



**FACTORS AFFECTING IMPLEMENTATION OF STRATEGIC PLANS IN BUSINESS
ENTERPRISES IN KENYA: A SURVEY OF SELECTED BUSINESS ENTERPRISES IN
THIKA SUB-COUNTY**

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Abstract

Business The primary objective of this research was to investigate factors that affect the implementation of strategic plans in selected business enterprises in Kenya and to establish the necessary recommendations. Mostly, strategy formulation is easy but implementation of strategy is a herculean task. This research will help the business enterprises make changes, and be effective and efficient in implementation of strategic plans in business enterprises. According to the findings, many organizations are dogged by poor leadership, meager resource allocation, skimpy and unattractive rewards, inadequate Information and Communications Technology (ICT) infrastructure and poor monitoring and evaluation. In order to successfully implement their strategic plans, it is recommended that business enterprises should be involve all stakeholders in their planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of strategic plans. Also the researcher recommends the business managers to increase resource allocation, motive their employees and disseminate the necessary information on regular basis for successful implementation of strategic plans. Moreover, the researcher recommends that middle managers be involved in the formulation as well as in the implementation of strategy for better organizational strategy implementation. The need for paradigm shift in implementation, monitoring and evaluation of strategic plans in businesses cannot be overemphasized.

Keywords: Information communication Technology, Implementation of Strategic Plans, Resource allocation, Style of Leadership

Introduction

Strategic management is a process, directed by top management, to determine the fundamental aims or goals of the organization, and ensure a range of decisions which will allow for the achievement of these aims or goals in the long term, whilst providing for adoptive responses in the short term (Saleemi, 2008). Further he says that the prime responsibility for the strategic management process is on the top management of the organization. Strategic management is being practiced by a growing number of small business and entrepreneurial companies. According to Thompson Jr.*et al* (2006), crafting and executing strategy are thus core management functions. Further among all the things managers do, nothing affects a company's ultimate success or failure more fundamentally than how well its management team charts the company's direction, develops competitively effective strategic moves and business approaches, and pursues what needs to be done internally to produce good day-in, day-out strategy execution. Implementing and executing a company's strategy is a job for the entire management team, not just a few senior managers (Thompson Jr.*et al*, 2006).

According to Saleemi (2008), strategic management approach requires that the modern manager be aggressive, innovative and think in an interpreted manner about his internal organization in the wider, outer environment to which there is an interdependence relationship which he has to effectively manage to survive the "turbulent waters" created by the risk changing and competitive business world.

David (2003) posits that management issues that are central to strategy implementation include establishing annual objectives, devising policies, allocating resources, altering an existing organizational structure; restructuring and reengineering, revising reward and incentive plans, minimizing resistance to change, marching managers with strategy, developing a strategy-supportive culture, adopting production operation processes, developing an effective human resource function and , if necessary, downsizing. Further he postulates that management changes are necessarily more extensive when strategies to be implemented move a firm in a major new direction. Managers and employee throughout an organization should participate early and directly in strategy-implementation decisions. Their role in strategy implementation should be built upon prior involvement in strategy-formulation activities.

Saleemi (2008) holds that strategy implementation is the sum total of the activities and choices required for the execution of a strategic plan and it is a process by which objectives, strategies and policies are put into action through the development of programs, budgets and procedures. Notably, successful strategy formulation does not guarantee successful strategic implementation of business strategic plans. In other words, strategy implementation is not synonymous with strategy formulation and therefore they are fundamentally different levels in strategic plans. Although inextricably interdependent, strategy formulation and strategy implementation are characteristically different (David, 2003). Further he points out that successful strategy implementation requires the support of as well as discipline and hard work from motivated managers and employees.

