Linking Strategy Implementation with Organizational Performance in Kenyan Universities

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Abstract

The business environment is characterized by turbulence, unpredictability, and ever changing circumstances. This calls for organizations to position themselves in the ever changing environment the effort to remain competitively advantaged. Universities in Kenya are not an exception, and therefore have to adapt to the dynamic environment and create a competitive edge. For organizations to remain competitive they need to embrace strategy implementation which entails putting into place intented strategies towards organizational performance. This paper sought to establish whether strategy communication, organizational leadership, employee participation, and resource allocation had a positive influence on strategy implementation in Kenyan universities. This study also sought to establish whether Kenyan universities successfully implement their strategic plans and how this impacted on organizational performance. The study was conducted in 10 universities (5 public and 5 private universities). The paper studied a sample size of 384 university employees. The study found that all the four factors had a positive influence on strategy implementation.

Key words: Strategy, Strategy implementation, universities, organizational performance

Introduction

Today's organisations work in a dynamic and complex environment that is ever changing Alashloo, Castka and Sharp (2005). This compels organisations to revisit their strategic planning – of which the higher education (HE) sector is not an exception. The higher education sector has begun to recognize that strategic planning is necessary in order to maintain its own responsiveness to a rapidly changing environment. Colleges and universities have experienced rapid changes associated with increasing competition, changing demographics, funding cuts, changing technology, rising costs, ageing facilities, and stringent education laws and regulations among others. Educational administrators are challenged to anticipate changes and to formulate proactive responses that will enhance the educational processes within college and university campuses (Alashloo et al., 2005).

In today's knowledge-based economy, institutions of higher education have to position themselves to bring a positive change in the society. Strategic planning in such institutions is of great and specific importance and it gives the institutions a shared understanding of how they adapt to the education policy, environment, and develop activities for a better future (Mashhadi, Mohajeri, and Nayeri, 2008; Kivati, 2017; Ojiambo, 2009). Educational institutions in Kenya and universities in particularly have continued to play a significant role in the training of manpower towards achievement of Kenya Vision 2030. Universities in Kenya play an innovative

role in tackling the problems of underdevelopment (Otieno, 2013). Mashhadi et al. (2008) support this argument by adding to it that higher education institutions play an essential role in economic growth and development of their countries.

Universities in Kenya are required to show evidence of at least a five year strategic plan that outlines their overall development plan including but not limited to academic programmes, physical facilities, student enrolment, staff development, ICT, Research and community Service (CUE, 2014). The Universities Act, 2012 also outlines that a university shall ensure sustainability and adoption of best practices in management and institutionalization of checks and balances.

Literature Review
According to Hitt, Keats, & DeMarie (1998), business world is entering into a new frontier characterized by rapid, unpredictable change and substantial uncertainty that are transforming the nature of competition. They add that success in today's business world calls for new managerial mindsets that emphasize global markets, strategic fiexibility, and the ability to tolerate and harness change. Furthermore, the time frames of all strategic actions are significantly being reduced (Hitt et al., 1998). This new business setting requires new forms of managerial thinking and organizational structures, global mindsets, considerable strategic and structural flexibility, and innovative methods for implementing strategies. A scientific reawakening will bring about the rise of new industries, change how businesses compete, and possibly transform how companies are managed (Pascale, Millemann, & Gioja, 2000). Business strategy has entered the aptly named market-driven era because of its central focus on the market as the basis for strategy design and implementation (Cravens, Greenley, Piercy, & Slater, 1998; Day, 1994). In order to cope with these dynamic changes for the strategic management field, more research is needed in this field (Okumus, 2001).

Lewa et al. (2009) point out that, the education sector in Kenya has since the year 2003 embarked on plans to institute reforms at all levels. Universities' leadership is faced by strategic questions in evaluating their present and future operations. In the face of changing environment, university leaders are asking themselves, where are we now? Where do we want to go? How do we get there? This requires development of a strategic direction and implementation of strategies that will enable the universities to move to their desired future states. Therefore, universities must engage in practical strategic planning. The process of strategic planning leads to strategic plans that require execution or implementation.

Ogaja and Kimiti (2016) argue that many public universities in Kenya have failed to implement well thought out strategies. Literature indicates that numerous studies acknowledge that strategies frequently fail not because of inadequate strategy formulation, but because of insufficient implementation of tactical decisions.

Strategy implementation

According to Pearce and Robinson (2009) strategic management is defined as "the set of decisions and actions that result in the formulation and implementation of plans designed to achieve a company's objectives." Strategy implementation is a very important stage in strategic management process. Several authors assert that without strategy implementation, the whole process of strategic planning will be in vain (Njoroge, Machuki, Ongeti, and Kinuu, 2015). A great strategy without strong implementation is useless (Finnie, 1997). Sterling (2003) once said, "Effective implementation of an average strategy beats mediocre implementation of a great strategy every time." Myrna, (2012) posits that just as a rolling stone gathers no moss, a strategic plan that's actually used will gather no dust. Too often, companies devote time and energy to developing strategic plans, only to never look at them again once they have been printed out.

