



IMPLEMENTATION PRACTICES ON PERFORMANCE OF PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES IN WESTERN KENYA

Abongó Beatrice Evelyn, PhD

Department of Business Administration

Maseno University, Kenya

babongo@maseno.ac.ke

Abstract

Published Reports indicate that public universities in Kenya are struggling to meet their financial obligations. This suggests ineffective adoption of implementation practices. No known studies have focused on implementation practices and their effect performance. The study purpose was to analyze the effect of implementation practices on performance. Contingency theory was adopted and cross-sectional survey design of 4 public universities in Western Kenya done. The population comprised 191 staff with 13 used for piloting. The remaining 178 comprised 166 senior managers including deans; chairs of departments; registrars; finance officers; librarians and 12 top managers including Vice-Chancellors and their deputies. The response rate was 84%. Primary data were collected using structured questionnaires and interview schedules. Pre-validated questionnaires had reliability alpha for implementation $\alpha=0.805$ and performance $\alpha=0.92$. Findings revealed that implementation practices significantly contributed to performance ($\beta=.522$, $p=.000$) with significant adj. $R^2=0.267$. The findings implied that implementation practices will result in a change of 0.522 standard deviation units in performance. It is concluded that implementation practices will lead to improved performance in universities. The study recommends need for public universities to be enlightened on benefits of implementation practices.

Keywords: Public Universities, Western Kenya, Implementation Practices, Performance, Contingency theory, Cross-Sectional Survey Design



INTRODUCTION

The performance of a university is measured by how effective it transforms inputs into outputs (Thursby, 2000). Miller (2007) outlines seven areas of performance used by colleges and universities. These include effectiveness, productivity, quality, customer and stakeholder satisfaction, efficiency, and innovation. Balanced Scorecard Measures (BSC) usage is referred to as the use of a combination of measures for assessing company performance (Kaplan & Norton, 1992). The Balanced Scorecard is a widely used method to diagnose and improve on an organization's performance. It was developed by Robert Kaplan and David Norton in 1992. The methodology is a comprehensive approach that analyzes an organisation's overall performance from four perspectives: financial, customer, internal processes, and innovativeness. Malmi (2001) and Marr and Schiuma (2003) in their studies on businesses and not non-profit organizations like universities, linked the Balanced Score Card to positive performance.

Hickson et al. (2003) proposes eight aspects for analysis of implementation. The eight aspects which are recommended by Miller (2004) for implementation success are categorized into two. These are the variables representing experience based which are assessability, resourcing, familiarity, acceptability and specificity and; the variables representing priority-based which are structural facilitation, priority and receptivity. Contrary, to the proposal by Hickson et al. (2003) and recommendation by Miller et al. (2004), a number of studies (Njagi and Kombo (2014), . Ibrahim et al. (2012), Kombo (2014), Fatima et al. (2013), have proceeded to examine the relationship between limited and isolated elements of implementation and performance

Mass (2008) on the other hand, in his study of 55 executives with implementation responsibilities within 44 public and private organizations in the small Caribbean island community of Curacao, differed with all the authors above by studying six aspects of implementation namely, competency, relationship oriented management, political context, implementation plan, organizational structure and organizational culture through a qualitative approach. Despite, the different ways in which implementation was constructed by the above authors, all the studies went ahead to examine the relationship between implementation and performance.

Bolo (2011) generally used a small sample, Njagi and Kombo (2014) study covered a three year period which is in most cases considered short, five years is recommended. Ibrahim et al. (2012) concentrated on CEOs and failed to consider other top managers who play an important role in implementation and Mass (2008) did a qualitative survey which is not generalizeable. Fátima et al. (2013) in her study, took a rather small sample. All the studies above dealt with relationship between implementation practice and performance. All of them

examined the individual constructs of implementation on performance. They constructed these elements of implementation differently. None of them examined all the elements as proposed by Hickson et al. (2003) and Miller et al. (2004). Consequently, they did not study the relationship between all the elements of implementation and performance. The information on the effect of implementation practices on performance of organizations is unclear due to the fact that the construction of implementation by earlier studies has been different and limited. Consequently, there is no information on effect of implementation on performance of Public Universities in Western Kenya.

