

Effect of Cultural Dimensions Practiced in Kenya on Strategy Implementation among Professional Bodies Registered by the Association of Professional Societies of East Africa

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ABSTRACT

The study sought to establish how cultural dimensions practiced in Kenya affect strategy implementation among professional bodies registered with the Association of Professional Societies in East Africa (APSEA). Through descriptive study design, the research applied a convenience sampling method to interrogate 28 registered professional bodies in Kenya using a structured questionnaire. Out of 168 questionnaires shared across the professional bodies, 132 correctly-filled questionnaires were returned. Results were processed using linear regression model seeking to establish the effectiveness of strategy implementation within the professional bodies. All data was run using Statistical Package for Social Sciences computer program. Results indicated the constructs for strategy implementation against 4 culture dimensions; clan, adhocracy, market and hierarchy; produced beta values of .245, .249, .263 and .281 with $p < .05$ indicating a significant increment whenever each dimension was applied. The study demonstrates the value attached to the theory of strategy as propagated by Porter with positive relationship shown against dimensional cultures as fronted by Cameron and Quinn. The implementation of strategy is thus dependent in the adoption of different forms of cultural dimensions. From the research findings, it is conclusive that promoting and actualizing a specific cultural dimension in an organization would enhance the implementation of strategy at all levels. Time constraint was experienced during the research period given that some respondents were mostly out of office on official engagement. Nevertheless, through modern technology, questionnaires were sent and returned through email. Further research is recommended in establishing whether strategy implementation can take place in an environment not adopting any of the 4 cultural dimensions.

Keywords: Strategic Implementation, professional bodies, cultural dimensions, Kenya

I. INTRODUCTION

Professional competition among organizations is demonstrated in the present world through access to the latest technology and communication systems in achieving high goals established by those organizations (Brännström & Staffansson, 2014). It is for this reason that researchers have embarked on finding out reasons why similar strategies work in some organizations while failing spectacularly in other organizations. The four cultural dimensions as defined by Cameron and Quinn (2006) have been touted as being responsible for the differences in the implementation of these strategic plans at various organizations. These dimensions including clan, hierarchy, adhocracy and market culture have been experienced at various organizations to varying degrees. As explained by classical theorists, organizational culture is the shared beliefs, espoused values, artefacts (behaviours) and basic assumptions that an organization learns while dealing with its surroundings (Genc, 2017).

The success of every organization is normally set on the achievement of set goals and plans. On many business fronts, goals have to be supported by strategies that require carefully crafted implementation activities to an extent of being measurable. It is thought that a fairly strong and outstanding organizational culture impacts a clear setup for the staff or members of an organization to have a mind-set of success all through the corporate world of thinking (Baroto et al., 2014). It is effective because it highlights the characteristics of the enterprise, the formation of the common values of the corporate members, and has a distinct personality that helps the company develop different strategies that can defeat their rivals. True as pointed out by many scholars, organizational culture is also an important means of implementation of the corporate strategy.

The joint effort through members of an organization remains a unifying factor that effectively plays a positive part in the implementation of corporate strategy leading to the belief that strategy is a vehicle for success.

II. THE PROBLEM

Strategy implementation has remained challenging to achieve across various organizations in which strategy planning is practiced. After successful launching of such strategic plans with full or partial allocation of all the required resources as estimated in the plans, there is still a high failure rate at the implementation phase. Global, regional as well as local studies have pointed out the various successes and failures of similar as well as dissimilar organizations concluding that perhaps there are differences in the cultural dimensions of the organizations that dictate the success or failure of strategic plan implementation. The failure to partially or fully implement strategies has contributed to poor performance by organizations leading to dissatisfied stakeholders who in turn reduce their investment or interest into such organizations. Contextualizing the scenario in Kenya, professional bodies are such organizations that have come up with smart strategic plans but still ended up performing poorly through lack of partial or full implementation. It is from this gap that the current study sought to establish the relationship between strategy implementation and cultural dimensions at the professional bodies registered with APSEA umbrella organization in Kenya.

