# STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION AND ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE AMONG INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER LEARNING IN KIAMBU COUNTY

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## ABSTRACT

Institutions of Higher Learning (IHLs) have experienced exponential growth in the past five years due to the rise in student enrolment. This trend has caused a lot of competition amongst these institutions, both public and private, leading them to develop competitive strategies in a bid to survive. However, successful implementation of these strategies has been a challenge to the organizational performance. The objective of this study was to examine the influence of strategy implementation on organizational performance among IHLs in Kiambu County. The study's specific objectives were; to examine the influence of resource allocation, strategic leadership, strategy communication and monitoring and control on the performance of these institutions. The theories that guided the study were; Resources and Capabilities, Agency, Institutional and the Balance Scorecard. A descriptive study design of cross section in nature was used because it allowed effective data collection to test hypotheses concerning the variables under study. The target population were heads of both academic and non-academic departments. The sample of 174 respondents was selected through stratified random sampling. Primary data was collected through semi-structured questionnaires through drop and pick method of administration. Content validity was evaluated through the opinion of scholars and experts in strategy implementation as well as through a pilot test was carried out to check the reliability of the research instruments. Reliability of the questionnaire was evaluated using the Cronbach alpha test, which provided an acceptable threshold of 0.8. Descriptive statistics such as mean, percentages and standard deviations were used to analyze the data collected. Inferential statistics in the form of correlation tests and multiple regression analysis were also used to evaluate the influence of the independent variables on the dependent variables. Results were presented using tables along with their associated interpretations. The response rate of this study was sixty-six percent (66%) based. The findings established the existence of a significant influence of strategic resource allocation, monitoring and control of strategies, strategic leadership and strategic communication on the performance of IHLs. The study concluded that organizational performance was significantly influenced by monitoring, control of strategies resource allocation and strategy communication. Further, the findings revealed that strategic leadership did not influence performance of IHLs to a great extent as the preceding variables. It is recommended that the management of IHLs can use the findings to consider resource allocation to core activities of the institution, not only those that are directly related to achievement of their educational goals, but also to infrastructure such as students' hostels. The institutions should create innovative communication channels, such as online feedback platforms to guarantee that all stakeholders are aware of the strategies implemented and give feedback for improvement of the same. Further, it is suggested that management of the IHLs should have deliberate programs to monitor and control the strategies implemented and results given to the management for further action depending on the outcome. Finally, it is recommended that advance research be carried out through replication of this study in other organizations or industries.

***Key Words:*** *strategy implementation, organizational performance, institutions, higher learning, Kiambu County*

## INTRODUCTION

There is an escalating pressure for organizations to adopt mechanisms that can keep up with the increasing competition in the global market. Strategy implementation is a critical competitive mechanism for all successful organizations to achieve their goals owing to its capability to enhance organizational performance. Akhtar, Arif, Rubi, Naveed (2011) assert that organizational performance is the degree to which an organization has successfully achieved its set objectives. Lawrimore and Noble (2009) also described organizational performance as an arrangement of financial and non- financial related pointers which indicate the level of accomplishment of pre-determined objectives. Indeed, strategic implementation is a vital facet in meeting an organization's desired goals and objectives. Therefore, it is imperative for the modern-day organizations to enhance their performance through effective strategy implementation.

Globally, Institutions of Higher Learning (IHLs) have developed viable strategy implementation mechanisms that enhance organizational performance so as to attain the millennia goals for research and development (Beard, 2009). In the United States (US), IHLs have enhanced their performance by implementing their mission and vision through developing a stakeholder-focused strategy that focuses on all the elements of the market in which they operate (Akhtar, Arif, Rubi, & Naveed, 2011). This has led to high organizational performance among these institutions making them highly competitive globally.

The Chinese IHLs have applied an integrated framework that manages, develops and releases full potential of their staff at an individual, team-based and organizational level. The institutions promote equality, involve and empower their stakeholders for effective strategy implementation. They care for, communicate, reward and recognize the need to motivate the staff in order to build their commitment to using their skills and knowledge for the benefit of effective strategy implementation (Chen, Wang, & Yang, 2009). This has resulted to a high organizational performance.

In Africa, IHLs in South Africa and Nigeria are at the helm of organizational performance due to their magnificent strategy implementation that conforms to the needs of their stakeholders (Omutoko, 2009). In South Africa for instance, the government has realized the need to enhance proper assessment mechanisms to facilitate strategic implementation in IHLs. Similarly, IHLs within Nigeria, which are among the fastest growing institutions of modern times, have invested heavily on strategy implementation through proper mechanisms that aid the attainment of desired goals without arousing significant conflict of interests from the stakeholders involved leading to a high organizational performance (Omutoko, 2009).

In Kenya, adequate research on the influence of strategy implementation on organizational performance is yet to be widely evident because most IHLs are still recuperating from poor organizational performance. Additionally, the continuous expansion of IHLs has adversely affected strategy implementation because limited resources used in implementing the organizational strategies have to be shared with the new institutions making the resources more scarce (Omutoko, 2009). These institutions also face challenges in their strategy implementation due to the unpredictable nature of the interests from stakeholders affecting their long run performance. It is upon this basis that this study found its foundation and examined the influence of strategy implementation on organizational performance among IHLs in Kiambu County.

## Organizational Performance

Organizational performance is the actual productivity of an organization measured against its projected goals and objectives (Upadhaya, Munir, & Blount, 2014). The performance of an organizational is based on the perception that the organization is comprised of valuable resources that include personnel, physical and capital assets that are used to achieve a shared goal. The performance can be measured in terms of productivity and outcome, profit, effectiveness of internal processes and procedures, staff attitudes and organizational responsiveness to the environment (William, 2002). These diverse constituents result in many different interpretations of 'successful or poor performance' of organizations (Barney, 2002). Organizational performance is measured not only limited to economic outcomes governed by financial indicators such as accounting returns, stock market and growth measures, but also non-financial indicators such as customer contentment, personnel satisfaction and social performance (Combs, Crook & Shook, 2005). Therefore, organizational performance is the measure of internal performance results normally linked with more efficient or effective processes and other external measures such as corporate social responsibility that relate to considerations that are broader than economic valuation (Richard, Devinney, Yip, & Johnson, 2009).