The public universities in Western Kenya comprise Maseno University, Kisii University, Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology and Jaramogi Oginga Odinga University of Science and Technology.

Objectives of the Study

To determine the effect of implementation practices on performance of public universities in Western Kenya.

Research Hypothesis

H₀. Implementation practices have no significant effect on performance of public universities in Western Kenya.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Review

Strategic management encompasses implementation which is the application of strategic thinking to doing the business of an organization. Noble (1999b) defines implementation as the process that turns plans into action assignments and ensures that such assignments are executed in a manner that accomplishes the stated objectives of the plans. Strategy implementation has long been recognized as being critical for business success. However, more than half of the new strategic initiatives fail to get implemented (Miller, 2002).

Performance is defined as accumulated end results of all the organization's work processes and activities (Stephen and Mary, 2002). The performance of a university is measured by how effective it transforms inputs into outputs (Thursby, 2000). Magutu et al. (2011) did a study on a survey of benchmarking practices in higher education in Kenya and found that participating in benchmarking would give Kenyan public universities a better understanding of performance. Miller (2007) outlines seven areas of performance used by colleges and universities. These include effectiveness, productivity, quality, customer and

stakeholder satisfaction, efficiency, and innovation. Balanced Scorecard Measures (BSC) usage is referred to as the use of a combination of measures for assessing company performance (Kaplan & Norton, 1992). The Balanced Scorecard is a widely used method to diagnose and improve on an organization's performance. It was developed by Robert Kaplan and David Norton in 1992. The methodology is a comprehensive approach that analyzes an organisation's overall performance from four perspectives: financial, customer, internal processes, and innovativeness.

The concepts of strategy implementation and performance are anchored and on the contingency theory. The theory does not claim that there is "one best way". Instead, according to contingency thinking, organizations reach their best performance if they assume the adequate level of a particular variable that matches the respective contingency, and not the maximum. Contingency theory has since developed into a conceptualization widely employed in strategic management (Bluedorn et al., 1994).

Empirical Review

Using multiple regression analysis, Bolo (2011) researched on the joint effect of selected strategy variables on performance of 52 large private manufacturing firms of the supply chains in Kenya and results revealed that implementation does not have an independent effect on corporate performance and that 11.8% of the variations in corporate performance is explained by implementation, with an accuracy level of 99% and nearly 88.2% is explained by other factors. The effect of implementation, though significant, had low explanatory power on corporate performance. The joint effect of core competencies, core capabilities, strategy and strategy implementation on corporate performance is not greater than the sum total of the independent effects of the same variables on corporate performance. The results show that, jointly, the variables explain 52.2% of the variation in corporate performance with an accuracy of 99% and 47.8% is explained by other factors. The study was on profit organizations.

Njagi and Kombo (2014) did a study on the effect of strategy implementation on performance of commercial banks in Kenya. They used correlational research design to determine if there was a relationship and the strength of the relationship between strategy implementation and performance of commercial banks in Kenya. Two aspects of implementation were used, namely, operationalization and institutionalization. This was a census study of all the forty three (43) registered commercial banks in Kenya over a three year period from 2010. The study used primary data collected through the use of questionnaires administered by the researcher to designated managers who were conversant with the institution's strategy implementation and performance levels. The results of the multiple

regression analysis revealed a regression coefficient ($r = 0.693$) of the analysis, which showed that there was a strong and positive relationship between strategy implementation and organizational performance and an Adjusted R Square was 44.8%. The study was on profit organizations.

Ibrahim et al. (2012) did a study on 164 manufacturing firms listed on the Jakarta Stock Exchange (JSE) in 1999 - 2001. The CEOs of these firms were identified as the respondents in this study. The study was conducted to investigate the relationship between strategy implementation and firm performance. It also investigated the moderating role of formality structure on the relationship between strategy implementation and performance of manufacturing firms in Indonesia. The primary data on strategy implementation were obtained through questionnaires to CEOs of manufacturing firms while the secondary data were obtained from the Indonesian Capital Market Directory report. Out of 164 questionnaires that were distributed to the CEOs of manufacturing firms, 127 were returned out of which only 112 were used for further analysis. The results of this research showed that there was a significant relationship between strategy implementation (program $R=.54$, budget $R=.61$ and control of resources $R=.66$) and performance of the manufacturing firm. The results also showed that there was a moderating effect of formalized structure on the relationship between strategy implementation and performance of the manufacturing firms measured by Return on Equity (ROE) and that the total variance explained was only 18.9%. This study was on profit organizations.

