characteristics of the respondents were analyzed in accordance to their status. In this case the researcher established that the respondents had an experience in the University for over 15 years. The respondents had therefore a good grasp of the strategic planning issues at the University of Nairobi. The data was collected and analyzed on past and present data on the University, matching out patterns against data and checking out validity of data sources.

4.1 Strategic Planning Process

From the findings it was evident that strategic planning had existed in the University of Nairobi. Formalized Strategic planning started in the year 1997 following the recommendations of the Presidential Visitation Committee headed by Geoffrey Kariithi. In view of the rapid expansion and complexities in administration, the University underwent a major restructuring in 1983 resulting in decentralization of the administration, by creation of six campus colleges headed by principals. However in 1997 strategic planning was formalized after the government insisted that the university work on a cost sharing basis with the government insisting on payment of salaries and wages only hence cut off grants to the university.

The Strategic Planning Process at the University of Nairobi lies with the senior management of the institution. The team is composed of the vice-chancellor and the deputies, college principals, registrar's directors and heads of departments. This internal

process is facilitated by the department of planning in the university; the head of planning facilitates the whole process of strategy formulation.

At the workshop the participants first review the institution in terms of where it is at that moment and where it wants to be in terms of achievements. This involves an assessment of both the internal and external environment to determine the real situation on the ground and in what direction events are likely to take. In the assessment of the internal environment, the tool used is the SWOT analysis the Strengths Weaknesses Opportunities for example; in the last analysis the institution documented some of the following results:

According to the interviewees, strengths of the university are strategic location of campuses, qualified and competent staff and diverse and competitive disciplines. Weaknesses includes: staggered semester schedules and low enrolment of international students while opportunities are potential for programme expansion through Distance Learning, potential for expanding multi-disciplinary programmes and growing demand for research and consultancy services. The interviewees also said that the main threats facing the university are increased competition from local and international institutions of higher learning and escalating cost of education.

The interviewees further said that before the Senior Management workshop, individual college management composed of the principal, Registrar and the strategic committee would have performed a focused analysis of their strengths and weaknesses at college level. A review of the opportunities and threats facing their individual colleges is undertaken. All the comments and suggestions are then incorporated into the final SWOT analysis conducted by the entire university team.

The interviewees further reported that internal and external environmental assessment is based on the tenets of the ISO 9001 - 2000 Quality Management System (QMS) standard certification which the institution was awarded in 2008. The process involved various stages with different activities spread over the three-year period. The assessment is the focus for the universities strategic planning. Its results impact greatly on the ability of the

institution to plan hence the committee knows the importance of interpreting the environment correctly.

The study further found that findings of the environmental assessment helps the planning committee to merge the strategic plans formulated with the institutions mission and vision statements. From the findings the university vision is to be 'a world-class university committed to scholarly excellence' while the Mission is 'to provide quality university education and training and to embody the aspirations of the Kenyan people and the global community through creation, preservation, integration, transmission and utilization of knowledge'.

The interviewees also said that strategic plan is then put together with the vision and mission statements in mind. The team then settles for a particular strategic direction and the plan developed henceforth will then have to accommodate the university's nine core values. The final draft is then presented to the University's administration for approval and adoption. Subsequently, the approved strategic plan is then communicated downwards to the departmental heads and eventually to the staff of the university. For implementation purposes, the interviewees said that, the plan is broken down to each department based on their core activities; part of which has clearly defined targets.

The study further found out that the college strategic planning committee is charged with the implementation of the plans on the ground, that is, college and departmental level. It is an activity that is ongoing throughout the year. Strategies implementation at the University of Nairobi also involves monitoring and evaluation. According to the interviewees, the college committees are again involved in the monitoring and evaluation. The Vice Chancellor of the University also takes a personal initiative to ensure that the strategy moves to the right direction. In this respect the policy statements, vision, mission and core values are published and signed by the vice chancellor and strategically placed to add impetus to the strategy.