The key performance indicators of an organization can be measured through efficiency which is marked by the degree of production costs, output of labour and capital; through quality which is measured by the number of faulty products returned inwards; innovativeness is measured against number of new products developed against the competitors and percentage generated from new products (Hill, 2008). The performance indicators in IHLs range from the quality of the undergraduate and postgraduate education provided to its students, number of graduates per year, number of graduates who secure employment/start a business, number of competent staff and collection of academic resources in the library. The idea is to select a few indicators that are reflective of organizational effectiveness (Matthew, Grawhich, & Barber, 2009).

In general, organizational performance is determined by the organization's capability to respond to threats and opportunities in an effective and efficient manner, with full knowledge of the strengths and weakness at hand. An effective organization is able to successfully use information of its past and current trends as well as knowledge of alternative strategies available to make decisions that will achieve the greatest benefit for the organization (Rabah, 2015).

## Strategy Implementation

Strategy implementation is the process of carrying out planned strategies so that performance can be moved from the existing position to a future desired position (Johnson and Scholes, 2008). According to Aladwani (2003), strategy implementation means executing the results of planning through operationalization of the day to day activities so that an organization can achieve its competitiveness. Mashhadi, Mohajeri, and Nayeri,(2008) postulate that for an organization to implement the strategy successfully, adequate resources, decision-making processes, organization structure, culture, information and communication technology, reward and motivation systems, effective communication, education, capabilities and skills should be provided.

According to Steiner (2004), the implementation process envelops complete administrative activities including aspects like management appraisal, incentives, reward and control process. Operationalizing planned strategies includes allocation of resources, instilling strategic leadership, communication, monitoring and control. Communicating the strategy is a vital element in strategy implementation. This communication can be either internal to the organization or external. Equally, for effective accomplishment of set goals, engagement of assets such as finances and personnel is considered during the strategy implementation phase (Ballentine, & Eckles, 2009).

Monitoring or evaluation is initiated to detect an errant strategy prior to negative impacts that could damage or increase the cost of implementing a strategy. Monitoring helps the team members to ensure that the strategy is being implemented successfully. (IEEE, 2009). Strategy control, offers appropriate and valid responses about the performance of an organizational so that change and adjustment becomes a regular part of implementation. Controls permit the amendment of implementation-related issues in the event that the desired goals are not being met (Gottschalk, 2015).

Strickland (2006) attempts to give some measures that can be put into place to enable effective strategy implementation. He notes that putting strategic plan into actions, tests a manager's ability to manage organizational change, inspire people, strengthen the organizations competencies and capabilities, create a strategy-supportive work environment and meet set targets. Effective strategy implementation should devise internal action approaches, develop effective strategies to improve organizational performance, attain clarity of future direction, assign team work and expertise based on resources, deal effectively with organizational changes and uncertainties in external environment, processes and people and make appropriate choices and priorities (Cole, 2004).

## Institutions of Higher Learning in Kiambu County

Institutions of higher learning within the Kenyan context includes: public and private universities, polytechnics, teacher training institutes, technical training institutes, institutes of technology and professional training institutions which could be government owned or commercial (Afeti, Ng'ethe & Subotzky, 2008).

Kenya has made tremendous growth in higher education and training in the past decade. Currently, there are 72 universities, distributed as follows: 31 public chartered universities, 5 public university constituent colleges, 18 private chartered universities, and 5 private university constituent colleges, 13 institutions with a letter of interim authority (CUE, 2017) and 540 technical and vocational colleges, with current student population in the range of more than 450,000 and 80,000 students in the universities and technical and vocational institutions respectively.

This study paid attention to IHLs in Kiambu County which has 52 institutions of higher learning which include; 10 universities and 42 technical and vocational colleges (TVETA, 2017). Of the 10 universities, there are 4 public universities/campuses, 5 private universities and 1 constituent college (CUE, 2017). Majority, of these IHLs are severely weighed down by numerous and uncontrolled problems such as lack of competent faculty and acute shortage of teaching and training resources, not to mention non-existence of any kind of advanced research activities. However, the on-going exchequer reduction in funding coupled with lack of transparency and proper accountability by the top management have exuberated matters-leading to serious and perennial cash flow difficulties leaving some of these institutions with stalled major infrastructure projects, shortage skilled staff, equipment and facilities to serve the ever swelling number of students, and thus, inability to produce skilled and competent students for the ever-changing today's' emerging job markets (Rabah, 2015).

In addition, majority of the private IHLs in Kenya rely on students' tuition fees for their income. This intense dependence together with lack of substitute revenue sources has resulted to these IHLs being expensive and unaffordable for most Kenyans (Ngome, 2003). Poor strategy implementation in key operations by top management, lack of effective communication on strategies to be implemented and proper monitoring and control mechanisms in the operational frameworks also causes conflict of interest in IHLs. Nevertheless, there is inadequate literature on the influence of strategy implementation on organizational performance within these institutions. In view of this, it was important to study how the IHLs in Kiambu County can boost organizational performance through effective strategy implementation that leads to long term survival. It was therefore upon this basic rationale that the current study aimed at identifying the influence of strategy implementation on organizational performance in these institutions.

## STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The task of implementing a strategy is critical to the survival of an organization and enhancing its performance in a competitive industry (Atkinson, 2006). It is noted that strategy implementation is a key process in achieving institutional goals and objectives and heightening the organizational performance (Allio, 2005). The drive for IHLs to adapt to the highly dynamic and competitive environment has led to refocusing of strategies so as to improve performance (Huang, 2012). The influence of strategy implementation on organizational performance continues to be singled out as important in research and practice Gaya (2013). For many years, there has been constant emphasis on strategy formulation and inadequate emphasis on strategy implementation (Shamila, Muhammad & Sohail (2016), Nnamani, Ejim & Ozobu (2015) and Akinyele & Fasogbon (2007). This emphasis on the plan and little or none on the implementation has been the cause of under-performance in IHLs. Noble (1999) asserted that most institutions' best-conceived strategies fail to generate premium performance due to poor implementation. Unless the desired financial and non-financial results dictated by an institutional strategy are achieved, the institution will be incapable of exploiting the future opportunities and combating threats effectively (Hrebiniak, 2006). Therefore, the purpose of this study was to examine the influence of strategy implementation on organizational performance in IHLs in Kiambu County. Whereas there have been research studies on strategy implementation undertaken in many sectors, few have been carried out to establish the influence of strategy implementation on performance of IHLs.

