

**FACTORS AFFECTING STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION IN PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES
IN KENYA: CASE OF JOMO KENYATTA UNIVERSITY OF AGRICULTURE AND
TECHNOLOGY**

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Abstract

Organizations formulate excellent strategies and they must be effectively and efficiently be implemented to ensure organization success. The general purpose of this study was to examine factors that influence implementation of strategy Implementation in Public Universities in Keny, with objectives of the study being; to determine the influence of Management, Organizational Culture, Organization Structure, Information Technology and Communication on strategy implementation in public universities in Kenya, which are made up of about 23 universities. The population of the study was public universities in Kenya. The research design was a Case Study and data was collected using guide interview schedule and questionnaires. The data collected was analyzed using descriptive statistics using the Statistical Package for Social Scientist (SPSS). The findings of the study revealed that the four variables affect strategy implementation in public universities in Kenya with Information Technology and Communication having the highest significance to strategy implementation.

KEY TERMS: *Strategic Implementation. Public Universities, Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology*

1.0 Background to the study

Strategic plans are often accompanied by parallel implementation plans, which outline responsibilities, timelines, resource requirements and organizational or operational changes required in order to deliver on the strategic plan initiatives. Formulating a consistent strategy is a difficult task, implementing the strategy and making it work proves more difficult for any management team (Hrebiniak, 2006). A series of factors potentially affect strategy implementation in the organization. Strategy implementation has been described as a craft rather than science unlike strategy formulation (Noble, 2009).

Strategy is seen as a plan for an organization. Strategy is the determination of basic long term goals and objectives of an enterprise and the adoption of causes of action and the allocation of resources necessary for carrying out these goals (Chandler, 2013). Strategy involves the constant search for ways in which the firm's unique resources can be redeployed in changing circumstances (Rumelt, 1984).

Strategy implementation involves turning strategic plans and thoughts into organizational action. It involves the change from "planning the work" to working the plan. Implementation is defined as a process through which the organization's strategies and actions are developed (Wheelan and Hunger). It is the transformation of the strategic plans into actions. It is worth nothing if great strategies are not implemented (Okumus and Roper 1999). It can also be said that it is better to effectively implement a second-grade strategy than to ruin a first class strategy by the ineffective implementation. It has been noted that less than 50% of formulated strategies are implemented (Mintzberg 1994).

Since independence, Kenya has, through legal notices, embarked on establishing universities and colleges throughout the country. Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology is situated in Juja, 36 kilometers of Nairobi, along Nairobi-Thika Highway. It was started in 1981 as a Middle-Level College Jomo Kenyatta College of Agriculture and Technology (JKCAT) Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology mission is to offer accessible quality training, research and innovation. This is in order to produce leaders in the various fields of agriculture, engineering, technology, enterprise development, built environment and health sciences and other applied sciences to suit the needs of our dynamic world.

In order for the University to effectively execute its mandate, it has restructured the Engineering Faculty and the Human Resource Development Faculty and converted them into Colleges. Further restructuring involves construction of state of the art workshops and technologies for training in the area of engineering. This will be complimented by the establishment of the Industrial and Technology Park. These developments will in-turn boost the capacity of the University to produce effective and skilled manpower to support the attainment of vision 2030.

Over the years the university has grown in student population putting strain on existing infrastructure in terms of research labs, classrooms and residence facilities. Due to space constraints, university management boards have therefore been forced to come up with strategies that seek to improve the existing constraining situation and still maintain the quality level of education it offers. There is a widespread impression that the quality of education and training in Kenyan public universities has declined as a result of increased student enrollment, inadequate and outdated equipment and facilities, frequent university disturbances, and low staff morale (Kinyanjui, 2007).

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Strategy Implementation in higher learning institutions can be a cumbersome undertaking as the institutions are large and complex. Also, there is often a great deal of internal competition among departments who may be more loyal to their discipline than to the university (Taylor and Knarr, 1999). As a formality, all public universities have strategic plans, on paper; but most of them have not implemented these strategic plans and the results are poor performance in structural development, poor internal organization, poor administrative systems, and policies. This poor performance by University management has led to stagnation of planned development projects and University activities.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

1.3.1 General Objective

To investigate the factors that affect strategy implementation in public Universities in Kenya.

1.3.2 Specific Objectives

- i. To determine the influence of Management on strategy implementation in public universities in Kenya.
- ii. To determine the influence of Organizational Culture on strategy implementation in public universities in Kenya.
- iii. To determine the influence of Organizational Structure on strategy implementation in public universities in Kenya.
- iv. To determine how effective Information technology and Communication strategy implementation in public universities in Kenya.

