

## **FACTORS INFLUENCING IMPLEMENTATION OF CHANGE IN SELECTED PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES IN KENYA**

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### **Abstract**

*Considering the constantly growing need for change in today's environment, handling changes within organizations has turn out to be extra important than ever before. This study purposed to investigate the extent to which organizational factors (especially change leadership and organizational culture) influence the implementation of change in selected public Universities in Kenya. The Study focused on two public Universities recently upgraded to fully fledged public universities; Jaramogi Oginga Odinga University of Science & Technology (JOOUST) in Siaya County and Kisii University(KSIU) in Kisii County from University colleges, thus finding themselves at the very centre of the need to persistently initiate changes as a coping strategy with the increased demand put on them by a hastily dynamic academic industry. Three dominant change theories/models; Kurt Lewin's Freezing- change –refreezing, John Kotter's 8 step change management model and Prosci's ADKAR change models formed the basis for the study. A descriptive survey research design was adopted with a sample of 170 respondents drawn from a target population of 1,425 formed of the University management Boards (UMBs), Deans/Directors/Heads of Departments/Sections, Teaching and Non teaching staff and Student Association's leaders. Interview schedules and questionnaires were used to collect data, SPSS was used to produce descriptive. The study found that majority of employees, top management*

*and other change stakeholders in public universities consider leadership, organizational and personal culture to have great and very great extent of influence on change implementation process. The study recommends among others that public universities need to be sensitive to human factors during change implementation process and practice democratic leadership that allows for staff and stakeholder involvement right from the very beginning of any change initiative/programme. Due and deserving attention need to be given to all organizational factors as their impact on change implementation process are to a great and very great extent in most cases.*

*Keywords: Influence, Implementation, Change, Leadership, Culture*

## **INTRODUCTION**

The phrase that goes “There is nothing permanent except change” has most likely been said and heard by many people. Why then is it so hard to create change in organizations? It is indeed a riddling question. Hannan and Freeman's (1977, 1984) structural inertia theory states that organizations are relatively inflexible and it is difficult and hazardous to impose change on them. Latest research, however, indicates that there are approaches which can help organizations go through change without failing. Scheid (2010) carried out a survey in 248 companies and identified factors for successful change management in Organizations which include effective and strong executive sponsorship, buy-in from front line managers and employees, putting up exceptional teams, continuous and targeted communication and planned and organized approach.

Olive (2009) had also concluded that the success of change depends on the organization's ability to make all their employees participate in the change process in one way or the other. The executive team should participate actively and visibly throughout the change project, build a coalition of sponsorship, manage resistance and communicate directly with employees.

The dynamic business environment today requires frequent changes both in the way organizations operate and in the organizational structure. Turner (1999) and Abrahamson (2000) note that change is endemic and has become an essential determinant in maintaining a company's competitive edge. In their opinion, the old bureaucratic style of management is incompetent of meeting the challenges of the changing environment.

Given the political, social and economic climate of today, some form of change is inevitable and has become a common event for organizations and their stakeholders (Akin & Palmer, 2000; Burke, 2002, Heracleous & Barrett, 2001; Piderit, 2000). But what is change?

“Change means the new state of things is different from the old state of things” (French and Bell 1999). Organizational change thus means the new state of things in the organization is different from the old state of things in the organization. In simple terms, change is understood as alteration of status quo.

The world has changed and will continue to change. Senior and Fleming (2006) provided a picture of the future and how it will affect people and their willingness to change within organizations. They predict there will be a structural change with less layers of management and a reduction of the numbers of people working together. There will be a stronger pressure for individuals to work harder and longer. The working pattern is also assumed to change. It will be normal to have more than one place of employment and a greater number of people will work from home. The workforce characteristics will also change with the rate of birth decreasing and the number of old people increasing, leading to a rise in the average age of people working. The workforce skills will change with a higher requirement for workers to learn new skills during their career due to changing technologies and a more competitive environment. The workers will also have more employment choices, with an increasing rate of self-employment and working abilities in small organizations. Due to an ageing population, pension schemes will also be necessary (Senior & Fleming, 2006).