Mass (2008) investigated implementation and its reasons for success or failure on a qualitative survey of 55 executives with implementation responsibilities within 44 public and private organizations in the small Caribbean island community of Curaçao. An aspect of this research was that it viewed the complex phenomenon of implementation in a holistic way. Three of its main practical findings were that strategy implementation is a very complex phenomenon with many interconnected factors related to the context in which the strategy is implemented, the process by which the strategy is implemented and the content of the strategy. Six key factors influence implementation performance. These are competency of organizational members, relationship-oriented management, political context, implementation plan, organization structure, organizational culture and that there are certain limits to the applicability and universality of North American and Western European implementation theories, concepts and practices to a developing small island context such as Curaçao. For example, it was found that individualistic implementation practices such as employee participation, individual responsibility, and performance based reward systems are difficult to implement in a collectivist context. The study further discussed the

implications on performance and made recommendations for implementation practice. This was a qualitative study and therefore not generalizable.

Implementation, though vitally important to the success of the firm, remains an under-researched topic in the domains of management (Noble and Mokwa 1999; Crittenden and Crittenden 2008; Sarin, Challagalla, and Kohli 2012). Implementation has received scant attention on an individual level (Sarin, Challagalla, and Kohli 2012). Raps (2004) asserts that up to 90% of strategies are not successfully implemented by organizations. Not surprisingly, many recommendations for firms to improve their implementation have been espoused (Noble and Mokwa 1999; Slater and Olson 2001; Dobni 2003; Crittenden and Crittenden 2008).

Hickson et al. (2003) proposes eight aspects for analysis of implementation. The eight aspects which are recommended by Miller (2004) for implementation success are categorized into two. These are the variables representing experience-based parameters which are assessability, resourcing, familiarity, acceptability and specificity and; the variables representing priority-based which are structural facilitation, priority and receptivity. Contrary to the proposal by Hickson et al. (2003) and recommendation by Miller et al. (2004), a number of studies, have proceeded to examine the relationship between limited and isolated elements of implementation and performance. For example, Njagi and Kombo (2014) constructed implementation as operationalization and institutionalization and went ahead to investigate the effect of these two on performance of commercial banks in Kenya. Ibrahim et al. (2012) in his study of manufacturing firms in Indonesia, came close to the approach by Hickson et al. (2003) and Miller et al. (2004) by constructing implementation as a programme, budget and control of resources. However, Ibrahim et al. (2012) did not examine all the proposed elements of implementation just like Njagi and Kombo (2014). Whereas Ibrahim et al. (2012) and Njagi and Kombo (2014) looked at three and two constructs respectively, Fatima et al. (2013) studied four constructs of implementation which were time, organizational structure, organizational culture and resources. The construction of implementation by Fatima et al. (2013) is also inconsistent with arguments by Hickson et al. (2003) and Miller et al. (2004). Mass (2008) on the other hand, differed with all the foregoing authors by studying six aspects of implementation namely; competency, relationship oriented management, political context, implementation plan, organizational structure and organizational culture through a qualitative approach.

Bolo (2011) generally used a small sample while Njagi and Kombo (2014) covered a three year period which is, in most cases, considered short since five years is recommended. Ibrahim et al. (2012) concentrated on CEOs and failed to consider other top

managers who play an important role in implementation while Mass (2008) did a qualitative survey which is not generalizable. Fátima et al. (2013) in her study, took a rather small sample. Despite, the different ways in which implementation was constructed by the above authors, all the studies went ahead to examine the relationship between implementation and performance.

