

Factors Affecting the Implementation of Strategic Plans in Government Tertiary Institutions: A Survey of Selected Technical Training Institutes

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Abstract

This study carried out an analysis of factors influencing the implementation of strategic management plans in selected tertiary institutions in Meru central District. The study was guided by four objectives and data was collected to answer the following four questions: - How managerial Behavior, Institutional policies, Resources allocation and Rewards and Incentives influence the implementation of strategic management plans. Four null hypotheses were tested to inform on the decision process of accepting or rejecting the influence of each of the four independent variables on the dependent variable.

The research design was a descriptive survey carried out in Meru central District and the selected governments sponsored tertiary institutions were; - Nkabune and Kiirua Technical Training Institutions. The population for the study were the institutions' Managers and serving Lecturers in the tertiary institutions within the selected institutions Meru Central District. The accessible population was made up of 136 Lecturers, 30 heads of departments and 12 top manager; totaling to an accessible population of 178 respondents.

Using a stratified random sampling design, a quota of 33% was established for each of the stratum in each institute from the three stratus of top management, heads of departments and lectures. A table of random numbers was used to select a sample of 60 individual respondents for the study. The study used a structured questionnaire as the data collection instrument both descriptive and inferential statistical analysis techniques were used in order to test the four Hypothesis of the study.

The study concludes that the weak influence of managerial behavior was as a result of strategic thinking of the management and the influence of rewards and incentives were found to be weak as it was the intrinsic motivation of the teacher's professional ethics than extrinsic motivation by management through tangible reward by Management that made the lecturers co-operate in the implementation of strategic plans. Institutional policies were revealed to be weak in influencing strategy implementation because of low awareness and the infrequent use of the service charter which is a critical 'barometer' of strategy implementation effectiveness and efficiency.

The study recommends that Tertiary institutions create a higher level of involvement of faculty members in any further strategy development and review to avoid hands off approach and lack of ownership on the part of lecturers who are the implementers. The Agencies must also ensure a high level of sensitization among faculty members, and where practical programmes for capacity building to improve skill and motivate the willingness to participate by the faculty members. Further study is recommended on the effectiveness of the strategic management plans being implemented in the tertiary institutions and other Institutions of higher learning and specialized institutions like Government Training Institutes

Key words: *implementation, strategic plans, government tertiary institutions, managerial behavior.*

1.0 Introduction:

Higher education institutions are complex organizations with a strong sense of tradition and a distinct culture. According to Vroom (1984) institutions of higher Education are also characterized by vagueness in their educational mission statement and a tendency toward anarchy. The absence of a political environment signifies confusion in the internal governing structure. The organizational structure is generally bifurcated between academic and administrative components. One of the strong values of the academic component is the "academic freedom" where it may not tolerate any interference from outside sources. The pressure of factors such as tenure creates a unique situation at higher education institutions.

Higher education institutions have many stakeholders who must be involved in the Strategic management process. Apart from administrators, faculty, staff, and students, the institutions also need to account for the interests of students' parents, government agencies, benefactors, alumni, the community, and accreditation agencies. Each of these stakeholders makes demands upon the institution and the strategic management must bring these stakeholders into the strategic management process to maximize "client satisfaction."

The choice of a method for strategic management implementation will depend upon situational factors such as size of the institution, complexity of programs, institutional culture, and the style of the management. In view of the complex characteristics of higher education institutions, the implementation approach should be based upon high participation. The crevice or the cultural approach as described by

Brodwin and Bourgeois (1984) meets these requirements. In the cultural approach the president assumes the role of a coach and focuses upon defining and developing the new culture of the institution. In the crecive approach, the president's role is changed to that of a premise setter which has a distinctive influence on the attainment of organizational quality objectives.

Kenyan universities and colleges, especially public ones, have always planned but there was never anything strategic about it because the “planning has always been the traditional one that followed the government’s five year planning cycle”. It is common knowledge that government’s five year planning cycles mostly involved adjusting plans for inflation and political changes especially to accommodate the whims of the ruling regime. The planning was never seriously focused on the long term. This was the case until the advent of performance contracting that demanded that planning be strategic levels (Lewa, Mutuku and Mutuku, 2009).

The Kenyan Education Sector has since the year 2003 embarked on plans to institute reform at all levels. They ask where we are now. Where do we want to go? How do we get there? In the face of changing circumstances, these are important questions to ask (Mutuku and Mutuku, 2004). These questions ought to force them to evaluate the conditions in their operating environments, examine competitive pressures, carry out SWOT analysis and identify strategic issues. This requires development of a strategic orientation and execution of strategies capable of moving the universities and colleges to their desired future states. In short, the universities and colleges must engage in practical strategic planning. Strategic planning and thinking involves making choices and decisions about the long-term future of an organization (Pearce and Robinson, 2007). The process results in strategic plans that require execution or implementation under the stewardship of strategic behaviour norms.

Strategy is a tool that a public university and colleges can use to find its competitive advantage and place within the ever turbulent operating environment. Kenya public universities and colleges 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 (Ministry of Education, 2006). Benjamin and Carroll (1998) discussing California education system reached the same conclusion. The authors decry lack of effective strategic planning and point out at the many problems facing the sector. They observe, “The present course of higher education in the state – in which student demand, tuition, and costs are rising much faster than public funding - is unsustainable. Unless significant steps are taken to address the situation, hundreds of thousands of Californians will be denied access to higher education within the next 20 years” (Benjamin and Carroll, 1998). “That is a serious, sobering, economic, political, and social catastrophe, and there is nothing in the framework of a current situation that is likely to prevent that from occurring” (Breneman, 1995). One can be tempted to think that these authors are talking about Kenya’s higher education sector because the problems are similar (Lewa, Mutuku and Mutuku, 2009). The development of a universities’ wide strategic plan by the Ministry of Education (2006) to be followed by all universities and colleges in Kenya in their strategic planning processes is a welcome move.

