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Factors Affecting Implementation of Strategic Plans in Co-operative Societies in Turkana County

Naphtali Maiche[1], Dr. Margaret A. Oloko (PhD)[2]

[1]Master of Business Administration, Department of Business Administration, School of Human Resource Development, Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology, Kenya.
[2]Supervisor, Department of Business Administration, School of Human Resource Development, Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology, Kenya.

Abstract: **Co-operatives develop strategic plans to set direction and establish priorities with a view to achieving organizational success. However, the process of implementation is bedeviled by many factors which impede strategy implementation. This study sought to examine factors affecting implementation of strategic plans in Co-operative Societies in Turkana County. The study's specific objectives were: To examine the influence of top leadership commitment and support on the implementation of strategic plans in Co-operative Societies; to examine the influence of availability of resources on the implementation of strategic plans in Co-operative Societies; to examine the influence of levels of risk on the implementation of strategic plans in Co-operative Societies; to examine the influence of monitoring and evaluation on the implementation of strategic plans in Co-operative Societies. The study adopted a descriptive research design. The study's population was drawn from 12 SACCOs in Turkana County with a registered membership of 3000 members. Purposive sampling was used to select a sample size of 52 respondents represented by 36 board members, 12 supervisory committee members and 4 CEOs/ managers. Data was collected using open-ended questionnaires and analyzed using the descriptive statistics tool of the Microsoft Excel Computer Package with the aid of SPSS software. The study concluded that: top leadership commitment and support; availability of resources; levels of risk, and; monitoring and evaluation influence implementation of strategic plans in Co-operative Societies. The study recommended that SACCOs should foster continuous trainings on implementation of strategic plans targeting everybody involved with implementation of SACCOs' strategic plans; resources allocated for implementing strategic plans should be in the right qualities, quantities and timelines; SACCOs should device adequate capital formation methods without necessarily compromising on their principles and values; communication in SACCOs should be made to be a pivot of clarity on SACCOs' strategies; SACCOs should develop risk-conscious strategic plans to reduce the negative impact of risk on their strategic objectives; SACCOs should embrace current technology to enhance implementation of their strategic plans; monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of strategic plans should be done regularly, and; SACCOs should develop highly responsive strategy implementation feedback mechanisms to inform on strategy performance hence enable SACCOs to take prompt action to guarantee realization of organizational strategies.**

Keywords: **Commitment and support, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, resources, risk, strategic plans.**

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study:

Strategic planning is an organizational management activity used to set priorities, focus energy and resources, strengthen operations, ensure that employees and other stakeholders are working towards common goals, establish agreement around intended outcomes/results and assess and adjust the organization's direction in response to a changing environment; it produces fundamental decisions and actions that shape and guide what an organization is, who it serves, what it does, and why it does it, with a focus on the future. Effective strategic planning articulates not only where an organization is going and the actions needed to make progress, but also how it will know if it is successful (balancedscorecard.org/Resources/ Strategic-Planning-Basics).

The end product of an organization's strategic planning process is a strategic plan document that contains the organization's vision, mission, objectives, strategies and action plan (balanced scorecard.org/Resources/Strategic-Planning-Basics). A strategic plan outlines key interventions that an institution intends to implement over a given time frame, normally 5 years (Department of Co-operative Development and Marketing, Strategic Plan 2012/13-2016/17). In the wake of resource constraints, SACCOs should develop strategic plans that are realistic and attainable. Maorwe (2011) argues that SACCOs need to articulate their strategic plans into day-to-day projects and activities that will enable them to achieve their strategic plans. The value of organizational strategy is magnified by its ability to surge productivity, reduce transaction costs, grow profits, improve service or product quality and enhance organizational performance. Ohmae (1991) asserts that an effective strategic plan takes into account three main players; the company, the customer and the competition. According to Ohmae (1991), strategy that ignores competitive reaction is flawed; so is the strategy that does not take into consideration sufficiently how the customer will react; and so, of course, is the strategic plan that does not explore fully the organization's capacity to implement it. This requires conducting a thorough and deep analysis of both the external environment and the internal capabilities of the organization (managementhelp.org/blogs).

In the modern hyper-competitive business environment, SACCOs are compelled to develop strategic plans to enable them create a level playing ground with other financial service providers aimed at developing formidable Co-operative entities capable of delivering on their strategic objectives. Ohmae (1991) argues that strategy is about winning over competitors with the primary role of guiding management decisions towards superior performance through establishing competitive advantage. However, the process of implementation of strategic plans in SACCOs is influenced by various factors which impede success of SACCOs' strategies. Successful implementation of strategic plans in SACCOs is a complex task that requires the unidirectional effort of everyone with a stake in SACCOs, without which, implementation of strategic plans shall remain to be a major challenge facing SACCOs. Freedman (2003) argues that strategy formulation is always glamorous but, strategy implementation always gets short-drifted. An organization needs to develop a strategic plan to set direction and establish priorities with a view to guaranteeing organizational success.

SACCOs have drastically embraced the strategic planning concept (Maorwe, 2011). The boards of SACCOs need to determine the appropriate parameters that will enable strategic planning teams to develop strategies that will ensure organizational success. Such parameters include but are not limited to; the planning horizon, capital constraints, profit margin, sources of revenue, growth, return on shareholders' funds, policy on diversification and acquisition opportunities and, major impacts to be considered (www.publicaccountants.org.au|December/January|2012). There is no one way to do strategic planning (Steiner, 1979). Some companies use a top-down, autocratic approach, where the plan gets created by a small group of senior managers and is then handed down to the rest of the organization. Some prefer a more democratic approach with employees at all levels contributing their ideas and input to the plan. Most organizations employ a hybrid of these two models. The approach adopted by a company depends on factors such as size, industry, culture, type of workforce and management style. Effective strategic planning requires setting goals and defining team and individual accountabilities which links the big picture to individual goals and competences (morethanaminute.com/the-five-must-have-elements-of-a-strategic-plan).

Organizational strategy is geared towards finding, formulating and developing a doctrine that will ensure long-term success if followed faithfully (Kvint, 2010). When developing strategies, organizations need to consider configuration of resources, competences and environmental dynamism with the aim of fulfilling the needs of markets and stakeholder expectations (Johnson, Scholes and Whittington, 2005). Chandler (1962) argues that "strategy is the determination of the basic long-term goals of an enterprise, and the adoption of the courses of action and the allocation of resources necessary for carrying out these goals." SACCOs need to allocate adequate resources to activities that will guarantee success of their chosen strategies. Eikelenboom (2009) argues that resources are the ultimate source of sustainable value creation. A good strategic plan includes metrics that translate the vision and mission into specific end points; this is critical because strategic planning is ultimately about resource allocation and would be irrelevant if resources were unlimited (Kamau, 2015). For an organization to achieve strategic success, it must align its business and technological strategies; the way technology is developed, exploited, organized and funded influences the success or failure of strategy (Johnson Scholes and Whittington, 2008). Thompson and Strickland (1999) define strategy as the 'game plan' management has for positioning the company in its chosen market arena, competing successfully, pleasing customers, and achieving good business performance. Rigid planning in a dynamic and turbulent business environment can be unproductive and rigid adherence to plans may translate into missed business opportunities (Thompson and Strickland, 2000).

Mintzberg (1994) argues that people use strategy as: a plan; a pattern in a stream of actions over time; a position; a ploy i.e. a specific maneuver intended to outwit a competitor; and strategy as a perspective. According to Andrews (1980), "Corporate strategy is the pattern of decisions in a company that determines and reveals its objectives, purposes or goals, produces the principal policies and plans for achieving those goals, and defines the range of business the company is to pursue, the kind of economic and human organization it is or intends to be, and the nature of the economic and non-economic contribution it intends to make to its shareholders, employees, customers, and communities." Regular monitoring and evaluation is critical for effective strategic control. Johnson, Scholes and Whittington (2008) assert that strategic control involves monitoring the extent to which the strategy is achieving the objectives and suggesting corrective action (or a reconsideration of the objectives). Organizations only have control over internal factors but lack control over external factors which affect implementation of organizational strategies (Pearce and Robinson, 2007). Lack of stringent M & E measures contributes to business failure in the SACCO industry (Mburu, 2010).

Cater and Pucko (2010) argue that poor leadership is among the major hindrances to successful strategy implementation. A leader's commitment drives the organization towards success by making efficient decisions for strategy formulation and implementation (Gordon, 2002). A strategic leader directs the organization by ensuring that long-term objectives and strategies have been determined, understood and supported by managers within the organization who will be responsible for implementing them (Thompson, 1997). Rajasekar (2014) argues that ensuring employees' buy-in and directing their capabilities and business understanding toward the new strategy is a key challenge in successful strategy implementation.

SACCOs, like other business enterprises, face a variety of risks that pose negative threats to their business. Risk-taking is an inherent and unavoidable aspect of financial service provision against which rewards in the form of profits is sought. Excessive and poorly managed risks pose a threat to investments and savings of SACCOs' members and depositors. Roberts, Wallace and McClure (2012) argue that organizational success requires controlling risks at acceptable levels while corresponding opportunities are exploited.