All the studies above dealt with relationship between implementation practice and performance. All of them examined the individual constructs of implementation on performance. They constructed these elements of implementation differently. None of them examined all the elements as proposed by Hickson et al. (2003) and Miller et al. (2004). Consequently, they did not study the relationship between all the elements of implementation and performance. The information on the effect of implementation practices on performance of organizations is unclear due to the fact that the construction of implementation by earlier studies has been different and limited. Consequently, there is no information on the effect of implementation on performance of public universities in Western Kenya.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study utilized cross-sectional survey design. Cross-sectional surveys have been described as snapshots of the populations about which they gather data. Cross-sectional surveys can be conducted using any mode of data collection, including interviews and mailed or self-administered questionnaires. The correlational approach helped determine whether, and to what degree a relationship existed between the quantifiable variables (Mugenda and Mugenda, 2003).

Target Population, Sample Size and Sampling

The target population of this study constituted respondents from the purposively selected 4 public universities. The interviewees consisted of the top management being the Vice Chancellors and Deputy Vice Chancellors and senior management being registrars, finance officers, deans, chairpersons of departments and librarians. A census approach was adopted since the units were not many and were concentrated in one region thereby favouring costs, time and other resources (Sekaran, 2000).

The target population was 191 staff out of which 13 were used for piloting. The remaining 178 comprised 166 senior managers including deans, chairs of departments, registrars, finance officers, librarians and 12 top managers including Vice-Chancellors and their deputies.

Table 1: Population Distribution

POSITIONS (MANAGEMENT)	MASENO	MASINDE MULIRO	KISII	JARAMOGI OGINGA ODINGA	TOTAL
Vice Chancellor	1	1	1	1	4
Deputy Vice Chancellors	3	3	2	3	11
Registrars	2	3	3	3	11
Finance Officers	1	1	1	1	4
Deans	13	15	11	12	51
Chief Librarian	1	1	1	1	4
Chair of Departments	40	30	24	12	106
TOTALS:	61	54	43	33	191

Sources: Information from respective universities, Commission of University Education (2013) and University Records (2014)

Sources of Data

The researcher gathered secondary data from the university records and Kenya National Audit Reports. Primary data was obtained from the top and senior managers. Both quantitative and qualitative data were sought.

Data Collection Instrument

Implementation Practices Dimensions Questionnaire

Implementation practices were measured in terms of planning efforts that is the degree of emphasis given to planning and prioritization while implementing strategies. Planning emphasis was measured using five items and prioritization using three items on a Likert scale of 1 to 4 as recommended by Miller et al. (2004).

Performance Dimensions Questionnaire

Performance was measured using the Balanced Scorecard methodology from four perspectives: financial, customer, internal processes, and innovation (Kaplan & Norton, 1992). It was measured anchored on a range of "Very Great Extent" to "No Extent" on a five point Likert scale.

Reliability Tests

In the current study, the Cronbach alpha was computed for implementation and performance. Implementation scale indicated 0.805 which was well above the recommended

threshold of 0.70, (Pallant, 2007). The performance scale indicated a Cronbach alpha of 0.92, again well above the threshold and comparable with similar research using the same scale (Allen and Kilmann, 2001; Allen and Helms, 2002; Allen et al., 2004) which obtained 0.93 and Allen and Helms (2006) which featured 0.95.

Validity Tests

Construct Validity

First, the appropriateness of construct for factor analysis was assessed. The study involved the two constructs of implementation and performance.

An examination of the correlation matrix revealed that, for all the constructs, most of the items featured correlations that were more than 0.3. From implementation, communalities indicated that the data was appropriate for factor analysis. For all the constructs, the Bartlett's test of Sphericity was significant at an alpha level ($p < .001$) which showed that there was sufficient correlation between the variables (Meyers et al, 2006). The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) Measure of Sampling Adequacy (MSA) established that for all the constructs, the items could be categorized on the basis of underlying various dimensions (Hair, Anderson and Tatham, 1987). The KMO statistic for the construct was .788. This is a good sign of validity. In other words, the screen plot indicated that after the first component increases in eigen values declined, giving a total solution of 1. The screen-plot together with the eigenvalues for each set of items was in support of the conclusion that the sets of variables could each be reduced to one component with an eigenvalue of more than one. This was a demonstration of the unidimensionality for the constructs. The total variance accounted for by each of the first factors for the variables were: Structural 44.17 %, ($\alpha = 0.742$); Acceptability 12.51 % , ($\alpha = 0.719$). All these added up to a total of 56.68% which is well above the threshold of 50%. In addition, the Alpha coefficient for these constructs indicates adequate reliability and internal consistency. Moreover, since the unit of analysis in the research is the organization and that as far as possible multiple respondents were used to ensure that responses closely represented organizational viewpoints, the above process yields factors representing valid constructs (Lumpkin and Covin, 1997). In addition, the average loadings of implementation practices (0.698) were greater than the average communalities implementation practices (0.640). This means that convergent validity was met.

