DETERMINANTS OF STRATEGIC PLAN IMPLEMENTATION IN PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES: A CASE OF SELECTED PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES IN NAIROBI COUNTY, KENYA

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ABSTRACT

The main objective of the study was to examine factors determining strategic plan implementation in the context of public institutions of higher learning. Specifically, the study sought to determine how leadership styles, communication, resources and technology influence strategic plans in public universities in Kenya. The study adopted a descriptive research survey design involving 13 universities in Nairobi. Out of the targeted 13 universities, 4 universities were samples. In each University the research sampled employees in the order of VC, DVCs, Registrars, CODs, HODs, PO,FO and Administrative Officers totaling to 279 respondents. The findings were analyzed using means, standard deviations, regression and correlation analysis. The study established that there was a moderate positive significant relationship between leadership style and strategic plan implementation (R= 0.424; p=0.000); leadership style significantly influences strategic plan implementation (p=0.011<0.05); there was a strong positive significant relationship between communication and strategic plan implementation (R=0.853; p=0.000); communication was a significant determinant of strategic plan implementation in public universities p=0.001<0.05; there was strong positive significant relationship between resource allocation and strategic plan implementation in public universities (R=0.842, p=0.000); resource allocation was found to be a significant determinant of strategic plan implementation in public universities p=0.000<0.05; there was strong positive and significant relationship between technology and innovation in respect to strategic plan implementation in public universities (R=0.718, p=0.000); technology and innovation was identified as a critical factor determining strategic plan implementation in public universities p=0.000<0.05. The study concludes that leadership style significantly influences strategic plan implementation in public universities; respondents avoided evaluating problems and concerns as they were discussed and Respondents rotated the role of team briefer among the staff; Communication was a significant determinant of strategic plan implementation in public universities. Resource allocation was found to be a significant determinant of strategic plan implementation in public universities. Technology and innovation was identified as a critical factor determining strategic plan implementation in public universities. The study recommends that top management of all universities in Kenya should strengthen their leadership styles in order to effectively enhance their strategic plan implementation. Clear channels of communication should be created between all management levels in public universities in Kenya. The national and county governments in Kenya should fully support strategic plan implementation in Kenyan universities by providing sufficient financial and non-financial resources. All universities in Kenya should put in place benchmarking programmes with technology oriented firms for example Safaricom and this will enhance technology transfer for effective strategic plan implementation.

Key Words: *strategic plan implementation, public universities, public universities, Nairobi County, Kenya*

INTRODUCTION

One greatest challenge in strategic change is ensuring sound implementation of the planned and formulated strategy. In this study, issues of strategy implementation are examined. According to Hult, Slater and Olson (2005), it is hard to do than dream. During strategic planning, a lot of resources and time are invested by an organization with little outcome out of this. A study in this area would thus pointy out factors accounting for low and unsuccessful implementation of strategies despite heavy commitment of resources by an organization (Hrebiniak, 2013).

A study was done by Mukokho (2010) on how strategic planning affected performance of Kenyan public institutions of higher learning, with specific reference to the University of Nairobi indicated that universities in Kenya encounter numerous challenges during implementation of the strategic plans. Some of these challenges include inadequate funding, overstretched academic facilities, poaching of staff by competitors, opening of campuses within the CBD by competitors, eradication of ethnicity, and increased number of universities offering similar degree courses with varying degrees of quality.

Greater emphasis today has been paid on critical factors during planning stage in strategy formulation. Furthermore, crucial problems at the implementation phase of strategic plans are also clearly known. Scholars have formulated various methods and strategies geared towards structuring the whole process of formulation and implementation of strategies. This study introduces, summarize and connect some of these factors. However, a gap still exists on awareness of what should be done and actually executing it. Hence, little information and knowledge exists on effective implementation of strategies with on paper and the actual daily business of organizations. Lack of proper implementation renders even most superior strategies as useless (Eden & Ackermann, 2013).

The study aimed at assessing issues, problems and concerns arising that act as hindrance to sound implementation of strategies. The study goes deeper to critically examine some of these factors that are most important. The most intriguing bit of the study is the collected information and experiences from interviewees that is practical with emphasis on strategy implementation. Unexpected results and discrepancies may arise from a comparison of practice and theory.

This study investigated determinants of strategic plans implementation in government owned Universities. A growing body of literature has suggested that although quite a number of organizations have embraced strategic planning, implementation of the formulated strategies is however a challenge to most of these organizations. This has resulted into properly formulated strategies that only end up unsuccessful at the phase of implementation. The study relies on past studies and literature to determine some of the issues that affect sound strategic plan implementation among public institution of higher learning in Kenya.

Concept of Strategy

A strategy is defined as a framework that guides operations of an organization as it interact with its forces of environment for sustainable competitive advantage (Stephens & Thomas, 2015). A strategy acts a mediator ort link between an organization and its surrounding. A strategy helps an organization to effectively develop decisions in response to changes in the environment that the same organization operates in. Strategic management on the other hand is an approach by top managers relating to the environment and the overall direction of the company. Strategic management is future oriented which ensure continued operations and existence of the business. Strategic management according to Grant (2016) is a process undertaken by the top and senior managers of an organization that ensure an organization attains its key goals and objectives. It entails formulation of sound decisions that ensure an organization attains its set of goals and objectives. The goals of an organization are both short term and long term in nature. Gole highlighted three key areas of corporate strategy as analysis, development and implementation. In strategic analysis, the internal and external forces of the environment that an organization operates in are examined.

Tavakoli, Schlagwein and Schoder (2015) states that strategy formulation is concerned with determining where the organization is, where it wants to go and how to get there. It involves carrying out situation analysis that leads to setting of objectives. Vision and mission statements are crafted and overall corporate objectives, strategic business unit objectives and tactical objectives are also developed. In strategy implementation, an organization allocates resources so as to boost the selected strategies of an organization. A number of activities are undertaken during this process of strategy implementation. These activities ensure that an organization puts its strategies in action while putting in place controls for effectively monitoring the success of an organization and thus attainment of the set goals and objectives of an organization.

During strategy evaluation, internal as well as external factors are reviewed, performance is measured and corrective actions are undertaken where appropriate. This is important as all strategies are subject to future modification depending on environmental turbulence (Abok, (2014). Zyen theory of strategic planning defines strategy as a means by which organizations deal with risks and rewards in order to achieve their objectives. Organizational relationships with clients often begin with strategic planning. Many successful companies are those that plan. Therefore, organizations use strategy as a means of dealing with uncertainty (Zyen, 2009). On the other hand, McNamara (2009) noted that the future direction of an organization over a given period of timer is determined through strategic planning. Strategic planning also details the steps an organization is going to take in order to reach this position. McNamara further contents that strategic planning as a process is can be focused on the whole organization or it can also be focused on key functions like departments or functions within an organization. As a process, planning is made up of a series of activities.