1.1.1 An Overview of Co-operative Societies

A Co-operative is an autonomous association of persons united voluntarily to meet their common economic, social and cultural needs and aspirations through a jointly-owned and democratically-controlled enterprise (ICA, 1995). Co-operatives are unique business enterprises that allocate surpluses accruing from their operations on the basis of member patronization of Co-operative products and services. The Rochdale Society of Equitable Pioneers founded in 1844 in Great Britain is cited as the origin of the modern Co-operative movement in the world (Gibson, 2005).

The first Co-operative Society in Kenya was registered by the white settlers at Kipkellion (formerly Lumbwa), in 1908 (Maorwe, 2011). The Co-operative movement in Kenya has been growing over the years and at the end of 2008, Kenya had 11,968 registered Co-operative Societies out of which 4,477 were agricultural Co-operative Societies; 5,350 were SACCO Societies; 2,041 were other non-agricultural Co-operative Societies and 100 were Co-operative Unions (Wanyama, 2009). By 31st September 2011, Kenya had a total of 14,126 registered Co-operative Societies out of which, 7,440 were SACCO Societies (Nyaga, 2012). In July 2013 WOCCU recognized Kenya's SACCOs as the fastest growing subsector in the world. Savings mobilization in the SACCO sub-sector has been growing at an average rate of 30% per annum (ILO, 2014). The SACCO sub-sector plays a key role in the attainment of Kenya Vision 2030 (Mumanyi, 2014). According to the WOCCU statistical report on 97 countries surveyed in 2009, Africa had a total SACCO membership of 16 million, savings worth USD 4.4 Billions and loans of USD 3.9 Billions. Kenya contributed up to 62% of the total savings and 65% of the SACCO loans advanced in Africa. Mumanyi (2014) argues that in Kenya, SACCOs contribute over 45% of GDP and at least one out of every two Kenyans directly or indirectly derives his or her livelihood from SACCOs. The Co-operative movement in Kenya is currently ranked 1st in Africa and 7th internationally in terms of resource mobilization and membership. In Kenya, Co-operatives employ 300,000 people and create work indirectly for 2 million people via the finance and opportunities they create (ILO, 2012).

1.2 Statement of the Problem:

SACCOs present an astonishingly large slice of the global banking market (Birchall, 2013). SACCOs face stiff competition from other financial service providers which has compelled SACCOs to change their approach from a welfare-oriented approach to a more business-like approach through implementation of result-oriented strategic plans

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which guide them in their operations (Maorwe, 2011). Furthermore, SASRA requires all SACCOs to carry-out strategic planning (Ndegwa, 2013). SACCOs in Turkana County have developed strategic plans (The Status of Co-operative Societies in Turkana County-March, 2015). SACCOs in Turkana County have invested valuable time, money and other resources in developing their strategic plans. However, putting the strategy into action is a challenging task for most SACCOs. Several factors can potentially affect how strategic plans are synthesized into organizational action (Jebukosia, 2013). The challenges experienced by Co-operative Societies in Turkana County while implementing their strategic plans have impacted negatively on their planned strategic objectives thereby causing a drift in the process of implementation of their strategic plans.

Research on factors affecting implementation of strategic plans in Co-operative Societies in Kenya is limited and includes studies done by Jebukosia (2013) on Challenges of Strategy Implementation in Savings and Credit Co-operative Societies in Nairobi County, Kenya; Ndegwa (2013) on Factors Influencing Implementation of Strategic Plans by SACCOs in Muranga County; Kabue (2013) on Strategic Planning in Co-operative Societies in Nairobi; and, Maorwe (2011) on Factors Influencing the Implementation of Strategic Plans in Savings and Credit Co-operative Societies in Imenti North District – Kenya. These previous similar local studies did not address all factors that affect implementation of strategic plans in Co-operative Societies thereby leaving a gap to be pursued by other scholars. Previous similar local studies failed to address the influence of risk on implementation of strategic plans in Co-operative Societies. However, to this researcher's knowledge, no known study has been carried out on factors affecting strategy implementation in Co-operative Societies in Turkana County which prompts the need to carry out a research to examine factors affecting implementation of strategic plans in Co-operative Societies in Turkana County to bridge the knowledge gap that still exists on factors affecting implementation of strategic plans in Co-operative Societies.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The general objective of the study was to examine factors affecting implementation of strategic plans in Co-operative Societies in Turkana County.

The specific objectives of the study were:-

(1) To examine the influence of top leadership commitment and support on the implementation of strategic plans in Co-operative Societies.

(2) To examine the influence of availability of resources on the implementation of strategic plans in Co-operative Societies.

(3) To examine the influence of levels of risk on the implementation of strategic plans in Co-operative Societies.

(4) To examine the influence of monitoring and evaluation on the implementation of strategic plans in Co-operative Societies.

1.4 Research Questions

The study was guided by four research questions namely:-

(1) What is the influence of top leadership commitment and support on the implementation of strategic plans in Co-operative Societies?

(2) What is the influence of availability of resources on the implementation of strategic plans in Co-operative Societies?

(3) What is the influence of levels of risk on the implementation of strategic plans in Co-operative Societies?

(4) What is the influence of monitoring and evaluation on the implementation of strategic plans in Co-operative Societies?

1.5 Justification of the Study

The findings and recommendations of this study will enable Co-operative Societies under study to give a new and more focused impetus on strategic planning and its implementation. The findings of this study will offer the Department of Co-operatives an insight on the extent of strategic planning in Co-operatives, hence provide the regulators with the basis for planning on educating Co-operatives the essence of strategic planning and its implementation. Other researchers can use the findings of this study as a basis for further research on factors affecting strategy implementation in Co-operatives. Other Co-operatives can use the findings of this study to address factors affecting implementation of their strategic plans.

1.6 Scope of the Study

Turkana County has 12 registered SACCOs with approximately 3,000 members (The Status of Co-operative Societies in Turkana County - March, 2015). This study targeted 12 SACCOs in Turkana County registered under the Co-operative Societies Act Cap 490 Laws of Kenya. The study targeted Co-operatives' board and supervisory members and CEOs/managers of the Co-operatives under study since they were the ones involved in strategy implementation. This study aimed at examining factors affecting implementation of strategic plans in Co-operative Societies in Turkana County. This study adopted a survey design to capture the respondents' perceptions and opinions on the extent to which: top leadership commitment and support; availability of resources; levels of risk, and; monitoring and evaluation, influence the implementation of strategic plans in SACCOs.

1.7 Assumptions of the Study

This researcher assumed that Co-operatives to be used in this research study had developed strategic plans and were therefore fit to be used in the study. The researcher also assumed that all the study respondents would show total cooperation thereby provide the required information necessary to enable the researcher to draw valid conclusions on the study findings. This researcher further assumed that all respondents had knowledge of the content of the strategic plans of their Co-operative Societies and that the sample to be taken would be representative of the study population.

1.8 Limitations and Delimitations of the Study

The main challenge of the study was the difficulty in reaching the study respondents given the expansiveness of Turkana County (approximately 77,000 km^2) . The sample studied was restricted to the board and supervisory committee members and CEOs/managers of SACCOs in Turkana County. Perhaps an inclusion of the general membership would have given more insights into factors affecting implementation of strategic plans in Co-operative Societies in Turkana County. Some respondents perceived some information being sought to be confidential and were reluctant to respond to certain questions. The researcher had to assure the respondents that the information being sought was for academic purposes only and that such information would be treated with utmost confidentiality.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a review of the existing literature both theoretical and empirical (past studies) regarding strategy implementation with a view to increasing the understanding of the concept of strategy implementation with a focus on the study variables namely: top leadership commitment and support; availability of resources; levels of risk, and; M and E. The chapter also provides a conceptual framework of the study variables and a research gap.

2.2 Theoretical Review

A theory is a set of interrelated concepts, definitions, and propositions that present a systematic view of phenomena by specifying relations among variables with the purpose of explaining or predicting the phenomena (Bull, 1991). This study utilized four theories in explaining the concept of strategy implementation namely: Industrial Organization Theory; The Resource Based View of the firm; The Systems Dynamic Theory, and; The Co-operative Life Cycle Model.

