

**STRATEGY EVALUATION PRACTICES ADOPTED BY
INSURANCE FIRMS IN NAIROBI, KENYA**

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DECLARATION

This research project is my original work and has never been presented in any other University/College for the award of any degree.

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Date

D61/66963/2011

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

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this research project to my wife Felishina and son Samuel for their patience and understanding when I had to work at odd hours.

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First, I would like to thank God for His gift of life .I am indebted to my supervisor; Professor Peter K'Obonyo for his advice, guidance, and supervision; i would not have come this far without his help.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AKI	Association of Kenya Insurers
BPR	Business Process Redesign
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CIP	Continuous Improvement Process
ICT	Information Communication Technology
IRA	Insurance Regulatory Authority
MBO	Management By Objectives
MIPS	Medical Insurance Providers
ROI	Return on Investment
UK	United Kingdom

ABSTRACT

The objective of the research was to establish strategy evaluation practices adopted by insurance firms in Nairobi, Kenya. The population of this study consisted of all the forty three (43) insurance firms in Nairobi, Kenya which are registered by the Insurance Regulatory Authority (IRA, 2012). A list of the insurance firms in Nairobi, Kenya was obtained from the Insurance Regulatory Authority (IRA). Primary data was collected from these companies by use of a questionnaire.

The study established that 50% of insurance firms in Nairobi, Kenya adopt a formal approach to strategy evaluation while 20.83% adopting informal strategy evaluation. 50% of the insurance companies evaluate their strategies formally, 20.83% informally and 29.17% both formally and informally. The insurance companies have adopted both formative and summative evaluation. Formative evaluations strengthen or improve the strategy being evaluated. They help form it by examining the delivery of the strategy, the quality of its implementation, and the assessment of the organizational context, personnel, procedures, inputs, and so on. Summative evaluations, in contrast, examine the effects or outcomes of strategy. The companies also evaluate strategy in light of both financial and operational performance of the organization.

Key limitations included non-response of some respondents and shortage of time. The study recommends that researchers in strategic management can take the topic of strategy evaluation further by conducting a case study on one of the insurance companies in Kenya.

CHAPTER ONE : INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

All organizations operate within an environment, and to remain competitive, they have to formulate strategies. These strategies must be implemented to ensure that the desired results are achieved. Today's rapidly changing business environment is calling for an innovative approach to strategic management. Research reveals that unsuccessful implementation of strategies and lack of strategy evaluation mechanisms leads to underperformance of companies (Kariuki, 2008). Though the importance of strategy evaluation has been recognized by most authors, Kariuki (2008) notes that evaluation and control is a very challenging and complex undertaking for most organizations.

Strategic management is the set of decisions and actions that result in the formulation and implementation of plans designed to achieve a company's objectives (Pearce & Robinson, 1991). It is a process which determines whether an organization excels, survives, or dies. All organizations engage in the strategic management process either formally or informally. According to Prescott (1986), Strategic management is the set of decisions and actions used to formulate and implement strategies that will provide a competitively superior fit between the organization and its environment so as to achieve organizational goals. The strategic management role is different in nature from other aspects of management. Johnson, Scholes, and Whittington (2008) indicates that while operational manager is most often required to deal with problems of operational control such as efficiency of production, strategic management is concerned with complexity

arising out of ambiguous and non-routine situations in the whole organization. Strategic decisions deal with concerns that are central to the livelihood and survival of the entire organization.

The strategic management process is dynamic and continuous. A change in any one of the major components in the process can necessitate a change in any or all of the other components. For example, a change in economy could represent a major opportunity and require a change in long-term objectives and strategies of an organization; a failure to accomplish annual objectives could require a change in policy or structure; or a major competitor's change in strategy could require a change in the firm's objectives (Kariuki, 2008). Strategic management process is therefore based on the belief that organizations should continuously monitor internal and external events and trends so that timely changes can be effected as need arises.

1.1.1 Strategy Evaluation

The final stage in strategic management is strategy evaluation and control. All strategies are subject to future modification because internal and external factors are constantly changing. In the strategy evaluation and control process, managers determine whether the chosen strategy is achieving the organization's objectives. Rumelt (2000) observed that the product to business strategy evaluation is answer to three main questions: are the objectives of the business appropriate? Are the major policies and plans appropriate? and do the results obtained to date confirm or refute critical assumptions on which the strategy rests?

The fundamental strategy evaluation and control activities are: reviewing internal and external factors that are the bases for current strategies, measuring performance, and taking corrective actions. Strategy evaluation is the appraisal of plans or the results of plans that centrally concern or affect the basic mission of an enterprise. Its result is the rejection, modification or ratification of existing strategies and plans (Mintzberg, 1979). Hinga (2007) notes that strategy evaluation can take place as an abstract analytical task, performed by consultants, but more often it is an integral part of the organization's process of planning, review and control. In some organizations evaluation is informal, only occasional brief and cursory while others have elaborate systems containing periodic strategy review sessions. In either case, the quality of strategy evaluation and ultimately the quality of corporate performance will be determined by the organization's capacity for self appraisal and learning than by the particular analytical technique employed (Johnson & Scholes, 2001). It is evident from this that the practice of strategy evaluation is not uniform in all organizations.

According to Rumelt (2000), strategy can neither be formulated nor adjusted to changing circumstances without the process of strategy evaluation. Whether performed by an individual or as part of an organization review procedure, strategy evaluation forms an essential step in the process of guiding an enterprise. Strategy evaluation practice adopted by an enterprise therefore plays a big role in determining success of the enterprise.

1.1.2 The Insurance Industry in Kenya

The insurance industry in Kenya is governed by the Insurance Act CAP. 487 and regulated by the Insurance Regulatory Authority. The Insurance Regulatory Authority is a statutory government agency established under the Insurance Act (Amendment) 2006, CAP. 487 of the Laws of Kenya to regulate, supervise and develop the insurance industry. It is governed by a Board of Directors which is vested with the fiduciary responsibility overseeing operations of the Authority and ensuring that they are consistent with provisions of the Insurance Act.