STRATEGY	TIMEFRAME	OUTCOME
Internal and external environment assessment	Continuous	REVEALS THE REALITIES
Vision and Mission	Continuous	Describes where university is and wants to go
Strategy Formulation	5 years	Strategic plan
Implementation	1 year	Plan is realised
Monitoring and evaluation	continuous	Quality achievement

4.2 Personnel Involved In the Strategic Planning Process

To the question on the role of personnel involved in the strategic planning process, the interviewees reported that the roles of the personnel involved in the strategic planning process in the University of Nairobi are clearly well divided. The roles however are complementary and support one another to ensure that the whole planning process is successful and the co-operation of all the members is therefore of cardinal importance. The University's management board is at the helm of the entire strategic planning process. Through the strategy committee whose members are the entire management board the University's management board reviews and approves the strategic plan proposed to them. According to the interviewees, often the University management board challenges the University senior management to justify and defend the proposed strategic plans and can approve the strategic plans with or without amendments.

The interviewees further said that the other player in the strategic planning process at the University of Nairobi is the Vice Chancellor. The Vice Chancellor provides leadership to the whole process of strategy planning. Besides sitting as a co-opted member of the management board he leads his team of college principals throughout the planning process and provides leadership. Since there are six colleges which have to come up with

individual plans aimed at their own colleges, the VC plays the central role of unifying the entire strategic planning process at the university. He ensures that the final strategic plan is sound and defensible before presentation to the board for approval. The Vice Chancellor provides motivation by publishing the quality statement, mission, vision and university core values which are advertised in their website, media as well as posted strategically in the university campuses.

The interviewees in addition added that the head of the planning division of the university is another key player in the strategic planning process. The head of the unit handles and organizes all the activities necessary for the successful planning process. Various meetings, workshops and retreats are organised and co-ordinated by the planning department. Publications and communication regarding strategic planning at the university is handled by this department.

4.3 Strategic Planning Committees

On the strategic planning committees, the interviewees said that the University of Nairobi has basically two committees involved in the strategic planning process. The first strategy committee involves the University management which is composed of the following; Principals, Deans, Directors and Head of Departments This committee oversees the strategies where they facilitate the induction of staff into leadership, undertake continuous leadership skills development and promote a leadership culture based on doctrines of good governance so as to achieve the implementation of the strategic planning process at the University of Nairobi. The committee also plays an important role in the evaluation and monitoring of the strategic plan against the actual performance.

The second level of the committee, according to the interviewees is the college level strategic planning committees. This committee is based at the college level and comprises of 10 members. There are therefore six such committees in the entire university with each committee representing each of the six colleges. The college level committees are headed

by the deputy principals of the colleges along with other co-opted members drawn from deans, directors of schools and institutes as well as registrars. The interviewees further added that, the committees are responsible for drawing up strategic plans for individual colleges while other key roles include coordination of the plan, resources mobilization, monitoring and implementation processes.

4.4 Strategic Approaches from Other Institutions

From the findings on strategic approaches from other institutions, the study established that the university had considered approaches from other institutions. According to the interviewees, there were a variety of perspectives, models and approaches used in planning, the way that strategic plan is developed depends on the nature of the organizations' leadership, culture, complexity of the organizations environment, size of the organization and expertise of the planners and there are a variety of strategic planning models including goal based, issue based, organic scenario (some would assert that scenario planning is more a technique than a model).

The interviewees said that the goal-based planning is probably the most common and starts with focus on the organizations mission and vision/or values, goals to work toward the mission, strategies to achieve the goals and action planning. Issue-based strategic planning often starts by examining issues facing the organization, strategies to address those issues and action plans. Organic strategic planning might start by articulating the organizations vision and values and then action plans to achieve the vision while adhering to those values. According to the interviewees, some planners prefer a particular approach to planning e.g. appreciative enquiry. Some plans are one year plans, many go for up to three years and some to five to ten years into the future; some plans include only top-level information and no action plans.