2.2.1 Industrial Organization Theory (IOT)

The IOT explains the external environment's dominant influence on a firm's strategic actions. IOT posits that the industry in which a firm chooses to compete in has a stronger influence on its performance than choices made by managers. IOT suggests that above-average returns are earned when firms implement the strategy dictated by the characteristics of the general industry and competitor environments. Organizations that develop or acquire the internal skills needed to implement strategies required by the external environment are likely to succeed, while those that do not, are likely to fail. IOT suggests that returns are determined primarily by external characteristics rather than by the firm's unique internal resources and capabilities (Hitt, Ireland and Hoskisson, 2005). A firm's performance is determined majorly by a range of industry properties including economies of scale, barriers to market entry, diversification, product differentiation, and the degree of concentration of firms in the industry (Hitt, Ireland and Hoskisson, 2005). A firm should identify these determinants, tailor strategies accordingly and compete successfully (Collis 1991). IOT has four underlying assumptions namely: The external environment is assumed to impose pressures and constraints that determine the strategies that would result in above-average returns; Most firms competing within an industry or a segment of that industry are assumed to control similar strategically relevant resources and to pursue similar strategies in light of those resources; Resources used to implement strategies are assumed to be highly mobile across firms so any resource differences that might develop between firms will be short-lived; Organizational decision makers are assumed to be rational and committed to acting in the best interest of the firm. IOT challenges firms to locate the most attractive industry in which to compete in. Firms' performance can increase only when firms operate in the industry with the highest profit potential and learn how to use their resources to implement the strategy required by the industry's structural characteristics. IOT suggests that firms can earn above-average returns by either following a cost leadership strategy or a differentiation strategy (Hitt, Ireland and Hoskisson, 2005). The five forces that govern competition and determine industry's profitability are: rivalry among competing sellers in the industry; potential entry of new competitors; availability of substitute products; competitive pressures stemming from supplier-seller collaboration, and; competitive pressures stemming from seller-buyer collaboration (Porter, 1985). A firm should locate a position within an industry where it can favourably influence these factors or it can successfully defend against their influence (Hitt, Ireland and Hoskisson, 2005). Approximately 20% of a firm's profitability can be explained by the industry it competes in and 36% of the variance in profitability can be attributed to the firm's characteristics and actions indicating a reciprocal relationship between the environment and the firm's strategy, thereby affecting the firms' performance (Hitt, Ireland and Hoskisson, 2005).

2.2.2 The Resource Based View of the firm (RBV)

The RBV assumes that each firm is a collection of unique resources and capabilities. The uniqueness of its resources and capabilities is the basis for a firm's strategy and its ability to earn above-average returns. For a firm to have a sustainable competitive advantage, RBV posits that a firm needs to: identify organizational resources - studying organizational strengths and weaknesses compared with those of competitors; determine organizational capabilities - what do the capabilities allow the firm to do better than its competitors; determine the potential of organizational resources and capabilities in terms of competitive advantage; locating an attractive industry and; selecting a strategy that best allows the firm to utilize its resources and capabilities relative to its opportunities in the external environment (Hitt, Ireland and Hoskisson, 2005). RBV posits that differences in firms' performances are due primarily to their unique resources and capabilities rather than to the industry's structural characteristics (Hitt, Ireland and Hoskisson, 2005). RBV also assumes that firms acquire different resources and develop unique capabilities based on how they combine and use the resources (Hitt, Ireland and Hoskisson, 2005) which implies that some firms are more skilled in accomplishing certain activities because they possess unique resources (Peteraf and Barney, 2003). RBV also assumes that resources and certainly capabilities are not highly mobile across firms and that the differences in resources and capabilities are the basis for competitive advantage. This resource immobility assumption explains why the benefits from heterogeneous resources persist over time (Barney and Hesterly, 2012). A firm's resources and capabilities can be a source of competitive advantage when resources and capabilities are valuable, rare, costly to imitate and non-substitutable (Hitt, Ireland and Hoskisson, 2005). RBV suggests that the strategy a firm chooses should allow it to use its competitive advantage in an attractive industry (Hitt, Ireland and Hoskisson, 2005). RBV posits that the competitive advantage of a firm depends primarily on how it applies the bundle of valuable resources at its disposal. A firm needs to be organized to exploit the full competitive potential of its resources and capabilities at its disposal (Barney and Hesterly, 2012). The potential competitive advantage of a resource may be hindered by poor organizational processes, policies and procedures; an organization acts as an "adjustment factor" that enables or hinders a firm from fully realizing the benefits embodied in its valuable, rare, and costly to imitate resources (Barney and Clark, 2007). A firm achieves a sustained competitive advantage "when it is creating more economic value than the marginal (break-even) firm in its industry and when other firms are unable to duplicate the benefits of this strategy" (Barney and Clark, 2007). RBV is instrumental in the development of strategy due to its shifting emphasis in the strategy literature away from external factors such as industry position towards inter-firm resources of competitive advantage (Kabue, 2013). RBV explicitly looks for internal sources of sustainable competitive advantage and aims to explain why organizations in the same industry might differ in performance (Tabo, 2013).

2.2.3 Systems Dynamic Theory (SDT)

According to Langsdale *et al*., (2007), SDT was developed for the purpose of characterizing complex, non-linear systems through capturing interrelations by use of stocks and flows, internal feedback loops and time delays. The central feature of SDT is explaining how complex systems implement their strategic change (Kariuki and Ombui, 2014). A key aspect of SDT is that it explicitly simulates the cause/effect relationships underlying the dynamics of systems since in most systems the “effect” might also affect the “cause” (Sterman, 2002). SDT leverages both existing historical data and the knowledge and experience of senior managers to develop a stochastic simulation model. SDT is of great essence in modelling operational risks in situations where there isn’t enough data to use statistical methods (Kushner and Dupuis, 2002) as cited by (Kariuki and Ombui, 2014) as it provides a systematic way to fill any gaps in historical data with input from experts, relying on their knowledge and experience. SDT provides effective ways to mitigate risk and measure their impact than with non-casual methods, as businesses become more complex and knowledge of their underlying dynamics becomes more fragmented and localized (Kariuki and Ombui (2014). Unlike many risk management strategies which are typically domain specific, SDT can be applied to any type of complex system that emphasizes behavioural dynamics over time (Von Bertalanffy, 1968) as it focuses on modelling the system, identifying the key feedback loops inherent to the system, and examining what policies can be implemented to help mitigate risk in the system (Minami, Madnick and Rhodes, 2008) hence, supports decision making process that should lead to improvement of the system (Sterman, 2000). SDT is a very powerful aid in helping to examine the implications of alternative strategies, and in helping to design robust policies and an improved organizational structure, which can help steer the organization towards meeting its objectives (Cavana, 1981). Knowledge of the system’s features like bounded rationality is likely to constitute a major leverage point towards a more targeted implementation process. Simon (1997) asserts that bounded rationality designates rational choice that takes into account the cognitive limitations of the decision maker – limitations of both knowledge and computational capacity. SDT includes a set of qualitative and quantitative modelling principles that can be used to conceptualize the underlying feedback loop structure and to simulate the repercussions of potential decisions over time (Sterman, 2000).

2.2.4 The Co-operative Life Cycle Model (CLCM)

Ortomann and King (2007) argue that the future of the Co-operative business model may best be analyzed through a life cycle model due to the evidence that Co-operatives may possess an exceptional proclivity for institutional innovation. The CLCM outlines five phases Co-operatives undergo and challenges Co-operatives experience at each stage. The first phase - Economic justification is characterized by strong cohesion and bonding based on members’ enthusiasm, shared identity and interests aligned around a common goal. In the first phase, Co-operatives’ strategy is basically defensive aimed at protecting the value of their members’ assets. The second phase - Organization design/formalization, witnesses a set of operational procedures emerging to coordinate tasks and communication. In this phase, institutional environment e.g. incorporation statutes, tax laws sets rules hence, costs for Co-operative formulation and functioning that must be offset by the benefits of collective action for Co-operatives to survive; flexibility and adaptability are critical to a changing environment. In the third phase - Growth, glory and heterogeneity, Co-operatives become complex with growth increasing transaction costs, market power, and risks of organizational failure. Cook (1995) asserts that transaction costs which include: the free-rider; portfolio; horizon; control and influence cost problems have the potential to erode the competitive advantage of the Co-operative. In the fourth phase - Recognition and introspection, pressure from the competitive environment and internal transaction costs makes it hard to manage the Co-operative; organizational change becomes imminent. Three strategic options are then available to a Co-operative; exit, restructuring and shift to a new model. In the fifth phase - the Choice stage, Co-operatives have four different choices: Tinkering - reshape the organization design and/ or its governance mechanisms to align members’ preferences and incentives; Spawning - create a separate organization often linked with the old Co-operative; Reinventing - create a hybrid with shared ownership rights with members and investors; Exiting - the ownership rights of the organization are no longer based on patronage hence, they can liquidate, merge with other Co-operatives or privatize. In the fifth stage, Co-operative strategy is more offensive in nature (Cook, 1995). CLCM guides organizational development for Co-operatives and improves the ability of leadership to make efficient decisions and adoption of strategic measures (Cook & Buress, 2009). CLCM implies that SACCOs should adapt to the changing business environment to enhance their viability as financial organizations by developing and implementing strategies aligned with a changing business environment.

2.3 Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework is a diagrammatic presentation of the relationship between dependent and independent variables (Mugenda and Mugenda, 2003). The conceptual framework in this study comprised of the independent variables and the dependent variable. The independent variables were -Top leadership commitment and support; availability of resources; levels of risk, and; M and E. The dependent variable was the implementation of strategic plans.

