FACTORS INFLUENCING PUBLIC SECTOR STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION IN KIRINYAGA COUNTY

Joyce Wambura Kinyua, Dr.Wamitu Susan Njeri, Ruth MukiriKanyaru

School of Business, Department of Business and Economics, Kenya Methodist University.

Abstract

Goal achievement and reaching for desired are the most important things for organizations today. Thebiggest challenge for managers today is competition and dynamism of environment and unknowns of the outside and inside of the organization each affecting the implementation of plans especially strategic ones. Strategy implementation affects service companies which have different nature than other kinds of organizations; the importance of this issue gets more highlighted by Zaribaf, Omid, and Hamid (2010). Diversification and broadness of service sector including individual and social services, professional and commercial and public increases the role and importance of strategy implementation in service companies. This research study intended to investigate the factors influencing strategy implementation in selected public sector departments in Kirinyaga County and by identifying them to achieve an intended pattern that can increase the success of implementation and achieving strategic goals which have been formulated already in strategic planning.

Key Words: Strategy, Implementation, structure, automation, Corporate

1. Background of the Study

Strategy implementation is an important topic in strategic management and in organization Science. Both practical experience and academic research indicate that strategy implementation has a substantial impact on organizational performance (Nick, 2006). Cole (2007) states that it is also crucial to organizational effectiveness, is critical to the functioning of an organization and is an essential factor in the formula for success of any business or organization(Bruno, 2006). Gerry (2007) argues that the successful implementation of strong and robust strategies will give any organization a significant competitive edge especially in industries where unique strategies are otherwise difficult to achieve.

Pearce (2007) confirms that there are many soft, hard and mixed factors that influence the success of strategy implementation. These range from the people who communicate or implement the strategy to the systems or mechanisms in place for co-ordination and control. Therefore, a strategic implementer needs to formulate strategies to eradicate barriers affecting strategy implementation. The public sector environment is increasingly dynamic or even turbulent (Hugh, 2000). Developments such as the globalization of markets, rapid technological

change, a shift from previous ways to improved ways of working and the increasing aggressiveness of competition have radically altered the competitive rules in the public sector.

Public sector organizations worldwide are under pressure to increase efficiency while delivering improved and integrated services. Since the 1980s, developed countries embarked on public sector management reforms which resulted to the public sector being put under pressure to adopt private sector orientations (Economic for Africa Report, 2003). As a result of the pressure, Hope (2001) observed that many governments embraced New Public Management (NPM) as the framework through which governments were modernized and the public sector re-engineered, indeed. NPM offered important lessons and analysis for public management throughout the world and African countries had no exception to the process of implementation of efforts aimed at achieving the outcomes embodied in the said framework. The public sector remains a central vehicle for development for both developed and developing countries (Chemengich, 2013).

The Kenyan public service is divided into two levels namely the national level and the district level. The national level formulates the strategies and the district level implements them. The Kenyan public sector has been plagued with inefficiencies and poor execution of plans, budgets and programs. This has largely been attributed to poor strategy implementation. Currently, the government has brought in Cabinet Secretaries to improve on policy formulation and implementation as well as provide strategic direction to their relevant public sector dockets. It is within this context that the researcher conducts this study to analyze how transformational leadership style, organizational structure, human resource and system automation influence strategy implementation in selected public sector departments in Kirinyaga County.

2. Statement of the Problem

The environment in which organizations exist is complex and turbulent. For some organizations, the environment is more turbulent than for others. It is possible, though not easy, for organizations to turn strategies and plans into specific actions that are necessary to produce great business performance. Most organizations both in the private and public sectors know their businesses, and the strategies required for success. However, most of them struggle to translate theory into action plans that will enable the strategy to be successfully implemented and sustained (Mwangi, 2011).