Today’s organizations operate under increasing demands for change. The market has radically changed due to globalization, strong competition, technical development and a customer-driven market (Härenstam et al., 2004). This high pace of change means that the organization must change behavior and manage to rapidly adapt to shifts in the market ( Nonas, 2005). According to Burnes (2004) change is an ever-present feature of organizational life, both at an operational and strategic level. Therefore, there should be no doubt regarding the importance to any organization of its ability to identify where it needs to be in the future, and how to manage the changes required in getting there. From a practical point of view, there is a clear need for an integrated and holistic framework to help top management think about how to formulate, implement and sustain a fundamental change in complex organizations like Universities.

When an organization introduces a change to the organization, it is at the end of the day going to be impacting one or more of the following four parts of how the organization operates: processes, systems, organizational structure and job roles. Ultimately, the goal of change is to improve the organization by altering how work is done. While the notion of 'becoming more competitive' or 'becoming closer to the customer' or 'becoming more efficient' can be the motivation to change, at some point these goals must be transformed into the specific impacts

on progressive alterations in processes, systems, organizational structures or job roles (Prosci, 2007).

With the management environment experiencing so much change, organizations must then learn to become comfortable with change as well. Therefore, the ability to adapt to organizational change is an essential ability required in the workplace today. Yet, major and rapid organizational change is profoundly difficult because the structure, culture, and routines of organizations often reflect a persistent and difficult-to-remove "imprint" of past periods, which are resistant to radical change even as the current environment of the organization changes rapidly (Dean, Christina 2009). Due to the growth of technology, modern organizational change is largely motivated by exterior innovations rather than internal moves. When these developments occur, the organizations that adapt quickest create a competitive advantage for themselves, while those that refuse to change get left behind (Marshak, Robert J. 2005).

In the early 1980s, a survey of management consultants summarized that fewer than 10 percent of well and clearly formulated new strategies were successfully implemented (Kaplan and Norton, 2001). Kotter (1996) begins his book with highlighting the fact that most of the transformation efforts undertaken in firms end up with a failure, producing only disappointment, frustration, burned-out and scared employees, and waste of resources. Beer and Nohria (2000) have also shown that currently, many change projects and development programs produce unsatisfactory results. A 2006 study by Harvard Business Review further found that 66% of change initiatives fail to achieve their desired business outcomes.

Kotter (1996) is however, quick to point out that a significant amount of the waste and failures could be avoided, if only more energy and attention was put into avoiding the most common and biggest problems transformation efforts are typically facing. Change competence, therefore, must increase for an organization to increase its ability to change. Change competence is described as the ability to manage change in the environment and to be able to form a continuous renewal of this process. Change competence is also about choosing a change strategy that matches the organization and its members' experience of change processes.

In Rwanda, barriers between departments, not enough support from senior management, resistance of middle management to change, focus too much on technological aspects and too less on people, scope of change not well defined, project is oversized, resistance of users to change, not enough resources available, budget needed higher than expected, organization and procedures are not adapted to the new situation (technological and organizational integration on different levels), no transparent goals/objectives, time for implementation needed longer than expected, goals too aggressive and organization is not

capable to cope, technological limitations (performance/missing functionality), barriers from external stakeholders (customers/supplier) and intercultural problems are rated as the most important problems facing change initiatives in public universities (Kamugisha, 2013).

There should be frequent organizational changes to be able to cope with the ever turbulent environment in which Universities operate. Helping workers deal with change is one of the greatest challenges Universities in Rwanda are facing today. This is because change is quite a complex and often an emotional process. Understanding how people deal with change will help an organization manage a successful transition (Kamugisha, 2013).

According to Hodge, Anthony and Gales (1996), not all change is initiated at the same pace. Change can be either slow and deliberate or quick and radical. This study focused entirely on formally planned change. But change may also emerge through an unplanned and unforeseen process.

Organizations as such do not just roam without direction, but they change and respond to events in their environment. But perhaps the greatest challenge facing modern organizations is the need to identify appropriate areas to change and to successfully implement those changes in various aspects of the organization. Choosing the right point is not an easy task, and there is no one single right answer for all organizations. Such factors as the nature of the organization's financial muscle, the people in the organization, the existing culture, leadership, policies, structures to name but a few, have differential impact on how much change an organization needs and on how an organization successfully implements the change. Very often the inability to successfully implement change is a result of the failure to produce shared understanding or meaning among organizational members involved in the change (Lewis, 1996).