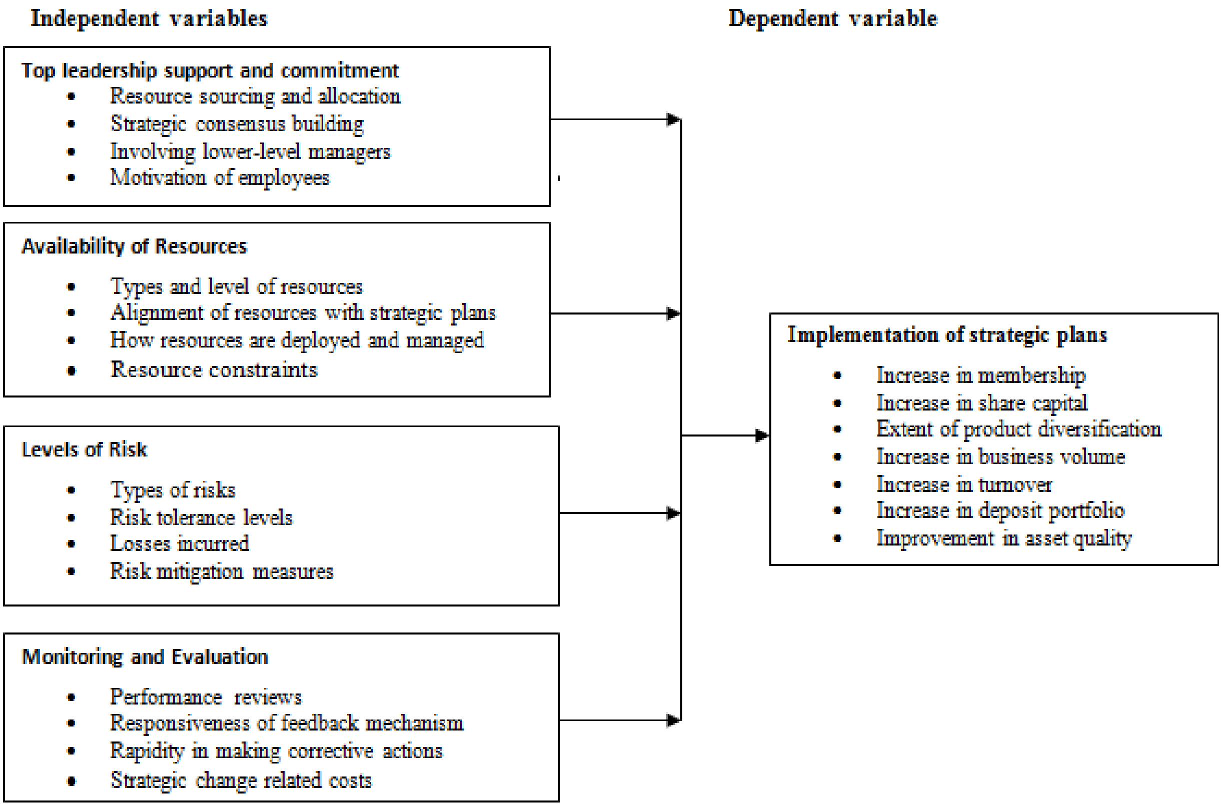

Figure 2.1: Conceptual framework

2.4 Literature review on the variables of study

Zaribaf and Hamid (2010) carried out a study on the factors affecting implementation of strategic plans in Pasargad Bank branches in Tehran. Zaribaf and Hamid (2010) focused on leadership, organizational structure, human resource, information systems and technology. Zaribaf and Hamid (2010) concluded that leadership, organizational structure, human resource, information systems and technology affect strategy implementation but their effects rates are different.

Rajasekar (2014) investigated strategy implementation processes in a service industry in the Sultanate of Oman. The study proposed seven factors that affect strategy implementation as: leadership style; information availability and accuracy; uncertainty; organizational structure; organizational culture; human resources; and technology. Rajasekar (2014) argues that although these factors affect strategy implementation, each factor's impact is at a different level and carries a different force. Rajasekar (2014) concluded that leadership was the most important factor influencing successful implementation of strategies in the service sector.

Madegwa (2014) carried out a study on factors affecting strategy implementation in government parastatals and focused on top management commitment, coordination of activities, individual responsibilities and organization culture. Madegwa (2014) concluded that top management commitment, coordination of activities, individual responsibilities and organization culture had a bearing on strategy implementation.

Jebukosia (2013) did a research study on challenges of strategy implementation in Savings and Credit Co-operative Societies in Nairobi County, Kenya focusing on: time for implementation; SACCO laws and regulations; strategic planning assumptions; communication processes and procedures; resistance to change; monitoring, planning, coordination and sharing of responsibilities; competing activities and crisis; external environment influence; organization structure; organization leadership; information systems; rewards and incentives; allocation of resources; organization culture; strategy formulation; management support; and, human resources. Jebukosia (2013) was not able to carry out a detailed review of all issues affecting implementation of strategic plans in SACCOs and recommends that similar studies should be carried out in Kenya to assist in comparison of findings and more so a study should be carried out for other SACCOs that are not licensed by SASRA.

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Ndegwa (2013) carried out a research on factors influencing implementation of strategic plans by SACCOs in Muranga County and targeted 1 SACCO. Ndegwa (2013) focused on: strategic leadership; human capital (employees); organization structure; information technology; and, organization culture. The study by Ndegwa (2013) was carried out in 1 SACCO (Murata SACCO) therefore its findings cannot be generalized to apply to all SACCOs in different environments. The study by Ndegwa (2013) did not consider all factors that explain changes in implementation of strategic plans in Co-operative Societies.

Kabue (2013) did a research on strategic planning in Co-operative Societies in Nairobi and targeted 98 SACCOs aimed at establishing the extent of strategic planning and implementation in Co-operative Societies in Nairobi. Kabue (2013) focused on: lack of staff participation in strategy formulation; resistance by staff; limited authority to make decisions by employees; lack of skills, knowledge and experience by employees; lack of adopting current technologies; high attrition of members; stringent regulations governing Co-operatives and political interference as factors influencing strategy implementation in Co-operatives. Kabue (2013) recommends that a further study should be carried out to identify the factors affecting strategic planning implementation in Co-operative Societies in other environments.

Maorwe (2011) used a RBV to do a research on factors influencing the implementation of strategic plans in Savings and Credit Co-operative Societies in Imenti North District – Kenya and targeted 16 SACCOs. Maorwe (2011) focused on: availability of funds; manpower planning; management style; legislation; and, organization structure. However, Maorwe (2011) did not indicate the extent to which his variables of study affect the implementation of strategic plans in Co-operatives. Maorwe (2011) argues that there is need to use other theoretical frameworks apart from the RBV to determine factors affecting strategy implementation in Co-operative Societies in order to achieve more robust results.

2.5 Top Leadership Commitment and Support

Strategic leadership may be defined as the leader's ability to anticipate, envision and maintain flexibility and to empower others to create strategic change as necessary (Hitt, Ireland and Hoskisson, 2007). Co-operatives are led by management committees elected by members either directly at a general meeting or indirectly through their delegates. Schaik (2009) argues that effective leaders manage by getting commitments, keeping track of all critical assignments and evaluating progress on a regular basis.

Sarah *et al*., (2015) using a mixed-method sequential design, surveyed 120 middle-level managers and interviewed 16 middle-level managers in implementing an innovation intended to reduce health disparities in 120 US health centres to assess whether top managers' support directly influences middle-level managers' commitment. Sarah *et al*., (2015) concluded that top managers increase middle-level managers' commitment by directly conveying to middle-level managers that innovation implementation is an organizational priority; allocating implementation policies and practices including performance reviews, human resources, training and funding; and encouraging middle managers to leverage performance reviews and human resources to achieve innovation implementation.

Upfront commitment by leaders must include an adherence to the full and thorough process of strategic planning including commitment to implement the strategies recommended by the strategic planning committee (Armstrong, 1986). Matthew (2009) argues that leadership influences the whole decision making process; leadership is a link that relates the soul of the organization with its body hence it is a critical element to formulate and implement strategies. Gopinath (2013) argues that top leadership determines success or failure of strategy implementation. Madegwa (2014) asserts that top management commitment to strategy implementation through availing of resources, funding of the process and providing the right leadership will enhance strategy implementation.

Rapa and Kauffman (2005) assert that lack of commitment on the part of top management is a negative signal for all the affected organizational members. Rapa and Kauffman (2005) further argue that by ensuring that middle-level managers are an integral part of the strategy process, their motivation towards the project will increase and they will view themselves as an important part of the process which helps to build consensus for the strategy since middle-level managers interact with the employees on a day-to-day basis. O'Reilly *et al*., (2010) argue that a leader has to assure that the rest of the organization is committed to the strategy, by convincing the employees that the new strategy is important and also create a meaning of strategy by dealing with resistance to change, allocating resources for implementing the strategy and creating strategic consensus. Werlin (2000) argues that a lack in strategic consensus inhibits a company's ability to concentrate its efforts on realizing a unified set of goals.

