CHANGE MANAGEMENT CHALLENGES FACING DEVOLUTION OF GOVERNMENT AT KAKAMEGA MUNICIPAL COUNCIL

BY

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

NOVEMBER, 2012

DECLARATION

This research project is my own work and has not been presented to any other university for the purpose of study or otherwise

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I acknowledge my supervisor Dr. Kitiabi and entire staff of the School of Business, University of Nairobi for their tireless effort in shaping me up to earn this opportunity. Special acknowledgements too to my fellow graduates for carrying out all assignments that helped complete this project successfully including the secretarial team and field assistants.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this project to my wife Clare and daughter Precious who have persevered long hours of my absence as I worked towards its completion. God gave you the patience to be peaceful and as you spurred me on, I knew the results would be there for all to see. Your smiles and constant company when I was working on this research kept me focused. Indeed this has come to pass and thank you for your great support. .

ABSTRACT

This study investigated challenges facing devolution at the municipal council of Kakamega. Further, it established how change management was handled at municipal council. The objectives of the study were to determine how change relating to devolution was being handled and establish the challenges of managing changes at the municipal council. Interviews from key offices in the municipality at the four divisions that were centrally placed in change management processes were carried out to get an in-depth view of the challenges that hinder smooth implementation of devolved governance system. The study can be of great significant interest to the corporate world in Kenya and may have generated new information that can be used for policy formulation by the government and its ministries in the republic to help speed up devolution process. The research also advanced the work of previous scholars and academicians. Based on the research findings the study concluded that training and lack of incentives was a major factor that affected strategic change management at the municipality. Similarly, the information technology changes and style of leadership in the municipality and the government as a whole appeared to be politically controlled making it difficult to effect devolution willingly. The study anticipated and encountered limitations in terms of funds and lack of cooperation from respondents but this was dealt with through financial assistance from friends to make a final report a success.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

At the beginning of the twenty first century, change is everywhere. Change is the shift in external situation. According to Ackerman (1982) change can happen fast. Transition on the other hand is the pre-orientation people need to make in response to the change. This can take time. To be successful in both implementation and in helping people we need to manage both the change and transition. A transition management plan is a necessary component of a change management plan and presumes that the underlying change is being well managed.

Conner (1993) asserts that employees have a tendency of resisting change during transition period. Some of the strongest resistance occur due to inefficient communication channels within the organization transiting. Scott (1991) points out the greatest challenge in transition is the fear of the dysfunctional symptoms of future shock which occur when the demands for adaptation to change exceed the current adaptation capacity. According to him, absorbing change requires physical, emotional, and intellectual energy. On any given day human beings can only absorb so much change before capacity reaches overload and they are pushed into future shock.

1.1.1Change Management

Change management is the modification or transformation of organizations in order to maintain or improve their effectiveness. This is a deliberate, conscious use of strategies to match the prevailing circumstances and preferences in order to achieve and succeed in attaining the objectives of the organization Mitchell, McKenna & Young, (2007). Change

management is the process of continually renewing an organization's direction, structure, and capabilities to serve the ever-changing needs of external and internal customers'.

Transitional change management is the process of managing a person or an organization through change in order to minimise resistance to change while accelerating adoption to change as outlined by practitioners such as Hiatt (2006) and Kotter (1996). Change can range from an overall organizational level change impacting all the employees in an organization to a process change impacting only on a select group or even an individual. In either case it needs to be appropriately managed.

Johnson (2002) emphasize that in managing change one needs to know the key elements to change which include: what is changing, why the change is taking place, who change impacts and how to monitor the changes throughout the process. These elements will help a researcher to identify the training and communication needs and eventually track all the change implementation stages.

William (1991) notes that a well-managed change ensures that there is an identified Executive Sponsor for the change, leaders understand the shifting roles of sponsors, Implementers Agents and advocates during change and change teams are set up as needed .it also guarantees that change has been effectively established and communicated to everyone and the details of the implementation are generally understood as they emerge and are modified to fit changing circumstances.

1.1.2 Devolution of Government

Countries across the world have reacted differently in managing change, Beth (2000). Some have been fairly successful while others have failed especially during devolution transition process. In Kenya, for instance, the promulgation of the 2010 new constitution has brought new challenges to the governance of the Municipal Councils.

Devolution is generally defined as a process of political, administrative and fiscal management powers between central government and lower levels of government primarily operating at city and region levels, Potter(2001).It is not just a linear process of power transfer from national to subnational level but it also involves some degree of cooperation between the different levels of government.

Muia (2008) asserts that devolution is one way through which people's right to participation in governance is attainable. It also refers to the transfer of public authority and resources including personnel from national to subnational jurisdiction. Scholars have advanced political and economic rationale in support of devolution. According to the Kenyan constitution (2010) devolution enhances democracy by bringing government closer to citizens. It also establishes different tiers of government and ensures minorities are given a stake in the system and this helps in conflict management.

The key economic rationale for devolution is well articulated by Musgrave (1959) who argues that devolution may improve governance in the public service provision by improving the efficiency of resource allocation. Previously, Kenya was identified with a highly centralized government which it inherited at independence from the colonial administration which established to facilitate direct rule and govern alongside the civil service, Kanyinga (2006).

