

**ORGANISATION LEARNING STRATEGY: A CASE STUDY OF EAST
AFRICAN CABLES**

BY

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A Management Research Project

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DECLARATION

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

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This research project has been submitted for examinations with my approval as university supervisor.

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Signature



Date

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Lastly, I would like to thank all those not mentioned by name that contributed and participated in one way or the other to make this work a readable whole.

DEDICATION

This piece of research work is dedicated to my late grandmother Feresi Komundiiri and my late sister Peace Karunji, they were my great source of inspiration.

ABSTRACT

The study was set to determine the organization learning strategy in the East African Cables Limited. The objectives of the study were to establish the extent to which organization learning strategy has been adopted by the East African Cables Limited and the challenges in the implementation of the organization learning strategy in the same company. The study adopted case study design and primary data was collected using an interview guide. The data was analyzed using content analysis to establish the extent to which East African Cables Limited has adopted the organization learning strategy and the challenges in implementing the strategy.

The study found that key aspects of organisation learning that have been adopted by East African Cables included storage of vital information, the information is passed from one generation to the other and all contracts in the organization are kept in data base for future use. The key challenges faced in implementing organization learning strategy by East African Cables were; psychological issues, resource management issues, cultural issues, strategy implementation issues and communication issues.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Organizations today aim at offering excellent services, being intelligent, flexible and responsive to change, which happens both to public and private organizations. Many factors in society today have brought about rapid changes in the organizations environment and they have to keep pace and cope up with the challenges exposed to them, so as to accommodate the rapid dynamism in their environment.

The challenge facing managers today is to make the effort needed to learn some of the new skills and techniques, and to put in processes that engage their work force in programmes of continuous capability development. Learning should be integrated as part and parcel of everyday work with the aim of getting the best out of everybody to meet challenges ahead (Farrago, 1995).

Organizations as living entities with a given life span, are expected to learn and as much as possible make it a continuous process. This is because the business environment is very dynamic and for an organization to survive the turbulence, then it must keep itself abreast with the changes and adapt to them. There is a never- ending quest to improve existing products and services and the need for continuous improvement and innovation within organizations is best achieved through human factors, such as skills, attitudes and appropriate organizational culture. There is stiff competition in the environment and organizations appreciate that they must strive to learn and cope with the changing environment or die (Karash 1995)

1.1.1 Organizational Learning

Organizational learning is an area of knowledge within organizational theory that studies models and theories about the way an organization learns and adapts. Learning is defined as the acquisition of knowledge or skill, through study, experience or being taught. Nonaka (1991) argues that human knowledge is created and expanded through social interaction between tacit knowledge and explicit knowledge and the reason why people search for knowledge is to increase their ability to produce results in whichever area they choose. Further, according to (Karash, 1995) tacit knowledge is one that an individual possesses and he can use it, but he cannot describe or transfer it to another. Explicit knowledge on the other hand, is the "how to" information that one can put into tangible formal language. The combination of tacit and explicit knowledge then means that one can do what is necessary and can also convey or pass on the knowledge to someone else who in turn internalizes the same. All this knowledge is gained through learning (Karash, 1995)

Learning is not a one-off activity where an ultimate answer is found, but is a cumulative process, which progresses at a pace dictated by the environment, maintaining a balance between reflection, learning and action. Finally, the definition gives the aspect of experience as a source of learning. While there are many sources of learning, it is useful that attempts are made to exploit an organization's experience and actions as main sources of learning, at times even to learn from mistakes made along the way. Learning is therefore seen as a proactive activity where one is always looking for a different and

hopefully better way to do something. It is the basis for discovery as with creativity; individuals always seek to improve what is or has been the status quo.

Karash (1995) noted that the possibility of achieving extraordinary performance with satisfaction is anchored in the knowledge that learning to do something worthwhile is enormously rewarding and personally satisfying to those involved. Organizations have over the years been providing training programmes to their employees with the intention of equipping them as best as possible to perform their duties effectively. However, entrepreneurs and managers today realize that changes in the environment are very fast and what was new in the previous year, is quickly overtaken by others in the market, therefore, the need to institute continuous acquisition of knowledge and concepts in order to be profitable and competitive (Argys and Schon, 1978).

While most organizations run a variety of training programmes for their staff; while others even have staff development activities linked to the appraisal processes, this does not necessarily amount to organisational learning. There is a significant difference between a learning organization and an organization that simply pays attention to training, even though the latter is still an important part of every learning organization.

In a traditional training culture, the programmes are determined, designed and administered by the management and the employees are only asked to attend the sessions as the management sees fit. Training is an activity given to employees by the organization which through the management and supervisory hierarchy determines the needs to be met, and then fulfils them through training programmers targeted at particular

staff cadres. This traditional approach leads to the training activities being seen as punitive or rewards to the employees by the supervisor or employer depending on the relationship or ensuing circumstances. This in effect erodes the expected gains and appreciation of the programme objectives, thereby failing to achieve the desired results.

Training is accessed sequentially just like studying from a text or script and most of the time remains physically and mentally separated from the work experience. It therefore requires a clearly defined beginning, middle and ending, even as it places the content responsibility on the educator or administrator. According to the Delphi Group Study on Enterprise E-learning 2001, training is also seen to convey little, if any sense of relationship between the learner and the material. Training which is loosely defined as any enhancement to an employee's skills is delivered in a classroom sitting by an instructor. This method of acquiring knowledge and building skills is normally not systematic but rather ad hoc, and as a result, there is little correlation between who needs the training and who gets trained (Clark, 2005). Due to its ad hoc nature, traditional training is seen as one that perpetuates in some cases, bad habits and in most cases old habits (Berry, 2000)

Training uses different methodologies for example, lectures, experimentation and others, but their objectives are very much the same, that is to equip the trainee with a desired skill or behavior. It gives the impression that there is only one way to achieve a given result and the trainee is restricted within the given path. This reduces his participation and possible creativity, as all he has to do is follow the prescribed path or steps (Brenda, 1998).

Training to a large extent is reactive in the sense that it is a response by the management to bridge a recognized performance gap in the employees' skills or abilities. When an employee has been hired, it is assumed that he has the prerequisite skills to perform the given function, and training is then offered only if, the performance is not up to the expected level. The ultimate aim of the training is to enable the employee to perform his job as the employer desires.

Employees within an organization that has adopted organization learning strategy are likely to have some degree of self determination of their own development rather than simply having the training imposed on them. Organizational learning is seen as one in which people at all levels, individually and collectively are continually increasing their capacity to produce results they really care about (Karash, 1995). This definition gives two different sides: one that organizations have to increase their performance significantly and therefore, they need to capture and encourage the development of knowledge at all levels in order to keep up with the pace. On the other hand, there is consideration for the individual's needs. Most people tend to derive great rewards and satisfaction when they learn to do something that they themselves are interested in.

