# CHALLENGES OF STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION AND THE PERFORMANCE OF ZETECH UNIVERSITY IN KENYA

BY

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# DECLARATION

**Declaration by Student**

This research project is my original work and has not been presented for an award of a degree or diploma in any other university or institution.

Sign:…………………………………………Date:…. …………………………….

Linet Chedeye

D61/60961/2013

**Declaration by Supervisor**

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

Sign:…………………………………………..Date:…. ……………………………….

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## DEDICATION

I dedicate this project to my family for the immense support and inspiration they have given me throughout the period of preparing this work. Special regards goes to my dear husband George and daughter Geolyn for their tireless comfort and love.I will always remember our parents, who have been a rock in our lives. I cannot put a value to what they have given us.

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# ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

**RBV:**        Resource Based View

**SCA:**        Sustainable Competitive Advantage

**SPSS:**        Statistical Package for the Social Sciences

**CUE:**        Commission for University Education

**ZU:**        Zetech University

**IT:**        Information Technology

**UMB:**        University Management Board

**AMREF:**        African Medical Research Foundation

# ABSTRACT

Strategic Planning is an area no business can ignore today. It involves anticipating the future and positioning the organization in such a way that it takes advantage of the changes likely to happen. Inorder to achieve the goals and objectives of the organization strategies ought to be formulated in the best way possible.This in itself may not enable the organization to achieve the desired results if the strategies being pursued are not effectively implemented. Strategy implementation is not an easy task in any organization and so to speak various challenges stand in the way of organizations results.Well implemented strategies lead to success and the vice versa is also true, hence it goes without saying that challenges to strategy implementation affects an organization's performance. This research has looked at some of the challenges and possible solutions to this problem. The researcher studied the case of Zetech University to help build a picture of what it is like to run such a program in the organization. The study collected data from various staff within the university who are essentially involved in Strategy Implementation and Formulation processes of strategic management. This included deans of faculties, heads of departments and divisions within the university as well as lecturers.The data collected involved both structured and unstructured interviews, and it was aimed at approaching the subject with an open mind. This method of data collection was advantageous because the researcher applied little if any influence on the process. Essentially, the process flew on its own, and there was a possibility of the researcher discovering something he was not aware of. Textual data was then collected in the form of field notes and was analyzed through content analysis. It was found out that ZU faces some challenges to strategy implementation and hence influencing performance. The key finding was that the organization needs to deepen communication across all levels of the organization to enhance strategy formulation and implementation. Above all, there is need to invest in the human resources and further motivate them to get them put forth the required levels of effort to make the whole process successful. The organization is mitigating the challenges through proper sensitization about its strategies as well us using participatory approach to strategy formulation and implementation. It is also putting in place various programs to motivate staff hence achieve better results. It is recommended that further research be carried out to look into the issue of organization culture and its effect on implementation of strategies. This study has huge implications on the existing policies, theories and practice of strategy implementation, its challenges on organizational performance both for Zetech University and the industry at large. For Zetech University, there will be immense need to sensitize the staff on its strategies. This agrees strongly with Chafee's Linear approach (Chafee, 1985). The study also prompts changes on communication policies  so as to allow easy flow of information in order to enhance the penetration of information regarding strategy formulation and implementation as supported by the study by Hrebnia (2006) as cited earlier. To the industry, the study provokes Universities to look at the motivation of staff as a key aspect to successful strategy implementation as noted by RBV arguments by (O'Regan and Ghobadian, 2004). Thus, coming up with good strategies through proper planning with much emphasis on time factor as alluded by (Fajourn, 2000) in the Mechanistic and Organic Theory is not enough. The workforce is the most important resource in organizations and without motivating them, performance will be below par.

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background

Strategic Management has been embraced by many Organizations in the world as way of attaining success and survival. One of the crucial phases in the process of strategic Management is Strategy Implementation. This is the action phase of the Strategic Management Process, Peace and Robinson, (2011). Once an organization has identified the strategies to be pursued, the action plan then follows which involves putting the strategies in action. Organizational performance is tied to strategy implementation since proper implementation of strategies will always lead to success while poor implementation results to failure which seriously determine its performance. In order to determine the effectiveness of the implementation process, evaluation and control is usually undertaken.

Strategy implementation and organizational performance is guided by a number of theories. Chafee (1985) looks at three approaches to strategy formulation and implementation. He states that, the linear models of strategy emphasizes on methodical approach to strategy by putting emphasis on planning as a way of executing strategies. On the other hand, the adaptive model focuses on continuous evaluation of how strategy is being implemented. Finally, the Interpretive models looks at the organization as a collection of social contracts (Chafee 1985). Another theory is the Mechanistic and Organic theories by Fajourn (2000). He classifies approaches to strategy into two broad perspectives. Mechanistic approach looks at time as discreet. While the organic view tends to treat time as incessant and continuous.

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The number of Institutions of Higher learning in Kenya is rising gradually year in year out with many private universities coming up with unique programmes in order to beat competition. Due to the turbulent and ever changing business environment, institutions of higher learning just like any other organization are on the move to attain Sustainable Competitive Advantage (SCA) in order to remain relevant in the market. SCA can only be achieved with super strategies that are effectively implemented. With the dynamic business environment, it is certain that strategy implementation is bound to face some challenges. This being the case, it is likely that the organizational performance will be affected hence the motivation to study the challenges of strategy implementation and its influence on the performance of an organization.

Zetech University (ZU) is a Private University in Kenya founded in 1999. The University offers a wide range of Courses at, Undergraduate, Diploma and certificate levels with a high ambition to expand the number of undergraduate courses and eventually move to offering post graduate courses in a couple of years from now.

The university has really strived to diversify its training to cover more areas like Information Technology (IT), Business, Hospitality and Tourism, Engineering, Education and Media Arts and Design while remaining out fitted amidst several other universities with long serving history. It is true that it is not easy for this university like for many others to implement its strategies and achieve 100% results without encountering draw backs on the way. It is therefore in the interest of this research, to examine the challenges of strategy implementation and the performance of Zetech University in Kenya.

### 1.1.1 Concept of Strategy Implementation

According to Johnson, Scholes & Whittington, (2008) "Strategy is the direction and scope of an organization over the long term, which achieves advantage in a changing environment through its configuration of resources and competences with the aim of fulfilling stakeholder expectations." Thompson, Strickland and Gamble, (2001) states that, "A company's strategy is management's action plan for running and conducting operations." This being the case, strategy is therefore the driver of all organizational activities.

After formulation of strategies, an organization now embarks on the implementation process so as to achieve the desired results. Many scholars and practitioners have defined strategy implementation in numerous ways. According to Tan and Matthews, (2009) in their book on 'Operations Strategy in Action', they argue that the process of strategy implementation is actually the opposite of the process of strategy formulation in the sense that, while during strategy formulation one is needed to aggregate information from various parties in the organization in order to formulate a good strategy, during implementation one is required to translate back the information that is relevant to all areas that originally supplied the information.

This implies that the same people who essentially are helpful in strategy formulation are the ones who will still participate in the process of strategy implementation. While implementing strategies, various individuals in the organization are involved at different levels. This is so crucial since it ensures ease in realization of the objectives of an organization.

Even after the grand strategies have been determined and the long term objectives set the strategic management process is far from complete. Strategic managers now move into a critical new phase of that process –translating strategic thought into organizational action ; they move from 'planning their work' to 'working their plan' as they shift their focus from strategy formulation to strategy implementation (Peace and Robinson, 2011).

Strategy implementation is not an easy process. There are several challenges that organizations face in an attempt to implement their strategies. Some of these challenges are similar while others are unique and specific to certain organizations. This is particularly so because of the unique business environments that firms operate in. According to Tan and Matthews, (2009) one of the challenges of strategy implementation process is lack of proper transition from strategy formulation to strategy implementation.

### 1.1.2 Organizational Performance

As a basic rule, organizations do come up with strategies with the intention of improving their performance and therefore position themselves in an advantageous position with regards to changes in their environment. With the competition ever becoming intense, an organization would not hesitate to latch at a 'formula' that promises to put it ahead of the competition or at least it catch up (Lewa, Mutuku & Mutuku, 2009).

Thus, in order to improve their performance, many organizations have taken up the tasks of putting in place strategic plans to be implemented over a period of time. Regardless of the period that implementation is to take place, organizations would be expecting to reap benefits such as reduction in their costs, improved revenues and development of a culture that is more responsive to the customers' needs (Johnson and Scholes, 2002).

However, Kennedy, Goolsby, and Arnould (2003) warn that strategy implementation is not a panacea, and we may end up with a performance loss. In most instances, the loss is unexpected and may be occasioned by various factors. It has to be noted that the process of implementing a strategy in itself is a change process and sometimes, such a process may not go as planned (Thompson 1993). Numerous challenges may come up in the course of implementing a strategy, and if these challenges are not anticipated in advance and dealt with effectively, then a loss will be inevitable (Rugman & Verbeke, 2008). Further more (Brown 2005) states that, when a strategy being implemented leads to specific targeted benefits, then this is referred to as performance gain

### 1.1.3 Strategy Implementation and Organizational Performance

Effective strategy implementation results in success of an organization. Success of an organization implies good performance. This means that strategy implementation and performance of an organization are inter-related variables. While good implementation results to good performance, poor implementation results in poor performance. Performance management assumes that by raising individual levels of performance, organizational performance will also improve (Cole and Kelly, 2011).

