ROLE OF ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE ON STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION OF PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES IN KENYA: A CASE STUDY OF JARAMOGI OGINGA ODINGA UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

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Abstract

Organizational structure is the main key element in improving the efficiency of all organizations. It is considered as the framework of the organization providing a foundation through which organizations functions; but translating strategic thought into organization action is the most difficult phase of strategic management, and without successful implementation of strategies the organization will not achieve its objectives. The study established the role of organizational structure on strategy implementation in public universities through three objectives. The theories used were Resource dependence theory, Dynamic capability theory and stakeholder's theory. The findings of the study were: organization resources contribute to achievement of strategic objectives to a moderate extent of 3.8667 mean weight; development of competencies among employees in the university as a resource allocation element helps in strategy implementation to moderate extent as its mean weight was 3.853 strength; clear allocation of resources in line with university strategies as resource allocation component of organization structure influence moderately strategy implementation in the university. Financial resources distribution enable strategy implementation to a great extent as the respondents rated highest by the respondents at 4.213 mean weights; the role of management control on strategy implementation in Public Universities in Kenya; communication on strategy implementation in Public Universities in Kenya. The findings indicate that formal orientation programs as a communication element contribute to strategy implementation to a large extent at mean weight of 3.9733 strength. Therefore, the universities should maximize the financial resources distribution to achieve effective strategy implementation in public universities.

Key Words: organizational structure, organizational resources, performance, strategy implementation

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1. Introduction

The structure of organizations models the behavior of its employees who become products of organizational structures in either positive or negative manner Organizational structure has been broadly considered to be an anatomy of the organization that provides a foundation within which institutions function. Thus, structural deficiencies may affect employee's behavior and performance negatively which adversely impacts organizational strategy implementation. Organizational structure which is inappropriate regarding the objectives of the organization is a hindering bureaucracy and hinders organizations from achieving their goals or misleads them. A correct organizational structure clarifies how duties are determined and what formal coordination mechanisms and organizational patterns of interaction that must be met (Bourgeois and Mitchell 1998). Organizational structure is considered the management framework adopted to oversee the various activities of institutions project or other activities of an organization. A suitable organizational structure assists the management team to achieve high performance in the organization. Institutions require efficient and effective organizational structure in order to successfully accomplish its goals and objectives (Sudarshan, 2010). Organizational structure helps in development of capacity to implement strategies (Kachru, 2005). Structural components are an important means to the facilitation of smooth translation of organizational strategy and policies to actions that lead to motivation and coordination of activities and people working in an organization. Hence an appropriate organizational structure is crucial for successful strategy implementation in any institution (Kachru et al, 2005). It is crucial to determine in the strategic implementation process the extent in which organizational structure design can change for the different strategic plans. Organizational structure should not only accommodate the intended strategy but also the emergent strategies. Organizations should be able to incorporate new strategies and operations (Sudarshan, 2010).Shifting emphasis towards innovation, proactiveness and risk taking is necessary in responding to the innovation challenges and speed requirements of strategic change initiatives. Organizational structure can therefore be referred as a framework within which strategy implementation should take place in order to achieve organizational objectives (Harsh, 2012).

According to Richard et al. (2009), organizational performance encompasses three specific areas of firm outcomes: financial performance (profits, return on assets, return on investment); product market performance (sales, market share); and shareholder return (total shareholder return, economic value added). Specialists in many fields are concerned with organizational performance including strategic planners, operations, finance, legal, and organizational development. Improving the productivity of an institution is essential to its survival in the competitive world. The purpose of all productivity related endeavors is to bring about lasting improvements in the performance of an education institution (Shrestha, 2005). Performance is something for which all education institutions strive