According to Aaltonen and Ikavalko (2002), strategy implementation has attracted much less attention in strategic and organizational research than strategy formulation and planning. Alexander (1991) as cited by Aaltonen and Ikavalko (2002) argues that, strategy implementation is less glamorous than strategy formulation. People overlook it because of the belief that it is easy to do. People are not exactly sure of what strategy implementation includes and where it begins and ends. Speculand (2011) argues that leaders must admit that strategy implementation is extremely difficult and they habitually underestimate its challenges. Implementing strategy is just as tough as crafting the right strategy. When leaders start to appreciate that formulating and implementing strategy are equal challenges, then they will easily start to pay more attention to strategy implementation. Many leaders delagate their implementation responsibilities and do not follow through on their actions. When leaders stop paying attention to implementation, the staffs also relax and that is the beginning of its failure.

Strategy Communication and Strategy Implementation

Scholey (2005) points out that, the implementation of a good strategy is not given equal attention as the formulation of the strategy. Strategy implementation is less addressed in the world of business today. This has led to business failure and disappointments. Companies that have good strategies repeatedly are faced with disappointing results simply because a good strategy has no meaning if it is not executed. Strategy implementation suffers from one major ingredient, communicating and defining the strategy in a way that the employees can understand and run with.

According to Watson (2005), policy deployment requires organizations to share the direction, goals, from top management to employees, and for each unit of the organization to function according to the plan. The approach is participative where the organization employs two way communication, both top-bottom and bottom-top communication. Allio (2012) points out that,

organizations should communicate the purpose of its strategy, and the expected process for its use often, to multiple levels of staff within the organization, both to educate and to socialize its use. Consider sharing dashboard elements with other critical stakeholders as well.

Forman and Arngeti (2005) point out that a company can build competitive advantage by managing communications so as to influence the interpretations and perceptions of the constituents. Again, a company can create competitive advantage by socializing its constituents to its own culture and can use communication to form long-term relationships with its constituents who shape the organization's image and reputation. There is a close link between corporate communication and corporate strategy. Using corporate communication is a management strategy by itself because it involves determining which constituencies are important and what information they need (Forman & Arngeti, 2005).

According to Cocks (2010), strategy communication should make it clear what people need to achieve as individuals and as teams, measure performance against their targets, provide feedback on that performance and reward based on the result. If an organization does not communicate its position and future strategy to all its employees, and employees do not recieve and accept that communication, this will create perception gaps leading to failure in strategy implementation. Communication channels need to be highly visible using scorecards, dashboards, flowcharts, and the tools for problem solving and project management. According to Allio (2008), the process of strategic planning in many firms is compromised from onset because the management team is not able to put together all issues and oppotunities the firm faces. As a result, managers make impulsive decisions on how to best allocate resources, respond to competition, and sieze opportunities in the market.

On the other hand, decision-makers in high competitive firms gather critical information. They capture and share a variety of information on the firm, its markets, the industry, and the environment, then translate these data into a useful manner (Allio, 2008). By possessing such useful data, management team conducts a far much better process of strategic analysis, enabling the formulation of a strategy that can be presented in a budget. Good strategic information plays an important role in the last two steps of the process, i.e strategy implementation and performance tracking (Allio, 2008). According to Allio (2008), when the management team begins the process of strategy formulation, the goal is to produce an informative view of the dynamics of the firm's internal and external operating environment. High performing managers structure a succinct, accessible, and informing databank. They also build a common language and a shared goal. Successful managers also involve a cross-functional team of managers who actively assess what is relevant.

Rajasekar (2014) argues that, the competitive space in which organizations operate is difficult to define because it is emergent and continuously changing. In such a changing environment, the traditional militaristic view of strategy that has dominated thinking in the field of Strategic

Management is unhelpful. For knowledge-intensive companies, strategy should have a behavioural dimension to guide knowledge workers rather than providing a directive strategic plan. This will present a different conceptualization of strategy and a framework that will link vision-based strategy to day-to-day management.

According to Rajasekar (2014), since organizations are operating in turbulent environments, they need to understand the conditions under which they compete and create novel approaches to meet these new demands. The traditional models, theories, and assumptions that accompany the process of strategic planning are no longer valid. A knowledge-based theory of the firm should be developed to deal with the central ingredient of knowledge. This is occasioned by the fact that there is no single set of assumptions that are valid for all organizations in all situations.

Holloway (2009) argues that organizations need not to present their strategies as numbers, or frameworks, or even a rhetoric narrative but as something concrete. Organizations should embrace design thinking where an organization could come up with a prototype. Design thinking enables organizations to come up with tangible strategies. Design thinking approach produces prototype that can be used for communication, alignment, and specifications to provide clarity and transparency during the finding of solution. Design thinking approach also encourages teams to create "project war rooms", and to work visually using pictures, diagrams, sketches, video clips, photographs, and artifacts collected from their research to create impressive work environments that allow the team to gain deeper understanding of the customer needs.