Muchira (2013) defines organizational performance as "the extent to which an individual meets the expectations regarding how he should function or behave in a particular context, situation, job or circumstance." Good performance may mean several things such as increase in market share, profitability, customer satisfaction, sound financial management, cost effectiveness, efficiency in operations etc. depending on the context in which it applies.

These indicators may vary considerably depending on whether the organization produces tangible products (goods) or intangible products (services).  According to Machida (2013) strategies to be implemented must be consistent with organizational culture to realize the desired organizational performance results. He goes further and explains that; every organization has some systems or internal processes to support and implement the strategy and run day-to-day affairs. The effectiveness of these systems dictates the performance of the organization if they are strictly followed since they are normally designed to achieve maximum performance.

### 1.1.4 Higher Education Sector in Kenya

Higher Education in Kenya falls under the Ministry of Education Science Technology which has University Education as Sub-sector under the charge of The Commission for University Education (CUE). CUE was established under the Universities Act, No. 42 of 2012, as the successor to the Commission for Higher Education (http://www.education.go.ke/home/images/cppmu) as a Government agency mandated to regulate university education in Kenya. University Education in Kenya comprises of all private and public University operating in Kenya. Public Universities are owned by the state while their private counterparts are owned by the individuals and firms in the private sector.

The number of universities in Kenya has risen rapidly from 6 in 2003. Presently there are a total of 53 universities in Kenya, nine constituent colleges of public universities and five of private universities (http://softkenya.com/university/). This implies that the number of universities has been growing over the past few decades and this growth is expected to continue.

For private universities, this growth brings about all manner of challenges and if proper strategic plans are not put in place, survival of these universities may be in doubt. Chacha (2004) notes that the environment under which universities in Kenya operate has experienced numerous challenges and risks and that strategic planning is needed if the institutions are to ensure that they are able to respond to these issues in sustainable manner. Due to the increase in competition in these institutions, it is true that universities in Kenya in this era embrace the concept of strategic management in their operations in order to attain SCA. Messah and Mucai (2011), in their study on 'factors affecting the implementation of strategic plans in Government Tertiary Institutions' argue that ; the Kenyan Education sector has since the year 2003 embarked on plans to institute reforms at all levels.

This study further stated that Strategy is a tool that a public university can use to find its competitive advantage and place within the ever turbulent operating environment. For universities to have strategies is therefore neither a new phenomenon nor unexpected. In fact, many of the universities in Kenya today, both private as well as public, are in various stages of either formulating or implementing their strategic plans (Chege 2009).

One of the driving forces for this approach is the increasing competition which has been partially occasioned by the need to attract more students hence raise enough revenues to undertake different projects in the universities (Lewa, Mutuku & Mutuku 2009). The future of strategy implementation in universities and institutions of higher learning is therefore a phenomenon that needs clear understanding of the impending factors affecting strategy implementation and proper positioning of these institutions to face these challenges in an amicable manner in order to remain viable.

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### 1.1.5 Zetech University

Zetech University is one of the private universities in Kenya having been founded back in 1999.The University has its headquarters situated along Thika Road near Ruiru with several other Satellite Campuses in Nairobi town. Having been founded from a simple Computer training college, this University has grown tremendously in the past five years and is committed to offer quality training to both Kenyans and non Kenyans as guided by a strategic plan. In pursuit to fulfill its obligations the institutions strategic move has been cascaded down to reflect in its vision, mission and also objectives.

At Zetech University, it is expected that a number of challenges are likely to be experienced when it comes to implementing the strategic plan for the institution. To begin with, the culture of the institution is likely to be a major barrier. The university is in pursuit of secular education and as such, secular values are fully embraced with majority of the junior staff being young and in the millennium generation . According to Muturi (2005), such institutions, though they have an advantage in that such values help in keeping them together, there is always a danger that the opinion of those in authority are readily accepted and rarely challenged as no one would want to be labeled as 'rebellious'. Thus, such a culture becomes a hindrance to open communication and debate which helps in refining the ideas of the management.

The structure of ZU is also of utmost importance in this study. The bureaucratic structure which the institution has adopted may not be beneficial in the implementation phase in the sense that it is likely to hamper a two-way communication. This is critical because during implementation, there is need for all levels of the organization to be in touch with each other and communication to flow seamlessly (Pearce and Robinson, 2007).

This helps the organization in terms of anticipating any challenges and putting in place appropriate measure to address such challenges should they occur. On the other hand, a two −way communication, if used well, ensures that the managers are thoroughly informed of all the developments in their environments and this puts them is a better position to make sound decisions (Thompson 1993).

## 1.2 Research Problem

Strategy implementation is a very key concept in the discipline of strategic management. This concept has been tested and proved to work especially with the fortune 500 companies across the world. There is no doubt that effective Strategy implementation has had positive impact on these organizations. As stated by Brown (2005), when a strategy being implemented leads to specific targeted benefits, then this is referred to as performance gain. This implies therefore that Organizational Performance can be determined by the effectiveness and efficiency in implementation of organizations strategies.

While this is true, is also true that implementation of organizational strategies may not just happen smoothly without experiencing some constraints. There are several challenges likely to be faced by an organization while implementing its strategies such as resistance to change, ineffective leadership, weak and inappropriate strategies, as well as insufficient resources to implement the strategies among others. It is therefore inevitable that such constraints will affect the performance of the organization.

The education sector in Kenya has been flooded by several Universities both public and private. The large number of public and private universities in Kenya has brought about stiff competition in the education sector since they are all competing for the same clientele. There is therefore need for these institutions of higher learning to position themselves strategically in order to succeed in this competitive environment. In order to achieve competitive advantage, universities in Kenya have ventured into strategic management in which process they are greatly involved in formulation of competitive strategies to drive their operations.

As defined by Porter (1980) competitive strategy is a plan on how a firm will compete. It is formulated after evaluating how its strengths and weaknesses compare to those of its competitors. Formulation of competitive strategies is a waste of time if they lack proper implementation which may lead to realization of the desired results. In the process of implementing their strategies, Universities in Kenya are facing challenges some challenges which in turn affect their performance in one way or another.

Several studies have been conducted in the past both internationally and locally revolving around strategy implementation, its challenges and Organizational performance. Internationally Miller, T., (1996) Studied Corporate Political Strategies and Firm Performance in which it was found out that there was a great correlation between strategy implementation and performance of firms. Okumus and Roper (1998) state that; Effective Implementation of the strategic plan is perhaps one of the most critical responsibilities of strategic leader. The study revealed that there are few researches conducted on strategy implementation compared to strategy formulation.

On the other hand Alexander (2001) argues that more focus is put in long range planning and strategy as opposed to actual strategy implementation and given that implementation is more complex than formulation then there are greater chances of failure in implementation. Hrebnia (2006) conducted a study on obstacles to effective strategy implementation and found that poor or inadequate information sharing, unclear responsibility and accountability, and working against the organizational power results in failed implementation processes.

In Kenya, several studies have been conducted in the past including the following; Aosa (1992) did an empirical investigation of aspects of strategy formulation and implementation within large, private manufacturing companies in Kenya and found out that; high managerial involvement in strategy and management training had little impact on success in implementing strategy among local companies.

Awino (2000) on the other hand studied the effectiveness and problems of strategy implementation of financing Higher Education Loans Board, and states that; the major determinant of an organization success today in the changing and turbulent environment is the successful implementation of policies. The way strategies are implemented is governed by a policy framework; the direction an organization takes in meeting its goals and objectives is influenced by the type of policy it employs. Muthuiya (2004) studied Strategy Implementation and its Challenges in Non – Profit Making Organizations in Kenya: The Case of African Medical Research Foundation (AMREF)-Kenya while Koste (2003) researched on Strategy Implementation and its Challenges: The Case of Telkom Kenya Ltd.

Muchira, (2013) looked at the Relationship between Strategy Implementation and Performance in Commercial Banks in Kenya and found out that; strategy implementation influences organization performance where organization use various measures such as organization use projected performance of competitors, organization goals, Past performance of the business and projected performance of organization in other industries to access their performance. Out of the several literatures reviewed, it was evident that several authors have written about strategy implementation, few have written about challenges of strategy implementation and out the nine studies quoted above both international and local only two have clearly brought out the relationship between strategy implementation and performance (Awino (2000) and Muchira (2013).

It was therefore realized that most studies are only based on pre-empting the challenges to strategy implementation and perhaps coining recommendations to curb them while there is need to relate this to performance in order to have a realistic picture of the situation hence manage it more effectively.  Additionally owing to the ever changing and dynamic business environment it is evident that Organizations keep facing new challenges since every change in the environment presents its own unique challenges hence the need to keep researching on this topic so as to have up to date information. It is therefore in light of this that a research need arose seeking to determine the challenges to strategy implementation and Organizational Performance. The study sought to answer the question; do challenges of strategy implementation affect Organizational Performance?