Data Analysis

Data was analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics was used to establish the extent of adoption of implementation practices and extent of

performance. Pearson r correlation and simple linear regression were used to examine the effect of implementation practices on performance.

ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

Effect of Implementation Practices on Performance

To test the hypothesis, that implementation practices do not affect performance of public universities in Western Kenya, Pearson product moment correlation was calculated using bi-variate correlations. The results are presented as shown in Table 2.

In Table 2, the specific aspects of the implementation were classified as specificity, structural, facilitation, resourcing, familiarity, receptivity, acceptability, priority and assessability. All the aspects were correlated with performance.

Table 2: Relationship between Implementation Aspects and Performance

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Overall performance	1								
Specificity	.351**	1							
Structural Facilitation	.360**	.579**	1						
Resourcing	.238**	.286**	.399**	1					
Familiarity	.426**	.384**	.326**	.248**	1				
Receptivity	.365**	.194*	.441**	.242**	.337**	1			
Acceptability	.401**	.318**	.374**	.354**	.359**	.453**	1		
Priority	.304**	.217*	.430**	.340**	.313**	.514**	.454**	1	
Assessability	.346**	.473**	.332**	.280**	.248**	.345**	.461**	.357**	1

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

The results indicate that the highest and most significant relationship occurred between familiarity and overall performance, ($r=.426$, $p<.01$) which was moderate but significant. This was followed by the relationship between acceptability and overall performance ($r=.401$, $p<.01$) which was still moderate but significant. The rest ranged between $r=.365$ and $r=.238$ and all the correlations were positive and significant.

The aspects underlying the implementation were summarized under two themes according to the theoretical framework and literature review and presented as those that involved application of prior experience (specificity, resourcing, familiarity, acceptability and assessability) and those that involved prioritization of activity (structural facilitation, receptivity and priority). The relationship with performance was also established as separately shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Relationship between Implementation and Performance

		1	2	3
1	Overall performance	1	.506**	.427**
2	Application of prior experience	.506**	1	.638**
3	Prioritization of activity	.427**	.638**	1

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

The results in Table 3 indicate that there is a high positive significant relationship between application of prior experience and performance, ($r=.506$, $p<.01$) and moderate positive significant relationship between prioritization of activity and performance, ($r=.427$, $p<.01$).

Finally, the implementation aspects were combined together by obtaining their means and the results further correlated with performance (see Table 4).

Table 4: Relationship Between Implementation and Performance

	Variable	1	2	Mean	S.D
1.	Implementation	1.00		2.89	.49
2.	Performance	.522**	1.00	2.99	.45

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

From the results in Table 4, it is clear that there was a high positive significant relationship between implementation and performance, ($r=.522$, $p<.01$). This implies that performance was influenced by implementation. The findings of the study further revealed that implementation practices have a significant positive correlation with performance as shown in Table 5 and there is less than 0.01 chance that the correlation coefficient occurred by chance in a sample of 140 respondents. Usually, social scientists accept any probability below 0.05 as indicative of genuine effect (Field, 2005).

Table 5: Effect of Implementation Practices on Performance

	Unstandardized		Standardized		Sig.	Correlations			Collinearity	
	B	Std. Error	Beta	T		Zero-order	Partial	Part Tolerance	VIF	
Model 1										
(Constant)	1.616	.193		8.363	.000					
Implementation	.474	.066	.522	7.183	.000	.522	.522	.522	1.000	1.000

a. Dependent Variable: overall performance

Its unique contribution to the performance is ($\beta=.522$, $t(139)=7.183$, $p<.01$) which is positive and significant. This implies that 1 standard deviation in implementation will result in a change of 0.522 standard deviation units in performance. This means that if more effort is put in implementation, then there will be improved performance.