Strategic Planning

Strategic planning is a management practice used to prioritize activities, dedicate resources and energy and improve on operations while ensuring that key stakeholders of an organization work towards similar goals and objectives of an organization. Strategic planning helps in establishing census across required results and outcomes of an organization. Strategic planning is the assessment and adjustments of the direction of an organization in view of the dynamic business environment. Strategic planning are ethical efforts producing crucial actions and decisions which guide and shape an organization. Strategic planning mainly focuses on future direction of the company for a given period of time. Sound strategic planning helps in articulating the general direction of an organization and the required actions to meet this progress of an organization.

Strategic Plan

A strategic plan is a document that management use to communicate actions and goals required for organizational performance. It outlines the required actions to attain the formulated goals and objectives of an organization over a given period overtime. It a process where an organization envisages the required future direction and making sure that this vision is translated into objectives or goals with a broad scope with sequential steps required to meet these goals. In comparison with long term planning (that starts with the present status and establish paths of meeting needs estimated in future), strategic planning begins with the required end and then works backwards towards the current state. In comparison with tactical planning (that majorly focus on using pre-established means to attain narrowly defined interim objectives of an organization), strategic planning focuses on a wider picture and it has flexibility in the choosing its means.

Strategy Implementation

Strategy implementation is a process of actualizing the formulated policies and goals by developing procedures, budgets and programs (Bradford, 2000). This is the most crucial step and process in most companies. According to Judson (1991), for every ten organizations, only one can effectively formulate and implement a strategy. For other companies, well formulated and developed strategies end up being unsuccessful. Strategic challenges are the forces that decisively influence on the overall direction of an organization in future. Most organizations seem to encounter various challenges during the implementation phase of their strategies. A number of problems have however been revealed that have an influence on implementation of strategies in organizations. There exist varied reasons for unsuccessful strategy implementation including the fact that implementation of strategie sis resource intensive and it is challenging for an organization (Ayuya, Awino, Machuki & Wainaina, 2017).

Strategic planning is a key priority on private institutions of higher learning that are private. This assertion is based on the fact that unique opportunities for sustainable competitive advantage and market differentiation. With regard to this, majority of institution of higher learning today are inquiring on the best methodologies and tool for ensuring successful implementation of their strategies (Cândido & Santos, 2015). For an organization to successfully implement its strategies, the leadership in place should be strengthened for optimal resource allocation and sound policies and processes supporting strategy.

According to Favaro (2015), leadership of an organization plays an important role during strategy implementation by ensuring that the formulated strategy moves in the right direction. A number of activities needed to be undertaken and the various skills required also limits strategy implementation among most organizations today. A mere decision to adopt a given strategy by management of an organization does not necessarily imply that junior and other subordinate staff will readily buy the idea. Several issues are involved during strategy implementation including office politics, the existing organizational culture including the attitudes and practices of employees in an organization. These hinder strategy implementation in most organizations today (Favaro, 2015).

Public Universities in Kenya

The history of university education dates back to 1961 where the Royal College of Nairobi was promoted to a University College. Later on, this University College entered in a special arrangement with University of London that facilitated undergraduate and pot graduate degree qualification to students. In 1963, the University of East Africa was established. At the same time, Kenya gained independence from Britain where the Royal College changed to University College, Nairobi. The gaining of independence in Kenya saw widespread expansion and growth of education sector. This trend was attributed to by sufficient budgetary allocations towards institutions of higher learning. The heavy investment and budgetary allocation was aimed at developing sufficient human capital base for growth and development of the country. This was also meant to offer practical solution to key challenges and issues facing human race including disease, illiteracy and poverty (CUE, 2016).

The expansion and growth of university education in Kenya can be clearly comprehended within the country's framework and general system of education besides the overall demand for quality education resulting from a surge in population. The increased demand for university has seen a rise in public institutions of higher learning since mid-1980s. Today, there are over 30 public universities in Kenya Appendix IV (CUE, 2016). There are a lot potential for growth in universities as seen through an increased number of students both local and foreign ones. However, the public universities continue to suffer from inadequate lecturers especially in specialized units. In addition there has been a challenge of the quality of the graduates who have been accused of not being competent enough to meet the challenges in the job market by being less practical (CUE, 2016).

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Unsuccessful strategic plan implementation result into gaps that make it hard for an organization to attain its success through achievement of the set goals and objectives. For policy makers and other decision makers, inability to drive an organization towards attainment of plans results into anxieties and concerns. This is because the strategic plan of an organization is expected to be a document for guiding operations. Thus, poor or unsuccessful strategic implementation of strategic plan makes such a document ineffective (Pfeffer & Sutton, 2006). When organizations set goals they tend to be active in the first few months of the official launch of the strategic plan and later on cool down the fires. Waiyego (2009) studied strategy implementation at Kenya electricity generating company ltd observing that for dominant players in the market, the strategy implementation process has changed recently due to more scrutiny from the government and stakeholders in general. Strategy implementation challenges in private Universities also transcend to the public universities. Hence not much attention has been given to the challenges of strategy implementation in public universities in Kenya. The public Universities in Kenya have been struggling to properly implement their strategic plans since 2012 during the liberalization of higher education in the country. It's on this basis that this study sought to find out determinants of strategic plan implementation in public universities in Kenya.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of the study was to examine the determining factors in strategy implementation in public universities in Kenya, and seal the loophole that exists between strategy formulation and implementation.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

1. To establish whether leadership styles affect implementation of strategic plans in public universities in Kenya
2. To determine whether communication affect implementation of strategic plans in public universities in Kenya
3. To establish whether resources affect implementation of strategic plans in public universities in Kenya
4. To determine whether technology affect implementation of strategic plans in public universities in Kenya

THEORETICAL REVIEW

Leadership Theories

Leadership theories play a significant role as far as strategic plan implementation is concerned. Business managers should aspire to establish working environments where subordinates are motivated and encourage to stay and do all their best to achieve the goals and objectives established (Bhargara, 2003). Leaders help in providing the general purpose and direction of the organization to subordinates. Managers should strive to ensure that their subordinates are committed towards the formulated goals and objectives of an organization.