## GENERAL OBJECTIVES

The general objective of the study was to examine the influence of strategy implementation on organizational performance among IHLs in Kiambu County.

## SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

1. To examine the influence of resource allocation on the organizational performance of IHLs in Kiambu County.
2. To assess the influence of strategic leadership on the organizational performance of IHLs in Kiambu County.
3. To establish the influence of communication of strategies on the organizational performance of IHLs in Kiambu County.
4. To determine the influence of monitoring and control of strategies on the organizational performance IHLs in Kiambu County.

## THEORETICAL REVIEW

### Resource Based View

The Theory of Resources and Capacities also known as the Resource-Based View (RBV) postulates that resources owned by an organization are critical for a firm to sustain competitive advantage and superior performance (Barney 2002). King (2007) predicted that resources possessed and managed by organizations are able to create a competitive advantage resulting in premium performance. The resources can be tangible such as raw materials, finances, real estate, computers; or intangible such as staff morale, reputation and patents (Mayer & Solomon, 2006). An organization's capacity is the ability of combining resources, people and processes to transform inputs to outputs. Makadok (2001) defines capabilities as special types of resources such as innovations and augmented customer service, specifically embedded and non-transferable, whose function is to improve the output of the other resources owned by the firm.

RBV explains the role played by resources possessed by an organization in differentiating it from other organizations in the industry through superior performance giving it competitive advantage (Baumol, Litan & Schramm, 2009). These different resources and capacities have positive implications on the performance of an organization. Organizations which allocate adequate resources to assets such as machinery, plant and equipment have a higher chance of premium performance than those that overlook such allocation (Ainuddin, Beamish, Hulland, & Rouse, 2007). Similarly, organizations that allocate resources to development of their personnel improve the human resources' skills and competencies. This in turn influences how decisions are made and implemented affecting the overall performance of organizations (Rose & Kumar, 2007). Allocation of financial resources such as money in hand and bank, stocks and other derivatives affects how a firm invests and even takes advantage of the new opportunities (Morgan, Kaleka, & Katsikeas, 2004). Intangible resources such as reputation of the products/services of the organization, its brand name and experience have significant implications on organization's activities. Capacities significantly affect an organization's performance and competitive ability (King, 2007). The organization must aim at allocating its resources at a cost-efficient and differentiated manner than its rivals for increased performance and eventually competitive advantage.

The RBV views organizational performance as the key component in gaining competitive advantage. The theory focuses on the following when determining the value of resources allocated in an organization: Firstly, competitive superiority which states that any resource that helps fulfill the customers' needs better than those of the competitor should be strategically allocated to customer-centered activities for synergy of performance (Mahoney and Pandian, 1992). Secondly, resource scarcity that states that any scarce resource should be sparingly allocated so that it can be sustained over time for continued organizational performance over the competitors who may not have access to the resource (Dierickx & Cool, 1989).

Thirdly, for long term competitive advantage, differentiating strategies can be implemented, when producing services such as programmes, so that competitors are not able to easily replicate; fourthly, inimitability that states that resources are allocated to ensure that unique aspects such as advanced practicals are inbuilt in the courses for better performance over competitors; resources should be allocated to research for the appropriateness of the institution's activities in the industry. Lastly, for rare, potentially value-creating and imperfectly imitable, an equally important aspect is non-substitutability (Dierickx & Cool, 1989). If competing organizations can counteract the value-creating strategies with a substitute, prices are lowered to the point of loss of competitive advantage causing overall poor organizational performance. The implementation of strategies should be based on the combination that uses organization resources more efficiently, and accumulate them in way to improve the firms' overall performance. The theory suggests that care and protection during allocation of the resources can improve the organization's performance (Crook, Ketchen, Combs & Todd, 2008).

This theory was relevant to this study because it explained the role played by allocation of internal resources in determining the organization performance of IHLs. When the resources were strategically allocated to key organizational activities, the organizational performance increased as did the competitive advantage of the institution.

### The Agency Theory

The Agency Theory put forth by Jensen and Meckling (1976) postulates that the agent acts on behalf of the principal and to advance the principal's objectives. It is a supposition that explains the relationship between principals and agents in organizations. The agents are typically leaders and managers of the organization at various levels. Once the agent accepts to embark on a task on behalf of the principal, they become answerable to the principal by whom they are engaged. Thus, the agents look after the principals' and their interests balancing them in order to achieve the objectives of the organization. This Theory has also been portrayed as the central approach to the relationship between principals and agents in performance management.

Laffont & Martimost (2002) contend that the Agency Theory is very important in organizational performance since the strategies implemented by the agent affect not only one, but several other the principals. The theory holds that appropriate synergy between the administration and its shareholders is necessary so as to work towards a common objective. Krueger (2004) in his paper on strategic management and management by objectives says that the objectives designed starting from the corporate to operational level must be overseen by the agents for the organization to achieve its goals. This is in view that at each stage of the chain of command, an agent has to be charged with the task of representing other stakeholders at other levels. This agent should create a conducive working environment that inspires the employees under them so that everyone in all the chains of command is acts as an agent.

There is synergy in operations and rapport between the principal and the agent leading to efficient and effective achievement of organizational objectives (Majone, 2001). Therefore, the agent plays a critical role in ensuring that intended strategies are implemented throughout the organization to achieve the objectives so as to realize greater performance. If the agent fails to do so, the agency loss is increased. Agency loss is the disparity caused by the acts of an agent on the best possible outcome. The best possible outcome is the situation where the agent acts as per the principal's interest thereby minimizing the agency loss and increasing the organizational performance, while acts of an agent is when the leaders act as per their own interests increasing the agency loss resulting to a decrease in organizational performance (Zajac & Westphal, 2004). Organizational performance depends on agency loss.

This theory was relevant to this study because it puts into perspective how leaders (agents) in IHLs affect strategy implementation and organizational performance. Superior organizational performance was achieved when the leadership of institutions (agents) acted in the sole interest of the Ministry of Education (principal) by subduing and shifting their own interests to implementing the actions that will chiefly achieve the organizational goals. Ultimately, when the principal and agent shared common interests, organization performance was increased since the agent appreciated and passionately implemented the strategies laid out by the principal.

