STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT AT BARCLAYS BANK OF KENYA

BY

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DECLARATION

This research project is my original work and has not been presented for any academic award in any other institution.

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D61/70632/2009

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

Signature ______________________________ Date ______________________________

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DEDICATION

To Almighty God, who has been my strength and divine inspiration in everything I do.

To my Mother, Grace Bitutu Ngoko and my father Augustine Ngoko Nyang'aya, who taught me at a tender age, the virtue of hard work and shaped me to who I am today. They saw my strengths and capabilities and made me understand that I can do anything that I purpose to achieve in life through determination.

To my siblings Peter Omwenga Ngoko, Eric Okari Ngoko, David Onkundi Ngoko, Patrick Omweri Ngoko, Jesica Moraa Ngoko, Margaret Nyandoche Ngoko and Sylvia Osiri Ngoko, who offered me a lot of encouragement and emotional support.

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ABSTRACT

Successful organizations recognize the importance of strategy as a tool in management and realize that their survival is dependent on how well they adopt new strategies or enhance existing strategies in an attempt to respond to the changes brought by the environment. While the quality of strategy is important, we cannot omit the importance of effectively executing the strategy. As the organization faces the challenge of successful strategy implementation, the quality of the human capacity implementing strategy in terms of their skills mix, cannot be overlooked. The aspect of skills development of the human capacity implementing strategy appears to be increasingly important in determining the success of implementation.

The current study, using strategy implementation as the theoretical background, sought to contribute to a greater understanding, the relationships between strategy implementation and skills development .In an attempt to achieve the objective of the study, a case study research design was conducted at Barclays Bank of Kenya. Data was collected through face to face interviews of 11 respondents .The data collected from the interviewed was analysed qualitatively using content analysis. This contributed to making the summary of findings, answering the research question, making conclusions and recommendations of the research study.

The research revealed that blended learning, which entailed adopting different options of skills acquisition, was required in an effort to obtain the best results in developing skills of the organization's workforce. To improve the level of employees' confidence in strategy implementation process, their level of competency and empowerment would be observed. Job roles would be reviewed in order to identify areas of skills development and place the people with the right skills in the right jobs. Critical skills required for strategy implementation would be identified based on the complexity and nature of the strategy and the appropriate learning option or channel sort. Adequate and early planning for skills needed for implementation and continuous assessment of skills needed was required. Enhancing skills increased the chances for successful strategy implementation and encouraged continuous improvement and creativity for future strategy implementation. The research concluded that there was a strong relationship between strategy implementation and skills development.

The study suggests that more case studies should be done with the local organizations. The study should be replicated in other commercial banks in form of a survey and the results compared to those of this research. Other aspects of strategy such as formulation, monitoring and control and their relationship to skills development should be analysed. The study should also be replicated using interviews drawn from a different group in different organizations.

The study recommends management and executives to genuinely realize the importance of skills development as a value-adding activity in strategy implementation by involving every one in the organization and involving training professionals and all stakeholders at every stage of implementation. Furthermore, organizations must develop structures that clearly align skills development activities with strategic goals, while continuously enhancing and renewing the skills of the workforce so that they could have a pool of resource to implement strategy in the future.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background Of The Study

In the context of the rapidly changing global business arena, most corporations are undergoing revolutionary changes. These changes are due to the unprecedented competition, exponential technological development, surging customer expectations, and changing governmental and international regulations. Many corporations are in the process of radical transformation aimed at achieving the ability to respond simultaneously and efficiently to meet heightened customer requirements in quality, service, innovation, speed, and price (Das et al, 2011).

An organization’s strategy defines its unique images and provides a central purpose and direction to its activities and to the people within and outside the organization. Strategy requires to be taken seriously as a management tool not only for the firm but also for a broad spectrum of the organization (Ansoff, 1990).Proper strategy helps to shape the organizations future (Grant, 1998). Strategy is the heart of strategic management for it helps an organization to formulate and implement various tasks in its attempt to prosper (Hussey, 1991). Strategy is useful in helping managers tackle the potential problems that face their companies (Aosa, 1992).

Successful CEO’s understand the need for sound business strategy and invest significant time, effort and money in strategy development, but the real value of strategy can only be recognized through execution .The ability to execute strategy is more important than the quality of the strategy itself (Kaplan and Nortion, 2001; Martin, 2010). Inadequate skills is one of the key contributors to an organization’s challenge of strategy implementation as organizations are frequently faced with the challenge of recruiting, training, developing and retaining employees with the right skills. In other instances, implementation is not completed due to skilled staff leaving the organization. Skills development therefore becomes a key area of focus in strategy implementation

1.1.1 Strategy Implementation

Crafting a strategy for the business is a core management function. Indeed, a good strategy and good implementation are the most trustworthy signs of a good management. The standards of judging whether an organization is well managed, therefore, are grounded in good strategy making, combined with good strategy execution. The better convinced an organization's strategy and the more flawless its execution, the greater the chance that the organization will be a peak performer in its industry (Thompson and Strickland, 1992).Implementation is just as critical, if not more so, than the development of effective strategies in the dynamic hyper competitive environment of today (Atkinson, 2006; Higgins, 2005; Kaplan and Norton, 2001).

Thompson and Strickland (2003) have urged that the strategy-implementing/strategy-executing task is easily the most complicated and time-consuming part of strategic management. Chebat (1999) mentioned that given an intensifying competitive environment, it is regularly asserted that the critical determinant in the success and doubtlessly, survival of the firm is the successful implementation of marketing strategies. According to Pearce and Robinson (1991), for a strategy to be successfully implemented, it must be institutionalized -must permit the firms day to day life. The McKinsey 7-S Framework provides a useful visualization of the key components managers must consider in successfully institutionalizing strategy, making sure it permits the day to day life of the firm. It suggests managers focus on six components to ensure effective execution: strategy; structure; systems; shared values (culture); skills; style; staff.

The implementation of new strategies often calls for new human resources management priorities and a different use of personnel. Such staffing issues can involve hiring new people with new skills, firing people with inappropriate or substandard skills and /or training existing employees to learn new skills (Pearce and Robinson, 1991). Hrebiniak (2005) mentioned that many of today's top executives are far better at developing strategy than executing it and overcoming the political and organizational obstacles that stand their way.

Implementation is a hands-on operation and action-oriented human behavioural activity that calls for executive leadership and key managerial skills. In addition, implementing a newly crafted strategy often entails a change in corporate direction and frequently requires a focus on effecting strategic change (de Kluyver and Pearce, 2003).Strategic change entails the following: establishing a sense of urgency; creating the guiding coalition; developing a vision and strategy; communicating the change vision; empowering board-based action; generating short-term wins; consolidating gains; producing more change; anchoring new approaches in the culture (Kotter,1996).

Variation in implementation programmes could be determined by the degree of the uncertainty in predicting the changes the environment and the size of the strategic change required (Hrebiniak, 2005).Wheleen and Hunger (2005) noted that a change in the environment leading to a change in a company's strategy also lead to a change in the top management team. Financial services management have to contend with continuously changing conditions due to pressures from the markets, the competitive situation and the rapid evolution of Information Communication Technology (ICT) (Osano, 2009).Given the changes in the environment brought about by globalization, technology and competition, organizations would have to adjust their way of doing things by adopting new strategies, while ensuring effective strategy implementation.