III. OBJECTIVE

The study specifically sets the objective of establishing the relationship between cultural dimensions and strategy implementation in the professional bodies registered with the APSEA in Kenya.

IV. LITERATURE REVIEW

The study is anchored on theories of strategy and the four cultural dimensions. Strategy directs organizational operations towards performance that is action-based (Awino et al., 2017). As supported in studies by Reddy (2017), this specifically points to a good allocation of resources in which plans have to be executed with optimal utilization of all related units of production. All these calls for a positive approach to a strategy emphasizing the popularity of strategic planning to attract more scholars to spread both theories and practices of strategy implementation in terms of a global trend (Baroto et al., 2014).

Cultural Dimensions Theory

As fronted by Cameron and Quinn (2006), the Competing Values Framework (CVF) focuses on assessing the culture of organizations based on the Organization Culture Assessment Instrument (OCAI). The CVF observes that organizations face blended values competing on four fronts which cannot be achieved simultaneously. The CVF implies that all the four cultural dimensions operate in a competing format towards each other thus requiring strategic leadership for appropriate selection (Acar & Acar, 2014). The flexibility of organizations is achievable as observed severally when a specific culture is adopted leading to success (Cameron & Quinn, 2006). Listed as clan, hierarchy, adhocracy, and market, the quadrants have played different roles in the implementation of strategy across various firms and organizations. The main criticisms of Cameron and Quinn's (2006) theory are that it is a challenge to reach a consensus in getting all stakeholders on board across the quadrants of adhocracy, hierarchy, market, and clan cultures. The main reason for failure to achieve a consensus appears to be that different functions within an organization might require different approaches of the quadrants within the framework (da Rocha et al., 2018).

Strategy Theory

The allocation of resources to different production processes and organizational projects is determined by the goals set by the internal stakeholders. It therefore implies that the basis of strategy theory is anchored on the proper optimization of the resources and processes in a specific time frame with measurable outputs (Naipinit et al., 2014). Burgelman (2020) concludes that the main factor considered in the development of strategy in an organization is the long-term goal, which is defined by the vision of the organization. From that conclusion it becomes clear that strategy has to align properly with other elements of the framework in order to achieve organizational performance success.

Hypothesis

H₀₁: There is no strategic significance in adopting cultural dimensions for the implementation of strategy at professional bodies registered with APSEA in Kenya.

V. METHODOLOGY

Sample and Data Collection

Some of the most prominent organizations to have unveiled their strategic plans in Kenya include professional bodies. This study targeted the registered professional bodies with the APSEA which is an umbrella society for these professional bodies across East Africa. Based at the Professional Centre in Nairobi, APSEA is a corporate body established in 1961 and draws its membership from professional societies in diverse professional disciplines. APSEA helps create strategic alliances while safeguarding the interests of professionalism in the disciplines

Pilot Study for Reliability and Validity

To test the study instrument, a pilot study was carried out using 2 professional bodies that were destined to merge while under APSEA. These 2 professional bodies were later automatically excluded from the main study. A pilot study aimed at establishing reliability took into consideration the value of Cronbach's alpha – α (Creswell, 2014). Tab.1 presents the reliability and validity output. First, reliability was carried out to establish the internal consistency and provides an estimate of the equivalence of the sets of constructs on each cultural dimension and strategy implementation. As shown in the results, Cronbach's alpha (α) $>.7$ shows all the constructs were reliable. Second, the validity of the constructs was established and tested using composite values. The value of the composite test was $>.7$ indicating that all the variables in the study attained construct validity. The study also tested further the content validity using Average Variance Extracted (AVE) with a measurement of $\Rightarrow .5$ indicating the measurement scales revealed satisfactory measurement of content validity.