Table 6: Model Significance

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	7.550	1	7.550	51.589	.000 ^a
	Residual	20.197	138	.146		
	Total	27.747	139			

a. Predictors: (Constant), Implementation
b. Dependent Variable: overall performance

The results in the model above shows that the overall model is significant, $F(1,139)=51.589$, $p<.01$. The model is therefore fit for the regression model and meets the assumption as discussed in the literature review section.

The model summary for the entire results was presented as shown in Table 7. This entails the overall percentage explained by the model, the R square and the R square change.

Table 7: Model Summary on the Influence of Implementation on Performance

Model	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	Std. Error of Estimate	Change Statistics					
					R ² Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change	Durbin-Watson
1	.522 ^a	.272	.267	.38256	.272	51.589	1	138	.000	1.663

a. Predictors: (Constant), Implementation
b. Dependent Variable: overall performance

From the analysis results in Table 7, it is clear that implementation explains an overall percentage 27.2% in performance of public universities, ($R^2=.272$ adjusted $R^2=.267$, $F(1,139)=51.589$, $P<.01$), which is significant. The null hypothesis is therefore rejected and the alternative hypothesis is adopted.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The results are consistent with those of Hickson et al. (2003) who proposed eight aspects for analysis of implementation. The eight aspects are recommended by Miller (2004) for implementation success are categorized into two. These are the variables representing experience based which are assessability, resourcing, familiarity, acceptability and specificity and; the variables representing priority-based which are structural facilitation, priority and receptivity. Contrary, to the proposal by Hickson et al. (2003) and recommendation by Miller et al. (2004), a number of studies, have proceeded to examine the relationship between limited and isolated elements of implementation and performance. For example, Njagi and Kombo (2014) constructed implementation as operationalization and institutionalization and went ahead to investigate the effect of these two on performance of commercial banks in Kenya. Ibrahim et al. (2012) in his study of manufacturing firms in Indonesia, came close to the approach by Hickson et al. (2003) and Miller et al. (2004) by constructing implementation as programme, budget and control of resources. However, Ibrahim et al. (2012) did not examine all the proposed elements of implementation just like Njagi and Kombo (2014). Whereas, Ibrahim et al. (2012) and Njagi and Kombo (2014) looked at three and two constructs respectively, Fatima et al. (2013) studied four constructs of implementation which were time, organizational structure, organizational culture and resources. The construction of implementation by Fatima et al. (2013) is also inconsistent with arguments by Hickson et al. (2003) and Miller et al. (2004). Mass (2008) on the other hand, differed with all the authors above by studying six aspects of implementation namely, competency, relationship oriented management, political context, implementation plan, organizational structure and organizational culture through a qualitative approach. Despite the different ways in which implementation was constructed by the above authors, all the studies went ahead to examine the relationship between implementation and performance.

Bolo (2011) generally used a small sample while Njagi and Kombo's (2014) study covered a three year period which is in most cases considered short because five years is recommended. Ibrahim et al. (2012) concentrated on CEOs and failed to consider other top managers who play an important role in implementation and Mass (2008) did a qualitative survey which is not generalizable. Fátima et al. (2013) in her study, took a rather small sample. All the studies above dealt with relationship between implementation practice and performance. All of them examined the individual constructs of implementation on performance. They constructed these elements of implementation differently. None of them examined all the elements as proposed by Hickson et al. (2003) and Miller et al. (2004). Consequently, they did not study the relationship between all the elements of implementation and performance. The

current study revealed the effect on performance for the composite implementation practices ($\beta=.522, p=.000$) and also the various aspects which are application of prior experience, ($r=.506, p<.01$) and prioritization of activity, ($r=.427, p<.01$). Consequently, the application of implementation practices alongside performance of public universities in Western Kenya was established.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Conclusions

The findings revealed a high positive significant correlation for the composite implementation practices on performance and also for the various aspects of implementation practices, it is concluded that managements have adopted implementation practices in public universities in Western Kenya and it is also concluded that the application of implementation practices were mostly based on aspects of prior experience.

Recommendations

Given the significant correlations observed between aspects involving prior experience (specificity, resourcing, familiarity, acceptability, and assessability) and overall performance, it is recommended that Public universities in Western Kenya emphasize and build upon their prior experiences. This could involve investing in familiar strategies, ensuring adequate resources, enhancing acceptability of new initiatives among stakeholders, and improving assessability of performance metrics.