The role played by mutual goals was particularly emphasized by key scholars including McGregor. For a number of years, the Economic Theory has indicated the need for an organization to effectively remunerate employees so as to increase their cooperation in achieving the goals of an organization. However, Robinson and Judgen (2008) suggested need to provide sound environment for employees so as to attain innovation and effectiveness. Management essentially entails using people to accomplish the formulated goals and objectives of an organization. Thus, managers need to care about human interactions and their skills set. These concerns are envisaged in the 'Scientific Management' school of taught (Taylor, 1900s) and 'Human Relations' perspective by Mayo in 1920s and early 1930s (Cole, 2002).

According to Cole (2002), the Authoritarian Style of management behavior is founded on the notion that managers derive power on the basis of their positions within an organization. It is also assumed in this style that people have in-borne laziness and unreliable behavior (Theory X). In Democratic Style, it is assumed that the group leader has to control empower him/her. It is assumed in democratic leadership that people are creative and self-guided at the work place when effectively motivated (Theory Y).

As a matter of fact, all policies in the authoritarian leadership style are established by a manager. This is in direct contrast with the democratic style where policies are open for group discussion and decision making. Thus, Theory E staff need to be well led an directed in strategic implementation. This is because unlike Theory Y employees, they are not expected to take initiative. At times, managers need to coerce them before per taking initiatives. According to McClelland (1961), employees with greater high need achievement (n-arch) are likely to be successful in all their undertakings. This because they have and feel the need and desire of excelling in all they do. The theory further indicates that highly motivated individuals are probable to undertake moderate risks, with strong desire for excellence and ability to solve complex issues. Such people are likely to drive the strategic plan implementation endeavors of an organization.

Communications Theory

Wolfgang (2006) argued that effectiveness in communication relies on the language used between senders and receivers. Communication is a form of dialogue between more than one party. Accoirding to Susana and Leonarda (2009), communication theory is a structure that shows how the elements in the process of communication engage each other in the dialogue process. According to this theory, there are seven elements of a communication process. The first element is the source of information. It is the source of information that produces either a message or a series of messages to be conveyed to the receiving end. Sender is the second element. It is also called the transmitter. It operates on the generated messages resulting into signals that can be transmitted over the channel with ease. Chanel is the third element which basically a medium that helps to transmit signals from transmitter to the receiver.

The receiver is the fourth component of communication. In the receiver, inverse operations those done by the transmitter are performed. It helps in reconstructing the message from signals. The destination is the fifth component of communication. This is an individual that the message is intended for. The message from the receiver confirming receipt which suggests communication or information is the sixth component. The seventh which is the last component of communication is feedback. Strategically, this is putting into practice the communicated message.

Resource Based Theory

This theory views a firm as a bundle of competence and resources that play a crucial role in competitive positioning of the firm. A firm according to this theory is made up of set of routines that the strategic team follows in managing operations of the business activities. Competences entail creation and establishment of a pool of specialist an experts (Tushman& Anderson, 2006).

This theory is founded on assumption that successful business organizations formulate distinctive capabilities that form the basis of future competitive advantage of the firm. These formulated capabilities are usually unique to given organizations. They may either be intangible or tacit in nature. The complexities of strategic assets, the skills, competences and capabilities that an organization possesses form the basis of competitive positioning and advantage of the firm. Proper management of intellectual and other physical resources results into core capability to a firm.

For a firm to gain competitive advantage, its resource endowment should rate, hard for competitors to copy and with no perfect substitutes (Barney (1991). One way of creating these kinds of resources of a firm is through sound interaction with primary stakeholders of an organization (Barney & Hansen, 1994). For instance, firms that are position to engage stakeholders beyond market transactions result into resources that are socially complex in view of trust and reputation. Additionally, Price and Jones (2004) suggested that firms in position to relate with primary stakeholders based on trust and mutual cooperation helps an organization to gain competitive advantage. This assertion is supported by the fact that the process involved in development of cooperation and trust between an organization and its stakeholders requires a long period of time. This in turn results into mutual exchange of values. These exchange results into improved performance of a firm.

According to proponents of this theory, during implementation of strategies, an organization should not consider the environment under which it operates but its bundle of resources (Boxall & Steenveld, 2009). The resource-based view theory accounts for the need of an organization to allocate its set of resources that are scarce so as to get and exploit competitive capabilities. Thus, a firm that has adequate resources and capabilities with strong investment in capabilities is able to exploit its distinctive competences (Song and Benedetto, 2007).

The Technology and Innovation Theory

Technology together with innovation does not only affect the technical aspect of an organization but also the attitudes and behavior and groups of employees in a business. The fact is that both innovation and technology are organization wide concerns. As such, one issue cannot be isolated by an organization while striving to focus on the other (Obuora, 2012). Technology and innovation play an important role in enhancing competitive positioning of an organization. This results into sustainable development of the firm.

Sustainable development according to United Nations (UN) as ability of an organization to develop so as to meet present needs without compromising future generations (WCED, 1987).

Wider technology strategies need to be established among organization (Cliff & Chard, 2001). A number of organizations have directly promoted the development of technology while in others, high technology department have been subsidized. According to Zahra and Hansen (2000), there has been widespread failure of state owned business enterprises among developing countries. This has resulted into significant delays in national technological, economic and social development. To create an environment that supports innovation requires macro-economic and political stability. All firms (big or small) today demand this stability. Although this stability is highly required, it is however not adequate in most countries. There is need for proactive policies in order to improve the level of innovation. Technology and innovation is a therefore a key player in strategic plan implementation. This should be counted in terms of what is the level of technology employed by the company, does is have the experts to operate the technology and what sustainability measure are there in place for the same technology. The theoretical framework is illustrated in Figure 1.