It is estimated that today, Kenya's informal sector constitutes 98 percent of all businesses in the country, absorbs annually up to 50 per cent of new non-farm employment seekers, has an employment growth rate of 12-14 percent, contributes 30 percent of total employment and 3 percent of GDP'. To its credit, Kenya, unlike most developing countries, has in official development policies recognized informal enterprise as more than a residual employer for the survival of poor households. In its Sessional Paper Number 2 of 1992, Small Enterprise and Jua Kali Development in Kenya, the government identifies the small-scale and Jua Kali enterprise sector for support to assist it to "graduate into the formal sector" and to become a major player in the creation of new jobs and economic growth. Strictly speaking, the term Jua Kali refers to the full range of enterprises employing between 1-49 workers in all sectors. Access to technical and managerial training, work sites, involvement of Jua Kalis in technological innovation, and creation of a positive enabling environment are key elements in the Government's Jua Kali development strategy. 'The Kenyan economy has seen a rebound growing at 3% after experiencing a jolt as a result of the post-election violence of 2008. From a negative growth in 2001, the economy experienced a high of over 7% in 2007 before hitting the floor in 2008. Vision 2030, Kenya's development blue-print estimates a 10% growth by 2012 to support a vibrant economy towards a newly industrialized state by 2030. A major driver is the informal sector of SMEs. (<http://www.entrepreneurstool.org>)

1.2 Statement of the Problem

When strategic plans are not implemented to achieve the intended results; the most wonderful strategy becomes redundant. The research project, therefore, sought to establish the factors that affect the implementation of strategic plans in business enterprises in Kenya with an aim of making the necessary recommendations thereupon.

1.3 Study Objectives

The specific objectives of this study were: to assess how leadership style affect implementation of strategic plans of selected business enterprises in Kenya, establish how resource allocation affect implementation of strategic plans of selected business enterprises in Kenya, determine how reward effect implementation of strategic plans of selected business enterprises in Kenya, explore the effect of information and communications technology affect implementation of strategic plans of selected business enterprises in Kenya.

1.4 Research Questions

This study was intended to answer the following questions:

- i. How does style of leadership affect the implementation of strategic plans of selected business enterprises in Kenya?
- ii. How does resource allocation affect the implementation of strategic plans of selected business enterprises in Kenya?

- iii. To what extent does reward affect the implementation of strategic plans of selected business enterprises in Kenya?
- iv. How does information and communications technology affect the implementation of strategic plans of selected business enterprises in Kenya?

1.5 Scope of Study

The survey confined itself to the business enterprises within Thika town. The study was on factors affecting implementation of strategic plans in business enterprises. The study was carried out in three months period. The target population was 150 respondents in the business enterprise. The study covered top management, middle management, supervisors and employees.

1.6 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A survey research design was used and a population of 1500 business enterprises formed the sampling frame. The sample for the study comprised of 150 business enterprises selected where simple random and stratified sampling technique was used since the population was heterogeneous. The questionnaire technique was used to obtain information from the respondents. Kothari (2004) observes that a questionnaire is good for research studies as they enable a researcher to collect more information which is not directly observable. Based on the above facts, the researcher used questionnaires to collect primary data since it was suitable research instrument for data collection in this study. Secondary data was collected from past research reports. After gathering, synthesis and analysis of data for three months, the researcher found that there is a wide gap between strategy formulation and implementation which is Achilles heel in many businesses.

1.7 RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Implementation of strategic plan

According to study findings in Table 1; in average the respondents were neutral/undecided about the influence of leadership style in implementation of strategic plan in the business organization as indicated by a mean of 3.30 and a standard deviation of 1.186; the respondents were neutral/undecided about the influence of resource allocation on implementation of strategic plan in the business organization as indicated by a mean of 3.02 and a standard deviation of 1.274; the respondents were neutral/undecided about the influence of reward on implementation of strategic plan in the business organization as indicated by a mean of 2.90 and a standard deviation of 1.215; the respondents were neutral/undecided about the influence of resource allocation on implementation of strategic plan in the business organization as indicated by a mean of 3.08 and a standard deviation of 1.289.

Table 1: Implementation of strategic plan

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Leadership style	1181	5	3.30	1.186	
Resource allocation	1181	5	3.02	1.274	
Reward	1181	5	2.90	1.215	
Information and Communications Technology	1181	5	3.08	1.289	

Style of leadership

According to study findings in Table 2; in average the respondents were neutral/undecided on whether everybody is freely involved in decision making opportunities as indicated by a mean of 2.55 and standard deviation of 1.114; in average the respondents disagreed that consultation cut across all departments as indicated by a mean of 2.14 and standard deviation of 0.933; in average the respondents disagreed that leaders interfere and control the activities of the organization as indicated by a mean of 2.15 and standard deviation of 0.844; in average the respondents disagreed that leaders interfere and control the activities of the organization as indicated by a mean of 2.15 and standard deviation of 0.844; in average the respondents disagreed that Leaders are highly supportive of strategic plans as indicated by a mean of 2.01 and standard deviation of 0.920.