1.4 Significance of the study

The study was to generate more knowledge on strategy implementation in public universities in Kenya and assist public universities to appreciate and enhance factors that enable effective execution of strategy. The findings of this study were expected to influence strategic decisions of Universities. This study also revealed the loopholes in prioritization of activities and also in the implementation process. It was to provide knowledge on how to turn strategies into individual actions, necessary to produce a great business performance.

On another hand, researchers i.e. anyone researching work relevant to this topic be it students or organizations, shall help them form a basis for further research work. Finally evaluating the factors affecting strategy implementation in public universities is critical in order to understand these factors thus creating healthy competition in the business environment. Enable effective and successful implementation and continuity and quality provision.

1.5 Scope of the study

The geographical area that was covered is Juja, Kiambu County in Kenya. The university under study was Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology. Population under study comprised of 50 personnel including the Vice Chancellors, Deputy Vice Chancellors, Registrars, Finance officers, Procurement Officers, Administrative officers, Head of departments and lecturers.

2.1 Theoretical Review

2.1.1 Resource based view Theory

The resource based view was postulated by Edith Penrose (1959). Management tries to make the best use of resources available, a truly dynamic interacting process occurs which encourages continuous growth but limits the rate of growth. Resources are a firm's capabilities, knowledge, structures, procedures and human capital assets. A manager interacts with these resources daily in the organization. 'The resource-based perspective suggests that unique resources and capabilities represent the main determinants of corporate performance relative to rival firms. How resources are combined and applied is what determines the competitive advantage of the organization (Penrose, 1959).

A resource-based perspective focuses on the resources of the organization and its stakeholders. Resources and capabilities help to explain the organization performance and long-term growth or decline. A resource-based perspective applies the inside-out strategy approach by giving an understanding of company resources before and during decision-making processes in business strategies. It also creates urgency of need for changes in organization: in systems and structures to enable implementation of value creating business strategies. It also focuses on the management and leadership of the organization, with its limited access to information and its capability to work efficiently and effectively to implement strategies (Bostrom, 2011).

2.1.2 Institutional theory

Institutional theorists assert that the organizational environment can strongly influence its development of formal structures in an organization, often more than market pressures. The Institutional theory focuses on the social aspects of structure. DiMaggio and Powell (1991) concluded that institutional effects lead to an overall increase in the homogeneity of organizational structures in an institutional environment. Firms will often adopt similar structures as a result of; Coercive pressures which arise due to legal mandates or influence from organizations they are dependent upon, Mimetic pressures which arise during high uncertainty and normative pressures to homogeneity which come from the similar attitudes and approaches that are brought into the firm by professional groups and associations.

Baroto, Arvand, and Ahmad (2014) concluded that, neither the resource-based view nor the industrial organization view towards strategic management can independently solve the strategy implementation problem and future research should be conducted to compare successful and unsuccessful strategic attempts, to determine what those successful companies did differently from the unsuccessful ones and also try to include more variables that can influence the strategy implementation effectiveness.

2.2.3 McKinsey 7S Framework

The McKinsey 7S model named after a consulting company, McKinsey and Company, has conducted applied research in business and industry (Pascale & Athos, 1981; Peters & Waterman, 1982). The seven variables (levers) all begin with the letter "S". They include; strategy, which is a plan of action an organization prepares in response to, or anticipation of, changes in its external environment. Structure is the specific form of shape an organization takes. Organizations are structured depending on their objectives and cultures. An organization's structure will often dictate the manner in which it operates and performs its activities (Waterman et al., 1980).

Systems are the internal processes that support strategy implementation and running of the day-to-day affairs in the organization. Traditionally the organizations have been following a bureaucratic-

style process model where most decisions are taken at the higher management level, and there are various and sometimes unnecessary requirements for a specific decision. In Style, all organizations have their distinct culture and management style. It includes the dominant values, beliefs, and norms that over time develop and become distinctive features of the organization life. Culture is an important factor to consider in the implementation of any strategy in the organization (Martins and Terblanche, 2003).

Staff in the organizations is made up of personnel who make the real difference to the success of the organization in the increasingly knowledge-based society. In addition, the organization has to instill confidence among the employees in the organization on their future career growth as a motivation to hard work (Boxal, 2003). Shared Values, Members of the organization share some common fundamental ideas or guiding concepts around which the organization is built. These shared values and goals keep the employees working towards a common objective as a team. An organization with weak values and goals often find their employees having a conflict of interest as they tend to follow their own personal goals (Martins, 2003).