## Institutional Theory

Simpson & Weiner (1989) defined the Institutional Theory as an approach that explains the influence of an organization's environment on its structures. The complexity of reporting structures affects the manner in which information relevant for strategy implementation is passed and received. The policies and procedures, which are the set of formal rules that are developed, determine the way information flows and actions to be carried out during strategy implementation (Scott, 2001).

This theory is concerned with how information flow in an organizational structure affects its performance. In this theory, the term institution is used to explain the particular culture as well as policies and procedures in an organization. Guohui & Eppler (2011) argue that organizations in which staff can easily access the management through open and supportive communication environment tend to outperform those with more restraining communication environments. Lehtimäk and Karintau (2012) confirm that communication is an important requirement for effective strategy implementation. Organizational communication is vital in knowledge dissemination during the process of strategy implementation.

Communication is enveloping in every facet of strategy implementation because it relates in a complex way in organizational context, organizing processes and implementation of objectives (Mutisya, 2016). The set of formal rules developed in an organization determine how the flow of information and the actions to be undertaken by staff in case of an incident of a particular nature occurring will be made (Amenta, 2005). These communication structures influence the organization's performance by generating expectations among different stakeholders when implementing strategies.

This theory was important for this study because it explained the role played by organizational structure, specifically the communication structure, in determining the organizational performance. It is noted that organizational culture and policies was positively correlated with how communication flows in an organization and consequently influenced the performance of organizations. Communication coordinated different departments, sections and even external stakeholders to harmonize their aspirations for common organizational goals. Through communication, organizations were able to coordinate different resources towards a given strategy implementation reducing chances of any deviations from the anticipated results.

### Balance Scorecard Theory

Kaplan and Norton (1992) put forth the Balanced Score Card (BSC) Theory which proposes that the financial evaluation of a company's performance should be enhanced with other measures that will include the intangible assets to give a evaluation of the company's performance. The concept was introduced following criticism of only using financial measures to assess the performance of a company. The BSC theory brings together all the strategic objectives of an organization into a single and balanced framework (Kaplan & Norton, 2003). This theory is an advancement of the General electric's corporate strategy analysis which had been put forth in the 1950's (Lewis, 1955) advocating measurement of performance not only by financial measures but non-financial measures as well.

The BSC allows organizational systems such as planning, budgeting, incentive and reward to be focused and allied to successful strategy implementation. Kaplan (2005) presented the balanced scorecard theory in four points of view namely; the learning and growth, financial, customer and internal process perspectives. Each of these perspectives is aimed at ensuring that organizational strategies are monitored and controlled at each stage of the implementation.

The learning and growth perspective identifies the intangible assets such as the human capital, the information capital, and organization capital that sustain the value-creating internal processes and seeks to monitor their implementation for achievement of the organizational goals. The financial perspective on the other hand, describes the tangible results of the strategy in financial terms, such as revenue growth, lower unit costs, shareholder value, profitability and return on investment. The customer perspective defines the drivers of income growth which include generic customer outcomes, like acquisition, satisfaction and retention as well as the differentiating value offers the organization sets to offer to generate sales and loyalty from targeted customers. Finally, the internal process looks at, innovation, customer management, regulatory and social process objectives for producing and delivering the customer value and improving the quality and productivity of operating processes (Kaplan, 2005).

Managers use these perspectives to formulate and communicate their strategy, to align business units and shared services for synergy and also setting priorities for strategic initiatives for reporting and guiding the implementation of the strategy (Neely & Adams, 2002). The process starts by applying the BSC at the upper hierarchy and cascading the strategic goals to lower levels, for customization to the specific situations faced in the lower level units. All units are aligned with each other and to the organizational strategy (Kaplan, 2006).

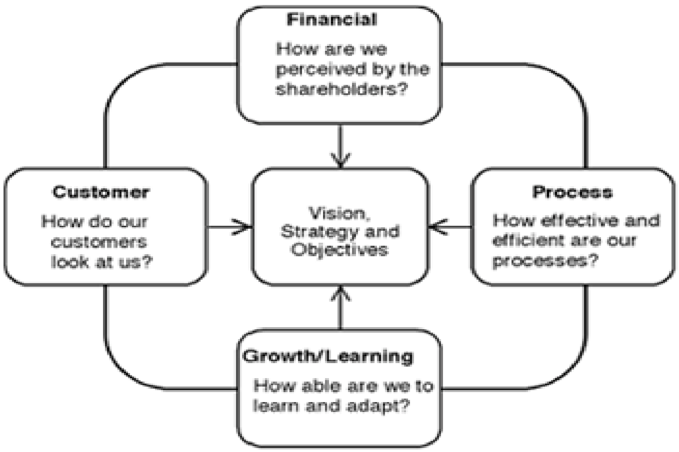


**Figure 1: Balance Scorecard**

*Source:* (Kaplan, 2005)

In the IHLs, the learning and growth objectives incorporate shared values, style and staff to improve organizational skills and important processes. When structure, systems and strategy are closely incorporated, the probability of successful strategy implementation is increased substantially. Thus, one can view the BSC as a convenient and effective tool for monitoring and controlling organizational variables and processes to achieve premium performance through focused strategy implementation (Kaplan, 2005).

The BSC Theory was relevant to this study because it provided key means of monitoring and controlling the strategies implemented in a bid to measure the performance of an organization. The theory emphasized monitoring and controlling of strategies at all levels of implementation so as to adjust deviances from the set objectives, provide a synergy in operations and possibly improve the overall performance.

## EMPIRICAL REVIEW

### Resource Allocation and Organizational Performance

Abok (2015) investigated the factors affecting organizational performance with reference to resource allocation. Her study revealed that strategic resource allocation measures were slowly being adopted by organizations, inhibiting optimum performance of these organizations. The study focused on the financial factors affecting effective implementation of strategies. The effect of non-financial factors on resource allocation during strategy implementation on organization performance were not highlighted in this study.