The new constitution of Kenya at article 1(3) and (4) establishes two levels of government; the national and county levels of government .But there may be those who may look at section 18 of the sixth schedule and argue that it creates a third level of government. The section seeks to continue the existence of Local authorities subject to any law that might be enacted .This argument may not be sustainable for a number of reasons. From a functional point of view the constitution at article 186 confers functions to only two levels of government, the national and count levels. From resource allocation point of view the constitution allocates resources to only two levels of government. The conclusion would then be that section 18 is a transition clause that continues the Local Authorities until when the county government shall have been elected.

1.1.3 Kakamega Municipal Council

Local authorities in Kenya fall under the Ministry of Local Government .Administration of the authorities consists of a mayor, town clerk and councilors. In each county, there are municipal council, town council and county council. The number of councilors depends on population and area of each authority. Authorities are divided into wards and each ward elects only one councilor. Wards have often common boundaries with administrative locations.

The Municipal Council of Kakamega is located in Kakamega County which is the second largest county in Kenya covering approximately 3,224.9 Km 2.The population is 1,660,651 (Male – 48%, Female – 52 %) with an annual growth rate of 2.12%. The number of Local Authorities in the county are 8: The Municipal Council of Kakamega and Mumias, County Councils of Kakamega, Butere-Mumias, Town Council of Malava)

The administrative structure of Municipal Council of Kakamega is divided into the policy arm (headed by the mayor) and the administrative arm (headed by the Town Clerk).The policy arm functions through committees that make council policies that get validated by the full council. The Municipality is divided into 10 wards, each politically represented by a councilor. The councilors come together to elect a mayor and chairmen of various committees. Currently, the municipality has 243 members of staff.

The Municipal's vision is 'To be a leading Council in the provision of Social and Economic development in Kenya' while the mission is 'To efficiently and effectively provide social and economic services to the citizenry of the Municipal Council of Kakamega through effective leadership and strategic partnerships.

1.2 Research Problem

The concept of change management process has been in existence for decades. Change management scholars have carried out researches and eventually developed different models to describe the process, for instance Hiati (2006) explains the ADKAR model for change management. According to the model, there are 5 stages for change management which are: Awareness, desire, knowledge, ability and reinforcement. Bridges (1991) on the other hand asserts that people go through the phases of transition as they orient to change. The phases, according to his transition model are: the lull between the waves, denial, resistance, exploration, commitment and getting ready for the new wave.

Johnson (2002) emphasize that in managing change one needs to know the key elements to change which include: what is changing, why the change is taking place, who change impacts and how to monitor the changes throughout the process. These elements will

help a researcher to identify the training and communication needs and eventually track all the change implementation stages

Kakamega municipal council has experienced episodes of political instability which have had adverse effect on the economic performance. Such failures include corruption, economic stagnation, inequalities and poverty. These failures and episodic instability can be linked to the quality of governance(Kimenyi et al 2004). Armstrong (1995) is of the view that change can create instability with disharmony and surprise. The organization's culture can create solidarity and meaning and can inspire commitment and productivity. But the culture can actively and forcefully work against an organization when change becomes necessary. If not properly managed, change can decrease morale, motivation and commitment and create conditions of conflict within an organization.

Isaboke (2001) Mudaya (2007) Musyoka (2011) carried out carried out studies on strategic response by organization in Kenya to changing environment and their impact however, none of these studies focused on Kakamega Municipal Council during the devolution process. This study was particular to Kakamega Municipal Council since strategic management is context dependent.Starategies applicable in one environment may not apply in a different environment as environmental forces may differ hence a knowledge gap exists.

In an effort to establish the challenges, this research examined the area of challenges in change management using a specific case study. The goal was to find out the challenges unique to the Municipal Council of Kakamega during the transition from central to devolved government. Taking this into account, this study sought to answer the following

research question. What are the change management challenges facing the transition from central to devolved government at Kakamega Municipal Council?

1.3 Research Objectives

i. To determine the change management challenges facing Kakamega Municipal Council in transition to a devolved county government

ii. To determine measures taken to deal with the challenges in Kakamega Municipal council during the transition from central to a devolved government

1.4 Value of the Study

This was a timely research after the new constitutional dispensation in Kenya. The findings of this study will therefore positively contribute to strategic management in general and change management practices in those transiting to a devolved government. This study will inform those charged with change management during the transition process on the best change management practices and how optimal efficiencies on performance can be maximized.

The academicians, scholars and researchers will use the findings as reference point for further analysis and research on decentralized government. This will help in generating new ideas that will provide a foundation for positive impact on the various counties in the future. Therefore, the research will provide knowledge that is applicable outside the research settings with implications going beyond the researcher.

For the Kakamega County and other counties, the research on change will assist solve particular existing problems and have an implication on formulation of policies and their implementation.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

Literature review seeks to examine in detail the available literature and studies that have already been conducted and which are directly related to the topic under study. The literature review for this research covers change management, transitional change challenges and elements of change management during the transition from central to devolved government.

2.2 Change Management

Carwall (1990) a change management scholar argues that the work of implementing changes in an organization is not an easy work like others could imagine. Changes create anxiety, uncertainty and stress. He notes that in transitional process find themselves working for long hours, dealing with problems and trying to overcome the doubts of other to see change through.

Amanda (2007)   concurs with Colin Carwal and further notes that that transition especially during devolution of state requires organizations to have a clear vision of the changes they want to implement and a technically and structurally sound foundation for making these changes. He is however quick to point out that the change initiatives can still wallow due to obstacles that arise during implementation.