The above described situation and future, is also a reality for public Universities in Kenya. The game has changed. For them to survive, compete and prosper, changes in policies, members, products, systems, structures and processes must occur over time. These variables have dramatically come together to alter both the purposes higher education is asked to serve and the resources available to it. Higher education is now faced with a new set of social roles and responsibilities, an increasingly diverse student population, new and changing demands from both students and society, limited or declining resources, and escalating costs. Together these changes comprise a fundamentally new set of challenges to the higher education system in Kenya.

It even becomes more worrisome for these Universities when their current increased number scrambling for the ever scarce government resources is considered. There are currently 31 public Universities in Kenya according to Commission for University Education, all depending

on the already over burdened government account. More are expected to come in still and the number of students is expected to rapidly multiply with the otherwise successful implementation of the Free Primary Education programme in the country. Indeed, the political leadership in Kenya has been quoted in the recent past of its intentions to increase student intake to public universities through a double intake. This meant that each public university will take higher number of students above the admissions of previous years. This academic year (2011/2012), universities will be admitting 32, 611 students. This number is 8,000 more than the 24,000 students admitted the previous year (Daily Nation June 21, 2011).

Prior to these events, there were only 7 public universities in the country, the number of students getting entry in them hardly went beyond 10,000. When they required money for development or offsetting recurrent expenditure etc., the Kenyan state often invested what was necessary. This gave the Universities a protected situation where initiative and innovation were unnecessary and the possibilities of failure did not exist. Today Kenya Government is pursuing Vision 2030, the country's new development blueprint covering the period 2008 to 2030. It aims to transform Kenya into a newly industrializing, "middle-income country providing a high quality life to all its citizens by the year 2030" (Republic of Kenya, 2007).

Critical players in achieving Kenya Vision 2030 are the universities. This is because education and training at university level, according to the Government (Republic of Kenya, 1999), is expected to achieve the following: imparting hands-on skills and capacity to perform multiple and specific national and international tasks, creation of dependable and sustainable workforce in form of human resource capital for national growth and development, creation of entrepreneurial capacity for empowering individuals to create self -employment and employment for others, offering opportunities for advancement of learning beyond basic education with strong leaning towards scholarship and research, bridging the gap between theory and practice in various disciplines of education and training among others.

Sifuna (2012), while investigating leadership in Kenyan public universities and the challenges of Autonomy and academic freedom found out that there are numerous challenges facing public universities in Kenya today that require innovation and continuous change in order to cope effectively. Gudo, Olel and Oanda (2011) also in their study on University expansion in Kenya and issues of quality, although focusing on challenges and opportunities, came up with similar findings. Since these changes are inevitable, it is important to study the change process in order to better understand it and determine the extent of influence certain key organizational factors have on its successful implementation within public Universities.

Bennis and Nanus (1985) in the context of transformational leadership, argued that today's leaders must have the capacity to move organizations from current to future states, create visions of potential opportunities for organizations, commitment to change within employees, and to promote new cultures and strategies in organizations that mobilize and focus energy and resources.

Effective leaders are capable of reframing the thinking of those whom they guide, enabling them to see that significant changes are not only imperative but achievable. Yet the challenges facing these leaders go beyond determining what needs to be done differently. They must also address how to execute these decisions in a manner that has the greatest possibility for success (Conner 1993). Kotter (1996) says that the primary function of leadership is to produce change. Leadership produces change by setting a direction, aligning people, and motivating and inspiring them to embrace the change.

Schein (2004) says that cultures normally stay stable until leaders act to change them. To change a culture, it is important to change its value set and for leaders it is central that they demonstrate and provide public displays of new values. If the leader's actions are successful, others in the organization will accept the new values on which these actions were based. Organizational learning, development and planned change cannot be understood without considering culture as a primary source of resistance to change (Schein, 2004). Culture has a big impact on the process of change. The leader cannot perform organizational change by using only formal structures and systems as principal instruments.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the study was to determine the extent of influence of organizational factors on implementation of change in selected public Universities in Kenya.

The study was guided by the following objectives;

- i. To determine the extent of influence of change leadership on implementation of change in Kenyan Public Universities.
- ii. To determine the extent of influence of organizational culture on implementation of change in Kenyan public Universities.