2.2 Empirical review

Omutoko (2009) study, *Re-thinking the Management of Higher Education Institutions Transformational Leadership* concluded that Higher education is in crisis today. The situation is characterized by low quality as a result of rapid enrolment, coupled with limited resources, and inappropriate use of public resources in higher education program duplication. The findings of the study were that most of the faculty members do not know about hierarchical levels in Higher Education Institutions, and therefore it is necessary that institutions take the responsibility of providing the lecturers and managers with management training to help them understand protocol thus improving their performance.

Nyakeriga (2015) study, *Factors influencing strategy in the Newly established Public Universities in Kenya*, the researcher concluded that human resources practices influence implementation of strategic plans in the newly established Kenyan public universities. The researcher also concludes that organizational culture and organizational leadership influence strategic plan implementation in the newly established public universities in Kenya. The importance of leadership to the implementation of strategic plans is underscored by the fact that this process entails formulation and institutionalizing the whole process.

2.2.1 Management

The most challenging and important aspect of strategy implementation is the management of a given organization. Top management commitment to support and implement the planned strategies is critical in an organization. According to Rapa and Kauffman (2005), top management that lack demonstrates lack of energy and drive to implement strategies often sends a negative signal to the organization members. Middle level managers' have a key role in operationalization and communication of organization policies and strategies.

2.2.2 Organizational Culture

The dynamism and goals must be established to support and establish an organizational culture that embraces the organization's strategy over time. Institutions are flexible are more likely to embrace change and this creates an environment that is open to production and communication. According to Marginson, (2002) strategy implementation evolves either from a process of winning group commitment through a coalitional form of decision-making, or as a result of complete coalitional

involvement of implementation staff through a strong corporate culture. A corporate culture that fosters partnership, teamwork and unity will enhance commitment among employees and productivity within the organization.

2.4.3 Organization Structure

According to Peter (1993), the main purpose of examining the structure of an organization is to determine ways that better suited the structure to strategy. Aligning the structure to strategy involves aligning how organization does things, exposure of the customer to the organization, activities and flow of work, authority and control of the tasks and communication flow between these activities. This helps to assess how fit the organization structure is to strategy implementation. . It defines the hierarchy of control and authority of the various departments of an organization and integrates the various activities of employees on all levels in the organization (Hill, 2009).

2.4.4 Information technology and Communication

Information technology can be defined as knowledge, products, processes, instruments, procedures and systems which helps producing goods and services (Arvanitis, 2005). Strategy and IT are aligned in an organization when the it mission, objective and plans are supported by the organization objectives and goals. Kumar (2006) asserts that excellent communication between parties involved is the practice of trust building between the involved parties throughout the implementation process. Effective communication is important in organizations for the process of strategy implementation, Communication includes making clear new responsibilities, tasks, and duties need to be performed by the employees in order to implement the strategy