According to Allio (2012), corporations give different names to the performance management tool they use to display data, such as dashboards, scorecard, or report card. Recently, more corporations that are determined to improve the implementation of their strategy have sought to devise a dashboard specifically designed to track key performance indicators. To realize full potential of the dashboard, leaders need to craft a broader process that changes how the dashboard is designed, positioned and deployed across the organization.

The Role of Organizational Leadership in Strategy Implementation

Leadership has been defined as a process by which a person influences others to accomplish an objective and directs the organization in a way that makes it more cohesive and coherent Kiptoo and Mwirigi (2014). Leaders carry out this process by applying their leadership attributes, such as beliefs, values, ethics, character, knowledge, and skills in order to guide and drive the organization. It's important to note that leaders are expected to be mentors who can be dependent on by the people they are leading. This means that leaders should exercise skills so that people will be able to appreciate their leadership skills (Kiptoo and Mwirigi, 2014).

Rajasekar (2014) posits that poor leadership is one of the main barriers to successful strategy implementation. The chief executive officer (CEO) and top management must understand and

drive the various functions and priorities within the organization. One key challenge in successful strategy implementation is making employees' buy-in and directing their capabilities and business understanding toward the new strategy. Therefore, the need for competent leadership supersedes any other factor. Beer and Eisenstat (2000) approached this issue from a different angle; they argued that with poor leadership, conflicting priorities will lead to poor coordination and employees will not trust top management. They referred to poor coordination across functions and inadequate top-bottom leadership skills and development as killers of strategy implementation. They added that relatively low leadership involvement in strategy implementation leads to partial strategy success.

Rajasekar (2014) points out that the leadership style in any given organization influences how the chosen strategies will be implemented. Leadership style in a particular organization influences organizational structure, delegation of responsibilities, freedom of managers to make decisions, and the incentives and rewards systems. The most important point to note here is that effective leadership is a key ingredient in the successful implementation of strategies in any given organization.

Zaribaf and Bayrami (2010) put leadership's importance into three key role categories: managing the strategic process, managing relationships, and managing manager training. Rajasekar (2014) identified the key responsibilities of a leader as; coordination of activities, streamlining of processes, aligning the organizational structure, and keeping employees motivated and committed to strategy implementation. The role of the board is to ensure consistency among resource allocation, processes, and the firm's intended strategy. Another aspect of effective leadership comprises enhancing effective communication within the organization. Blocked vertical communication has a negative effect on a business's ability to implement and refine its strategy (Beer and Eisenstat, 2000).

Nahavandi and Malekzadeh (1993) point out that, leader personality and processes can affect strategy. These processes involve various cognitive and behavioural aspects that leaders use to design and implement strategy. The leader can affect strategy through direct decision or through allocation of resources, nurturing of organizational culture that promotes the strategy, and establishment of structures that support desired results and stop the undesirable ones. Successful strategic planning implementation requires a large commitment from executives and senior managers, whether the strategic planning is occurring in a department or in a complete organization (Kibicho, 2015).

Brumm and Drury (2013) point out that, one of the most important competencies of a leader is the ability to plan the direction one is leading. Leaders should be great strategic planners, defining the course of action for the followers. Leaders should also be good at leading and enabling their followers. Such enabling is called empowering and it means creating conditions

for employees to share power and meaning. According to Brumm and Drury (2013), leader's behaviour can empower followers, though some leaders do not empower their employees and thus the organization incurs the cost of powerless employees. Leaders can develop followers by building a relationship of cooperation and mutual influence. Leaders need to listen well to followers, seek their input and follow-up and take action. Leaders develop followers by good behaviour examples, developmental experiences, constructive work, and an environment that is conducive, caring, ethical, and strengths-based. Brumm and Drury (2013) argue that, followers should engage in the leadership-followership process and actively work together with the leader towards organizational goals. Leaders should seek to empower their employees to be successful and effective followers.

Employee Participation in Strategy Formulation and Implementation

According to Sofijanova and Chatleska (2013), employee participation entails a process of involvement and empowering employees in order to give their input for stellar individual and organizational performance. Involvement means employee participation in decision making and problem solving, and increased autonomy in work processes. This makes employees to be more motivated, more committed, more productive and more satisfied with their work. Basic dimensions of involvement are: employee participation (as individuals or in teams), empowerment and self-managed teams. Employee participation is a management initiative that gives employees the opportunity to discuss issues relating to their work and influence managerial decisions while the management reserves the right to govern. Employee involvement enables the organization to have a better insight about the way of functioning and where it can potentially make improvements that would be beneficial for both, the organization and the employees (Sofijanova & Chatleska, 2013).

Staff involvement in strategic decisions is important in every organization since the staffs are supposed to be directly involved in the implementation of strategies (Wairimu & Theuri, 2014). Johnson and Scholes (2002) state that all employees should be involved in decision making throughout the organization in order the planning process to be part of organizational reality. Henry (2008) states that employees may not own strategy that is from senior management only without their input. Kivuva (2015) asserts that employee involvement in strategy implementation has immense benefits that can be experienced in an organization. In order to gain a competitive edge in a dynamic business environment it is thus important for managers to engage and involve employees in strategic decisions and effectively steer through challenges. Since employees are the engine that drives productivity and results, they play an important role in strategy implementation.