1.1.2 Skills Development

Armstrong (2003) suggested that the business case of learning and training should demonstrate how training and development programs would meet business needs and the areas of business strategy that depended on the availability of talented people should be analysed. He pointed out that it was important to note the organization's strategic aims that concern, issues like, the development of a high performance culture, productivity improvement or achieving better levels of service delivery to customers that will impact on knowledge and skill requirements.

Wills (1998) mentioned that policy deployment which is a structured method of cascading corporate goals and strategies through the company was a powerful method of ensuring that training and development are carried out within the context of the companies' business goals. Wheleen Hunger (2005) mentioned that priorities change over an organization life and that successful corporations would need to select managers who have skills and characteristics appropriate to the organization's particular stage of development and position in its life cycle.

Adelesberg and Trolley (1999) suggested that executives saw a widening gap between the skills and knowledge that businesses require, versus those that the workforce can offer and as a result, there is now a virtual consensus among executives that learning must be a major factor in the ongoing strategies for business success. Management must therefore invest in skills development for strategy implementation and must be convinced that this will contribute to the prosperity and survival of the organization.

1.1.3 The Kenya's Banking Industry

The banking system in Kenya is regulated by the Central Bank of Kenya (CBK) Act (Cap 491) and the Banking Act (Cap 488). These acts are intended primarily to facilitate the development and maintenance of a sound monetary policy (Ngesa, 1989).Currently there are 46 banks and non bank financial institutions, 15 micro finance and 48 foreign exchange bureaus. The banking act was enacted in 1989 and it replaced the banking act of 1969. Prior to this, banking in Kenya was regulated under banking ordinance .This was a colonial piece of legislation, which was inherited by the government at independence (http://www.cetralbank.go.ke).

The banks have come together under Kenya Bankers Association (KBA), which serves as a lobby for the banks interests and also addresses issues affecting the members. The industry is dominated by a few banks which are foreign owned and some are locally owned. Nine of the major banks are listed at the Nairobi Stock Exchange (NSE). The CBK falls under the docket of the Minister of Finance. It is responsible for formulating, implementing monetary policy and fostering the liquidity and proper functioning of the banking industry. Key issues affecting the banking industry include: changes in the regulatory framework, where liberalization exists; declining interest margins due to customers' pressure leading to mergers and re-organization; increased demand for non-traditional services and move towards emphasis on the customer rather than the product; introduction of non-tradition players who offer financial services products. (http://www.cetralbank.go.ke).

The banking industry is poised for significant expansion, product and market development that should result in further consolidation of the banking sector. Most of these transformations have been necessitated by the changes in the environment which have forced banks to respond to them so as to remain in business.

1.1.4 Barclays Bank Of Kenya

Barclays Bank PLC is a major global financial services provider engaged in retail banking, credit cards, corporate, investment banking and wealth management with an extensive international presence in Europe, America, Africa and Asia with over 300 years of history and employs over 147,000 people. Barclays moves, lends, invests and protects money for over 48 million customers and clients worldwide (Barclays PLC Investor Seminar 2011, June 15).

Barclays Africa is the leading bank in Africa with business in ten countries in Africa namely; Botswana, Egypt, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Barclays has operated in Kenya for over 90 years. Financial strength coupled with extensive local and international resources have positioned Barclays Bank of Kenya as a foremost provider of financial services. Barclays Bank of Kenya has established an extensive network of 117 outlets with over 230 ATMs spread across the country. The bank’s financial performance over the years has built confidence among the bank's shareholders, with a reputation as one of the leading blue chip companies on Nairobi Stock Exchange (www.investorrelations.barclays.co.ke).

Barclays Bank of Kenya has continued to maintain its market leadership position in a sector that has become increasingly competitive over the years. It was the first bank to introduce Islamic Banking to Kenya and first to introduce Corporate Bond by any commercial bank. Over the years, Barclays Bank of Kenya has contributed to the development of the banking industry, financial services sector, as well as the economy overall. Industry recognition they have received for leadership include; Best Bank in Kenya – Global Finance (2008, 2009 & 2010); Company of the Year Award for Human Resource Management Practices - Kenya Institute of Management (2008); Best Retail Bank – 2009 Banking Awards; and Company that best complies with the International Financial Reporting Standards-FiRe Awards (2009) (www.barclays.com).

1.2 Problem Statement

Despite the importance of the strategy execution process, far more research has been carried out into strategy formulation rather than implementation (Okumus and Roper, 1998).In his literature, Otley (2003) concluded that literature was dominated by a focus on long range planning and strategy content rather than the actual execution of strategies on which little is written or researched. It is also argued that the field of strategy execution is considered to be less attractive as a subject area and that researchers often under estimate the difficulties involved in investigating such a topic –especially as it is thought to be fundamentally lacking in conceptual models (Aaltonen and Ikavalko, 2002). Several studies on strategy implementation that have been done in the past include: (Ochanda, 2005; Wambugu 2006; Aosa, 1992; Tai, 2007; Amati, 2008). While each of these studies had focused on some aspects of strategy implementation, none had focused specifically on strategy implementation and skills development. This therefore raised the need for further research in how strategy implementation and skills development relate.

Gilley and Maycunich (2000) suggested that most human resource development programs were not linked to strategic business goals of the organization. The researchers' further mentioned that, interventions and initiatives are implemented in a vacuum as little attention is paid to the problems facing the organization and how training and development programs could be used to address them. As a result, employees failed to receive the type of learning and reinforcement needed to improve performance.

In their research, Jooste & Fourie (2009) concluded that strategy implementation is perceived as an important but difficult component of the strategic management process and the failure of change initiatives was largely due to poor implementation of strategy. The authors also concluded that a poor understanding of the strategy among the workforce and ineffective communication of the strategy to the workforce were the most important barriers to effective strategy implementation. Skills development is thus expected to be crucial in the successful implementation of strategy .It is therefore important to investigate if an organization ensured it had the right skills to handle strategy implementation successfully.

In her research, Onyonka (2008) concluded that companies aligned their training and development programs to their business strategies to a large extent. She recommended that organizations must ensure there was a clear link between training and development programs and business strategies. A study of 51 corporations in the UK found that 71% of leading companies rated staff learning and training as important or very important compared to 62% of the other companies. Another study of 155 U.S manufacturing firms revealed that those with training programs had 19% higher productivity than did those without such programs (Wheleen and Hunger, 2005).
If implementation of strategy takes place without addressing the required skills on the organization's human capacity, its effect on positive performance is expected to be minimal. Since having the right skills is expected to enhance effective implementation it is important to find out how organizations relate strategy implementation to skills development. Is there a relationship between strategy implementation and skills development at Barclays Bank Of Kenya?

1.3Research Objectives

The objective of the research will be to establish the relationships between strategy implementation and skills development at Barclays Bank of Kenya.

1.4 Value Of The Study

The results of this study would bring out several benefits. It would add to the current scope of knowledge and theory in strategy implementation. Scholars could therefore use the findings as a basis for further research.

The research would benefit executives and managers as it would bring to light the need for human resource intervention in ensuring the organization had the right skills for successful strategy implementation. It would enable organizations realize the need for strategic fit to its human capacity level of skills and changes brought by implementing strategy.

Policy makers and implementers could use the findings to set guidelines and bench marks for strategy implementation. The findings would unfold essential or critical skills that policy makers and implementers should source for in successful implementation.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter provides reviews and summaries of empirical studies and literature on strategy implementation and skills development. The Chapter is organized as follows; section 2.2 presents the concept of strategy; section 2.3 discusses strategic implementation; section 2.4 presents strategy implementation and skills development.