Nayahangan et al (2011) approach transitional change as a process and not as an event. According to them, there is a definite sequencing of time, strategy, understanding, acceptance and adoption of new systems, workflow, or ideas. They argue that change happens to individuals and is highly personal, guided by feelings of personal mastery,

adequacy, sense of loss, entitlement and personal gain. They also observe that successful leaders must consider the differing priorities of the organization and filter those issues through the change process.

Failing to engage stakeholders and to inform them of the reasons, processes and expected benefits of major organizational changes can lead to lack of acceptance of the changes and, ultimately, failure of these initiatives. This can affect not only the organization and relations within the organization, but also clients and the organization's reputation. Change management leaders must therefore promote awareness and understanding of the change initiative to influence stakeholders' willingness to embrace the change Amanda (2007)

Change agents are in agreement on the principle of transitional change mechanism. They say that change occurs when people are feeling pain. Unless their present conditions create enough discomfort, there is no motive for change. Change agents try to assess how much emotion people are regarding the change issue, before initiating change strategy. Kreitner (1983) lists some of the reasons why stakeholders resist change. They are: Parochial self-interest, misunderstanding, lack of trust and low tolerance for change. The change must be continuously evaluated, recreated, and ensure continued application of improvement initiatives to ensure a competitive edge (Fickenscher et al, 2011).

2.3 Approaches to Change Management

A change encompasses the transformational and modification of an activity or process to affect behavior and achieve objectives. According to Seckler (1999) Management is regarded as the collective utilization of human resource and material in an effort to reach the known goal. Change management need to be systematically approached in order to realize its goals.

According to Gullick (2008) the process of change management consists of a set of basic management tasks such as; planning that determines an organization's objectives and establishes appropriate strategies for achieving them and it is done at every level. It also provides a structure for the firm to enable it to function effectively to achieve quality goals. Leading by providing direction, guidance and motivation that involves influencing organization's members to perform in ways that allow the accomplishment of objectives. The process of change encompasses complex situations either to an individual or an organization. To bring changes to individuals, helping others to handle change or trying to cope with changes, it is worth taking some time to think about what needs to be changed and how the change is to be implemented.

According to Armstrong (1995) there are two main types of change: strategic and operational. Strategic change is concerned with broad, long-term and organization-wide issues. It is about moving to a future state, which has been defined generally in terms of strategic vision and scope. It will cover the purpose and mission of the organization, its corporate philosophy on such matters as growth, quality, and innovations and values concerning people, the customer needs served and the technologies employed.

The ultimate achievement of sustainable competitive advantage relies on the qualities defined by Pettigrew and Whipp (1991), namely; the capacity of the firm to identify and understand the competitive forces in play and how they change over time, linked to the competences of a business to mobilize and manage the resources necessary for the chosen competition response through time. Operational change relates to new systems, procedures, structures or technology which will have an immediate effect on working arrangements within a part of the organization. But their impact on people can be more significant than broader strategic change and they have to be handled just as carefully. Organizations are constantly involved in change, but not all change is the same. Although some organizations make minor adjustments to take advantage of new opportunities, other organizations are devoured in corporate takeovers that move them into entirely different industries.

2.4 Challenges in Change Management

There are various challenges anticipated during a transition period. The people challenge which may entail: high staff turnover, focus on customer service, disengaged colleagues increased expertise and skill gaps .The process challenge on the other hand include: poorly designed processes, clear accountabilities, inconsistency, inefficiencies and increased costs service levels.

The most notable challenge is resistance .Resistance to change is a common phenomenon for individuals and organizations. There are many reasons for resisting major changes. According to Connor (1995) the basic reason for resistance to change is distrust of the people who propose it. Distrust can magnify the effect of other sources of resistance. Even when there is no obvious threat, a change may be resisted if people imagine there

are hidden, ominous complications that will only become obvious at a later time. Mutual mistrust may encourage a leader to be secretive about the reasons for change, thereby further increasing suspicion and resistance.

Ansoff (1990) on the other hand notes that resistance to transitional change can be based on the belief that change is unnecessary. One reason for resisting change is the absence of an obvious need for it. Change will be resisted if the current way of doing things has been successful in the past and there is no clear evidence of serious problems. Cameron (2012) argues that belief that the change is not feasible may cause resistance to change. Even when problems are acknowledged, a proposed change may be resisted because it seems unlikely to succeed. Making a change that is radically different from anything done previously will appear very different if not impossible to most people. Failure of earlier change programs creates cynicism and makes people doubtful the next one will be any better.

Paton (2007) points out economic threats as a reason determining resistance to change. Regardless of how a change would benefit the organization; it is likely to be resisted by people who would suffer personal loss of income, benefits or job security. The latter concern is especially relevant when change involves replacing people with technology or improving processes to make them more efficient. Prior downsizing and layoffs raise anxiety and increase resistance to new proposals, regardless of the actual threat.

Change starts with the perception of its need, so a wrong initial perception is the first barrier to change. This can be referred to as distorted perception, interpretation barriers and vague strategic priorities, Rumelt (1995) It includes: myopia, or inability of the

company to look into the future leave a pessimistic image for future changes (Lorenzo, 2000); and different interests among employees and management. The lack of a creative response also hinder strategic vision or lack of clear commitment of top management to changes (Rumelt,1995; Waddell and Sohal, 1998).

Implementation is the critical step between the decision to change and the regular use of it at the organization Klein and Sorra(1996). In this stage, two more resistance groups can be found. The first of them deals with political and cultural deadlocks to change. It consists of implementation climate and relation between change values and organizational values, considering that a strong implementation climate when the values' relation is negative will result in resistance and opposition to change Schalk et al., (1998). According to Rumelt (1995) incommensurable beliefs, or strong and definitive disagreement among groups about the nature of the problem and its consequent alternative solutions, deep rooted values and emotional loyalty are key contributors to resistance during transition period.