Organizational learning strategy is one that achieves remarkable levels of performance while also making it rewarding and satisfying for the people involved (Karash, 1995). In this setting then, employees are not viewed as a collection of passive, hired hands but are seen as the co-partners to the achievement of the firm's mission and objectives. On the other hand, a learning organization is one that builds and improves its own practice by

consciously and continually devising and developing the means to draw learning from its own and other's experience (Taylor, 1998). This definition gives four elements for consideration.

One is that a learning organization is not one that just learns, but one that learns consciously. It is critical to have a conscious intention and commitment to the process of learning, so that the knowledge learnt is captured and used to change and improve future practice. The second element is one of improved practice, which means that the test for whether learning is taking place lies in the extent to which the practice of the organization has been improved, thus the implementation of the action required. The third aspect is the ongoing nature of learning required of a learning organization and once this is adopted then organizational learning is in place.

1.1.2 The East African Cables

East African Cables was incorporated in 1966 and is one of the more experienced cable manufacturers in Africa with close to four decades of experience in cable production. A public limited company listed on the Nairobi Stock Exchange with its head office in Nairobi's Industrial Area, East African Cables is the premier manufacturer in East and Central Africa. It comprises two manufacturing facilities in Nairobi, Kenya and Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. While the Nairobi factory was commissioned in 1966, the Dar facility was commissioned in 1977 and joined the East African Cables family on October 27 2005. Products manufactured by East African Cables include copper electrical cables and conductors for domestic as well as industrial applications and the company has over the

years continually supplied the construction industry with quality products. The next range of manufactured products is the aluminium conductors and cables used for power distribution and transmission over national gridlines.

East African Cables is the sole distributor for Nexans (a world leader in the cable industry) in East and Central Africa. The supplies from Nexans include medium and high voltage cables, telecommunication cables, data cables, LAN systems, fiber optic cables and related accessories. East African Cables is well represented with agencies and branches throughout the region. The marketing strategy includes local presence and a market oriented sales organization combined with strong service backup. East African Cables Limited is also ISO 9001:2000 certified. East African Cables has 180 employees.

1.2 Statement of Research Problem

While it is the desire of every organization to keep abreast with the changing times and demands in its environment, it has been accepted over the years that the only way to acquire the needed skills, competencies and methodologies of working is through traditional training. Employers seem to have accepted that it is one of their duties to provide training programmes to the employees when necessary and when funds are available, and the employees on the other hand have acquired learned helplessness in this situation, where they just wait to receive from the employers or management hand. While all this is useful, it does not help the organizations to always determine an appropriate desired skills and competencies an employee should have. More often than not, organizations react to their environment's changes instead of proactively anticipating and

possibly driving the change. All this is as a result of cultural orientation that calls for a shift from the predominantly training culture to the development of an active learning culture.

Few studies have been done on the learning organization strategy thus calling for more studies to be done. For Instance Ouma (2007) conducted a study on organizational learning and sustainable competitiveness; While Kihara(2007) did a study on Organizational Learning Concept a survey on the Non Governmental Organizations in Kenya. The researcher has not found any study done on the adoption of the strategy and its challenges in a manufacturing organization where the strategy can be used to provide competitive advantage.

As the need to make this shift appears logical, relevant and crucial for growth and survival of organizations, this research is aimed at identifying why there seems to be the lack of will by organizations, to take steps in changing the orientation of people from training to learning. It becomes an area worth of study, with the aim of making the desired outcome, of a learning culture, encouraged and perceived as beneficial to the implementing organizations, so that others will soon follow. Therefore the study seeks to determine the challenges in implementation of the organizational learning strategy in East African Cables and establish the extent to which organization learning has been adopted by the company. The study was guided by the following questions; to what extent has organization learning concept been adopted by East African Cables? What are the

challenges East African Cables is facing in implementing the concept of organization learning?

1.3 Research Objectives

- i. To establish the extent to which organization learning concept had been adopted by East African Cables.
- ii. To determine challenges in implementation of organizational learning concept in East African Cables.

1.4 Importance of Study

This study would be useful to managers in both private and public organizations who want to keep pace with the environmental turbulence. This study would assist in formulating, implementing and evaluating findings brought out in it. Agents of change would have to change their mode of delivery of subject matter from traditional training methodology to learning concepts. Academicians, who expected to introduce new techniques, influence management styles and also formulate new innovations in developing new ways of acquiring knowledge. This is especially true for academicians in the Project Management and Business Studies related fields. This study would be important to employees since it would be geared to appreciating learning for development growth.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter recognized work of many writers in the field of organisation learning. Organisational learning has been a concept which has been researched on by key management scholars and their findings very important to this research. This concept clearly started gaining momentum in the 1990s thus the reason why it is of interest today to many management scholars.

2.2 The Concept of Organizational Learning

Argote (1999) argues that an organization is learning when it can bring about the future it most desires. In the business community, learning is much more than just a way to create the future you want; in today's fast-paced, highly competitive work world, it may actually give ones organization the edge it needs to survive—and thereby keep fulfilling its purpose. Senge (1990) affirmed that organizational learning focused originally on the practice of core disciplines them being as follows,

Systems thinking is the art of seeing the world in terms of wholes, and the practice of focusing on the relationships among the parts of a system. By looking at reality through a systems thinking "lens," you can work with a system—rather than against it—to create enduring solutions to stubborn problems in every arena of your life. Practicing this discipline involves learning to recognize "signature" systemic behaviors all around you, and familiarizing yourself with some special terminology and some powerful tools unique to this field.

Team learning is what happens when a group of people working on something together

experiences that rare feeling of synergy and productiveness that happens when you're "in the groove." When a team is truly learning, the group as a whole becomes much more than just the sum of its parts. Practicing this discipline involves startlingly different kinds of conversations and a remarkable degree of honesty and mutual respect—all of which you can learn to do through familiarizing yourself with specific tools from this field.

Shared vision emerges when everyone in an organization understands what the organization is trying to do, is genuinely committed to achieving that vision, and clearly grasps how his or her role in the organization can contribute to making the vision real. Practicing this discipline involves knowing how all the parts of the organization work together and being clear about how your own personal goals align with those of your organization.

Mental models are the deep beliefs and assumptions one holds about how the world works. These models shape the decisions one makes in life, the actions one take in response to events, and the ways in which one interpret others' behavior. Practicing this discipline involves surfacing and testing ones deepest assumptions and beliefs, and helping others do the same. Again, there are specific tools available from this field that can help one with this practice.

Personal mastery is the art of identifying what mark one wants to leave on the world during your lifetime. That is, what's one unique purpose in life, and how does one want to

go about fulfilling that purpose? Practicing this discipline involves some honest exploration of one's own life experiences and desires and a willingness to take some risks.

Argyris (1996) added that corporate culture is that intangible "something" that influences the environments in which one works every day. Technically, culture is an anthropological concept. But in the field of organizational learning, it refers to the policies, beliefs, activities, and rituals that determine an organization's "personality." A company's culture can support or hinder learning, encourage or stifle creativity, and so on. Fortunately, we can shape our organizations' culture through careful attention to how we do things and treat one another in the workplace.