Employee involvement makes advantage of the employees' abilities to enhance the processes unlike what top-down management can do. In order to successfully implement strategies it is imperative to ensure employees are highly motivated, committed and empowered in order to

achieve intended targets. A participatory managed work environment is one that provides ongoing training, skills development, and professional enrichment and mentoring to employees at all levels. This in turn ensures smooth implementation of organization strategies in a receptive environment.

Organizations should involve their employees in strategic decision making process directly. This helps employees to see what it means for them personally and what their role in strategic planning entails. Strategy formulation and strategy implementation form part of the strategic planning process which is often organized in the form of task forces involving teams of people organized to work on a particular strategic issue over a defined period of time (Johnson & Scholes, 2002). Henry (2008) asserts that it is important that everyone in the organization understands where it is going and how it will get there during the process of strategy formulation and implementation.

Calfee (2006) argues that most organizations consult a few members for information during strategy formulation. Accordingly, and over time, organizations realized that this approach was faulty. With limited input into the final strategy, company managers tended to ignore, half-heartedly support, or sometimes undermine strategies from which they were not involved and they failed to understand and accept. Some more thoughtful companies began to see benefits in greater involvement in strategy formulation by those senior managers ultimately responsible for executing it.

According to Kohtamaki, Kraus, Makela, and Ronkko (2012) point out that, participative strategic planning increases personnel understanding of the company's purpose and strategic targets, clarifies why strategies are implemented, and creates a sense of shared purpose for employees. Clarifying and explaining strategies and involving personnel in the strategic planning process have been argued and shown to increase personnel commitment to strategy implementation. Increased personnel commitment enables more rapid strategy implementation and improves both the strategy-environment fit and consequently company performance. Organizational learning enables employees to target their learning to support its company in its strategic initiatives. Better learning capabilities enable companies to better adapt to changes in the business environment and hence can improve business performance (Kohtamaki et al., 2012).

A study by Al-Kandi, Asutay and Dixon (2013) on three strategic cases indicated that employee involvement occurred when the strategic decision was made by top management (decision makers), although the people who implement the strategy (implementers) were also clearly involved in this process and their number is probably greater than those who actually made the decision. Therefore, their initial responsibility, besides involvement, is to map and design the strategic plan for the entire project, including the roles, responsibilities, goals, and objectives. The involvement process for all managers and implementers on all organizational levels is

perceived as a crucial factor in the implementation process and it is of paramount importance for successful implementation (Al-Kandi, Asutay & Dixon, 2013).

Actual employee involvement could thus result in the coordination of top management, interest groups, and managers within the organization itself, to decide exactly how to implement the strategic decision, thereby allowing focus to be placed on effective implementation, which can in turn help to minimize potential conflicts and any resistance to change. The involvement of managers and their staff in the strategic decision-making, alongside their provision with an explanation as to why it has been made an entire process and combined with other initiatives such as promotion and rewards, would highlight the desired outcomes of the strategic decision, in that implementers would focus, desire, and work as a team towards achieving success. Managers have to be involved at all levels and maintain focus during the implementation processes (Al-Kandi, Asutay & Dixon, 2013).

Fulmer (1990) argues that human resources management plays an important role in making strategy implementation a success. Organizations' departments and their employees should be enthusiastic about the strategy implementation process. This means getting people involved and establishing a motivating reward system will have a positive influence on strategy implementation.

Resource Allocation and Strategy Implementation

Strategy implementation plans can be curtailed by lack of commitment by key managers, lack of commitment on resources, or ineffective management structure. CEOs believe it is the duty of the managers to implement the strategy and do not follow up on strategy implementation (Hanley, 2007). Getz and Lee (2011) argue that organization leaders reveal and share the new strategy with great fanfare but thereafter many organizations discover that they have not made progressive achievements as predicted by their strategies. "The reason for missing strategic goals is that leaders do not invest the same amount of time, energy, and resources in managing the implementation of the strategy as they do in setting the strategy" (Getz & Lee, 2011).

Firm's resources, capabilities, and competencies facilitate the development of sustainable competitive advantages. The primary argument is that firms hold heterogeneous and idiosyncratic resources (defined broadly here to include capabilities) on which their strategies are based. Competitive advantages are achieved when the strategies are successful in leveraging these resources (Hitt *et al.,* 2001; Mango, 2014). Mango (2014) postulate that allocation of resources has influence on execution of management's sanction plans. Poor resource allocation is one of the main reasons for unsuccessful strategy implementation. Ongeti (2014) postulates that resources can be generally classified into three categories: tangible, intangible and human. However, resources are not able to be productive on their own. Resources are not only inputs in the productive processes, they also render services. Newbert (2008) posits that a company will

not create competitive advantage if it does not possess capabilities for resource exploitation even if it possesses a number of resources.