Ouma and Kilonzo (2013) investigated how resource allocation planning influences performance in public financial institutions in Kenya. The study focused on the procurement departments of these institutions revealing that resource allocation significantly affects performance in the financial institutions. It did not show how the balance of overall resource allocation and allocation of funds to specific departments can improve the overall performance from low level to corporate-wide unit.

Gaya (2013) in his assessment of the determinants of strategy implementation at the Kenya Sugar Board found out that lack of proper strategy planning affected resource allocation at the Board. This was manifested by planning several strategies at once, which caused a strain in allocated resources leading to poor implementation of strategies. The study also revealed that the Board focused much on allocation of financial resources at the strategy planning stage, neglecting the role of non-financial resources such as human resources in strategy implementation resulting to under performance of the organization.

The current study aimed at finding out how balancing all types of resources during allocation to all departments and activities in the organization affected its performance.

### Strategic Leadership and Organizational Performance

In a survey carried out on the factors influencing the implementation of strategies in Nairobi Water and Sewerage Company by Ndichu (2009), it was noted that all organizations where top management did not exhibit confidence in the personnel occupying pivotal administrative positions when delegating assignments to them had poor performance, while all those that confidently delegated duties to these individuals had optimal performance. The study focused on the achievement of principal’s and some agent’s (top management)’s interests while neglecting the personal interest of the other staff in the organization. This study therefore explored the effect of strategic leadership on the organizational performance through achievement of common interests of the principal and agents.

Chege (2015) conducted a research on the challenges of strategic implementation on the performance of Zetech University and found out that leaders do not engage employees in formulation of strategic plans leading to reluctant implementation resulting to poor performance. This study therefore established how strategic leadership affects the implementation of strategies and overall performance of an organization.

## Strategy Communication and Organizational Performance

Uka (2014) investigated how communication influenced the effectiveness of the organization. The study conducted in Nigeria reflects the overall importance of communication as a continuity and key component of implementation of strategies. The study noted that constant and clear communication of the strategies to all employees of an organization, improved the overall achievement of the set goals. The findings nonetheless, did not outline the importance of communicating the strategies to all stakeholders including external parties. The current study expounded on these areas to find out if they have a comprehensive influence on communication of strategies and the overall organizational performance.

Mutisya (2016) investigated the influence of communication on strategy implementation among pharmaceutical companies in Nairobi. The study found out that to a great extent, strategy communication had an affirmative effect on the performance of these companies. However, majority of the companies used horizontal communication mechanism with no indication of feedback received from other levels in the organization on the strategies implemented.

The current study therefore focused on communication mechanisms with all stakeholders as a means of promoting organizational success.

## Monitoring and Control of Strategies and Organizational Performance

A research study done by Rintari and Moronge (2012) investigated the influence of monitoring and control strategies on organizational performance of the Public Service Commission of Kenya. The study found that monitoring and controlling strategies through environmental scan contributes most to organizational performance. The study majorly focused on the improvement of an organization’s performance through monitoring and controlling financial indicators overlooking the non-financial indicators. This study investigated both financial and non-financial indicators.

A study on the influence of monitoring and control of strategies in public schools in Webuye Constituency was conducted by Kitonga (2013) revealing that there is a positive relationship between monitoring and control of strategies and organizational performance. However, Kitonga’s study focuses on the monitoring and control of l strategies in specific activities of the schools while the current focuses on monitoring and control these strategies at all levels in the organization.

Tesot (2009) carried out a research on the effects of strategic management practices on performance of the Coffee Development Fund of Kenya. Her findings indicated that performance in these organizations was below the optimal level because monitoring and control strategies were not well adapted across the Fund. Majority of the respondents indicated that monitoring and control as a process involved the personnel on a minimally and as a result it was usually ignored.

This study sought to find out how constant monitoring and controlling of strategies, involvement of the employees of the IHLs in the process and giving feedback of the results affected the organizational performance.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### Research Design

The study used descriptive study design which was cross-sectional in nature because the researcher was able to generate an accurate profile of factors, events and situations of a study population at a specific point in time to examine the connection between the dependent and independent variables (Cooper & Schindler, 2003). Descriptive study design enabled the researcher to explain the variables under study and obtain regression models for predicting independent variables (Zikmund, 2003). This design also allowed the researcher to collect information from the study sample on their perceptions relating to the influence of strategic implementation with regards to resource allocation, strategic leadership, communication of strategies and monitoring and control of strategies; on the performance of the IHLs and draw valid conclusions from the findings (Neuman, 2006). Cross-sectional study allowed the researcher to determine the sample affected by the variables under study and whether the frequency of occurrence varied across the population (Alexander, Lopes, Masterson & Yeatts, 2017). Additionally, this method enabled the researcher to examine the hypotheses and collect data from the sample in a time and cost-effective manner.

### Study Population

A study population according to Kothari (2004) is the total unit where the study is supposed to be conducted. This study population was 52 IHLs in Kiambu County which included 10 universities and 42 technical and vocational colleges (Appendix III). The county was suitable for this study since the IHLs were of diverse nature with l0 being universities and 42 being technical and vocational institutions.

### Sampling Design and Sample Size

This study conducted a census survey of all 52 IHLs in Kiambu County so that the size of the population would be well sampled. The unit of observation was 580 heads of department of teaching and non-teaching departments from three management levels that is; top, middle and lower-level in the IHLs as shown in Table 3.2. The study then used stratified random sampling technique to select the required sample from this population of 580 respondents. Due to the large number of respondents in the IHLs, a 30% sample of the respondents was used in accordance with Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) to get the desired sample size. The desired sample size was therefore;

$$n = \frac{30}{100} \times 580 = 174$$

The sample was distributed evenly in the strata as per Pedhazur and Schmelkins (1991)'s formula below:

$$r = \frac{c \times s}{p}$$

Where: r is respondent required from a stratum; c is stratum population (management level); s is the desired size (174); p is the total population (580)

## Data Sources and Collection Technique

The study employed primary data as it provided first hand information from the implementers and was helpful to the researcher because it was consistent and precise. This data was collected from the sample size of 16 IHLs. A structured questionnaire was used to collect data from teaching and non-teaching staff in these institutions. Questionnaires contained both open and closed ended questions themed along the study objectives. Questionnaires helped the researcher gather massive data within a short time (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2009). The secondary data was also vital in the study since the researcher collected useful information from the library books, annual reports, journals and publications from research institutions.