for, regardless of their size. Small institutions want to get big, big institutions want to get bigger. Indeed, institutions have to grow at least a bit every year in order to accommodate the increased education needs that emerge over time. Bloisi, (2007) highlights importance of structure as a means of getting people work towards common goals thus acting as facilitator in pursuit of organizational goals. Looking simple but organization will have to make sure that employees identify with organizational thoughts and willingly forgo personal interests. Thus putting greater burden while designing structure which accommodates employees and harnesses an environment where staff takes organizational goals as their own and share believe of being valued through their work, hence good structure should provide right blend of command and control plus employee independence without feeling of resentment that hinders organization pursuit of its mission. Superior structure promotes cultural values; cultivate integration and coordination as it seeks to strengthen relationship of individuals and tasks. Jones (2013) notes that from this relationship emerge norms and rules contributing to improved communications and common language that improves team performance. Contrary to Jones, Turner (2006) points to structure as primary reason why organization struggle with cultural change as these structure often box people in old styled formations which are not aligned to new business philosophies.

Higher education institutions are complex organizations with a strong sense of tradition and a distinct culture. According to Vroom (1984) institutions of higher Education are characterized by vagueness in their educational mission statement and a tendency toward anarchy. The organizational structure is generally bifurcated between academic and administrative components. One of the strong values of the academic component is the "academic freedom" where it may not tolerate any interference from outside sources. The pressure of factors such as tenure creates a unique situation at higher education institutions. Higher education institutions have many stakeholders who must be involved in the Strategic management process. Apart from administrators, faculty, staff, and students, the institutions also need to account for the interests of students' parents, government agencies, alumni, the community, and accreditation agencies. Each of these stakeholders makes demands upon the institution and the strategic management must bring these stakeholders into the strategic management process to maximize client satisfaction. The choice of a method for strategic management implementation will depend upon situational factors such as size of the institution, institutional structure, and complexity of programs, institutional culture, and the style of the management. In view of the complex characteristics of higher education institutions, the implementation approach should be based upon high participation (Vroom, 1984). Kenyan universities and colleges, especially public ones, have always planned but there was never anything strategic about it because the planning has always been the traditional one that followed the government's five year planning cycle. It is common knowledge that government's five year planning cycles mostly involved adjusting plans for inflation and political

changes especially to accommodate the whims of the ruling regime. The planning was never seriously focused on the long term. This was the case until the advent of performance contracting that demanded that planning be strategic levels (Lewa, Mutuku & Mutuku, 2009).

Strategy is a tool that a public university and colleges can use to find its competitive advantage and place within the ever turbulent operating environment. Kenya public universities and must bring about the needed institutional redesign and devise an effective strategic planning system that will guide their operations. The recent guidelines issued by the Ministry of Education, seem to suggest that by pursuing a greater mission differentiation and reallocation of resources they will be better positioned to respond to the changing needs of their constituencies (Ministry of Education, 2006). Benjamin and Carroll (1998) discussing California education points that the present course of higher education in the state in which student demand, tuition, and costs are rising much faster than public funding is unsustainable. Unless significant steps are taken to address the situation, hundreds of thousands of Californians will be denied access to higher education within the next 20 years. The same problem has been noted in Kenya's higher education sector (Lewa, Mutuku & Mutuku, 2009).

The development of a universities' wide strategic plan by the Ministry of Education (2006) to be followed by all universities and colleges in Kenya in their strategic planning processes is a welcome move. Here in Kenya, Public universities and Colleges have started to get serious about strategic planning because they recognize the

challenges they face today and also because they are now required by the government to carry out strategic planning (GOK, 2006). Kenyan public universities and colleges that are essentially traditional in orientation must find new ways of dealing with the issues facing them including increasing competition from private universities and colleges (Lewa, Mutuku & Mutuku, 2009). It is therefore imperative that Strategic planning is one of the major steps the universities can take to address the challenges they face in enhancing the quality of their programmes in provision of Higher Education. Improvement on the quality of education focuses on setting of standards for the various variables and ensuring that the set standards are adhered to according to the While Commission for University Education (CUE). The Directorate of Quality Assurance and Standards is mandated to co-ordinate, follow-up and advice on curriculum delivery. According to Chege, (2009) most higher education institutions have a mission, vision, core values and objectives well stated, and some pasted on walls, receptions, institutions' handbooks, websites among other places. Ideally, these visions, missions, core values and objectives should act as navigators for these institutions to achieve their goals and realize their dreams. Higher education institutions are ideally to be a lead in education and research in any country (Chege, 2009).

