

INFLUENCE OF CENTRALIZED STRUCTURE ON STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION IN THE COUNTY GOVERNMENT OF NAKURU, KENYA

Ramina Janet Atieno 

School of Human Resource Development

Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology, Kenya

jraminya17@gmail.com

Wagoki A. Juma

School of Human Resource Development

Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology, Kenya

Abstract

This study reviewed literature on degree of centralization after devolution of functions and governance systems in Kenya, and discussed theories that relate to strategy implementation which supported the study. The aim of the study was to establish how this structural element, affects strategy implementation in the County Governments in Kenya. The study adopted descriptive design and did a census on 46 heads of departments and sections drawn from all government departments, whose functions have been devolved. Structured questionnaires were used to collect data from the respondents. A Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) Version 21 was used to analyse and enhance the quality of data. Descriptive statistics were also used to analyze the data collected. Pearson Correlation coefficient was used to test the significance of the relationship between the independent and dependent variables. The findings indicate that there is an average positive significant relationship between centralization and strategy implementation. This shows that the structure centralization is important for strategy implementation. The study concludes that structure is significant in predicting strategy implementation in county government, and recommends that the County governments should establish a good mix of structure which would enhance strategy implementation.

Keywords: Strategy, strategy implementation, organizational structure, centralization, County Governments

INTRODUCTION

The challenges of the modern business environment and fast changing global economy demands high productivity speed and flexibility for organizations that seeks to thrive. In order to achieve the required efficiency and effectiveness, organizations must change their structure strategically. These can be achieved by retaining the best of their traditional structures while embracing radically new structures that leverage the human capital and adds value to the customers (Pearce and Robinson, 2011). Organization design can be considered to be a strategic tool for executing business strategy. The management should consider it pertinent in designing structures that enables implementation of strategic goals in order to suit the demand of its market place, customers and business model (Muchira, 2013).

With increased competition, rapid technological advancement, shifting economic regulations and increased demand on non price competitive advantage, most companies have been compelled to review their business strategies. The magnitude speed and impact of change are greater than ever before, while new production processes and services have emerged (Burnes, 2004). Advancement in technology, communication and innovation has made it impossible for organizations to maintain the status quo in order to be competitive. Organizations need to have the ability to devise strategies which are vital for their survival. However, these strategies will not benefit organizations unless implemented successfully (Ginsberg, 1988; Hamel & Prahalad, 1989; Reid 1989). They further state that, although the importance of strategy implementation is widely acknowledged, strategy implementation remains a process which is poorly understood.

Many executives argue that brilliant execution is more important than brilliant strategy. The reason is simple: doing is harder than dreaming, and a poorly executed strategy is merely a vision of what could be. Effective implementation can prove difficult, as it requires the coordinated and appropriate efforts of individuals throughout the organization. Strategic plans are often accompanied by parallel implementation plans, which outline responsibilities, timelines, resource requirements and organizational or operational changes required in order to deliver on the strategic plan initiative. The term 'strategic plan' often is used as an umbrella term covering all these aspects, as they are all critical to the success of a strategic planning effort, and are all very much the focus of any such work done (Munyoroku, 2012). Each strategic plan has particular aspects that are related to the external environment, internal processes and structures, financial resources and human capabilities.

Throughout most of modern business history, corporations have attempted to unlock value by matching their structures to their strategies. As mass production took hold in the nineteenth century, for instance, companies generated enormous economies of scale by

centralizing key functions like operations, sales, and finance. A few decades later, as firms diversified offerings and moved into new regions, a rival model emerged. Corporations such as General Motors and DuPont created business units structured around products and geographic markets. The smaller business units sacrificed some economies of scale but were more flexible and adaptable to local condition.

Strategy implementation involves allocation of sufficient resources such as financial, personnel, time and establishing a chain of command or organizational structure (Chebat, 1999). It also involves assigning responsibility of specific tasks or processes to specific individuals or groups, and managing the process. This includes monitoring results, comparing to benchmarks and best practices, evaluating the efficacy and efficiency of the process, controlling for variances, and making adjustments to the process as necessary (Chakravarthy & White, 2001). They point out that, to effectively direct and control the use of firm's resources, mechanisms such as organizational structure, information systems, leadership styles, and control systems are among others, are essential strategy implementation ingredients that must be looked at. Most strategies fail to be implemented due to lack of involvement of all employees in the process.