1.1 The Problem statement

Finkelstein (2003), maps four circumstances in which strategic planning failure is most likely to occur: launching new ventures, promoting innovation and change, managing mergers and acquisitions and responding to new environmental pressures. So in this era of dramatic change, global alliances, and a variety of environmental pressures, the potential for failure is very real. While Mintzberg (1994) believes that the strategic planning models of the 1960s and 1970s ultimately failed because they did not distinguish between strategic planning and strategic thinking. Miller (1990) found in his research that the

victories and strengths of companies can often be the cause of their future strategic failure. Miller delineated four major causes of strategic failure: leadership traps, monolithic cultures and skills, power and politics, and structural memories. All of these causes emerge while an organization is experiencing success-especially in its strategic initiatives.

Here in Kenya, Public universities and Colleges have started to get serious about strategic planning because they recognize the challenges they face today and also because they are now required by the government to carry out strategic planning (GOK, 2006). Kenyan public universities and colleges that are essentially traditional in orientation must find new ways of dealing with the issues facing them including increasing competition from private universities and colleges (Lewa, Mutuku and Mutuku, 2009). It is therefore imperative that Strategic planning is one of the major steps the universities can take to address the challenges they face in enhancing the quality of their programmes in provision of Higher Education. The purpose of this study was to carry out an analysis of the factors that influence implementation of strategic plans in government sponsored tertiary institutions to point out the established causes of failure before it takes place and to aid in having surveillance to avoid a repeat of the 1990s elsewhere.

1.2 Objectives of the Study

1.2.1 General objective of the study

This study proposed to carry out an analysis of factors influencing the implementation of strategic management plans in government tertiary institutions in Meru Central Districts.

1.2.2 Specific objectives of the study

The study was guided by the following specific objectives:-

- i. To assess whether Managerial Behaviour is a factor influencing implementation of strategic management plans in tertiary institutions
- ii. To establish whether Resource Allocation is a factor influencing implementation of strategic management plans in tertiary institutions
- iii. To determine whether Reward management is a factor influencing implementation of strategic management plans in tertiary institutions
- iv. To examine whether Institutional Policies is a factor influencing implementation of strategic management plans in tertiary institutions

1.3 Hypothesis of the study

The study tested the following hypothesis to facilitate objective answers to the research questions:-

Ho. There is no relationship between a Managerial Behaviour and implementation of strategic management plans by Technical Training Institutes

Ha. There is a positive relationship between Managerial Behaviour and implementation of strategic management plans by Technical Training Institutes

Ho. There no relationship between reward management and implementation of strategic management plans by Technical Training Institutes

- Ha. There is a positive relationship between reward management and implementation of strategic management plans by Technical Training Institutes
- Ho. There is no relationship between resources allocation and implementation of strategic management plans by Technical Training Institutes
- Ha. There is a positive relationship between resources allocation and implementation of strategic management plans by Technical Training Institutes
- Ho. There is no relationship between Institutional policies and implementation of strategic management plans by Technical Training Institutes
- Ha. There is a positive relationship between Institutional policies and implementation of strategic management plans by Technical Training Institutes

1.4 The scope of the study

This study was limited to an analysis of factors influencing the implementation of strategic management plans in government tertiary institutions in the three government sponsored tertiary institutions (Meru, Nkabune and Kirua) in Meru central districts. Though they are all located on upper Eastern province of Kenya they are representative of the all government sponsored tertiary institutions under the Ministry of Higher Education. The study lasted four months due to the proximity and nature of the study population.

2.0 Literature review

2.1 Theoretical review

In this section is a summary of theoretical literature which explores the factors that influence the implementation of strategic plans in Higher education and in particular as it relates to the current situations of the government Tertiary Institutions.

The goal of education for all is now being looked into a fresh by the organizations concerned to ensure that not just education but quality education is received (UNESCO, 2004). The UNESCO report emphasizes that quality education is a tool to overcome most of the problems in Africa and a means to fulfill other rights. Indicators of quality education must be revised to ensure that standard is maintained worldwide. It is important to realize that poor quality education anywhere in the world is bad for humankind as a whole (UNESCO, 2004). The Bergen Conference of European Ministers Responsible for Higher Education 19-20 May 2005 adopted Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (Diamond, 2007).

Established in 1980 the Inter-University Council for East Africa (IUCEA) is mandated to foster and coordinate interuniversity cooperation in the region, facilitate strategic development of the member universities, and control and promotion of the quality of higher education in the region through the development and application of a harmonized quality assurance framework. Therefore, the IUCEA is the appropriate body of EAC to participate in the implementation of SDEA as stated above. Establishment of an East African Quality Assurance System Within its mandate and in order to safeguard and foster the quality of higher education in East Africa, as well as promote the comparability and compatibility of higher education in the region, in 2006 the IUCEA in collaboration with the regulatory agencies in Kenya (Commission for Higher Education – CHE), Tanzania (Tanzania Commission for Universities – TCU) and Uganda (National Council for Higher Education – NCHE) initiated a process to introduce a common quality assurance system for universities in East Africa. The system was aimed at aligning the existing

quality assurance systems of individual universities and regulatory agencies to a common but not uniform system. Government's priority is in ensuring that quality is at the core of all education programs.