Table 1: Reliability test for hierarchy culture

Variable/Dimensions	Composite value	Cronbach's alpha	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
CLAN	0.815	0.732	0.606
HIERARCHY	0.719	0.833	0.723
ADHOCRACY	0.845	0.796	0.639
MARKET	0.793	0.820	0.822
STRATEGY	0.832	0.775	0.626

Analyses and Interpretation of Data

The study used a regression model of the linear form $Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta_4 X_4 + \varepsilon$
Where:

Y is the dependent variable (strategy implementation)

X_1 is Clan culture

X_2 is Adhocracy culture

X_3 is Market culture

X_4 is Hierarchy culture

The results of the regression coefficient for the combined variables were regressed against the dependent variable, strategy implementation.

VI. RESULTS

The study instrument used a Likert scale of 1 to 5 with 1 as strongly disagree, 2 as disagree, 3 as neutral, 4 as agree, and 5 as strongly agree was applied (Likert, 1932). The statistical tests conducted were descriptive statistics and inferential statistics to establish hypothesis testing using a regression model.

Demographic and Descriptive of the Study Constructs

The descriptive statistical tests conducted are presented in Tab. 2, which shows the gender, age group, level of education, and professional discipline. The spread between both males and females indicated the general population mix in the Kenyan professionals. In gender terms, 52% of the respondents were males while 48% were females. Education-wise, 7% were Ph.D. holders, with the majority 51% holding a Master's degree, 39% having Bachelor's degree, and a minority 3% being non-degree holders. Other demographics included age group and professionalism.

Table 2: Demographic data of respondents

Demographic Characteristics	Demographic Category	Male Percentage	Female Percentage
Age Group	Below 30	4	2
	31-40	23	20
	41-60	30	19
	Over 60	1	1
Level of Education	Non-Degree holder	2	1
	Bachelors	20	19
	Masters	35	16
	PhD	5	2
Professionalism	HRM and Procurement	14	11
	Marketing	6	6
	Finance and Planning	14	6
	ICT and Support	24	19

Regression Model using ANOVA

From the results in Tab.3, the regression coefficients model indicated the clan culture, a beta of .245 and hierarchy culture, a beta of .249 were statistically significant at $p < .05$ with another beta of .263 (an increment) and culture of hierarchy, a beta of .281 (an increment) at $p < .05$ indicating significance in statistical terms. The study model could thus be summarized as $Y = .549 + .263X_1 + .281X_4$ indicating the significance of strategy implementation. The results of regression ANOVA show that the model of regression suitably predicts outcomes based on a specific cultural dimension with a notably positive effect on Kenya's professional bodies ($P > .05$). With a significant figure of 0.000, the regression showed a sign of a strong correlation (See Table 3: *Strategy implementation regression coefficients - Appendix I*).

The study results indicate that a linear regression established a strong positive relationship between strategy implementation and cultural dimensions a clear indication that if organizations dropped the dimensions, there could be a drop in their effort of implementing organization strategies.

IV. DISCUSSION

From the study findings, it appears that there is evidence for an influence of cultural dimensions driving the organization's implementation of the strategy. The proven results in approaches based on clan culture are a clear indication that this cultural dimension is not just familiar but sits well in most working environments. This is also evidenced in societies that bring people together while treating them like clan members (Willar et al., 2016). Supporting or similar studies on cultural dimensions have pointed towards organizations staying creative and flexible with the adoption of adhocracy culture (Haffar et al., 2014). Additionally, the aspect of coordination leading to people participation commands good association in strategy implementation (Rameezdeen & Gunarathna, 2012).

Anning-Dorson (2017) has pointed to the difficulty in gathering market data by an organization hence making it very difficult to adopt a market culture in strategy implementation. Again there is a high cost in adopting market culture leading to the difficulty in convincing organizational leaders to adopt the culture (M'zungu et al., 2017).

Similarly, Acar and Acar (2014) studies are in line with the findings of this current study in which the scholars contend that market culture cannot be the lead culture in the implementation of the strategy. Tanwar (2013) and Nyakurong (2016) are also in support of hierarchy culture as being key in strategy implementation with various designed frameworks working in favour of strategy implementation. Laurian, Walker, and Crawford (2017) have argued that the nature of hierarchy culture enables strict observance of any plans passed on to the organizational members. There is also an observation that attributes leadership in the hierarchical structure as the key to strategy implementation (Al-Ali et al., 2017).