Despite the fact that organizations modify their development plans to be in accordance with technological, economic and demographic changes, new strategies create administrative problem and economic inefficiencies. Accordingly, structural changes are needed to address these issues. Structure involves even physical re-arrangement - often a powerful aspect of strategy that needs to be carefully considered. Chandler identified four key parameters for strategy growth and firm performance that would influence organizational structure as being expansion of volume, geographical expansion, vertical integration, and product diversification. For any organization, the organizational structure is a chain of command of people and its functions. Structure is the framework around which a group is organized. Any organization should have its own structure to operate efficiently.

While the need for structure is clear, the best organizational structure depends on its internal and external factors (Ledbetter, 2003). The internal factors include policies, strategies, leadership, and communication patterns and how far it has come in its development process. External factors are technology, government laws and the competition among others. A structure provides guidelines and a means for the people to maintain order, resolve disputes, and what roles the people are involved in so that its work can be performed and goals met. The structure must therefore, be aligned to the strategy to achieve the strategic fit necessary for implementation.

Globally, strategy implementation usually involves the introduction of change to an organization. Managers may spend months, even years, evaluating alternatives and selecting a strategy. The chosen strategy is then announced to the organization with the expectation that organization members will automatically see why the alternative is the best one and will begin immediate implementation. When a strategic change is poorly introduced, managers may actually spend more time implementing changes resulting from the new strategy than was spent in selecting it (Beer & Eisensat, 2000). Some of these changes may not be well supported by the existing structures making their implementation a big challenge. Strategy implementation involves both macro-organizational issues such as technology, reward systems, decision processes, and structure, and micro-organizational issues like organization culture and resistance to change.

In Kenya today, the global events coupled with changes brought about by technological advancement, and entry of many multinational organizations into the local market arena has sent many organizations back to the drawing board. Many organizations including the government have embraced strategic management, business re-engineering processes and other management tools, in a bid to cope with the high competition brought about by some of these multinational organizations with global presence. According to Munyoroku (2012), in his research study whose objective was to determine the role of organization structure on strategy implementation among food processing companies in Nairobi, he established that organizational structures are influenced by multiple factors, and that effective structures provide the stability a firm needs to successfully implement its strategies and maintain its current competitive advantages, while simultaneously providing the flexibility to develop competitive advantages that will be needed for its future strategies. Munyoroku's position is that, firms seem to prefer the structural status quo and its familiar working relationships until the firm's performance declines to the point where change is absolutely necessary.

The urge to devolve governance structure and bring services closer to the citizens, was the key trigger for the fight by the people against the centralised system of governance, which was associated with abuse of the enormous state and economic power (Okoth, 1992). Nakuru County government in a bid to realize the anticipated fruits of the said struggles, must align their plans with the country's national development plan/blue print. This will facilitate fast-tracking some of the national development flagship projects already at advanced stages of implementation, and also help them effectively implement some of their short term goals that could take the county and their entire country towards realization of middle income status as envisaged in the national development blue print.

In June 2013, the Ministry of Devolution and Planning issued Guidelines for Preparation of County Integrated Development Plans (Government Circulars, 2013); as the first step

towards formulation and implementation of county policies and plans. In light of this, the County governments developed their first CIDP which also provided the basis for their Strategic Planning, and which sets out the individual County's priority programs to be implemented in the Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF), under the new governance structures. It is framed against a backdrop of the devolution of functions as per legal notice 16 and 157 of 2013, in the Kenya gazette and in compliance with 4th schedule of the constitution. The Counties also came up with their first County Fiscal Strategy Paper (CSFP, 2014), which is mirrored to the Budget policy statement by the National government, where the county is trying to address some of the challenges they are experiencing. Their strategy for economic excellence covers five broad areas namely: Creating an enabling environment for business in order to encourage investment growth and expansion of economic and employment opportunities; Development of key infrastructure facilities including roads, water, energy, ICT countywide to stimulate growth, creation of employment and reduction of poverty; Promotion of health services; Promotion of value addition for agricultural produce, Environment management and food security; Promotion of equitable regional and social development for stability and enhancing governance, transparency and accountability in the delivery of public goods and service among others.