### **Research Questions**

- i. To what extent does change leadership influence the implementation of change in Kenyan public Universities?
- ii. To what extent does organizational culture influence implementation of change in Kenyan public Universities?

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study employed a descriptive survey design in two purposively sampled public universities awarded charters to acquire full fledge university status in the same period; Jaramogi Oginga Odinga University of Science and Technology (JOOUST) in Siaya County and Kisii University (KSIU) in Kisii County. The institutions are currently under pressure to initiate and implement change projects that are meant to enable them meet the requirements of their new university statuses and cope with the rapid dynamics experienced in Kenyan academic industry. The target population of the study was stratified in to Universities Management Boards, Deans/Directors/Heads of Departments and Sections, Teaching and None teaching Staff and Students' Association Leaders from each university. From a total population of 1,425 a sample of 170 respondents was used in the study selected through purposive and random sampling techniques.

Table 1: Target Population of the Study per University

| Target Population             | JOOUST     | KSIU       | Total       |
|-------------------------------|------------|------------|-------------|
| Management Board              | 10         | 6          | 16          |
| Deans/Dir./HoDs/Sect.         | 49         | 33         | 82          |
| Teaching & Non Teaching Staff | 369        | 950        | 1319        |
| Students Association Leaders  | 4          | 4          | 8           |
| <b>Total</b>                  | <b>432</b> | <b>993</b> | <b>1425</b> |

Source: Universities Record (2014)

Kodhari (2009), Mugenda & Mugenda (2003) and Bryman criteria for sample determination were used to select the total sample of 170 respondents. Kodhari (2009) was used for teaching and none teaching staff while Mugenda & Mugenda (2003) was used for Deans/Directors/HoDs/Sections. Proportionate sampling method of determining sample size was then used to determine the proportions to be selected from each University in order to ensure University representation. Systematic random sampling was there after used to come up with the sample interval for each stratum along which respondents to participate in the study were picked from registers of employees.

According to the Universities records (2014), there are a total of 16 members of the Universities Management Boards (UMB), 82 Deans/Directors/HoDs/Sections, 1319 members of teaching and non teaching staff and 8 senior student leaders. Using 30% the desired sample of UMB is 5, Deans/Dir/HoDs/Sect. was 25, while teaching and non teaching staff was 132 using 10%. Student leaders was 8 using saturated sampling. To get University representation, proportionate sampling criteria was used.

Stratum was University and Position defined;

### UMB

Population =16

JOOUST -  $10/16 \times 5 = 3.152 = 3$  respondents

KSIU -  $6/16 \times 5 = 1.875 = 2$  respondents

### Deans/Dir/HoDs/Sect.

Population =82

JOOUST -  $49/82 \times 25 = 14.93 = 15$  respondents

KSIU -  $33/82 \times 25 = 10.060 = 10$  respondents

### Teaching and non teaching staff

Population =1319

JOOUST -  $369/1319 \times 132 = 36.92 = 37$  respondents

KSIU -  $950/1319 \times 132 = 95.07 = 95$  respondents

Systematic random sampling was then used to calculate the interval  $K = \text{size of population} / \text{desired sample size}$  of every stratum. On UMB, the population of JOOUST is 10/3,  $K=3$  while in KSIU,  $K=6/2=3$ . On Deans/Dir./HoDs/Sect., In JOOUST,  $K$  will be  $49/15=3.26=3$  while in KSIU,  $K$  will be  $33/10=3.3=3$ . On teaching and non teaching staff, in JOOUST,  $K$  will be  $369/37=9.97=10$  and in KSIU,  $K$  will be  $950/95=10$ .

Simple random sampling was then used to pick the first respondent from each stratum. After picking the first respondent from among the target population sizes in each stratum, the researcher systematically picked every  $K$ th individual member of the population until the required size of the sample was met.