According to Insurance Regulatory Authority (IRA) annual reports, in the year 2010 there were forty seven insurance companies licensed to operate in Kenya (IRA, 2010). The Insurance Regulatory Authority noted that in Kenya, short term insurance business (non life insurance) continued to dominate the Kenyan market with its premiums making approximately 65% of the gross written premium in year 2010 (IRA, 2010). The gross premium written was Kshs 76.9 billion with Kshs 49.7 billion being non life insurance and Kshs 27.2 billion life assurance. There was 18% growth in gross direct premiums income from Kshs 65 billion to Kshs 76.9 billion in year 2010 (IRA, 2010). Forty three insurance companies and two reinsurance companies were licensed to operate in Kenya in the year 2012 (IRA, 2012).

Insurance companies in Kenya operate under their association called Association of Kenya Insurers (AKI, 2010). This is the umbrella body which brings the current 43 Insurance companies together. The membership of the Association is open to any

Insurance company duly registered under the Insurance Act to transact business in Kenya (AKI, 2010).

A study carried out by Ronga (2008) confirms that insurance companies develop and implement strategies. Because of rapidly changing business environment within which these companies operate, they need to evaluate their strategies frequently. This will ensure that their strategies are not led irrelevant by the changing business environment.

1.2 Research Problem

Gomes (2010) suggests organizations are most vulnerable when they are at the peak of their success. Erroneous strategic decisions can inflict severe penalties and can be exceedingly difficult, if not impossible, to reverse. He recognizes that strategy evaluation is vital to an organization's well-being; timely evaluations can alert management to problems or potential problems before a situation becomes critical. Through evaluation and control process, corporate activities and performance results are monitored so that actual performance can be compared with desired performance. Gomes (2010) note that the objectives that were established in the strategy formulation part of the strategic management process (dealing with profitability, market share and cost reduction, among others) should certainly be used to measure corporate or overall performance once the strategies have been implemented. Evaluation and control information consists of performance data and activity reports. Evaluation and Control information must be relevant to what is being monitored. Gomes (2010) observes that evaluation and control are not easy activities; one of the obstacles to effective control is the difficulty in developing appropriate measures of important activities and outputs.

In the annual reports in the year 2010, there were forty seven insurance companies licensed to operate in Kenya (IRA, 2010). Although this number is fairly large, the insurance penetration has remained very low. AKI (2010) confirmed that insurance penetration in Kenya is very low. In the year 2006, insurance penetration was 2.54%, in the year 2007, 2.65%, in the year 2008, 2.63%, in the year 2009, 2.84%, and in the year 2010, 3.1%. This begs the question about the quality of the strategies applied by the insurance companies and strategy evaluation practice adopted by the companies.

Different researchers have carried out research on strategic management processes. Kariuki (2008) notes that unsuccessful implementation of strategies and lack of strategy evaluation mechanisms leads to underperformance of companies. Aosa (1982) carried a research on “An Empirical Investigation of Aspects of Strategy Formulation and Implementation with large, Private Manufacturing Companies in Kenya”. A study carried out by Ronga (2008) looked at Challenges to strategy implementation at Madison Insurance Company (K) Limited. She found that some of the challenges to strategy implementation in Madison Insurance Company (K) Limited includes; organizational culture, structure, high degree of staff turnover, ineffective communication, inadequate resources, resistance to change, lack of teamwork, and a very competitive business environment. Kariuki (2008) carried a study on Strategy evaluation and control among dairy processing firms in Kenya. Though strategic management is the same all over the world, the context in which it is practiced vary from culture, religion, industry and companies. Consequently, strategy evaluation and control practices adopted by dairy

processing firms are likely to be different from the ones adopted by insurance firms. This study therefore attempted to bridge the knowledge gap on strategy evaluation practices adopted by insurance firms in Nairobi, Kenya. It intended to answer the question, what are the strategy evaluation practices adopted by insurance firms in, Nairobi Kenya?

1.3 Research Objective

The objective of the research was to establish strategy evaluation practices adopted by insurance firms in Nairobi, Kenya.

1.4 Value of the Study

This study is of benefit to insurance companies, academicians and the government of Kenya. Managers responsible for strategic management in insurance industry will find the study useful in developing effective monitoring and control systems to mitigate challenges of strategy evaluation. The study will contribute to professional extension of existing knowledge in strategic management by helping in understanding current strategy evaluation practices. It will be used by academicians as references for further research work among other functions. The study will be important to the government of Kenya specifically the Insurance Regulatory Authority in developing policies to facilitate growth of the insurance industry and also in regulation of the insurance industry. This will mainly ensure that the Insurance Regulatory Authority does not develop policies which hamper development of the insurance industry.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

Today's rapidly changing business environment calls for an innovative approach to strategic management. Research reveals that unsuccessful implementation of strategies and lack of strategy evaluation mechanisms leads to underperformance of companies (Kariuki, 2008). Strategy evaluation is the appraisal of plans or the results of plans that centrally concern or affect the basic mission of an enterprise. Its result is the rejection, modification or ratification of existing strategies and plans (Mintzberg, 1979).

2.2 Strategic Management Process

Strategic management is the process of specifying an organization's strategies and objectives, developing policies and plans to achieve these objectives, and allocating resources to implement the policies and plans to achieve the organization's objectives. Wheelen and Hunger (2008) define strategic management as set of managerial decisions and actions that determines long-run performance of a corporation. It includes environmental scanning, strategy formulation, strategy implementation and evaluation and control. According to Wheelen and Hunger (2008), strategic management can therefore be divided into three main activities: Strategic formulation which is the process of developing long range plans to deal effectively with the environmental opportunities and threats in light of corporate strengths and weakness, strategy implementation which

is the process of putting strategies and policies into action through development of programs, budgets and procedures, and lastly strategy evaluation which is the process of monitoring corporate activities and performance results so that actual performance can be compared with planned performance.

Strategy is the direction and scope of an organization over the long term, which achieves competitive advantage for the organization through its configuration of resources within a changing environment and to fulfill stakeholder expectations (Johnson & Scholes, 2002). A strategy of a corporation forms a comprehensive master plan that states how the corporation will achieve its missions and objectives. It maximizes competitive advantage and minimizes competitive disadvantage. Johnson and Scholes (2002) notes that a strategy can be seen as the matching of the resources and activities of an organization to the environment in which it operates, and is sometimes known as search for strategic fit.