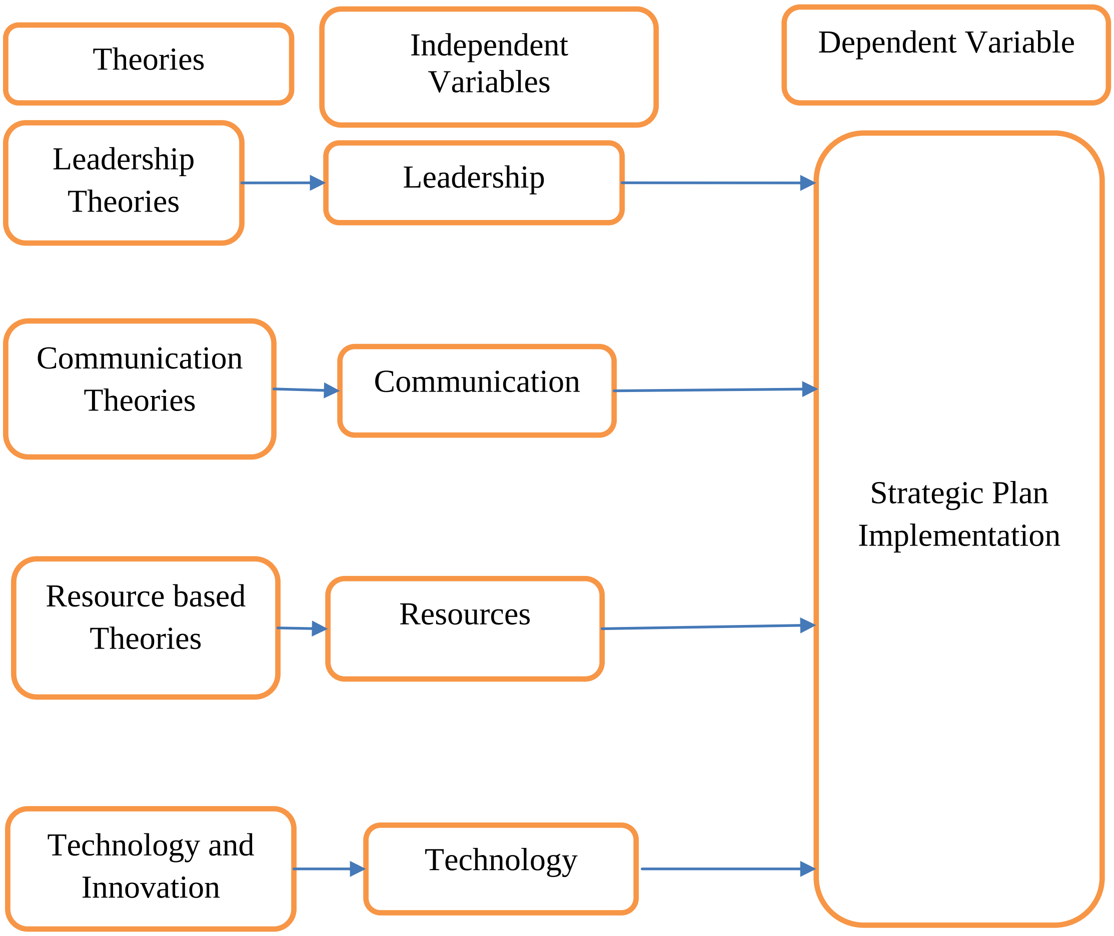

Figure 1: Theoretical Framework

EMPIRICAL REVIEW

Implementation of Strategic Plans

Aosa (1992) did a study on issues in strategic plan formulation an implementation. The study used a case of private firms engage in manufacturing. A total number of 51 firms were surveyed. Data was collected using questionnaires. The analyzed finding indicated that management of an organization played a significant role in strategic plan implementation in manufacturing firms. The study further revealed that for effective implementation of strategic plan, communication and organizational culture of the company need to be strengthened.

Awino (2007) assessed how selected variables influence financial performance. The study was done in the context of insurance companies. Specifically, 49 firms were used. The study relies on primary data collected through questionnaires and interviews. From the analyzed findings, culture and leadership were critical factors affecting firm performance. Beatrice (2009) carried out an analysis of Management of Crisis with specific reference to challenges facing universities. The study established that management of crises; proactive methods and practices were not largely employed by management. Most managers have no sufficient knowledge on strategic actions like aligning crisis management into the process of strategic planning and corporate excellence statements. Most universities had no plan for managing crises. It is important to provide workshops and training facilities to strategic managers. It is also important to align crisis management into overall objectives of the firm (Bitange et al., 2010).

Leadership Styles and Implementation of Strategic Plans

Cater and Pucko (2010) did a study to determine factors hindering execution of strategies. The study was done in Slovenia. A total number of 172 firms were sampled. The study revealed that managers in organizations usually rely on organization and planning during strategic implementation. Poor leadership is the most significant obstacle in strategic plan implementation. The findings of the study further established that inadequate managerial skills and reluctance of employees to share knowledge and information. According to Mullins (2005), managerial challenges and problems have economic, social, psychological and physical aspects.

Taylor (1995) noted that for all employees to clearly understand the goals and visions of an organization, employees need to be committed and actively be involved ensuring the formulated goals are translated into activities that can be implemented with ease. This however requires strong leadership. Taylor further notes that radical changes are managed by strategic leaders in order to attain drastic improvements in activities of an organization. Such leaders have effective communication skills with ability to cultivate and establish strong organizational culture. This ensures that everyone within an organization is actively involved in strategy implementation.

Thompson and Strickland (2007) concur with Taylor that strategic leader's drive innovation within an organization. This is done by supporting people who with new ideas and ways of doing things that would change the existing organizational structures and therefore performance. In a study to determine how selected factors influence organizational performance, Owino (2007) noted that for effective strategy implementation, there must commitment leadership in place. Owino further posits that any strategy within an organization will receive employee buy in when it has emanated from the top office of the CEO of an organization.

In essence, the top management team, comprising of the CEO play a vital role in shaping and ultimately influencing performance of a corporation. The top management team to critically asses the general forces of both internal and external environment before coming up with strategies suited to the overall environment. The involvement and ownership of the top management team should go beyond the strategic planning phase. It entails the actual process of implementing the established strategies. This brings synergy in the whole management team and subordinate staff. According to Curtin (1999), strategic leadership is the ability of an organization to involve and encourage employees so as to raise their overall productivity.

According to Lufthans (1992), leaders in any organization are charged with the responsibility of providing resources to show their commitment towards strategy implementation. A leader should involve all employees in strategy implementation while paying attention to numerous possibilities. If leaders and employees share and internalize similar values, it will strengthen the bond between employees and leaders. This will increase the flow of information and thus knowledge transfer. Thus, an effective leader needs to strongly focus on the culture of an organization while ensuring that every employee focuses on vision and mission of an organization.

Leaders need to ensure that their subordinates are focused in a similar direction. The CEO should take a leading role in articulating the mission, vision and value statements of an organization to employees (Ombina, Omoni & Sipili, 2010). In a study on how human resource management influences organizational performance, Mulube (2009) noted that most organization in Kenya emphasize on democratic leadership that is exclusively characterized by optimal participation and involvement of members of the group. Therefore, sound strategic plan implementation aimed at improving organizational performance demands having in place factors that shall motivate the executive leadership to allow successful strategy implementation.