Quality education assures sustainable acquisition of knowledge, be it intellectual or practical capable of developing the individual and contributes to national and global development. The process of providing quality education begins with proper planning for financial, human and physical resources and curriculum. This involves all the stakeholders and it is incorporated in the teaching/learning process.

The focus on education quality is normally at the heart of efforts aimed at improving the performance of education sectors. Quality is what attracts learners, satisfies their basic learning needs, and enriches their life and their overall experience of living. Governments and all other partners must work together to ensure quality of education for all, regardless of gender, wealth, location, language, ethnic, social or cultural origin. There has been much effort in expanding basic education in the Kenya. The achievements made especially with regard to making basic education access to the population at all places are very significant. However, the issue of quality in education still remains a crucial concern of the ministries of education. Quality of education has now become the most important aspect of education worldwide.

2.1.1 Strategic behaviour

'Strategic behaviour' refers to actions which a firm takes to improve its competitive position relative to actual and potential rivals, in order to gain a permanent commercial advantage, thereby increasing its long-run profits. Carlton and Perloff (1994) refer to actions 'to influence the market environment and so increase profits'; while Martin (1993) refers to 'investment of resources for the purpose of limiting rivals' choices'. Strategic behaviour thus refers to conduct which is not economically inevitable, but which is the outcome of a conscious attempt to shape the firm's market environment to its own lasting advantage and to the competitive disadvantage of rivals.

There are two categories of strategic behaviour. 'Non-cooperative behaviour' occurs when a firm tries to improve its position relative to its rivals by seeking to prevent them from entering a market, to drive them out of business or to reduce their profits. 'Cooperative behaviour' occurs when firms in a market seek to coordinate their actions and therefore limit their competitive responses (this does not necessarily imply explicit agreement). Here, only non-cooperative strategic behaviour is considered.

2.1.2 Institutional policies

The Kenya Ministry of Education through the Directorate of Quality Assurance and Standards developed through extensive consultation with various stakeholders facilitated by the Kenya National Commission for UNESCO two sets of guidelines aimed at ensuring the provision of quality and relevant education (Economic survey, 2003). Kenya Education Sector Support Programme (KESSP) was set up based on the rationale of the overall policy goal of achieving Education for All (EFA) and the Government's commitment to the attainment of Millennium Development goals (MDG). The broad objective is to give every Kenyan the right to quality education and training no matter his/her socio-economic status (MOEST, 2006). This will be achieved through the provision of an all-inclusive quality education that is accessible and relevant to all Kenyans.

This vision is guided by the understanding that quality education and training contribute significantly to economic growth and expansion of employment opportunities. The vision, which is in tandem with the Government's plan as articulated in the Economic Recovery Strategy (ERS) therefore, provides the rationale for major reforms in current education system in order to enable all Kenyans to have access to quality lifelong education and training. The government is supposed to ensure equitable distribution of

learning/teaching materials in pre-university education to support curriculum implementation. Capacity building for heads of institutions, management committees and field officer should be instituted to ensure delivery of quality education services.

Improvement on the quality of education focuses on setting of standards for the various variables and ensuring that the set standards are adhered to. While this directorate deals with school-level institutions, the Commission for Higher Education (CHE) deals with post-secondary institutions (also referred to as 'middle level colleges') and university level institutions (MOEST, 2005). The Directorate of Quality Assurance and Standards is mandated to co-ordinate, follow-up and advice on curriculum delivery at school-level. The Education Act Cap 211 of 1968 did not extend its work to technical and vocational education and training (TVET) institutions that are at the school level, thus excluding a vital component of education and training. However, the Directorate of Quality Assurance and Standards has now been given this mandate but needs the legal provision to do so. The staff in the directorate is expected to supervise and advise curriculum implementers. In order to carry out their duties, therefore, they should have good academic qualifications, specialized skills and well-established staff development programmes. This enables them keep pace with the changes in the education sector.

To achieve the national educational goals, MOEST has two complementary quality assurance and quality development strategies (MOEST, 2005). The first strategy is Quality Assurance: This is achieved through assessment of institutions and reporting on these assessments to the institutions and to MOEST. It is also achieved through assessing the curriculum through valid and reliable national examinations whose results are used as indicators of quality of education in the country. The second strategy is Quality Development: This is achieved through the work of the advisory services, the provision of staff development opportunities and the development of teaching and learning materials.

2.1.3 Reward management

Organizational theories are fast approaching major transformation. The infusion of the behavioral sciences (Sociology and Psychology) most prominently in small group analysis erodes the bases of traditional organization theory at a microscopic level (Golembiewski, 2000). Knowledge of group and personality properties in current research has sharply revealed the inadequacies of earlier theories. We now have goal-based, empirical theories of how organizational goals and objectives could be attained. Even when the conditions prescribed by the theory do exist, the expected consequences often do not produce an outcome (Lawler, 2001). But the theory-types and their methodological implications have been considered in ongoing research and often found to be useful. According to Maehr and Braskamp (1986) McClelland and his colleagues set out to systemize the study of motivation by designing assessment procedures that would help identify the characteristics associated with highly motivated personalities.

In a further review of research on motivation as it is in specific contexts or situations, Maehr and Braskamp (1986) offer a "counterbalancing perspective" to McClelland's. "Focus on personality as a cause of motivation." Maehr and Braskamp conclude that "perhaps more than we realize, we are what we expected to be and we do what the task and our significant others allow and demand" (Maehr and Braskamp, 1986).