2.2 Concept Of Strategy

Strategy is the direction and scope of an organization over the long term which achieve advantage for the organization through its configuration of resources within a changing environment and to fulfil stakeholders' expectations (Johnsons and Scholes, 2002). Dessler (2005) described strategy as a course of action which shows how the enterprise would move from the business it is now , to the business it wanted to be in , as stated in its vision, mission and goals, given its opportunities and threats and its internal strengths and weakness.

Mintzberg (1994) defined strategy as a pattern in a stream of decisions and actions of an organization. He defined strategy from a 5Ps approach: a plan; a ploy; a pattern; a position; a perspective. As a plan, strategy specifies consciously an intended course of action. As a ploy, it is a specific manoeuvre intended to outwit competition. As a pattern, strategy emerges in a stream of actions over time. As a position, strategy means locating an organization in its environment. As a perspective, strategy gives the organization an identity that reveals how people locate and perceive it. Mintzberg (1995) brought out a different conception of strategy where he viewed it as a pattern of emerging actions and behaviour. He stated that strategy is not a preconceived plan, but a consistency in behaviour and in a sense, strategy is not a proactive but a reactive concept; a view that may be hard to accept, but it reflects the reality of many organizations.

Strategy is the link between an organization and its external environment and must be consistent with an organization's goals and values, with its external environment, with its resources and capabilities, with its organizational structures and systems (Ansoff, 1990).A well-formulated strategy helps to marshal and allocate an organization's resources into a unique and viable posture based on its relative internal competencies and shortcomings, anticipated changes in the environment and contingent moves by intelligent opponent (Mintzberg and Quinn ,1996).

2.3 Strategy Implementation

Robbins and Coulter (2002) have mentioned that strategic management is the process that encompasses strategic planning, implementation and evaluation. In their view, strategic management process is a way of considering dealing with and realizing already formulated strategies. Pearce and Robinson (1991) define strategic management as a set of decisions and actions that result in the formulation and implementation of plans designed to achieve a company's objectives. They add that strategic management involves the planning, directing, organizing and controlling of a company's strategy -related decisions and actions that reflect a company's awareness of how, when and where it should compete, against whom it should compete and for what purpose it should compete.

Viewed from a task perspective, Thompson and Strickland (1989) outlined five tasks in the strategic management process: developing a strategic vision and mission; setting objectives, crafting a strategy; implementing the strategy and evaluating performance; initiating corrective adjustments. Kazmi (2002) notes that as a process strategic management consists of different phases which are sequential in nature namely: Strategic intent, formulation, implementation, evaluation and control. This division is intended for orderly study as in real life situations, the activities are interlinked and intertwined depending on the nature of strategy, size of organization and environmental factors by a particular organization.

Strategy implementation is one of the components of strategic management and it refers to a set of decisions and actions that result in the formulation and implementation of long term plans designed to achieve organizational objectives (Pearce and Robinson, 1997). Johnson and Scholes (2004) notes that strategy implementation is the translation of strategy into actions. It entails institutionalization and operationalization of strategies and managing the ensuing change. According to Thompson and Strickland (2003), strategy implementation is viewed as the process that turns the formulated strategy into a series of actions which result in ensuring that the vision, mission, strategy and strategic objectives of the organization are successfully achieved as planned.

Strategy implementation is generally believed to be a dynamic activity within strategic management process and the kind of organizational structure that the business adopts is expected to improve performance. Bourgeois and Brodwin (1984) emphasised that strategy implementation was classified as part of a first wave of studies proposing structural views as important facilitators for strategy implementation success.

According to Irwin (1995), implementation involves creating fits between the ways things are done and what it takes for effective strategy execution, executing strategy proficiently and effectively, producing excellent results in a timely manner and creating fits between strategy and organizational capabilities, reward structure, internal support systems and organizational culture. Pettigrew (1998); Pearce and Robinson (1997); Lynch (2000) adds that implementation includes aspects of who will be responsible for the implementation, the most suitable organizational structure to support the strategy and the relevant systems needed by the organization to track and monitor the progress. Thompson and Strickland (1989) noted that the cornerstone of strategy implementation is building an organization capable of carrying out the strategy successfully. Lawrence and Lorsch (1967) argued that the organization should be structured in such a way that it can respond to pressures for change from its environment and pursue any appropriate opportunities which are spotted.

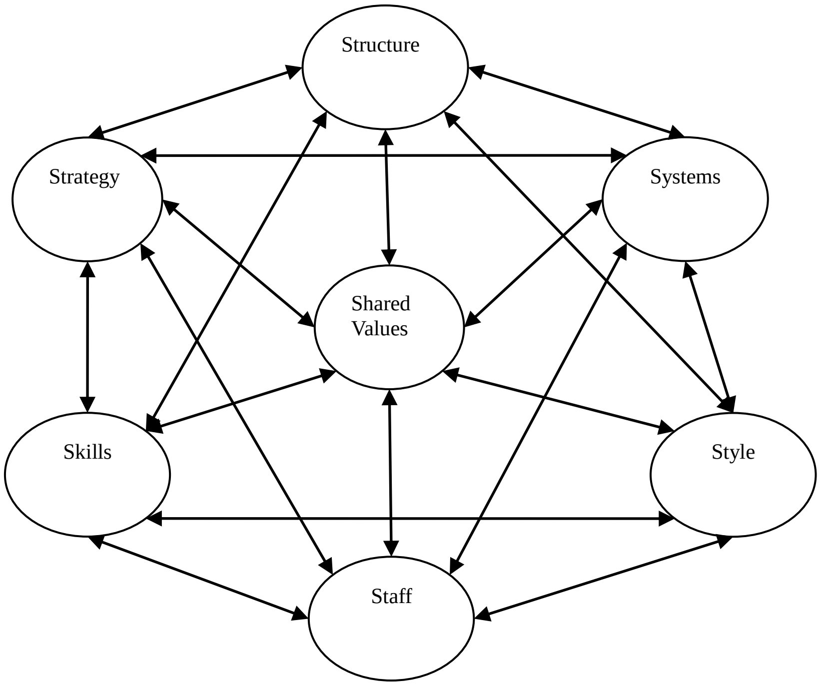
Lingle and Schieman (1994) stated that market, people, finance, operation, adaptability and environmental factors played a vital role in long-term successful strategy implementation. Christensen and Donovan (1998) mentioned that intended strategies would be implemented as they have been envisioned if three conditions were met: if those in the organization understand each important detail in management of intended strategy; if the organization is to take collective action, the strategy needs to make as much sense to each of the members in the organization as they view the world from their own context, as it does to top management; if collective intentions must be realized with little unanticipated influence from outside political, technological, or market forces. Eisenstat (1993) noted that most companies trying to develop new organization capabilities failed to get over these organizational hurdles: competence;

co-ordinating; commitment.

Implementation involves working with and through other people and instituting change. Every operational manager down to first line supervisors and every employee will be involved in some way in implementing corporate, business and functional strategies. Most of the people in the organization who are crucial to the successful strategy implementation probably had little, to do with development of the corporate strategy and therefore might be entirely ignorant of the vast amount of data and work that went into the formulation process (Thompson and Strickland ,1980).Unless changes in mission, objectives, strategies and policies and their importance to the company are communicated clearly to all operational managers, resistance and foot dragging can result. In that case, it is important to involve middle managers in both formulation and implementation process as it tends to yield better organizational performance (Wheleen and Hunger, 1995).