## Data Collection Procedure

Primary data from the sample of the study was collected through semi-structured questionnaire (Appendix I). The questionnaire contained Likert scale and closed-ended questions. In structuring the questionnaire, closed ended questions were avoided because they limit the respondents' answers and increased the risk of subjective answers. The questionnaires were administered through drop and pick method. The data collecting instruments were designed so as to achieve the research objective and collect data that addresses the problem of the study. Permission to conduct the research was sought from the National Council for Science and Technology (NACOSTI) office before initiating data collection. Data collection lasted ten (10) days.

## Data Analysis and Presentation

Data analysis was done through coding, tabulating and then drawing statistical inferences this by use of statistical software including the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Descriptive statistics involving frequency distributions, percentages, means and standard deviations was employed to analyze responses. With reference to the hypotheses, inferential statistics was carried out using regression models. The study utilized multiple regression analysis to predict the relationship between the dependent variable (y) and the independent variables

(H1,2,3,4). The adjusted coefficient of determination (R-squared) was used to show the unpredictability of the variables. This was followed by the analysis of variation (ANOVA) test which compared group means by analyzing comparisons of variance estimates to test if the means of several groups were all alike. The statistical model that tested the relationship of the variables in the study is presented as follows:

$$y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 H_1 + \beta_2 H_2 + \beta_3 H_3 + \beta_4 H_4 + \varepsilon i$$

Where: y = the value of the dependent variable (Organizational performance); $\beta_0$ = Constant; $\beta_{1,2,3,4}$ = Coefficient of independent variables; $H_1$ = Resource allocation strategies; $H_2$ = Strategic Leadership; $H_3$ = Strategy communication; $H_4$ = Monitoring and control of strategies; $\varepsilon i$ = is error term 0.05 (captures any other variable not included in the equation)

Once inferences were drawn, the presentation of data was done through tables and graphs, where applicable.

## RESEARCH RESULTS

The objective of the study was to assess the influence of strategy implementation on organizational performance among IHLs in Kiambu County. From the findings, it was clear that performance of organizations was influenced by strategy implementation, specifically, in terms of resource allocation, strategic leadership, strategy communication and monitoring and control strategies.

### Influence of resource allocation on organizational performance

The study showed that there was a positive influence between the performance of the organization and the resources allocated to key activities in IHLs. In institutions where adequate resources were allocated, the performance was satisfactory. However, the study found out that most IHLs in Kiambu County lacked adequate physical and human resources.

### Influence of strategic leadership on organizational performance

This part of the research study was directed by specific objective number two. The study revealed that strategic leadership in IHLs had a positive influence on organizational performance with most institutions preferring transformational leadership style that fully involved all members of the IHLs in making decisions that affect the organization. The aggregate mean score on the influence of strategic leadership on IHLs performance indicated that the institutions were well guided by the current the strategic leaders in achievement of overall goals. However, there was a low-level confidence on the reward systems, perception of different opinions given to leaders and the healthy state of the leadership in the IHLs in Kiambu County.

### Influence of communication of strategies on organizational performance

The study found out that strategy communication had a positive influence on performance of the IHLs. Effective and constant communication of strategies to stakeholders of the IHLs through deliberate communication programs and diversifying the communication channels yielded to success of the IHLs external and internal activities. Nonetheless, giving feedback and constant communication amongst the employees did not have a considerable impact in enhancing performance of the IHLs.

### Influence of monitoring and control of strategies on organizational performance

There was a positive influence between monitoring and control of strategies and the performance of IHLs. Where monitoring and control of strategies was done on a quarterly basis in the IHLs and external auditors evaluated senior management of the institution, the performance was better. This ensured that the strategies implemented were regularly checked for any deviation from the set objectives. Unfortunately, monitoring and evaluation of strategies was documented, but not provided to relevant authorities for action. This hindered execution of corrective actions to the non-conformities raised in the evaluations.

## CORRELATION ANALYSIS

A correlation analysis was carried out to determine whether significant relationships existed between the study variables. The findings show that strategic resource allocation had the strongest influence on organizational performance of IHLs, r (0.682); $p < 0.01$; followed by monitoring and control of strategy r (0.674); $p < 0.01$; strategic leadership r (0.632); $p < 0.01$, and finally the strategic communication r (0.542); $p < 0.01$. These were statistically summarized in Table 1:

**Table 1: Correlation Analysis**

| Variable | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Organizational performance | 1 | | | | |
| Resource allocation | 0.682 | 1 | | | |
| Strategic leadership | 0.632 | 0.221 | 1 | | |
| Strategic Communication | 0.542 | 0.396 | 0.294 | 1 | |
| Strategy monitoring and control | 0.674 | 0.5000 | 0.392 | 0.224 | 1 |

Where: **N=116**

Table 1 presents tests on the correlation between independent variables where the correlation coefficients for all variables were less than 0.8 meaning that the study data did not reveal extensive multicollinearity because relationships did not exceed the threshold.

## INFERENTIAL STATISTICS

Normality was tested using the Shapiro-Wilk test. The Shapiro-Wilk's statistic ranges from zero to one and in case the calculated probability (p-value) is below 0.05, the data notably deviates from normal (Razali and Wah, 2011). These results of Shapiro-Wilk test on this study are presented in Table 2.

**Table 2: Shapiro-Wilk statistic**

| | Statistic | Df | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|
| Resource allocation | . 874 | 116 | .320 |
| Strategic leadership | . 871 | 116 | .233 |
| Strategy communication | . 934 | 116 | .078 |
| Monitoring and control of strategies | .725 | 116 | .092 |
| Organizational performance | .855 | 116 | .419 |

The findings in Table 2 reveal that the five research variables had values of calculated probability ranging from 0 .078 for strategy communication to 0.419 for organizational performance. The probability values were greater than 0.05 and therefore at 95% confidence level and so the sample has a normal distribution as advocated by Razali and Wah (2011).

Homoscedasticity was examined through Levene's test to evaluate the impartiality of variances for a variable calculated for two or more groups. The level of significance for the study was $\alpha = 5\%$, for $p \geq 0.05$ fail to reject, while for $p < 0.05$ was rejected and a conclusion made that there was a discrepancy between variances of the population. The results are presented in Table 3.