Normative expectations apply to all group member is expected to adhere to the established norms of the group. Such expectations can exist in very basic social units, including the business organization, family, clubs and schools. Because individuals are influenced by these social groups quite early in life, they can acquire at young ages basic attitudes about what is worthy achieving and how it can be achieved (Maehr and Braskamp, 1986). Another important category is individualized expectations that is, what significant people, such as managers and executives, believe about a specific worker. Some research in this area as it relates to the workplace indicates that an employer's belief about the effectiveness of an employee influences the productivity of that worker (Steers, 1981).

2.2 Empirical literature review

Langfield-Smith (1997), in his research paper on Management Control Systems and Strategy; reviewed the relationship between management control systems (MCS) and business strategy on specific aspects of MCS and their relationship with strategy. These aspects included cost control orientation, performance evaluation and reward systems, the effect of resource sharing, the role of MCS in influencing strategic change and the choice of interactive and diagnostic controls. More contemporary approaches to the relationship between performance measurement systems and strategy were also considered. It concluded that our knowledge of the relationship between MCS and strategy is limited, providing considerable scope for further research.

Nganga,(2009) sought to explore; Competency, Experience and Industrial Exposure of Faculty Members in Public Universities and Collaborating Colleges in Kenya .The most significant and outright finding is the absence of a systematic form of faculty member's performance metrics. The universities do not seem to have a practical and well adopted method of measuring, assessing and monitoring the faculty member's performance and effectiveness. Research, the mainstay of universities attainment of goals and objectives, is limited to the extent to which the majority of the faculty members can finance from their meager earnings.

Arasa and Nkunya (2009), in their study on Current Higher Education Quality Assurance Dynamics in East Africa, outlined the process that the IUCEA in collaboration with the regulatory agencies in Kenya (CHE), Tanzania (TCU) and Uganda (NCHE) have embarked upon to introduce a common quality assurance system for universities in East Africa. They established that IUCEA has already established a quality assurance unit that will coordinate the system. There are, however, still a number of challenges to overcome, including financing of the system at the universities, inertia towards embracing the system among the university stakeholders, and streamlining the student evaluation procedures as part of the quality assurance process. It can however be foreseen that in the near future the quality assurance system will gain strength in harmonizing the quality of education and the proficiency of our university graduates in the regional and to fit into the international labour markets.

Kitaingo and Wosyanju (2009) in an assessment of the relevance of youth polytechnics programmes towards youth employment concluded that; the youth polytechnics had made various efforts in their quest to offer market relevance courses. However, these efforts had been met with various challenges. The challenges were identified as the ever-changing job market demands, insufficient training resources and insufficient feedback from previous employers.

Kitaingo, Syomwene and Nganga (2000) in a study on Organization of Education and Training in Australia gave inferences on possible lessons for third world Countries The paper discussed some of the training aspects that are found in Australia. They were clear that this does not imply that Australia is the best system in the world as it is still reforming its systems to make them more responsive to the main forces that are impacting on education and training. They concluded that Developing countries should not

just look at a model of training and imagine that all is well. Education and training are dynamic aspects that are driven by the world forces like globalization, lifelong learning and the culture of the people whom the education and training are aimed for. They recommended that there is also a need for the update of the personal skills to match the demands at the work place for all the people. This calls for the appreciation of the fact that we should all be learners, and design our systems and programs with the local conditions at hand being guided by the international perspectives.

Mabonga, (2009) took a study on Module II Programmes in light of the challenges of access and prospects. Mabonga noted that the rate of development of the Module II programs should be checked by the Kenyan universities in order to ensure that customers are satisfied with the quality offered. He observed there seems to be faster expansion in population capacity than in acquisition and development of relevant resources and facilities for use in teaching. Recommendation based on the research findings included that the University staffs who has lower qualification than a Masters degree should continue upgrading their academic qualification. And the universities should not admit more students than those who can effectively be supported by the human and physical infrastructure in order not to violate the policy set staff to student ratios or distort the program based Full Time Student Equivalent (FTSE).

Omutoko, (2009) undertook a study; Re-thinking the Management of Higher Education Institutions Transformational Leadership. The study concluded that Higher education is in crisis today and the current situation is not sustainable throughout the world. The situation is aggravated by low quality which is as a result of rapid enrolment, growth under limited resources, inefficiency in terms of inappropriate use of public resources in higher education, high dropout rates, program duplication and inequity. The study recommended that due to the fact that most of the faculty members do not know about hierarchical levels in HEIs, it is necessary that institutions take the responsibility of providing management training for lecturers and managers as this would help them in understanding protocol and improve their management. On the same note, orientation and induction of new staff should be a must after the recruitment process as this helps in understanding activities and gives a starting point. Mentorship should also form an integral part of management. In conclusion he stated that Higher education is vital for economic and social development, therefore these institutions should be managed efficiently and issues facing them should be dealt with promptly in order for them to be able to achieve their goals which will ensure that the country moves progressively towards a guided direction. In order for universities to remain relevant, achieve their missions and to keep up with current trends, they can benefit from knowledge management practices which include making use of the corporate portal concept and management by results.

According to Chege, (2009) in his study;- Relevant, Effective, Appropriate and Transformative Leadership in Higher Education in the 21st Century, observed that Most higher education institutions have a mission, vision, core values and objectives well stated, and some pasted on walls, receptions, institutions' handbooks, websites among other places. Ideally, these visions, missions, core values and objectives should act as navigators for these institutions to achieve their goals and realize their dreams. Higher education institutions are ideally to be a lead in education and research in any country. However, his study revealed that many students in these institutions echoed that 'high school was better than university and college in terms of facilities and services offered' and wondered what is wrong especially with such well written down roadmaps. Chege therefore concluded that Leaders in tertiary institutions need to take a lead in taking the institutions forward by balancing task orientation and people orientation, by embracing technological changes and regular revision of curriculum. Above all an effective, appropriate and relevant leadership should bring changes in the society for the true measure of education is change. Leadership without a following is only taking a walk!

Lewa, Mutuku and Mutuku (2009) studied; Strategic planning in the Higher Education Sector of Kenya. The study revealed that Kenyan public universities are essentially traditional in orientation and must find new ways of dealing with the issues facing them include increasing competition from other universities. The study observed that strategic planning is one of the major steps the universities can take to address the challenges they face. The development of a universities' wide strategic plan by the Ministry of Education (2006) to be followed by all universities in Kenya in their strategic planning processes is a welcome move, as it provides a basic framework that could prove useful to the universities. The study proposed that universities should consider incorporation of strategic thinking in their process of strategic planning in order to make their planning more useful in view of the failures of strategic planning in public universities. The research was candid that, strategic thinking helps examine the critical issues in every situation and possibly would help public universities to be flexible and open in their planning efforts. The study recommended that public universities should encourage active participation of as many stakeholders as possible, including the faculty, administration, industry, education authorities, students, and alumni. This way synergy and ownership are built in the process.

Manyasi, (2009) took a study on Crisis Management: A Challenge in Institutions of Higher Learning in Kenya. The study revealed that managers in the institution do not use a proactive approach to crises management. They lack knowledge about strategic actions such as integrating crises management into strategic planning process, integrating crises management into statements of corporate excellence, creating crises management teams and including outsiders on the board. The organizations did not have a crisis management plan. The researcher recommends that: Competent public relations officers should be employed to perform all functions including crises management. Training and workshops in crises management should be provided to strategic managers and public relations practitioners. Managers should use strategic actions such as integrating crises management into strategic planning process, integrating crises management into statements of corporate excellence, creating crises management teams and including outsiders on the board. A location to act as a crisis management centre should be identified. Organizational members should be exposed to crisis simulations.

According to Ahenda (2009), in his study on the Roles Of The Inter-University Council For East Africa, observed that the need to safeguard and harmonize the quality of education in Africa amidst the many challenges the continent continues to face, has prompted the African Union (AU) to commit itself to invoke strategies that will lead to a harmonized African higher education system, as part of implementation of the Second Decade of Education for Africa (SDEA, 2006 – 2015). The study revealed that; SDEA focuses on harmonization of higher education programs in African institutions so as to foster cooperation in information exchange, harmonization of higher education procedures and policies, and attainment of comparability of qualifications. He observed; it is expected that the initiative will lead to the development and maintenance of a continental framework for higher education qualifications through the establishment of harmonized regional higher education processes that are integrated into a common continental system. And therefore, the implementation strategies of SDEA hinge on initiatives being undertaken by the five regional economic communities in the continent in that regard. These include the East African Community (EAC) whose institution handling higher education affairs is the IUCEA.

Talbot (2005), in her study on performance Measurement, demonstrates that there are several arguments against performance measurement systems. A brief list includes: the argument that performance is an incomplete indicator which obscures more than it reveals; the argument that performance systems are overly-complex, which renders them unusable and too expensive; a critique of the transaction costs attached to the operation of performance systems; the discussion of the links between output and outcomes; the discussion of quantity versus quality; the discussion of manipulation of the indicators when performance is linked to rewards or penalties; other unintended consequences, such as suboptimal

behaviour; the political processes which undermine performance systems by changing the indicators and not allowing for sufficient historical data; a more general critique of rational planning versus muddled

Chacha (2002) in a paper on status of University Education in Kenya observes that for a number of years before and after independence, University education in East Africa has been mainly public in ownership as well as in operational control. Thus, expenses for higher education, including students' living costs, have been financed entirely by the public budget. With a few exceptions, students, their families, and future employers have not been making any significant contribution to the cost of university education beyond the general incidence of the tax system and the income forgone while studying. The relatively favorable economic conditions during the 1960s and early 1970s enabled the respective governments to sustain university education without much sacrifice. The numbers were few and the demands made on government finances were manageable. In those days the students were well fed and even given pocket money that they did not have to repay back. They even got beddings that they took away at the end of their studies. The libraries were well stocked, and students did not have to contribute towards the budget for books and other study related materials

Kiamba (2008), in his paper on; Experience of Privately Sponsored Studentship and Other Income Generating Activities at the University of Nairobi made an observation in that Private sponsored students and other income-generating activities at the university of Nairobi that Although public universities are raking millions of shillings every year from parallel students, no ambitious staff development programmes have been developed to assist lectures obtain PhD degrees. Currently, the bulk of lecturers in public universities like their counterparts in private universities have stagnated at Master's degree level. Lecturers complain that little has been done to assist them to acquire higher degrees. The issue is common in East Africa where public universities have embraced the concept of the entrepreneurial university, a model that identifies higher education resources and their exploitation. "The model assumes that universities have to market what they know best, namely, teaching, research and service,"

Bidemi (2009), in his study on Strategic planning for higher education expressed that, students have become targets for the extraction of revenue. "Private entry schemes have increased workload of lecturers and consequently lowered academic standards without evaluating implications of access, standards and equity issues. From a business point of view, universities have been very successful in recruiting privately sponsored students and creating market driven courses. Funds have been used to establish lecture rooms to accommodate large number of paying students