Mc Kinsey's (1982) framework described the seven factors critical for effective strategy execution: strategy; structure; shared values (attitudes and philosophy); Staffing(approach to staffing the organization and its overall "people orientation"); systems (administrative systems, practice and procedures used to run organization on a day to day basis, including the reward structure ,formal and informal policies, budgeting and programs, training ,cost accounting, and financial control); skills (the organizations skills, capabilities and distinctive competence); Style (how top management allocate their time and attention, symbolic action, their leadership skills ,the way the management team comes across to the rest of the organization).The 7-s framework is a simple way to illustrate that the job of implementing strategy is one of bringing all 7 S's into harmony .When the 7'S are in good alignment, an organization is poised and energized to execute strategy to the best of its abilities (Thompson and Strickland, 1989).

Fig 1: Bonding The Administrative Fits: The Mc Kinsey 7-S Framework



SOURCE: Thomas J. Peters and Robert H. Waterman, Jr., In search of Excellence (New York: Harper& row, 1982), p.10.

Implementation involves directing people to use their abilities and skills most effectively to achieve organizational objectives. Direction may take the form of leadership by management, communicated norms of behaviour from the corporate culture, or agreements among workers in autonomous work groups. To direct a new strategy effectively, top management must delegate appropriate authority and responsibility to operational managers .They should encourage employees to act in ways desired by the organization and coordinate those actions to yield effective performance (Wheelen and Hunger, 1995).

Organizing a company's activities and people to implement strategy involves more than simply redesigning a corporate overall structure. It also involves re-designing the way jobs are done. With the increasing emphasis on re-engineering, many companies are beginning to rethink their work processes with an eye toward phasing unnecessary people and activities out of the process (Wheelen and Hunger, 1995). Effectiveness in strategy implementation is at least in part effected by the quality of people involved in the process (Galbraith and Kazanjian, 1988; Govindarajan, 1989). Here, quality refers to skills, attitudes, capabilities, experiences and other characteristics of people required by a specific task or position.

2.4 Strategy Implementation And Skills Development

There is growing recognition that the most important problems in the field of strategic management are not related to strategy formulation, but rather to strategy implementation and that the high failure rate of organizational initiatives in a dynamic business environment is primarily due to poor implementation of new strategies (Flood et al. 2000). Strategy implementation has become a key focus for firms and continues to attract attention as it plays a key role in success of firms today worldwide. Johnsons and Scholes (2002) asserted that in knowledge based economies people were truly the most valuable asset which human resources policies need to reflect.

Wheelen and Hunger (1995) mentioned that the implementation of new strategies and policies often calls for new human resource management priorities and a different utilization of personnel. Such changes may mean hiring new people with new skills, firing people with inappropriate or substandard skills, and /or training existing employees to acquire new skills.

Skills refer to the distinct competencies of the organization: what it does best along dimensions such as people ,management practices ,processes ,systems ,technology and customers relationships(Kaplan,2004).Training is the process of teaching new and present employees new skills they need to perform their jobs(Dessler,1997).It is a formal and systematic modification of behaviour through learning which occurs as a result of education, instruction development and planning experience (Armstrong, 2002).

Tan (1995) and Greenhans (1987) have differentiated the concept of training and development: training is short term in nature and is designed to permit learner acquired knowledge and skills needed for the current job while development is training of a long term nature which is aimed at developing current and future employees for future jobs within the organization or to solve a problem. The fundamental aim in skills development is to help the organization achieve its purpose by adding value to its key resources; the people it employs. Training means investing in people to enable them perform better and empower them to utilize the best of their natural abilities. Employees need to be helped to their present job correctly and effectively.

Effective learning of skills is best enhanced by the creation of an environment in which employees feel that they are well-respected and well-managed. This approach, with its emphasis on a communicated vision, and on good feedback and support, has become known as high-performance working. It involves people believing in what they do, having the skills they need, or believing that they can readily acquire them. The role of training interventions to promote skills must be increasingly learner and business centric; this demands a new mind-set and skill-set for the workforce to support learning and development in organizations. Training and learning at work is heavily dependent on context (Sloman, 2011).Research also indicates that the happiest, most productive employees are those who feel empowered to work. Good leaders need to coach and motivate and then leave people to get on with it in terms of the grass roots of implementation of strategy (Dransfield, 2001).

Executives see a widening gap between the skills and knowledge that businesses require versus those that the workforce can offer and as a result there is now a virtual consensus among executives that learning must be a major factor in their ongoing strategies for business's success. The authors further mentioned that executives are keenly aware that training is but a means to learning .While business leaders are now sold on the idea that learning is crucial, some harbour serious doubts whether the training in which they invest consistently yields learning that truly helps the business (Adelsberg and Trolley, 1999).

According to Thompson (1993), several authors have discussed the issue of general managerial skills and particular strategies .Wheelen and Hunger (1995) have mentioned that after a new strategy has been formulated, different types of people may be needed or current employees may be retrained to implement it. For instance, if growth strategies are to be implemented, new people may need to be hired and trained. Herbert and Deresky (1987) contended that financial skills were important for all strategies, with marketing skills being particularly important at the development stage and production and engineering skills invaluable for stabilizing strategies. Dickson (1989) suggested that innovatory general management skills were most required in the early and late stages of the life of a business or product in its present form. He further stated that these skills were required to establish or create competitive advantage and in the case of terminal decline, to find an alternative product, service or business. These changes were best accomplished by outsiders with fresh ideas.

As quoted in Wheelen and Hunger (1995), studies show that, because priorities change over an organization's life cycle, successful corporations tend to select managers who have skills and characteristics appropriate to the organization's particular stage of development. Top management has no choice, it must search for a person with a proven capability to exercise initiative and leadership in the industry and hope that the person selected can lead other strategic managers in formulating and implementing an appropriate strategy.

Wheelen and Hunger (1995) have noted that training and development comprised one way of implementing a company's corporate or business strategy as was extremely important for a differentiation strategy emphasizing quality or customer service. Training is important in implementing a retrenchment strategy as the company has to invest in the remaining employees to ensure successful downsizing.

It is no longer enough to be efficient. To be successful today and in the coming millennium, organizations have to be fast and responsive and it requires responding to customers' needs for quality variety, customization, convenience and timeliness. Meeting these new standards requires a workforce that is more than just technically trained. It requires people who are capable of analysing and solving job related problems, working productively in teams, "switching gears" and shifting from job to job as well (Oakland, 1989). Organizations therefore need to not only hire people with the right mix of skills and experience, but also support them to grow on the job for future promotions and any changes in strategies. Skills development is thus a critical factor to the success of the organization. Practitioners therefore need to understand the relationship between strategy implementation and skills development.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter contains the research methodology and procedures that were followed in the execution of the research work, which include the research design, means of data collection and the data analysis method that was used.

3.2 Research Design

This research was conducted through a case study. A case study is an in-depth investigation of an individual, institution or phenomenon (Mugenda and Mugenda, 2003). The primary purpose of the study was to determine the relationship between strategy implementation and skills development at Barclays Bank of Kenya.

The case study design was successfully used by Mumbi (2005); Njagu (2008); Gakenia (2008) among others. It was deemed the best design to fulfil the objectives of the study and because it was expected to enable the researcher have an in-depth understanding of strategy implementation, skills development and their relationship.