Boin, Stern and Sundelius (2016) noted that three administrative techniques and mechanisms are used by to effectively implement their strategies. These mechanisms include integration/formalization, centralization and managerial philosophy. Other scholars have emphasized on control systems that are part of the administrative systems. A strategy is carried out within a well-defined structure. The activities of an organization define it strategies. Thus, variation and alterations of the strategy has an influence on the actions undertaken by everyone within an organization.

Drennan, McConnell and Stark (2014) looked at the formal systems of control in strategy implementation. The study revealed that strategy implementation to a large extent is influenced by how fluid a control system is. Organizational structure is not only an organizational chart but it details all elements of an organization including people, processes, the prevailing culture, procedures, positions and systems within a business organization. An organizational structure describes all processes and pieces of work that work together to achieve the goals and objectives of an organization. An organization should ensure that it is fully aligned with its overall strategy and this helps in attaining goals and objectives. Structures give support to a strategy of an organization. A change in structure of an require subsequent change in strategy for alignment.

Weiss (2014) noted that centralized leadership occurs when decision making within an organization is done exclusively by the top management team. It entails clearly established channels of responsibility and communication. Bureaucracies are largely eliminated so that reaching the top management for approval is not demanding. Once a decision has been arrived at, implementation is made easier in this kind of organization.

Communication and Implementation of Strategic Plans

An organization should have regular communication as compared to irregular. Communication should also be done using appropriate channels that managers see as fit for the purpose. It is important for an organization to involve all employees in implementation of strategies. It is important to continuously communicate during the process of strategy implementation (Aosa, 1992). A proper team need to be constituted that involves in strategy implementation as indicated in the strategic plan. Constituting this team entails discussing and debating on how effective the plan is being implemented in an organization.

Robinson and Pearce (2004) noted that there exists miscommunication between the start and end of communication process. Most importantly, the interpretation of the communication is important where managers are required to put in place strong organizational culture that comprehends effective communication from all parts of an organization. Thus, manager needs to be aware of the values, belief and attitudes of employees in an organization for effective communication of messages on strategic plan implementation to staff (Burnes, 2004). The study will examine how communication as an aspect relate with the organizational culture in universities and how these are likely to influence strategic plan implementation.

According to a study by the Hay Group (a recognized Management consultancy firm on global scale), sound communication from three crucial areas played an important role in gaining organizational confidence and trust (Lamb & McKee, 2004). Communication enable employee to clearly understand the overall strategy of the organization, and how to contribute towards attainment of goals and objectives of an organization. Proper communication ensures that information is adequately shared among employees of an organization with regard to how an organization is doing relative to overall goals of an organization.

Organizational Resources and Implementation of Strategic Plans

Kenyan universities have arranged for a number of training workshops, seminars and other programs. However, these programs have been blamed for not seriously pooling resources and implementation of strategies. In a study by Amulyoto (2004) to determine how organizational learning has been actualized among Kenyan donor agencies, it was noted that there is a lot of resource wastage especially during distribution of foods among relief organizations. The ability to anticipate inadequate resources and the objective4 of developing both new and existing resources is crucial in forcing managers and leaders to motivate an or5ganbizxationm in effective implementation of strategies. The current study assesses two kind of resources in universities; financial and human resources. Among all resources, finances and human resources are important to an organization.

Resources in an organization are viable when there are sound strategies to train and develop human capital. This helps an organization to meet its strategic goals and objectives (Pearce & Robinson, 2009). Providing employees with job securities through motivation, provision of modern systems and empowerment makes them responsible to care and secure resources of an organization. This also helps employees to work in ensuring the goals of an organization are attained (Prahalad& Hamel, 1990). For sound strategic plan implementation, staff in an organization should be available at a given work place for a sufficient period of time. This facilitates the implementation process. In order to retain employees at the work place for a sufficient period of time, there should be job security, empowerment and motivation programs. Retaining employees for a long period of time facilitates the entire process of strategic plan implementation in an organization. An organization with sufficient level of resources is likely to retain its employees with ease unlike the one where resources are limited.

Research on strategies today has paid a lot of emphasis on strategic typologies. Taxonomy, a system of classifying phenomena and the explanation thereof facilitates development of knowledge. Taxonomic methods and approaches have gained relevance in most theories of marketing and in an analysis of strategies. Fearn-Banks (2016) revealed that the types and styles of leadership can play a crucial role in reducing challenges and limitations faced during strategic plan implementation in organizations.

Drennan et al., (2014) argued that action research can play an important role in explaining the role played by members of the board in implementation of strategic plans. There are however some underlying issues and challenges that researchers of corporate governance encounter including chances for participatory rather the rule. The high level of confidence required in strategic issues besides the fact that the increased legal accountability of member of the board results into les inclination for allowing researchers to assess how they behave.

Technology and Implementation of Strategic Plans

Technology is a body of knowledge aimed at creation of tools, processing actions and ensuring materials are effectively extracted. Technology is a wide term and it can be understood differently by different people. Technology is used to attain a number of activities on a daily basis. Technology can briefly be described in terms of organizations, processes and product. Through technology, people are perceived to be important components of a technological system. Technology can also be defined as a body of systems within an organization, procedures, tools, processes, products (goods and services) and innovations besides knowledge. These tools are used by people in accomplishing their day to day activities (Damanpour, 1991).

Technology according to Resource Based View Theory (Grant, 2001) is seen as one of the basic capabilities of the firm. Technology according to RBV is one of the bundles of resources in an organization that helps in gaining a superior competitive positioning. Firms (especially manufacturing companies rely on technology to produce various goods and services that are demanded by consumers (Barney, 1991; Wernerfelt, 1984). There are however constant changes within the industry that an organization operates from. Based on these changes, the Dynamic Capability Theory (Zollo & Winter, 2002) considers technology as one of the dynamic capabilities of the firm that firms leverage for competitive positioning in an industry. In firms where there are strong dynamic capabilities, there are greater market and technological agility. Such firms are better placed to establish new technologies, maintain and differentiate superior and unique processes. These firms are in position of modifying their organizational structures and systems and operating models so as to outsmart their competitors (Teece, 2014).