Harmonizing the 2nd Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF), and County plans, mainly the CIDP and the strategic plans will ensure faster delivery of the promises made by the government as a whole. The Counties envisage a mechanism of follow-up on implementation of their plans, thereby instituting a County Strategic Plan Implementation Committee (CSPIC) whose function is to have a strong bearing on the implementation of these plan's policies, programmes and projects. All these in a bid to come up with the best possible strategies, whose implementation will among other things boost their revenues and reduce their financial woos. However, the best-formulated strategies may at times fail to produce superior performance for an organization if they are not successfully implemented, as noted by Noble (1999).

Statement of the problem

The business world is entering a new frontier composed of unpredictable changes and substantial uncertainties that are transforming the nature of competitive success. Today's business world requires managerial mindset that emphasizes global markets, strategic flexibility and the ability to tolerate and harness change (Hitt et al., 2000). Furthermore, the timeframe for all strategic actions are significantly being reduced. This new business setting requires new form of managerial thinking and organizational structures, global mindset, considerable strategic and structural flexibility and innovative methods for implementing strategies.

The biggest challenge for many public organizations in Kenya today, is successful implementation of strategies and strategic plans (MTP, 2013). The new dispensation has led to total overhaul of systems and procedures for performing various tasks. Various county governments are streamlining their structures to ensure they remain on top in terms of development. This include among other things, coming up with strategic plans that aim at giving the individual counties a sustainable competitive position in the country. This cannot be attained if the existing structures do not facilitate proper implementation of the strategies. The researcher therefore, interrogated centralization as a structural element that may influence strategy implementation, if not properly addressed at strategy formulation stage. Since devolution of functions and governance is a new system in Kenya, very little has been done on strategy implementation in the context of a devolved system of government, especially in Nakuru County. It is on the basis of this, that the researcher sought to fill the academic gap that exists by carrying out a study on the influence of organizational structure on implementation of strategy in Nakuru County.

Objective of the Study

The objective of the study was to establish the influence of centralized structure on strategy implementation in the County Government of Nakuru, in Kenya.

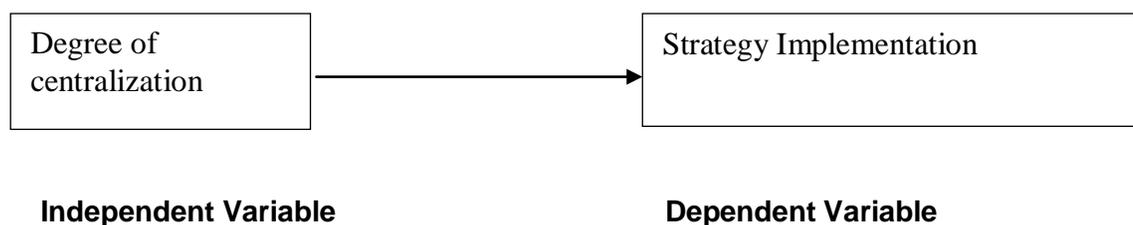
Research Question

The study was guided by the research question: Does centralized structure have an influence on strategy implementation.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study showed the independent and dependent variables. The study conceptualized that strategy implementation is dependent on degree of centralization which is an element of organizational structure as illustrated by the framework below.

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework



LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Literature

This study was supported by Bourgeois III and Brodwin (1984) five model system for strategy implementation.

Five-Model System for Strategy Implementation

Bourgeois III and Brodwin (1984) came up with a five-model system for strategy implementation which categorized strategy implementation into: Commander model, Change model, Collaborative model, Cultural model and Crescive model. Commander model addresses strategic position only and should guide the CEO in charting a firm's future. The CEO can use economic and competitive analysis to plan resource allocations to achieve his goals. The commander model is based on involvement of all organization's employees' participation in decision making directed to perpetuate the organization's vision (Bourgeois & Brodwin, 1984). This model however, has two major weaknesses: it requires a vast amount of time and presupposes an intelligent and responsible workforce and may lead to suppressing homogeneity in the organization (Kimiti et al. 2014), and therefore, the CEO must create enough time take keen interest for it to be effective.