**Table 3: Levene statistic**

| Variables | Levene Statistic | df1 | df2 | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Resource allocation | 4.532 | 4 | 112 | .733 |
| Strategic leadership | 6.265 | 4 | 112 | .194 |
| Strategy communication | 7.709 | 4 | 112 | .063 |
| Monitoring and control of strategies | 8.440 | 4 | 112 | .116 |

Dependent Variable: Performance of IHLs

Table 3 shows that the calculated probability is greater than 0.05 for all the research variables. These values ranged between 0.063 for strategy communication and 0.733 for resource allocation. In this case, the variances were considerably equivalent as contended by Gastwirth.

Variance Inflation Factors (VIF) and its reciprocal-the tolerance were computed to test for multicollinearity. VIF measured the extent of multicollinearity in an ordinary least- squares regression analysis. VIF that are greater than 10 signify multicollinearity; the higher the value of

VIF's, the more extensive the problem. Multicollinearity was tested in the study and the results are presented in Table 4.

**Table 4: Collinearity Statistic**

| Variables | Tolerance | VIF | Comment |
|---|---|---|---|
| Resource allocation | .735 | 1.361 | No multicollinearity |
| Strategic leadership | .345 | 2.897 | No multicollinearity |
| Strategy communication | .193 | 5.186 | No multicollinearity |
| Monitoring and control of strategies | .117 | 3.572 | No multicollinearity |

Dependent Variable: Performance of IHLs

Table 4 shows that all the research variables had tolerances and VIFs greater than 0.1 and less than 10 respectively. According to Landau and Everitt (2004), VIFs of at least 10 or tolerances of at most 0.1 imply presence of multicollinearity. Resource allocation yielded the least VIF at 1.361; however, strategy communication generated the highest VIF at 5.186. This suggests that there was no multicollinearity and thus all the predictor variables were upheld in the regression model as this is in line with the threshold suggested by Landau and Everitt (2004).

Regression analysis was used in this research to test the research hypotheses. The study adopted the multi-regression analysis to establish the influence of strategy implementation on the organizational performance based on the mean and standard deviations of the study variables. The analysis assumed the following model:

$$Y= \beta_0+ \beta_1H_1+\beta_2H_2+ \beta_3H_3+\beta_4H_4+\varepsilon$$

Where: Y is the dependent variable (organizational performance); $\beta_0$ is the regression constant; β1, β2, β3, β4, and β5 are the coefficients of independent variables; $H_1$ is strategic resource allocation; $H_2$ is strategic leadership; $H_3$ is strategic communication; $H_4$ is monitoring and control of strategy; ε is the error term.

The tests for hypotheses utilized the ANOVA test which computed both the linear and non-linear components of a set of variables whereby, non-linearity is noteworthy if the calculated probability value for the non-linear component is below 0.05 (Garson, 2012). Moreover, it established if there was a major link between the dependent and independent variables. ANOVA test is superior compared to the two-sample t-test because it is not susceptible to higher chance of committing a type I error (error of rejecting a null hypothesis when it is actually true).

**Table 5: Linear regression summary model**

| Model | R | R Square | Adjusted R |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 0.748 | 0.534 | 0.512 |

The findings in Table 5 indicate that the variables were significantly correlated where R (coefficient of correlation) was a positive correlation of 0.748 implying that strategy implementation variables were strongly linked to organizational performance. The table shows R Square of 0.534 meaning that the identified independent variables (resource allocation, strategic leadership, communication of strategies and monitoring and control of strategies) explain fifty-three percent (53.4%) variation in the dependent variable. The remaining 46.6% is explained by other management strategies and practices adopted by IHLs.

**Table 6: Summary of One-way ANOVA**

| Model | Sum of squares | df | Mean square | F | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Regression | 2.228 | 3 | 0.176 | 8.728 | 0.000 |
| Residual | 1.587 | 113 | 0.144 | | |
| Total | 3.815 | 116 | | | |

Dependent Variable: Performance of IHLs

From Table 6, the study of ANOVA revealed the presence of a significant relationship between the combined study variables, F = 8.728; p value = 0.000; which is less than 0.05 the threshold required for a relationship to be significant. This showed that the collective independent variables had significant effect on performance of IHLs. This is demonstrated by high F-values (8.728) and low p values (0.000) which are less than 5% level of significance.

The researcher went ahead to test the significance of each predictor to determine its effect on organizational performance as shown in Table 7.

**Table 7: Co-efficient of determination**

| Model | Unstandardized coefficients | | Standardized coefficients | t | P-value |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Beta | Std error | Beta | | |
| Constant | 0.198 | 0.573 | | 6.050 | 0.000 |
| Resource Allocation | 0.515 | 0.129 | 0.370 | 3.892 | 0.000 |
| Strategic leadership | 0.430 | 0.101 | 0.331 | 3.258 | 0.007 |
| Strategy communication | 0.411 | 0.133 | 0.317 | 2.090 | 0.000 |
| Monitoring and control of strategy | 0.396 | 0.244 | 0.323 | 1.039 | 0.000 |

The regression coefficients revealed that when the variables were combined, strategic resource allocation had the highest regression coefficient with a beta value β (0.515); p value = 0.000; followed by strategic leadership coefficient with a beta value β (0.430); p value = 0.007; followed by strategic communication coefficient with a beta value β (0.411); p value = 0.000 and finally monitoring and control of strategy coefficient with a beta value β (0.396); p value = 0.000.

The results of the regression equation below shows that for a 1- point rise in strategic implementation, performance in IHLs rises by 0.198, ceteris paribus.

The regression model equation is expressed as:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 H_1 + \beta_2 H_2 + \beta_3 H_3 + \beta_4 H_4 + \varepsilon$$

$$Y = 0.198 + 0.515H_1 + 0.430H_2 + 0.411H_3 + 0.396H_4$$

Where: β is a correlation coefficient; Y= Organizational Performance; $H_1$= Strategic Resource Allocation; $H_2$= Strategic leadership; $H_3$= Strategic communication; $H_4$= Monitoring and Control of strategy; ε= Error Term

From on the coefficients of regression above, it can be presumed that performance of IHLs in Kiambu County was influenced by strategic resource allocation, strategic leadership, strategic communication and monitoring and control of strategy respectively.