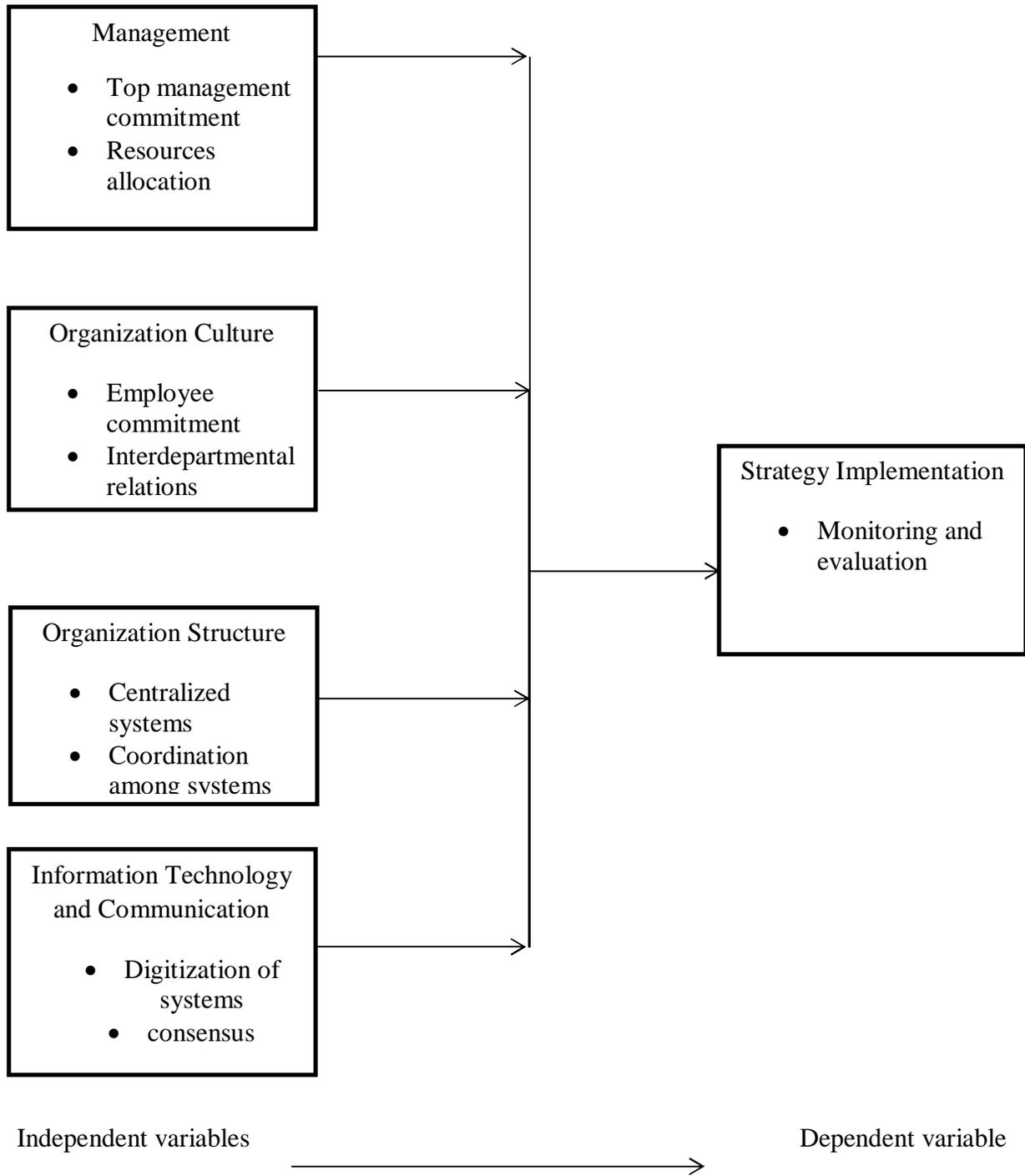


Figure2.1 Conceptual Framework

Source: Researcher, 2015

3.0 Research Methodology

3.1 Research Design

The study used a case study research design. A case study is expected to capture the complexity of a single case. Carla willing (2008) asserts that case studies focus on a particular unit of analysis and not methods used to collect and analyze data. Case studies are bounded in a discrete way of examining a set of specific or a set of individuals, organizations, schools, departments or events. The advantage of case studies is that they present data that is usually gathered through a variety of means including, but not limited to interviews, observations, audio and video data and document allocation. They provide additional validity to assertions made by either the researcher or the participants in the case itself (stake, 2005).

3.2 Sampling and Data Collection Instruments

Random sampling of respondents was used to conduct the research to avoid bias and ensure that samples drawn were a representative of the population of the university staff. Randomization was simple to ensure that samples were chosen by chance and that each member of the population had an equal chance of being selected for the study. A sample size of 50 respondents was selected to represent the population. The instrument used in data collection was a questionnaire that consists of closed-ended questions as well as interviews.

4.0 Data Analysis and Presentation

The results of the analysis were presented per study objective and described in figures and tables as illustrated. The case sample size for the analysis was 50 respondents. 15 respondents were part of the administration of the Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology, that is, Vice Chancellors, Deputy Vice Chancellors, Registrars, Finance officers, Procurement Officers, Administrative officers, Head of departments. 35 respondents were the lecturers and members of staff of the institution. Once the respondents answered the questionnaire, data was then analyzed descriptively.

4.1. Response Rate

The study targeted 50 respondents in collecting data with regard to the study. From the study, 36 out of the 50 questionnaires were filled and returned making a response rate of 72% Kothari (2004) asserts that a response rate of 50% is adequate, while a response rate greater than 70% is very good. This implies that based on this assertions; the response rate in this case of 72% was very good.

Management Influence on Strategy Implementation

Table 4.1: Opinion on Whether Management Influences Strategy Implementation

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	33	91.67%
No	3	8.33%
Total	36	100%

From the table 4.1, it can be observed that majority of the respondents (91.67%) were of the opinion that management influences strategy implementation.