The organizational change model emphasizes how the organizational structure, incentives, compensation, control systems among others, can be used to facilitate the implementation of strategy. It is based on planned interventions in the organization's structure and systems which sets off the desired behavioural outcomes. The CEO applies behavioural science techniques to manipulate his organization into compliance with his strategic plan. It employs several techniques for successful implementation such as using the structure and staffing to effectively convey the firm's new priorities and focus attention on the desired areas, changing the systems used for planning, performance measurement and incentive compensation, and also using cultural adaptation techniques to introduce system-wide change. The model creates the ability to carry out more complicated strategic plans than the commander model, but also creates an additional inflexibility for unanticipated events and changes of plan. Both the commander and change model may experience problems with motivation issues which the CEO should look into to avoid running into problems resulting from low morale.

The collaborative model concentrates on the group decision-making at a senior level and involves top management in the formulation process to ensure commitment. It extends the power of strategic decision-making from the CEO to the organization's management team. The CEO makes use of group dynamics and brainstorming techniques so that managers with differing opinions can air their views during the strategic decision making process. According to

this model, the role of the CEO is that of a coordinator who facilitates the interaction among the decision makers resulting in the acceptance of all good ideas. This model helps to motivate the managers and also provides the strategic decision making process with more information and cognitive capital. The problem with this model is that collaboration does not go beyond top management, however, more decision making means more conflicts of interest and politics which may mean less rationality. Traditionally, strategy formulation and such decisions are made by top management in most organizations and therefore, it should not be a problem.

The cultural model tries to implement strategy through the use of a corporate culture. It is based on moulding of the organization's culture to ensure the acceptance of a shared vision. The CEO guides the organization by communicating and instilling his vision and allowing the staff members to participate in designing their work procedures in tune with that vision. The role of the CEO is to encourage staff members to take decisions in order to determine the operational details of execution of plan. This model is based on participation of all organization members in decision making directed towards perpetuating the vision. The main problem with this model is that like the commander model, vast amount of time is required. It also requires an intelligent and responsible workforce and may lead to suppressing homogeneity in the organization. The first three models assume implementation as after-the-fact. This implies that the number of strategy developers is few and that the rest of the organization is somehow manipulated or cajoled into implementation.

The Crescive model draws on manager's inclination to want to develop new opportunities as seen in the course of their day-to-day management. It offers the manager an opportunity to make full use of the organizational members' knowledge and effort in the strategy process, encouraging participation. This model is relevant to this study because it describes the characteristics of different administrative practices brought about by the type of structure adopted by the county governments. For the Cultural and Crescive models, most of the energy is used for strategy formulation and the strategy requires relatively little effort in its implementation, since the culture is inherent and only requires moulding while the opportunities will always exist depending on the resource competences and capabilities.

Empirical Review

Organization structure may be classified as mechanistic or organic. The mechanistic model has extensive departmentalization, high formalization, a limited information network and little participation by low-level members in decision-making (Miles & Snow, 2003). At the other end of the scale, an organic structure uses flat, cross-hierarchical and cross-functional teams, with low formalization and possesses a comprehensive information network with high participation in

decision-making. The structure an organization chooses depends on its strategy. Organization size also influences structure in that, as organizations increase in size, they tend to become more mechanistic although size affects structure at decreasing rate (O'Reilly et al., 2004). This section reviewed literature on structure centralization and strategy implementation.

Degree of Centralization

Centralization is the degree to which decision-making authority is concentrated at higher levels in an organization. Lines of communication and responsibility are relatively clear in centralized organizations, and the route to top management for approval can be travelled quickly (Osion et al. 2005). In centralized organizations, much of the control is held centrally, while managers and corporate staff issue rules and make key decisions. A high degree of centralization shows that there is no decentralization, while a lower degree of centralization is a sign of decentralized authority. Whereas, fewer innovative ideas might be put forth in centralized organizations, implementation tends to be straightforward once a decision is made. In decentralized organizations, a variety of views and ideas may merge from different groups such as product management and sales. Since decision making is dispersed in decentralized organization, making decision and implementation may be more time consuming. In the long run, though, it is likely that the decentralized organization will produce more new ideas and more actual program changes than will a centralized organization.