**1.3 Research Objectives**

The Objective of this study was to determine the challenges of strategy implementation and its influence on the performance of Zetech University.

**1.4 Value of the Study**

This study has a number of benefits generally to universities in Kenya and specifically to Zetech University. To start with, this study brought to the fore the value of proper strategy implementation in universities.

This study brought out clearly various parties involved in strategy implementation and their roles in this process were clearly highlighted. Secondly this study is helping in enriching the already available knowledge on this subject. This study therefore is going to benefit not only the management of Zetech University but also its stakeholders in decision making.

Lastly, most studies done in this area approached the issues in a survey format. Failure to look at one institution wholesomely denies the researcher a chance to have an in depth understanding of the subject matter. This is particularly crucial because organizations differ in many aspects such as management style, resource base, and the composition of its personnel among other factors. On the other hand the external environment under which organizations operate may also present a few differences from those of other organizations. Therefore, generalization of the challenges facing strategy implementation may not present a realistic picture. This study has tried to eliminate the assumptions of generalization.

**1.5 Chapter Summary**

This chapter basically introduced us to the concept of strategic planning and its importance to organizations. It looked at key concepts of strategic management including strategy formulation, implementation and evaluation linking this to performance.

Essentially, it holds that if organizations come up with sound strategies and implement them, then this will have a positive impact on its performance on profitability and the ability to adapt to changes in the environment.

The Chapter alluded that strategy implementation is a key concept of strategic management process and as such its impact on organizational performance is worth mentioning. It began by bringing out the background of the study in which underlying theories that guides the concept of strategy implementation and organizational performance were identified. Further more the chapter interrogated the relationship between strategy implementation and organizational performance where is came out clearly that the concepts were interrelated.

Higher education Sector in Kenya was introduced as CUE, and a body which regulates operations of all universities in Kenya both Private. Additionaly in the Sector of Higher Education in Kenya, this part of the study brought out the overall picture of the number of Universities in Kenya, and specifically looked at Zetech University as the case for the study.

Research problem was stated and elaborated with the support of literature from other scholars in which the gap for further research was clearly identified. Four local and four international studies were examined to validate this gap. The research objectives was to to determine the challenges of strategy implementation and its influence on the performance of Zetech University.Lastly the benefits of the study to both Zetech University and the industry at large was clearly stated.

# CHAPTER TWO

# LITERATURE REVIEW

## 2.1 Introduction

We have many theorists who have written extensively in this area of strategy and strategy implementation. All their works sought to give theoretical foundations to guide the strategy formulation and implementation. These works sought to harness knowledge from different fields of study such as organization behavior, psychology, sociology, public administration and philosophy into a cogent theory. This section is going to lay a focus on some of these theories as a way of laying a foundation for this study.

## 2.2 Theoretical Foundation

In order to bring out a clear understanding of the challenges to strategy implementation and organizational performance, a number of theories were reviewed. These include; Linear, Adaptive and Interpretive Schools theory and Mechanistic and Organic theory.

### 2.2.1 Theory of Linear, Adaptive and Interpretive Schools

Chafee (1985) put forward these schools. Broadly speaking, these schools seek to explain how strategy can be formulated and implemented. Chafee's linear approach puts emphasis on planning as a way of executing strategies. In essence, linear models of strategy emphasizes on methodical approach to strategy. For this approach to succeed, it follows that decision making should be done in a rational manner (Joyce 2000). Basically, what this means is that the environment under which the strategy is being executed should be stable enough to provide room for consultations and consensus building before a decision can be taken. Chafee (1985) notes that; this is a simplistic view of environment because in real sense, the environment tends to be dynamic.

The adaptive model focuses on continuous evaluation of how strategy is being implemented. This means that the organization puts itself in a better position to adapt itself to the changes in its environment. This approach fits better within the concept of dynamism of the environment (Chafee 1985).

According to Chafee (1985), adaptive approach to implementation of strategy allows for all levels of management to participate in the implementation of strategy and in the process laying emphasis on the means and goals of realizing the strategy.

Interpretive models looks at the organization as a collection of social contracts (Chafee 1985). Basically, a social contract relates to the expectations that each party in the organization have of the other party. It is hoped that when these expectations are met, stability is achieved and as such, the whole organization works as a single team. In this sense therefore, strategy is embraced as an organization activity and is thus driven by the shared values and beliefs (Pettigrew et al 2002). In this sense therefore, decision making as relates to the implementation of strategy becomes a truly consensual undertaking which borders on a political process. Basically, this means that the process is driven by discussions underpinned by mutual respect and a 'give and take' approach.

### 2.2.2 Mechanistic and Organic Theory

Fajourn (2000) classifies approaches to strategy into two broad perspectives: Mechanistic and Organic. These two groups of strategy are based on how time is treated with the approach to strategy and therefore the quality of resulting constructs and models. Mechanistic approach looks at time as discreet. This basically means that each activity is done t its own time; therefore, events flow in a linear sequential and directional manner (Miller 1996).

As noted earlier, if this were to be the case, then it means that the environment under which the strategy is being planned and implemented will be a bit stable to allow for wider consultations and decision making. According to Fajourn (2000), in such an environment, the resulting models and constructs in this approach are well developed and differentiated and emphasis tends to tilt more towards the constructs themselves rather than the relationships among different constructs. On the other hand, the organic view tends to treat time as incessant and continuous hence difficult to predict the future as we are not even sure of what happens tomorrow. Besides, time is continuous an activity can be implemented from which ever direction. Therefore, there is basically no need to approach an activity in a methodical way, as in the end, everything will be done and completed as expected  (Fajourn 2000).

When it comes to participation in decision making, Fajourn (2000) notes that mechanistic approach is prescriptive and concentrates on the role of top individual as the strategist and therefore the locus of analysis is an individual, the locus of analysis can be an individual or a group but restricted to top management and views strategic change as episodic. Thus strategy is more a static, episodic activity and therefore is not viewed as a process but more as an event. On the other hand, organic approach to strategy focuses more on wider participation in decision making. Pettigrew et al (2002) notes that it focuses on a more inclusive role for other levels of management, viewing participation as necessary for management of environmental dynamism; treats strategy as a process. Therefore the locus of decision making can vary from an individual to a group; locus of analysis is a group and change is seen more as incremental.

### 2.2.3 Resource Based View

Resource based theory which stems from the principle that the source of firms competitive advantage lies in their internal resources as opposed to their positioning in the external environment. That is rather than simply evaluating environmental opportunities and threats in conducting business, competitive advantage depends on the unique resources and capabilities that a firm possesses (Barney, 1995).

Resource based theory stress the uniqueness of resources and capabilities are not sufficient to sustain competitive advantage (O'Regan and Ghobadian, 2004). Fiol (2001) remarks that both the skills and resources and the way firms use them must constantly change, the leading creation of continuously changing temporary advantage. This suggests that it is the way resources are configured and not the capabilities as such that is the source of competitive advantage. The resource-based view of the firm predicts that certain types of resources owned and controlled by firms have the potential and promise to generate competitive advantage and eventually superior firm performance (Ainuddin et al., 2007).

### 2.3 Strategic Management Process

Strategic Management does not just involve undertaking of activities haphazardly without a clear plan or direction as long as the goals of an organization are accomplished. In its nature strategic management entails a set of activities that are undertaken systematically in a procedural manner. With the competition ever becoming intense, an organization would not hesitate to latch at a 'formula' that promises to put it ahead of the competition or at least it catch up (Lewa , Mutuku & Mutuku, 2009).

## 2.3.1 Strategy Formulation

This involves crafting, creating or coming up with a set of activities to be undertaken by an organization in order to achieve its goals and objectives. The process begins with goal and objective setting. This requires an in depth understanding of the firm's mission, vision statements and values. The strategies created should be in line with the purpose and direction where the company is heading. The grand strategy section matrix of Pearce & Robinson (2000) explains how access the internal and external environment and gives alternative strategies that can be adopted in case of either weakness or strength in both internal and external environment.

Hrebnia (2006) is of the opinion that the most important part of strategy formulation is the questions of how to bring all the stakeholders together. Given that strategy formulation should be based on sound information and assumption, it is important that the subject be approached from different angles to ensure that those making decisions have considered all alternatives. This ensures that the decision taken is the best under the circumstances. It is common practice to come across organizations where strategy is a preserve of a select group of people in the organizations, mostly the top management. This structure of formulating strategy is not the best because it practically pushed everyone else out of the 'way' leading to feelings of alienation and disenchantment. On the other hand, there is a feeling of entitlement among those who appear to be favored and as such, their opinions carry the day. Koste (2003) warns that such an approach to development of strategic plans is a recipe for disaster.

Thus, the most important aspect of strategy formulation is to ensure that everyone is involved and owns the both the process and the strategy (Koste, 2003). This way, an organization would have created an environment whereby everyone is eager to give their best and see to it that the objectives set are achieved.

