

EFFECTS OF STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT PRACTICES ON THE PERFORMANCE OF PUBLIC HEALTH INSTITUTIONS IN KISII COUNTY, KENYA

Elina Moraa Juma 

MBA Student, Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology, Kenya
nyamshem@yahoo.com

Walter Bichanga Okibo

Lecturer, Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology, Kenya

Abstract

Strategic planning and management practice as an effective tool in strengthening the performance in health care as becomes a subject of interest. The study was based on the effects of strategic management practices on the performance of public health institutions in Kisii County, Kenya. Health care institutions in Kisii County which was the research study in question found this study important because it offered out ways of improving the health care strategies on its operations. The specific objectives of the study were to establish the extent to which human resource management strategy, technology architecture strategy and organizational structure strategy on the performance of the health care institutions in Kisii County, Kenya. The target population which was the totality of the cases comprised of 340 respondents of which was 30 medical officers, 50 managers, 70 clinical officers, 100 nursing officers and 90 community health workers. The sample size was 20% of the target population which comprised of 68 respondents. The study employed a descriptive survey research design. The questionnaires were used for data collection and data was analyzed using descriptive statistics Findings revealed to a great extent that technology architecture strategy if fully embraced would lead to efficient service delivery in health care provision.

Keywords: Strategic Management, Strategy, Organizational Performance, Public Healthcare, Efficiency, Kenya

INTRODUCTION

Strategic management has been touted as one of the effective management tools in strengthening organization performance through effective decision making and systematic strategic formulation and implementation. Although, strategic management was more prevalent in the private sector since the concept was first developed, the interest of using strategic management in the public sector has increased over the last decade (Smith, 1994). Since 1980's there have been a series of reforms taking shape in the public sector, resulting from increased awareness on the importance of quality in the public sector.

Barnely and Hesterly (2008) suggested that a good strategy is one that actually generates a competitive advantage that differentiates an organization with its competitors by giving it sustainable edge that is valuable, rare and not easy to imitate. Strategy should therefore be unique in order to create a competitive advantage. Porter (1998) in competitive advantage of nations aptly states that "at the heart of positioning is competitive advantage". Thompson and Strickland (2003) defined strategy as consisting of moves and approaches devised by management to produce successful organizational performance while Wheelen and Hunger (2008) stated that a strategy is a plan that provides direction on how the organization will achieve its mission and objectives.

According to statistics from ministry of health (2009), The County's under-five mortality rate stands at 109/1,000 which is higher than the national average of 54/1,000; while maternal mortality stands at 110/100,000 compared to 484/100,000 live births. The Infant Mortality Rate stands at 90/1,000 while the proportion of one year old children immunized against measles is estimated to be 80 percent. The County's proportion of women using contraceptive stands at 70 percent, while deliveries taking place in the health centers remains at 76 percent. Although the figures are slightly better than the national average, the County is still lagging behind in this goal of providing universal health care.

Statement of the Problem

While strategic management is widely practiced by firms and other profit oriented organizations in this country, its adoption by public sector particularly in health care service delivery at operational level is less understood. Strategic planning practices in Kenya is still insubstantial and unknown in the sense that there is an absence of documented proof of its practice (Mohamad, 1988). This study is undertaken to fill this knowledge gap. It is imperative to study on how strategic management is being adopted by government agencies as a tool of enhancing performance.

Health care systems in Kenya is riddled with numerous problems, According to Kenya Aids Indicator Survey (KAIS) of 2007, the County's HIV/AIDS prevalence among the population aged 15-24 years was estimated at 4.5 percent for boys while that of girls is estimated at 6 percent, the average being 5.3 percent while the number of people with access to Anti-Retroviral drugs (ARV) stands at 40 percent of the total infected. Noting that the KAIS report of 2012 reports an incidence of HIV/AIDS of 8 percent means that the problem has gotten worse over the last five years.