Managers can increase commitment with involvement and integration of employees from lower levels which creates a kind of ownership in the new strategy thereby increasing commitment enormously (Beer and Eisenstat, 2000). The single most powerful tool that management can utilize to gain employee commitment to carrying out the strategy is linking the reward system to strategic relevant performance outcomes (Pearce and Robinson, 2007). Lack of top management backing is one of the factors inhibiting effective strategy implementation (Aaltonen and Ikavalko, 2002). CEOs and senior management often make mistakes by stepping back once a strategy is formulated which causes lack of leadership during implementation that leads to the strategy being viewed by the employees as less important (Corboy and O'Corrbui, 1999). Leadership should foster commitment by organizational members to key strategic decisions (MacMillan, 1978). If middle-level managers believe that their self-interest is being compromised, they may redirect, cause delay or totally cause sabotage of the strategy implementation (Guth and MacMillan, 1986). Involving middle level managers in the original strategy formulation can improve implementation since the middle level managers involved in the original strategy formulation will be better at interpreting strategic intentions into action, have a stronger personal commitment to strategic goals, and communicate the strategy more effectively to their teams (Johnson, Scholes and Whittington, 2008).

Ndegwa (2013) argues that problems of implementation are really issues about how leaders influence behaviour, put in place working structures, change the course of events, and overcome resistance; a prerequisite for successful strategic plan implementation is commitment and support from the leadership. Most of the problems bedeviling Co-operatives today arise from bad governance and poor economic management (Mutunga, 2009). Use of good practices of governance has proved to be fundamental in the success and perenniality of organizations as it ensures that executives pursue goals determined by owners or those responsible for strategic decisions, and not their own goals; in Co-operatives, there is no pursuit of profits and Co-operatives' targets are long-term, since the main focus is serving the needs of the Co-operative owners (Brasilia, 2008). Labie and Périlleux (2008) argue that corporate governance tends to be more complex in the structures of Co-operative Societies compared with classical firms due to their democratic principle of decision-making and also because their ownership is usually much more diffuse which makes corporate governance a fairly touchy issue for SACCOs and more so when they enter growth dynamics. Cornforth (2004) asserts that one may question the ability of lay board members to effectively supervise senior managers, ensure probity and guard the interests of members and other relevant stakeholders.

2.6 Availability of Resources

Wangari (2011) argues that many strategies fail because not enough resources were allocated to successfully implement them and that lack of resources is generally a bigger threat to capital-intensive strategies. Hussey (1998) as cited by Jebukosia (2013) argues that deploying the requisite resources is critical for successful strategy implementation. From strategic leadership, resources needed adequately to effectively implement organizational strategy include financial resources, human resources and technological resources.

2.6.1 Adequacy of Funds

Co-operatives require finances in order to implement their strategic plans. Inadequate funds hinder Co-operative operations (Maorwe, 2011). Co-operatives need to put in place financing strategies to guide them objectively in the acquisition, monitoring and utilization of capital resources for their growth. Kamau (2015) argues that the strategy implementation team needs to determine sources of funds that include appropriate mix of debt and equity in an organization's capital structure to enable smooth implementation of strategic plans. Laidlaw (1974) asserts that Co-operatives are user-owned, user-controlled business entities. The "user-owned" principle implies that members help to finance the Co-operative and therefore own the Co-operative (Zeuli and Cropp, 1980). Members help to finance operations and growth of the Co-operative through one-time or annual membership fees; member contributions with no individual ownership attached such as service fees; member share capital; individual member deposits with the Co-operative which may be used for business, and; deferred payment to members. Co-operatives often use external sources of funds to run their operations or to finance their investments. Borrowing from non-members such as banks is a good strategy only when the returns from such borrowing are larger than the cost of borrowing (www.fao.org).

Lund (2013) argues that "member economic participation", a key Co-operative principle, means that members share in the economic rewards of the Co-operative and also ensure that the Co-operative has the capital it needs to operate effectively. In addition to "paid in" or contributed capital, the major source of equity for any privately held business is the reinvestment of net profit after distributions to the owners, if any, are made. Lund (2013) asserts that Co-operative boards decide what portion of the net profit is to be allocated and distributed to each patron member and what portion remains the property of the Co-operative as a whole. Lund (2013) argues that retained allocated equity allows member-owners to finance their Co-operative in proportion to their use of the Co-operative. The unallocated portion of net earnings becomes equity that is “owned” by the Co-operative entity as a whole which are reinvested in operations, and can absorb any losses that the Co-operative business might incur from time to time. Zeuli and Cropp (1980) argue that Co-operative financing must be consistent with the principles of co-operation and legislation. Birchall (2013) argues that the main source of capital for a financial Co-operative is retained profits added to reserves while the main source of money for lending to members is members’ savings. Mumanyi (2014) argues that by freeing their lending policies, banks have attracted SACCO members who have turned out in big numbers to borrow from commercial banks thereby causing Co-operatives to lose on their sources of income. Johnson, Scholes and Whittington (2008) argue that finance is a resource of central importance in all organizations and that the type of funding should vary with the strategy. A critical issue is the way in which financial strategies address the financial and business risks of different types of funding.

Maorwe (2011) argues that historically, Co-operatives have used their own reserves as a source of business capital. Co-operatives’ capacity to build internal capital is affected by poor business performance and partly by government policies. SACCOs should adopt new innovative means and strategies of sourcing for funds to finance their activities instead of relying on members’ deposits alone; relying on members deposits alone to fund all projects in SACCOs makes SACCOs to rely on short-term external borrowing thereby hinders implementation of strategic plans. Bibby (2006) as cited by Maorwe (2011) argues that many Co-operatives have accumulated debts dating back many years. Manyara (2003) argues that Co-operatives’ own source of financing is inadequate due to limiting By-laws which specify low share capital requirements, and due to non-payment of annual contributions; most Co-operatives depend on government, donor or borrowed funds for their operations hence, Co-operatives should re-examine their By-laws to identify areas where they can exercise flexibility to facilitate capital formation. Biekpe and Kiweu (2009) argue that commercial sources of financing i.e. debt financing and equity financing play a great role in relaxing financing constraints facing SACCOs.

2.6.2 Human Resources

The Free Dictionary defines human resources as the persons employed in a business or organization. Armstrong (2006) asserts that human resource management aims at ensuring that organizations are able to achieve success through people and that human resource strategies aim to support programmes for improving organizational performance by developing policies in such areas as knowledge management, talent management and generally creating “a great place to work”. Human resource has been argued to be the most vital asset of any organization (Burma, 2014). A firm’s competitive success depends on having well informed and capable human resource managers at the highest levels of decision making process. Ndegwa (2013) argues that for successful implementation of strategic plans, SACCOs should align their human resources with future demands. Johnson, Scholes and Whittington, (2008) assert that knowledge and experience of people influence success of strategies. Human resource strategies should be aligned to organizational strategies to ensure success of such strategies. Strategy success depends on how resources are deployed, managed, controlled and in the case of people, motivated to create competences in those activities and business processes needed to run the business.

Soni and Saluja (2013) argue that the existing organizational design of most Co-operatives does not conform to the basic principles of human resource management of a sound institution. Co-operatives are generally headed by a committee of elected members, who are not necessarily professionals. Co-operatives will have to evolve sound human resource policies encompassing proper manpower planning and assessment. Cater and Pucko (2010) assert that a well-formulated strategy, a strong and effective pool of skills, and human capital are extremely important resources for strategy success. Acquaah (2004) as cited in Burma (2014) argues that human resource management practices enhance organizational effectiveness and performance by attracting, identifying and retaining employees with knowledge, skills and abilities, and getting them to behave in a manner that will support the mission and objectives of the organization. The quality of human resources in an organization depends on the success in the recruiting and selection process. Soni and Saluja (2013) argue that Co-operatives should evolve scientific staffing norms, come up with a conscious policy for developing a second tire of management in all key functional areas and develop conscious and well specified HRD principles in crucial areas like recruitment, placement, training, career progression and managerial grooming. Co-operatives should develop a talented workforce to enable them to implement their strategies. Ouma (1989) as cited in Maorwe (2011) argues that lack of human resource planning is a major hindrance in the development and growth of many Co-operatives in Kenya. Human resource planning allows for the identification, selection and development of required talent or competency within the organization (www.management studyguide). Burma (2014) argues that when opportunities for growth and enhancement of skills are available, people will be stimulated to give their best, leading to greater job satisfaction and organizational effectiveness. Bae and Lawler (1999) as cited in Burma (2014) assert that empirical studies show that superior outcomes are achieved by organizations which align their HRM practices with their business strategy. Co-operatives should find strategies for integrating business and people needs for them to achieve their strategic objectives.

Managers who know what motivates subordinates and rely on motivational incentives as a tool for achieving targeted strategic and financial results will gain greater employees' commitment to good day-in, day-out strategy execution and achievement of performance targets (Ndegwa, 2013). Successful firms use both financial incentives and non-monetary carrot and stick incentives for instance frequent words of praise, special recognition at company gatherings or in the company's newsletter, more job security, simulative assignments and opportunities to transfer to attractive locations, increased autonomy and rapid promotion to gain whole hearted employee commitment to good strategy execution and operation excellence (Thompson and Strickland, 2004). Co-operatives in Asian and African countries have a poor reward system and lack provisions for rewarding superior performance (Develtere et al., 2008). Taylor (2009) as cited in Burma (2014) argues that four important points are necessary to make the employee "fall in love" with the firm: Reward fairly in line with the market place; focus on recognition of every employee's contribution; train and improve skills; and develop talented people. Rewards and compensation should be tied to successful strategy implementation (Allio, 2005).

2.6.3 Technology Uptake

Pavic *et al*., (2007) assert that modern economic environment which is dominated by globalization, hyper-competition and the knowledge and information revolution has revolutionized the way business is conducted. ICT is turning out to be the norm in the business arena. Investment in ICT involves large capital outlays which calls for firms to ensure that they have adequate financial resources to enable them adopt ICT (Thong and Yap, 1993). Optimal and strategic use of ICT helps firms to create products and deliver services efficiently and effectively thereby helps in improving organizational competitiveness, increasing productivity, and enhancing firm performance. Gunga (2008) argues that adoption of ICT leads to reduced transaction costs, improved access to timely and usable knowledge, improved communications with markets and within supply chain, acquisition of appropriate skills for enhancement and improved information about new opportunities. Kotter and Armstrong (2004) argue that technological change is perhaps the most dynamic force shaping our destiny hence, organizations that do not keep up with the rapid technological change will soon have outdated products and will miss out on new product and market opportunities. The rate of technology adoption and its overall application in Co-operatives in the region is generally low and is caused by conservatism, costs and ignorance (Manyara, 2003).

SACCOs operate in a competitive business environment hence they should strive to understand both the existing and probable future technological advances that can affect their productivity (Ndegwa, 2013). Firms should create optimal alignment of ICT with existing business strategies and ensure effective use of ICT to serve their business strategies so as to obtain, increase and sustain competitive advantage. ICTs are value-adding services that improve efficiency and effectiveness (Romer, 1993). The flipside of the knowledge economy propelled by technology and globalization has the potential of threatening Co-operatives that do not want to embrace change hence, Co-operatives must be able to tap the benefits of the knowledge economy, regionalization and globalization to levels seen in larger markets through developing and increasing the use of technology to enable them acquire networking and innovative opportunities thereby strengthen their niche and competitive advantage (Mumanyi, 2014). According to Nkuru (2015), ICT enhances decision making in SACCOs but the uptake of ICT in SACCOs is low. This is attributed to low technical skills of ICT staff, few ICT staff, small ICT departments, Lack of ICT departments in some SACCOs and lack of ICT managers in some SACCOs.

2.7 Levels of Risk

Levels of risk may be defined as the magnitude of risk and may be acceptable or unacceptable (ISO 31000:2009). Risk-taking is an inherent and unavoidable aspect of financial service provision against which reward in the form of profits is sought. Sound risk management systems enable managers of SACCOS to take risks knowingly, reduce risks where appropriate and strive to prepare for an uncertain future (SASRA 2015). Risk management is the capability of doing the right things in the right manner effectively under conditions of uncertainty (Lam, 2015). SACCOs are exposed to numerous dynamic risks which require a system of risk management to manage or minimize their impact in order to conduct SACCOs' business to members' satisfaction (Mwandau, 2014). Decisions on risk appetite and risk tolerance levels is a prerogative of a firm's executive management team and board as they intimately understand the firm's business drivers and the corresponding impact of not meeting these business objectives (RIMS Executive Report, 2012).

Lam (2015) asserts that firms should develop key risk metrics, exposure limits, and governance and oversight processes to ensure that enterprise-wide risks are within acceptable and manageable levels by implementing a clearly defined risk appetite statement embedded in a risk appetite framework which provides significant strategic, operational, and risk management benefits because it informs risk-based decision making. To achieve organizational risk appetite, a firm must operate within certain risk tolerance levels. Atkinson (2013) argues that firms need to outrightly confront management of risk if they are to succeed in their strategies by developing a balanced "risk appetite" which will enable firms to pursue profitable opportunities. Roberts, Wallace and McClure (2012) assert that every firm has its own risk appetite and its own range of acceptable outcomes and that there has to be a limit beyond which any firm dare not go; risk management is an integral part of the decision making process and effective risk management can improve business performance of SACCOs hence, minimize possibilities of business failures. According to RIMS Executive Report (2012), if the risk appetite is to low or is never challenged operationally, the potential for reward will likely be low (unless it is a niche market or monopoly); if risk appetite is too high or not understood by the board, management and employees, it can have extremely negative consequences on the firm and possibly the industry. Exceeding a firm's established risk tolerance level not only may imperil its overall strategy and objectives, in the aggregate doing so may threaten its very survival. Roberts, Wallace and McClure (2012) identify four levels of organizational risk: strategic risk which affects the development and implementation of an organization's strategy at the corporate level; change/project risk which operates at numerous levels and relates to both planned and imposed change; operational risk which relates to the production process and includes the process itself, the asset base, the people within any project teams and the legal controls within which the organization operates; unforeseeable risk relates to uncertainties that cannot be accurately forecast before they can occur.

Fadun (2013) argues that SACCOs need to have risk management policies and procedures in place which requires the knowledge of risk management, essential in business enterprises. Factors which influence risk management practices need greater practical evaluation of their influence on risk management activities within organizations. According to RIMS Executive Report (2012), organizations should clearly understand and articulate their risk appetite and tolerance concepts to achieve their strategic objectives. Organizations should take measured risks to generate value, avoid intolerable losses and create awareness about and actions to prevent excessive levels of risk that may lead to adverse consequences. An organization's strategy, risk appetite and risk tolerance are inseparable hence should be designed and changed together.

In Kenya, the SACCO Societies Act 2008 requires SACCOs to develop and implement risk management and internal control systems as a precondition for licensing. The SACCO Societies Act 2008 and Regulations 2010, include clear standards regarding capital, liquidity, extent of external borrowing, asset categorization and provisioning, maximum loan size, insider lending and annual reporting. Ngaira (2011) argues that a strong supervisory framework for financial institutions is built upon legislation that is predictable, proportional, and prudential and recognizes that financial institutions are run by human beings; predictable legislation provides a SACCO with the clarity and certainty it needs to plan and invest for the future; prudential legislation establishes financial standards to which a SACCO must adhere to protect the institution and safeguard member deposits while proportional legislation recognizes the risks a SACCO presents to depositors and the financial system as a whole and establishes appropriate rules to mitigate those risks.

2.8 Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring entails routine checking of information on progress to confirm that progress occurs against the defined direction while evaluation is an in-depth process of investigation to determine whether stated objectives have been reached and to determine the nature of processes undertaken (Motingoe and Van der Waldt, 2013). Evaluations help to draw conclusions about five main aspects of intervention; relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and, sustainability (www.sportanddev.org). M & E ensures that a firm is following the direction established during strategic planning. Reasons for deviation from the plan should be understood and the plan updated accordingly. Valadez and Bamberger (2000) as cited by Motingoe and Van der Waldt (2013) assert that evaluation should take place either periodically or continuously from the time the project is formulated through implementation and the operational phase. Trochim (2009) argues that evaluation needs to be guided by written evaluation policies for them to perform the signaling role; success of strategic plan implementation depends on how planned activities and outputs are effectively monitored and evaluated.

Hrebiniak (2005) argues that strategy implementation requires firms to develop effective incentives and controls. Strategic control involves tracking, monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the strategy as it is being implemented, detecting problems or changes in the strategy and making necessary adjustments. Incentives motivate or guide performance and support the key aspects of strategy execution whereas controls provide timely and valid feedback about firm performance so that change and adaptation become a routine part of the implementation effort and also allow for the revision of execution-related factors if desired goals are not being met. Thompson and Strickland (2001) assert that custodians of a strategic plan track progress, spot problems and issues early, monitor the environment and initiate adjustments as needed. Mburu (2010) argues that lack of stringent M & E measures are among the causes of business failure in the SACCO industry. Strategy evaluation enables a firm to assess its ability to implement the chosen strategy and checks that a firm's resources for carrying out work and expertise of available staff are adequate, compares the cost related to strategy activities, benefits to the firm, strategic advantages the strategy predicts, determines to what extent a strategy matches the internal firm's structures and the external competitive environment, and verifies whether value creation specified by the strategy matches target market needs (smallbusiness.chron.com). Credible evaluation work requires clear, valid measures that are collected in a reliable, consistent fashion. Effective evaluations assess programme implementation and results and also identify ways to improve the programme evaluated (Wholey, Hatry and Newcomer, 2010). Good monitoring eases evaluation as data is collected and analyzed throughout the life of the project; evaluation and analysis should be built into policy design as it assists in assessing the impact of policies on outcomes (Productivity Commission, 2013). For SACCOs to "consolidate lessons learnt and synthesize prior experience" (Mark, 2005), goals and objectives should be developed and specified in social terms as a pre-requisite to evaluation (McCoy and Hargie, 2001). Evaluation entails feedback hence, provides modalities for resolving issues before they reach a level of crisis (Anderson and Kleiner, 2003).