Argote (1999) argued that corporate social responsibility should be added as a discipline in that it addresses the question of how the business community fits into the larger social picture. Specifically, what responsibility do organizations have beyond just their own industries and areas of competition? How do the actions of a particular organization or industry affect neighborhoods, the public sector, educational institutions, and families? It's tempting to compartmentalize these dimensions of human life, but of course they all influence each other. The discipline of corporate social responsibility focuses specifically on these interconnections and ways in which businesses can make the larger social world a better place for everyone.

Arie de Geus (1997) added that Dialogue focuses on new communication forms that strengthen a group's collective intelligence. This discipline offers several intriguing tools

and techniques that may seem strange to anyone at first but that, with practice, will transform the way you talk with others, stimulating questions and insights that we often miss through traditional forms of conversation.

Huber (1991) argued that Leadership in the field of organizational learning takes on a particular focus. Specifically, the discipline of leadership explores how managers—and leaders at every level in an organization—can unleash the full potential of each and every employee in the organization. Often this involves moving away from more traditional command-and-control management structures and toward more fluid, self-organizing leadership. This discipline is truly redefining the role of management for businesspeople everywhere.

Fulmer (1998) defended the fact that Sustainability, as a discipline, entails being thoughtful stewards of the natural resources on which our organizations depend. After all, if we use those resources without regard to their limits, we may deplete them permanently—and our organizations can't survive that. Sustainable management practices help us design organizations that respect and balance human needs with the natural cycles and limitations of our planet.

Karimi (2007) argued that Work/life balance is another area receiving increasing attention in the organizational learning field. More and more, people are seeking to design their work so that they have room for the other important dimensions of their lives—family, community, self-development, and so on. At the same time, the boundaries

between work and home life have blurred in recent decades. The discipline of work/life balance seeks to explore the ramifications of these changes and address the question of how to set priorities and find meaning in both our work and non-work lives.

Because everything really is structurally connected (systems thinking again), an organization committed to true learning practices all of the above disciplines in some form, rather than tackling them in isolation. After all, they each reinforce one another, and when they come into alignment, the organization truly soars. And as organizations move into the 21st century, one will no doubt see new disciplines emerge in this dynamic field (Senge 1999).

Organizational learning borrows heavily from the 'learning organization' that has its origins in companies like Shell, where Arie de Geus (1994) argued that learning is the only sustainable competitive advantage. The Learning Organization is seen as a response to an increasingly unpredictable and dynamic business environment. Learning Company is an organization that facilitates the learning of all its members and continually transforms itself (Burgoyne and Boydell, 1991). Organizations where people continually expand their capacity to create the results they truly desire, where new and expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured, where collective aspiration is set free, and where people are continually learning to learn together. There are five main characteristics of a learning organization; systems thinking, personal mastery, mental models, shared vision and team learning (Senge, 1990) as explained before.

According to Pedler et al (1990), a Learning Organization is the term given to an organization that facilitates the learning of its members and continuously transforms itself. Learning Organizations develop as a result of the pressures facing modern organizations and enables them to remain competitive in the business environment (O'Keefe, 2002). Argyris (1997) defines organizational learning as the process of "detection and correction of errors." In his view organizations learn through individuals acting as agents for them: The individuals' learning activities, in turn, are facilitated or inhibited by an ecological system of factors that may be called an organizational learning system. Huber (1991) considers four constructs as integrally linked to organizational learning: knowledge acquisition, information distribution, information interpretation, and organizational memory. Learning need not be conscious or intentional. Further, learning does not always increase the learner's effectiveness, or even potential effectiveness. Moreover, learning need not result in observable changes in behavior. An entity learns if, through its processing of information, the range of its potential behaviors is changed (Huber 1991).

Weick (1991) argues that the defining property of learning is the combination of same stimulus and different responses, however it is rare in organizations meaning either organizations do not learn or that organizations learn but in nontraditional ways. He further notes that; Perhaps organizations are not built to learn. Instead, they are patterns of means-ends relations deliberately designed to make the same routine response to different stimuli, a pattern which is antithetical to learning in the traditional sense. Or else, he argues, Organizational Learning perhaps involves a different kind of learning than has been described in the past: the process within the organization by which

knowledge about action-outcome relationships and the effect of the environment on these relationships is developed (Duncan and Weiss 1979). In his view, a more radical approach would take the position that individual learning occurs when people give a different response to the same stimulus, but Organizational Learning occurs when groups of people give the same response to different stimuli. The important points to note about these definitions are that learning organizations have the following characteristics; Are adaptive to their external environment, Continually enhance their capability to change/adapt, Develop collective as well as individual learning and Use the results of learning to achieve better results.

2.2 The "founders" of Organization learning strategy

Senge (1990) argues that organizational learning values and derives competitive advantage from, continuing learning, both individual and collective. The five disciplines are systems thinking, personal mastery, mental models, shared vision, and team learning. Senge (1990) argues that people put aside their old ways of thinking (mental models), learn to be open with others (personal mastery), understand how their company really works (systems thinking), form a plan everyone can agree on (shared vision), and then work together to achieve that vision (team learning). Anyone who wants to be part of a organization learning strategy must first go through a personal change (Senge, Kleiner et al., 1994). This means that if some members of the group like to tell people what to do and are too busy to listen, they must be willing to change themselves.

Argyris (1994) distinguished between learning that challenges the status quo, called double-loop learning, and learning that is routine, called single-loop learning. Double-loop learning is about solving difficult problems, the truth is discovered when claims undergo rigorous tests that allows us to see more clearly the casual processes embedded in those claims, this is transparency. Double-loop learning depends on stewardship, or the internal commitment by employees to seek truth, transparency, and personal responsibility in the workplace. For single-loop learning, people are programmed to believe that transparency and truth are good ideas, but only when they're not threatening or embarrassing.

In addition, Argyris (1994) argues that the new but now familiar techniques of corporate communication, like focus groups, surveys, management - by - walking around, can block organizational learning even as they help solve certain kinds of problems (Argyris, 1994). These techniques, he explains, promote defensive behaviours by encouraging employees to believe that their proper role is to criticize management while the proper role of management is to take action and fix whatever is wrong. Worse yet, they discourage double-loop learning, which is the process of asking questions not only about objective facts but also about the reasons and motives behind those facts.

Argyris(1994) added that double-loop learning encourages people to examine their own behaviour, take responsibility for their action and inaction, and make conscious the kind of potentially threatening or embarrassing information that can produce real change. Argyris (1994) argues that People need to recognize that 'expert' business advice

becomes a fad and slowly fades away. What remains is a deepening sense of lack of credibility and believability for those who gave and used the advice. The result is that organizations develop ultra - steady states that make it difficult to carry out advice given by the line executives and professional change agents. People can overcome these counterproductive consequences in themselves, in groups, or in the organizational cultures in which they work by examining 'expert' advice in order to surface the gaps and inconsistencies, it is recommended that managers need to challenge, to think constantly and creatively about the needs of the organization. This goal is to fill employees with as much intrinsic motivation and as deep a sense of organization stewardship as any company executive. By applying these ideas to individual or group performance reviews, managers can create an incentive for employees to increase their commitment to continuous, non- routine learning and for implementing strategy. Argyris (1997) defines organizational learning as the process of "detection and correction of errors." In his view organizations learn through individuals acting as agents for them: The individuals' learning activities, in turn, are facilitated or inhibited by an ecological system of factors that may be called an organizational learning system.