Drucker (1992) and later Porter (1997) observed that the key task of strategic management is thinking through the overall mission and vision of the business. That is asking questions; “What is our business? Where are we? Where do we want to go? How do we get there?” This leads to the setting of objectives, development of strategies and making of today’s decisions for tomorrow’s results. This must be done by those in the organization who can see the entire business, that can balance objectives and the needs of today against the needs of tomorrow, and can allocate human and financial resources to key results. The right formulation of mission statement will guide the company to set objectives and goals which will provide the basic direction and framework within which all the activities of the company will take place (Kariuki, 2008).Pearce and Robinson

(1997) note that strategic management involves attention to planning, directing, organizing, evaluating and controlling strategy related decisions and actions of the business. According to Aosa (1992), each organization's experience with strategic management is unique, reflecting the organization's distinct culture, environment, resources, structure, management style, and other organizational features. This implies that it is necessary to document knowledge on how different organizations practice strategic management.

Historically, the principal benefit of strategic management has been to help organizations formulate better strategies through the use of a more systematic, logical, and rational approach to strategic choice. Research indicates that organizations using strategic management concepts are more profitable and successful than those that do not (Kariuki, 2008). According to Wheelen and Hunger (2008), strategy evaluation and control process ensures that a company is achieving what it is set out to accomplish. It compares performance with desired results and provides the feedback necessary for management to evaluate results and take corrective action, as needed. Several scholars have advocated an alternative view of strategy making which has called in to question the traditional view centered on planning. The main criticism of the planning model are, focus on the unpredictability of the real world, role lower level managers can play in the strategic management process and lastly point out that many successful strategies are often the result of serendipity; not rational planning (Hills & Jones, 2001). We live in a world in which uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity dominate the business environment. In such

circumstances, even the most carefully thought out strategic plans are prone to being rendered useless by rapid and unforeseen change in the environment.

2.3 Strategy Evaluation

Organizational efficacy, effectiveness, and efficiency are perhaps the most compelling and important topics in strategic management and organizational theory. Kariuki (2008) notes that in the world of business, these issues are embodied in the concept of corporate performance, which includes both financial and social characteristics. Evaluating a firm's performance is a continual internal process, but it is generally accepted today that the most meaningful of such assessment are external (Kariuki, 2008). This implies that strategy evaluation is becoming a key concern to most organizations since it is the best way for managers to know whether or not their strategies are working, how the internal and external environment is changing and whether they are achieving the kind of results they anticipated.

Strategy evaluation involves examining how the strategy has been implemented as well as the outcomes of the strategy (Coulter, 2005). This includes determining whether deadlines have been met, whether the implementation steps and processes are working correctly, and whether the expected results have been achieved. If it is determined that the deadlines are not being met, processes are not working, or results are not in line with the actual goal, then the strategy can, and should be modified or reformulated.

Failure to achieve company objectives leads to strategy execution gaps (Mankins & Steele, 2005). A strategy execution gap confirms that the current strategic plans are not being executed effectively and efficiently. However, a compounding problem occurs when it cannot be determined whether the cause of the strategy execution gap is due to poor strategy, poor implementation, poor evaluation or a combination of all (Mankins, 2005). Failure to determine the root cause of a strategy execution gap greatly reduces the organization's chances of closing it and the chances of developing better strategies in the future. This observation implies that developing a robust system of strategy evaluation and control is an important component of strategic management which can help companies to know whether they are achieving their strategies, how big or how small is the strategy execution gap, what changes need to be put in place to close this gap and what needs to be done to achieve high levels of strategic performance.

According to Senge (1990), managers responsible for the success of the strategy are concerned with these questions; are we moving in the proper direction? Are key things falling into place, are we doing the critical things that need to be done? Should we adjust or abort the strategy? How are we performing? Are objectives and schedules being met? Are costs, revenues and cash flows matching projections? Do we need to make operational changes? Thus, strategy evaluation is an attempt to look beyond the obvious facts regarding the short-term health of a business and appraise instead, those more fundamental factors and trends that govern success in the chosen field of endeavor. Mintzberg (1991) notes that strategy evaluation measures whether a strategy is effective and whether the organization is efficient in achieving its objectives.

When evaluating effectiveness of strategy, success implies a strategic perspective that is right for today and developing in line with future needs, linked to a clear mission or purpose, that is communicated, understood and leads to the provision of quality products, and high level of services. Measures of effectiveness may include number of new products, harnessing ICT, using of capital for competitiveness and success. When evaluating efficiency, success implies that the organization is well managed and administered, supported by sound budgeting and control systems underpinned by a good ICT system. The measures include, sales growth, market share, return on investment (ROI), cash flow among others (Senge, 1990). Establishing such evaluation and control measures requires a genuine attempt to reconcile the different expectations of stakeholders.

2.4 Strategy Evaluation Practices

Rumelt (2000) observes that for many executives, strategy evaluation is simply an appraisal of how well a business performs: Has it grown? Is the profit rate normal or better? If the answers to these questions are affirmative, it is argued that the firm's strategy must be sound. Rumelt (2000) notes that despite its unassailable simplicity, this line of reasoning misses the whole point of strategy—that the critical factors determining the quality of long-term results are often not directly observable or simply measured, and that by the time strategic opportunities or threats do directly affect operating results, it may well be too late for an effective response. Thus, strategy evaluation should attempt to look beyond the obvious facts regarding the short-term health of a business and appraise

instead, those more fundamental factors and trends that govern success in the chosen field of endeavor.

There are many different types and tools of evaluations depending on the object being evaluated and the purpose of the evaluation. The most important basic distinction in evaluation types is that between formative and summative evaluation. Formative evaluations strengthen or improve the strategy being evaluated. They help form it by examining the delivery of the program or technology, the quality of its implementation, and the assessment of the organizational context, personnel, procedures, inputs, and so on. Summative evaluations, in contrast, examine the effects or outcomes of strategy. They summarize it by describing what happens subsequent to delivery of the program or technology.

2.4.1 Formative and Summative Evaluation

Formative evaluation is a method for judging the worth of a program while the program activities are forming. According to Scriven (1967) formative evaluation aims to provide systematic feedback to the designers and implementers. It is a disciplined approach to ensuring that a strategy is well developed.

A summative evaluation is a method of judging the worth of a program at the end of the program activities (summation). Scriven (1967) note that summative evaluation is concerned with identifying and assessing the worth of a program outcomes in the light of initially specified success criteria after the implementation.