The strongest correlations were found between familiarity, acceptability, and overall performance. It is therefore recommended for Public universities in Western Kenya to focus on initiatives and practices that are familiar to stakeholders and are deemed acceptable. This may involve conducting thorough assessments of stakeholder needs and preferences before implementing new programs or policies.

Public universities in Western Kenya should also prioritize creating supportive structures for implementation, fostering receptivity to change among staff and stakeholders, and ensuring that activities are aligned with institutional priorities. Universities should prioritize the ability to assess the effectiveness of their implementation practices. Regular assessment and feedback mechanisms should be put in place to monitor progress, identify areas for improvement, and adapt strategies accordingly.

Finally it is recommended for Public universities in Western Kenya to recognize that implementation aspects can be categorized into prior experience and prioritization of activities. These categories should be integrated into their planning and decision-making processes.

Strategies should be developed with a clear understanding of both the institution's past experiences and its current priorities.

Limitations of the Study

The first limitation, is that the study reflects the perceptions of the top and senior managers. The second limitation is that the study focused only on the public universities in Western Kenya. However, confining the study to public universities in a single regional setting conferred the obvious advantage of control. Another limitation encountered during the field survey was that respondents did not complete most of the open-ended sections of the questionnaire. The verbal reasons advanced were that they found the closed-ended questions adequate. The researcher considers this issue as having had no adverse effect on results of the study. Although all these present opportunities for research on context-specific variables, the results of this study should be assessed with these limitations in mind.

Suggestions for Further Research

This study focused on the public universities in Western Kenya in general. It is recommended that future studies should focus on all the public universities in Kenya and lastly, future studies can research on the other variables that contribute to university performance apart from implementation practices.

REFERENCES

- Allen, R., & Helms, M. (2002). Employee perceptions of the relationship between strategy, rewards, and organizational performance. *Journal of Business Strategies*, 19(2), 115-39.
- Allen, R., & Kilmann, R. (2001). The role of the reward system for a total quality management based strategy. *Journal of Organizational Change Management*, 14(2), 110-31.
- Allen, R., Helms, M., Takada, M., & White, C. (2004). Rewards and organizational performance in Japan and the United States: a comparison. *Compensation & Benefits Review*, 36(1), 7-15.
- Bluedorn, A.C., Johnson, R.A., Cartwright, D.K., & Barringer, B.R. (1994). The interface and convergence of the strategic management and organizational environment domains, 20 (2), 201-262.
- Bolo, A. Z. (2011). An Empirical Investigation of Selected Strategy Variables on Firms Performance: A Study of Supply Chain Management in Large Private Manufacturing Firms in Kenya. *Journal of Public Administration and Policy Research*, 3, 228-236.
- Crittenden, Victoria L., & William F. C. (2008). Building a capable organization. The eight levers of strategy implementation, *Business Horizons*, 51(4), 301-09.
- Dobni, C. Brooke & George Luffman (2003), Determining the scope and impact of market orientation profiles on strategy implementation and performance. *Strategic Management Journal*, 24(6), 577-85.
- Fátima, E. B. A., João, V.L., Mário,G.A., Paulo,C. B. (2013). *Organizational capabilities, strategic orientation, strategy formulation quality, strategy implementation and organizational performance in Brazilian textile industries*.
- Hair, Jr., Rolph E. Anderson, Ronald L. Tatham.(1987). *Multivariate data analysis: with readings*, 2nd ed.
- Hickson. D.J., Miller, S.J. & Wilson, D.C. (2003). Planned or Prioritized: Two options in managing the implementation of strategic decisions. *Journal of Management Studies*, 40(7), 1803-36.