Kipchumba, (2008) Looking at Trends and the future of University Education in Kenya observed that in 1998, the University of Nairobi admitted a handful of students into a new programme that allowed parallel teaching of courses offered in its mainstream classes. He reckons that the programme has placed higher education within the reach of many Kenyans. He says that it has contributed immensely towards the financial stability of public universities and enables them to supplement funds received from the Exchequer and quotes Prof Everett Standa, Secretary of the Commission for Higher Education "Module II has enabled more Kenyans to access higher education which was previously a pipe dream," and asserts that "The programmes are not only of international standard but are also relatively cheap," he added

Munyao (2009), in her study on Module II Programs and Quality of Higher Education observed that, market-driven degree courses in public universities have created a 'curriculum football' and upshot a clash of values and priorities and in particular a disagreement between academic and market values. On one side of the divide are academics who would like universities to revert to their original missions and stick to their areas of excellence while the other group is rooting for vigorous marketing of courses. In other cases, the "student as client" seems to have been taking financing of their education for granted thus neglecting studies. The lecturers have also been accused of spending more time with parallel students

because they earn more from them. "There's antipathy and resentment. They hate each other," says one anonymous student

2.4 Underlying theory

The theoretical background draws on two theories of strategy and competitive advantage, namely, industrial organization (IO) and resource-based view (RBV). Competition amongst higher education (HE) institutions is largely due to an oversupply of student places and slowing demand from suitably qualified students. As a result, managers in the HE sector are seeking to rethink their strategic positions. Theories and practices in business strategy development, as used in the for-profit business domain (Mashhadi, Mohajeri and Nayeri, 2008), provide a basis for innovative approaches; to strategy development however they do not address the comprehensive planning needs of the HE sector.

The most accepted approaches to strategy development are industrial organisation (IO) (Bain, 1959; Porter 1981) and the resource-based view (RBV) (Wernerfelt, 1984; Barney, 1991). While sustainable competitive advantage was the buzzword of the 1980s, especially through the work of Porter (1980, 1985), there has been relatively little in-depth development of theory and practice related specifically to the strategic management of HE sector. Lynch and Baines (2004) have shown that it is appropriate to use RBV to guide strategy development for Higher Education. They argued that the RBV approach can be applied to the competitive national system.

IO theory developed as a result of strategic marketing scholars continuing to emphasise the significant influence of sector structure on a firm's performance (Bain, 1959; Porter, 1981, 1985, 1990). Porter's five-force model (1980) is designed to assist in analysing the relative effect of each of the five industry-level competitive forces. All five competitive forces together contribute to the intensity of industry competition and profitability. More specifically, the stronger the force or forces affecting industry competition and profitability; the more important they are in strategy formulation (Porter, 1980).

The RBV seeks to identify the important 'bundles of resources' as these are the source of the firm's competitive advantage (Barney, 1991; Grant; 1991). It was Grant (1991) who further defined these as resources and capabilities of the firm. Amit and Schoemaker (1993) noted that resources are a bundle of assets. Capabilities, however, refer to the ability to exploit and combine existing resources. While there are differences between IO and RBV theories (Teece, Pisano and Shuen, 1997) there is also support for combining these two approaches to achieve a complementary approach to strategy development (Hitt, Ireland and Hoskisson, 2001; Spanos and Lioukas, 2001).

3.0 Methodology

3.1 Research design

The research design used in this study was descriptive survey. The researcher chose this research design because the study aimed at collecting information from respondents on their attitudes and opinions in relation to influences of strategic managerial behaviour on attainment of organizational quality objectives.

3.2 Location of the study

The study was done in Meru central district and the sample was from three governments sponsored tertiary institutions (Meru, Nkabune and Kirua) in Meru central districts. Though they are all located on upper Eastern province of Kenya, the three institutions are ideal as Kiirua is newly upgraded to a TTI while Nkabune T.T.I is a women only institute and Meru Technical is to become a National polytechnic due to its expansive size and a rich menu of programmes and the location is close to the researcher making it cost and time effective.

3.3 Target population

The focus of the study was Managers and Lecturers in the tertiary institutions within Meru Central District. The accessible population was made up of (136) Lecturers in the three Tertiary institutions, their heads of departments (30) and top management (12) totaling to 178 respondents. The sample size consisted of 60 respondents who were randomly selected out of the 178 to be a representative sample.

3.4 Sample design

Using a stratified random sampling design, a quota of 33% was established for each stratum in each institute from the three stratus of top management, heads of departments and lectures. Using stratified random sampling design, the researcher selected 60 respondents on whom to conduct the survey. A table of random Numbers was used to select the individual respondents for the study.

The researcher chose to use probabilistic sampling design. This choice was made for various reasons. First, the research chosen was a qualitative study requiring in depth information from the respondents. This research design enabled the researcher to get the information required to answer the study objectives. Secondly, this research design allowed the researcher to select lecturers and managers randomly without bias.

3.5 Data collection instruments

The researcher used a questionnaire as the data collection instrument. Both primary and secondary data was collected. Primary data was obtained using questionnaires while secondary data was from the internet, newspapers, journals, government publications and magazines The questionnaire was made up of both structured and unstructured questions so that quantitative and qualitative data will be collected for the study.