Table 2: Sample size of the Study

| Strata                         | JOOUST    |        | KSIU      |        | Total Sample |
|--------------------------------|-----------|--------|-----------|--------|--------------|
|                                | Total PPn | Sample | Total PPn | Sample |              |
| Management Board               | 10        | 3      | 6         | 2      | 5            |
| Deans/Dir./HoDs/Sections       | 49        | 15     | 33        | 10     | 25           |
| Teaching & None Teaching Staff | 369       | 37     | 950       | 95     | 132          |
| Students Assoc. Leaders        | 4         | 4      | 4         | 4      | 8            |
| <b>Total</b>                   |           |        |           |        | <b>170</b>   |

Source: Universities Records (2014)

## Data collection

To successfully conduct the study, the researcher, used both open ended and closed questionnaires and interview schedules as the instruments to collect the necessary data required for the study. Questionnaires, personally administered by the researcher were used for Deans/Directors/HoDs/Sections and teaching and none teaching staff. Interview schedules were used for university management boards(UMBs) and students' association leaders. To ensure validity, the researcher ensured that the instruments were sufficiently formatted and the contents capable of measuring what they purported to measure with regard to set objectives of the study in addition to seeking advice from the supervisors on the validity of the instruments. Their views together with results of piloting among 17 none sampled respondents were used in revising the instruments. Cronbach's Alpha Test registered Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient of 0.888 on questionnaire for Teaching and None teaching staff while the questionnaire for Deans/Directors/HoDs/Sections registered Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient of 0.789. The rule of thumb is that alpha values of at least 0.7 are considered optimal (Kulter, 2007). The instruments were therefore found to be reliable for the study.

## Data analysis and Presentation

The responses were classified into themes and sub themes for ease of analysis using both quantitative and qualitative techniques. Raw data were grouped into themes and sub themes as per the study objectives. Quantitative data was coded and analyzed through the use of Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS) in order to describe and interpret data based on research objectives. Presentation of the analyzed data was done in form of frequencies, tables, percentages and explanatory notes.

## EMPIRICAL RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The extent of influence of change leadership on implementation of change in public universities in Kenya was assessed through employee and stakeholder involvement by management in various change activities and styles of leadership practiced by management during change implementation process. The study found out that majority of employees and stakeholders felt involved in change activities at 56% and that university management mostly involved employees and stakeholders in change programmes at the initiation stage with 44% of respondents reporting as such.

Democratic style of leadership was found to be widely practiced within the universities with teaching and none teaching staff and Deans/Directors/HoDs/Sections reporting 43% and 52% respectively. The number of employees who reported their change readiness to be

influenced to a great and very great extent by the leadership style practiced by their university management was higher than those who reported neutral, little to very little. The study therefore established that leadership influences on employee and stakeholder readiness to implement change ranges from great to very great extent even though some few believe the influence ranges from little to very little (See tables 3 and 4).

Table 3: Extent of Influence of leadership style on readiness to change among staff (n=88)

| Leadership Style        | Total Frequency |      | Very great |     | Great |      | Neutral |     | Little |      | Very little |     |
|-------------------------|-----------------|------|------------|-----|-------|------|---------|-----|--------|------|-------------|-----|
|                         | f               | %    | f          | %   | f     | %    | f       | %   | f      | %    | f           | %   |
| Democratic              | 56              | 100% | 16         | 29% | 18    | 33%  | 14      | 25% | 6      | 10%  | 2           | 3%  |
| Autocratic              | 0               | 0%   | 0          | 0%  | 0     | 0%   | 0       | 0%  | 0      | 0%   | 0           | 0%  |
| Dictatorship            | 1               | 100% | 0          | 0%  | 0     | 0%   | 0       | 0%  | 1      | 100% | 0           | 0%  |
| Transformative          | 13              | 100% | 2          | 14% | 3     | 20%  | 4       | 32% | 3      | 25%  | 1           | 9%  |
| Laissez-faire/Free hand | 8               | 100% | 1          | 11% | 1     | 18%  | 2       | 26% | 2      | 26%  | 2           | 19% |
| Transactional           | 8               | 100% | 0          | 0%  | 2     | 23%  | 3       | 40% | 2      | 20%  | 1           | 17% |
| Others                  | 2               | 100% | 0          | 0%  | 2     | 100% | 0       | 0%  | 0      | 0%   | 0           | 0%  |