2.4.2 Outcome Based and Process Oriented Evaluation

Outcome based evaluation is a systematic way to determine if a program or project has achieved its goals. The organized process of developing a project using outcome based evaluation helps to establish clear benefits (outcomes), to measure those benefits (indicators), clarify the individuals or groups for which the project's benefits are intended. The point of outcome-based evaluation is to establish a project's effectiveness. Outcome evaluation addresses the question of what are the results. It is common to speak of short-term outcomes and long-term outcomes.

Process evaluation is directed at describing or documenting what actually happened in the contest or course of a program. Process evaluation provides extremely useful information about what actually happened in a program. It is crucial for communicating best practice to others who want to replicate elements of a successful strategy. Process evaluation is concerned with how the program is delivered. It deals with things such as when the program activities occur, where they occur, and who delivers them. In other words, it takes the questions: is the program being delivered as intended? An effective program may not yield desired results if it is not delivered properly.

2.4.3 The balanced Scorecard

The balanced scorecard is an approach to describing, communicating and evaluating strategies. It is also a way of selecting performance measures that will drive a unique organizational strategy. The concept of balanced scorecard was originally developed by Kaplan and Norton (1992). They take the view that what you measure is what you get and they emphasize that no single measure can provide a clear performance target or

focus attention on the critical areas of the business. The balanced scorecard combines financial measures that tell the results of actions already taken with operational measures on customer satisfaction, internal processes, and the corporation's innovation and improvement activities-the drivers of future financial performance (Wheelen & Hunger, 2008). Wheelen and Hunger note that this approach is especially useful given that research indicates that non-financial assets explain 50% to 80% of a firm's value. If strategic managers are to obtain a true picture of organizational performance, financial performance must be supplemented with performance measures that indicate how well an organization has been achieving the four building blocks of competitive advantage- efficiency, quality, innovation and responsiveness to customers (Hills & Jones, 2001).

Despite its well publicized successes, some of the organizations that adopt the balanced scorecard fail to reap the key rewards they expect. A common problem is that an organization will adopt some new non-financial measures, but fail to align the measures adequately with strategy. According to Norton (1992), the biggest mistake that organization make is thinking that the balanced scorecard is just about measures. Quite often they will develop a list of financial and non-financial measures and believe they have a scorecard, this he says is dangerous. A scorecard is only effective if it is clearly understood throughout an organization. Frequently, the scorecard will be developed at executive level, but not communicated or cascaded down through an organization. Without effective communication throughout the organization, a balanced scorecard will not spur lasting change and performance improvement.

2.4.4 Benchmarking Approach

Benchmarking is the continual process of measuring products, services, and practices against the toughest competitors or those companies recognized as industry leader (Wheelen & Hunger, 2008). According to Hill and Jones (2001), benchmarking is the process of measuring the company against the products, practices and services of some of its most efficient global competitors. It is a strategy evaluation tool that uses standard measurements in a service or industry for comparison to other organization in order to gain perspective on organizational performance. One of the biggest mistakes organizations make when beginning their benchmarking endeavor is that they only look to benchmark organizations within their own industry. Although this does not hurt, they probably already know enough about their industry to know what works and what does not work. Some organizations think they must benchmark their competitor. What if competitor is worse than your organization? Instead organizations should benchmark an organization that is well known for being a good model, sometimes referred to as best practices, exemplary practices, or business excellence.

According to Wheelen and Hunger (2008), benchmarking has been found to produce best results in companies that are already well managed. Apparently, poorer-performing firms tend to be overwhelmed by the discrepancy between their performance and the benchmark and tend to view the benchmark as too difficult to reach. Nevertheless, a survey by Bain & Company of 460 companies of various sizes across all U.S. industries indicated that more than 70% were using benchmarking in either a major or limited manner (Wheelen & Hunger, 2008). Hill and Jones (2001) note that one of the best ways to develop distinctive competences that contributes to superior efficiency, quality,

innovation, and customer responsiveness is to identify best industrial practice and to adopt it. Only by so doing will a company be able to build and maintain the resources and capabilities that underpin excellence in efficiency, quality, innovation, and customer responsiveness.

2.4.5 Business Process Redesign (BPR)

Business Process Redesign is the analysis and design of workflows and processes within and between organizations. In Hammer and Champy (1993) business process redesign (reengineering) is defined as “the fundamental rethinking and radical redesign of business processes to achieve dramatic improvements in critical contemporary measures of performance such as costs, quality and speed.

Davenport and Short (1990) prescribe a five step approach to BPR. First develop the business vision and process objectives. Secondly, identify the processes to be redesigned. Thirdly, understand and measure the existing processes to avoid repeating of old mistakes and for providing a baseline for future improvements. Then identify IT levers; awareness of IT capabilities can and should influence process design. Lastly, designing and building of a sample of the new process. The new design should not be viewed as the end of the BPR process. It should be viewed as a sample, with successive iterations. The metaphor

of sample aligns the BPR approach with quick delivery of results, and the improvement and satisfaction of customers.

King (1994) views the primary reason of BPR failure as overemphasis on the tactical aspects and the strategic dimensions being compromised. 70% of the BPR projects fail because of obstacles caused by lack of sustained management commitment and leadership (Hinga, 2007). A lack of management support for the initiative causes poor acceptance in the organizations. Another obstacle is unrealistic scope and expectations, exaggerated expectations regarding the potential benefits from BPR initiative and consequently failure to achieve the expected results. Failure is also caused by implementation of generic, so-called best-practices that do not fit the specific company needs. Organizations also make the mistake of performing BPR as a one off project with limited strategy alignment and long term perspective. Another obstacle is under estimation of the resistance to change within the organization since BPR introduces a lot of changes in the processes of an organization.

2.4.6 Continuous Improvement Process (CIP)

Continuous improvement in regard to organizational quality and performance focuses on improving customer satisfaction through continuous and incremental improvements to processes, including by removing unnecessary activities and variations (Imai, 1986). Often known as Kaizen, it is essentially a small step-by-step incremental improvement strategy. It is based upon a belief that continual improvement can be brought about by a never-ending series of small changes.