## 2.3.2 Strategy Implementation

Strategic Management process does not just end with formulation of nice strategies; it goes a long way to the complete implementation of these strategies. Peace and Robinson (2011) call strategy implementation 'the action phase of the strategic management process 'which implies, implementing the chosen strategy. They continue to explain that for a strategy to be effectively implemented, it must be institutionalized. This refers to permeating the firms day-to-day life. This process involves institutionalization and operationalization of strategies, which is key to strategy implementation. The process also involves a mobilization of resources, restructuring systems and processes, policy, leadership and technological changes. Additionally, strategy implementation may involve significant budgets shifts, impacting human resource and capital expenditure.

Thus, the process in itself involves both huge resources and a readiness to take decisions sometimes over short periods of time. It is during this period that the organization really needs the knowledge, skills and experience of its human resources (Hrebnia, 2006). An organization with a poor set of workforce in terms of skills is likely to find it hard going and may even be forced to abandon expensive projects simply because it cannot cope, leading to huge losses (Okumbe, 2008). It is for this reason that organizations should invest heavily in developing the quality of their human resources.

Aside from human resources, it has to be mentioned that the implementation phase puts to test the quality of the plans that were formulated. If the plans were poor, it will be difficult, or even impossible to make necessary adjustments. Pearce and Robinson (2007) observes that for such plans, any slight adjustments required might mean unravelling the whole plan and starting afresh, leading to wastage of time, resources and even reputation.

### 2.3.3 Strategy Evaluation

This entails appraising the entire process of strategy formulation and implementation in order to establish whether it achieved is expectations. Control is about coming up with mechanisms and procedures that help reduce risks, resolve vulnerabilities and counter system attacks. This should be a continuous process hence enhancing the implementation of the strategies.

At this stage, strategies that prove not to be working are gradually dropped or reviewed at the same time new strategies that seem more favorable to the situation at hand are adopted. This procedure is undertaken continuously throughout the process until the firm is able to successful accomplish its purpose. That is rather than simply evaluating environmental opportunities and threats in conducting business, competitive advantage depends on the unique resources and capabilities that a firm possesses (Barney, 1995)

### 2.4 Challenges of Strategy Implementation in Organizations

One of the challenges that several Organizations in Kenya are facing is inadequate funding to finance the strategic plans. For example, private universities depend solely on the tuition fees raised as a source of funding. This puts them under pressure to attract as many students as they can to join their programs (Okumbe 2008).

The common practice would be to drag the implementation phase, as work has to proceed as much as possible when funds are available and immediately stops when the funds run out (Chege, 2009). Organizations in Kenya also face a serious shortage of qualified manpower to drive their various programs. Given that manpower is part of the strategy and is hugely involved in implementation, it is worrying that many universities in Kenya have inadequate staff and are have to make work done with part time staff to bridge the shortfall (Githua, 2004).

The inadequate number of lecturers has been occasioned by poor pay, which leads to inability to attract qualified personnel (Chege 2009). Besides, Wachira (2011) notes that the rate at which lecturers qualifies, especially at PhD level has been less compared to demand. It is therefore imperative that universities put in place their own mechanisms to ensure that they have enough lecturers with requisite qualifications.

Another challenge facing organizations today in an attempt to implement their strategies successfully is the lack of proper downward communication. Lewa, Mutuku & Mutuku (2009) notes that one area in which most Kenyan universities are failing relates to communication. In many universities, the development of strategic plans have been the purview of the top university management with little or no input from the lecturers and other lower cadre employees. The challenge with this type of approach is that these employees who are barely involved in the development of the plan feel alienated (Pearce and Robinson, 2007) and would not have a sense of ownership of the plan. This brings immense problems when it comes to implementation. In most cases therefore, strategies are resisted because the junior level employees do not understand what they are being asked to implement, and therefore expectations of the management does not make sense.

## 2.5. Empirical studies and Knowledge gaps

The idea of having strategic plans in Kenyan universities is basically in transition as recorded in various literatures. This is because for a very long time, many of the universities were operating in their comfort zones without facing stiff competition with only a few of them in operation and no threat. Mathooko and Ogutu (2014) conclude that universities in Kenya were practicing 'traditional strategic management' which mainly focused on internal dynamics and not external environmental changes.

But in view of increased competition in the higher education sector largely due to the increasing number of universities, competition for students has tremendously increased. This has brought about the need to 'stand out' which basically has forced the institutions to pursue various competitive advantages. To do so, there has been a need for strategic planning which drives these institutions towards the goals and objectives they have set out for themselves (Poddar and Gadhawe, 2007). Therefore, we are seeing more and more universities moving towards putting in place sound management capable of implementing their strategies. Pearce and Robinson (2011) note that; whenever an organization makes a decision, there is always the likelihood of a reaction from other stakeholders such as competitors, suppliers and even customers.

This way, every decision taken by the organization should be a product of judicious thinking. Otherwise, the reaction may be negative and the organization may find itself being pushed out of the business. The almost 'crowded' higher education sector is very competitive. Matters are not helped by the fact that the numbers keep growing. A major concern for private universities would be how they can grow and remain profitable amidst this immence competition.

Poister (2010) is of the opinion that in order to attain this goal, then such organizations should have strategic planning as a continuous process and not one that is either episodic or haphazard. This means that the objectives and goals to be achieved should be monitored continuously, almost on a daily basis so that corrective measures are taken in good time. Appropriate responses to changes in the environment will definitely ensure that the organization is able to capitalize on the changes and either minimize the risks of maximize the benefits.

It has to be appreciated however that the institutions are keen on keeping themselves in tandem with the changes in the environment and may not be having what it takes to make required decisions. Some of the challenges include organizational contexts and the manager's prior experiences (Pearce and Robinson, 1997). Inappropriate organizational culture may in itself work against efforts to come up with sound decisions by slowing down communication hence poor strategy implementation. The above studies have addressed the issues regarding strategic planning in Universities in Kenya, challenges faced by Universities in Kenya during Strategy Implementation and partly how these can be addressed. Unfortunately there has been scarcity of research on strategy implementation and organizational performance. The matter of challenges to strategy implementation and performance of universities in Kenya, and in particular Zetech University has not been tackled. In order to plan effectively for the future, Universities need to understand how the challenges they face in implementation of their strategies impact on their performance.

## 2.6 Chapter Summary

In conclusion this chapter clearly brought out the fact that for an organization to effectively  implement its strategic plan, there are a number of issues to be considered. For once, there is a need to come up with very clear and sound plans and programmes of actualizing those plans. Second, internal resources are essential in ensuring that the organization is able to undertake the kind of programmes that go with the implementation of the plans. It is resources such as the human resources as well as financial resources that will enable the organization to actualize its goals. By harnessing these resources, the organization is able to overcome various challenges that come with implementation of strategic plans.

The process of strategic management was clearly explained specifically looking at three key concepts; Strategy Formulation, Strategy Implemention, and Strategy Evaluation. This stages are sequential and need to be followed systematically. Challenges to strategy implementation in organizations were pointed out including inadequate finance, inadequate number of lecturers due to poor pay and lack of proper downward communication of strategies. Finally the chapter looked at empirical studies and knowledge gaps in which it was noted that there has been scarcity of research on strategy implementation and organizational performance hence the reason for undertaking this study.

## CHAPTER THREE

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

## 3.1 Introduction

This chapter mainly deals with the research methods and the research design that was deployed in carrying out this research work. It outlined the research design, data collection and data analysis.

This chapter also endeavoured to succinctly lay bare the techniques that were employed in collecting data. As usual, such techniques were relevant in collecting the required data without compromising the validity of the collected data. Therefore, the research method ensured that the data identified by the research design was of value to the goals that were being pursued in the research work were optimally obtained and to this end, the tools used in collecting the data and how they were employed was of utmost importance.

## 3.2 Research Design

A research design helps the researcher not only plan but also to anticipate various problems that will likely be experienced and as such be ready to address such problems in a way that maximizes the validity of the overall results (Mouton, 1996). This research adopted a case study research design. A case study research method is as an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident and in which multiple sources of evidence are used (https://www.ischool.utexas.edu/~ssoy).

This case study was deemed appropriate as it brings an understanding of a complex issue or object and can extend experience or add strength to what is already known through previous research. Case studies emphasize detailed contextual analysis of a limited number of events or conditions and their relationships.

## 3.3 Data Collection

The interview process adopted both the structured as well as the unstructured interview approach. Unstructured approach is whereby the interviewer has an idea of the questions he wants answered but does not restrain himself to a set of preconceived and outlined questions. This ensures that the interviewer is able to help the interviewee to relax and therefore gain the confidence of the interviewee (Welman & Krugar, 2001). Besides, out of the respondents' answers one is able to explore even those areas which were previously unknown to the researcher, thereby getting more information and becoming more informed about the topic.