Table 4: Extent of Influence of leadership style on readiness to change among Deans/Directors/HoDs/Sections (n=21)

| Leadership Style        | Frequency |      | Very great |     | Great |     | Neutral |     | Little |      | Very little |    |
|-------------------------|-----------|------|------------|-----|-------|-----|---------|-----|--------|------|-------------|----|
|                         | f         | %    | f          | %   | f     | %   | f       | %   | f      | %    | f           | %  |
| Democratic              | 11        | 100% | 4          | 35% | 5     | 45% | 2       | 20% | 0      | 0%   | 0           | 0% |
| Autocratic              | 0         | 0%   | 0          | 0%  | 0     | 0%  | 0       | 0%  | 0      | 0%   | 0           | 0% |
| Dictatorship            | 0         | 0%   | 0          | 0%  | 0     | 0%  | 0       | 0%  | 0      | 0%   | 0           | 0% |
| Transformative          | 5         | 100% | 1          | 25% | 2     | 40% | 2       | 35% | 0      | 0%   | 0           | 0% |
| Laissez-faire/Free hand | 4         | 100% | 1          | 16% | 0     | 0%  | 2       | 49% | 1      | 35%  | 0           | 0% |
| Transactional           | 1         | 100% | 0          | 0%  | 0     | 0%  | 0       | 0%  | 1      | 100% | 0           | 0% |
| Others                  | 0         | 0%   | 0          | 0%  | 0     | 0%  | 0       | 0%  | 0      | 0%   | 0           | 0% |

Majority of the Deans/Directors/HoDs/Sections, 96%, reported that leadership plays a role in change implementation process while the remaining 4% held the opinion that leadership does not play any role in change implementation process. This is suggestive of an acknowledgement by majority of persons in positions of leadership of the need and merit of exerting influence on the behavior of their subordinates during change implementation process. More respondents felt that the Universities management and other people in leadership positions like Deans, Directors/HoDs/ Sections practiced democratic style of leadership than other alternative styles of leadership. The scenario reflects an appreciation by the leadership of Kanyan public Universities of the need to have staff involved in change implementation process. Transactional style of leadership had the least number of respondents who believed it was being practiced either by the management or the Deans/Directors/HoDs/Sections. (See tables 5, 6 and 7).

Table 5: Role of Leadership in Change Implementation among Deans, Directors/ HoDs/Sections

| Leadership role | Yes | No | Total |
|-----------------|-----|----|-------|
| Frequency       | 24  | 1  | 25    |
| Percentage      | 96% | 4% | 100%  |

Table 6: Leadership practiced by management among teaching and none teaching staff (n=129)

| Leadership Style      | Frequency | Percentage |
|-----------------------|-----------|------------|
| Democratic            | 56        | 43%        |
| Autocratic            | 22        | 17%        |
| Dictatorship          | 20        | 16%        |
| Transformative        | 13        | 10%        |
| Laissez-fare/Freehand | 8         | 6%         |
| Transactional         | 8         | 6%         |
| Others                | 2         | 2%         |

Table 7: Leadership practiced by Deans, Directors, HoDs/Sections during change (n=25)

| Leadership Style      | Frequency | Percentage |
|-----------------------|-----------|------------|
| Democratic            | 13        | 52%        |
| Autocratic            | 0         | 0%         |
| Dictatorship          | 1         | 4%         |
| Transformative        | 6         | 24%        |
| Laissez-fare/Freehand | 4         | 16%        |
| Transactional         | 1         | 4%         |
| Others                | 0         | 0%         |

More staff (68%) felt that their readiness to accept change was being influenced by the leadership style practiced by their universities management. 32% said leadership style did not influence their readiness in the same respect. On the other hand, 84% of the Deans/Directors/ HoDs/Sections believed that leadership style they practiced during change implementation process influenced their staff readiness to embrace change(s). Only 16% said they did not think so (See tables 8 and 9).

Table 8: Influence of Leadership Style practiced by Management among staff (n=129)

| Influence  | Yes | No  | Total |
|------------|-----|-----|-------|
| Frequency  | 88  | 41  | 129   |
| Percentage | 68% | 32% | 100%  |

Table 9: Influence of Leadership Style practiced by Deans, Directors/HoDs/Sections on staff (n=25)

| Influence  | Yes | No  | Total |
|------------|-----|-----|-------|
| Frequency  | 21  | 4   | 25    |
| Percentage | 84% | 16% | 100%  |

When a majority of teaching and none teaching staff report that autocratic and dictatorial leadership styles influence their change readiness to a very little extent, it is an indication that these two styles of leadership produce the least positive impact in the process of change implementation in public universities. Additionally, when a majority of respondents find themselves in a neutral state with regard to the extent of influence transformative, laissez-faire and transactional styles of leadership have on their readiness to embrace change, it points to a great likelihood that the management has not sufficiently invested their efforts towards making these styles of leadership where they exist, take one particular desired direction that is positively influential on employees so as to realize real output of these styles of leadership. Employees at this state are still capable of swinging to any direction and as such the management can take advantage of this situation and influence them to their desired direction.