Response mechanisms have emerged within the private market to meet these recent challenges but government organizations have been slower to respond. This is understandable, given fiscal constraints and the bureaucratic process manifested in governments. No study has been done per se to determine the factors influencing strategy implementation in the public sector in Kirinyaga County. This study therefore sought to fill this gap by examining the factors influencing strategy implementation in the public sector in Kirinyaga County

3. Objectives of the Study

The specific objectives were;
   i.   To establish how leadership influences strategy implementation in selected public sector departments in Kirinyaga County.
   ii. To determine how organizational structure influences strategy implementation in selected public sector departments in Kirinyaga County.

iii. To establish how staff performance influences strategy implementation in selected public sector departments in Kirinyaga County.

iv. To determine how process automation influences strategy implementation in selected public sector departments in Kirinyaga County

4. Hypothesis

i. Ho. There is no significant relationship between leadership and strategy implementation in selected public sector departments in Kirinyaga County.

ii. Ho. There is no significant relationship between the organizational structure and strategy implementation in selected public sector departments in Kirinyaga County.

iii. Ho. There is no significant relationship between staff performance and strategy implementation in selected public sector departments in Kirinyaga County.

iv. Ho. There is no significant relationship between process automation and strategy implementation in selected public sector departments in Kirinyaga County.

5. Literature Review

Strategy refers to all decisions related to business objectives and the courses of actions to achieve them (Cole, 2007). Strategy consists of corporate decisions planning which clarify and determine vision, mission, and objectives, defining policies and basic plans for achieving those goals, defining scope of company's activities and specifying the kinds of economic and human type of the organizationbosses in a work or organizational context.

Leadership and Strategy Implementation

The role of strategic planners today is to offer effective leadership in such a way as to lead the organization to use growth opportunities (Macintosh & Mclean, 1999). In fact they contribute an important role in growing inner capabilities and promoting entrepreneurship. Therefore motivating people and developing key employees' skills are their priorities. It also acquires and allocates resources so that the firm can thoughtfully develop and implement a strategic plan. It monitors the firm's success in the competitive market place to determine whether the strategic plans are well designed and activated (Mullins, 2005).

2.2.2 Organizational Structure and Strategy Implementation
The relationship between strategy and structure was first described by business historian Chandler (1962) in his review of the growth and development of four large American firms: du Pont, General Motors, Standard Oil of New Jersey, and Sears, Roebuck and Company. He found that as each of these companies grew through a s structure consists of corporate hierarchy, division of labour, delegating and communications. Besides initial information and organization's current issues are included. Griffin (2007) says that strategy implementing is a process in which all planning and budgeting activities, policies and procedures follows the defined strategy. It may involve some changes in organization's culture, structure and managerial system or even a wide general change in all these mentioned fields.

Staff Performance and Strategy Implementation

A better understanding of employees' work, attitudes, motivation and behavior strategy implementation is imperative during strategy implementation. Pryor et al (2007) discovered that people are the process owners who perform work that is consistent with the principles and processes of an organization to achieve its purpose. Therefore, people must be a substantial section of any depiction of a comprehensive and integrated implementation process.Nel et al (2004) illustrate that the workplace has to manage the employee, group and organizational empowerment through human resource interventions in order to successfully implement its strategy

Process Automation and strategy implementation

Process automation refers to the linking of the process design to application integration services in order to foster the automation of business process implementation and to allow for the execution of workflows that involve multiple heterogeneous applications (Martin, 2003). Process automation is the supplementing manual procedures with automatically controlled alternatives. This happens through the orchestration and integration of technology and human assets to form streamlined processes. These processes enable choreographing of activities between people, applications and external services and this enhances strategy implementation.

6. *Guiding Theories*

This study was guided by the following theories

McKinsey's 7S Model

This model got its name from McKinsey and company which was a consulting firm. It describes seven critical factors for effective strategy execution. The seven factors are: strategy, structure, systems, staff, skills, styles/culture and shared values (Kaplan, 2005).The 7-Smodel observes that organizations are successful in the event that they achieve an integrated harmony among the three S's of strategy structure and systems and four soft S's of skills staff The others are more difficult to comprehend and are more difficult to change and are termed as the most challenging elements of any change management strategy (Purcell and Boxal, 2003). Style and super ordinate goals (shared values). The hard S's are feasible and easy to identify in an organization.

The Okumus Strategy Implementation Framework

Okumus (2003) proposed a strategy implementation framework that holistically takes a comprehensive view to evaluate content, context, process and outcome in a complex environment. He suggests that this framework can be empirically tested by investigating cases of strategy implementation in organizations through collecting data from top, middle and lower management over a period of time. In his framework, he identified eleven implementation factors and these are; strategy development, environmental uncertainty, organizational structure, organizational culture, leadership, operational planning, resource allocation, communication, people, control and outcome (Viseras, Baines, & Sweeney, 2005). Some elements of this framework form the variables under investigation in this study

7. Research Design and Methodology

In this study, descriptive research design approach was used. According to Kothari (2003) descriptive studies are structured with clearly stated investigative questions. 3.2 Target Population. The population of the study was 596 comprising of 18 heads of department, 58 sectional heads and 596 employees in public sector departments in Kirinyaga County. A stratified random sampling method was used to select 10% of each stratum to form a sample size of 60 comprising of 2 departmental heads, 88 Sectional heads and 52 general employees. This is demonstrated below.