Daymon and Holloway, (2002) also notes that one is able to observe the verbal as well as non verbal cues and therefore tell whether there is something the interviewee is not telling and as such see how to get that information. Structured approach to interview involves asking the same questions in the same order (Daymon and Holloway, 2002). This research sought data from implementers of strategies at Zetech University. The respondents included top level managers such as Campus Directors, Middle level managers including Deans of Faculties and heads of Schools and lower level managers such as Heads of Departments and unit lectures.

## 3.4 Data Analysis

Given that an interview guide was used in this study, content analysis technique was used to analyze the data and present findings. Content analysis enables researchers to sift through large volumes of data with relative ease in a systematic fashion (Stemler, 2001). It also allows inferences to be made which can then be corroborated using other methods of data collection. The results of content analysis allows the researcher to identify, as well quantify, specific ideas, concepts, and their associated patterns, and trends of ideas that occur within ZU.

This method was used to analyze interview transcripts to determine the frequency of specific words or ideas. After the collection of data from the respondents, the next step was to analyze the data so as to deduce what the results of the reach portent to the question. The interview guides were checked for accuracy and completeness of recording of field notes by the researcher. The data was analyzed to bring out specific issues about the challenges of strategy implementation and performance. The content was then compared with the theoretical approaches and documentations cited in the literature review to check on consistency and reliability of collected data.

## 3.5 Chapter Summary

In summary this chapter outlined how the whole process was conducted in order to attain the desired results. However, the researcher was keen to realize that the actual research environment was considerably varied from the intended one which informed the development of various research tools and data collection mechanism and once in a while, a few changes were incorporated, but such did not fundamentally change the entire research objectives.

Data collection was done through both structured and unstructured interviews hence enabling the researcher to benefit from the advantages of both approaches. Data analysis was done using content analysis technique which enabled the researcher sift through large volumes of data with relative ease in a systematic fashion. The results of the analysis aimed at bringing out specific issues about the challenges of strategy implementation and organizational performance which was compared with the theoretical approaches and documatations cited in the literature review to check on consistency and reliability of collected data.

# CHAPTER FOUR

## DATA ANALYSIS, RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

## 4.1 Introduction

In this section, the researcher is going to represent the collected data. To begin with, the interview method was used to collected data. The questions were both structured as well as unstructured. Unstructured interview questions were advantageous because they more or less widened the scope of research and eliminated any restriction to answers from respondents.  Thus, there was a possibility of discovering something which the researcher had not imagined when setting out to collect data.

This research was collected in both the main campus of Zetech University which is in Ruiru area of Kiambu County along the Thika super highway, as well as campuses in town mainly Pioneer, Agriculture house and Stanbank campuses. To carry out the interviews, the researcher had first to obtain a letter authorizing the exercise from University Management and this was issued by the Vice Chancellor. Afterwards, the researcher had to arrange individual schedules with the respondents so as not to interfere with their work schedules.

A total of 50 employees were interviewed. This number was drawn from different cadres of workers who were broadly categorized as senor managers, middle levels managers and junior managers. This was necessary to ensure that all levels of the workforce were represented. As noted earlier, the research was centered on discovering the challenges the university faces in implementing its strategies and the their effect on performance. The questions of the research were concluded in good time and within the stipulated time.

**4.2. Research Findings**

This Chapter reports the research findings that the researcher was able to come up with after having analyzed the data that was collected by way of interviews. The chapter is very crucial since it brings out the results of the study. Several techniques were employed to present the analyzed data.

**4.2.1 Demographic Information**

Given that Zetech University has a large staff of close to 250 employees; it was necessary to first draw a sample. The researcher determined that a sample of 50 employees would be the best putting in mind the constraints of time and the need to have a widespread view of the subject. Stratified sampling was used to get the required employees who would make the sample to be interviewed. Thus, employees were divided into three main categories; senior managers, middle level managers and junior managers.

Hill (2013) defines a manger as anyone who is in charge of a whole or part of a company's operations. In line with this definition, it was determined that the following staffs fall within the definition of managers; Campus Directors, Deans of Faculties, Heads of Schools and Departments and junior managers such as lecturers and such other positions in non-teaching departments. The researcher then decided that the proportion of these positions within the staff population should also be reflected within the sample chosen. To this end, the total of 50 staff was divided in the proportion shown in the table below:

**Table 4.1: Profile of the Respondents**

| Respondents | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Senior Managers | 5 | 10 |
| Middle Level Managers | 15 | 30 |
| Junior Managers | 30 | 60 |
| Total | 50 | 100 |

**Source: Respondents, 2015**

The staff members who formed part of the sample were randomly chosen to avoid any bias. There was no pattern or process followed in choosing the staff members to make up the numbers. The researcher simply picked at random those he came across, took them through the purpose of the research and asked for their permission to participate, upon which a schedule to collect data through interview was discussed and fixed.

**4.2.2 Length of Service**

Length of service at the institution was also another factor under consideration. Basically, the length of service is important in gauging how much employees know and have interacted with the strategic plans. Thus, a longer length of service is deemed to give one more insights into the implementation of strategic plans in the organization and as such, the individuals is in a position to make informed decision regarding either success or failure of the plans. According to the findings, the length of service varied from one month to 9 years. Therefore the sample was good in attempting to gauge the different perspectives that this experience give.

**Table 4.2: Respondents' Length of Service**

| Number of Years Worked at Zetech | Frequency |
|---|---|
| 0-1 | 4 |
| 2-3 | 14 |
| 4-5 | 9 |
| 6-7 | 11 |
| 7-8 | 8 |
| 9-10 | 4 |
| Total | 50 |

**Source: Respondents, 2015**

What was noted in the responses is that the newer employees especially those who have worked for 3 years and below did not have an idea of the strategic plans. The institution has recently undertaken various activities towards being certified by the International Standards Organization (ISO). Out of a total of eighteen members of staff who have worked for 3 or less years, 12 noted that being ISO certified was part of the strategic plan that the institution was pursuing. However, when asked how being ISO certified was beneficial to the organization, 7 were unable to point out some of the benefits that are contingent to achieving this status.

Only 3 respondents were able to mention that the status will likely improve the reputation of the university and even help boost the students' numbers. This observation clearly demonstrates the need to deepen communication on strategic plans of the organization especially to new staff.

This way, such staffs are informed about the future the organization is striving to achieve and their place in that effort. Without such information, then staffs are more or less at a loss and may not contribute positively. This information is likely to be passed on to the staff during the point at which they are inducted into the institution (Pearce and Robinson, 2007). Interestingly, when prodded further, the staff said that indeed there is an induction process in the institution, and this raises the possibility of communication about the future of the organization not be passed or not be insisted on enough.

On the other side, Koste (2003) notes that there is a need for an organization to have a practice of socializing new staff to its norms. From observation made here, there is a possibility that the new staffs were only able to remember what they have seen given their participation in the ISO certification process and not necessarily talk from a point of information about the issue of strategy at the institution.

Another finding that was noted was that those who have worked at the institution for more than 5 years were knowledgeable about the strategic plan of the institution. It was found out that out of the 32 respondents who have worked at the institution for more than five years, 22 were able to point out the mission and vision of Zetech University and link it up with the recent developments at the institution.

According to Zetech University (2015), the vision of the institution is to be "a leading university in research, knowledge creation and dissemination in Africa' while its mission is to 'provide holistic education and foster a culture of integrity, hard work, research, innovation and creativity towards problem solving and lifelong skills'.

Some of these developments include having in place a service charter, the completion of ultra-modern Thika Road Campus in Ruiru which is equipped with state of the art facilities. There are also plans to acquire more land to further expand facilities besides building Zetech Towers, to expand both space and facilities.

All in all, what is clear is that there is no clear understanding of what is a strategic plan. If there is any plan, then it is vague and there is need to make it clear to staff. What is coming out, is the fact that employees are seeing what appears to be a strategic plan, they understand it, but are confused as to what it constitutes. Essentially, it appears that the university's plan may not be clear as it should be.

The graph below shows what staff at the institution takes the strategic plan to mean. Essentially, majority of them agree there is a plan, only that they don't know it as a phrase or sentence. The frequency shows how many employees pointed out the variable noted.

**What Staff Associate Strategic Plan With**

Source: Respondents, 2015

**Figure 4.1: What Defines Zetech University Strategic Plan?**

## 4.3 Benefits of a Strategic Plan

In essence, a majority of employees think that the institution has a strategic plan. 81 percent of the respondents were of the opinion that the institution has a strategic plan out of which 78 per cent felt that the strategic plan will move the institution in the right direction. This may be an indication that the institution has done a good job in promoting its strategic plan . It may well be an indication that a good number of employees have either witnessed or been part of the implementation process of various activities which they associate with the implementation of strategic plans.

According to the research, 39 out of the 50 respondents felt that the institution stand to immensely benefit from having in place a strategic plan. The research found out that 27 respondents were of the opinion that such a plan would increase the number of students registering for various courses at the institution. As noted before, private universities in Kenya do not get capitation from the government. They therefore solely rely on the tuition fee collected form the students to fund their various projects. Therefore, it is imperative that such institution put in place measures that will help them attract more students, and this include having a good strategic plan in place.