A continuous improvement process (CIP) is an ongoing effort to improve products, services, or processes. Delivery (customer valued) processes are constantly evaluated and improved in the light of their efficiency, effectiveness and flexibility. Some successful implementations use the approach known as *Kaizen* (the translation of *kai* (“change”) *zen* (“good”) is “improvement”). This method became famous by the book of Masaaki Imai “Kaizen: The Key to Japan's Competitive Success.” The core principle of CIP is the self reflection of processes (Feedback), its purpose is the identification, reduction, and elimination of suboptimal processes (Efficiency) and it emphasis on incremental, continual steps rather than giant leaps (Evolution).

Continuous improvement has employees constantly questioning and evaluating the current state of work for an improved future state, design, and improvement implementation. It is essential to keep pace with the changing environment in which organizations operate today. However, unless the organization is a leader, then it is not enough to just be continuously small step improving, it will also need quantum change or major improvement to ensure it is at the forefront with the leaders in the sector.

2.5 Challenges of Strategy Evaluation

According to Rumelt (2010) the products of business strategy evaluation are answers to the questions: Are the objectives of the business appropriate? Are the major policies and plans appropriate? Do the results obtained to date confirm or refute critical assumptions on which the strategy rests? Devising adequate answers to these questions is neither

simple nor straightforward. It requires a reasonable store of situational –based knowledge and more than the usual degree of insight.

The major issues that make strategy evaluation challenging is that each business strategy is unique. Strategy evaluation must therefore rest on a type of situational logic that does not focus on “ one best way” but which can be tailored to each problem as it is faced. Strategy is centrally concerned with the selection of goals and objectives. Many people find it much easier to set or try to achieve goals than to evaluate them (Mintzberg & Quinn, 1991). This arises out of a tendency to confuse values with objectives. Formal systems of strategic evaluation, while appealing in principle, can create explosive conflict situations. Not only are there serious questions as to who is qualified to give an objective evaluation, the whole idea of strategy evaluation implies management by “much more than results” and runs counter to much of currently popular management philosophy (Mintzberg & Quinn, 1991).

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter describes how the research was conducted. It discusses the research design, population of study, data collection instrument, procedures and data analysis. This section is an overall scheme, plan or structure conceived to aid the researcher in answering the research question.

3.2 Research Design

The research design constitutes the blueprint for the collection, measurement and analysis of data. It aids the researcher in the allocation of his limited resources by posing crucial choices (Cooper & Schindler, 2003).

To achieve the objective of this study, survey method was utilized. This allowed the researcher to collect data from several research units. Though surveys have been criticized for being costly and time consuming as compared to case study, survey was considered to be applicable in this study because it allows collection of data from many units as well as comparisons within the sample and generalization to the entire population.

3.3 Population of the Study

The population of this study consisted of all the forty three (43) insurance firms in Nairobi, Kenya which are registered by the Insurance Regulatory Authority (IRA, 2012). A list of the insurance firms in Nairobi, Kenya was obtained from the Insurance Regulatory Authority (IRA).

3.4 Data Collection

Primary data was used in this study. It was collected from all the forty three insurance firms using a structured questionnaire. This instrument was considered appropriate for this study because all the respondents were literate and the number was fairly large.

The questionnaire consisted of closed questions. It had two parts: Part A collected data on respondents' personal information, and Part B dealt with strategic evaluation practices.

The questionnaires were delivered to the respondents and collected latter after completion. The respondents were the manager in charge of strategic issues in each firm. To improve on the response rate, the researcher made follow ups with telephone calls and emails to ensure the questionnaires were promptly completed.

3.5 Data Analysis

The completed questionnaires were edited for completeness and consistency. The data was coded to enable the responses to be grouped into categories.

To achieve the objective of the study, comparisons of data collected was done across the companies and the results comprised frequencies, percentages and means. Results were presented in tables.

CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS, FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

This section presents the study findings and discussion. The chapter deals with data analysis and interpretation of the research findings. The data in this study was summarized and presented in the form of tables, frequencies, means and percentages.

A total of 43 questionnaires were issued to all the 43 insurance companies in Nairobi, Kenya. The completed questionnaires were edited for completeness and consistency. Out of the 43 questionnaires issued, only 24 were returned fully completed. The returned

questionnaires represented a response rate of 56% which the researcher considered adequate for analysis. Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) stipulate that a response rate of 50% is adequate for analysis and reporting.

4.2 How strategies are evaluated in organizations

As shown in table 1, 50% of the insurance companies evaluate their strategies formally, 20.83% informally and 29.17% both formally and informally. This is consistent with literature review where it was observed that in some organizations, evaluation is informal, only occasional brief and cursory while others have elaborate systems containing periodic strategy review sessions.

Strategy evaluation is becoming a key concern to most organizations since it is the best way for managers to know whether or not their strategies are working, how the internal and external environment is changing and whether they are achieving the kind of results they anticipated. The findings presented in table 1 show that all the respondents carry strategy evaluation. This confirms that strategy evaluation is a key concern to the insurance firms.

Table 1: How strategies are evaluated

How strategies are evaluated	Frequency	Percentage
Formally	12	50.00
Informally	5	20.83
Both formally & informally	7	29.17

Never evaluated	0	0.00
Total	24	100

4.3 Participants in Strategy Evaluation

The findings presented in table 2 show that all the companies involve consultants, Board of Directors, Managing Directors, and managers in carrying out strategy evaluation. 37.5% of the respondents involve Managing Director to a very great extent in carrying strategy evaluation and 12.5% of respondents involve consultants to a very great extent in carrying strategy evaluation. The findings show that 16.67% of the respondents and 25% of the respondents involves the Board of Directors and the managers respectively to a very great extent in carrying out strategy evaluation.

As the researcher expected, some organizations do not involve all their employees in carrying out strategy evaluation. The findings presented in table 2 show that 12.5% of the respondents do not involve the supervisors in carrying out strategy evaluation. 87.5% of the respondents involve all the employees in strategy evaluation.

The findings further indicate that on average, the Managing Director and the managers are the key participants in strategy evaluation with mean score of 4.13 and 4.04 respectively. The two are involved to a great extent, with the rest being involved to a moderate extent in strategy evaluation.