4.5 Strategic Approaches at the University of Nairobi

To the question on the strategic approaches at the University of Nairobi, the study found that organizations employ strategic planning systems and approaches that suit them best and have formal and structured strategic planning systems; the University of Nairobi also employs formal highly structured approach. Workshops and retreats are organized to deliberate on strategic planning issues. The Vice Chancellor as the chief executive leads the teams for inspiration and motivation and all deliberations are carefully recorded.

The interviewees said that structural approach is exemplified by the manner in which the various committees and related teams play well defined roles in the process. The issues generated are subsequently passed on to the board for approval. The stage then necessitates the review of the proposals before giving the final approval. According to the interviewees, once the strategic plan has been finalized it is communicated downwards to the rest of the employees through the college principals and the deans of the faculties. The strategic plan is hence communicated top-down because there is no input from the low level staffs.

4.6 Strategic Planning Challenges at the University of Nairobi

From the findings the University of Nairobi faced some challenges in the formulation, planning and implementation of strategic plans. From the findings, the university has embarked on customer satisfaction strategies, innovative strategies, operational excellence strategies and differentiation strategies. The main challenge in these strategies is customer satisfaction and differentiation because the university taps the same market just like other public universities.

According to the study findings, the strategic plans are implemented at various departmental levels involving the various heads of departments who then incorporate other staff members. This poses a serious challenge because only heads of departments are trained to handle strategic planning practices.

According to the study the draft plans are developed and then circulated to the senior members of staff. Apparently, the system of top down communication poses a challenge on the success of the strategic plans because they ignore the input of the lower cadre staff who are mostly involved in the implementation.

Another challenge to strategic planning according to the study is lack of a clear system for aligning resources with strategic plans. This is more evident in the university physical and human resources. There is no planned budget to increase revenue to assist in human resource department to attract and develop high caliber staff. The issue of resources also touches on provision of library materials as well as develops and upgrades ICTs to enable smooth implementation of strategic planning.

CHAPTER FIVE:SUMMARY,DISCUSSIONS,AND CONCLUSIONS

5.0 Introduction

The aim of this research was to establish the strategic planning practices adopted by the University of Nairobi. The study sought to determine which strategic planning practices were adopted and the challenges which faced the university in the strategic planning process. This chapter contains a summary of the results as presented in the previous chapter and give conclusions and recommendations based on the findings of the study the chapter also provides the limitations of the study based on the analysis of the entire study and finally the study provides suggestions fore further research.

5.1 Summary, Discussions and Conclusions

From the research findings the University of Nairobi has a clearly defined strategic management process. The planning process is well structured with a top to bottom planning approach. The roles of the key personnel involved in the planning process are clearly spelt out.

The Vice Chancellor as the chief executive of the University is the man responsible for the formulation delivery and implementation of a sound strategic plan for the university. The study found out that the Vice Chancellor provides leadership and motivation during the planning process. Although the University management board is the ultimate decisions maker on whether or not to adopt the plan, various committees such as the

University senior management and the college strategic planning committee play an important role in the strategic planning and implementation process.

From the research findings the strategic planning process ensues an assessment of the external and internal environment. This assessment is normally done using the SWOT technique so as to test the strengths of the university, identify the weaknesses and thereby go for the opportunities. According to the findings, the actual formulation is done by putting together the contributions of the various college planning committees. The final strategic plan is eventually agreed upon by the university senior management before it is presented to the management board for approval.

The study established that the strategic plan is communicated to university senior managers through one day workshops. The senior managers later brief the rest of the staffs on the contents and expectations of the strategic plan. Monitoring and evaluation of the strategic planning process is done annually. From the study findings, the approach adopted by the University of Nairobi is a top-down approach just like other large public institutions in Kenya. There is little evidence of significant flow of bottom-up ideas other than the necessary monitoring and evaluation information.

From the findings the University of Nairobi faced some challenges in the formulation, Planning and implementation of strategic plans. The main challenges were customer satisfaction and differentiation because the university taps the same market just like other public universities. Apparently the system of top down communication poses a challenge on the success of the strategic plans because they ignore the input of the lower cadre staff who is mostly involved in the implementation. Another challenge to strategic planning according to the study is lack of a clear system for aligning resources with strategic plans.