Mutuma (2011) studied the challenges facing the implementation of hospital management information systems in hospitals in Nairobi whereas Chepkurui (2011) studied the human capital planning practices in faith base hospitals in Kenya. Studies in private hospitals were carried out by Gichane (2011) who studied the adoption of social marketing concept by private hospitals in Kenya and Mbugua (2010) studied the competitive strategies adopted by private hospitals in Kenya. Studies have also been conducted in public hospitals; Ongayo (2005) covered human resource issues, Mutugi (2008) determined the challenges of strategy implementation, Obaga (2009) explored performance contracting, Kamuri (2010) studied the challenges facing the implementation of outsourcing strategy at the KNH.

The study intends to integrate human resource strategy, organizational structure and ICT in health care sector. The study therefore aims to breach this gap by reviewing the process of formulating the strategic management practices in this area and this trend shows that the country lagging behind in providing health care. The research intends to fill this gap by bringing in strategies of improving service delivery in the health care sector.

Objectives of the Study

General Objective

To evaluate the effects of strategic management practices on the performance of health care institutions in Kisii County, Kenya.

Specific Objectives

- i) To find out the extent to which human resource management strategy influences service delivery in the health care provision in Kisii County, Kenya
- ii) To find out the extent to which technology architecture strategy influences service delivery in health care provision in Kisii County, Kenya.
- iii) To find out the extent to which organizational structure strategy influences service delivery in provision of health care in Kisii County, Kenya

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

According to Orotho (2006) research design is the scheme, outline or plan that is used to generate answers to research problems. It is the conceptual structure within which research is conducted and constitutes the blue print for collection, measurement and analysis of data. A descriptive survey research design was used in this study. Kothari (2005) defines descriptive research as all those studies concerned with specific predictions, narration and characteristics concerning individual groups or situations. This is because it allows for collection of information by way of interviews or administration of questionnaire to a sample of individuals. The method was further considered appropriate since it allowed for collection of qualitative information such as those aimed at measuring attitudes, opinions or habits which this study aimed at.

Target Population

The study targeted staff working in the health care hospitals and the management both at the hospitals and the county in the ministry of health. A total of fifty hospitals in the county were chosen. The total population targeted was 340 consisting of 30 medical officers, 50 managers, 70 clinical officers, 100 nursing officers, and 90 community health workers. All the stakeholders and management was targeted to ensure that the sample was representative of the population,

Table 1: Target Population

Category	Target Population
Medical officers	30
Managers	50
Clinical officers	70
Nursing officers	100
Community health workers	90
Total	340

Source: Kisii county office (2015)

Sample Design

Kull (1984) noted that sampling is the process by which a relative small number of individual object or event is selected and analyzed in order to find out surrounding about the entire population from which it will be selected using some systematic form. Since the overall population is heterogeneous, stratified random sampling was used in the study to select the respondents. Mugenda and Mugenda (2005) acknowledge 10% to 30% of the target population

to be the sample population of the study as it gives the in-depth of the study, for this study 20% was used to draw the sample size of 68 respondents to the study.

Table 2: Sample Size table

Category	Target Population	Sample Size
Medical officers	30	6
Managers	50	10
Clinical officers	70	14
Nursing officers	100	20
Community health workers	90	18
Total	340	68

Source: Kisii county office (2015)

Data Collection Instruments

The main tools of data collection for this study were structured questionnaires. The questionnaires were used for data collection because it offers considerable advantages in the administration. It also presents an even stimulus potentially to large numbers of people simultaneously and provides the investigation with an easy accumulation of data. Anonymity helps to produce more candid answers than is possible in an interview. The questionnaire comprised of close-ended questions.

ANALYSIS

Data collected was analyzed using descriptive statistics. Descriptive statistics involved the use of frequencies and percentages and a likert scale was used for in depth analysis.

Effects of Strategic Management Practices on Health Care Provision in Hospitals

The researcher sought to establish the effect of strategic management practices on health care provision in hospitals using a likert scale as shown in table 3 below.