3.3 Data Collection

Primary data was collected using an interview guide, in the form of face to face interviews to meet the objectives of this research. An interview guide is a set of questions that the interviewer asks when interviewing (Mugenda and Mugenda, 2003). An important characteristic of face to face interviews is the opportunity for follow-up by probing .The researcher may ask for clearer or more comprehensive explanation combined with observation and face to face interviews to allow the researcher understand the meanings that everyday activities hold for people. The face to face interview is especially useful for obtaining unstructured information (Zikmund, 2003).

The data was collected by interviewing senior managers, middle level managers and first line managers within the functions of the bank who are responsible for implementation. The managers were based in the following functions: Consumer Credit Team, Operations, Corporate Banking, Human Resources and Consumer Banking. A total of 11 interviewees were interviewed. The interview guide consisted of open ended questions covering issues on strategy implementation and skills development. This was expected to facilitate a more in-depth interaction with the respondents of the study.

3.4 Data Analysis

Qualitative analysis was done using content analysis on the data that was collected. Qualitative analysis is a research for general statements about relationships and underlying themes (Strauss & Corbin, 1997).According to Zikmund (2003), data analysis is the application of reasoning to understand and interpret the data that has been collected. Data analysis in qualitative research can be compared to a metamorphosis where the researcher retreats with the data, applies associated analytical techniques and finally emerges with the findings (Merriam, 1998).

According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003), content analysis is the systematic qualitative description of the composition of the objects or materials of the study. It involves observation and detailed description of objects, items or things that comprise the study. The variables or themes that were used were classified broadly into strategy implementation and skills development

CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS, RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the analysis, results and findings of the research following interviews with senior managers, middle level managers and first line managers at Barclays Bank of Kenya. The data analysis was designed with the intention of answering the research question of this study. The analysis of qualitative discussion outcomes was associated with the questions as per the interview guide (Appendix II). The chapter includes highlights on general information, strategy implementation, and skills development, other findings and discussions of findings.

4.2General Information

Most of the respondents were long serving in the organization with 4 to 6 years of experience and had served in their current roles of management for less than 6 years. They therefore had vast knowledge and experience within the organization. The respondents had also previously handled strategy implementation within the organization and as such they were appropriate candidates for the interviews.

The respondents were to the opinion that the internal and external operating environment would largely influence strategic change .Aspects of the operating environment that were most significant influencers mentioned were competition, customer demand for quality, technological change ,need for conformity to overall corporate structure ,the organization culture and the micro economy. For instance, one of the respondents noted that in the micro economy, inflation, political position of the country and climatic conditions significantly affected the financial lending rates and credit policies of the organization. Another respondent stated that the implementation of the Barclays Bank of Kenya mission “LiMME” dubbed as Lifes Made Much Easier and its vision “To Be The Go To Bank” was largely driven by the need to change the internal operating environment and the culture around its customers. This change had to conform across all Barclays African countries. It was generally felt that the organization continuously assessed its operating environment in order to determine its positioning and areas that needed strategic change in an effort to remain relevant to its customers, maximize returns for shareholders while remaining profitable in the long run.

4.3 Strategy Implementation At Barclays Bank Of Kenya

All respondents had played critical roles in strategy implementation .The roles played by the respondents in the actual implementation included monitoring and evaluating the implementation, providing appropriate leadership, planning for the implementation, communicating the strategy at every stage of implementation, networking, obtaining stakeholder by-in, training and development, performing market research and risk management. One of the respondents pointed out that every manager involved in strategy implementation would be involved in tracking the performance of the strategy through action plans at every stage of the implementation, in order to determine the strategy's impact and sustainability. Another responded noted that while planning, it was important to turn the strategy into a series of actions in the form of action plans and then assign the actions to skilled persons to execute and in the process track the performance of each action against plan in order to determine review areas.

A discussion of specific strategy initiatives with the respondents revealed that there were a wide range of critical factors to consider in implementing strategy. They were to the opinion that the process of strategy implementation was difficult, complex, involving and dynamic. The critical factors mentioned included having an estimate budget ,planning ,stakeholder by-in, effective communication ,flexibility to conform to broad global structure, market research, hiring the right skills ,competency and empowerment of the workforce ,monitoring and evaluation of performance, networking, top management ownership, marketing particularly cross marketing, change management, vendor management, job descriptions and setting up focus groups or project teams.

Those respondents who mentioned strategies that involved changes in the technology of the banking systems such as online banking, Interactive Voice Response system, overall change in banking platform, free ATM services and learning management system, pointed out that the most critical factor was cost of implementation due to the requirement for hiring required skills, involvement of system vendors and vendor managed trainings. However for those who mentioned strategies such as payroll loans strategy, organizational structure alignment and adopting of commission based debt recovery were to the opinion that stakeholder by-in and effective communications were the most critical factors.

According to the respondents, the organization involved a wide range of resources in strategy implementation and practically everyone in the organization including the customers were involved in some way. Those involved included top management, the general workforce, the executives, vendors or consultants and the customers. The respondents however noted that executives were not actively involved in strategy implementation as much as they were involved in strategy formulation.

The respondents were of the opinion that the organization was keen in ensuring awareness of strategy to the entire workforce and including its customers. They noted that the most sort for communication channel used by the organization to relay key messages on strategy initiatives, policies and implementation to the work force were e-mail cascades, meeting cascades and screen savers in an attempt to keep the employee continuously updated and reminded of the strategy being implemented. One of the respondents mentioned that the use of screen savers at the ATM's was not only for advertising purposes but also for increasing awareness of the strategies the organization was implementing particularly to the customers. The respondents also noted training programmes would be most preferred means of communication in instances where the strategy to be implemented was complex and required detailed explanations of a technical nature. Other channels mentioned included workshops, circulars, booklets, newsletters, and feedback sessions.

In terms of how the workforce responded to strategy implementation, the respondents were to the opinion that the impact of the strategy implemented to the employee would determine their reaction. The workforce would develop varied levels of resistance and acceptance, fear of the unknown, varied levels of motivation and varied levels of uncertainty. The respondents mentioned that employees generally wanted to know what is in it for them in the process. One respondent mentioned that the environment in which implementation is done affected the workforce's motivation level while their level of competency and empowerment affected their level of confidence and therefore determining their fear of the unknown.
There were a wide range of critical factors to consider for successful strategy

implementation as mentioned by the respondents .They were to the opinion that the timing aspect enabled meeting the requirements of the strategy and managing the budget allocations .They mentioned that the quality of the human capacity will determine the success of the implementation. These would include their level of skills and experiences, if they were engaged right from the start, if effective communication was done at every stage of the implementation and if the environment was conducive for implementation. They pointed out it was important to perform a step by step planning with clear outlines and processes and undertake an effective market research in an attempt to understand key requirements and estimates for the implementation. Stake holder by-in was mentioned as important in ensuring that commitments were obtained by all parties with vested interests to the strategy. They further pointed out that reviewing the progress and milestone at every stage of the implementation would help determine the extent of achievement, any changes or resources requirements and any risks and controls that would affect the implementation process .Respondents also were of the opinion that top leadership ownership was required to give direction on what is intended to be achieved.

4.4 Skills Development At Barclays Bank Of Kenya

The responded were of the opinion that generally the workforce acquired skills through a wide range of options. These options included on the job training, classroom training, self learning, online training, coaching, mentoring, attachments business communication, hiring and networking. The respondents noted that on the job training enabled the workforce mostly acquire technical skills, while classroom training was more oriented towards obtaining soft skills.