Schon (1983) argues that work can be organized into four themes, namely; The concept of inquiry as reflection - in - action; Constructing a learning dialect in organizations; The practice of learning how to learn; and The commitment to a new educational paradigm that teaches practitioners how to reflect-in-action which is both a consequence and cause of surprise. When a member of a bureaucracy embarks on a course of reflective practice, allowing oneself to experience confusion and uncertainty, subjecting ones frames and

theories to conscious criticism and change, one may increase capacity to contribute to significant organizational learning (Schon, 1983). Most organizations are not comfortable with the threat of instability that is the result of this learning. Managers and all decision makers in science and the professions must move beyond a purely rational model of understanding to one that is transactional, open-ended, and inherently social and that is mode of knowing that can inquire into and transcend its own axioms, as well as inquire into and transform one's own practice. Whereas natural science is based on imparting knowledge about isolated events and "objective" entities,

Schon's (1993) approach is relational, allowing for a direct connection between epistemology (how do we know) and reflective practice, inquiring into the process of knowing itself. In this interactive mode, the inquirer does not stand outside the problematic situation like a spectator; he is in it and in transaction with it. According to this approach, action and reflection should occur at the same time so that learning is necessarily embodied in concrete situations. This type of learning generative because cognitive understanding is generated through one's active participation in a project, group or system.

Similarly, Margaret (1999) offers these core ideas: Everything is constant process of discovery and creating; Life uses messes to get well - ordered solutions; Life is intent on finding what works, not what is right; Life creates more possibilities as it engages with opportunities; Life is attracted to order; Life organizes around Identity; Everything participates in the creation and evolution of its neighbours. Using a spider's web as a

metaphor, it demonstrates how organizations are living entities and that learning and change strengthen their structure and their communities. Once one recognizes that organizations are webs, there is much one can learn about organizational change just from completing spider webs. Most of us have had the experience of touching a spider web, feeling its resiliency, noticing how slight pressure in one area jiggles the entire web. If a web breaks and needs repair, the spider does not cut out a piece, terminate it, or alter the entire web apart and reorganize it. She reweaves it, using the silken relationships that are already there, creating stronger connections across the weakened spaces. In order to change, the system needs to learn more about itself from itself. Human beings are terrified of emotions aroused by conflict, loss, love. In all of these struggles, it is being human that creates the problem.

On the other hand, Ratner (1997) offers an insightful description of the fundamental shift in learning approaches in the latter half of the 20th century that is giving rise to exciting new fields such as active learning, collaborative learning, and organizational learning. This shift, from thinking of learning as a transaction to learning as a process, is shown in Table 2.1. This shift eliminates the separation of teacher from student and replaces it with dialogue between teacher and student to encourage joint responsibility for learning and growth (Burkey. 1993)

Table 2.1: Shift in learning approaches

Old Answers	New Answers
Knowledge is a "thing" that is transferred From one person to another	Knowledge is a relationship between the Knower and the known; knowledge is "Created" through this relationship.
Knowledge is objective and certain	Knowledge is subjective and provisional.
Learners receive knowledge	Learners create problems
We all learn in the same way	There are many different learning styles
Knowledge is organized in stable, hierarchical Structures that can be treated independently of one Another.	Knowledge is organized "ecologically," Disciplines are integrative and interactive.
We learn alone, with our minds, based on our Innate abilities.	We learn in social contexts, through mind, body and Emotions.
We learn in predictable sequences from simple "parts" to complex "wholes".	We learn in wholes.
Our "intelligence" is based on our individual abilities.	Our intelligence is based on our learning Community.
We learn best passively, by listening and watching.	We learn best by actively doing and managing our own learning.

Source: Shana Ratner's (1997) Emerging issues in learning communities.

Ratner (1997) defines as organization learning as one which people at all levels, individually and collectively, are continually increasing their capacity to produce results they really care about.

2.3 Organizational Learning Perspectives from practitioners

Levine (2001) describes the similarities between technology change management (TCM) and organizational learning; describes organizational learning strategy as which: The organization remembers and learns; Public recording is unobstructive and useful in the execution of work processes and decision -making; Principles and concepts may refer to a group, an organization unit(s), or a community, suggesting notions of scalability and tailoring; The notion of learning is different from the additive sum of individual

contributions (the whole is more than the sum of its parts); Learning is applied to produce or modify individual dispositions, policies, processes, and procedures.

On the other hand, Mohanty (1999) argues on a strategic learning model for Advanced Manufacturing Technology (AMT) starts with the list of organizational learning characteristics; the article offers six generic and interactive forces that influence any business corporation to evolve into a learning organization. These forces also speak to organizational performance them being; Customer power; Information power; Global investors' power; Global market power; Power of simplicity and Power of organization. Similarly Mesa (1998) argues that cross training makes jobs more interesting, teaches employees new skills, and reduces injuries. Learning incentives promote cross training and reward good performance. Including workers in shift scheduling is one way to promote a strong work/life balance. There are many benefits to improving learning capacity and knowledge sharing within an organization. The main benefits are Maintaining levels of innovation and remaining competitive; being better placed to respond to external pressures; having the knowledge to better link resources to customer needs; improving quality of outputs at all levels; Improving corporate image by becoming more people orientated and increasing the pace of change within the organization (Gerard 1999).

2.4 Reasons for interest in "Organizational Learning"

Armstrong (2001) stated that companies are seeking to improve existing products and services (continuous improvement), and innovation (breakthrough strategies). This has resulted into initiatives such as TQM (Total Quality Management) and BPR (Business

Process Reengineering). But companies are finding that such programmes succeed or fail depending on human factors, such as skills, attitudes and organizational culture. It also appears that many implementations are geared to highly specified processes, defined for anticipated situations. The current interest in organizational learning strategy stems from the recognition that these initiatives, by themselves, often do not work. Something more is needed to cope with rapid and unexpected changes where existing 'programmed' responses are inadequate; Provide flexibility to cope with dynamically changing situations; Allow front-line staff to respond with initiative based on customer needs versus being constrained by business processes established for different circumstances.

As various management writers put it; Organizations must develop a capacity for fast-paced innovation that is to learn to love change (Kihara, 2007). As the competitive environment becomes more complex and variegate, the need for greater genetic variety - a broader range of managerial beliefs and a greater repertoire of managerial actions - grows apace (Dodgson, 1993). Top companies seem to organize around people; honoring these needs - feeling of control, something to believe in, challenge, lifelong learning, and recognition (Huber 1991). With the pace of change ever quickening, the need to develop mechanisms for continuous learning and innovation is greater than ever.