Table 2: Participants in strategy evaluation

Participants	Not at all	To a Small extent	To a moderate extent	To a great extent	To a very great extent	
	Percentage	Percentage	Percentage	Percentage	Percentage	Mean
Consultant	0	16.67	25.0	45.83	12.5	3.54
Board of Director	0	12.50	37.50	33.33	16.67	3.54
Managing Director	0	4.17	16.67	41.67	37.50	4.13
Managers	0	4.17	12.50	58.33	25.0	4.04
Supervisors	12.5	0.0	37.50	41.67	8.33	3.33
All employees	12.5	16.67	16.67	29.17	25.0	3.38

4.4 Frequency of Strategy Evaluation

The findings presented in table 3 shows that all the respondents carry strategy evaluation within one year. Majority of the respondents carry strategy evaluation on quarterly basis. As the table shows, 20.83% carry strategy evaluation on monthly basis, 54.17% quarterly, 16.67% semi annually and only 8.33% annually.

Table 3: Frequency of strategy evaluation

Period	Frequency	Percentage
Monthly	5	20.83
Quarterly	13	54.17
Semi annually	4	16.67
Annually	2	8.33
Every two years	0	0.00
Never evaluated	0	0.00
Others	0	0.00
Total	24	100.00

4.5 Communicating of strategy evaluation

The findings presented in table 4 show that all the respondents communicate the results of strategy evaluation to the Board of Directors, Managing Director, managers, supervisors and all other employees. While 91.67% of the respondents communicate the results to the consultants, 8.33% of the respondents do not.

The study also shows that the results of strategy evaluation are communicated to the Managing Director and the managers to a great extent with mean of 4.25 and 4.17 respectively. The study shows that generally the respondents ensure that the results of strategy evaluation are communicated to all the participants in strategy evaluation which is commendable.

Table 4: Communication of results of strategy evaluation

Parties to whom evaluation results are communicated	Not at all	To a Small extent	To a moderate extent	To a great extent	To a very great extent	Mean
	%	%	%	%	%	
Consultant	8.33	4.17	12.50	66.67	8.33	3.63
Board of Director	0	8.33	29.17	29.17	33.33	3.88
Managing Director	0	0	8.33	58.33	33.33	4.25
Managers	0	0	12.5	58.33	29.17	4.17
Supervisors	0	4.17	41.67	33.33	20.83	3.71
All employees	0	16.67	37.5	12.5	33.33	3.63

4.6 Change of strategies depending on the outcome of strategy evaluation

The analysis in table 5 shows that all the respondents make use and apply the results of strategy evaluation in strategy development. All the respondents change their strategies depending on the outcome of the strategy evaluation. However, only 33.33% (29.17% to a great extent and 4.16% to a very great extent) of the respondents are very keen to change their strategies depending on the outcome of strategy evaluation. The remaining, 66.67% of respondents change their strategies depending on the outcome of strategy evaluation only to a moderate extent. This is very unfortunate because strategy evaluation is very expensive in terms of time and money spent and organizations should make maximum use of the results to improve their strategies.

Table 5: Changing strategy depending on the outcome of strategy evaluation

Extent of changing strategy	Frequency	Percentage
Not at all	0	0.00
To a small extent	0	0.00
To a moderate extent	16	66.67
To a great extent	7	29.17
To a very great extent	1	4.17
Total	24	100.00

4.7 Extent to which organizations undertake various tasks in strategy evaluation

This section covers findings from the specific questions posed to the respondents to determine the extent to which they undertake some predetermine tasks in strategy evaluation. The measure of central tendency (mean) was used to analyze the data as detailed in table 6 in page 30.

Table 6: Extent to which organizations undertake strategy evaluation tasks (continued next page)

Strategy evaluation tasks	Not at all	To a small extent	To a moderate extent	To a great extent	To a very great extent	Mean
	%	%	%	%	%	

Clarifying strategy evaluation and control direction to all employees	0	4.17	20.83	54.17	20.83	3.9
Training staff who are involved in strategy evaluation process	0	20.83	25.00	37.50	16.67	3.5
Making sure employees are involved in strategy evaluation	0	16.67	29.17	37.50	16.67	3.5
Evaluating whether the strategy presents consistency between organization objectives and the values of the management group	0	12.5	12.5	58.33	16.67	3.8
Evaluating whether the strategy presents consistent goals and policies	0	4.17	16.67	58.33	20.83	4.0
Evaluating feasibility of strategy in light of the available physical resources	0	8.33	20.83	37.5	33.33	4.0
Evaluating feasibility of strategy in light of the available human resources	0	12.5	25.0	45.83	16.67	3.7
Evaluating feasibility of strategy in light of the available financial resources	0	8.33	20.83	45.83	25.0	3.9
Strategy evaluation tasks	Not at all	To a small extent	To a moderate extent	To a great extent	To a very great extent	
	%	%	%	%	%	Mean
Evaluating whether the strategy provides creation and maintenance	0	8.33	12.5	50.0	29.17	4.0

of competitive advantage in the selected area of operation						
Evaluating strategy in light of the expected change in external environment	0	16.67	12.5	41.67	29.17	3.8
Evaluating strategy in light of financial performance of the organization	0	12.5	12.5	33.33	41.67	4.0
Evaluating strategy in light of overall operational performance e.g customer satisfaction, new product developments etc	0	0	16.67	20.83	62.5	4.5

As evident in table 6, the tasks the respondents undertake in strategy evaluation are evaluating strategy in light of overall operational performance with a mean of 4.5, evaluating strategy in light of financial performance of the organization with a mean of 4.0, evaluating whether the strategy provides creation and maintenance of competitive advantage in the selected area of operation with a mean of 4.0, evaluating feasibility of strategy in light of the available physical resources with a mean of 4.0 and evaluating whether the strategy present consistent goals and policies with a mean of 4.0. Training staff who are involved in strategy evaluation process and making sure employees are involved in strategy evaluation are the tasks respondents undertake in strategy evaluation to a moderate extent, having a mean of 3.5 each.

The findings in table 6 also shows that respondents also clarify strategy evaluation and control direction to all employees, with a mean score of 3.9, they evaluate feasibility of strategy in light of the available financial resources, with a mean of 3.9.They also evaluate whether the strategy present consistency between organization objectives and the values of the management group, with a mean of 3.8.Equally, they evaluate strategy in light of the expected change in external environment. Another task the respondents undertake in strategy evaluation is evaluating feasibility of strategy in light of the available human resources, with a mean score of 3.7.