The respondents felt that the organization looked for learning options that would best address their skills needs and that would best have a return on investment. One of the responded commented that the organization was increasingly embracing online learning in an attempt to look for cheaper and efficient learning options .Another respondent felt that the organization encouraged the workforce to take charge of their own development by taking control of their career development plan.

The respondents noted that blended learning with a mix of different skills acquisition options reaped the best results in skills development. The respondents were to the opinion that by adopting variety of skills acquisition options, the organization was confident that the type of learning its workforce obtains would create a pool of talent and skills that the organization can resort for in periods of demand for required skills.

4.5 Strategy Implementation And Skills Development At Barclays Bank Of Kenya

The respondents mentioned that the workforce acquired skills key for strategy implementation through hiring ,classroom training , on the job training , workshops ,delegation, coaching , communication and self learning .They commented that hiring was the most sort for skills acquisition option, particularly because there was scarcity of the skill within the organization to implement most strategies since these strategies were mostly oriented towards technological change that would require sourcing for vendors and consultants who would have managed the technology elsewhere. They mentioned that classroom training enabled the workforce be empowered in understanding the strategy at high level and in a testing environment while on the job training enabled them understand the technical aspects of the strategy implemented and more so in the actual working environment. In the instance where classroom training followed vendor managed training ,there would be a high cost impact and therefore the organization referred stakeholders and trainers to be trained who were then left with the responsibility to communicate and train the rest of the workforce in order to save on cost and time. In other cases, a high level kind of training in form of workshops would be sort mostly for stakeholders in order to get their by-in at all stages of the strategy implementation. The respondents also mentioned that delegation, coaching and succession planning was an option sort for in order to ensure there were available skills in the event of absenteeism or increased workload.

A discussion with the respondents on recent strategies which had been implemented in the organization and the type of skills that were critical in their implementation revealed that critical skills required included leadership skills, project management skills, technical skills, communication skills ,financial skills analytical skills, presentation/facilitation skills, relationship management skills , market knowledge, business awareness, team management skills , procedure writing skills, IT skills, negotiation skills , decision making skills , product knowledge, innovation skills, quality assurance skills and knowledge of consumer behaviour . The respondents were to the opinion that leadership skills and financial skills were inevitable in all strategies.

The respondents felt that specific strategies required specific skills for their implementation but these skills were dependent on the complexity and nature of the strategy. For instance , from the discussions, it was felt that for strategies aligned to change in technology of the banking systems such as change of overall banking system, interactive voice response system, internet banking, learning management system, free ATM services and debt manager system , leadership skills, project management skills, technical skills, IT skills ,relationship management skills and facilitation skills were inevitable. For strategies such as working across product lines, payroll loan and LiMME (Lifes Made Much Easier), inevitable skills included, leadership skills, communication skills, analytical skills and relationship management skills.

The responded felt that, while implementing strategy, job roles were affected in different ways and their review was necessary to align the job roles to the implemented strategy. Job roles were merged while others gained added responsibilities. Job redundancy also sufficed leading to loss of jobs. Some new roles were created while others became complex demanding a review of the skills set required. In some instances physical job transfers occurred.

There were a wide range of challenges faced by the organization in acquiring the right skills to implement strategy as was mentioned by the respondents. They increasingly felt that budget constraints and time constraints were the most critical challenges. Other challenges faced in acquiring the right skills included ,work demands, competition for talent ,scarcity of skills, attitude of the workforce ,resistance to change, level of competency of the trainers ,level of clarity ,milestone review ,retention of talent, matching skills to job role, risk awareness, policy requirements and lack of stakeholder by-in. Respondents were to the opinion that adequate and early planning for skills should be necessary if the organization was to overcome these challenges.

In order to align, employee skills to the changes brought by implementing strategy to ensure sustained and improved performance of the organization, the respondents felt that the organization should continuously up skill their employees, perform role swaps or job transfers, in order to match skills to the role and encourage delegation, succession planning and coaching in order to increase capability within the organization for future needed skills. They also mentioned that the organization should perform skills gap assessment on an ongoing basis while encouraging employees to own their career development. One of the respondents noted that the use an effective reward system in recognizing best performers during strategy implementation was a way that the organization adopted to encourage learning within the organization. The respondents were of the opinion that the organization was keen in improving the quality of employees following implementation by ensuring they acquired the right skills on an ongoing basis, in order to meet customer's demand for quality service.

According to the respondents, enhancement of skills would have a wide range of benefits on the implementation process. Enhancement of skills increased the chances for successful implementation and determined continuous improvement and creativity within the organization for future strategy implementation. They also mentioned that skills enhancement enabled timely implementation as it resulted in early preparation and proper planning , which ultimately reduced costs .Another benefit mentioned was that enhancing skills would improve impact assessment as salient and latent drawbacks could be identified. One of the respondents was of the opinion that the employees would be efficient and therefore productive, as resistance would be minimized. Another respondent noted that skills enhancement fostered confidence and ownership in tackling duties and responsibilities. Further more, the respondents felt that enhancement of skills improved communication with a similar magnitude to the entire organization and encouraged best practice across the organization, giving the organization comfort that it had what it takes to implement strategy.

4.6Discussions Of Results

Osano (2009) noted that financial services management have to contend with continuously changing conditions due to pressures from the markets themselves, the competitive situation and the rapid evolution of Information Communications Technology (ICT) .This literature was consistent with the research outcome that aspects of the operating environment such as competition, customer demand for quality, technological change ,need for conformity with overall corporate structure ,the organization culture and the micro economy were significant influencers of strategic change.

Thompson and stickland (2003) mentioned that strategy implementation was a dynamic process within the strategic management process. The finding that a wide range of critical factors were considered in implementation of strategy supported this literature. The process of strategy implementation was found to be difficult, complex, involving, dynamic and dependent on the nature and size of implementation. This result was consistent with the research by Jooste & Fourie (2009), who concluded that strategy implementation was perceived as an important but difficult component of the strategic management process, and the failure of change initiatives is largely due to poor implementation of strategy. The research results also supported the literature by Atkinson 2006); Higgins (2005); Kaplan and Norton (2001) that implementation is just as critical, if not more so, than the development of effective strategies in the dynamic hyper competitive environment of today.

The research found that while planning for implementation ,it was important to turn the strategy into a series of actions in the form of action plans and then assign the actions to skilled persons to execute and in the process track the performance of each action against the plan in order to determine review areas. In addition, every manager implementing strategy would at least be involved in tracking the performance of the strategy at every stage of the implementation to determine its impact and its sustainability. This was consistent with the literature by Johnson and Scholes (2004) that strategy implementation is the translation of strategy into action plans.

The research revealed that the organization involved a wide range of resources in strategy implementation and everyone in the organization including the customers were involved in some way. This outcome supported the argument by Thompson and Strickland (1980) that every operational manager down to first line supervisors and every employee will be involved in some way in implementing corporate, business and functional strategies. In contrast, this literature did not mention that customers were involved. There was also the finding that there was less involvement of executives in strategy implementation which supported the literature by Herbiniak (2005) that today's top executives are far better at developing strategy than executing it and overcoming the political and organizational obstacles that stand in their way.