2.5 Characteristics of organization learning

Peters (1999) stated that observation and research identifies four characteristics, they included; Learning Culture - (an organizational climate that nurtures learning. There is a strong similarity with those characteristics associated with innovation). Processes - (processes that encourage interaction across boundaries. These are infrastructure,

development and management processes, as opposed to business operational processes). Tools and Techniques - (methods that aid individual and group learning, such as creativity and problem solving techniques) and Skills and Motivation - (to learn and adapt). There are some additional points on the first three of these.

A Learning Culture; Future, external orientation these organizations develop understanding of their environment; senior teams take time out to think about the future. Widespread use of external sources and advisors for example, customers on planning teams. Free exchange and flow of information - systems are in place to ensure that expertise is available where it is needed; individuals network extensively, crossing organizational boundaries to develop their knowledge and expertise. Commitment to learning, personal development - support from top management; people at all levels encouraged to learn regularly; learning is rewarded. Time to think and learn (understanding, exploring, reflecting, developing). Valuing people - ideas, creativity and "imaginative capabilities" are stimulated, made use of and developed. Diversity is recognized as strength. Views can be challenged. Climate of openness and trust - individuals are encouraged to develop ideas, to speak out, to challenge actions. Learning from experience - learning from mistakes is often more powerful than learning from success. Failure is tolerated, provided lessons are learnt, learning from fast failure (Peters 1999)

Tools and Techniques of Learning; this involves; Inquiry - interviewing, seeking information; Creativity - brainstorming, associating ideas; Making sense of situations -

organizing information and thoughts; Making choices - deciding courses of action; Observing outcomes - recording, observation ; Reframing knowledge - embedding new knowledge into mental models and memorizing. Collective (that is team and organizational) learning require skills for sharing information and knowledge, particularly implicit knowledge, assumptions and beliefs that are traditionally "beneath the surface". Key skills here are: Communication, especially across organizational boundaries; Listening and observing; Mentoring and supporting colleagues; Taking a holistic perspective - seeing the team and organization as a whole and coping with challenge and uncertainty.

2.6 Problems faced by organizations that have adopted organization learning strategy

Organizations face problems that may freeze the process of learning. These problems result if the organization does not embrace the characteristics of the Organization Learning. The problems are either individual oriented or organization oriented. Organizational barriers result from some organizations can find it difficult to embrace personal mastery because as a concept it is intangible and the benefits cannot be quantified (Senge, 1990). Additionally, personal mastery can be seen as a threat to the organization. This threat can be real, as Senge (1990) argues that to empower people in an unaligned organization can be counterproductive. In other words, if individuals do not engage with a shared vision, personal mastery could be used to advance their own vision. In some organizations a lack of a pro-learning culture can be a barrier to learning. It is important that an environment is created in which individuals can share their learning

without it being devalued and ignored so that more people can benefit from their knowledge and the individual becomes empowered (O'Keefe, 2002). A Learning Organization needs to fully embrace the removal of traditional hierarchical structures. These are a barrier to the development of shared vision and to the sharing of knowledge (O'Keefe, 2002).

Individual barriers include resistance to learning that can occur within a Learning Organization if there is no sufficient buy in at an individual level. This is often encountered by people who feel threatened by change or believe that they have the most to lose (O'Keefe, 2002) . The same people who feel threatened by change are likely to have closed mind sets are not willing to embrace engagement with mental models (O'Keefe, 2002). Unless implemented coherently across the whole organization, learning can be viewed as elitist and restricted to more senior levels within the organization. If this is the case, learning will not be viewed as a shared vision (McHugh, et al, 1998). If training and development is compulsory, it can be viewed as a form of control, rather than a form of personal development (Mchugh, et al, 1998). Learning and the pursuit of personal mastery needs to be an individual choice, therefore enforced take up will not work (Senge, 1990).

2.7 Reasons for adopting Organization Learning

Senge (1990) argues that organizations adopt the organization learning concept for various reasons them being; adopting the learning concept to gain a superior performance. Where an organization has an energized and committed workforce hence

employers must learn so as to make contributions and act in the interest of the whole enterprise and for the senior managers who must learn how to extend mastery and self-determination throughout the organization.

Companies adopt the learning concept to improve quality. Quality Management companies are seeking to improve existing products and services (continuous improvement) and innovation (breakthrough strategies). This has resulted in such initiatives as TQM (Total Quality Management) and BPR (Business Process Reengineering). But companies are finding that such programmes succeed or fail depending on human factors such as skills, attitudes and organizational culture. With the pace of change ever quickening, the need to develop mechanisms for continuous learning and innovation is greater than ever. The only sustainable source of competitive advantage is an organization's ability to learn faster than its competitors so as to meet needs of the community hence gaining competitive advantage through organization learning.

Senge (1990) continues to argue that organization learning helps people embrace and manage change. People in learning organization react more quickly when there are environmental changes because they know how to anticipate changes that are going to occur and how to create the changes they want. Change and learning are inextricably linked. The technological changes that spin out into everyday life demand that organizations learn. The economies of scale may also diminish. People in learning organizations will hence be able to look forward to creating instead of merely reacting to the new world that emerges. There are various changes that are taking place in society

and if we are going to address these conditions significantly, it will have to be at the level of collective thinking and understanding at the level of organizations, communities and society hence the recognition of interdependence .Huber (1991) further clarifies that learning need not be conscious or intentional. Further learning does not always increase the learner effectiveness even potential effectiveness. Moreover, learning need not result in observable changes in behaviour. Taking a behavioural perspective, (Huber, 1991) argues that an entity learns, through its processing information the range of its potent behaviours changed.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

The study adopted a case study design. Since the study was qualitative, a case study methodology was used to determine the extent of the adoption of the Organization Learning Strategy by East African Cables and the challenges in implementing the strategy.

3.2 Data Collection

The study largely utilized primary data which were collected from line managers. A total of 10 line managers participated eight of whom were male, while two were female. Secondary data was collected from relevant documentation. An interview guide was used to collect information from the line managers through personal interviews.

3.3 Data Analysis

The data collected was analyzed using content analysis to establish the extent to which East African Cables has adopted organisation learning strategy. Descriptive analysis was used to analyse general information and ranking aspects of organisation learning that had been adopted by East African Cables and factor analysis was used to come up with key challenges faced in Implementing Organization Learning Strategy. The findings were presented in tabular form for ease of interpretation.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the results of the analysis of the data collected during the interview. It provides information about a summary of the general information, response on ranking aspects of organisation learning that has been adopted by East African Cables, analysis of key challenges faced in Implementing Organization Learning Strategy and finding on other challenges experienced in the process of implanting the organization learning strategy.

4.2 General Information

A total of 10 completed interview guides were obtained from the members for the survey. The general information considered in this study were; department, length of stay in the organization, age, gender, marital status and level of education of the respondents.