Contrary to other scholars who support hierarchical culture as being conducive for strategy implementation, Naranjo et al. (2019) found hierarchy opposing the process of implementation. Similarly, they faulted the characteristic of hierarchy culture which promotes imitation making it hard to encourage innovations and hence not conducive for strategy implementation. Beyene (2011) too, found no significant relationship between hierarchy culture and strategy implementation. Mutai (2015) also cites the informal nature of the hierarchical culture as being a hindrance to the implementation of strategy since there is no commitment to chase the given goal on the organization level. It, therefore, leads to slowing down of acceptance and hence a long period in implementation of the strategy which is not productive to the organization.

There is always a school of thought that suggests that organizational culture has a positive relationship with strategy implementation including Belias and Koustelios (2014). From their field studies, these two scholars established that the high levels of satisfaction in such organizations give a platform for excelling in an environment of positive growth in all efforts to have a positive implementation of the strategy. In addition, there was a conclusion from Belias and Koustelios suggesting that high levels of well-defined organizational culture were a clear indication that the organization could move forward as a team. Belias and Koustelios (2014) further contend that with the high-level satisfaction, there is bound to be adequate freedom for empowering staff to feel obliged in the implementation of organizational strategy. It is also possible to have a great understanding of a company or organization's forecast of the future through the way staff or members of the organization stay in the planning and implementation of the strategy.

These results have a concrete basis in that majority of the successful organizations have referred to their strategic plans pointing towards a specific culture within the organization.

VII. RECOMMENDATIONS AND AREAS FOR FURTHER STUDY

Having established that there is a positive relationship between cultural dimensions and strategy implementation, the study came up with recommendations for policymakers as well as further studies. First, there is a need for the stakeholders in the professional bodies to embrace cultural dimensions through training with various approaches including workshops and seminars. This also suggests that various professional bodies within APSEA could benchmark for raising awareness on adept steps for cultural dimension adaptations. The ministry and policymakers on culture could also make it a requirement for professional bodies to affirm their preferred cultural dimensions for training coordination purposes. Second, further studies focusing on what cultural dimensions are best suited to various professional bodies in strategy implementation should also take place. From the study findings, the implication is that indeed, no single cultural dimension can be related to a given professional body. This further calls for yet more review of strategy implementation as it relates to cultural dimensions

VIII. CONCLUSION

Study findings using both the descriptive and inferential statistical approach have strongly indicated that cultural dimensions play a key role in the implementation of strategy within organizations. As pointed out in Cameroon and Quin propositions, the Kenya APSEA member organizations proved to have direct relationships with one or more of each of the cultural dimensions. Every organization has tried to impact a specific dimensional culture across its working environment. The results of the survey proved pivotal in confirming the hypothesis that indeed organizations have fronted their strategy implementation through the adoption of cultural dimensions. The cultural dimensions are thus crucial in the achievement of positive strategy implementation. Professional bodies, therefore, have to adopt a specific cultural dimension to drive home their strategy implementation plans. That is the case for APSEA members in Kenya.

Conflict of Interest

This study is conducted by a member of one of the most well-known APSEA member organizations but all measures were taken to avoid any bias in reporting thus ensuring no specific APSEA organization is mentioned as an example of failure or success in strategy implementation.

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APPENDICES*Table 3: Strategy implementation regression coefficients*

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	
	B	Std. Error				
	(Constant)	.506	.621		.815	.417
	Clan culture	.346	.118	.245	2.941	.004
1	Adhocracy culture	.154	.114	.116	1.354	.178
	Market culture	.042	.097	.035	.429	.669
	Hierarchy Culture	.288	.099	.249	2.921	.004

a. Dependent Variable: Strategy implementation