Strengthening technological capacity and capability of the firm requires change in the entire organization. This is because it requires new experiences, skills set and knowledge to be developed and incorporated in the existing system and process. This helps in generating the required technical change within an organization (Lall, 1992; Bell & Pavitt, 1995). Technological capability according to Lall (1992) is the constant process where an organization interacts with forces of its environment so as to determine, establish, absorb and accumulate technological skills and knowledge that the firm requires.

According to Kumar, Kumar and Madanmohan (2004), a firm is able to achieve its technological capability by process learning. For a firm to attain superior performance, it is important that such an organization is able to establish and manage changes in technologies used to produce goods and services demanded by its customers at the market place (Pavit& Bell, 1995; Trez, Steffanello, Reichert, DeRossi & Pufal, 2012; Zawislak, Alves, Tello-Gamarra, Barbieux & Reichert, 2012).

Technological capability usually has close association with knowledge base of an organization (Jin & Von-Zedtwitz, 2008). As such, it is technological capacity is incremental in nature (Pavitt, 1998). There are limited options through which an organization can accumulate new level of knowledge. Organizations should learn how to effectively use their new technologies how best to generate more knowledge and skills for competitive edge (Jin et al., 2008).

In a rapidly changing business environment, an organization not only needs new knowledge but also innovative views and ideas (Teece, 2014). Through innovation, a firm is able to alter and modify its process and production function. Innovation helps an organization to come up technological competences that are distinctive in nature. At firm level, innovation is conceived through application of new and modified ideas that result into new products in the market (Rubera & Kirca, 2012; Therrien, Doloreux & Chamberin, 2011).

Employees in organizations apply technology on a daily basis to carry out their duties and responsibilities. Since it is embedded in almost of all organizations activities and practices from production to marketing of goods and services, from the structure, culture, systems, organization to leadership, then technology becomes an important factor that determines the success and competitiveness of a firm. Urich and Wayne (2005) conclude that human resources make use of different technologies with the sole aim of improving efficiency levels as they can accomplish tasks faster and in a more accurate manner. Improvements in accuracy and speed at which tasks are completed positively influences overall organizational performance.

Hutchins and Wang (2010) noted that there exist differences between firms in view of their structures. This calls for a mover towards contingency approach of viewing a firm where the structure of an organization should be a reflection of its strategies and situations. An organizational structure has an influence on information flow besides the nature and contexts of interrelationship between employees in an organization. An organizational structure determines the level of collaboration, shows the means of coordination and communication besides allocation of responsibility and power.

Traditionally, these needs for cooperation and coordination have been addresses by firms through hierarchical configurations, with need to centrally make decisions, strictly following the established procedures and rules and coming up with proper responsibilities and roles. Other organizations have shifted towards delayering because of the growing unpopularity of bureaucratic systems especially in firms operating on a larger scope (McCaffery et al., 2010). With downsizing, most role and responsibilities have been significantly changed and modified.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The objectives of the study were attained through descriptive design. This design accounts for how?, why?, what? and when? on a given happening or event. A descriptive design helped the researcher to clearly establish critical determinants of strategic plan implementation among public universities. The independent variables were Leadership Styles, communication, Resources and Technology while the dependent variable was strategy implementation

Target Population

According to Thorpe (2008), is a group of items, events or people that are well defined with common attributes. In this study the populations of interest were all the employees in the Universities in represented in Nairobi county-Kenya. According the Commission for University Education records, 13 universities are operating and represented within Nairobi County as at December, 2016.In this study, the researcher selected 4 out of the 13 public universities operating and represented within Nairobi County According to Ramenyi (2003), a sample of 10% to 20% is considered adequate for detailed studies. The sample target were the University Management; Vice Chancellors, Deputy Vice Chancellors, Finance Officers, Procurement Officers and Registrars, all heads of sections, Chairmen of departments, Finance officers and Administrative Officers.

Sample Size and Sampling Procedure

Sampling refers to the selection of the elements of the population to be included in the study. A sample is a part of the entire population that can be used for study and has all the characteristics of the entire population. According to Kothari (2004), the ultimate test of a sample is how well it represents the characteristics of the entire population. A sample size of 279 respondents was selected for the purpose of this study.

Data Collection Methods

This study used primary data collected using questionnaires. The questionnaires included both open and closed ended questions in line with the objectives of the study. A Five point Likert scale was used for closed ended questions. The questionnaires contained two sections. The first section sought to establish the respondent demographic data while the second section sought to establish the respondents' opinions on the four objectives of the study.

Research Procedures

Questionnaires aligned with objectives were developed by the researcher. Permission from relevant authorities was then sought by the researcher. The researcher applied for a research permit with NACOSTI. While in the field, questionnaire were distributed on a drop and pick latter basis. The researcher administered questionnaires by self.

Data Analysis Methods

After completion of data collection, a researcher needs to analyze collected data so as to make sense of it for the purpose of providing answers to set research questions (Miller, 1991). A researcher needs to determine in advance the techniques and methods to be employed in analyzing the collected data. These could encompass descriptive statistics including tests on significance and inferential. The researcher checked for completeness of research instruments, gave them unique codes and captured the data in Statistical package for Social Sciences (SPSS version 23.0) for the purposes of analysis. The analysis was done with help in means, standard deviations, regression and correlation analysis. For purposes of predicting the dependent variable (Leadership Styles, Communication, Resources and Technology) from the independent variables (Strategic Plan implementation), a multiple regression was used. The multiple regression helped the researcher to describe, forecast (predict) and adjust new observations and processes. Thus a multiple regression was used for interpreting the results of the effect of independent variables on the dependent variable. To predict the changes in strategy implementation in relation to the four independent variables, the study used the function of the form: Y f(X_1, X_2, X_3, X_4+ε). From this function a multiple regression model was derived.

$$\mathbf{Y = \beta_0+\beta_1X_1+\beta_2X_2+\beta_3X_3+\beta_4X_4+\varepsilon}$$

Where: Y = Strategy Implementation; β_0 = constant; β_0, β_1, β_2, $\beta_{3,}\beta_4$= coefficients of the determinants; X_1 = Leadership Styles; X_2 = Communication; X_3 = Resources Availability; X_4 = Technology and Innovation; ε = Error term

RESEARCH RESULTS

The study sought to establish determinants of strategic plan implementation in public universities in Kenya. The specific objectives of the study were: to establish whether leadership styles affect implementation of strategic plans in public universities in Kenya, to determine whether communication affects implementation of strategic plans in public universities in Kenya, to establish whether resources affect implementation of strategic plans in public universities in Kenya and to determine whether technology affects implementation of strategic plans in public universities in Kenya. A summary of the key findings on each of these specific objectives is presented in this sub-section.