Capabilities are the abilities of a firm to combine all resources for stellar performance (Pearce et al, 2012). Firms that are not able to creatively bundle and leverage their resources for value creation for their customers suffer performance shortfalls. Capabilities give sustainable competitive advantage and also long term performance since new resource configurations are always assured as markets collide, emerge, split, evolve and die. Differences in performance of organizations may be explained by how differently organizations put together their resources.

According to Watson (2005), Organizations that aspire to achieve their long-term goals plan their work and work their plan. If organizations want to realize their strategies and long-term vision, they have to be disciplined in setting direction and implementing that direction through effective use of their resources. This method is called policy deployment. Policy deployment is a strategic direction setting formula. It describes how strategy flows from vision to implementation in the place of work by collaboration and linkages with management methods such as management review and performance self-assessment. Policy deployment uses the approach of linking strategy development, measurement and management of operations. This approach links strategy with operations and people processes of an organization.

Watson (2005) argues that, policy deployment adopts a system that aligns the actions of its people to harmonize the actions of each function in order to create organizational value for its customers. The bottom-line is that the most appropriate way to achieve desired results for an organization is for all employees to understand the strategic direction the organization has taken and get involved in design methodology of achieving the results. Employees should be able to measure their processes and monitor them for continuous improvement and to fill the existing gaps towards the strategic goals. Kibicho (2015) Posits that, strategy implementation includes designing the organization's structure, allocating resources, developing information and decision process, and managing human resources, including such areas as the reward system, approaches to leadership, and staffing.

Strategy Implementation and Organizational Performance

A carefully prepared and solid strategic plan is no longer enough to ensure profitable success. It should link virtually every internal and external operation of an organization with a focus on customer needs (De Feo and Janssen, 2001). According to Davenport (2007), creating a brilliant strategy is not superior to executing it successfully. Execution is critical to organizational success, thus a carefully and well planned approach to execution leads to attainment of strategic goals. Therefore, in order to achieve intended results, good strategies should be properly implemented. Implementing a strategy is as important, or even more important, than developing the strategy (Buuni *et al.,* 2015). The critical actions of strategy implementation make a strategic

plan stop being a document that lies on the shelf. This is realized through adopting actions that drive business growth. The purpose of a strategic plan is to provide a roadmap for the business to pursue a specific strategic direction and set of performance goals, deliver customer value, and be successful. However, this is just a plan that just provides a roadmap and doesn't guarantee that the desired performance is reached any more rather than having a roadmap that guarantees the traveler arrives at the desired destination. This means, a strategy only becomes relevant when it is implemented.

According to Ibrahim, Sulaiman, Kahtani, and Jarad (2012), previous research on organizational performance revealed that organizations that implement their strategies effectively also perform better than organizations that lack in implementing their strategies. Firms which implement strategic planning achieve better performances than those that don't implement (Al-Kandi *et al.,* 2013). Strategic management process is important for a firm's success since it enables a firm to define a future direction, provides the means to achieve its mission, and ultimately leads to value creation (Porth, 2003). Powell (1992) also indicates that firms whom adopt strategic management generally improve their performance. One of the most important management's tasks is to constantly search for the best strategy to enhance performance.

Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive cross-sectional design since it was conducted once and represented a snap shot of one point in time. The study covered ten universities (five public universities and five private universities) out of the seventy universities in Kenya. The universities were selected using criterion-based sampling. This sampling design was adopted because one may learn a great deal by focusing in depth on understanding a small number of carefully selected sample than by gathering standardized information from a large, statistically representative sample of the population (Patton, 1990). The researcher used preliminary information to judge which universities could be holding relevant information. Mainly, those universities that had earlier implemented a strategic plan had more relevant information for this research. The public universities included University of Nairobi, Kenyatta University, Egerton University, Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology, and Multimedia University of Kenya. The private universities included Kabarak University, United States International University, Daystar University, Africa Nazarene University, and Africa International University. The sample size for this study was 383 university employees.

The study used primary data which was quantitative in nature. The data was collected using a semi-structured questionnaire which was formulated guided by the research objectives. Closed ended questions were developed guided by the concepts of this study, theory and other previous studies to harness divergence of views from various respondents. A five point Likert scale ranging from 1= not at all to 5 = very large extent or 1= strongly disagree to 5= strongly agree

was used to address some of the items. Likert scale questions were most frequently used in the study. It is used to test a respondent's opinion, perception or attitude. Likert scale exhibits favorable perception on one extreme and unfavorable perception on the other towards an aspect of study. The instrument was administered to senior officers in the universities through drop and pick method.

Validity is the extent to which differences found within a measuring instrument reflect true differences among those being tested (Kothari, 2004; Cooper and Schindler, 2006). The instrument's validity is said to be good if it contains a representative sample of the universe subject matter. This study performed content and construct validity tests. Content validity measures the extent to which the instrument adequately covered the investigative questions in the study. A pilot study was conducted at Pan Africa Christian (PAC) University to pre-test the validity of data collection instruments. Content validity was tested by use of a panel of lecturers from Kabarak University. Data analysis was done using descriptive statistics where mode and Chi-Square tests were conducted. Descriptive statistics present respondents' opinion on subject matter under study. Respondents were asked to give their opinions on whether strategy communication, organizational leadership, employee participation, and resource allocation had a positive influence on strategy implementation. This qualitative data was treated as descriptive data where respondents' opinions were analyzed and presented as research findings.