The research unfolded that a variety of channels were used to create awareness of the strategy depending on its technicality and those it will impact on. The mostly used channels were e-mail cascades, meetings and screen savers. Other channels mentioned included training programmes, workshops, circulars, booklets, newsletters, and feedback sessions. The respondents noted that training programmes would be most preferred means of communication in instances where the strategy to be implemented was complex and required detailed explanations of a technical nature. In their research, Jooste & Fourie (2009) concluded that a poor understanding of the strategy among the workforce and ineffective communication of the strategy to the workforce were the most important barriers to effective strategy implementation. As such, the research revealed that the organization was keen in ensuring awareness of strategy to the entire workforce, including its customers, through effective communication.

The researcher found that the impact of the strategy implemented to the employees would determine their reaction .Employees would generally want to know what is in it for them. In addition, the environment in which implementation is done would affect their motivation level. Their level of competency and empowerment would affect their level of confidence which would determine their fear of the unknown. These findings supported the statement by Dransfield, (2001) that the happiest, most productive employees are those who feel empowered to work and that good leaders need to coach and motivate and then leave people to get on with it in terms of the grass roots of implementation of strategy.

As the results indicated, successful strategy implementation was dependent on a wide range of factors, however the time aspect was the most important .This finding supported the literature by Thompson and Strickland (2003) that the strategy-implementing/strategy-executing task is easily the most complicated and time-consuming part of strategic management. It also emerged that the success was largely dependent on the quality of people involved by virtue of their skills and experience within the organization and their level of engagement in every stage of implementation. These findings supported (Galbraith and Kazanjian 1998; Govindarajan, 1989) statement that effectiveness in strategy implementation is at least in part affected by the quality of people involved in the process where quality refers to skills, attitudes, capabilities, experiences and other characteristics of people required by a specific task or position. These findings also supported the literature by (Thompson and Strickland, 1989) on the Mc Kinsey 7-S framework that when the 7'S are in good alignment, an organization is poised and energized to execute strategy to the best of its abilities.

The research revealed that the organization looked for learning options that best addressed their skills needs and best gave a return on investment. Blended learning with a mix of different skills acquisition options reaped the best results in skills development thus giving the organization confidence that the type of learning its workforce obtained would create a pool of talent and skills that the organization could resort to in periods of demand for required skills .Further more, the researcher found that skills acquisition through training on the job enabled the workforce mostly acquire technical skills, while classroom training was more oriented towards obtaining soft skills. The organization was also increasingly embracing online learning and encouraged the workforce to take charge of their own development in an attempt to adopt cheaper and efficient learning options. These findings supported literature by Armstrong (2003) that the business case of learning and training should demonstrate how training and development programs would meet business needs and the areas of business strategies that depend on the availability of talented people should be analysed.

The finding of effects on job roles while implementing strategy was that their review was necessary to align the job roles to the implemented strategy. In some instances, job roles were merged while others gained added responsibilities. Job redundancy also sufficed leading to loss of jobs. Some new roles were created while others became complex demanding a review of the skills set required. In other instances, physical job transfers occurred. These findings supported the argument by wheelen and hunger (1995) that implementing strategy involved re-designing the way jobs are done and that after a new strategy has been formulated, different types of people may be needed or current employees may be retrained to implement it.

The research revealed that leadership skills, relationship management skills and financial skills were inevitable in all strategy implementation cases. Further more, the skills required were dependent on the complexity and nature of the strategy .For strategies oriented towards technological change, the inevitable skills included leadership skills, financial skills project management skills, technical skills, IT skills, relationship management skills and facilitation skills. For strategies that did not involve technological change, inevitable skills included leadership skills, financial skills, communication skills, analytical skills and relationship management skills. The findings supported the argument by Herbert and Deresky (1987) that financial skills were important for all strategies. In contrast to the findings, Adelsberg and Trolley, (1999) had urged that ,while business leaders are now sold on the idea that learning is crucial some harbour serious doubts whether the training in which they invest consistently yielded learning that truly helped the business.

The research found that the organization would look for a variety of options in acquisition of the skills needed for strategy implementation. The option of classroom training was widely used in empowering the workforce to understand the strategy at high level and in a testing environment while on the job training enabled understand the technical aspects and more so in the actual working environment. For the stakeholders, a high level kind of training in form of workshops would be sort in order to get their by-in at all stages of the strategy implementation. Delegation, coaching and succession planning were options that would ensure there were available skills in the event of absenteeism or increased workload. The research supported literature by Adelsberg and Trolley (1999) that training is but a means to learning.

The findings also noted that hiring internally or externally was inevitable in acquiring skills for implementing strategies that involved technological change or were of a complex nature. Those responsible for training and execution would undergo vendor managed training and would then be left with the responsibility to train the rest of the workforce in order to save on cost of training and time. This supported Wheleen and Hunger (1995) studies that top management have no choice: it must search for a person with a proven capability to exercise initiative and leadership in the industry and hope that the person selected can lead other strategic managers in formulating and implementing an appropriate strategy.

The research revealed that a variety of challenges were faced in acquiring the right skills to implement strategy. Budget constraints and time constraints were most critical challenges. Others included work demands, competition for talent, scarcity of skills, attitude /resistance to change, level of competency of the trainers, level of clarity, milestone review, retention of talent, matching skills to job role, risk awareness, policy requirements and lack of stakeholder by-in. This was a reflection of the need to adequately plan for implementation in order to overcome these challenges. This supported the nortion by Eisenstat (1993) that most companies trying to develop new organization capabilities failed to get over these organizational hurdles: competence, co-ordinating and commitment. These findings further supported the notion by Sloman (2011) that training and learning at work is heavily dependent on context and the role of training interventions to promote skills must be increasingly learner and business centric; this demands a new mind-set and skill-set for the workforce to support learning and development in organizations.

The results of the research noted that, use of effective reward systems in recognizing best performers during strategy implementation was a way that the organization adopted to encourage a learning organization that was productive. These findings supported (Wheelen and Hunger, 1995) that implementation involves directing people to use their abilities and skills most effectively to achieve organizational objectives. The findings were also in support of (Wheelen and Hunger, 1995) statement that top management should encourage employees to act in ways desired by the organization and coordinate those actions to yield effective performance.

Gilley and Maycunich (2000) suggested that most human resource development programs were not linked to strategic business goals of the organization. In contrast to this literature, the research results revealed that the organization places emphasis on development programs that would meet strategic goals. In order to align employee skills to the changes brought by implementing strategy to ensure sustained and improved performance the research revealed that the organization continuously up skilled their employees, performed role swaps or job transfers where necessary to match skills to the role and encouraged delegation, succession planning and coaching in order to increase capability within the organization for future needed skills. A skills gap assessment would be done on an ongoing basis while encouraging employees to own their career development. The findings of this research supported the conclusion by Onyonka (2008) who noted that companies aligned their training and development programs to their business strategies to a large extent.

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a summary, conclusion and details of recommendations for the research in line with research objective and the research question. The section concludes by giving limitations of the study and suggestions for further research.

5.2 Summary Of Findings

The research found that the organization looked for learning options that best addressed their skills needs and that would best have a return on investment. Blended learning, with a mix of different skills acquisition options would give the best results in skills development that would give the organization confidence that the type of learning its workforce obtained would create a pool of talent and skills that the organization could resort to in periods of demand for required skills.

The researcher also found that the level of competency and empowerment of the employees affected their level of confidence in the implementation process and therefore determined their fear of the unknown. Furthermore it was noted that in implementing strategy, a review of the skills set and ultimately skills development, was required where job roles were affected by added responsibilities, creation of new roles or complexity of the job.