Management Factors on Strategy Implementation

Table 4.2: Management Factors on Strategy Implementation

Responses	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean	Standard Deviation
Sufficient resource allocation toward strategy implementation	3	14	10	7	2	3.25	1.05
Top management commitment	18	7	6	4	1	4.03	1.18
Provision of guidelines to guide strategy implementation	13	8	7	5	3	3.64	1.33
Strategy implementation is supported by the existing power structure	14	6	7	6	3	3.61	1.38

Research data, 2015

The table above indicates the descriptive statics of the various variables regarding management commitment factors and from it the researcher can conclude that the factor on the commitment of the top management has the highest mean value of 4.03 as well as a standard deviation of 1.183 whereas the factor on sufficient resource allocation has the least mean value of 3.25 and a standard deviation value of 1.052.

Influence of Organization Culture on Strategy Implementation

The second objective of the study was to determine the influence of organization culture on strategy implementation in public universities in Kenya. The researcher sought to establish the of the respondents on the organizational culture on influence strategy implementation in public universities in Kenya. The results were presented in Table 4.6.

Table 4. 3 Influence of Organization Culture on Strategy Implementation

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	30	83.33%
No	6	16.67%
Total	36	100%

From the table 4.3, it can be observed that 83.33%, who are the majority, were of the opinion that organization culture influences strategy implementation.

Table 4.4: Organization Culture Factors on Strategy Implementation

Responses	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean	Standard Deviation
Interdepartmental relations	15	10	5	3	3	3.86	1.291
Shared beliefs and values	3	8	13	8	4	2.94	1.120
Clarification of the strategic plans intentions	1	9	13	7	6	2.78	1.098
Employee commitment	2	6	13	9	6	2.53	.971

Research Data, 2015

The table above shows the total number of respondents who agreed, disagreed and those whose opinion was neutral in reference to the various variables concerning organization culture factors on strategy implementation. In regard to Organization Culture Factors on Strategy Implementation, it is evident that the variable with the largest mean value is that on interdepartmental relations with a mean value of 3.86 and a standard deviation value of 1.291 in regard to whereas the least mean value 2.53 and a standard deviation value of 0.971 are of the factor employee commitment.

Influence of Organization Structure on Strategy Implementation

The third objective of the study was to determine the influence of Organization Structure on strategy implementation in public universities in Kenya. The researcher sought to establish the respondent's opinion on the organizational structure influence on strategy implementation in public universities in Kenya. Majority of the respondents, (94.44%) were of the opinion that Organization Structure influences strategy implementation.

Table 4.6: Organization Structure Factors on Strategy Implementation

Responses	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean	Standard Deviation
Formalized systems	6	7	15	6	2	3.25	1.11
Centralized systems(whether decision authority is closely held by top managers or is delegated to middle and lower level managers)	3	7	13	8	5	2.86	1.15
Specialization in the Systems(division of tasks and activities in the organization)	1	3	10	14	8	2.19	.92
Coordination among the Systems	16	8	5	5	2	3.86	1.29

Research data, 2015

From the table above on organization structure factors on strategy Implementation, the study found out that coordination among the systems had the highest mean value being 3.86 and standard deviation value of 1.291 it is clear that coordination among the systems is an influential factor in strategy implementation whereas the factor with the least mean value 2.19 and standard deviation value of 0.920 is on specialization in the systems.

Influence of Information Technology and Communication on Strategy Implementation

The fourth objective of the study was to determine the influence of Information Technology and Communication on strategy implementation in public universities in Kenya. The researcher sought to establish the opinion of respondents on whether Information Technology and Communication influence strategy implementation in public universities in Kenya. The results were presented in Table 4.7.

Table 4.7: Opinion on Whether Information Technology and Communication Influence Strategy Implementation

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	35	97.22%
No	1	2.78%
Total	36	100%

From the table 4.7, it can be observed that majority of the respondents (97.22%) were of the opinion that Information Technology and Communication influences strategy implementation.

Information Technology and Communication Factors on Strategy Implementation

Table 4.8: Information Technology and Communication Factors on Strategy Implementation

Responses	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean	Standard Deviation
Effective communication	15	10	3	6	2	3.83	1.298
Consensus	13	8	6	4	5	3.56	1.443
Existing information technology infrastructure	16	10	7	1	2	4.03	1.134
Adequate information sharing between organizational leaders and departments responsible for strategy implementation	15	10	5	4	2	3.89	1.237

Research data, 2015

From the above table, existing information technology infrastructure takes up the largest mean value (4.03) and a standard deviation value of (1.134) whereas consensus takes up a mean value of (3.56) being the least mean and a standard deviation value of (1.443).