Table 1: Target Population and Sample Size

Response	Population	Sample size
Head of department	18	2
Sectional heads	58	6
Employees	520	52
Total	**512**	**60**

Retrieved from Kenya Open Data, (2014),https://opendata.go.ke/facet/counties/Kirinyaga

8. Data Collection Procedure and Analysis and Presentation

Semi-structured questionnaires were used. The questionnaires was administered through drop and pick method to the staff working in the selected departments.Descriptive statistics and Pearson's correlation coefficients were used to analyze the data. Data presentation was done by use of frequency tables, pie charts and graphs.

9. Findings

Correlation analysis was built in order to assess the individual association level of explanatory variables with independent variable and to test the relationship between the variables. Pearsons product moment correlation (r^2) statistic was established to test the significance of the correlation between the factors influencing strategy implementation in the selected public sector departments.

Table 2: Correlations

		Strategy Implementation	Leadership	Organizational Structure	Staff Performance	Process Automation
Strategy Implementation	Pearson Correlation	1.00	0.777	0.562	0.181	0.928
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.00	0.008	0.324	0.770	0.057
Leadership	Pearson Correlation	0.777	1.00	0.711	-0.561	0.493
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.008	0.00	0.021	0.092	0.0246

Organizational Structure	Pearson Correlation	0.562	0.711	1.00	-0.699	-0.776
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.324	0.021	0.00	0.189	0.123
Staff Performance	Pearson Correlation	0.181	-0.561	-0.699	1.00	0.791
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.770	0.092	0.189	0.00	0.111
Process Automation	Pearson Correlation	0.928	0.493	-0.776	0.791	1.00.
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.057	0.0246	0.123	0.111	0.00

Table 2 provides the Pearson correlation for the variables that were used in the regression model. The study found that the strategy implementation is positively correlated with the independent variables namely: Leadership; organizational structure; staff performance; and process automation. The positive correlations explain that Leadership was positively correlated to strategy implementation in the public sector at 77.70 percent; organizational structure was positively correlated to strategy implementation in the public sector at 56.20 percent; staff performance was positively correlated to strategy implementation in the public sector at 18.10 percent; and process automation was positively correlated to strategy implementation in the public sector at 92.80 percent.

i.   There is a strong positive relationship between leadership and strategy implementation hence the null hypothesis is rejected.
ii. There is a moderate positive relationship between the organizational structure and strategy implementation hence the null hypothesis is rejected.
iii. There is weak positive relationship between staff performance and strategy implementation hence the null hypothesis is rejected.
iv. There is a strong relationship between process automation and strategy implementation hence the null hypothesis is rejected.

Process automation presented a positive sign, and level of significance of 92.80 percent showing the high influence on strategy implementation. Staff performance had the lowest influence on strategy implementation with 18.10 percent. This shows process automation is the most crucial factor on strategy implementation followed by leadership, then organizational structure and lastly but not least staff performance in the selected public sector departments in Kirinyaga County.

10. Conclusion

The study findings revealed that process automation is the most crucial factor in strategy implementation followed by leadership, then organizational structure and lastly but not least staff

performance in the selected public sector departments in Kirinyaga County.It was also apparent that strategy implementation in public institutions is a far more complex and difficult process than in the market-driven private sector requiring skillful balancing of divergent forces and needs

11. Recommendations

Based on the findings, the study puts forth the following recommendations:

There is need for managers to include all employees in the strategy implementation process. This will help ensure that workers understand the goals, and promotes acceptance of challenging objectives that they help define. In addition, leadership must be able to win over the other managers and the entire workforce. The choice of an organization's structure, born out of the strategy pursued, determines organizational performance. Structure should be reassessed when strategy changes. Process automation must maintain a suitable balance between competing public values and the benefits of new technologies. Improved information flows and automated processes can produce efficiency, effectiveness, and transparency that will improve strategy implementation in the public sector.

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