The research revealed that successful strategy implementation was largely determined by the quality of people involved in the process depending on their skills and experience and if they were engaged right from the start. The research further revealed that while critical skills required for implementing strategy were dependent on the complexity and nature of the strategy, leadership skills and financial skills were inevitable in all cases of strategy implementation.

The research found that while implementing strategy, classroom training was widely used in empowering the workforce to understand the strategy at high level and in a testing environment, while on the job training enabled understand the technical aspects of the strategy implemented and more so in the actual working environment. Hiring skill internally or externally was inevitable in strategies that involved technological change or were of a complex nature. Those responsible for training and execution would undergo vendor managed training and would then be left with the responsibility to train the rest of the workforce in order to save on cost of training and time. Training programmes were found to be the most preferred means of relaying key messages on strategy initiatives and implementation in instances where the strategy to be implemented was complex and required detailed explanations of a technical nature.

The research revealed that in order to overcome challenges faced by the organization in acquiring the right skills to implement strategy, there should be adequate and early planning for skills required that will avoid unnecessary delays, people issues, process issues and cost issues. The research found out that the organization was keen in improving the quality of its employees following implementation by ensuring that on an ongoing basis they acquired the right skills on an ongoing basis in order to meet customers demand for quality. There was also a need to have the people with the right skills in the right jobs by putting aces in their places in order to improve on efficiencies. There was a wide range of benefits that enhancement of skills would have on the implementation process, most importantly it would determine the success of strategy implementation.

The research revealed that it was necessary for the organization to continuously assesses its skills needs and develop skills on an ongoing basis .Further more enhancement of skills improved communication with a similar magnitude to the entire organization and encouraged best practice, giving the organization comfort that it had what it takes to implement strategy and therefore increasing the chances for successful implementation, continuous improvement and continuous creativity within the organization for future strategy implementation.

5.3 Conclusion

This research project has provided a comprehensive review of strategy implementation and skills development in an attempt to answer the research question and meet the research objective. The researcher established that organizations should adopt blended learning in an attempt to obtain the best results in skills development of its workforce. While implementing strategy, the appropriate learning options or channels should be sort on the basis of the complexity of the strategy, the nature of the strategy and who it would impact on.

The level of competency and level of empowerment of employees should be observed in order to improve their level of confidence in the implementation process. Following strategy implementation, job roles must be reviewed in order to identify areas of skills development and in order to place the people with the right skills in the right jobs. Critical skills required for strategy implementation must be identified depending on the complexity and nature of the strategy .However, leadership skills ,relationship management skills and financial skills would be required for all strategy implementation cases.

The research finding established that adequate and early planning for skills required for strategy implementation should be done in order to avoid unnecessary delays, people issues, process issues and cost issues. The organizations must assess their skills needs and develop skills continuously .Organizations must also understand that enhancement of skills increased the chances for successful strategy implementation and encouraged continuous improvement and creativity for future strategy implementation. The research therefore concluded that there was a strong relationship between strategy implementation and skills development.

5.4 Recommendations

Managers and executives need to improve on communication and awareness of strategy and focus on building competencies in the organization during strategy implementation phases to increase the chances of successful implementation, their visibility, importance and credibility.

Managers and executives should genuinely realize the importance of skills development as a value-adding activity in strategy implementation by involving every one in the organization. They need to also involve training professionals and all stakeholders at every stage of implementation to get their by-in to support the process to the end by working collaboratively.

Managers and executives need to ensure that structures were in place that clearly aligned skills development activities with strategic goals, while continuously enhancing and renewing the skills of the workforce, to create a pool of resource to implement strategy in the future.

5.5 Limitations Of The Study

Owing to the nature of the working conditions in the organization, it was not possible to interview managers who had tight schedules of work and on official duties. It was also a challenge scheduling the interview sessions as the managers were stationed in different offices in dispersed locations of the organization.

There were managers who had been in the organization during major strategy implementation phases who had since left and their experience could not be incorporated in the study. Some managers refused to be interviewed as they felt that the information they were to provide to the research was very sensitive.

5.6 Suggestions For Further Study

The study was looking into strategy implementation and skills development by a multinational organization. Previous studies have not been done on the topic and as such there is need for further research. More case studies should be done with the local organizations, so that, the learnings and experiences from them, can then be used by those organizations intending to implement strategy.

The findings of this research study, as a case study, were from a specific organization. As such, they did not give a general picture of the banking industry. Consequently, similar studies should be done in other commercial banks ,as a survey ,the results of which could be compared with this research study, so as to establish the following: whether there would be consistency on the relationship between strategy implementation and skills development; whether the challenges and benefits which were highlighted as affecting the acquisition of skills necessary for strategy implementation were consistent; whether specific skills for implementing specific strategies would be the same.

The study focused on strategy implementation only and left out other important aspects of strategy such as formulation, monitoring and control. The researcher therefore recommended that a survey on the banking industry in Kenya be performed and other aspects of strategy and their relationship to skills development be analysed.

This study should be replicated using interviews drawn from a different group in different organizations. For example, a sample of CEOs (Chief Executive officers) could be drawn to study their perception of the impact of skills development on strategy implementation. A study could also be designed to compare financial measures of the organization's performance in respect to the level of skills development in strategy implementation.

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APPENDIX 1: LETTER OF INTRODUCTION

Dear Sir/Madam,

RE: REQUEST FOR RESERCH INFORMATION.

I am a student at the University of Nairobi pursuing a Master degree in Business Administration (MBA). I am undertaking a research project on strategic implementations and skills development at Barclays Bank of Kenya as part of the academic requirements for the award of the stated degree.

I would be grateful if you could spare a moment of your time and allow me to interview using the attached interview guide, to help me gather the necessary information. The information you give shall be treated with utmost confidentiality and shall be used solely for this research problem. A copy of the same shall be availed to you on request.

Any additional information you might consider necessary for this study will be highly appreciated.

In case of any queries pertaining to this research project, do not hesitate to call me on Tel: 0724960310.

Thank you in advance.

Yours sincerely

Isabella Kerubo Ngoko

APPENDIX 11: INTERVIEW GUIDE

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT AT BARCLAYS BANK OF KENYA

SECTION A: RESPONDENTS PROFILE

1. Position held...
2. Department...
3. Number of years of service in the Corporation.............................
4. Number of years served in the position…………………………...

SECTION B: GENERAL INFORMATION

5. What informs the strategic change in the organization?
6. What role have you played in implementation of strategy?
7. How does the workforce in the organization acquire skills?

SECTION C: STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION

8. Think of a most recent implemented strategy in the organization.
   a. What was it?
   b. What factors were key in implementing the strategy described?
9. Who are involved in the organization when implementing strategy?
10. How do employees' respond to strategy implementation?
11. How are job roles affected while implementing strategies?
12. What considerations would you suggest for successful strategy implementation?

SECTION D: SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

13. How does the workforce in your unit acquire skills key for strategy implementation?
14. Think of a most recent strategy implementation in the organization.
    a. What was it?
    b. What types of skills were critical?

c. How did the organization acquire these skills?

15. What challenges are faced in acquiring the right skills to implementing strategy?

16. What channels are used to relay key messages on strategy initiatives and implementation to the workforce?

17. How does the organization align employee skills to the changes brought by implementing strategy to ensure sustained and improved performance?

SECTION E: CONCLUSION

18. How do skills enhance internal and external consistencies in strategy, policies and implementation process?

19. What benefits does enhancement of employee skills have on strategy implementation?

20. What other comments do you have?

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION