

# **THE EFFECT OF STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION ON THE GROWTH OF THE TRAINING INSTITUTIONS IN MACHAKOS COUNTY, KENYA**

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## **Abstract**

*The aim of the study was to determine the effect of strategy implementation on the growth of training institutions in Machakos County. The design was a descriptive survey. The target population was the Board of Management, Principals, Teaching staff and Support staff from 6 training institutions within Machakos County. 192 respondents were selected from a population of 368 using stratified random sampling. The data was collected using questionnaires which had closed ended and open ended questions. The study employed both quantitative (descriptive and regression statistics) and qualitative data analysis. The study found that majority of institutions followed Situational Analysis procedure in strategy implementation. Further the study found that inadequacy of Information Systems used to monitor strategy formulation; poor planning; lack of support and poor coordination, and poor communication were challenges of Strategy implementation which affected growth of training institutions. Based on the findings on strategy implementation, it can be recommended that the management should make an effort to improve further on Strategic management in order to raise the level of performance of training institutions. In addition, training institutions which are implementing their strategy formulation should develop effective strategic communication in order to attain their objectives. The training institutions should also give more attention to enhancement of teamwork and human resource management.*

*Keywords: Strategy implementation, institutional growth, Training institutions*

## INTRODUCTION

Strategic Management is an act of managing the process of strategy formulation, implementation, evaluation and control in an organization. Strategic Management has two major phases that is, strategy formulation and strategy implementation (Ogutu, 2014). According to Pearce and Robinson (2007), Strategic Management is a theory based on four concepts which are decisions and functions, formulation, implementation and objectives. This definition is echoed by Harvey (2008) who has described Strategic Management in four concepts which are formulation, implementation, evaluation and objectives.

Strategic Management is the art, science and craft of formulating, implementing and evaluating cross-functional decisions that enable an organization to achieve its long term objectives (David, 2009). It is the process of specifying the organization's mission, vision and objectives, developing policies and plans, often in terms of projects and programs, which are designed to achieve objectives and then allocating resources, to implement policies, plans, projects and programs.

The effective formulation and implementation of Strategic Management techniques can lead an organization to the path of success. The pitfalls in the strategic planning can be overcome with successful implementation of Strategic Management techniques. An effective Strategic Management process is imperative for gaining sustainable competitive advantage in the market (Quinn, 2014).

Strategic Management practices have been viewed as one of the effective management tools in strengthening organization and growth of the training institutions and performance, through effective decision making and systematic strategy formulation and implementation. Although Strategic Management was more prevalent in the private training institutions sector since the concept was first developed, the interest of applying Strategic Management practices in the public training institutions sector has increased over the last decade (Smith, 2014). Since 1980's there have been a series of reforms taking shape in the training institutions, resulting from increased awareness on the importance of quality in the training institutions globally.

The Kenyan training institutions Sector has since the year 2003 embarked on plans to institute reforms at all levels (Mutuku and Mutuku, 2009). This requires development of a Strategic Management practice orientation and execution of strategies capable of moving the training institutions to their desired future states. In short, colleges must engage in practical Strategic Management. Strategic Management practices involve making choices and decisions about the long-term future of an organization (Chemwei, (2014). The process results in Strategic Management that require execution or implementation under the stewardship of strategic behaviour norms.

Strategy is a tool that training institutions can use to find their competitive advantage and place within the ever turbulent operating environment. Kenya training Institutions must bring about the needed institutional redesign and devise an effective strategic planning system that will guide their operations. The recent guidelines issued by the Ministry of Education, seem to suggest that by pursuing a greater mission differentiation and reallocation of resources they will be better positioned to respond to the changing needs of their constituencies (Pearce and Robinson, 2007).

## **THEORETICAL REVIEW**

Among the theories that formed the basis of this study along the field of strategic Management includes; the resource based theory, the agency theory and the contingency theory.

### **The Agency Theory**

Agency Theory is a management approach where one individual (the agent) acts on behalf of another (the principal) and the agent is supposed to advance the principal's goals. The agent therefore advances both the principals' interests and his own interests in the organization. A balance of these interests should be merged in order to arrive at the corporate objectives of the organization, through the agent because he/she is in charge of the vast resources of the organization. Laffort and Martimost (2012) contend that the Agency Theory of Strategic Management is so crucial since the action chosen by a particular individual (the agent) affects not only one, but several other parties (the principals) in which the researcher agrees with. Hence, the agents' role in strategic formulation and the overall Strategic Management process cannot be underestimated.

The Agency theory holds the view that there should be proper synergy between the management and its stakeholders in order to work towards a common goal. The Agency Theory has also been described as the central approach to managerial behavior. Ross (2010) says that the Agency Theory is used in the managerial literature as a theoretical framework for structure and managing contract which is among the emerging issues in Strategic Management. It therefore explains the behavior of principals and agents relationships in performance contracting in management.

The Agency Theory also gets a lot of support from Alchian and Demsetz (2012), Jensen and Meckling, (2010) as a framework for Strategic Management as they say that this theory focuses on accountability by correction for opportunistic behavior that can result from exploiting asymmetric information-one part has an economy of knowledge about something which the other part does not have.

Mintzberg (2013), Joseph (2013), and James (2013), contend that strategies emanate from the Agency Theory as it is the agents who are charged with the responsibility of strategic formulation by other stakeholders who have direct control over the firm. Gibbons (2014) calls the Agency Theory the simplest possible theory of Strategic Management; one boss (or principal) and one worker (or 'Agent'). In his response he says that the Agency Theory of Strategic Management rests on the firm's shareholders as the principal and the CEO to be the agent but it is on this context that he says that one can enrich this modality in analyzing a chain of command in organizations.

### **Contingency Theory**

Contingency Theory has been one of the most influential theory applied in strategy and organizational studies (Hofer, 2011) and also the one, which is widely adopted in Strategic Management (Khairuddin, 2015). Contingency Theory is the most nominated theory by scholars as important from other 110 organization theories.

According to Donaldson, (2011) changes in contingencies, such as size or strategy, would render the structure to be unfit with the organization and lead to lower performance. Hence, adjustment to the structure is needed to regain the fit condition, which would lead to higher performance. These researches on contingencies and organization structure were later known as structural contingency theory.

In an article on Porter's generic strategy based on contingency approach, the viability of each of Porter's strategy was tied to the presence of a number of environmental preconditions. Meaning the viability of generic strategies would be influenced by the existence of some preconditions on the external factors. According to Miller (2012), as supported by Kim and Lim (2009), differentiation strategy is more likely to create sustainable competitive advantage in dynamic environment, while cost leadership would be able to achieve competitive advantage in stable environment. Industry conditions would also influence the effect of whether one chosen strategy would produce greater competitive advantage compared to another. Further, changes in industry conditions would force the strategy to be re-evaluated and adjusted accordingly, as argued by (Gilbert & Strebel, 2007). The theory is relevant since it emphasizes on changes in contingencies, such as strategy, and how the changes affect organization's performance.

### **Resource Based theory**

The objective of strategy building is to make a low cost or differentiated competitive position that leads to a competitive advantage that can be maintained over a period of time. The resource-based theory explains that in Strategic Management, the primary sources and drivers

to organization competitive advantage and greater performance are mostly connected with the characteristics of their resources and capabilities which are valuable and costly-to-copy (Barney, 2011). Building on the assumptions that strategic resources are heterogeneously circulated across organizations and that these differences are steady eventually, Barney (2011) researched the relation between firms resources and sustained competitive advantage.

In Barney (2011), Organization resources comprise all assets, capabilities, organizational processes, firm attributes, information, knowledge controlled by a firm that allows the organization to visualize and apply strategies that improve its efficiency and effectiveness. An organization is supposed to encompass a competitive advantage when it is implementing a value creating strategy not concurrently being implemented by any present or possible competitors. In addition, a organization is said to have a sustained competitive advantage when it is implementing a value creating strategy not concurrently being implemented by any existing or possible competitors and when these other organization are incapable to make a copy the importance of this strategy (Barney, 2011).

The resource-based Strategic Management viewpoint of the organization has emerged in current years as an accepted theory of competitive advantage (Wernerfelt 2014). Fahy, (2008) the importance of this involvement is apparent in its being awarded the Strategic Management publication best paper prize in 1994 for reasons such as being an early report of an vital tendency in the area in Fahy, 2008) has reasoned that the principal contribution of the resource-based theory of the organization has been as a theory of competitive advantage. This theory instigates the last objective of the study which will be to establish how strategy evaluation affects the growth of the training institutions.

## **EMPIRICAL LITERATURE**

Ofunya (2013) investigated the correlation of strategic management practices and organization performance in Post bank in Kenya. The study used descriptive research design. The study found that the strategies adopted by Post bank so as to cope with the competitive environment integrated vital pursuit of cost reductions, giving exceptional customer service, improving operational efficiency, amongst others.

Mwangi (2013) investigated strategic management practices and performance of large pharmaceutical organizations in Kenya. The study used survey design. The study findings found that organization that were using strategic management practices were most ready to innovate and to take risks and were more proactive than competitors.

Muogbo (2013) investigated the impact of strategic management on firm growth and development of manufacturing firms in Anambra State the study used descriptive survey

research design. Findings from the analysis shown that strategic management was not the same among the manufacturing organization in Anambra State but its implementation had major significant effect on competitiveness and influences on manufacturing organizations.

Taiwo and Idunnu (2010) investigated the impact of strategic planning on firm performance this study used a causal research design. The study examined the planning-performance affiliation in organization and the extent to which strategic planning affected performance of First Bank of Nigeria. The findings found that planning forms superior firm performance, which in the long term impacts its survival.