2.9 Strategy implementation

Strategy implementation is an iterative process of implementing strategies, policies, programmes and action plans that allows a firm to utilize its resources to take advantage of opportunities in the competitive environment (Harrington, 2006). In modern business, strategic management is adopted to gain competitive advantage (Nderu, 2014; Dess, Lumpkin & Taylor, 2005). Many firms have embraced strategic planning due to its perceived contribution to organizational effectiveness (Thompson and Strickland, 2007). By adapting a long term-perspective, a firm is able to adapt to changes in the operating environment in a manner that increases possibility of achieving desired goals (Danson, 2005). Strategic planning intends to provide strategic direction; guide priority use of resources; set standards of excellence; cope with environmental uncertainty and change; and provide objective basis for control and evaluation (Koteen, 1989).

Strategy implementation is aimed at ensuring that the vision, mission, strategy and strategic objectives of the firm are achieved as planned (Thompson and Strickland, 2003). Due to the misunderstanding of the factors that influence strategy implementation process, adoption of strategic management often leads to incomplete implementations (Steiner, 1979). This implies that strategic plans are a means to an end of achieving strategic objectives and therefore strategic plans are rendered valueless by not being implemented. Manyara (2003) argues that many factors influence the implementation of strategic plans. Most strategies accomplish less than half of what their sponsors had hoped for, with as high as 9 out of 10 strategies failing to implement successfully (Speculand, 2009). A good strategy can result into a disaster through poor strategy implementation (Hunger and Wheelen, 2003). Li, *et al*., (2008); Zaribaf and Bayrami (2010) and; Speculand (2009) contend that strategy implementation is a key challenge for today's organizations. Zaribaf and Bayrami (2010) argue that strategy implementation cannot be achieved by management alone but requires the collaboration of everyone within the firm; inclusion of all relevant stakeholders, and; coordinated top-down, bottom-up and across efforts.

The test of successful strategy implementation is whether actual firm performance matches or exceeds targets in the strategic plan document. Shortfalls in performance signify weak strategy, weak implementation or both (Njagi and Kombo, 2014). Weak implementation undermines strategy's potential and paves way for shortfalls in firm performance (Rama and Rao, 2011). An economist survey found out that 57% of firms failed to execute their strategy initiatives over a period of three years according to a survey of 276 senior operating executives in 2004 (Allio, 2005). Hrebiniak (2005) argues that an organization should develop a strategy and create an execution plan to reach it; execution sets companies apart more than strategy formulation does because fewer corporate leaders are skilled at strategy implementation. Venkatraman and Ramanujam (1986) illustrated that averagely, only 63% of the potential returns of a strategy is realized by way of implementation which connotes that the problem does not lie with the strategy itself but with the implementation aspect. At every stage of implementation, the business needs to re-evaluate its environment since the implementation stage envisages a shift in responsibility from the strategic level down to the individual or functional managers; this transfer of responsibility from few to many sometimes acts as a barrier and indeed a challenge to strategy implementation (Tabo, 2013). Blahova and Knapkova (2010) assert that despite the importance of strategy implementation, there are countless cases of good strategic plans going awry due to substandard execution caused by formidable hurdles that injure the strategy implementation process. Neilson, Martin and Powers (2008) as cited by Blahova and Knapkova (2010) assert that execution is a notorious and perennial challenge; even at companies that are best at it, just two-thirds of employees agree that important strategic and operational decisions are quickly translated into action. According to the White Paper of Strategy Implementation of Chinese Corporations in 2006, strategy implementation has become "the most significant management challenge which all kinds of firms face at the moment." The Paper indicates that 83% of the surveyed companies failed to implement their strategy smoothly and only 17% felt that they had a consistent strategy implementation process which pinpoints the challenges bedeviling strategy implementation. McCluskey (2002) as cited by Ndegwa (2013) argues that many firms struggle to benefit from strategic planning when the plan is actually implemented.

2.10 Research Gap

This research study was informed by studies carried out by Maorwe (2011) on factors influencing implementation of strategic plans in Savings and Credit Co-operative Societies in Imenti North District-Kenya; Ndegwa (2013) on factors influencing implementation of strategic plans by SACCOs in Muranga County; Jebukosia (2013) on challenges of strategy implementation in Savings and Credit Co-operative Societies in Nairobi County, Kenya; and, Kabue (2013) on strategic planning in Co-operative Societies in Nairobi who all agree on the need to carry out further studies to identify other factors that explain changes in implementation of strategic plans in Co-operative Societies in other environments. From the reviewed empirical literature, it is evident that factors affecting implementation of strategic plans in Co-operative Societies are multifaceted and depend largely on the operating environment of the specific Co-operative which differs from one Co-operative to another. Moreover, similar previous local studies on factors affecting implementation of strategic plans in Co-operative Societies namely; Ndegwa (2013), Kabue (2013), Maorwe (2011), and Jebukosia (2013), failed to address the impact of risk on the implementation of strategic plans in Co-operative Societies but, only evaluated a handful of factors that affect strategy implementation in Co-operative Societies thereby leaving a gap to be pursued by other scholars. There is no known study that has ever been carried out to examine factors affecting implementation of strategic plans in Co-operative Societies in Turkana County hence the need to carry out a research to determine factors affecting implementation of strategic plans in Co-operative Societies in Turkana County to bridge the knowledge gap that still exists on factors affecting implementation of strategic plans in Co-operative Societies.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter provides the research design adopted by the study; the population and sampling procedure as well as the sample size. The chapter also discusses data collection procedures and data analysis methods used by the study.

3.2 Research Design

Research design is the scheme, outline or plan that is used to generate answers to research problems (Orodho, 2003). This research study adopted a descriptive survey as its research design. Descriptive research studies seek to obtain pertinent and precise information concerning the current status of the phenomena aimed at drawing varied conclusions from the facts discovered (Mugenda and Mugenda, 2003; Kothari, 2004). Descriptive design was considered appropriate for this research study because the study sought to find new ideas and insights in the factors affecting implementation of strategic plans in Co-operatives in Turkana County.

3.3 Population

According to Ngechu (2004), a population is a well-defined or set of elements, events or group of things that are being investigated. The population for the study comprised of all the 12 SACCOs registered under the Co-operative Societies Act Cap 490 Laws of Kenya, within Turkana County. The study targeted Co-operatives' boards of directors, supervisory committee members and CEOs/managers of the SACCOs under study since they were the ones involved in the implementation of strategic plans. The categorization of the target population was as shown in table 3.1.

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Table 3.1 Target Population

No.	Category	Population frequency
1	Board of directors	36
2	Supervisory committee members	12
3	CEO/Managers	4
	Total	**52**

3.4 Sampling

This study employed a purposive sampling technique to select a sample size of 33% of the SACCOs i.e. 4 SACCOs out of the 12 operating in Turkana County represented by 36 board members, 12 supervisory committee members and 4 CEOs/managers of the SACCOs which made the sample size to be 52 respondents. A sample of 10% to 20% units of population is a sufficient representative of a population (Mugenda and Mugenda, 2003). Purposive sampling involves a deliberate selection of particular units of population to constitute a sample. In this study, the sampling frame consisted of a list of all 12 SACCOs in Turkana County registered under the Co-operative Societies Act Cap 490, Laws of Kenya.

3.5 Data Collection

Donald (2006) asserts that there are two major sources of data used by respondents; primary and secondary data. This research study used open-ended questionnaires to collect primary data from the management and supervisory committee members and the CEOs/managers in the sampled SACCOs. Secondary data was collected from SACCOs' records and annual reports, journals, internet, academic works, books and government publications. Franker (2006) argues that a questionnaire is vital in obtaining objective data because the participants are not manipulated in any way by the researcher. The questionnaire gives respondents ample time to give well thought out responses; is effective in reaching respondents who are not easily approachable and saves on costs compared to other instruments (Kothari, 2004). A total of 52 validated questionnaires were administered on a "drop and pick later basis" to the study respondents for filling. Follow-ups were made to ensure timely collection of questionnaires as well as to assist the study respondents on any difficulties experienced in filling the questionnaires.

3.6 Pilot Test

Donald and Pamela (2014) argue that a pilot test is conducted to detect weaknesses in design and instrumentation and to provide proxy data for selection of a probability sample. Piloting helps to identify questions that don't make sense to respondents, or questions that might lead to biased answers, and assist in analyzing time taken to answer questions. The pilot test for this study was done by administering the questionnaires to 5 respondents who were selected randomly from SACCOs that were not part of the research in order to help in gathering accurate judgement that offers consistency and suitability in developing a study that is focused, meaningful and objective in its orientations, practicability and applicability. The pilot test was necessary to test the reliability and validity of the study questionnaire (Kothari, 2004).

3.6.1 Validity of Data

Validity is the degree to which results obtained from the analysis of the data actually represent the phenomenon under study (Mugenda and Mugenda, 2003). The questionnaire was pre-tested to check for validity of the questions in terms of clarity of the questions, suitability and simplicity of the language used. The researcher also applied the research judgement technique by providing the study supervisor the instruments for developing instrument generated objectives for comparison with the study objectives.