Table 4.9: Factors that affect strategy implementation

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean	Standard Deviation
Management influences Strategy Implementation in my University	16	10	3	4	3	2.11	0.16
Organization Culture influences Strategy Implementation in my University	10	7	5	10	4	2.75	0.08
Organization Structure influences Strategy Implementation in my University	7	6	9	8	6	3.00	0.04
Information Technology and Communication influences Strategy Implementation in my University	14	10	5	5	2	2.19	0.13

Research data, 2015

From the table above Management influences had the greatest influence on strategy Implementation in the University Strategy since it had the least mean of 2.11, followed by information technology and communication with 2.19, organization culture had 2.75 while the one with the least effect on strategy implementation was organization structure with a mean of 3.00.

Regression Equation

$$Y = 4.001 + 0.528 X_1 + 0.602 X_2 + 0.719 X_3 + 1.235 X_4 + e$$

Table 4.10: Coefficients Table

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	4.001	1.123		3.563	.018
	Management	.528	.186	.614	2.839	.035
	Organization Culture	.602	.159	.736	3.786	.009
	Organization Structure	.719	.215	.783	3.344	.026
	Information Technology and Communication	1.235	.339	1.116	3.643	.013

Research data, 2015

From the regression equation above at 5% level of significance and 95% level of confidence, organization culture had a 0.009 level of significance; information technology and communication had a 0.013 level of significance; organization structure had a 0.026 level of significance while management had 0.035 level of significance hence organization culture was the most significant. All the variables were significant ($p < 0.05$). On the regression equation it was found that holding management commitment, organization culture, organization structure and information technology and communication to a constant zero, strategy implementation would be 4.001. A unit increase in management would lead to increase in strategy implementation by 0.528 units. A unit increase in

organization culture would lead to increase in strategy implementation by 0.602 units, a unit increase in organization structure would lead to increase in strategy implementation by 0.719 units and a unit increase in information technology and communication would lead to increase in strategy implementation by 1.235 units. Overall information technology and communication had the greatest effect on strategy implementation.

Summary

On seeking to establish the demographic information of the respondents, the study sought to find out the gender composition of the respondents with males constituting 55% and females 45%. The level of education of the respondents was as follows: PhDs' were 8.33%, 50% of the respondents had Master's Degree, while the least 5.56% are those with Diploma and certificate as their highest level of education.

Conclusions of the Findings

From the findings the study concludes that management affects strategy implementation in Public universities in Kenya. The study established that top management commitment to performing their roles in the strategy formulation and monitoring and evaluation process is of importance to ensure strategy implementation process. Provision of guidelines that enable the lower ranking employees to implement strategy is vital to strategy implementation process success. The study also concludes that existing power structure and sufficient resource allocation support strategy implementation in public universities in Kenya.

The study concluded that organization culture affect strategy implementation in public universities in Kenya. It was found that interdepartmental relations greatly affect strategy implementation. The employee understanding of intentions of strategy should be clarified to enable a smooth implementation process and eliminate resistance. Shared beliefs and values and employee commitment also affect implementation of strategy in public universities in Kenya.

The study established that organization structure affects strategy implementation in public universities in Kenya. The study also established that coordination among systems and formalized systems are key to implementation of strategy in the public universities, thus the study concludes that specialization of systems, that is, the extent to which activities and tasks are divided in the organization and centralization of systems affect strategy implementation in public universities in Kenya.

The study revealed that information technology and communication affects strategy implementation in public universities in Kenya. The study also found that effective communication is essential in strategy implementation. Information technology infrastructure provides a platform for implementation process. Adequate information sharing between organization leaders and those responsible for strategy implementation is key to ensuring success of the implementation process.

Recommendations

From the findings the study recommends;

The university administrators review the administrative systems on a continuous basis since they influence implementation of strategic plans in public universities in Kenya

The public universities should encourage an open door policy to encourage communication among all staff. Also, the management of the university should encourage participation of all staff in the university strategy formulation process.

There should be continuous improvement on existing information technology infrastructure to enhance and facilitate strategy implementation in public universities in Kenya.

Areas for further research

The study recommends more research should be carried out to investigate the influence of the external environment on the implementation of strategy in public universities or other organizations as the variables in the study relate to internal factors in the public universities.

The study recommends that similar studies be undertaken in other organizations and to establish other factors that affect strategy implementation in other organizations apart from learning institutions.

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