Another benefit that respondents felt that having a strategic plan will bring to the organization is improvement of the reputation of the organization. 54 per cent of the respondents felt that having a good reputation is a benefit in the sense that it gives confident to both the students while 32 percent of the respondents felt that it will endear the university to potential employers. This is important in two ways. First, when employers favor an institution, they are likely to employ its graduates as they hold them in good stead (Lewa, Mutuku & Mutuku, 2009). On the other hand, if students have the confidence in their institutions, it will help them develop skills such as personal interaction and personal presentation which also make them to be more marketable. In essence, a good reputation will further lead to the overarching objective of helping to boost students' numbers. 22 respondents said that implementation of a strategic plan is good for the institution as it will help most of their students to secure employment.

**Benefits of a Strategic Plan**
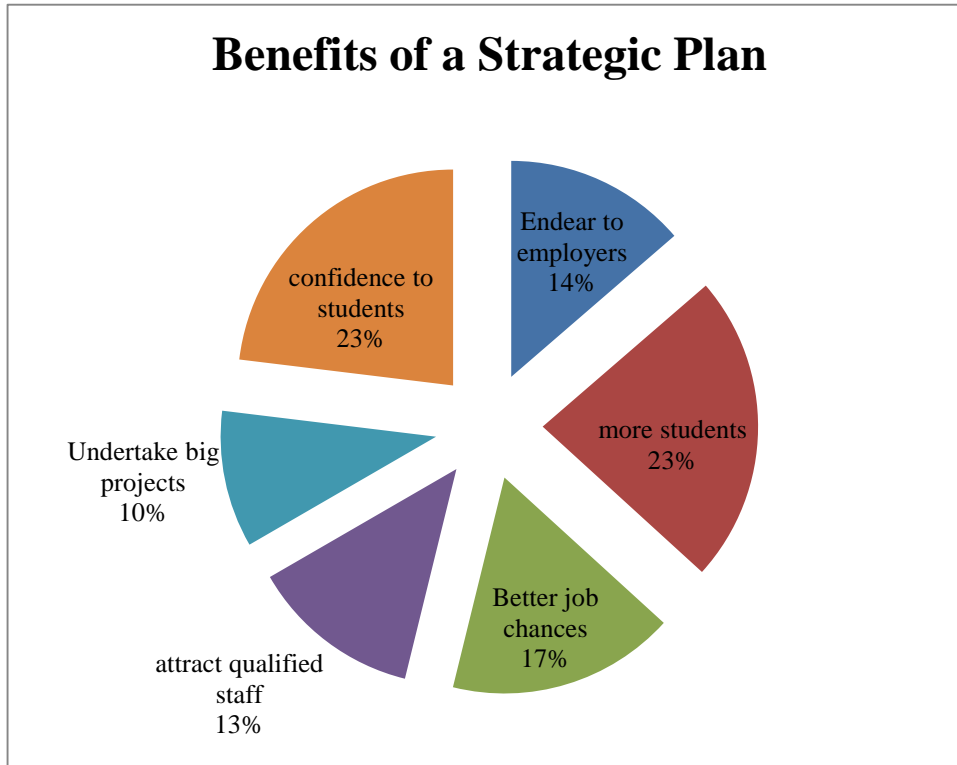
Source:Respondents, 2015

**Figure 4.2: Benefits of a Strategic Plan**

Five respondents were of the opinion that implementing a strategic plan will help the institution to fund huge projects such as the planned construction of Zetech Towers as well other expansion programmes. This is anchored on the belief that implementation of strategic plans, if done successfully, will definitely lead to more revenues being earned by the institution and thus the ability to fund such progranmmes. It has to be noted that universities have the onerous task of funding expensive projects to support the learning progranmmes and this can only happen in the event that they are able to raise sufficient revenues which only goes in tandem, with an increase in the number of students.

According to the research, 7 respondents were of the view that having a strategic plan will enable the institution to attract qualified personnel.

Institutions that are able to attract to attract qualified personnel are also able to benefit immensely. To begin with, such institutions of higher learning will be able prepare their students well for the job market by imparting the requisite skills. When the students perform better at their place of work, it will go a long way to boost the image of the institution and further endear it to the job market. Besides, such a pedigree of staff will also be keen to work in an environment where they are appreciated and their efforts recognized. (Thompson, 1998) observes that this includes better pay for the employees and opportunities for career development and growth. An institution which is unable to attract qualified personnel will definitely have to deal with higher levels of staff turnover which negatively affects staff morale and the confidence of students in the institution (Muturi, 2005).

## 4.4 Strategy Formulation and Involvement in Implementation

The research also sought to know the structure of strategic plan formulation and involvement in the implementation process. Basically, the researcher sought to establish who is involved in the formulation of strategy and the extent to which they participate in its implementation. Moreover, the researcher sought to know the extent of involvement in strategic plan implementation among the staff. This was informed by the fact that those who formulate strategic plans tend to understand it better and should therefore participate in its implementation. In the case of Zetech University, some interesting findings were observed. Top begin with, 95 percent of the respondents observed that formulation of strategy is a prerogative of the top management. This is to say that the lower cadres of employees are rarely involved if any, in the formulation of strategic plans.

The rest of respondents had no idea who formulates the strategic plan and there were diverse opinions among them, with some suggesting that it is the human resource department. However, 40 employees were of the opinion that all employees in the organization, at all levels of management are involved in the implementation of strategy. 7 respondents observed that they are lower levels employees are never involved in implementation.

Looking at this, there is a clear line that should warn us of the fact that Zetech University may not be able to achieve its strategic plan in the intended way. First, what comes out clearly is that there is a notion among a good number of staff that formulation of strategic plan at the institution is a preserve of the top management or the University Management Board (UMB) as it is called. This should never be the case. The reason is that such staff at the apex of the organization may not be well placed to understand the complexities of performing various tasks or the deficiencies of their staff with regards to the targets they are setting (Githua, 2004).

It is for this reason that there is a need for the formulation of strategic plans to encompass everybody. It is highly unlikely that individuals, who feel far removed from a plan, can have the zeal and enthusiasm of pursuing the plan to its conclusion. But again, aside from the question of those formulating strategic plan being aware of the complexities in the environment, it is absolutely important that the staff to be involved in implementation be motivated. One way of achieving this is by ensuring that the staff or their representative takes part in the formulation of strategic plans and therefore feel that they are part of the process.

Having a top-down rather than a bottom-up approach to formulation of strategy tends to make lower levels employees feel alienated form the strategic plan itself, further complicating implementation process (Githua, 2004 and Muturi, 2005). This affects their motivation levels and they may not give their best or at worse resist the process. Besides, such employees may have invaluable knowledge which can help shape the process especially in an environment that is dynamic and where decisions have to be taken fast. The good thing is that when it comes to implementation of the formulated strategic plans, all levels of employees are involved. According to the research, 98 per cent of the respondents observed that all employees are involved in the implementation process.

Generally speaking, the eventual outcome an organization reaps from the implementation process is a totality of the efforts each person in the organization puts in. It is thus important to ensure that everyone understands what is going on and their roles in ensuring the overall success of the process. Putting this into perspective, there was a sense that though the staffs were not clear of a particular strategic plan being pursued, they noted that everybody is involved in the process. This further engenders the need for proper communication about the strategic plan being pursued.

## 4.5 Challenges Faced in the Implementation of Strategic Plan

The research also sought to find out if the university is facing any challenges with regards to implementation of its strategic plan. Essentially, given that employees at least had an idea of what plans Zetech University have for the future, it was important to note some of the issues they feel is pushing back the realization of these plans. After discussing this issue with the respondents, a lot of answers came up and the researcher had a candid discussion on this subject.

In this section, the paper is going to concentrate on issues that came up at least five times as a basis of winnowing out the issues. This way, we get to concentrate on the most important and perhaps general issues among the respondents without necessarily ranking them up. The figure below shows us the challenges pointed out by the respondents according to their frequencies.



**Figure 4.3: Challenges of Strategic Plan Implementation**

**Source: Respondents, 2015**

Looking at the graph, it is clear that a majority of the respondents feel that regulations, inadequate finances to cater for implementation of strategies and high staff turnover are the major obstacles Zetech University is facing with regards to implementation of strategic plan.

From the interviews, 42 respondents felt that adhering to the various regulations regarding the running of the institution especially the guidelines by CUE are the most important factor the organization faces. It has to be noted that Zetech University is currently operating with a letter of Interim Authority and will only be given a charter subject to conforming to the regulations of the commission. Subsequently, the university has a huge task of ensuring that in the next few years it complies with the guidelines, failure of which even the letter may be withdrawn.

Aside from the commission, it has to be noted that the University is also obliged to observe a number of regulations from other government departments. The challenge with legal obligations is that the university has no choice but to fulfill them. The problem is that these regulations may slow down the implementation process. To begin with, some authorization to establish some courses for instance or undertake some construction work may delay, leading to missed schedules. But aside from that, depending on the nature of the regulatory mechanisms at hand, resources may be spent. The amount of resources vary, but if it is huge, that may well go a long way in forcing the university to rethink some of the strategies already pout in place.