Student leaders stated that their leadership influences implementation of change in their universities, through a number of ways key among them include communicating change initiatives proposed in the university to students, recommending to students what change initiatives /programmes to embrace or reject, informing the management of student views on the changes proposed, consulting and dialoguing with students to reach a compromise on the changes proposed by management, interpreting the proposed changes to students and putting pressure on management through threats of strikes to conform to students' demands on proposed or ongoing change initiatives. The responses provide useful evidence that the student leaders play a critical role in shaping the attitude and opinion of the rest of the student population towards and on the changes implemented in their universities. This finding is similar to that of a study conducted by Matilda Ohlson in 2007 at Saab Aero systems where she found out that leaders outside the official formal organizational structure impact to a very great extent on any change implementation process within the formal structures and therefore need to be involved extensively in the process.

The UMB members unanimously agreed that they consider leadership as a key factor in the process of change implementation in their universities. Majority, 60%, reported that they believed leadership influences change implementation process to a very great extent. 40% reported that they believe leadership influences change implementation process to a great extent. This means that majority of university top management appreciate the usefulness and

need for providing change friendly leadership during change implementation process. It therefore underscores the point that leadership will continue to remain core in any organization that intends to achieve successful implementation of their change programmes.

Cultural influence was assessed through various cultural aspects/components and employee behavior towards change initiatives/programmes. The study found out that majority of employees and change stakeholders in the universities have their behavior towards change influenced by personal and organizational culture. Personal attitude, beliefs and organizational vision/mission were found to influence the behavior of majority of the respondents towards change. The number of respondents who reported that the extent of influence of the cultural aspects ranged from great to very great was higher than those who said the extent of influence ranged from neutral, little to very little. The study thus established that even though some employees in public universities consider cultural influence on behavior towards change to be neutral, little or very little, majority are clear that the extent of influence is great and in some cases very great. (See tables 10 and 11).

Table 10: Extent of Influence of Cultural Aspects on Staff Behavior among Teaching and None teaching Staff (n=115)

| Cultural Aspect/component             | Total Frequency |      | Very great |     | Great |     | Neutral |     | Little |     | Very little |     |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------|------|------------|-----|-------|-----|---------|-----|--------|-----|-------------|-----|
|                                       | f               | %    | f          | %   | f     | %   | f       | %   | f      | %   | f           | %   |
| Personal Attitude, beliefs            | 115             | 100% | 43         | 37% | 37    | 32% | 18      | 16% | 9      | 8%  | 8           | 7%  |
| Personal Values                       | 115             | 100% | 40         | 35% | 30    | 26% | 28      | 24% | 17     | 15% | 0           | 0%  |
| Personal Opinion                      | 115             | 100% | 39         | 34% | 30    | 26% | 32      | 28% | 13     | 11% | 1           | 1%  |
| Orgnl. vision/mission                 | 115             | 100% | 25         | 22% | 50    | 43% | 12      | 10% | 26     | 23% | 2           | 2%  |
| Orgnl.values, slogans, stories, myths | 115             | 100% | 25         | 22% | 36    | 31% | 18      | 16% | 21     | 18% | 15          | 13% |