From the study findings it can be concluded that the concept of strategic planning is well developed at the University of Nairobi. The strategic planning process is structured in such a way that the process flows from one logical step to the other. All the key personnel have clearly defined roles. The study reveals that authority at the University is clearly

top-down approach. The study reveals that, faced with many challenges such as stiff competition from Other public and private universities, there is little evidence to show that the university has improved with the introduction of strategic planning.

5.2 Limitations of the Study

There was lack of finances to carry out the study on more interviewees and use of more research instruments and the study further experienced time constraints since the project was to be done within a short time frame. The study was however done on a few interviewees due to time constraint and used a comprehensive research instrument so as to capture as exhaustive data as possible on the strategic planning practices at the University of Nairobi. There was also lack of cooperation with one of the Registrar who was uncooperative to fill the interview guide.

5.3 Recommendations for Policy and Practice

Faced with unprecedented competition, the University of Nairobi has no option but to ensure that the strategic planning is more of a process and less of an event. Allocating more time and resources to strategic issues and thinking could help to increase the success of the university. It could also be of great benefit to the University if it changed the strategic planning approach from top-down approach to bottom-up approach model. It has been demonstrated that flow of ideas from the bottom up-wards has potential yield for good results in as far as motivation and ownership of the strategic plan is concerned.

5.4 Recommendations for Further Research

The researcher conducted a case study of the University of Nairobi only and therefore recommends that for a more generalized conclusion to be made on the strategic planning practices for Kenyan institutions, a study should be done or conducted for the

Universities in Kenya Repeat surveys, will also offer a distinct advantage as they enable us to capture the net effect changes. By repeating the survey at a different time and asking fairly similar questions, it enables us to collect information that can easily be compared

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APPENDICES

Appendix I: Introductory Letter

**REGISTRAR,
UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI,
P.O BOX 30197-00100,
NAIROBI.**

Dear Sir/Madam,

REF: PERMISSION TO CARRY OUT RESEARCH IN THE UNIVERSITY

I am a postgraduate student in University of Nairobi, School of Business, taking a masters degree in business administration (MBA). In partial fulfillment of the degree I am required to carry out a project on the 'Strategic Planning Practice in University of Nairobi

You have been selected to form part of this study which includes all the college registrars in the six colleges to whom an interview will be conducted. I, therefore, seek for an appointment with you in the course of the week so that I might carry-out the data collection process through an interview.

The information you provide will be treated with utmost propriety and will only be used for the purposes of the project. Thanks in anticipation.

Thank you.

Esther Wairimu, D61/70107/2008

Appendix II: Interview Guide

Section A: Strategic Planning Practices

1. Did you have any mission and vision statement before you adopted the strategic plans?
2. Have you adopted any strategic planning practice in the University?
 - a) If so when?
 - b) When did it get completed?
 - c) If not when are you likely to adopt one?
3. How long did it take in adopting the strategic planning practices?
4. What strategies have you adopted?
5. What strategic analysis have you adopted?
6. Did you get any training before you handled the strategic planning practices?
7. How long did the strategies take in order to be adopted?
8. How frequently are strategic plans drafted?
9. Please describe the stages or processes that the strategic plans pass through?
10. Does the university create a planning committee during strategic planning?
11. If yes, how many people are involved in the strategic planning and what are their designations?

12. Do you conduct environmental analysis during formulation of strategic plans?
13. Does the university revise or evaluate the strategies it has formulated?
14. How do the strategic planning practices adopted enhance the universities performance?
15. Does the University revise or evaluate the strategies it has adopted?
16. Have you learned any of the approaches from other institutions or Organisations? If so please list

Section B Objectives

17. Do you have any objectives in the University?
18. How often do you set the objectives?
19. Who drafts the objectives?
20. Which Management level is involved in setting the objectives?
21. When did you change your objectives?
22. How did the change affect your planning ?
23. Has the University attained any of its Objectives ?
24. How do you draft plans when they are developed?