Another thorny issue pointed out as likely to push back the match towards relaxing the strategic plan by Zetech University is high staff turnover. According to the research, 44 percent of the respondents felt that the high staff turnover is an issue that cannot be ignored. This is because the turnover affects the ability of the university to retain the knowledge and skills within its work force which is instrumental in attaining its objectives.

But again, it is an indicator of deep seated issues regarding motivation of employees who remain behind. Low levels of morale deny the organization a workforce that is ready to approach their tasks with the zeal and enthusiasm that would make them achieve their goals. Out of those interviewed, 35 respondents pointed out that inadequate finance is a challenge that hinders implementation of strategic plan laid down by the organization. As noted before, the university mainly depends on the enrollment of students to raise the revenue needed to finance its strategic plan. The university is just establishing itself in the market and the respondents were of the opinion that raising the required numbers to generate enough revenues would be a tall order for the university.

Another issue that was pointed out was the fact that the strategic plan by the university was not well understood by the employees staff who are supposed to implement it. It is important to note that if staff do not understand the plan then they are unlikely to give their full support, leading to under achievement of set targets. This is because the employees are unlikely to give their best efforts and at worse, they may engage in acts of sabotage against the said plans. If this happens, then it is the organization that losses.

Essentially, the key issue that has to be looked at is the fact that all the employees are pulling in the same direction. The fact that this issue was pointed out also points to another problem within the implementation phase in the organization; the involvement of employees in the formulation of the strategy and the way information is being communicated to them. Poor communication often results into confusion and creates an environment whereby people are just working because they have been asked to perform certain duties and not because they appreciate the value of what they are doing. This eventually has an effect on the quality of efforts they put in their various tasks.

**4.6 Adressing Challenges of Strategy Implementation**

Having gone through the challenges, it was also important to check if the organization was doing anything at all to address the situation. The general observation was that the University was focusing on two key areas mainly improving staff welfare and deepening communication channels. With regards to the ISO certification procedure, it was noted that indeed staff there has been some level of engagement with staff, though the levels was not adequate. 28 respondents were of the opinion that also needs to be done to engage staff, noting that even though representatives of the staff attended meetings and were part of the process, the collection of views from members was not adequate. For this reason, 36 per cent of the respondents hoped that the situation will improve in future.

On the subject of employee welfare, 27 per cent of the respondents were of the opinion that the welfare had improved generally, and that in the next year they expected the situation to improve even further and therefore help to stem the high turnover rates. All in all, the most important thing is that there is movement, an indication that the management is aware of the situation and is determined to make the necessary changes, time and resources allowing.

**4.7 Performance of Zetech University**

The researcher also sought to know how the staff across all levels of management felt about the performance of their organization with regards to how the strategic plan was being implemented. Essentially, none of the respondents rated organizations effort at Very Good which was the highest rating. This is an indication that staffs at ZU are of the opinion that a lot still needs to be done if their strategies are to be achieved .

Besides, 11 respondents rated the performance as good while 7 respondents rated the performance as Poor. The importance of this is that the organization has not been doing things right. But essentially, this situation should also be tempered by the fact that individuals may not at all be happy with some issues, which may be unrelated to the study. The graph below shows how the respondents feel about the efforts of the organization with regards to the efforts put in place to achieve strategic plan.



**Source: Respondents, 2015**

**Figure 4.4: Rating of University's Effort towards Strategic Plan Implementation**

The poor score could also be an indictment that staff have no trust in the way they are engaged in strategy issues, showing a wide spread feeling that a lot needs to be done. But also there is a possibility that the views of both sides are dramatically opposites of each other, leading to low opinion on the performance of the university on the strategy front.

Given that the staff who identified themselves as occupying positions in the middle and lower levels were the majority of those interviewed, it should be noted that this points to a need to engage them more.

Another explanation could be the fact that staffs are bench marking their institution with others, some of which have been in the business for decades and therefore have more resources to mount impressive programmes in pursuit of their objectives. But above all, their objectives may be different from what Zetech is pursuing. These two reasons point to the fact that there will always be a difference between organizations and thus bench marking in general terms may not be appropriate and results may be misleading.

## 4.8 Chapter Summary

This Chapter has presented the collected data in a very specific and methodical way.The research findings were discussed in detail by reporting on various aspects as was informed by the interview responses. This was done with the aid of a number of data presentation tools including tables, bar graphs and pie charts.

Generally, this research has unearthed a number of key issues which are important in the overall plan of achieving organizational objectives. For once, it is clear that there is a weakness in the way the organization has been able to communicate its objectives to the staff. Consequently, a number of staff is unaware of the strategic plan if there is any. Secondly, there is a clear disconnect between various levels of management with regards to how the strategies are formulated, communicated and implemented. Lastly, there is also the issue of motivation of staff .Altogether all these issues affect performance negatively.

# CHAPTER FIVE

## SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 5.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the researcher discussed the summary, conclusion and recommendations of the study, besides pre emptying further reseach area. The researcher summarized the findings of the study that was arrived at after data analysis was conducted. This aimed at answering the research question.The conclusion to the findings was done and later the researcher made recommendations as well as stated the implication of the study on policy, theory and practice.

### 5.2 Summary

From the findings above, it is clear that though Zetech University is doing its best as far as strategy formulation and implementation are concerned. However there is need for a few things to be done to ensure that there is a high chance of achieving its strategies just the way it was intended. One of the most immediate issues would be to ensure that all employees are aware of any strategies that the organization is putting in place. The challenge here is that there is confusion about whether or not the institution has a strategic plan. In the midst of this confusion among staff, there is no clear guideline as to what the organization is pursuing and therefore the role of each individual employee in achieving that ends up not being clear. Essentially, what all this means is that there is no clear narrative from the top, down to the lower level employees of what the organization really what to achieve in the future. As a result of this, there is a likelihood that the staff may not be in a position to harness their potential and help the organization achieve its objectives.

Still talking about communication, it is important to ensure that all employees, especially new employees are inducted well into the institution. The socialization process has to be relooked into to ensure that the new staffs coming in are aware of the expectations of the organizations and not just how they will be working and with whom they will be working with. The strategic plan should be widely shared and this includes the new staff joining in. They are also an important part of the organization and if they are unable to give their best, then they may end up pulling others behind.

The motivation of staff is also a key issue that this research found out. The fact that a good number of respondents pointed out staff turnover as an issue is something that should worry those keen with implementing the strategic plan. For once, staff turnover is an issue that cannot be completely avoided. However, when it reaches acute levels, then it should be addressed as a matter of urgency. As already noted, the turnover of staff means that an organization lacks the consistency required to approach issues and programmes but above all, it denies that organization the experience and skills these staff have accumulated over time. The new faces coming in to replace them will take some time to learn, and this only delays the achievement of set targets and goals.

Another issue that has come out during this research is the fact that a good number of staff feels alienated from the strategic plan formulation process. They therefore feel that their roles are restricted to implementation and nothing more. To projects this argument, we see a workforce that cannot even raise a finger when they see something going amiss. Essentially what this means is that the employees feel that either their contribution doesn't matter and thus wont be considered, or most likely, that they are not up to the task to deal with the issues at hand.

Essentially, what must be addressed is the fact that the employees are a key stakeholder in the strategy formulation and implementation process as they possess essential information given their 'proximity' to the point of action. Therefore, the top management is ill placed to handle such issues alone given that the higher you climb the organizational rank, the further away you move from the point of action which is the customer. Therefore, we need a combination of both top management and staff from all levels to come together to approach issues of strategy formulation. This way, those plans would be based on realistic figures and scenarios.

Above all, lower levels staff would feel valued and this may positively influence their participation in the implementation process. Further, the issue of finance appears to be a big one. Truly speaking, most of strategy formulation and implementation processes involve a number of activities and all this require a lot of resources. Without the requisite resources, even if the plans are good on paper, they may never see the light of the day. It is for this reason that it is imperative that the University relook into areas that it can raise more resources. Private Universities do not get funding from the government and have to fund their operations and programmes solely from the tuition fees they raise. This therefore means that Zetech University, just like any other University in the country should look for creative ways of generating more resources to finance its activities. It has to be noted that even public universities are increasingly finding it difficult to live within the capital they get from the government and have been looking for ways of boosting their financial muscles. Furthermore, the rapid growth of universities has meant that there is intense competition for students.

## 5.3 Conclusion

As noted in this research work, it is important for an organization to have a strategic plan. In fact, having a strategic plan is so important that it lies at the heart of the success of any organization. However, having a strategic plan is one thing and making it work and deliver intended results is a different ball game altogether. What this research has shown is that there are issues that though not taken seriously, that are likely to significantly hinder achievement of strategies.

On of the key issues is the communication of strategies. Communication about strategic plan should be done effectively and delivered to all levels of the organization. There is a danger that once the document is in place, it is shoved somewhere from where concerned heads will be dealing with the document in a piece meal way without really checking whether the staff are aware of the contents of the plans, and what it means to have such a plan in place.