Bakar, (2011) examined the practice of strategic management in building companies in Malaysia the study used survey design. The findings of the research found that many of the organizations practicing strategic management had a clear objective, a winning strategy to attain the goal and a mission statement to guide the firm in achieving success.

Njagi and Kombo (2014) established the effect of strategy implementation on performance of commercial banks in Kenya the study used a descriptive research design. The study found out that there was a strong connection among strategy implementation and organizational performance.

Ondera (2013) investigated strategic management practices in Mbagathi District Hospital, Nairobi, Kenya the study used a descriptive research design. The study found that, the hospital implements and evaluates the work strategy by including all employees working at the hospital and that the administration allocated finances based on the plan to help the procedure of strategy implementation.

## RESEARCH METHOD

The study used a descriptive survey study. The target population of the study comprises Boards of Management, Principals, Teaching staff and Support staff from 6 training institutions within Machakos County. According to Ministry of Education Report (2015), Machakos County has 13 training institutions. Stratified random sampling technique was used to draw the sample from the population. This technique was preferred because it ensures that all units in the population have an equal and independent chance of being included in the sample. The sampling frame constituted list of principals, teaching staff, support staff and Board of Management staff of selected training institutions. The total sample size was 192 respondents.

The primary data was collected through the use of a questionnaire. The questionnaire consisted of both open and closed ended questions. The close-ended questions provided more structured responses to facilitate tangible recommendations. The open-ended questions provided additional information that could not be captured in the close-ended questions. The

questionnaires were advocated for because they are easy to administer and simple to respond and yet gave enough information required for the study. The first step in data collection was researcher obtaining introduction letter from the School of Business & Economics for permission to collect data. Before the actual data collection, research teams were trained to assist in the distribution of questionnaires in the field of study.

The data was collected using the drop method to allow the respondents fill the questionnaires at their convenient time who in charge of administering the questionnaires for the first time. Data collected were coded; edited and then subjected to description statistical analysis techniques. This was eventually tabulated, arranged and presented in tables. This further reduced, summarized and interpreted the numerical information.

## ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

The main purpose of this study was to establish the effect of strategy implementation on the growth of training institutions in Machakos County. The researcher sought to find out the respondent's view on whether strategy implementation affect the growth of the training institutions in Machakos County. The results were presented in Table 1. According to the findings, 54.3% of the respondents strongly agreed; 32% agreed; 4% were neutral; 6.2% disagreed; 3.5% strongly disagreed that strategy implementation is set within the budget; 39% of the respondents strongly agreed that strategy implementation affects Stake holder satisfaction and accountabilities; 41% agreed; 8% were neutral; 10% disagreed; while 2% strongly disagreed. Majority 45.1% of the respondent strongly agreed that the strategy should be implemented with set timeliness 38.6% agreed; 8.3% were neutral; 6% disagreed while 2% strongly disagreed and 30.7% strongly agreed that coordination and sharing of tasks positively affects strategy implementation on the growth of the training institutions in Machakos County 33% agreed; 14.2% were neutral; 18% disagreed while 4.1% strongly disagreed as indicated by the mean 3.8, 3.5, 4.1, and 4.0 respectively.

Table 1: Strategy implementation on the growth of the training institutions

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Mean
	%	%	%	%	%	
Within set financial plan	54.3	32	4	6	3.5	3.8
Stake holder approval and accountabilities.	39	41	8	10	2	3.5
In terms of time appropriateness	45.1	38.6	8.3	6	2	4.1
Management and allocation of tasks	30.7	33	14.2	18	4.1	4.0

These results correlates with the literature review where Quinn, (2008) found out that Strategic implementation involves allocation and management of adequate resources (monetary, human resources, time and technology support), finding a chain of authority or some option structure allocating responsibility of particular tasks or procedure to exact persons, it also includes administration the procedure. This shows that strategy implementation factors to a large extent affect the growth of the training institutions in Machakos County.

### Challenges of Strategy Implementation

The study sought to find out level of agreement with statements concerning the challenges of Strategy Implementation on the growth of training institutions in Machakos County.

The study sought to find out the level of agreement with statements concerning the Challenges of Strategy Implementation on the growth of training institutions in Machakos County. From the findings respondents agreed to the statement that Leadership style; Uncertainty and organizational structure; Information Availability and Accuracy; and Poor Organization Structure as indicated by a mean of 4.37, 3.93, 3.89 and 3.78 respectively. These findings agrees with findings by Rutere (2012) who found the many Challenges of Strategy Implementation such as poor management, poor communication, unclear strategic intentions, conflicting priorities, unawareness or misunderstanding of the strategy, unaligned organizational systems and resources, competing activities and unmanageable environmental factors.