Table 11: Extent of Influence of Cultural Aspects on Staff among Deans,/HoDs (n=16)

| Cultural Aspect/component             | Total Frequency |      | Very great |     | Great |     | Neutral |     | Little |     | Very little |     |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------|------|------------|-----|-------|-----|---------|-----|--------|-----|-------------|-----|
|                                       | f               | %    | f          | %   | f     | %   | f       | %   | f      | %   | f           | %   |
| Personal Attitude, beliefs            | 16              | 100% | 8          | 50% | 7     | 41% | 1       | 9%  | 0      | 0%  | 0           | 0%  |
| Personal Values                       | 16              | 100% | 3          | 16% | 4     | 28% | 8       | 47% | 1      | 9%  | 0           | 0%  |
| Personal Opinion                      | 16              | 100% | 0          | 0%  | 7     | 42% | 5       | 32% | 2      | 13% | 2           | 13% |
| Orgnl. vision/mission                 | 15              | 100% | 4          | 25% | 8     | 47% | 3       | 19% | 1      | 9%  | 0           | 0%  |
| Orgnl.values, slogans, stories, myths | 16              | 100% | 2          | 11% | 9     | 58% | 0       | 0%  | 4      | 25% | 1           | 6%  |

When personal attitude and beliefs, Personal values and opinion have the highest number of teaching and none teaching staff who reported they have a very great extent of influence on behavior towards change at 37%, 35% and 34% respectively against organizational vision/mission and organizational core values, it points to the strength of embedded human personal interests against external interests. It also reminds organizations to give appropriate consideration to staff personal culture and strategically align them with the desired organizational culture if they need to gain the best possible change behavior from staff.

The findings from Deans/Directors/HoDs/Sections show that those in positions of leadership in the universities consider organizational culture more meaningful and useful to them at work place than personal culture. This finding contradicts that of a study conducted at Saab Aero systems in 2007 by Matilda Ohlson where she found out that employee personal culture was a very strong force in shaping behavior towards any change initiative in an organization. In general, the findings reveal that personal and organizational cultures are useful to consider when implementing change programme(s). Most responses range from very great to great against very little, little and neutral.

50%, of the student leaders reported, however, that their universities did not have a noticeable culture to share in to while another half agreed that their universities had a noticeable culture that they shared in to. Interestingly, 50% of those who agreed that their universities had a noticeable culture said they only shared in to this culture to a little extent. 25% said they did not at all share in to the culture. They attributed little opportunity for interaction between the students and the rest of the university society such that it became difficult to learn and inculcate the culture in to their way of life to this finding. 25% of them said they shared in to the culture to a great extent.

When only 50% of the student population in the universities recognizes that there is a noticeable culture in the universities and only 25% of this percentage proportion say to share in to this culture to a great extent, it suggests that the propensity of the students fraternity in public universities in Kenya to embrace change is still at its low and only a few of the public universities have invested fruitful efforts to develop working and shared cultures in the universities. This shows that their commitments to achieving successful change implementation are likely to continue generating minimum results since culture is one of the dominant factors in a person's ability to adopt new ways of doing things according to reviewed literature.

Majority (60%) of the UMB members reported that there exists a noticeable culture in their universities. 40% said there is no existing noticeable culture in the universities, saying that a lot of their systems, procedures and processes were still in their evolutionary stages. However, only 20% of the 60% who said there exists noticeable culture agreed that the current

culture supports successful change implementation in their universities to a little extent. The remaining 40% felt that the existing culture was not supportive to change.

When the percentage of University Management Board members who feel there exists no culture in the universities stands at 40% representing nearly a half of the interviewed respondents despite these universities having been in operation for more than four years and with almost the same members in office, it demonstrates a disconnect in thought among university management board members. It also shows the likelihood that part of these Universities Management Boards could be “blindly” leading with no sense of common purpose. This has a negative impact on the efforts aimed at successful change implementation. It also points to the possibility that these UMBs have not invested deliberate efforts to build effective cultures that filter through all levels of their universities. This in essence predicts future difficulty in attaining zero-failure of change initiatives. The findings further show that even where a noticeable culture exists, the universities still largely operate with change -hostile cultures. As such, it is most likely that public universities that operate under this state of things will continue to record dismal performance in change implementation process for a foreseeable future.

## CONCLUSION

The purpose of the study was to determine the extent of influence of organizational factors on implementation of change in selected public universities in Kenya. The study established that both factors investigated were considered by majority of employees and students in the public universities to have a great to very great influence on change implementation process. Thus, the study concludes that the role of a leader and organizational and personal culture are critical in determining the success and competitive performance of modern organizations including public Universities. Understanding of their contribution on readiness, competence and capacity to successfully embrace change by employees and students in Institutions of higher learning is, therefore, something that managers of these institutions need to put as a top priority if they have to realize maximum benefit from their change initiatives.

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