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Introduction

This chapter summarizes key findings and draws conclusion relevant to the research. The study had one objective; to establish strategy evaluation practices adopted by insurance firms in Nairobi, Kenya.

5.2 Summary of the findings

The main objective of the study was to establish strategy evaluation practices adopted by insurance firms in Nairobi, Kenya. The study established that 50% of insurance firms in Nairobi, Kenya adopt a formal approach to strategy evaluation while 20.83% adopting informal approach to strategy evaluation. 50% of the insurance companies evaluate their strategies formally, 20.83% informally and 29.17% both formally and informally.

The companies undertake the following tasks in strategy evaluation: evaluating whether the strategy is consistent with organization objectives and the values of the management group, evaluating whether the strategy present consistent goals and policies, evaluating feasibility of strategy in light of the available physical resources, evaluating feasibility of strategy in light of the available human resources, and evaluating feasibility of strategy in light of the available financial resources. The companies also evaluate whether the strategy provides creation and maintenance of competitive advantage in the selected area of operation. Evaluating strategy in light of financial performance, overall operational performance and the expected change in external environment are some of the other tasks undertaken to a great extent in strategy evaluation. Training staff who are involved in strategy evaluation and making sure employees are involved in strategy evaluation are undertaken though to a moderate extent.

All the insurance companies involve a consultant in strategy evaluation but the key participant in strategy evaluation is the Managing Director and the managers. Most of the companies adopt continuous strategy evaluation, with 54.17% evaluating their strategies on quarterly basis and 20.83% on monthly basis. This is important to ensure that any discrepancy between the expected result and the actual result is determined promptly and corrective measures undertaken at earliest time possible. Although some companies do not involve all their employees in strategy evaluation, all the companies communicate the result of strategy evaluation to all their employees.

All insurance companies carry strategy evaluation. However, only 33.33% (29.17% to a great extent and 4.16% to a very great extent) of the companies are very keen to change their strategies depending on the outcome of strategy evaluation. The remaining, 66.67% of respondents change their strategies depending on the outcome of strategy evaluation only to a moderate extent.

5.3 Conclusion of the study

The insurance companies have adopted both formative and summative evaluation. Formative evaluations strengthen or improve the strategy being evaluated. They help form it by examining the delivery of the strategy, the quality of its implementation, and the assessment of the organizational context, personnel, procedures, inputs, and so on. Summative evaluations, in contrast, examine the effects or outcomes of strategy. The companies also evaluate strategy in light of both financial and operational performance of the organization.

5.4 Limitations of the study

The key limitation to this study was time factor. The study was to be completed within specified set timeframe. This put the researcher under immense time pressure. The researcher had to collect data from all the 43 insurance companies who are spread out within Nairobi and hence required a lot of time.

The other limitation to this study was non-response. Although non –response was expected due to competition in the industry, hence the need to keep information as far away from competitors, the researcher encountered immense problems with the respondents' unwillingness to complete the questionnaires promptly. Some of them kept the questionnaires for too long, thus delaying data analysis.

5.5 Recommendations

Strategy evaluation is costly in terms of time spent and the fund required. However, it is very important because it is the best way for managers to know whether or not their strategies are working, how the internal and external environment is changing and whether they are achieving the kind of results they anticipated. Insurance companies should therefore take the outcome of strategy evaluation seriously and change their strategies depending on the outcome of the evaluation. The study found that, only 33.33% of the companies change their strategies depending on the outcome of strategy evaluation to a great extent.

5.6 Suggestions for further Research

Researchers in strategic management can take a further research on strategy evaluation by conducting a case study on one of the insurance firms in Kenya. In addition, this study was only carried on insurance companies in Kenya. The insurance industry consists of many other players which include insurance brokers, loss adjusters, risk surveyors among others. Researchers in strategic management can therefore carry a research on strategy evaluation practices adopted by any of the other players because although strategic management is the same all over the world, the context in which it is practiced vary from culture, religion, industry and companies.

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APPENDIX I: LETTER TO RESPONDENTS

19th September 2012

Daniel Kinuthia

Registration Number D61/66963/2011

MBA Student, School of Business,

University of Nairobi

NAIROBI

Dear sir/Madam,

RE: REQUEST FOR RESEARCH DATA

I am a post graduate student in the School of Business, University of Nairobi pursuing Master of Business Administration (MBA) in strategic Management. In partial fulfillment of the course, I am conducting a research project titled “Strategy Evaluation Practices Adopted by Insurance Firms in Nairobi, Kenya.”

This is to kindly request you to assist me by completing the attached questionnaire. The information you will provide will be exclusively used for academic purposes.

My supervisor and I assure you that the information you will give will be treated with strict confidence. A copy of the final paper will be availed to you upon request.

Your co-operation will be highly appreciated.

Yours sincerely,

Daniel Kinuthia

MBA Student

APPENDIX II: QUESTIONNAIRE

This questionnaire seeks to collect information on strategy evaluation practices. All information received will be treated confidentially and used for academic purpose only.

Part A: Respondents Personal Information

Name _____(Optional)

Department_____

Position/Job Title_____

Company _____

Contacts_____

Part B: Strategy Evaluation Practices

1) How are strategies evaluated in your organization? (Please tick where appropriate).

- a) Formally ()
- b) Informally ()
- c) Both formally and informally ()
- d) Are never evaluated ()

2) To what extent are the following individuals involved in carrying out strategy evaluation in your organization? (**Please indicate your rating in a range of 1 to 5; Where: 1= Not at all, 2= To a small extent, 3= To a moderate extent, 4= To a great extent, and 5= To a very great extent**). Write the appropriate number in the corresponding bracket in each case.

- a) Consultants ()
- b) Board of Directors ()
- c) Managing Director/CEO ()

- d) Managers ()
- e) Supervisors ()
- f) All employees are involved ()

3) How often are the strategies evaluated? (Please tick where appropriate).

- a) Monthly ()
- b) Quarterly ()
- c) Semi annually ()
- d) Annually ()
- e) Every 2 years ()
- f) Never reviewed ()
- g) Other (Please specify) _____

4) To what extent are the results of strategy evaluation communicated to the following individuals? **(Please indicate your rating in a range of 1 to 5; Where: 1= Not at all, 2= To a small extent, 3= To a moderate extent, 4= To a great extent, and 5= To a very great extent).** Write the appropriate number in the corresponding bracket in each case.