Leadership Style and Strategic Plan Implementation

The study found out that respondents avoided evaluating problems and concerns as they were discussed with a mean of 4.14 with a standard deviation of 0.97. Respondents rotated the role of team briefer among the staff with a mean of 4.05 with a standard deviation of 1.24. Respondents also tried to assign work in small, easily controlled units as the mean was 3.90 with a standard deviation of 1.03. Respondents of the study also set down performance standards for each aspect of their staffs' jobs for the mean was 3.81 with a standard deviation of 1.33. It was further revealed that respondents avoided making judgments or premature evaluation of ideas or suggestions with a mean of 3.74 with a standard deviation of 1.42. The findings of the study indicated staff reported back to respondents after completing each step of their work as the mean was 3.73 with a standard deviation of 1.45. Moreover, respondents demonstrated each task involved in doing the job for the mean was 3.67 with a standard deviation of 1.29.

From the findings of correlation analysis, the study documents that there was a moderate positive significant relationship between leadership style and strategic plan implementation (Pearson correlation= 0.424; p=0.000). Findings of regression analysis indicated that leadership style significantly influences strategic plan implementation ($p=0.011<0.05$).

Communication and Strategic Plan Implementation

The study established that the university was subjected to monitoring and compliance requirements that were imposed by legislative and regulatory bodies as supported by a mean of 4.51 with a standard deviation of 2.36. Furthermore, the management committed appropriate human and financial resources to develop the necessary financial reporting information systems as indicated by a mean of 3.50 with a standard deviation of 1.21. Burnes (2004) noted that managers must be aware of people's beliefs, attitudes, behavior, demands and arguments in order to commit the appropriate human and financial resources so that the management is able to communicate effectively the message of strategic plan implementation to the employees. The findings of the study also indicated that communication flow across the university adequately (e.g. from department to department) enabled people to discharge their responsibilities effectively as shown by a mean of 3.51 with a standard deviation of 1.19. Robinson and Pearce (2004) observed that miscommunication occurs between the point where communication starts and the point where it is received and there communication should flow across the organization adequately.

The findings of correlation analysis indicated a strong positive significant relationship between communication and strategic plan implementation (Pearson correlation coefficient=0.853; $p=0.000$). From regression analysis, the study revealed that communication was a significant determinant of strategic plan implementation in public universities $p=0.001<0.05$.

Resource Allocation and Strategic Plan Implementation

The study documents that the university had a strategic plan implementation committee steering all the activities of the implementation with a mean of 3.93 with a standard deviation of 1.00. The university also had a complete budget annually allocated for purposes of strategic plan implementation had a mean of 3.84 with a standard deviation of 1.36. According to Prahalad and Hamel (1990), an organization with adequate resources will most likely achieve a higher retention of staff if all other variables are not a hindrance. Top management had provided all university departments with a copy of the strategic plan for purpose of references as indicated by a mean of 3.58 with a standard deviation of 1.33.

The results of correlation analysis indicated a strong positive significant relationship between resource allocation and strategic plan implementation in public universities (Pearson correlation coefficient=0.842, $p=0.000$). Regression analysis supported this finding where resource allocation was found to be a significant determinant of strategic plan implementation in public universities $p=0.000<0.05$.

Technology and Innovation and Strategic Plan Implementation

The study found out that the top management had set efficient technology distribution channels to ensure all departments serve customers using the current and modern technology for the mean was 3.97 with a standard deviation of 1.88. The university kept constant improvement on existing network infrastructure and replacement of old computers with new ones as shown by a mean of 3.50 with a standard deviation of 1.59. Respondents of the study however were not sure as to whether their university encouraged the use of current technology innovations strategies for the mean was 3.35 with a standard deviation of 1.41. Similarly, respondents of the study were not certain as to whether they had perfect understanding of the current market trends in education and technology and has a policy on use of technology had a mean of 3.23 with a standard deviation of 1.24 which indicated that the respondents agreed to a moderate extent with the statement hence the statement is consistent with Kumar et al. (2004), who noted that firms develop capabilities in technological applications by learning. They also need to be in a position to manage change especially those related to technology applied in production processes for superior organizational performance.

Correlation analysis indicated a strong positive and significant relationship between technology and innovation in respect to strategic plan implementation in public universities (Pearson correlation coefficient=0.718, p=0.000). This finding concurred with regression analysis where technology and innovation was identified as a critical factor determining strategic plan implementation in public universities $p=0.000<0.05$.

Strategic Plan Implementation Performance

The study revealed that the university had attracted to notch renowned academicians as supported by a mean of 4.60 with a standard deviation of 2.66. Respondents of the study also did their work with minimum supervision as shown by a mean of 3.85 with a standard deviation of 1.77. The study established that the university met its objectives on time as shown by a mean of 3.67 with a standard deviation of 1.49. The university had increased students' population due to effective service of both academic and administrative staff since the mean was 3.60 with a standard deviation of 1.30.

BIVARIATE CORRELATION ANALYSIS

This study conducted bivariate correlation analysis with the aim of determining the strength and direction of relationship between different determinants of strategic plan implementation in public universities. The results are shown in Table 1.

Communication is positively related to strategic plan implementation ($r=0.853$, $p=0.000<0.05$) indicating that the relationship between communication and strategic plan implementation is statistically significant. Resource allocation was also positively related to strategic plan implementation ($r=0.842$, $p=0.000<0.05$), signifying that there was statistically significant relationship between resource allocation and strategic plan implementation. There was a positive relationship between technology and strategic plan implementation ($r=0.718$, $p=0.000<0.05$), which was statistically significant. The study further identified a positive relationship between leadership style and strategic plan implementation ($r=0.424$, $p=0.000<0.05$).

Table 1: Bivariate Correlation Analysis

		Strategic plan implementation	Leadership style	Communication	Resource allocation	Technology and innovation
Strategic plan implementation	Pearson Correlation	1				
	Sig. (2-tailed)					
	N	175				
Leadership style	Pearson Correlation	.424	1			
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000				
	N	175	175			
Communication	Pearson Correlation	.853	.677	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000			
	N	175	175	175		
Resource allocation	Pearson Correlation	.842	.633	.888	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000		
	N	175	175	175	175	
Technology and innovation	Pearson Correlation	.718	.659	.906	.858	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	
	N	175	175	175	175	175

REGRESSION ANALYSIS

A regression analysis was conducted to examine the determining factors in strategy implementation in public universities in Kenya, and seal the loophole that exists between strategy formulation and implementation. The study applied SPSS analytical software to come up with inferential statistics. The results were as show in the proceeding sub - sections.