Table 4.2: Style of leadership

Variables	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Everybody is freely involved in decision making opportunities	1181	5	2.55	1.114	
Consultation cut across all departments	1181	5	2.14	.933	
Leaders interfere and control the activities of the organization	1181	5	2.15	.844	
Leaders are highly supportive of strategic plans.	1181	5	2.01	.920	

Resource allocation

According to study findings in Table 3; in average the respondents disagreed with statement that financial resources are always available as indicated by a mean of 2.47 and standard deviation 0.949; in average the respondents disagreed that physical resources are adequate as indicated by

a mean of 1.86 and standard deviation 0.937; in average the respondents disagreed that their organization has enough human resources as indicated by a mean of 2.14 and standard deviation 0.787; in average the respondents disagreed that there was sufficient time to implement strategic plans as indicated by a mean of 2.06 and standard deviation 1.007.

Table 3: Response regarding the resource allocation in the business organization

Variables	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Financial resources are always available	1181	5		2.47	.949
Physical resources are adequate	1181	5		1.86	.937
Our organization has enough human resources	1181	5		2.14	.787
There is sufficient time to implement strategic plans	1181	5		2.06	1.007

Response on rewards

According to study findings in Table 4; in average the respondents were neutral/undecided that employees are committed to their duties as shown by a mean of 2.58 and standard deviation 1.015; in average the respondents disagreed that employees are adequately rewarded for good performance as shown by a mean of 1.97 and standard deviation 1.045; in average the respondents disagreed that employees are verbally appreciated for work well done as shown by a mean of 2.12 and standard deviation 0.753; in average the respondents disagreed that Self-administered reward are given in our organization as shown by a mean of 1.86 and standard deviation 0.954.

Table 4: Response on rewards

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Employees are committed to their duties	1181	5		2.58	1.015
Employees are adequately rewarded for good performance	1181	5		1.97	1.045
Employees are verbally appreciated for work well done	1181	5		2.12	.753
Self-administered reward are given in our organization	1181	5		1.86	.954

Information and communications Technology

According to study findings in Table 5; in average the respondents disagreed that they have enough computers as shown by a mean of 2.31 and standard deviation of 0.872; they disagreed that most employees are conversant with ICT as shown by a mean of 1.92 and standard

deviation of 0.944; they disagreed that Network hardware & software are adequate for all employees as shown by a mean of 2.19 and standard deviation of 0.795; they disagreed that there are televisions, telephones & radios in every department as shown by a mean of 1.93 and standard deviation of 0.913.

Table 5: Response regarding the ICT in the business organization

Variables	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
We have enough computers	1181	5		2.31	.872
Most employees are conversant with ICT	1181	5		1.92	.944
Network hardware & software are adequate for all employees	1181	5		2.19	.795
There are televisions, telephones & radios in every department	1181	5		1.93	.913

Regression analysis

The researcher conducted regression analysis to determine statistical significance between the independent variables (ICT, Style of leadership, Resource allocation, Reward) and dependent variable Implementation of strategic plan.

Table 6: Model summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square
1	.875	.766	.751

R-square is the Coefficient of determination that explains the extent to which changes in the dependent variable can be explained by the change in the independent variables or the percentage of variation in the dependent variable (Implementation of strategic plan) that is explained by all the three independent variables (ICT, Style of leadership, Resource allocation, Reward). From Table 6, the value of Adjusted R-Square is 0.751. This implies that, 75.1% of variation of Implementation of strategic plan was explained by ICT, Style of leadership, Resource allocation, Reward. From the findings, there is remaining 24.9% which implies that there are factors not studied in this study that affects Implementation of strategic plan.