Decentralized companies give more authority to lower-level employees, resulting in a sense of empowerment (Ferrell and Skinner, 1988). Decisions can be made more quickly, and employees often believe that decentralized companies provide greater levels of procedural fairness to employees. Job candidates are more likely to be attracted to decentralized organizations. Because centralized organizations assign decision-making responsibility to higher-level managers, they place greater demands on the judgment capabilities of CEOs and other high-level managers.

O'Toole and Meier (2004) argues that the extent to which decision making is centralized or decentralized in any organization determines that organization's policies and how it is going to allocate its resources. They portend that as mechanistic organizations operate in stable environment, so centralized decision making is preferred (Osion et al., 2005). Many companies find that the centralization of operations leads to inefficiencies in decision making. For example, in the 1980s, the industrial equipment manufacturer Caterpillar suffered the consequences of centralized decision making. At the time, all pricing decisions were made in the corporate headquarters in Peoria, Illinois. This meant that when a sales representative working in Africa wanted to give a discount on a product, they needed to check with headquarters. Headquarters

did not always have accurate or timely information about the subsidiary markets to make an effective decision. As a result, Caterpillar was at a disadvantage against competitors such as the Japanese firm Komatsu. Seeking to overcome this centralization paralysis, Caterpillar underwent several dramatic rounds of reorganization in the 1990s and 2000s (Ambrose & Cropanzano, 2000). Decentralizing their decision-making approach has helped Caterpillar compete at the global level. Hitting the right balance between decentralization and centralization is a challenge for many organizations.

From this example, it is evident that centralization or decentralization of decision-making authority may influence strategy implementation, and that there are other factors that should also be taken into account such as nature of environmental conditions both internal and external, the size of the organization, the characteristic and abilities of lower-level employees among others. Because the centralized organizations assign decision-making responsibility to higher-level managers, they place greater demands on the judgement capabilities of CEOs and other high-level managers. Centralization may cause a reduction in the production of creative solutions and hinder interdepartmental communication as well as the frequent circulation and sharing of ideas (Souitaris, 2001). This is attributed to the existence of time-consuming formal communication channels (Pertusa-Ortega et al. 2010). Consistent with recent management efforts to make organizations more flexible and responsive, there has been a notable change towards decentralizing decision-making in Kenya, a case in point is the Central government's devolution of financial, political and decision making authority to the County governments.

Strategy Implementation

Strategy implementation is the process used to implement specific firm policies, programs and action plans across organization (Harrington, 2004). Implementing strategies successfully is about matching the planned and the realized strategies, which together aim at reaching the organizational vision.

With firms evolving in terms of structure it follows that the style of strategy implementation will differ depending on the style of organization and management. Strategy implementation has received increasing attention in literature such as Bourgeois and Brodwin (1984); Noble 1999; Beer & Eisenstat (2000); and Flood et al. (2000). However, no coherent research paradigm appears to exist, main reason being diversity of perspectives that have been taken in defining the concept (Noble, 1999). He thus defines strategy implementation as communication, interpretation, adoption and enactment of strategic plan. He makes a distinction between structural and interpersonal process views on strategy implementation. The structural perspective focuses on formal organizational structure and control mechanisms, while the

interpersonal process is about understanding issues like strategic consensus, autonomous strategic behaviours, diffusion perspectives, leadership and implementation styles and communication, including other interaction process.

Generally different leadership styles also play a critical role in overcoming barriers to implementation (Grant, 2005). The starting point of implementation according to Pearce and Robinson (1996) is the selection and transformation of organization structure, where senior management is believed to play a major role not only in the formulation, but in the implementation of the strategy (Smith & Kofron, 1996). Unlike strategy formulation, strategy implementation is often seen as something of a craft, rather than a science, and its research history has previously been described as fragmented and eclectic (Noble, 1999).