4.2.1: Length of service by employees

Length of service in the organization determined the rate at which staff changes jobs as well as the reliability of the information given by the respondents. The respondents were asked to state the length of service in their organization. The results are given in table 4.1

Table 4.1: Length of service by employees

Number of service years	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Less than 2 years	1	10	10
2-4 years	4	40	50
4-6 years	2	20	70
over 6 years	3	30	100
Total	10	100	

The result in table 4.1 shows that the respondents have worked in the organization for a period ranging from less than 2 years to over 6 years. 30% of the respondents had worked

in the organizations for over 6 years, 20% had worked for a period of 4 to 6 years, 40% had worked for a period of 2 to 4 years and 10% had worked for less than 2 years. Majority of the respondents have worked in the organization for over 2 years, thus there is high level of understanding of the organization.

4.2.2: Age and Gender of the respondents

The respondents were asked to state their age and gender. The results are given in table 4.2.

Table 4.2: Age and Gender of the respondents

Age		Gender		Total
		Male	Female	
21-30 years	Count	1	0	1
	%	100.0%	.0%	100.0%
31-40 years	Count	5	2	7
	%	71.4%	28.6%	100.0%
Above 40 years	Count	2	0	2
	%	100.0%	.0%	100.0%
Total	Count	8	2	10
	%	80.0%	20.0%	100.0%

The findings in table 4.2 indicated that majority of the respondents were of age bracket 31 to 40 years. This gives the impression that the line managers were at an age that can allow them to understand the organisation learning concept and its an age of the high fliers where growth to them is essential thus the organisation learning concept can be fully embraced. Specifically all employees at age 21 to 30 years and above 40 years were male while at age 31 to 40years, 71.4% were male and 28.6% were female. This clearly shows that there are more male than female thus some element of gender imbalance.

4.2.3: Level of education of the respondents

The respondents were asked to indicate their highest level of education. The results are shown in table 4.3.

Table 4.2: Level of education of the respondents

Level of education	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Post -secondary diploma	2	20.0	20.0
Undergraduate degree	6	60.0	80.0
Post -graduate degree	2	20.0	100.0
Total	10	100.0	

As shown in table 4.3, majority of the respondents (60%) had undergraduate qualification, 20% had post secondary diploma and post graduate degree respectively. These findings show that the level of education was in line with the organisation learning strategy. One cannot conclude that the employees could not understand the concept fully especially if they were fully involved in formulation and implementation.

4.3 Ranking of aspects of organization learning that have been adopted by East

African Cables

The respondents were asked to indicate various aspects of organization learning had been adopted by East African Cables in a five point Likert scale. The range was 'to a very great extent (5)' to 'not at all' (1). The scores of 'not at all' and 'to a little extent' have been taken to present a variable which had an impact to a small extent (S.E) (equivalent to mean score of 0 to 2.5 on the continuous Likert scale ;($0 < S.E < 2.4$). The scores of 'to a moderate extent' have been taken to represent a variable that had an impact to a moderate extent (M.E.) (equivalent to a mean score of 2.5 to 3.4 on the continuous Likert scale: $2.5 < M.E. < 3.4$). The score of both 'to a great extent' and 'to a very great extent' have been taken to represent a variable which had an impact to a large extent (L.E.) (equivalent to a mean score of 3.5 to 5.0 on a continuous Likert scale; $3.5 < L.E. < 5.0$). A

standard deviation of >1.5 implies a significant difference on the impact of the variable among respondents; this is arrived at on the assumption that the average score is 3 and half of the 3 is 1.5.

Table 4.3: Ranking of aspects of organization learning that has been adopted by East African Cables

	Mean	Std. Dev
Participatory policy and strategy reviews by all employees in my organization	2.2000	.91894
Employees are encouraged to think together	2.6000	.51640
All employees are involved in team playing and learning	2.4000	.84327
All employees can access the organization databases	2.6000	.69921
There is always feedback on financial consequences of actions as soon as they are known by accounting system	2.9000	.56765
Department and section in organizations all understand each others importance	2.7000	.67495
Information is received from people and organization stakeholders	2.6000	.69921
Participation in joint ventures with grantees and stakeholders	2.6000	.96609
Meet with other organizations and share ideas	1.8000	.63246
employees in the organization are continually expanding their abilities through learning	3.5000	1.08012
The organization has a strategy that responds to the changing environment	2.6000	.69921
Learning new things is a way of life for everyone in the organization	2.2000	1.03280
Policies and strategies are reviewed often	2.3000	.67495
The organization carries out research so as to get new outcomes	2.0000	.47140
There is a strictly followed training programme	2.1000	.31623
Employees are involved in key decision making processes	1.8000	.78881
Employees play a part in policy and strategy formulation	1.9000	.56765
There is a flexible organization structure that changes frequently	2.3000	.67495
There are different ways of compensation	2.2000	.63246
Various method of communications are used in the organization	3.0000	.94281
Employees give meaning to any information that is received in the organization	2.4000	.84327
There is the element of shared goals and vision	2.7000	.67495

All employees understand the relationship between their personal goals and that of the organization	2.2000	.42164
The organization has future goals that it wants to accomplish and the employees know them	2.0000	.47140
Employees help in formulating the future goals	2.1000	.73786
Employees are free to give meaning to situations in the organization	2.3000	.94868
Information technology is not only used for automating processes but also helps in innovation	2.9000	.56765
Vital information is stored	3.5000	.97183
The information is passed from one generation to the other	3.6000	.69921
There is smooth continuity in case of managerial changes	2.6000	.84327
All contracts in the organization are kept in data base for future use	3.7000	.48305
All relevant information are accessible to employees	3.0000	1.05409

As shown in the Table 4.3, the following factors were used to a large extent (high mean values); Vital information is stored (mean of 3.5000), The information is passed from one generation to the other (mean of 3.6000), All contracts in the organization are kept in data base for future use (mean of 3.7000), Information technology is not only used for automating processes but also helps in innovation (mean of 2.9000), there is always feedback on financial consequences of actions as soon as they are known by accounting system (mean of 2.9000), Department and section in organizations all understand each others importance (mean of 2.7000). There is low variation in the opinion of the respondents as shown by the low values of the standard deviations

The study also found that some of the factors are only used to a small extent for instance Employees play a part in policy and strategy formulation (mean of 1.900); Employees are involved in key decision making processes (mean of 1.8000) and Meet with other organizations and share ideas (mean of 1.800).

4.4 Challenges in Implementing Organization Learning Strategy

The respondents were asked to indicate the challenges in implanting learning strategy.