3.6 Data collection procedures

The researcher will visit the 60 respondents in their Institutes in the month April 2011. It took a period of two weeks to collect the data required as all the respondents are within close proximity to each other, domesticated by the nature of their employment and positively acquainted to the researcher. The respondents were required to complete questionnaire as honestly and as completely as possible; which they did as they did not raise objections to any items on the instruments.

3.7 Data analysis procedures

Qualitative and quantitative analysis of data was done in order to answer the four research questions of this study. Both descriptive and inferential statistical analysis techniques were used. The researcher chose to use chi square although it is a test of association as the responses were nominal in nature and therefore in appropriate for the other non-parametric tests i.e., spearman's rho (ρ) which would require ordinal data or a parametric test like; Pearson's product moment which would require data to be interval (ratio).

Data collected was sorted, classified and coded then tabulated for ease of analysis. The data was summarized and categorized according to common themes. Data collected was analyzed using frequency

distribution tables, descriptive statistics and inferential statistics. Chi square was used for Hypothesis testing and the results of the survey were presented using tables, charts and graphs. The SPSS (version 17) computer software aided the analysis as it was more users friendly and most appropriate for analysis of Management related attitudinal responses (Newton and Jeonghun, 2010).

3.8 Reliability and validity of the instruments

In order to ensure validity and reliability, the questionnaires were composed of carefully constructed questions to avoid ambiguity and in order to facilitate answers to all the research questions. The questionnaires were then pre-tested in a pilot study through a sample of five lecturers, three Heads of departments and two top managers at Riwika Technical Training Institute in Mbeere district to avoid respondent contamination (Kothari, 2007), after which corrections and adjustments were done; this ensured reliability. The validity of the research instrument was then tested for internal consistency by use of Cronbach's Alpha with a 60% acceptance level. The instrument was presented to experts (my supervisors) who ascertained its face validity.

4.0 Findings

The study on analysis of factors influencing the implementation of strategic management plans in government tertiary institutions were guided by four objectives that included influence of managerial behaviour, reward management, resources allocation practices and institutional management policies. The problem that provoked this study arises from Miller (1990) who delineated four major causes of strategic failure: leadership traps, monolithic cultures and skills, power and politics, and structural memories. All of these causes emerge while an organization is experiencing success—especially in its strategic initiatives. This mirrored our situation in that; Kenyan public universities and colleges that are essentially traditional in orientation must find new ways of dealing with the issues facing them including increasing competition from private universities and colleges. Four hypotheses were proposed to guide the research process, they included: There is no relationship between a Managerial Behaviour, Reward management, Resources allocation, Institutional policies and implementation of strategic management plans by Technical Training Institutes

The response rate was high at 72 percent from the 60 questionnaire presented to the respondents and which represents a reliability of 63.3 on Cronbach's Alpha scale. Four hypotheses were tested to establish if implementation of strategic plan by tertiary institutions had any significant relationships with; Managerial behaviour, Institutional policies, resources allocation or Reward management. The results of the study revealed significant relationships with Managerial behaviour having level of significance at 0.100; Institutional policies having level of significance at 0.055, Resources allocation having level of significance at 0.033 and Reward management having level of significance at 0.083 thus except Resource allocation all others were above 0.05 which would indicate a significant correlation between the independent variables and implementation of strategic plans.

There was evidence of frequent reference to the strategic management plans by respondents 67 percent while the use of financial management policies was reported at 67.4 percent. The study revealed influence of reward management on implementation of strategic plans at 46.5 percent, while resource allocation was rated at 55.8 percent. Managerial behaviour was reported to influence implementation of strategic plans at 93 percent; which was confirmed by influence of managerial decision making at 86

percent. Managerial philosophy was rated at 88.4 percent as influencing implementation of strategic management plans.

4.1 Discussion

The following is a thematic discussion guided by the research hypothesis and interpretive inferences made from literature review discussed in the study.

4.1.1 How managerial behaviour influences implementation of strategic management plans in tertiary institutions.

Managerial behaviour was found to influence implementation of strategic plans though the correlation coefficient index showed a relatively weak relationship. The frequent use of strategic plans tools for decision making on financial and human resources management decision is an indicator of managerial thinking which is a pre-requisite is for strategic management success. This is supported by a leadership style that was supportive of strategic implementation benchmarks of performance contracting and ISO processes. This is in line with Carton and Perloff (1994), who refer it as actions 'to influence the market environment and so increase profits'; while Martin (1993) refers to 'investment of resources for the purpose of limiting rivals' choices'. Strategic behaviour thus refers to conduct which is not economically inevitable, but which is the outcome of a conscious attempt to shape the firm's market environment to its own lasting advantage and to the competitive disadvantage of rivals. Therefore Institutions management has exhibited managerial behaviour that has strategic influence.

4.1.2 How resource allocation influences implementation of strategic management plans in tertiary institutions.

Resource allocation influences implementation of strategic management plans through the preference of institutional leadership and the Board of Governors. The influence is rated as moderate on the correlation coefficient index. There were conducive resource allocation policies for equitable distribution of opportunities for staff development and the sensitive policies on student's performance. There were objective resource allocation policies for students and staff with special needs and these established influence. The relationship between resource allocation policies and strategic implementation plans; show a low correlation between resource allocation policies and Implementation of strategic plans when student's performance is the focus. The above is out of tandem with practice as Resources allocation is among the factors that affect and ultimately comprise a company's strategy stream continuously from the intended and emergent sources (Mintzberg and Waters (1985). Regardless of the source of the strategies, however, they must flow through a common filter – the resource allocation process. This is because a company's actual strategy is manifest only through the stream of new products, processes, services and acquisitions to which resources are allocated (Bower and Joseph, 1986). The resource allocation process acts like a filter that determines which intended and/or emergent initiatives get funding and pass through, and which initiatives are denied resources (Mintzberg and Waters, 1985).