Table 7: Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) table

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	24.856	4	6.214	7.975	.001

Residual	87.269	112	.779
Total	112.125	116	

a. Dependent Variable: Implementation of strategic plan

b. Predictors: (Constant), ICT , Style of leadership , Resource allocation , Reward

The ANOVA test is used to determine whether the model is important in predicting the Implementation of strategic plan. At 0.05 level of significance the ANOVA test indicated that in this model the independent variables namely; ICT, Style of leadership, Resource allocation, Reward are important in predicting Implementation of strategic plan as indicated by significance value=0.001 which is less than 0.05 level of significance (P-value=0.001<0.05).

Table 8: Coefficient of Multiple determinations of the variables

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error			
(Constant)	2.975	.428		6.951	.000
Style of leadership	.253	.123	.175	2.049	.043
1 Resource allocation	.393	.125	.276	3.154	.002
Reward	.383	.134	.275	2.858	.005
ICT	.157	.148	.100	1.061	.291

a. Dependent Variable: Implementation of strategic plan

From the findings in table 8 above, at 5% level of significance, Style of leadership was a significant predictor of Implementation of strategic plan where (p=0.043<0.05). Resource allocation was a significant predictor of Implementation of strategic plan where (p=0.002<0.05). Reward was a significant predictor of Implementation of strategic plan where (p=0.005<0.05).ICT was not a significant predictor of Implementation of strategic plan where (0.291<0.05).

Where, is Y the dependent variable (Implementation of strategic plan), X_1 is Style of leadership, X_2 is Resource allocation, X_3 is Reward and X_4 is ICT.

As per the SPSS generated regression Table 4.8the equation

($Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta_4 X_4 + \epsilon$) becomes:

$$Y=2.975+0.253X_1+0.393X_2+.383X_3+.157X_4$$

According to the equation taking all factors constant; the Implementation of strategic plan was 2.975. A unit increase of Style of leadership would lead to a 0.253 increase in Implementation of strategic plan; a unit increase Resource allocation would lead to 0.393 increase in Implementation of strategic plan; a unit increase in Reward leads to 0.383 increase in Implementation of strategic plan. A unit increase in ICT leads to 0.157 increase in Implementation of strategic plan. Therefore according to the study findings Resource allocation contributes more to increase in Implementation of strategic plan.

1.8 Summary

The purpose of the study was to assess the factors effecting the implementation of strategic plans in selected business enterprises in Kenya. This is the summary of the findings of this research study as was obtained and the analysis of data collected from the sample subjects on the various variables that affect implementation of strategic plans. The survey has been planned with painstaking attention to detail.

To assess how leadership style affect implementation of strategic plans of selected business enterprises in Kenya

The survey found out that leadership had a direct impact on implementation of strategic plans in many business organizations. According to the findings, many organizations do not freely involve all the stakeholders in decision making process while consultations do not cut across all departments. At the same time, many leaders seemed to interfere and control the activities of their organizations while leaders lacked commitment to strategic plans.

To establish how resource allocation affect implementation of strategic plans of selected business enterprises in Kenya

The study also comes to a conclusion that implementation of strategies is also called practical strategic management where resources should be optimally be allocated. The purpose of implementing strategies is that managers and employees need to collaborate in order to allocate the available resources effectively and efficiently. In other words, implementing strategic plans is the herculean task in strategic management process especially where resources are meager and scanty requires coordinated and concerted effort. Implementation success depends to rewarding and motivating employees who profoundly enhances performance. Formulated strategies must be implemented, evaluated and monitored in order for the business organizations to realize their objectives. Managers should take a leading role in identifying skilled employees and must allocate the resources efficiently, fairly and effectively for maximum implementation of strategy.

To determine how reward effect implementation of strategic plans of selected business enterprises in Kenya

Successful implementation requires effective management and integration of these elements to ensure that the strategy “takes hold” in the daily life of the firm. There is little doubt that highly

motivated employees can significantly increase the likelihood that organizational strategies will be successfully implemented. The way that management recognizes outstanding performance or fails to recognize it sends signals throughout the organization about what is desired and what is worth to try to achieve. These signals should support the overall strategic direction of the firm.

Strategies and their requirements should be communicated and clearly defined for all affected employees. All affected employees must receive the management and organization support necessary to implement the strategies.