Other results of the hypotheses are discussed hereafter thematically based on the hypotheses.

**$H_{01}$ Resource allocation has no influence on the performance of IHLs in Kiambu County**

The first objective aimed at determining if resource allocation influenced the performance of IHLs in Kiambu County. A null hypothesis H01 was formulated, with the assumption that resource allocation has no influence on performance of IHLs in Kiambu County. Table 4.16 shows that the coefficient of resource allocation was 0.515, the t-statistic and corresponding p-value were 3.892 and 0.000 respectively. This implied that resource allocation had a considerable effect on the performance of IHLs in Kiambu County.

This is in accord with findings by Ouma and Kilonzo (2013) that resource allocation positively influences performance in an organization. The RBV theory by (Barney, 2002) also supports the findings in that resource allocation is critical to enhancing organizational performance.

**$H_{02}$ Strategic leadership has no influence on the performance of IHLs in Kiambu County**

The second objective sought to establish whether a strategic leadership had an influence on the performance of IHLs. A null hypothesis, H02, was formulated with an assumption that strategic leadership had no influence on the performance of IHLs. Table 4.16 shows that the coefficient of strategic leadership was 0.430, with the t-statistic of 3.258 and p-value of 0.007. This meant that strategic leadership had a significant influence on performance of the IHLs.

As postulated by the Agency Theory (Jensen and Meckling, 1976), the agents of the Ministry of Education (principal), management of IHLs should utilize leadership styles that will ensure that the employees embrace the strategies to be implemented for superior organizational performance. Additionally, in line with findings by Chege (2015) which indicated that strategic leaders who engaged the employees in formulation of strategies had better implementation outcomes than those who did not, affecting the performance of the organization adversely.

**$H_{03}$ Strategy communication has no influence on the performance of IHLs in Kiambu County.**

The third objective aimed at determining if strategy communication influenced the performance of IHLs in Kiambu County. A null hypothesis H03 was formulated, with the assumption that strategy communication had no influence on performance of IHLs in Kiambu County. Table 4.16 indicates that the coefficient of strategy communication was 0.411, the t-statistic was 2.090 and p-value was 0.000. Given that the coefficient for strategy communication was positive and significant, it can be concluded that it has a positive effect on performance of IHLs in Kiambu County.

This is in accord with Mutisya (2016) findings that indicated that strategy communication in an organization had positive influence on its performance.

**$H_{04}$ Monitoring and control of strategy influenced the performance of IHLs in Kiambu County**

The fourth objective sought to establish whether a monitoring and control of strategy had an influence on the performance of IHLs. A null hypothesis, H04, was formulated with an assumption that monitoring and control of strategy had no influence on the performance of IHLs. Table 4.16 shows that the coefficient of strategic leadership was 0.396, with the t-statistic of 1.039 and p-value of 0.000. This meant that monitoring and control of strategy had a considerable influence on performance of the IHLs.

This is in tandem with the Balance Scorecard Theory by Kaplan and Norton (1992) which indicated that monitoring and control of strategies was critical in ensuring that deviations from the set objectives was identified and rectified for intended goals to be achieved. The theory postulated that constant monitoring and control of strategy will translate to an improved organizational performance.

## CONCLUSIONS

The results reveal that resource allocation, strategic leadership, strategy communication, monitoring and control of strategies are among the major factors that influenced performance of IHLs.

### Resource Allocation

As the findings highlight, the coefficient of resource allocation was 0.515, the t-statistic and corresponding p-value were 3.892 and 0.000 respectively implying that allocation of resources gives an institution a competitive edge in performance over its competitors. Institutions therefore need to strategically allocate its financial and non-financial resources from strategy formulation to implementation so as to survive in the competitive and dynamic industry.

### Strategic Leadership

The strategic leadership indicated a statistically significant influence on organizational performance; coefficient of 0.430, with the t-statistic of 3.258 and p-value of 0.007 implying that strategic leaders who created a clear picture of the future and encouraged the employees to achieve the set goals effectively translating to improved performance of the IHLs. This was because the employees reacted with an increased willingness to exert extra effort so as to try and the set goals in turn positively increasing the organizational performance.

### Communication of Strategies

The positive influence of strategy communications on organizational performance of IHLs as implied by the coefficient 0.411, the t-statistic 2.090 and p-value 0.000, indicated that communication of strategy was vital to ensure that all the stakeholders of the IHLs understood the goals to be achieved through the strategies implemented. Constantly giving feedback to employees on the strategies implemented increased their overall performance because they were able to improve where deviations were noted. It was noted that for effective operation of IHLs, an effective communication channels should be adopted by the IHLs for optimum performance.

### Monitoring and Control of Strategies

The positive influence of strategic monitoring and control on organizational performance as shown by the coefficient of strategic leadership that was 0.396, t-statistic of 1.039 and p-value of 0.000, implied that during strategy execution it was crucial to monitor progress toward the set objectives so as to assess whether adjustments need to be made. This was important because it determined whether the set objectives were being achieved and created feedback about the performance as per the adjustments recommended.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The study investigated the influence of strategy implementation on the performance of IHLs in Kiambu County and the following recommendations have been suggested:

### Recommendation for Policy Implementation

The study also recommends that strategy implementation policies in IHLs should be re-evaluated to enhance performance of the institutions and to align them with stakeholder demands and the global emerging trends in implementation of strategies. The study also recommends that specific ministries should evolve a comprehensive structure on which relevant industries can anchor implementation policies in tandem with their strategic objectives.

### Recommendation for Practice

It is recommended that IHLs top management should consider adopting practices such as allocating more resources to physical and human resources proportionate to the existing student population for superior performance. Additionally, management should reward employees based on their performance and also cultivate a healthier relationship with all the stakeholders of the institutions to promote organizational success. The management of the IHLs need to lobby the government through the Ministry of Education, to address the issues pertaining to the industry's resource allocation policy and regulations which will enable them to efficiently implement strategies, hence improve the organizational performance. The institutions through the Ministry need to urge the government for resources to be channeled to them, being that government-sponsored students are now enrolled even in private IHLs. Deliberate programs involving the stakeholders in development of strategies should be considered for better implementation of the strategies.

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