Table 2: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.920[a]	.846	.843	1.82794

The four variables (leadership style, communication, resource allocation, technology and innovation) explain 84.6% of the total variation in strategic plan implementation. 15.4% is explained by other factors not covered in the current study.

From the ANOVA Table 3, the Sum of Squares Regression SSR is 3131.605. SSR is a measure of how a data set varies around a central number. In simple terms, it quantifies how far the estimated sloped regression line is from the sample mean.

Table 3: Model Validity

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	3131.605	4	782.901	234.307	.000[b]
Residual	568.030	170	3.341		
Total	**3699.634**	**174**			

The ANOVA Table further indicates that the Residual Sum of Squares as 568.030. Residual Sum of Squares measures how much of the dependent variable's variation the regression model did not explain. Smaller Residual Sum of Squares signifies better model fitness.

The Total Sum of Squares is indicated as 3699.634, which is obtained by summing up the Sum of Squares Regression and the Residual Sum of Squares. The Total Sum of Squares indicates the amount of variation in strategic plan implementation in Public Universities in Kenya.

Table 3 indicates that the F statistics ($F_{(4,\ 170)}$ =234.307, P<0.001), meaning that all the four variables (leadership style, communication, resource allocation, technology and innovation) are good predictor of the strategic plan implementation. Therefore, the F statistics state that the Model Summary ($Y = \beta_0+\beta_1X_1+\beta_2X_2+\beta_3X_3+\beta_4X_4+\varepsilon$) is valid for further analysis.

Table 4: Regression Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	**Std. Error**	**Beta**		
(Constant)	8.262	3.961		2.086	.038
Leadership style	.160	.062	.111	2.574	.011
Communication	.255	.076	.235	3.365	.001
Resource allocation	2.061	.092	2.079	22.347	.000
Technology and innovation	1.025	.105	1.222	9.803	.000

$$\mathbf{Y= 8.262+ 0.160X_1 + 0.255X_2 +2.061X_3+1.025X_4}$$

Where: Y= Strategic plan implementation performance; X_1=Leadership; style X_2= Communication; $X_{3=}$ Resource allocation; $X_{4=}$ Technology and innovation

$\mathbf{X_1}$ is positively related to strategic plan implementation ($\beta_{1=}0.160$, p=0.011<0.05), meaning that X_1(leadership style) is significant in predicting strategic plan implementation. These findings are consistent with the findings of Aosa (1992) on managerial involvement on strategy implementation in organizational setting especially multinational corporations.

X_2 was also positively related to strategic plan implementation ($\beta_{2=}2.55$,p=0.001<0.05, an indication that X_2 (communication had significant effect on strategic plan implementation. X_3 had positive relationship with strategic plan implementation **(**$\beta_{3=}2.06$,p=0.000<0.05), signifying that X_3 (resource allocation had significant effect on strategic plan implementation.

These findings are consisted with the argument of Prahalad and Hamel (1990) who found out that employees become secure in their positions if they are empowered, provided with tools and equipment to work with, work with well established systems which allow them to be innovative. Provision of such an environment ensures that employees feel safe about working in an organization thus will always put in extra effort to ensure that organizational goals are achieved. X_4 was positively related with strategic plan implementation **(**$\beta_{3=}$1.05,p=0.000<0.05), showing that X_4 (technology and innovation) had significant influence on strategic plan implementation. According to Urich and Wayne (2005), technology is an important factor that determines the success and competitiveness of a firm.

CONCLUSIONS

From the findings and summary above, it can be seen that there was a moderate significant relationship between leadership style and strategic plan implementation. Leadership style significantly influences strategic plan implementation in public universities. Respondents avoided evaluating problems and concerns as they were discussed and Respondents rotated the role of team briefer among the staff. Respondents also tried to assign work in small, easily controlled units and set down performance standards for each aspect of their staffs' jobs. Respondents of the study avoided making judgments or premature evaluation of ideas or suggestions and that staff reported back to respondents after completing each step of their work.

The study further concludes that a strong positive significant relationship exists between communication and strategic plan implementation. Communication was a significant determinant of strategic plan implementation in public universities. The universities were required to observe provision related to monitoring and compliance imposed by regulatory bodies. The management need to be committed ensuring that adequate resources are made available especially in human capital and finances in the development of appropriate financial reporting systems. It can also be concluded that there was efficient communication as information flew across departments smoothly hence ensuring smooth execution of duties.

The study also concludes that a strong positive significant relationship exists between resource allocation and strategic plan implementation in public universities. Resource allocation was found to be a significant determinant of strategic plan implementation in public universities. The university had a strategic plan implementation committee steering all the activities of the implementation. The university also had a complete budget annually allocated for purposes of strategic plan implementation. Top management had provided all university departments with a copy of the strategic plan for purpose of references.

There was a strong positive and significant relationship between technology and innovation in respect to strategic plan implementation in public universities. Technology and innovation was identified as a critical factor determining strategic plan implementation in public universities. Top management had set efficient technology distribution channels to ensure all departments serve customers using the current and modern technology. The university kept constant improvement on existing network infrastructure and replacement of old computers with new ones.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The study established that there was no holding of regular meetings to discuss work status, emphasis on the importance of quality but allowing staff to establish the control standards, assurance that information systems are timely and accurate and that information is fed directly to staff and focus on opportunities and not problems. Based on these findings, the study recommends that to the top management of all universities in Kenya to ensure regular meetings and improve on their systems to ensure accuracy and timeliness.

The management of studied universities neither communicated employees' duties and control responsibilities in an effective manner nor took timely and appropriate follow-up action on communication received from customers, or other external parties. Based on this finding, the study recommends that to top management of all universities in Kenya to strengthen their communication channels at the work place.

The top management did not closely monitor the use of finances during strategic plan implementation. In view of this, the study recommends to the ministry of Education and all senates in Kenya to ensure that finances of their respective universities are closely monitored during strategic plan implementation process.

The study established that there were no perfect network infrastructures in most of the studied universities. Based on this finding, the study recommends that sufficient budget of all universities in Kenya whether public or private ones should be set aside for improving their network infrastructures. Since technology significantly affected strategic plan implementation, this study recommends that measures should be put in place among all universities in Kenya to improve on technology applications.

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