To explore the effect of information and communications technology on the implementation of strategic plans of selected business enterprises in Kenya

Further the study found out that technology is very crucial on strategic plans. Technology has become an indispensable tool on human development and civilization expansion in the past and present times. Successful implementation of strategies results from integrating and coordination of technological innovations, production processes, marketing, financing and human resource. The leadership must capitalize on timely dissemination of information for timely and effective implementation of strategic plans.

Management and organizational support include appropriate leadership, resource allocation, ICT and effective motivational systems.

1.9 Conclusions

Strategic planners must provide effective leadership in such a way to fully implement the strategic plan thus leapfrogging the organization to high growth opportunities. Top management is not only involved in crafting strategic plans but it also plays an important role in growing inner capabilities and promoting intrapreneurship and competitiveness. Therefore, paying serious attention to identifying effective factors on the failure of strategic decisions implementation is crucial for organizational leadership. Leadership is involved in motivating people and developing key employees' skills for effective and efficient strategy implementation. Without active participation of employee, implementation of strategic plans remains a mirage.

A resource is an asset, process, skill or knowledge controlled by the corporation. A company's sustained competitive advantage is primarily determined by the resource endowments. The firm's resources can be classified in terms of strengths and weaknesses. In order to successfully implement their strategic plans, business organization must increase resource allocation. Meager and scarce resource allocation is a recipe for failure of strategic plans. The study found that majority of organizations lacked adequate resources to fully implement strategic plans. Others allocated resources unfairly due to lack of budgeting hence lack of core competencies. Available resources should be allocated to priority areas and human resource be involved for maximum implementation of strategic plans.

The study found that many organizations do not practice proper implementation of rewards. Skimpy rewards have hindered implementation of strategic plans. At the same time, the survey found that unfair allocations of resources and paltry resources have hampered implementation of

strategic plans. In other words meager allocations of resources have deterred effective implementation of strategic plans. Lack of implementation of strategic plans due to limited resources seemed to be the Achilles heels of many businesses.

Technology has had a great impact on human development and civilization expansion all through the history. Technology can be defined as knowledge, products, processes, instruments, procedures and systems which helps producing goods and services. Technology is at the center of systems designed for finding customers' needs and satisfaction. Successful implementing of strategies results from integrating and coordination of technologic innovations, production processes, marketing, financing and personnel. Review, develop and implement an ICT strategy that is aligned to overall business strategy. By this means defined goals are achieved.

2.0 Recommendations

After meticulous gathering, synthesis and critical analysis of data gathered on the survey for three months, this study suggests several recommendations for business enterprises.

Business leadership should not only be involved in formulation of strategic plans but they should actively participate in implementation also. Leaders should involve all stakeholders in the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of strategic plans. In order to successfully implement their strategic plans, the business leadership must adopt collective and participative leadership.

The management of business enterprises has the responsibility of employing and creating an enabling environment that is favorable for successful implementation of strategic plans. In other words, the business management must ensure that climate in their businesses is conducive through commitment to strategic plan. Flexible organizational structure, culture of high performance, attractive rewards and incentives, availability of sufficient resources and effective ICT as some of the key to successful implementation of strategic plan.

Employees pay is an indication of their worthiness to the organization. In order for business organizations to retain the best employees, they must motivate employees to work harder and to help the company achieve its strategic goals. It is important to note that the objective of compensation is to attract high-quality workers from the labour market. Therefore it is recommended that organizations should compensate their employees handsomely. Labour cost may be as high as 60 percent in the manufacturing environment and is higher in service organizations.

The leadership must provide stakeholders with timely, efficient, effective and relevant information throughout the organization to shun information asymmetry. They must plan and coordinate all ICT projects to support the achievement of the corporate business strategy. They must design and implement controls and procedures that ensure accuracy and reliability in data capture, processing and dissemination of information.

2.1 Areas for Further research

This research study focused on the factors that affect implementation of strategic plans in business enterprises in Kenya. The researcher suggests further study to be carried on how other factors like organizational structure, organization culture, level of training and monitoring and evaluation affect implementation of strategic plans in business enterprises. Also the researcher proposes that a study be carried out on challenges that face implementation of strategic plans in institutions of higher learning and NGOs and how implementation can be improved.

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