2. Statement of the problem

It is generally believed that organizational effectiveness is primarily due to its organizational structure. The selection of structure also determines whether a chosen strategy can be successfully implemented and achieve the desired performance in an

organization. However, there is a lack of empirical studies examining the relationship of structure and strategy implementation in institutions of higher learning. Therefore the researcher is motivated by the above problem to investigate the role of organizational structure on strategy implementation in public Universities in Kenya with a case of Jaramogi Oginga Odinga University of Science and Technology.

3. Objectives of the study

The specific objectives of this study were:

i. To assess the role of resource allocation on strategy implementation in Public Universities in Kenya.

ii. To determine the role of management control on strategy implementation in Public Universities in Kenya.

iii. To determine the role of communication on strategy implementation in Public Universities in Kenya.

4. Research methodology

The study adopted a descriptive case design. The target population was 150 respondents from whom primary data was obtained. The target population for this study was 150 respondents consisting of the Vice Chancellor, Deputy Vice Chancellors(3), Registrars (3), Assistant Registrars(10) Directors (7), Coordinators (10), Dean of Schools (10) Dean of Students (1), Human Resource Manager, Finance officer, Deputy Finance Officers (2) Procurement officer, Departmental Heads (25) and Administrative officers (75) who were selected using a census sampling technique. The data was analyzed using descriptive statistics tools like percentages and mean weights and presented using tables.

5. Results of the Study

Resource Allocation and Strategy Implementation

The study established the influence of resource allocation on strategy implementation in public universities in Kenya with particular interest of Jaramogi Oginga Odinga University of Science and Technology. The respondents were asked to rate the statement of resource allocation on a five point Likert Scale ranging from strongly agree (5.0) agree(4.0) moderately agree(3.0) disagree(2.0) and strongly disagree (1.0) on the extent to which the resource allocation elements contribute to strategy implementation. The response rate obtained from the field was presented as in table 1 below.

Table 1 Resource Allocation and Strategy Implementation

Resource Allocation elements	5	4	3	2	1	Σf_i	$\Sigma w_i f_i$	$\Sigma wf_i/\Sigma f_i$
Organizational resources contribute to achievement of university strategic objectives	48	51	36	13	02	150	580	3.8667
Clear allocation of resources in line with university strategies	11	52	41	39	07	150	471	3.14
Development of competencies	62	29	38	17	04	150	578	3.853

among the employees

Management Control elements	5	4	3	2	1	Σ f$_i$	Σ w$_i$f$_i$	Σ wf$_i$/Σf$_i$
Financial resources distribution enable strategy implementation	64	59	24	1	2	150	632	4.213
Right manpower to implement university strategies	03	58	76	10	03	150	486	3.240
Technological resources sufficiency and distribution enable strategy implementation	15	48	58	19	10	150	484	3.227

Table 1 shows that organization resources contribute to achievement of strategic objectives to moderate extent of 3.8667 mean weight; therefore it moderately influences strategy implementation in the public university. Development of competencies among employees in the university as a resource allocation element helps in strategy implementation to moderate extent as its mean weight was 3.853 strength. The right manpower to implement university strategies was rated at 3.240 weight strength; for technological resources sufficiency and distribution enables strategy implementation moderately at 3.227 mean weight strength. While clear allocation of resources in line with university strategies as resource allocation component of organization structure influence moderately strategy implementation in the university. For financial resources distribution enable strategy implementation to a great extent as the respondents rated highest by the respondents at 4.213 mean weights. This indicates that strategy implementation is greatly influence by the availability of financial resources and their distribution in the university.