Various sources of resistance with different characteristics have been identified by scholars of change management for instance leadership inaction, sometimes because leaders are afraid of uncertainty, sometimes for fear of changing the status quo (Beer and Eisenstat, (1996). Rumelt (1995) on the other hand argues that collective action problems, especially dealing with the difficulty to decide who is going to move first and how to deal with free-riders and lack of the necessary capabilities to implement change.

2.5 Overcoming Challenges to change Management

In opposition to the traditional view of resistance to change, which tends to blame the individuals, certain authors (Coch & French, 1948; Lawrence, 1969) initially studied ways that management could neutralize and overcome resistance to change. Prescriptions subsequently emerged for what management could do to overcome such resistance. Kotter and Schlesinger (1979) proposed traditional strategies for reducing resistance: involvement, education, and participation. The attitudes a manager should adopt run the gamut from complete respect for resistance to total disregard for it. These management actions are unilateral, defensive and force managers to react.

Managing the transition period recommends that managers periodically survey the reactions of those affected; quickly detect and correct what does not work; continually remind those affected of the objectives of the change; exchange ideas directly with these individuals as often as possible; pay attention to people; highlight efforts and provide support to keep energy levels high (Collerette, Delisle, & Perron, 1997). Collerette and Schneider (1996) also propose a series of useful measures in relation to each possible cause of resistance to change. Furthermore, managers can decide to listen to, deny or ignore resistance (Scott & Jaffe, 1989). If planning has been well carried out and a little training is offered, the change will putatively take place by itself, a theory contested by Hall (1987).

These suggestions regarding intervention generates uncertainty and misunderstanding, while underscoring the need for a rigorous, comprehensive method of analysis to allow managers to make judicious choices in intervention strategies. Goldberg's (1999) asserts

that labeling these difficult problems as resistance to change only impedes the change effort. He adds that making changes effectively in organizations requires specific, targeted action and to develop strategies for dealing with more specific losses. Actions should focus more on prevention and on bringing together the individuals affected and the organization.

The phases of preoccupations model is amenable to this new paradigm. Preoccupations are not caused by a poor quality of change management, as was implied in the traditional view of resistance to change where resistance had to be overcome. On the contrary, preoccupations emerge among individuals affected when they feel listened to and important, and when they trust management to respond to their needs (Brassard, 1998).

Listening and diagnosing reactions according to knowledge of the phases of preoccupations enables managers to understand and adapt their managerial actions so that employees may quickly channel their efforts into the change. This approach to communication is much more concrete than the conventional key principles in organizational and change communications. Although it offers a more detailed two-way communication structure than the communication strategy described by Klein (1996), this theory refers to differentiated communication tactics during different phases of organizational change.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1   Introduction

This chapter presents the procedures and methods used to carry out the study. It explains the research design, area of the study, the rationale for the chosen procedures and the methodologies used. The chapter also explains data collection methods and procedures used in analyzing and presenting the data.

3.2 Research Design

Research design refers to the structure of an enquiry. According to Yin (1989), it is a logical matter rather than a logistical one. The central role of research design is to minimize the chance of drawing incorrect causal inferences from data.

This study used a case study research design .The study aimed at collecting information from the selected key informant and a content analysis of relevant secondary data on the challenges in relation to adoption of reform and devolution programme in the Municipal Council of Kakamega County. Case study method was ideal for this research since it enabled to obtain a holistic in-depth investigation on challenges experienced during the devolution process.

3.3   Data Collection

Data collection refers to the way you choose to collect information from people or observe your surroundings. Since it was a qualitative study both primary data and secondary data were collected.Primary data entailed information gathered directly from the respondents which was qualitative in nature. This was through interview, focus group

discussions and observation while secondary data was gotten from reports on devolution of government.

 3 key informants interviewed. The key informants comprised the Kakamega Municipal Council Mayor, the Town Clerk, and a devolution expert. Notes from implementers' group meetings were also taken.

3.4 Data Analysis

This is the process in which data is ordered and organized so that useful information can be extracted from it. For this case study, content analysis was used. This entailed propositions testing. The study relied mainly on explanations and interpretation of the explanations from both primary and secondary data. The analysis was centred on propositions informed by the extant literature.It involved detailed write-ups on Kakamega Municipal Council and its departments. This helped in becoming intimately familiar with each case as a stand-alone entity. To avoid the danger of hastily drawing conclusions, there was a need to look at the data in many divergent ways. This approach allowed for subtle similarities and differences in the cases.

CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction

This study sought to determine challenges facing municipal council during the devolution process. Key informants were inducted into the study. These included the Town Clerk, the Mayor, Chief Administrator and Principal Human Resources Officer Annual reports and strategic plan documents of the municipal council of Kakamega were also utilized to produce the project report. This meant that both primary and secondary data was collected.