The basis of strategy implementation is the coordination of goals and tasks, resources and control. Many systems-oriented authors link implementation with goal setting practices. Goal setting is a systematic practice very often associated with strategy in many organizations. Goal setting is closely associated with management by objectives -MBO and associated literature (Johnson & Scholes 1999; Shrivastava 1994). Beyond the preoccupation of many authors with firm structures, another wave of investigations advocated interpersonal processes and issues as crucial to any strategy implementation effort (Noble & Mokwa, 1999).

Studies led by Pettigrew (2005), group implementation variables into a larger number of categories. These categories are: strategic content, context – consisting of organizational context, organizational structure, culture and environmental context – uncertainty in general and uncertainty in the task environment; process and strategic outcome among others. Okumus (2001) also adopted the above framework, but added three new variables. The revised implementation framework includes four parts: content which is, strategic decision, multiple project implementation; context which is internal context – organizational structure, culture among others and external context characterised by environmental uncertainty in general; process and outcome both tangible and intangible outcomes.

According to white paper on strategy implementation of Chinese corporation in 2006, strategy implementation has become a great challenge for the management of all kinds of organizations. The survey also described that out of 100% surveyed organizations 83% organizations fail in implementation of their strategy smoothly and only 17% organizations were successful in implementation. Implementation of the strategic plan is more important than formulation; otherwise it is nothing more than a well-documented piece of paper in an organization (Lesinger, 2006).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a descriptive research design, to gather information about the present existing condition as fronted by Creswell (2002). The target population included all the heads of departments and sections whose functions have devolved in the County Government of Nakuru. A census was conducted of the heads of departments and sections. A census is good at eliminating sampling errors and providing data on all the individuals in the population (Saunders & Thornhill, 2007), hence the researcher's choice of a census.

Data was collected using structured questionnaires, personally administered by the researcher and. The data was then processed and analyzed based on the objective and research question using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 21. Descriptive statistics in form of frequencies and means were presented in tables and used to organize, summarize and describe the characteristics of the respondents. Pearson Correlation Coefficient was meanwhile used to test the significance of the existing relationship between the variables.

The study involved a census on a total of 46 heads of department and sections in Nakuru County. A total of 46 questionnaires were administered, out of which 40 were completely filled and returned. This represented 89.13% response rate which was considered as good. According to Babbie (1990) a response rate of 60% is considered good; while 70% is considered very good.

ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

Degree of Structure Centralization

Table 1: Centralization

	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Dev
Centralization leads to faster decision making	40	1	5	3.52	1.261
Decentralization fastens decisions making in county governments	40	2	5	3.63	.838
Decentralization empowers employees to make important decision	40	2	5	3.45	1.037
Decentralization makes more people contribute in decision making	40	2	5	3.42	1.174
With decentralization, departments have feedback controls to detect problems	40	2	5	3.05	1.011
Feedback mechanisms in decentralization enhances information sharing	40	2	5	2.88	1.017
Decentralization provides greater levels of procedural fairness to employees	40	1	5	2.88	1.202

The table 1 shows that the respondents agreed with three aspects of centralization recording a mean of approximately 4 (agree). The idea that centralization leads to faster decision making within the county governments recorded the lowest standard deviation of 0.838 with a mean of 3.63 indicating that respondents concurred in their responses towards this aspect. However respondents were indifferent with the four of the centralization aspects recording a mean of approximately 3 (don't know). Six of the aspects had a standard deviation of more than 1 indicating the respondents did not have responses that were in agreement with each but had very diverse views as far as these aspects were concerned.

Strategy Implementation

The researcher sought to establish the respondents' views regarding strategy implementation in the County Government of Nakuru. The summarized analysis is in table 2.

Table 2: Strategy Implementation

	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Dev
Strategy implementation decisions are based on strategic plan	40	2	5	4.07	.616
Stakeholders are involved in formulation and informed on the need of change	40	2	5	3.88	.757
For strategy implementation, county has developed effective communication system	40	1	4	2.97	1.000
For strategy implementation, monitoring and evaluation control teams have been set up	39	1	5	2.79	1.174
There is a gap between ability to formulate and implement sound strategies	40	2	5	3.35	.975
For effective strategy implementation, a change in processes was carried out	40	1	5	3.12	.992
lack of understanding and inability to connect formulation and implementation affects successful strategy implementation	40	2	5	4.10	.496

The findings indicated that the respondents only agreed with three aspects of strategy implementation. These were that strategy implementation decisions are based on strategic plan, stakeholders are involved in formulation and informed on the need of change and that lack of understanding and inability to connect formulation and implementation affects successful strategy implementation. These aspects recorded means approximately 3 (agree). Respondents were not able to either agree or disagree with all the other four aspects as they recorded a mean of approximately three indicating that they were indifferent about those aspects. Most

responses recorded a standard deviation of less than 1 indicating greater agreement in their views about these aspects.