Table 3: Strategic Management Practices on Health Care Provision

Practice	5-very great Extent	4-great extent	3-moderate extent	2- less extent	1- no extent	£fi	£wifi	£wifi/£fi
Empowerment of Employees	7	32	21	6	2	68	240	3.52
Employee involved In decision making	3	40	15	7	3	68	237	3.48
Appraisal influence Performance	11	31	24	2	0	68	255	3.75

Adequacy of medical Staff	3	7	41	15	2	68	198	2.9
In service training	17	25	11	10	3	68	241	3.54
ICT influence service delivery	8	6	24	30	3	68	199	2.92
Adequacy of ICT	4	20	16	25	4	68	202	2.97
Involvement of staff in Decision making	2	3	44	16	3	68	189	2.78
Quality of auditing	14	42	8	3	1	68	265	3.90

From table 3 it was revealed with a great extent of 3.52 that employees are empowered to perform their duties whereby employees are given reliable and timely information from other departments that enable them to attend to patients appropriately. It was also reported with a moderate extent of 3.48 that employees are involved in decision making process that has assisted them in overcoming some barriers like ensuring that there is mandatory ICT training for all health sector personnel and health training using e-learning components like telemedicine has been embraced through accommodative decision making process. Further it was shown with a great extent of 3.75 that staff appraisal influences staff performance as this motivates them to work towards achieving the mission of their practices. Also, it was shown with a great extent of 3.54 that ICT influences service delivery as it was reported that shortage of IT professionals with appropriate IT skills sets pose, the most significant challenge to the effective service delivery in hospitals. Further moderate extents of 2.97 were of the view that availability of IT professionals network and system administrators influence service delivery in hospitals. Finally 2.9 which is a moderate extent reported that adequacy of staff ensures that service delivery is achieved in hospitals adequately.

CONCLUSION.

The researcher drew the following conclusions from the study based on the research objectives:

Effects of Human Resource Management Strategy on Service Delivery

The study sought to establish the effects human resource management strategy on service delivery in the health care provision. The findings reaffirmed that human resource management strategy is essential for provision of good service delivery. Therefore more emphasis should be dwelt on human resource management strategy to ensure prudent use of human resource in the health care institutions. In addition to this, the careful elimination of draconian strategies of human resource management and in place adopts human resource strategies that involve all employees in decision making process could help for efficient service delivery.

Effects of Technology Architecture Strategy

For better service delivery implementation and adoption of ICT strategy is a necessity, it provides efficient access and dissemination of information. The lack of adequate, organized, reliable and timely information leads to the mismanagement of the health of patients, resources and time in addition the non existence of an adequate system to manage and disseminate information hampers efficiency of the sector.

Effects of Organisational Structure Strategy on Service Delivery

Organizational structure strategy is an important aspect for the improvement and development of a sound service delivery in the health care institutions and in order to keep the health care institutions in course, there must be an effective organizational structure strategy system that will enable all the plans, objectives, and strategies to be translated into actions that will lead to efficient service delivery in the health care sector. The organizational structure should streamline the deployment and use of ICT and human resource strategy that will lead to collective and efficient service delivery.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In order to manage the service delivery in the care hospitals efficiently the researcher made the following recommendations.

Recommendations on Human Resource Strategy

From the analysis of data the result revealed that there is low level of technical competence, poor handling of emergencies as well as frequent shortage of drugs and medical supplies the strategies to overcome these barriers include efforts to improve staff skill through basic and in-service training, improvement on transport and communication systems and redressing the unfavorable distribution of staff.

Recommendations on Technology Architecture Strategy

For effective management and use of ICT infrastructure planning and funding should be given priority to streamline the deployment and use of ICT, develop in-service training for staff to improve capacity for using technology and develop multimedia mechanisms for dissemination of information and improvement of communication in the health care sector and to increase use of internal and local area networks to improve internal and external communication

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