Results of factor analysis are shown in table 4.3

Table 4.3: Total Variance Explained

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	%of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	%of Variance	Cumulative %
1	4.401	29.343	29.343	4.401	29.343	29.343
2	3.369	22.460	51.803	3.369	22.460	51.803
3	2.457	16.378	68.181	2.457	16.378	68.181
4	1.963	13.084	81.265	1.963	13.084	81.265
5	1.417	9.450	90.715	1.417	9.450	90.715
6	.555	3.697	94.412			
7	.367	2.446	96.857			
8	.288	1.920	98.777			
9	.183	1.223	100.000			
10	9.720E-16	6.480E-15	100.000			
11	2.156E-16	1.437E-15	100.000			
12	1.040E-16	6.935E-16	100.000			
13	-9.042E-17	-6.028E-16	100.000			
14	-1.308E-16	-8.719E-16	100.000			
15	-6.320E-16	-4.213E-15	100.000			

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Table 4.3 shows that of the 15 variables examined, only 5 had Eigen values greater than 1. the five factors explain 90.715% (Cumulative percentage) of the total variation, the remaining 10 factors together account for 9.285% of the variance. The explained variation 90.715% is greater than 70% and therefore, Factor Analysis can be used for further analysis.

Table 4.4: Rotated Component Matrix

	Component				
	1	2	3	4	5
Shortages of manpower in terms of key competencies	-.031	.841	.310	-.148	.074
Attitude and psychological	-.263	-.059	.905	.133	-.175

dispositions					
Inter -departmental conflict	.167	.425	.835	-.191	.022
Scope of learning not well defined	.354	.025	.704	-.243	-.258
Over ambitious goals	.757	.251	.127	-.384	-.035
Lack of clear communication on the objectives to be achieved by each employee	-.101	-.109	-.225	-.041	.945
Information technology is not only used for automating processes but also helps in innovation	.180	.715	-.211	.002	-.281
Less consideration given to employees in strategy formulation	.019	.122	-.127	.960	.125
Training can sometimes negate performance	.139	.863	.088	-.169	-.016
Mistrust amongst those in authority and between employees	-.184	-.252	.032	.906	-.129
Lack of conducive environment for learning due to power games and organizational politics	.742	-.375	-.025	-.011	-.462
Lack of appropriate means of evaluating learning	.918	-.073	-.005	-.104	-.011
Inadequate provisions to motivate the employees to undertake learning	.461	-.782	.048	-.324	.211
Lack of expertise that are qualified to instill learning among other employees	.429	-.007	-.340	.211	.653
Inability of employees to appreciate the importance of organizational learning	.761	.590	.034	.192	-.006

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization. Rotation converged in 8 iterations.

From the results in Table 4.4, it is found that factor one is made up of the following variables; lack of appropriate means of evaluating learning (0.918), inability of employees to appreciate the importance of organizational learning (0.761), over

ambitious goals (0.757), lack of conducive environment for learning due to power games and organizational politics (0.742). This factor represents the challenge known as psychological issues.

Factor two is made up of the following variables; training can sometimes negate performance(0.863), shortages of manpower in terms of key competencies (0.841), inadequate provisions to motivate the employees to undertake learning (-0.782) and information technology is not only used for automating processes but also helps in innovation (0.715). This factor represents the challenge known as resource management issues.

Factor three is made up of the following variables; attitude and psychological dispositions (0.905), inter -departmental conflict (0.835) and scope of learning not well defined (0.748). This factor represents the challenge known as cultural issues. Factor four is made up of; less consideration given to employees in strategy formulation (0.960) and mistrust amongst those in authorities and between employees (0.906). This factor represents the challenge known as strategy implementation issues. Factor five is made up of; lack of clear communication on the objectives to be achieved by each employee (0.945) and lack of expertise that are qualified to instill learning among other employees (0.906). This factor represents the challenge known as communication issues.

The respondents were of the opinion that other challenges experienced in the process of implementing the organizational learning strategy in East African Cables were; mistrust among themselves thus a hindrance to information sharing, organization culture where

head of department surround themselves with few confidants, competition of employees to get higher positions, poor reward systems where everyone seems to have unique salaries irrespective of qualifications, hands off leadership style of management, lack of training programs for the last three years,

4.5 Ways for effective implementation of organization learning strategy

When asked to state possible ways for effective implementation of organization learning strategy at East African cables, the respondents suggested that management should share the vision and objectives of the organization with all staff, employees should embrace change of attitude and culture, management should introduce performance measurements to assist employees know what is expected of them, introduction of balance score card approach to manage the organization, reward good performers, invest in training and learning programs for all employees, change of leadership style by allowing all employees to participate in decision making process and review compensation and reward scheme.

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary

The objectives of the study were to establish the extent to which organization learning concept has been adopted by East African Cables and to determine challenges in implementation of organizational learning concept in East African Cables.

Foremost, the study found that vital information is stored, the information is passed from one generation to the other and all contracts in the organization are kept in data base for future use were the most highly used aspects of organization learning adopted by East African Cables.

On the other hand most of the aspects were rated as of having low extent on the aspects of organization learning that has been adopted by East African Cables. This means that there is no link between the employees of East African Cables and the aspects of organization learning that has been adopted by the organization hence an urgent need of review of the process.

Secondly, the study found that the main challenges affecting the implementing Organization Learning Strategy by East African Cables were; Psychological issues which included over ambitious goals, lack of conducive environment for learning due to power games and organizational politics, lack of appropriate means of evaluating learning and inability of employees to appreciate the importance of organisational learning. Resource

Management issues included shortage of manpower in terms of key competencies, Information technology is not only used for automating processes but also helps in innovation, training can sometimes negate performance and inadequate provisions to motivate the employees to undertake learning. Cultural issues included attitude, psychological dispositions, inter-departmental conflict and scope of learning not well defined. Strategy Implementation issues included less consideration given to employees in strategy formulation and mistrust amongst those in authorities and between employees and lastly Communication issues included lack of clear communication on the objectives to be achieved by each employee and lack of expertise that are qualified to instill learning among other employees.

Other challenges identified by the respondents were mistrust among employees themselves, organization culture where head of department surround themselves with few confidants, poor reward systems where every one seems to have unique salaries irrespective of qualifications and lack of training programs for the last three years,

5.2 Conclusion

From the findings of the study, it can be concluded that East African Cables have not fully embraced Organization Learning Strategy. This is supported by the respondent's low rating of key aspects put in place by the organization to implement Organization Learning Strategy.

The study also found that there is no link between the employees of the organization and the organization's vision, mission and objectives as such the gain made by the

implementation of the strategy may be short lived. Finally, it can be concluded that the recommendations made by the employees of East African Cables Limited should be implemented immediately so that the organization can reap the benefits of implementing organization learning strategy.

5.3 Recommendations

5.3.1: Recommendation with policy implications

Based on the study findings, it is recommended that employees should be involved in the formulation, implementation and evaluation of strategy. A control document should be formulated with the help of all stakeholders to provide proper guidance on this. This would allow for ownership of the program by the relevant stakeholders such as employees who are expected to implement and meet company's objectives.

5.3.2: Recommendation for Further Research

This study focused on the determination of challenges in implementation of the organizational learning strategy in East African Cables and establishment of the extent to which organization learning has been adopted by the company, it is therefore recommended that further research work should look at the success and challenges of learning organization strategies in other organizations who have implemented the same and the results be compared. The results of the study also found out that employees rating were very low on the aspects of implementing learning organization strategy at East Africa cables. Further research is necessary to establish the reasons for this low rating.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Letter of Introduction

University of Nairobi,
School of Business,
P.O. Box 30197,
Nairobi.