Management Control and Strategy Implementation

The study established the extent to which the principles of management control influence strategy implementation in public universities with particular interest in Jaramogi Oginga Odinga University of Science and Technology. The information on this variable the respondents were asked to rate them on a five point Likert scale ranging from strongly agree (5) agree(4) moderately agree(3) disagree(2) and strongly disagree (1) on the extent to which the management control elements contribute to strategy implementation. The information collected from the respondents was recorded as in table 2 below

Table 2 Management Control and Strategy Implementation

Management Control elements	5	4	3	2	1	Σ f$_i$	Σ w$_i$f$_i$	Σ wf$_i$/Σf$_i$
University leadership clear vision for the future influence strategy Implementation	61	47	38	03	01	150	614	4.0933

	5	4	3	2	1	Σ fᵢ	Σ wᵢfᵢ	Σwfᵢ/Σfᵢ
Recruitment of capable workforce to implement strategies in their respective positions	10	35	66	26	13	150	453	3.020
Appropriate top management commitment to university strategy with controlled communication to employees	3	71	64	08	04	150	511	3.407
Appropriate and formal guidelines in dealing operational activities with employees input	23	69	45	10	03	150	542	3.6133
Adoption of policies and procedures manuals readily available help strategy implementation	26	72	38	11	3	150	557	3.7133
Constant review of university strategies communicating changes for purposes of effective implementation	19	56	51	05	19	150	501	3.3400

Table 2 shows that management control and strategic implementation contribute to achievement of strategic objectives to moderate extent with university leadership clear vision for the future influence strategy implementation 4.0933 mean weight; therefore it largely influences strategy implementation in the public university. Where else, recruitment of capable workforce to implement strategies in their respective positions has the least contributing role towards management control and strategy implementation, with a mean weight of 3.02.

Communication and Strategy Implementation

The study established the role of communication on strategy implementation in the university. The responses were rated on a five point Likert scale ranging from strongly agree (5.0) agree(4.0) moderately agree(3.0) disagree(2.0) and strongly disagree (1.0) on the extent to which the resource communication elements contribute to strategy implementation. The information collected from the respondents was recorded as in table 3 below.

Table 3 Communication and Strategy Implementation

Communication Elements	5	4	3	2	1	Σ fᵢ	Σ wᵢfᵢ	Σwfᵢ/Σfᵢ
Organization clear lines of strategy communication	31	82	30	05	02	150	555	3.700
Formal established structures on	13	81	23	25	08	150	516	3.440

channels of communication for strategy engagements undertaken by the university								
Open contributions of ideas by individuals towards strategy implementation by the university	15	47	32	51	05	150	466	3.1067
Policies and Procedure manuals are available and as resources communication element contribute to strategy implementation	24	62	49	10	05	150	540	3.600
Formal orientation programs contribute to strategy implementation in the university	40	73	32	3	2	150	596	3.9733
Departments or sections autonomy on regular meetings and briefings on strategy processes contribute to strategy implementation	9	65	54	13	09	150	502	3.347

Table 3 indicate that formal orientation programs as resource communication elements contribute to strategy implementation to a moderate extent at mean weight of 3.9733 strength. For organization's clear lines of strategy communication was rated by the respondent's at3.700 mean weight. While policies and procedure manuals availability as resource communication elements contribute to strategy implementation to moderate extent as rated by the respondents at mean weight of 3.600 strength. The formal established structures as channels of communication for strategy engagements undertaken by the university moderately influence strategy implementation as rated by the respondents at 3.440 weight strength. It was found out that the most commonly used form of communication is where the information flows from top to bottom.

Conclusions of the Study

The first objective of the study was to assess the role of resource allocation on strategy implementation in Public Universities in Kenya. The results of the analysis revealed there was an indication that financial resources distribution enable strategy implementation majorly. The second objective of the study was to determine the role of management control on strategy implementation in Public Universities in Kenya. The results of the analysis indicate that university leadership clear vision for the future influence strategy implementation is a major contributor to strategy implementation. The third objective of the study was to determine the role of communication on strategy implementation in Public Universities in Kenya. The findings indicate that formal orientation

programs as a communication element contribute to strategy implementation to a large extent. Based on the above findings and conclusions, the study recommends the following: that the universities should maximize the financial resources distribution to achieve effective strategy implementation in public universities.

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