Results and Discussions

Strategy Communication and Strategy Implementation
To understand how strategy communication influenced strategy implementation, respondents were asked four questions to determine the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with how strategy communication affects strategy implementation. The results obtained are presented in table 1 below.

Table 1: Strategy Communication

Variables indicators	S D	D	N S	A	S A	χ^2	$p > \chi^2$
University leadership communicated to its staff the existence of a strategic plan and its contents	1.09%	5.8%	13.04%	47.1%	32.97%	208.5	<0.0001
Proper strategy communication led to successful strategy implementation	1.09%	8.7%	19.93%	52.9%	17.39%	217.3	<.0001
Effective Strategy communication led to improved company image	0.72%	15.58%	36.96%	34.42%	12.32%	130.49	<.0001
University leadership trained its staff on implementation of the strategic plan	4.35%	18.12%	35.14%	30.8%	11.59%	91.79	<.0001

Notes: SD=Strongly Disagree, D=Disagree, NS=Not Sure, A=Agree, SA=Strongly Agree
Source: Research Data, 2017

The first question was on communication of strategic plan to staff by university leadership. The results show that 47.1% of the respondents agreed while 32.97% strongly agreed with the statement that university leadership communicated to its staff on existence of a strategic plan and its contents. Very few (5.8%) disagreed while 1.09% strongly disagreed. Only 13.04% remained neutral. The second question sought to investigate respondents' opinion on whether proper strategy communication led to successful strategy implementation. Majority of respondents (52.9%) agreed while 17.39% strongly agreed with this statement. Results show that 8.7% of the respondents disagreed while 1.09% strongly disagreed. Only 19.93% were not sure. The χ^2 test for the item shows that the variable item is significant at p<0.0001.

When asked whether they thought effective strategy communication led to improved company image, 36.96% of respondents were not sure while 34.42% agreed. Results show that 12.32% strongly agreed while 15.58% disagreed. Only 0.72% strongly disagreed. The last question sought to investigate respondents' opinion on whether university leadership trained its staff on strategy implementation. Results show that 35.14% of the respondents were not sure while 30.8% agreed with the statement university leadership trained its staff on implementation of the strategic plan. Results show that 11.59% strongly agreed while 18.12% disagreed. Only 4.35% strongly disagreed. The p<0.0001 indicates that the variable item is significant.

Results imply that communication of strategic plan plays a key role in ensuring its full implementation. These results are advanced by Allio (2012) who points out that organizations should communicate the purpose of its strategy, and the expected process for its use often, to multiple levels of staff within the organization, both to educate and to socialize its use. The results again are supported by Cocks (2010) who argues that strategy communication should make it clear what people need to achieve as individuals and as teams, measure performance

against their targets, provide feedback on that performance and reward based on the result. He adds that if an organization does not communicate its position and future strategy to all its employees, and failure of that communication to be received and accepted by them will create perception gaps, leading to failure in strategy implementation.

According to Watson (2005), policy deployment requires organizations to share the direction, goals, from top management to employees, and for each unit of the organization to function according to the plan. The approach is participative where the organization employs two way communication, both top-bottom and bottom-top communication. On the other hand, decision-makers in high competitive firms gather critical information. They capture and share a variety of information on the firm; its markets, the industry, and the environment, then translate these data into a useful manner (Allio, 2008).

Organizational Leadership and Strategy Implementation

To understand how organizational leadership impacted strategy implementation, respondents were asked four questions on the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with how university leadership affects strategy implementation. The results obtained were as presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Organizational Leadership

Variable indicators	S D	D	N S	A	S A	χ^2	$p > \chi^2$
University leadership takes total control over the strategy formulation and implementation process without allowing employee participation	26.09%	29.35%	22.83%	14.49%	7.25%	44.906	<.0001
University leadership gathers as much information as they can from the employees on the strategy formulation and implementation process	2.17%	12.68%	33.7%	38.77%	12.68%	133.13	<.0001
University leadership creates a conducive environment for implementation of the strategic plan	0.72%	13.41%	11.23%	57.97%	16.67%	268.38	<.0001
University leadership led to	6.16%	15.94%	32.97%	30.8%	14.13%	72.768	<.0001

improved university image

Notes: SD=Strongly Disagree, D=Disagree, NS=Not Sure, A=Agree, SA=Strongly Agree
Source: Research Data, 2017

The first question was on whether university leadership takes total control of strategic planning process without allowing employee participation. Results indicate that 29.35% of the respondents disagreed while 26.09% strongly disagreed. Results show that 14.49% of the respondents agreed while 7.25% of the respondents strongly disagreed. Only 22.83% of the respondents were not sure. The second question was on information gathering on strategic planning process by university leadership. Results show that majority of the respondents (38.77%) agreed while 12.68% of the respondents strongly agreed. On the other side, 33.7% were not sure whether university leadership gathered information from employees on strategic planning process while 12.68% disagreed. Only 2.17% of the respondents strongly disagreed. The third question sought respondents' opinion on whether university leadership creates a conducive environment for strategy implementation. Results show that majority of respondents (57.97%) agreed while 16.67% of the respondents strongly agreed. On the contrary, 13.41% of the respondents disagreed while 0.72% of the respondents strongly disagreed. Only 11.23% of the respondents were not sure whether university leadership creates a conducive environment for strategy implementation. The χ^2 test for the variable items shows that it is significant at $p<0.0001$.