- a) Consultants ()
- b) Board of Directors ()
- c) Managing Director/CEO ()
- d) Managers ()
- e) Supervisors ()
- f) All employees are involved ()

5) To what extent does your organization change its strategies depending on the outcome of strategy evaluation? (Please tick where appropriate).

- a) Not at all ()
- b) To a small extent ()

- c) To a moderate extent ()
- d) To a great extent ()
- e) To a very great extent ()

6) To what extent has your organization undertaken the following tasks in strategy evaluation? **(Please indicate your rating in a range of 1 to 5; Where: 1= Not at all, 2= To a small extent, 3= To a moderate extent, 4= To a great extent, and 5= To a very great extent).** Write the appropriate number in the corresponding bracket in each case.

- i) Clarifying strategy evaluation and control direction to all employees ()
- ii) Training staff who are involved in strategy evaluation process ()
- iii) Making sure employees are involved in strategy evaluation ()
- iv) Evaluating whether the strategy present consistency between organization objectives and the values of the management group ()
- v) Evaluating whether the strategy present consistent goals and policies ()
- vi) Evaluating feasibility of strategy in light of the available physical resources ()
- vii) Evaluating feasibility of strategy in light of the available human resources ()
- viii) Evaluating feasibility of strategy in light of the available financial resources ()
- ix) Evaluating whether the strategy provides creation and maintenance of competitive advantage in the selected area of operation ()
- x) Evaluating strategy in light of the expected change in external environment ()

- xi) Evaluating strategy in light of financial performance of the organization ()

- xii) Evaluating strategy in light of overall operational performance e.g customer satisfaction, new product developments etc ()

**APPENDIX III : LIST OF LICENSED INSURANCE COMPANIES IN NAIROBI, KENYA
YEAR 2012**

Reg. No.	Name	Address	Town
1.	A P A Insurance Limited	P.O. Box 30065 – 00100,	NAIROBI
2.	Africa Merchant Assurance Company Limited	P.O. Box 61599 – 00200,	NAIROBI
3.	Apollo Life Assurance Limited	P.O. Box 30389 – 00100,	NAIROBI
4.	British-American Insurance Company (K) Limited,	PO Box 30375 – 00100,	NAIROBI
5.	Cannon Assurance Limited	P.O. Box 30216 – 00100,	NAIROBI
6.	CfC Life Assurance Limited	P.O. Box 30364 – 00100,	NAIROBI
7.	Chartis Kenya Insurance Company Limited	P.O. Box 49460 – 00200,	NAIROBI
8.	CIC General Insurance Limited	P.O. Box 59485 – 00200,	NAIROBI
9.	CIC Life Assurance Limited	P.O. Box 59485 – 00200,	NAIROBI
10.	Concord Insurance Company Limited	P.O. Box 30634 – 00100,	NAIROBI
11.	Corporate Insurance Company Limited	P.O. Box 34172 – 00100,	NAIROBI
12.	Directline Assurance Company Limited	P.O. Box 40863 – 00100,	NAIROBI
13.	Fidelity Shield Insurance Company Limited	P.O. Box 47435 – 00100,	NAIROBI
14.	First Assurance Company Limited	P.O. Box 30064 – 00100,	NAIROBI
15.	GA Insurance Limited	P.O. Box 42166 – 00100,	NAIROBI
16.	Gateway Insurance Company Limited	P.O. Box 60656 – 00200,	NAIROBI
17.	Geminia Insurance Company Limited	P.O. Box 61316 – 00200,	NAIROBI
18.	ICEA LION General Insurance Company Limited	P.O. Box 30190 – 00100,	NAIROBI
19.	ICEA LION Life Assurance Company Limited	P.O. Box 46143 – 00100,	NAIROBI
20.	Intra Africa Assurance Company Limited	P.O. Box 43241 – 00100,	NAIROBI
21.	Invesco Assurance Company Limited	P.O. Box 52964 – 00200,	NAIROBI
22.	Kenindia Assurance Company Limited	P.O. Box 44372 – 00100,	NAIROBI
23.	Kenya Orient Insurance Limited	P.O. Box 34530-00100,	NAIROBI
24.	Madison Insurance Company Kenya Limited	P.O. Box 47382 - 00100,	NAIROBI
25.	Mayfair Insurance Company Limited	P.O. Box 45161 – 00100,	NAIROBI
26.	Mercantile Insurance Company Limited	P.O. Box 20680 – 00200,	NAIROBI
27.	Metropolitan Life Kenya Limited	P.O. Box 46783 – 00100,	NAIROBI
28.	Occidental Insurance Company Limited	P.O. Box 39459 – 0063,	NAIROBI
29.	Old Mutual Life Assurance Company Limited	P.O. Box 30059 – 00100,	NAIROBI
30.	Pacis Insurance Company Limited	P.O. Box 1870 – 00200,	NAIROBI
31.	Pan Africa Life Assurance	P.O. Box 44041 – 00100,	NAIROBI

32.	Limited Phoenix of East Africa Assurance Company Limited	P.O. Box 30129 – 00100,	NAIROBI
33.	Pioneer Assurance Company Limited	P.O. Box 2033 00200,	NAIROBI
34.	REAL Insurance Company Limited	P.O Box 40001 – 00100,	NAIROBI
35.	Shield Assurance Company Limited	P.O Box 25093 – 00100,	NAIROBI
36.	Takaful Insurance of Africa	P.O. Box 1811 – 00100,	NAIROBI
37.	Tausi Assurance Company Limited	P.O. Box 28889-00200,	NAIROBI
38.	The Heritage Insurance Company Limited	P.O. Box 30390 – 00100,	NAIROBI
39.	The Jubilee Insurance Company of Kenya Limited	P.O. Box 30376-00100,	NAIROBI
40.	The Kenyan Alliance Insurance Co Ltd	P.O. Box 30170 – 00100,	NAIROBI
41.	The Monarch Insurance Company Limited	P.O. Box 44003 – 00100,	NAIROBI
42.	Trident Insurance Company Limited	P.O. Box 55651 – 00200,	NAIROBI
43.	UAP Insurance Company Limited	P.O Box 43013 – 00100,	NAIROBI

Source: IRA (2012) Insurance Regulatory Authority