Dear Sir/Madam

Reference: COLLECTION OF RESEARCH DATA

I am a postgraduate student at the University of Nairobi undertaking a Management Research Project on "Organization Learning Strategy": A case study of East African Cables."

You have been selected to form part of this study. You are kindly requested to assist in data collection by responding to the questions in this interview. The information provided will exclusively be used for academic purposes only and will be treated with utmost confidence.

You will also be provided with a copy of the final report upon your request.

Your cooperation is highly appreciated.

Yours faithfully,

Jane Ndinya.

MBA Student

Researcher

Dr. Justus Munyoki

University Supervisor

School of Business



UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI
SCHOOL OF BUSINESS

A PROGRAM - LOWER KABETE CAMPUS



Telephone: 020-2059162
Telegrams "Varsity", Nairobi
Telex 22095 Varsity

P.O. Box 30197
Nairobi, Kenya

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TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

The bearer of this letter. . . . J..CUU-: . . . ^ v l c l m :

Registration No: . . . £.!.... 1 H i ^ P J . . j . A T J Z X . .

is a Master of Business Administration (MBA) student of the University of Nairobi.

He/she is required to submit as part of his/her coursework assessment a research project report on a management problem. We would like the students to do their projects on real problems affecting firms in Kenya. We would, therefore, appreciate if you assist him/her by allowing him/her to collect data in your organization for the research.

The results of the report will be used solely for academic purposes and a copy of the same will be availed to the interviewed organizations on request.

Thank you

 / UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI
SCHOOL OF BUSINESS
DR. W.N. IRAKI mBA OFFICE
CO-ORDINATOR fM&A fKOOSAWP
NAIROBI

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Appendix 2: **Interview Guide.**

SECTION A: PERSONAL DATA

Function/Department

1. Please tick on the department one is in:

- 1. Sales and Marketing
- 2. Finance
- 3. Information technology
- 4. Human Resources
- 5. Operations
- 6. Production

2. How long has one been employed by this organization?

- Less than 2 years ()
- 2- 4 years ()
- 4- 6 years ()
- Over 6 years ()

3. Please check the basic that indicates ones age bracket.

- 20 or below ()
- 21-30 ()
- 31-40 ()
- Above 40 ()

Gender Male () Female ()

Marital Status Single () Married () Other ()

Education (Please indicate appropriate level)

Secondary / High School Certificate ()

Post- Secondary Certificate ()

Post- Secondary Diploma ()

Undergraduate Degree ()

Postgraduate Degree ()

SECTION B

5. To what extent do the following apply to the organization?

1. Not at all
2. To a little extent
3. To a moderate extent
4. To a great extent
5. To a very great extent

	Statements	Not at all	To a little extent	To a moderate extent	To a great extent	To a very great extent
1	Participatory policy and strategy reviews by all employees in my organization.	1	2	3	4	5
2	Employees are encouraged to think together.	1	2	3	4	5
3	All employees are involved in team playing and learning	1	2	3	4	5
4	All employees can access the organization databases	1	2	3	4	5
5	There is always feedback on financial consequences of actions as soon as they are known by accounting system.	1	2	3	4	5
6	Departments and sections in organizations all understand each other's importance.	1	2	3	4	5
7	Information is received from people and organization's stakeholders	1	2	3	4	5
8	Participation in joint ventures with grantees and stakeholders.	1	2	3	4	5
9	Meet with other organizations and share ideas	1	2	3	4	5

10	Employees in the organization are continually expanding their abilities through learning	1	2	3	4	5
11	The organization has a strategy that responds to the changing environment	1	2	3	4	5
12	Learning new things is a way of life for everyone in the organization	1	2	3	4	5
13	Policies and strategies are reviewed often	1	2	3	4	5
14	The organization carries out research so as to get new outcomes	1	2	3	4	5
15	There is a strictly followed training programme	1	2	3	4	5
16	Employees are involved in key decision making processes.	1	2	3	4	5
17	Employees play a part in policy and strategy formulation	1	2	3	4	5
18	There is flexible organization structure that changes frequently	1	2	3	4	5
19	There are different ways of compensation	1	2	3	4	5
20	Various methods of communications are used in the organization	1	2	3	4	5
21	Employees give meaning to any information that is received in the organization	1	2	3	4	5
22	There is the element of shared goals and vision	1	2	3	4	5
23	All employees understand the relationship between their personal goals and that of the organization	1	2	3	4	5
24	The organization has future goals that it wants to accomplish and the employees know them	1	2	3	4	5
25	Employees help in formulating the future goals	1	2	3	4	5
26	Employees are free to give meaning to situations in the organization	1	2	3	4	5
27	Information technology is not only used for automating processes but also helps in innovation	1	2	3	4	5
28	Vital information is stored	1	2	3	4	5
29	The information is passed from one generation to the other	1	2	3	4	5
30	There is smooth continuity in case of managerial changes	1	2	3	4	5
31	All contracts in the organization are kept in data base for future use	1	2	3	4	5
32	All relevant information are accessible to employees	1	2	3	4	5

SECTION C

Challenges in Implementing Organization Learning Strategy

6. Please indicate on a scale of 1 to 5 below, the extent to which the following statements describe the challenges in implementation of the Organization Learning Strategy in East African Cables.

1. Not at all
2. To a little extent
3. To a moderate extent
4. To a great extent
5. To a very great extent

	Statements	Not at all	To a little extent	To a moderate extent	To a great extent	To a very great extent
1	Shortages of manpower in terms of key competencies	1	2	3	4	5
2	Attitude and psychological dispositions	1	2	3	4	5
3	Inter- departmental conflict	1	2	3	4	5
4	Scope of learning not well defined	1	2	3	4	5
5	Over ambitious goals	1	2	3	4	5
6	Lack of clear communication on the objectives to be achieved by each employee	1	2	3	4	5
7	Information Technology is not only used for automating processes but also helps in innovation	1	2	3	4	5
8	Less consideration given to employees in strategy formulation	1	2	3	4	5
9	Training can sometimes negate performance	1	2	3	4	5
10	Mistrust amongst those in authority and between employees	1	2	3	4	5
11	Lack of conducive environment for learning due to power games and organizational politics	1	2	3	4	5
12	Lack of appropriate means of evaluating learning	1	2	3	4	5
13	Inadequate provisions to motivate the employees to undertake learning	1	2	3	4	5
14	Lack of expertise that are qualified to instill learning among other employees	1	2	3	4	5
15	Inability of employees to appreciate the importance of organizational learning	1	2	3	4	5

SECTION D: CONCLUSIONS

In your opinion, what are other challenges that are experienced in the process of implementing the learning organization strategy in East African Cables?

What recommendations do you suggest for effective implementation of the Organization Learning strategy to take place at East African Cables?