The last question sought to investigate respondents' opinion on whether university leadership contributed to improved university image. Results show that 32.97% of the respondents were not sure of the statement university leadership led to improved university image. In addition, 30.8% of the respondents agreed that university leadership contributed to improved university image while 14.13% strongly agreed. On the contrary, 15.94% disagreed with the statement that university leadership led to improved university image while 6.16% of the respondents strongly disagreed with the statement. The P-values are greater than Chi-square indicating that the variables are significant. The Chi-square test shows that $p<0.0001$ which is indication that the variable items are significant.

Results imply that university leadership plays a key role on ensuring successful strategy implementation. These results are in line with Rajasekar (2014) argument who points out that the leadership style in any given organization influences how the chosen strategies will be implemented. Leadership style in a particular organization influences organizational structure, delegation of responsibilities, freedom of managers to make decisions, and the incentives and rewards systems. The most important point to note here is that effective leadership is a key ingredient in the successful implementation of strategies in any given organization.

Zaribaf and Bayrami (2010) put leadership's importance into three key role categories: managing the strategic process, managing relationships, and managing manager training. Rajasekar (2014) identified the key responsibilities of a leader as; coordination of activities, streamlining of processes, aligning the organizational structure, and keeping employees motivated and committed to strategy implementation. The role of the board is to ensure consistency among resource allocation, processes, and the firm's intended strategy. Another aspect of effective leadership comprises enhancing effective communication within the organization. Blocked vertical communication has a negative effect on a business's ability to implement and refine its strategy (Beer & Eisenstat, 2000).

Employee Participation and Strategy Implementation

Under employee participation, respondents were asked four questions on the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with how employee participation in strategic planning process affects strategy implementation. Table 3 presents the results.

Table 3: Employee Participation

Variable indicators	S D	D	N S	A	S A	χ^2	p> χ^2
Employees participated in formulation of the university strategic plan	2.91%	9.45%	13.82%	45.09%	28.73%	157.75	<.0001
Employees are encouraged to contribute their ideas towards strategy formulation and thus felt motivated to implement it	3.27%	7.64%	25.82%	46.18%	17.09%	159.56	<.0001
Employee involvement in strategy formulation resulted to increased customer satisfaction	1.45%	12.73%	27.27%	49.82%	8.73%	201.56	<.0001
Employee involvement in strategy formulation resulted to increased employee productivity	3.28%	10.58%	20.07%	52.19%	13.87%	197.53	<.0001

Notes: SD=Strongly Disagree, D=Disagree, NS=Not Sure, A=Agree, SA=Strongly Agree

The first question sought respondents' opinion on whether employees were allowed to participate in the process of strategic planning. Results show that majority of respondents (45.09%) agreed with the statement that employees participated in formulation of the strategic plan while 28.73% of the respondents strongly agreed. On the other hand, 9.45% of the respondents disagreed with the statement while 2.91% of the respondents strongly disagreed. Only 13.82% of the respondents were not sure whether employees participated in formulation of the strategic plan. The second question sought to investigate respondents' opinion on whether employees are encouraged to give their ideas on strategic planning process and whether this led to motivated employees. Majority of the respondents (46.18%) agreed while 17.09% of the respondents strongly agreed. Results indicate that 7.64% of the respondents disagreed while 3.27% strongly disagreed with the statement. Only 25% of the respondents were not sure whether employees were encouraged to contribute their ideas towards strategy formulation. The χ^2 test for the item shows that the variable items are significant at p<0.0001.

The third question sought the opinion of respondents on whether employee involvement in strategy formulation led to increased customer satisfaction. Results show that majority (49.82%) of the respondents agreed with the statement while 8.73% of the respondents strongly agreed. On the other hand, 12.73% of the respondents disagreed with the statement while 1.45% of the respondents strongly disagreed. Only 27.27% of the respondents were not sure whether employee involvement in strategy formulation led to increased customer satisfaction The χ^2 test for the item shows that the variable items are significant at p<0.0001.

When asked whether employee involvement in strategy formulation resulted to increased employee productivity, majority (52.19%) of the respondents agreed with the statement while 13.87% of the respondents strongly agreed. Results show that 10.58% of the respondents disagreed with the statement while 3.28% of the respondents strongly disagreed. Only 20.07% of the respondents were not sure whether employee participation in strategy implementation resulted to increased employee productivity. The P-values show that the variable items are significant at p<0.0001.