4.2 Change Management in the Municipal Council of Kakamega

In this section, the objective of the study was to determine how the municipal council of Kakamega was handling the approaches to change management specifically during the devolution period. Several questions were posed to the senior managers at the municipal offices who were directly involved in devolution reforms implementation. According to the respondents, the municipal council developed various strategic plans for its departments as a required by the ministry of local government in the old constitution system. These had to be in line with yet more strategic plans that are developed by other Ministries of the government and finally, in tandem with the general strategic blue print for the entire government. In this case, all strategic plans were tailored to fit into vision 2030 main stream strategy whose socio-economic, cultural, environmental and political pillars were meant to catapult the country into a semi-developed or fully developed nation. The devolution of power reforms were part of the wider Vision2030 objectives

and hence respondents observed that steps followed in implementing the changes had a defined clear process and steps.

In order to fully participate in strategic planning exercise, respondents showed that particular officers from their sections were taken for workshops from where action plans for each section were formulated regarding the new devolution reforms. After such workshops took place, the senior officers would then convene several meetings in which every officer is given an opportunity to list down the key result areas (KRAs) in an annual work plan to be monitored through the government appraisal system that would ensure a smooth devolution process.

Although the vision and mission statements of the ministry and individual departments are continuously repeated to the staff, officers pointed out that the objectives as pointed out in the document tended not to favour the staff, instead concentrating on quality service delivery and achieving timely results with minimum costs. It was also evident that most officers felt that the language used in the formulation of vision, mission and department objectives seemed generic without necessarily focusing on either junior staff or senior government staff and hence generating disillusionment in the process of devolution.

Out of the total number of the respondents interviewed,75% reported that leadership articulated the vision, scope and benefits of the devolution to the municipal.

 30% believed leadership did not address end user resistance. This is one of the cornerstones of Hiatt's (2006) arguments that successfully implementing change requires

high level management involved from the outset in managing resistance to change and that direction and information related to the changes should come from this source.

A key area of importance in transitional change management is identifying training needs of the organization undergoing change. In this study 75% of the interviewed population saw training as key to success while 25% did not value it. This indicates that the true value of training may not be fully utilized or understood.

The majority of respondents felt that training carried out by sectional leaders were deemed not adequate and that such training did not carry the extra incentives as compared to the training received by those leaders during externally hosted workshops for devolution. In other words, there was a feeling by the officers that there was lack of motivation to enable the municipal employees fully participate in the training forums.

It was clear from the respondents that consultants from the central government were continuously involved in training process although in some stages of the implementation, ad hoc decisions were made to ensure continuity of the devolution reforms changes. The forces behind devolution reforms according to the respondents were the head of departments and senior officers in the devolution teams. One reason why the devolution reforms were receiving some form of success was because the government employees had for long voiced their concerns over the ageing and corruptible central governance and hence looked forward to a new system that would help alleviate recurring lack of accountability. To some extent therefore, the officers had advance preparation both mentally and physically on the impending devolved government reforms.

4.3 Challenges that Affect Change Management at Kakamega Municipal Council

Through an in-depth interview of the senior officers from Kakamega municipal council, the study came out with several observations as highlighted in the next sections. The focus was on public devolution of management in which central governance was now being phased out to be replaced fully by the devolved government.

From the responses of the senior officers, there was an indication some of their departments were not well managed since changes were not being effected during the transition process. The stake holders were not quite sure of the repercussions thereafter devolution. The respondents indicated that they perceived the transition as the genesis of total change where there will be no payment of taxes. Respondents cited the fear that they may not be well represented since there will be no councilors. At some point people had the feeling that they may be forced to transfer to other places in the Devolved County Government without any form of orientation.

From the respondents, it was observed very few people including the staff were well informed about the Devolved County Government. Those that were informed were not willing to share that information with others, and those who shared it had given wrong or inaccurate information concerning the same.

Respondents observed that their ability to handle change was hampered by loyalty and secrecy policy of the government, which in turn has led to reduction in the development of associated competencies. The main challenge according to officers interviewed was for the government to use its channels to harmonize people's competency .This entailed

stimulating trust and understanding power shifts, to disrupt rigid patterns of thought and stimulate change from central to devolved government.

In effect, the change leaders at the county level appeared not to be role models to some extent even being likened to the stumbling blocks of devolution reforms. Some of the respondents indicated that officers in leadership position resisted change to hide their own incompetence and continued to keep the status quo of the old system without devolution. In other words, there was a dis-connect between the managers (called bosses) and their subordinates who are the real players in the implementation of such changes.

This study also sought to establish how human resource performance was being affected by the devolution reforms. Respondents were of the opinion that each division should have a localized human resource section instead of having a common one in which the personnel never seemed to consider the individual needs of various professionals at the county level. The main problem with human resource performance was that there were no rewards for excellent performance and to some extent; officers felt that favouritism ruled the way one performed both in the central governance and the devolved governance system.

In terms of resource utilization, respondents indicated that a sustainable level of success by the devolved government would be difficult to achieve. Several reasons were cited for this. First, respondents indicated that, debts had been incurred privately since most of the prominent people had accumulated huge arrears in terms of property and rents. In the process of transition, the records needed to be left clean without debt. These brought to

question how to deal with such individuals and the human resources division felt that they did not have sufficient powers to discipline such defaulters.

The respondents cited frequent cases where people willingly or unwilling refused to pay rent, leading to engagement of advocates at a cost. Although the rent would be collected, it went into the Kenya Revenue Authority (KRA) dockets and did not benefit the human resources of the municipal council of Kakamega directly.

The respondents observed that a responsive working environment that emphasizes the need to co-operate across and within functions was not readily provided. Observations by officers interviewed revealed that performance at the municipal council was largely affected by the motivation and incentive policies in place. Sections and departments whose heads tried to introduce motivating factors seemed to perform highly as opposed to those without any such motivations. Although officers did not show this directly, it was clear from the interviews and a check on the appraisal reports that officers received some stress and needed a counseling division to deal with the stress levels. This was even more evident since many felt that devolution would in one way or another change their status quo.

It was noted that most of the support systems like information technology and subordinate services were enjoying far much higher rewards than common sections in the municipality. In effect, the officers felt that the external service providers were treated with tender care while the internal ones whose services the external ones relied on were given a raw deal. This is despite the fact that such support services ran across all sections

of the municipal council services. The officers' argument was that at the end of the day, they all worked towards efficient delivery of services by the municipal council.

Almost all respondents indicated that the culture of government is such that training is the best form of adapting to new changes while keeping secrets and not divulging any information to those perceived to be foreigners in the government is the official policy. There was some break from the old culture of too much resistance and no sharing of knowledge since the devolution system allowed a degree of information sharing. Respondents also indicated that the trainings that took were of mixed nature where different values were inculcated into operations of the new devolution system. This included group work and team sharing, creativity in handling dynamic environments and cross-departmental sharing of resources without breach of the government code of ethics and secrecy.

According to the respondents, what needed to be done was the incorporation into higher learning institutions the government working systems. This was so that new officers who were normally sourced from those higher learning institutions experience so much culture shock that makes them vulnerable to manipulation and hence joining the rings of change resistance. The newly recruited officers came to the municipal council with lots of enthusiasm but normally encountered a wall of resistance from old officers thereby requiring some form of protection to effect changes. This culture of old officers ganging up against new officers bred some contempt which had slowed down the effective implementation of changes for the government and in the devolved governance structure.

Most failures of change implementation were most likely blamed on this culture of waiting for orders to get some protection or favouritism in order to implement a change. However, it had proved very difficult to harmonize the different mentalities of devolved officers and the rest of the government officers which according to the respondents remained a hindrance to smooth implementation of a devolved governance system.

As observed by Paton and McCalman (2008), change in any organization is inevitable and the government has had many changes in the implementation of various plans. The political leadership and team structure at the local government enables minimal changeover training whenever a new plan is in place. A gap exists between those who are willing to have a change and those who would prefer to have the old systems continue.

Responding officers indicated that so far, lots of efforts were required to come up with a plan for smooth implementation of devolution in the municipalities. Otherwise, officers were of the opinion that supervisors and section heads were well positioned to lead changes even though most of them were still in the old school of just letting things go on as usual. Whenever a change occured, there was no concrete means of enforcing unless incentives were used for example mounting workshops away from the working place. In other words, there was need to have devolution system fully trained amongst all officers and employees of the municipal council.

4.4 Measures to deal with Change Management Challenges at the Municipality

The municipal council therefore faced many challenges in its quest to fully implement devolution system as outlined in government documents. As new programs or systems were introduced in the government following the change of constitution, organization structure appeared to be on the top on the officers list of complaints. Most of them indicated that the structure lacked many changes of progression both vertically or laterally in the government leading to discontent among most officers.

Figure 1: Organization Structure at Kakamega Municipal Council

(Adapted from the Kakamega Municipal Council website)
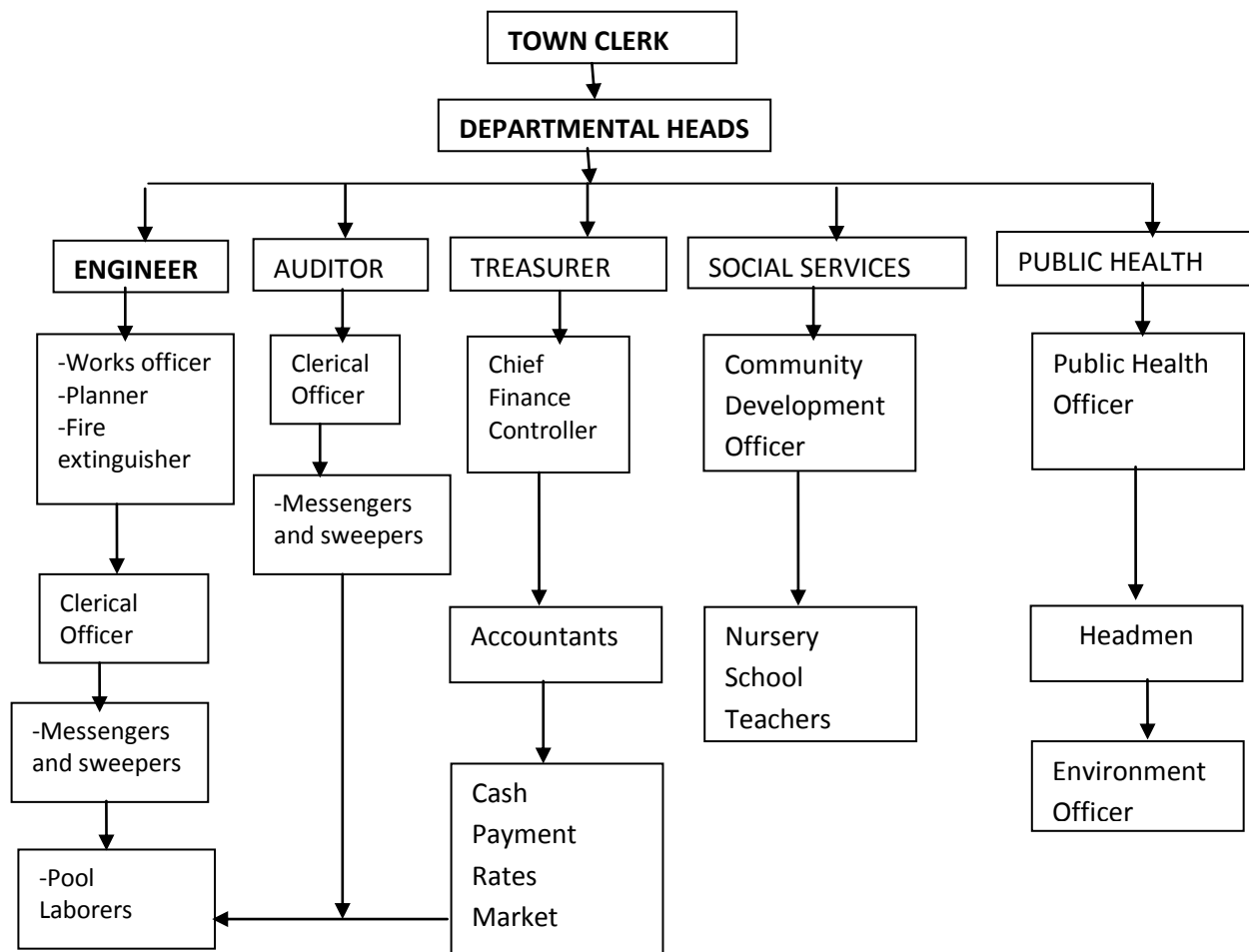
Although the governance structure at the municipality suggested that opportunities for expansion were prevalent, officers observed that there was little mobility within the present structure and the same was feared to be heading into the devolved system of governance. The respondents in this case observed that a new structure to accommodate several skills and various new vacancies was most needed even though no suggestions were provided by the respondents.

Other common ways of accepting or being able to manage changes of strategic planning included physical rearrangement of offices, the adoption of new leadership style that was modern and ICT oriented and increasing incentives given to officers who fully implemented changes both of devolution and common day activities.

Corporate governance as a way of improving devolution changes across all cadres of staff had proved difficult to implement by the officers. The lead issues in corporate governance were elimination of corrupt practices while offering timely quality services to the public. This was still a big problem as long as government remunerations were still low and their compensations in terms of hours spent could not commensurate with salaries of their counterparts in the private sector.

Officers interviewed observed that the government could easily overcome resistance to devolution change if it heavily involved most stakeholders in the planning activities that lead to devolution change. There was a suggestion that people should be well informed since at the moment some people were informed while others were not well aware of the devolution process.

Similarly, some staff had training together with consultants who had been coming together with new dispensation experts shading light concerning the Devolved County Government. To emphasize this media broadcasts which included radio, television and barazas had been utilized by the government in their efforts to communicate and highlight to the general populace the impending devolved system of governance.

The government had also been using trainings through seminars, workshops, outreaches and open forums to further emphasize need for understanding devolution. It was notable that qualified personnel in the relevant areas of specialization were key in the new devolution system and efforts were being made to ensure that promotions from one job group to another was done in a way to recognize the devolved system while at the same time making sure those who retired from the old system would have their retirement benefits.

Respondents indicated that to some extent putting up a new structure of governance was challenging since Devolved County Government had just been borrowed from developed countries which were self sufficient unlike our country which still required aid from such developed countries for total self-reliance. The government was also trying to bring back African district Governing Councils that used to be there during colonial period. Therefore it was until the Devolved County Government had been implemented that its effectiveness will be realized.

The respondents also indicated that the government needed to work hard to ensure that new structures at all levels would be implementable without necessarily incurring costs that the new devolved governments could not sustain or have difficulties supporting.

Generally, the observation by respondents was that the devolved governance structure would be too crowded to be easily supportive of the various functions in the devolved governance. Both the present local government structure and the new structure at the devolved level was seen to be in need of review. At the present level, it was felt that specialists would not be easily compensated if there was no proper means of revenue sharing. From the principles of change management, the environment under which the devolved governance systems would operate required less turbulence for stability. This suggested that the transition teams at the devolved level would either be supportive or in some way partisan in order to be absorbed in the system.

Respondents in the devolution change exercise hinted to the fact that all employees once absorbed in the new devolved structure might resort to old ways of running the government and hence measures had been put in place to reduce that chance through training and change of old systems.

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

The report in chapter 5 highlights the summary of the entire research bringing out the conclusions, recommendations and suggestions for further research.   The recommendations and suggestions are based on the findings in the previous chapter and the study objectives.

5.2 Summary of Findings

The study objective was to determine how the municipal council of Kakamega was managing change related to devolution of governance and establishing the challenges of managing the changes. Accordingly, the study viewed documents and used interviews from the four main top officers of the municipal council including the mayor, town clerk, principal human resources officer and senior administrator of the municipality. The initial analysis showed that change management was a process that is taken seriously but with not so much enthusiasm by the staff of the departments. The officers were involved in the implementation of strategic objectives as a duty but mostly they would have liked to be strongly involved in the formation of the strategic objectives as stakeholders before any meaningful changes took place at the county level.

Change and introduction of the devolved reforms involved both local senior management and experts from the stakeholder community especially the central government. This was

a well planned system changeover although on many occasions, ad hoc planning was adopted to cope with the various features of resistance that cropped out all through the implementation period. In general, municipal council clearly maintained a cautionary approach since the threat of councilors missing jobs seems real and requires proper addressing.

It was also established that the reward system and managerial value was not appropriate and that the allowances did not go down well with most officers at the municipal level. Since the drivers of that change were the leaders and management, officers observed that those same leaders and management got more rewards and hence were motivated to implement the strategic objectives regardless of the hardships experienced by officers in meeting tight schedules of implementation. This was a big hindrance and a challenge to the implementation of devolution that needed to be addressed by change management teams.

Another major finding was that corporate governance and leadership were not very democratic since there were no specific forums for multi-directional communications. The forums of communication in place including radio, TV and barazas did not give a chance to the municipality people to have multi-directional communication. It was observed that a form of corruption practice hindered the delivery of quality services and timely actions as officers were very vulnerable to the temptation of bribes and gifts from their clientele in the delivery of services. The culture observed at municipality departments suggested that everyone was in a hurry to complete their heavy workload without offering any other service that would enhance corporate governance. That showed lack of ethical considerations in the ranks of officers since each person was

mindful of the work on their desk and were not willing to indulge anywhere else in the sector. Change management would therefore remain an exclusive activity of a few and this would make devolution not a smooth strategic process.

5.3 Conclusion

Based on the findings above it is clear that change management should entail thoughtful planning and sensitive implementation, and above all, consultation with, and involvement of, the people affected by the changes. In this case study, all the departments and staff working at different management levels should be allowed to participate in the change programs. The top management should not force change on other stakeholders in the council since there is likely to face resistance hence sabotage the entire devolution process.

 Change must be realistic, achievable and measurable. These aspects are especially relevant to managing change. Before starting organizational change, ask yourself: What do we want to achieve with this change, why, and how will we know that the change has been achieved? Who is affected by this change, and how will they react to it? How much of this change can we achieve ourselves, and what parts of the change do we need help with?

This study indicates that change needs to be understood and managed in a way that people can cope effectively with it. Change can be unsettling, so the managers logically need to be a settling influence. The previous centralized system of government may not have succeeded in delivering the required services to the common citizen, but instant changes are not warranted.

Those spearheading change management in different counties need to ponder over the following questions If they need to make a change quickly: probe the reasons - is the urgency real? Will the effects of agreeing a more sensible time-frame really be more disastrous than presiding over a disastrous change? Quick change prevents proper consultation and involvement, which leads to difficulties that take time to resolve. The success of devolution will require huge resources, public awareness capacity building initiatives and highly committed personnel institutions and organizations. The Kakamega municipal council need a devolved system that should resonate with the objectives of the vision 2030 Economic blue print.

5.4 Recommendations for Policy and Practice

The following recommendations are based on the data collected from the key informants in the Kakamega Municipal Council. With the emergence of the devolved system of governance, the central government is expected to hand over certain functions to the local council granting them full power to decide in terms of planning and implementation hence the council to bear full responsibility for the decision they make. From the onset, the council management should involve /invite central government on its plans and progress .The management should come up with sensitization programs that focus on education of the masses that the benefits will be realized in the medium to long term. Furthermore, the council to develop mechanisms to continuously update central government on plans and progress. A capacity building program to be started where personnel will be trained to serve effectively and efficiently at the council complemented with regular review of timelines and communication of progress to all stakeholders.

In order to increase business performance in all the departments ,the employees should be free of conflict of interest and be subjected   to greater level of scrutiny for transparency and upholding national values.

5.5 Limitations of the Study

As study based on historical data and interviews, it was always going to be difficult to make a conclusion from the findings which might be usable to the future. The fact that data had been fully used and archived means that policy makers and academicians will always use projections in making any decisions for the future. This is due to the fact that municipal council officers were not fully involved in all the stages of change management planning as well as implementation. To them, devolution was being forced down their throats and hence resistance was inevitable.

The nature of work at the municipal council necessitated the use of partial interviews in which the officers were interviewed and left with the interview guide to help them give more indepth information.   However, that meant the information was subject to manipulation by the officers and hence much bias.   Finally, most officers in the government always had the code of secrecy at the back of their mind while carrying out any exercise meaning that some information was withheld for fear of the unknown.

5.6 Suggested Area of further study

There is need to have a further study in the municipalities to establish the periods in which change management implementation experience resistance. This needs to be determined in order to enable policy makers overcome such resistance and embrace change.

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APPENDICES

Appendix I: Letter of Introduction

P.O Box 28600

Nairobi

Dear Sir/Madam,

RE: RESEARCH PROJECT

I am carrying out a research in fulfillment of master programme in Business Administration (MBA) at University of Nairobi. My research Project is entitled 'Change Management Challenges Facing the Transition from Central to Devolved Government at Kakamega Municipal Council, Kenya. Kindly take some time and respond to the questions that will be put across to you. Any information provided will be purely used for academic purposes and will be treated with utmost confidentiality.

Yours faithfully,

Eliud Situma

Appendix III: INTERVIEW GUIDE

Key Informant Interview Questions

1. In your opinion, how is the Municipal prepared to transit to devolved government?

2. What structures have been put in place to ensure smooth transition process?

3. Is the staff fully informed of the transition process?

4. Which channels of communication have been put in place to keep the stakeholders informed of the transition process?

5. So far, what are the challenges you are experiencing during the transition process?

6. What are some of the best change management practices have you witnessed within the Municipal Council during the transition process?

7. What measures have been put in place to deal with the challenges?

8. In your opinion, do you think the relevant structures put in place are adequate for the effective transition process?

9. What indicators will you use to measure the success of the transition process?