Table 2: Challenges of Strategy Implementation

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Mean
	%	%	%	%	%	
Leadership style	23	3.7	22	51	22	3.93
Uncertainty and organizational structure	18	19	7.4	48	44	4.37
Information accessibility and correctness	13	3.7	33	33	29	3.89
Poor Organization Organization	14	11	29	29	29	3.78

These findings are in agreement with the literature review where Johnson & Scholes, (2013), found that Strategic evaluation includes not only evaluating strategy for deviations from planned course but also for flexibility towards responding to the new challenges and establishing the efficiency and the pace of the implementation.

## Growth of Training Institutions

Table 3: Growth of Training Institutions in Machakos County.

	Strongly agree	Agree	No effect	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Mean
Employees have a clear understanding of the quality and of work expected from them	21	30.1	17.2	17.1	14.1	3.8
Teaching employees performance contributes to the overall Growth of the training institutions	33.7	29.5	14.3	14.4	8.1	4.3
One of the most often used tools to develop growth of the institutions is the quality of training offered	25	64.6	4	3.4	3	4.2
Board of Management involvement in decision increases Growth of the training institutions	30.8	41	14.9	9.2	4.1	4.1

According to the results, 30.1% of respondents agreed that employees have a clear understanding of the quality of work expected from them; 21% strongly agreed; 17.2% were neutral; 17.1% disagreed while 14.1% strongly disagreed.

On the statement concerning teaching employees performance as its contribution to the overall Growth of the training institutions 33.7% of majority strongly agreed; 29.5% agreed; 14.4% disagreed; 14.3% were neutral and 8.1% strongly disagreed; On the statement regarding on whether the most often used tools improved growth of the institutions is the quality of training offered majority of the respondent with 64.6% agreed; 25% strongly agreed; 4% were neutral; 3.4% disagreed; while 3% strongly disagreed; Board of Management involvement in decision increases Growth of the training institutions 30.8% strongly agreed; 41% agreed; 14.9% were neutral; 4.9% disagreed and 4.1% strongly disagreed; as shown by mean of 3.8, 4.3, 4.2, and 4.1 respectively. These results correlates with the literature review where Becker, Antuar & Everett, (2011) shows that growth of the training institutions depends on the quality of the training factors which are strategy implementation, remuneration, leadership style, career advancement and goal setting.

## Regression analysis

The linear regression analysis models presents the relationship between the dependent variable which is growth of training institutions in Machakos County and the independent variables which are strategy formulation, strategy implementation and strategy evaluation. The coefficient of determination  $R^2$  and correlation coefficient ( $r$ ) show the degree of association between the Variables and growth of the training institutions in Machakos County. The results of the linear regression indicate that  $R^2=.955$  and  $R= .975$  this is a suggestion that there is a strong relationship between strategy formulation, strategy implementation, strategy evaluation and the growth of the training institutions.

Table 4: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square
1	.975	.955

Table 5: ANOVA<sup>a</sup>

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
	Regression	494.594	18	123.648	362.058	.000 <sup>b</sup>
1	Residual	28.687	174	.342		
	Total	523.281	192			

a. Dependent Variable: Growth of the training institutions

Table 5 indicates that P value = 0.000 which is less than 5%. This finding shows that the overall model is significant. It further implies that strategy implementation have a significant influence on the growth of the training institutions in Machakos County.

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

From the findings of this study the researcher concluded that Strategic Management practices affects the growth of training institutions in Machakos County. This is because every institution has some systems or internal processes to support and implement the strategy and run day-to-day affairs. This implies that there is a strong positive correlation between strategic management practices and strategy implementation.

The study findings established that most training institutions in Machakos County implement strategies as planned. Additionally, on average the study findings revealed that most of the training institutions in Machakos County implemented their short-term goals within 3 months. Principals, and Teaching staff were found to be the most responsible for strategy

implementation. The results established that strategy implementation influences growth of the training institutions in Machakos County. Variables testing revealed that strategy implementation has significant influence on the growth of the training institutions in Machakos County.

More attempts must be made to improve process guiding strategy implementation procedure. It is also recommended that training institutions which are implementing their strategies must have successful strategic ability in terms of human resources, organizational culture and policies. The training institutions must get better on its capacity to respond to major changes in the external environment and allocating resources to new strategy. Training institutions in Kenya must consider strategic flexibility throughout the strategy formulation, implementation and evaluation to make sure that they attain the growth of the training institutions in Machakos County.

### **SCOPE FOR FURTHER RESEARCH**

The findings put emphasis on the Strategic Management practices affecting the growth of training institutions in Machakos County which include of strategy formulation, strategy implementation, and strategy evaluation. Accessible literature shows that a avenue of research there is need to take out related research on the Strategic Management practices affecting the growth in the other sectors in order to establish if there is relationship between the Strategic Management practices on growth and those factors.

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