Results imply that employee participation in strategic planning process plays a key role in ensuring successful strategy implementation. These findings are supported by Fulmer (1990) who argues that human resources management plays an important role in making strategy implementation a success. Organizations' departments and their employees should be enthusiastic about the strategy implementation process. This means getting people involved and establishing a motivating reward system will have a positive influence on strategy implementation. The involvement process for all managers and implementers on all

organizational levels is perceived as a crucial factor in the implementation process and it is of paramount importance for successful implementation.

Kohtamaki, Kraus, Makela, and Ronkko (2012) point out that participative strategic planning increases personnel understanding of the company's purpose and strategic targets, clarifies why strategies are implemented, and creates a sense of shared purpose for employees. Clarifying and explaining strategies and involving personnel in the strategic planning process have been argued and shown to increase personnel commitment to strategy implementation. Increased personnel commitment enables more rapid strategy implementation and improves both the strategy-environment fit and consequently company performance.

Resource Allocation and Strategy Implementation

Under resource allocation, respondents were asked four questions on the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with how resource allocation affected strategy implementation. Results are presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Resource Allocation

Variables	N A	L E	M E	GE	V L E	χ^2	p> χ^2
University resources allocation was appropriately done towards strategy implementation	3.27%	22.55%	25.09%	36.36%	12.73%	87.018	<.0001
Proper resource management led to successful strategy implementation	1.09%	17.82%	20%	47.64%	13.45%	160.73	<.0001
Proper utilization of resources in the University led to increased revenue	2.91%	12.73%	25.82%	46.91%	11.64%	161.27	<.0001
University resources were sufficiently available to facilitate strategy implementation	11.27%	28.36%	33.09%	21.09%	6.18%	70.073	<.0001

Notes: NA=Not at All, LE=Less Extent, ME=Moderate Extent, GE=Great Extent, VLE=Very Large Extent
Source: Research Data, 2017

The first question sought to investigate respondents' opinion on whether university resource allocation was appropriately done towards strategy implementation. Results show that 36.36% of

the respondents said to large extent while 12.73% of the respondents said very large extent. On the contrary, 22.55% of the respondents said less extent while 3.27% said not all. Only 25.09% indicated to moderate extent. The second question sought to get respondents' opinion on whether proper resource management led to successful strategy implementation. Results show that majority (47.64%) of the respondents said to that to a large extent proper resource management led to successful strategy implementation while 13.45% said very large extent. Another 17.82% of the respondents said to less extent while 1.09% said not at all. Only 20% of the respondents indicated moderate extent. The P-values show that the variable items are significant at p<0.0001.

When asked whether proper resource utilization led to increased revenue, 46.91% said to large extent while 11.64% of the respondents said very large extent. On the other hand, 12.73% of the respondents said to less extent while 2.91% of the respondents said not at all. Only 25.82% said to moderate extent. The last question sought to investigate respondents' opinion on whether university resources were sufficiently available towards strategy implementation. Results show that majority (33.09%) of the respondents said to moderate extent while 21.09% said to large extent. Only 6.18% of the respondents said to very large extent. On contrary, 28.36% of the respondents said to less extent while 11.27% said not at all. All the P-values are greater than Chi-square implying that the results are significant. The P-values show that the variable items are significant at p<0.0001.

Results indicate that proper resource allocation and management plays a key role in ensuring full implementation of a strategic plan. These results are advanced by Hitt, Ireland, Camp, and Sexton (2001) and Mango (2014) who posit that firm's resources, capabilities, and competencies facilitate the development of sustainable competitive advantages. The primary argument is that firms hold heterogeneous and idiosyncratic resources (defined broadly here to include capabilities) on which their strategies are based. Competitive advantages are achieved when the strategies are successful in leveraging these resources. Mango (2014) postulate that allocation of resources has influence on execution of management's sanction plans. Poor resource allocation is one of the main reasons for unsuccessful strategy implementation.

Pearce *et al*. (2012) add that capabilities are the abilities of a firm to combine all resources for stellar organizational performance. Firms that are not able to creatively bundle and leverage their resources for value creation for their customers suffer performance shortfalls. Capabilities give sustainable competitive advantage and also long term performance since new resource configurations are always assured as markets collide, emerge, split, evolve and die. Differences in performance of organizations may be explained by how differently organizations put together their resources.

Conclusion

Results show that strategy communication has a positive influence on strategy implementation. This implies that for organizations to successfully implement their strategies, the leaders have to clearly define their strategic direction and bring everyone on board in terms of understanding the contents of the strategic plan. The study also found that organizational leadership had a positive relation with strategy implementation. The leader personality, skills of leadership posssed by the leader, and the style of leadership adopted by the leader determines the success of strategy implementation and overall organizational performance. The study also found that employee participation in strategy formulation had a postive influence on strategy implementation. This implies that when employees are given opportunity to contribute their ideas in strategy formulation, they own the process and hence get motivated to implement the stratey. Results also show that resource allocation had a positive influence on strategy implementation. This calls for a balance between both tangible and intagible resource allocation towards successfull strategy implementation. Success in strategy implemenation has been found to lead to stellar organizational performance.

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