But again, implementation of a strategic plan in itself involves a lot of disruption to the status quo, leading to discomfort. There is need therefore to ensure that the staff in the organization possess the necessary levels of competence and that they are motivated to work and go over the obstacles. What this research has aptly captured is a situation whereby the staffs feel they are not part of the process and this affect their motivation. The plan is therefore largely viewed as a child of the top management and therefore the top management should be the ones dealing with its implementation.

All in all, development and implementation of strategies should involve everybody in the organization regardless of their position. Everyone has a place in making the strategies successful and therefore no one should be left behind. Proper education of employees should be made to ensure that they are in touch and aware of the details besides making the plan easily accessible for future reference by the staff. Besides, constant evaluation about the achievement made in implementing the strategies should be done and the results communicated to the employees to keep them in touch with the developments.

**5.4 Recommendations**

Zetech University should look for alternative means of raising finances. This includes partnership with private institutions especially the corporate world. This way, they can have arrangement whereby some of their programmes would be sponsored by the corporates, besides having extra money to finance projects within their strategic plans. Still on finances, the university should specialize its offering in the market. For instance, it should build a strong brand around a certain courses and market itself as a leader in that given field. This way, it will be able to attract students in this area.

For instance, Strathmore University has successfully built its reputation as a good training ground for accountants while Daystar University has done the same for Journalists. Because of this, and engaging qualified staff in those areas, they have been successful. There is no denying that Zetech University needs the support of qualified and experienced staff. To this end, focus should shift to retaining its staff and building their competence so that they are better able to participate in the implementation of their strategic plans. This would involve coming up with ways of motivating their employees.

Aside from better pays, other areas to be looked into should be the relationship between top management and employees at lower levels and engaging staff in decision making, especially with regards to formulation of strategic plans. Moreover, there should be feedback mechanisms where employees can relay any communication they feel would help in the implementation process. In other words, two-way communication should be encouraged.

There should also be improvement in the way strategic communication issues are disseminated. There has to be clear communication of what is to be achieved, together with the timelines and the intended results. This basically means that the employees should always be kept on the loop on what is happening so that they are better informed. Formulation of strategic plans should be an inclusive process. This does not mean that everybody is involved. Of course that will simply be impractical. What should thus happen is the fact the meetings to formulate such plans should be done by committee including representative of all levels of management. This way, the organization is able to get input from all those levels.

 Above all, this will help in dispelling the notion that formulation of strategic plan is a preserve of the top management, something that has tended to inculcate feelings of alienation among the staffs, especially those at the lower levels of management.

## 5.5 Recommendations for Further Research

The research has looked at some of the challenges that organizations may face when attempting to formulate and implement their strategies. Essentially, this is by no means exhaustive. Even though the research has looked at some of the solutions to those

challenges, it would be important if future research looked at the issue of organization culture and its effect on implementation of strategies. Organization culture is a strong force and it would be interesting to see how managers can deal with it and keep employees firmly on the path of formulating and implementing strategies by dealing with the destructive effects of organization culture.

Generally the research has looked at some of the challenges that organizations may face when attempting to formulate and implement their strategies. Essentially, this is by no means exhaustive. Even though the research has looked at some of the solutions to those challenges, it would be important if future research in are looked at the issue of organization culture and its effect on implementation of strategies. Organization culture is a strong force and it would be interesting to see how managers can deal with it amicably.

## 5.6 Implication of the Study on Policy, Theory and practice

This study has a huge implication on the existing policies, theories and practice of strategy implementation, its challenges on organizational performance both for Zetech University and the industry at large. To begin with, for Zetech University, there will be immense need to sensitize the staff on not only the existence of a strategic plan but also its contents. This is crucial since the strategic plan holds the strategies the university is pursuing in a more simplified way in form of vision, mission, goals and objectives of the institution. This agrees with Chafee's Linear approach (Chafee, 1985).

Another policy aspect of this study is the fact that it is likely to prompt changes to the structure of the university as far as the channels of communication are concerned so at to allow easy flow of information in order to enhance the penetration of information regarding strategy formulation and implementation as alluded by Hrebnia (2006) .

Managers will be forced to allow information to flow freely either way.  For the industry at large the study has an implication on various aspects such as organization structure, culture, and the business environment under which the universities operate. The research has relevant strategy implications on policies and general practice of strategy implementation and performance of universities in Kenya. Of key importance is that organizations should be able to look at the motivation of staff which agrees with RBV arguments (O'Regan and Ghobadian, 2004). Thus, coming up with good strategies and ensuring that enough financial, physical and human resources are available is not enough. The workforce is the most important resources in organizations and without motivation, and then performance will be below par.

## 5.7 Chapter Summary

This Chapter has clearly brought out the summary, conclusion, and recommendation of the study. In summary the chapter has explained that poor down ward communication, financial challenges, inadequate staff motivation and less sensitization of staff on strategic plan form major challenges to strategy implementation at ZU. The researcher therefore recommend that ZU looks into alternative means of raising finances as it bench marks with other institutions.  At the same time improvement in the way strategic issues are disseminated across various levels of staff and making formulation of strategic plans an inclusive process were also outlined. It was noted that this study has emmense implications on policy, theory and practice not only at ZU but the industry at large as it points out major aspects of strategy implementation  and organizational performance.

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# APPENDICES

## APPENDIX A: INTRODUCTION LETTER FROM UNIVERSITY

## UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI
### SCHOOL OF BUSINESS
#### MBA PROGRAMME

| | |
|---|---|
| Telephone: 020-2059162<br>Telegrams: "Varsity", Nairobi<br>Telex: 22095 Varsity | P.O. Box 30197<br>Nairobi, Kenya |

DATE...17/09/2015

### TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

The bearer of this letter .... LIMET    CHEDEYE ...........................

Registration No.....D61/60961/2013 ..................................

is a bona fide continuing student in the Master of Business Administration (MBA) degree program in this University.

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 your assistance to enable him/her collect data in your organization.

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.

PATRICK NYABUTO
MBA ADMINISTRATOR
SCHOOL OF BUSINESS

UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI
SCHOOL OF BUSINESS
16 SEP 2015
P.O. Box 30197 – 00100, NAIROBI
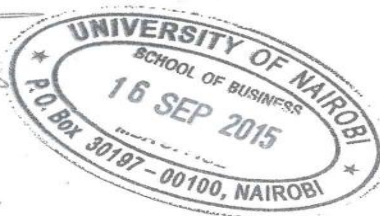
# APPENDIX B: AUTHORITY LETTER TO COLLECT DATA

Zetech University Main Campus
Off Thika Road, Ruiru
P.O.Box 2768 - 00200, Nairobi
Mobile: 0716 600 116
E-mail:info@zetech.ac.ke
Website: www.zetech.ac.ke

Friday 30<sup>th</sup> October 2015

ZU/3/14/Vol 2/55

MBA Administrator
School of Business
University of Nairobi

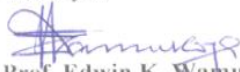Dear Sir/Madam

SUBJECT:    LINET CHEDEYE D61/60961/2013

This is to confirm that the above named has been authorized to carry out her MBA Research Project at Zetech University.

As recommended in your letter dated 17<sup>th</sup> September 2015, it is expected that the results of the report will be used solely for academic purposes and that a copy of the same will be availed to Zetech University as the interviewed organization.

Thank you

Prof. Edwin K. Wamukoya
Vice Chancellor

**APPENDIX C: INTERVIEW GUIDE**

**CHALLENGES TO STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION AND THE**

**PERFORMANCE OF ZETECH UNIVERSITY**

The information obtained from this interview will be treated with high confidentiality and will be not be used for any other purposes other than academic.

**PART A:  Interviewee profile**

1. What is your age?

   18-25 ☐       25-35 ☐       35-45 ☐

   45-50 ☐          0ver 50 ☐

2. Are you a senior manager, middle level manager or junior manager?

3. Which section do you head?

4. What is your job Title?

5. How long have you been working at Zetech University?

**PART B Challenges of Strategy implementation and Performance of Zetech University**

1. Does Zetech University have a strategic plan? If YES what period does it cover?

2. Do you think they follow the strategic plan in their operations?

3. Do you feel that the strategic plan will help the university move in the right direction?

4. Are there some strategy that the university is pursuing? If yes, name a few.

5. Who is involved in strategy implementation at Zetech University?

6. Are those who formulate strategies part of the implementers? If NO, why?

7. Are there challenges that the university is facing in implementing its strategies? If YES, name them.

8. Which of these challenges are specific to your line of duty? Explain how they affect your performance while pursuing the goals and objectives of the institution.

9. Do these challenges affect the performance of the institution? If YES? How, explain.

10. How does the university overcome these challenges?

11. Has the university been able to realize improved performance after the challenges are addressed? Explain.

12. What are some of the measures that the university has put in place to curb the challenges to strategy implementation.

13. How would you rate the performance of Zetech University as far as implementing its current strategic plan is concerned?

Poor

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Fair

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Good

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V. Good

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┌─────────────┐
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14. Do the challenges of strategy implementation influence this performance? If YES how, Explain.

**Thank You for your time!!**