- Hickson, D. J., Miller, S. J. & Wilson, D. C. (2003). Planned or Prioritized? Two options in managing the implementation of strategic decisions. *Journal of Management Studies*, 40(7), 1803-1836.
- Ibrahim, M., Sulaiman, M., Kahtani, A., & Abu-Jarad, I. (2012). The relationship between strategy implementation and performance of manufacturing firms in Indonesia: The role of formality structure as a moderator. *World Applied Sciences Journal*, 20(7), 955-964.
- Kaplan, R. S., & Norton, D.P. (1992). The balanced scorecard – measures that drive performance. *Harvard Business Review*, 70(1), 71-79.
- Kenya National Audit Office Report (2012/2013). Retrieved from www.kenao.go.ke/index.php/reports/doc
- Magutu, P. O., Mbeche, I.M., Nyamwange, S. O., & Nyaoga, R.B. (2011). A Survey of benchmarking practices in higher education in Kenya: The case of public universities. *IBIMA Business Review*. <http://www.ibimapublishing.com/journals/IBIMABR/ibimabr.html>
- Malmi, T. (2001), Balanced scorecards in Finnish companies: a research note, *Management Accounting Research*, 12(2), 207-220.
- Marr, B., & Schiuma, G. (2003). Business performance measurement – past, present and future, *Management Decision*, 41(8), 680-687.
- Maas Van Arnoud (2008). Strategy Implementation in a Small Island Community An Integrative Framework.
- Miller, S., Wilson D., & Hickson, C. (2004). Beyond planning strategies for successful implementing strategic decisions. *Long Range Planning*, 37(3), 201-18.
- Miller, D. (2002). Successful change leaders: What makes them? What do they do that is different? *Journal of Change Management*, 2(4), 359-68.
- Miller, B. A., & Swope, S. (2007). Assessing organizational performance in higher education. *International Journal of Educational Advancement*. San Francisco, ISBN: 978-0-7879-8640-7; pp 258.
- Mugenda, O.M. and Mugenda, A.G. (2003) Research Methods, Quantitative and Qualitative Approaches. ACT, Nairobi.
- Njagi, L., & Kombo, H. (2014). Effect of strategy implementation on performance of commercial banks in Kenya. *European Journal of Business and Management*, 6(13), 2-68.
- Noble, C. H., & Michael, P. M. (1999). Implementing marketing strategies: developing and testing a managerial theory. *The Journal of Marketing*, 63(4), 57-73.
- Noble, C.H. (1999b). The eclectic roots of strategy implementation research. *Journal of Business Research*, 45(2), 119-134.
- Pallant, J.A. (2007). *SPSS survival manual: A step by step guide to data analysis using SPSS*, England: Open University Press, McGraw-Hill.
- Raps, A. (2004). Implementing strategy, *Strategic Finance*, 85(12), 48-53.
- Republic of Kenya (2012), Universities Act 2012 No. 42. Government Printer, Nairobi.
- Republic of Kenya (2002). *National development plan 2002 – 2008*. Nairobi: Government Printer.
- Republic of Kenya (2005a). *Ministry of Labour and Human Resource Development (MLHRD) Strategic Plan*. Nairobi: Government Printer.
- Republic of Kenya (2005b). *Kenya education sector support programme 2005-2010: Delivering quality education and training to all Kenyans*. Ministry of Education.
- Republic of Kenya, (2005c). *Sessional Paper No. 1 of 2005 on a Policy framework for education, training and research: Meeting the challenges of education, training and research in Kenya in the 21st Century*. Nairobi: Government printer.
- Sarin, S., Goutam, C., & Ajay K. K. (2012). Implementing changes in marketing strategy: The role of perceived outcome and process-oriented supervisory actions. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 49(4), 564-80.
- Sekaran, U. (2000). *Research Methods for Business; A skill-building approach*, 3rd Edition. New York, NY: John Wiley.
- Slater, S.F., Olson, E.M., & Hult, T.M. (2010). Worried about strategy implementation? Don't overlook marketing's role. *Business Horizons*, 53(5), 469-479.

Slater, S.F., & John C. N. (1994). Does competitive environment moderate the market orientation-performance relationship?. *Journal of Marketing*, 58(1), 46-55.

Stephen, P.R., & Mary, K.C. (2002). *Management*, 7/E Prentice Hall.

Thursby, J.G.(2000). What do we say about ourselves and what does it mean? Yet another look at economics department research", *Journal of Economic Literature*, 38(2), 383-404.

Universities Act 2012: Toward quality varsity education in Kenya. University of Nairobi copyright© 2008-2012.