4.1.3 How reward management influence implementation of strategic management plans in tertiary institutions.

The influence of reward management on implementation of strategic management plans was established as relatively weak on the correlation coefficient index. This was supported by effectiveness of staff on related strategic implementation bench mark of performance contracting and ISO processes. Though there was existence of welfare and development policies, professional ethics of the teachers was found to be the main factor. There was also evidence that motivation of staff on career development was low and

so was motivation on ISO process and BOG decisions towards implementation of strategic plans. This is an interesting observation, which concurs with Maehr and Braskamp (1986) who offer a “counterbalancing perspective” to McClelland’s. “Focus on personality as a cause of motivation.” Maehr and Braskamp conclude that “perhaps more than we realize, we are what we expected to be and we do what the task and our significant others allow and demand” (Maehr and Braskamp, 1986).

4.1.4 How institutional policies influence implementation of strategic management plans in tertiary institution.

Institutional policies were found to influence implementation of strategic plans in tertiary institutions. However this was indicated as negligible on the correlation coefficient index and this is supported by the awareness of specific institutional policies that guide ISO process and performance contracting which are benchmarks and the guidance of policy on strategic implementation. There was also evidence that the low influence of policy statements on decision making is an indicator to the relative weakness of correlation between implementation of strategies and institutional policies. The infrequent use of service charter can also show why there is low influence of institutional policies on implementation of strategic plans. These observations confirm Langfield-Smith (1997); in his research paper on Management Control Systems and Strategy which concluded that our knowledge of the relationship between MCS and strategy is limited, providing considerable scope for further research. The findings also agree with Nganga (2009) who sought to explore; Competency, Experience and Industrial Exposure of Faculty Members and concluded that the universities do not seem to have a practical and well adopted method of measuring, assessing and monitoring the faculty member’s performance and effectiveness.

4.2 Conclusion

The study concludes that the weak influence of managerial behaviour was guided more by the strategic thinking of the management. However, the low influence of managerial actions in allocation of resources had a great influence on implementation of strategic plans as this was more of institutional leadership decisions which would wish to be seen to be supportive. The influences of reward management are found to be relatively weak as it was more of the intrinsic motivation of the teacher’s professional ethics than extrinsic motivation through tangible reward by Management. Institutional policies have been revealed to be relatively weak in influencing strategy implementation because of low awareness and infrequent use of the service charter which is a critical ‘barometer’ of strategy implementation effectiveness and efficiency.

4.3 Recommendations

The study makes specific recommendations guided by the objectives of the study and which are workable and tentative in nature if implemented by the stakeholders as identified in the study.

4.3.1 Recommendations for institutional managers.

The study recommends that Tertiary institutions create a higher level of involvement of faculty members in any further strategy development and review to avoid hands off approach and lack of ownership on their part. It is also critical that a review is done to distinguish between strategic plan implementation and other performance and Quality management tools such as performance contracting and ISO certification processes. There is also need to institutionalize policies so that their guiding philosophies are shared across the faculty membership and to avoid them being vied as managerial propensity to lord over staff.

4.3.2 Recommendations for faculty membership

The faculty members should be motivated to learn new knowledge on the role and place of strategic management in steering organizations to strategic advantage in times of volatile market conditions. There is motivation in knowing you can control dynamic managerial challenges as with time one may become the Manager of the situations or even the institutions. Faculty members must also be objectively critical to managerial leadership styles as this has far reaching implications which could ruin individual reputations where ones current station underperforms persistently. The failure tag would be part of one history and not good for professional development or progress.

4.3.3 Recommendations for government agencies

The government agencies charged with management of tertiary institutions should ensure that adequate resources are availed to the institutions for purposes of strategy implementation as this is an expensive exercise which must be deliberately budgeted for. The Agencies must also ensure a high level of sensitization among faculty members, and where practical programmes for capacity building to give skill and willingness to Participate to the faculty members

4.3.4 Recommendations for scholars

This study has exposed a number of challenges faced in the implementation of strategic plans by tertiary institutions and specifically the need to establish the relationship between strategic management plans and the execution of performance management tool. The relationship between ISO certification process and Strategy implementation would also need further clarification through a study.

4.4 Implications on policy theory and practice

This study has policy implications as there has not been a standard benchmark for the tertiary Institutions as it is for Universities in the east Africa region. Currently several universities are now participating in the Inter-University Council for East Africa (IUCEA) common quality assurance system, which aims at harmonizing higher education standards in East Africa thereby promoting comparability of academic programs among universities, based on regional benchmark standards. This makes this study therefore a critical part of the link between theory and practice within the confines of strategic higher education management in East Africa.

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Table: 3.1 Study Population Stratums .

Institutions	Top Managers	Head of Departments	Lecturers
Meru Technical Training Institute	4	16	83
Nkabune Technical Training Institutes	4	9	38
Kiirua Technical Training Institute	4	5	15
Sub Totals	12	30	136

Source: Provincial Technical Training Officer- Eastern, (2011)

Table 3.2 sample distribution

Category	Accessible Population	% of Sample	Sample Representation	% Sample Representation
Lecturers	136	33 %	45	75 %
Heads Of Departments	30	33 %	10	17 %
Top Management	12	33 %	5	8 %
Total	178	33 %	60	100 %

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