Effect of Structure Centralization on Strategy Implementation

The researcher sought to establish the effect of structure centralization on strategy implementation. The items on centralization and strategy implementation were combined as a composite score of their means and their results correlated. Pearson correlation coefficient was established to portray the relationship that exists between structure centralization and strategy implementation. The findings for the analysis are as summarized in the table 3.

Table 3: Influence of Structure Centralization on Strategy Implementation

		Centralization	Strategy Implementation
Centralization	Pearson Correlation	1	.461**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.003
	N	40	40
Strategy Implementation	Pearson Correlation	.461**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.003	
	N	40	40

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The table shows that there is an average positive significant relationship ($r=.461$, $p<0.01$) between centralization and strategy implementation. This shows that structure centralization is important as far as strategy implementation is concerned. From these findings, the researcher observed that if centralization which is a component of structure, is enhanced strategy implementation is also enhanced as a result. Positive correlation indicates direct proportionality between the two variables. Thus if one variable is improved, likewise the other variable is also improved. The researcher concludes that centralized structure is significant in predicting strategy implementation in Nakuru county government. It is therefore recommended that the county government should establish a good structural mix that would enhance strategy implementation.

Summary of Findings

On the aspect of structure centralization, respondents agreed that centralization leads to faster decision making and fastens decision making in county governments. However the respondents were undecided on all the other aspects of centralization. All but one of the aspects of

centralization recorded standard deviations of more than 1 indicating that respondents gave very diverse opinions as regards to these aspects. Thus, consistency in responses was not observed. Only 4 aspects had standard deviation of more than 1 showing divergent views in responses with regard to those aspects. Respondents agreed with three aspects of strategy implementation while they remained undecided on the other four aspects. Apart from two aspects, all the other aspects had standard deviations less than 1, meaning that responses were consistent thus greater agreement was depicted in the responses.

CONCLUSIONS

The researcher made pertinent conclusions in line with the objective of the study in consideration of the research findings. The conclusions were as reflected by both descriptive and inferential statistics. The results from the analysis indicate that decentralization enhances decision making process both at the individual level and the general government functions. This goes a long way in enhancing efficiency in the county government. This is supported by past researchers in their scholarly works. O'Toole and Meier (2004) argues that the extent to which decision making is centralized or decentralized in any organization determines that organization's policies and how it is going to allocate its resources. Inferential statistics however, indicated that centralization has a relatively average significant and positive relationship with strategy implementation. Thus, the researcher concluded that centralization is a key predictor of strategy implementation. By enhancing centralization will lead to better strategy implementation.

In view of the above conclusions the researcher recommended that the county governments should increase the degree of centralization and come up with a mix of structure that will enhance strategy implementation. This will improve proper communication and coordination channels which are key factors in strategy implementation. The researcher also recommended that further studies be carried out on individual components of structure to examine the extent to which they singly influence strategy implementation.

LIMITATIONS & SCOPE FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

This study also had its limitations which were worth noting. First, the County governments which came into existence through devolution of power/authority by the central government, is a new system of governance in the country, and is in its third year of implementation. A more accurate picture of the successful strategy implementation or failure can only be clearly seen after a period of five years or more. Second, some heads of departments and sections who were the target population for the study, were equally new and had no prior experience with the

government and lacked proper basis for their responses/views. This being the case, many county governments are still in the early stages of implementation and therefore, it was not possible to conclusively confirm the failure or success of the strategy implementation process. However, it was possible to tell the indicators of success or failure. Finally, the researcher suggested that this study be carried longitudinally throughout the other parts of the country to enable the generalization of the findings.

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