3.6.2 Reliability of Data

Reliability refers to how consistent a researcher's procedure or instrument can be depended upon. To test for reliability, the questionnaire used in the pilot study was edited accordingly upon detecting ambiguous or biased questions. Cronbach's alpha coefficient which is a test of reliability as internal consistency ranges from 0 to 1. A high value of alpha shows a more reliable Likert generated scale (Cronbach, 1951). 0.7 is an acceptable reliability coefficient (Cooper and Schindler, 2008). With a reliability coefficient of 0.8701, this study questionnaire showed that it was reliable.

3.7 Data Processing and Analysis

According to Polit and Hungler (1997) data analysis means to organize, provide structure and elicit meaning. Raw data collected through the study questionnaires was thoroughly examined and checked for completeness and comprehensibility. Data was then edited, coded and summarized to facilitate data entry into the SPSS software using spreadsheets in Microsoft Excel Computer Package and analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequencies, means and standard deviations with the aid of the descriptive statistics tool in the SPSS software.

4. RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter deals with analysis of data, findings of the study, interpretation and discussion based on the objectives of this study as presented in chapter one of the study. The study begins by presenting a bio-data of the respondents. The next section of the chapter deals with the findings for each research objective.

4.2 General Information of the Respondents

The researcher sought to determine the distribution of the respondents by their gender, age bracket, level of education and their position in the SACCO.

4.2.1 Response Rate

Out of the 52 questionnaires that were issued to the study respondents, 48 were completely filled and returned giving a response rate of 92.3% which is statistically acceptable.

4.2.2 Respondents' Gender

The distribution of the respondents by gender involved in the study was as indicated in table 4.1.

Table 4.1 Respondents' Gender

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	33	68.8	68.8	68.8
	Female	15	31.3	31.3	100.0
	Total	**48**	**100.0**	**100.0**	

The findings in table 4.1 indicate that majority (68.8%) of the respondents were male whereas a minority (31.3%) of the respondents were female. This indicates that majority of Co-operatives in Turkana County are male dominated in terms of leadership and staffing. Co-operatives should adhere to the confines of the new constitution with respect to gender parity.

4.2.3 Respondents' Age bracket

The age bracket of the respondents was as indicated in table 4.2.

Table 4.2 Respondents' Age bracket

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	19-29 Years	9	18.8	18.8	18.8
	30-45 Years	16	33.3	33.3	52.1
	46-59 Years	18	37.5	37.5	89.6
	60 years and above	5	10.4	10.4	100.0
	Total	**48**	**100.0**	**100.0**	

The findings in table 4.2 indicate that respondents aged between 19-29 years had a response rate of 18.8%; 30-45 years (33.3%); 46-59 years (37.5%); and 60 years and above (10.4%). Majority (37.5%) of the respondents were aged between 46-59 years. This is an age bracket looking for profitable avenues to mobilize their savings in to enable them have access to affordable credit for sustainable socio-economic development.

4.2.4 Respondents' Level of Education

The respondents' level of education was as indicated in table 4.3.

Table 4.3 Respondents' Level of Education

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Primary	5	10.4	10.4	10.4
	Secondary	17	35.4	35.4	45.8
	Diploma	20	41.7	41.7	87.5
	Degree	6	12.5	12.5	100.0
	Total	**48**	**100.0**	**100.0**	

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The findings in table 4.3 indicate that respondents with primary education had a response rate of 10.4%; secondary education (35.4%); diploma level (41.7%); and Degree level (12.5%). The results indicate that majority (41.7%) of the top leadership and senior staff in majority of the SACCOs in Turkana County were diploma holders. Competences, knowledge and skills of top leadership and staff are a precursor for successful strategy implementation.

4.2.5 Respondents' Position in the SACCO

The respondents' position in the SACCO was as indicated in table 4.4.

Table 4.4 Respondents' Position in the SACCO

		Frequency	percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Board member	32	66.7	66.7	66.7
	Supervisory member	12	25.0	25.0	91.7
	Staff	4	8.3	8.3	100.0
	Total	**48**	**100.0**	**100.0**	

The findings in table 4.4 indicate that respondents at board level had a response rate of 66.7%; supervisory level (25.0%); and staff level (8.3%). This shows that data gathered from the study could be relied upon to determine factors affecting implementation of strategic plans in SACCOs in Turkana County as all study respondents were involved in implementation of strategic plans.

4.2.6 Share Capital of SACCOs

Share Capital of SACCOs was as indicated in table 4.5.

Table 4.5 Share Capital of SACCOs

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Below 10M	48	100.0	100.0	100.0

The findings in table 4.5 indicate that all SACCOs in Turkana County had share capital of less than Kesh. 10 Million. The findings indicate that majority of SACCOs in Turkana County had low share capital which impacted negatively on the implementation of their strategic plans.

4.2.7 Whether SACCOs have Strategic Plans

The researcher sought to determine whether the sampled SACCOs had strategic plans. The findings are as indicated in Table 4.6.

Table 4.6 Strategic Plans in SACCOs

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	48	100.0	100.0	100.0

The findings indicate that all the SACCOs sampled had strategic plans. This shows that the study was able to collect the information needed on factors affecting implementation of strategic plans in Co-operative Societies in Turkana County.

4.3 Influence of Top leadership commitment and support on implementation of strategic plans

The researcher first sought to determine whether top leadership commitment and support influences implementation of strategic plans. The findings are as indicated in fig 4.1.

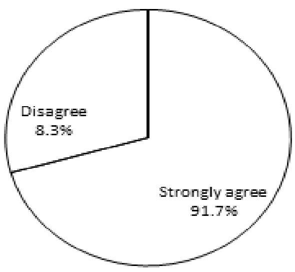

Figure 4.1 Influence of Top leadership commitment and support on implementation of strategic plans

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The findings indicate that majority (91.7%) of the respondents agreed that top leadership commitment and support influences implementation of strategic plans to a very great extent.

The researcher further required the respondents to indicate the extent to which they agreed with top leadership commitment and support factors on implementation of strategic plans in Co-operative Societies. The findings are indicated in table 4.7.

Table 4.7 Top leadership commitment and support factors and their influence on implementation of strategic plans

	Mean	**Std. Deviation**
Delegation of duties by top leadership enhances implementation of SACCO's strategies	3.8125	1.2826
Board adheres to Co-operative policies, guidelines and governance	3.7917	1.3832
The board has prioritized activities in the SACCO's strategic plan	3.5833	1.2688
Top leadership maintains membership consensus on SACCO's strategic decisions	3.5000	1.3209
SACCO's decision making process supports implementation of its strategic plan	3.5000	1.3838
Competences of board and senior executives support implementation of SACCO's strategic plan	3.4583	1.4136
SACCO's communication supports implementation of its strategic plan	3.3333	1.4923
Lower-level managers participate in the formulation and implementation of SACCO's strategic plans	3.2500	1.3128
Leadership has gained employees' buy-in of its ideas on SACCO's strategic plan	3.1875	1.4389
Leadership links rewards and incentives to strategic relevant performance outcomes	2.6458	1.2963
Leadership allocates adequate resources to implement SACCO's strategic plans	2.3958	1.2839
SACCO's leadership has established staff training programmes on strategy implementation	2.2500	1.0619

Table 4.7 presents the findings of the influence of top leadership commitment and support on implementation of strategic plans using a 5 point Likert scale with 1 point representing factors with the least influence while 5 points represent factors with the highest score. Responses on delegation of duties had the highest mean (3.8125) whereas responses on establishment of staff training programmes had the lowest mean (2.2500) and the lowest standard deviation (1.0619); adherence to Co-operative policies, guidelines and governance (3.7917); board's prioritization of activities in strategic plans (3.5833); maintaining membership consensus on strategic decisions (3.5000); decision making process supporting strategy implementation (3.5000); competences of board and senior executives (3.4583); SACCO's communication (3.3333); involving lower-level managers in formulation and implementation of strategic plans (3.2500); gaining employees' buy-in of board's ideas on the strategic plan (3.1875); aligning of processes, resources and relationships with the strategic plan (3.0625); linking rewards and incentives to strategic relevant performance outcomes (2.6458), and; allocating adequate resources to implement the strategic plan (2.3958).

The findings indicate that majority of the SACCOs had not established staff training programmes. The study established that establishment of staff training programmes will enable SACCOs to develop a talented workforce best suited to implement SACCOs' strategies. The findings also indicate that majority of SACCOs in Turkana County did not allocate adequate resources towards implementation of their strategic plans. Wangari (2011) argues that many strategies fail because not enough resources were allocated to successfully implement them. The findings also indicate that majority of SACCOs' leadership in Turkana County did not reward performance based on strategic relevant performance outcomes and that majority of SACCO's leadership in Turkana County did not foster employees' buy-in towards SACCOs' strategies. Rajasekar (2014) argues that ensuring employees' buy-in and directing their capabilities and business understanding toward the new strategy is a key challenge in successful strategy implementation. The findings also indicate that majority of SACCOs in Turkana County had a breakdown in strategy communication. Lack of vertical communication is a barrier to strategy implementation (Beer and Eisenstat, 2000).

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4.4 Influence of Availability of Resources on Implementation of Strategic Plans

The researcher first sought to determine whether availability of resources influences implementation of strategic plans. The findings are as indicated in figure 4.2.

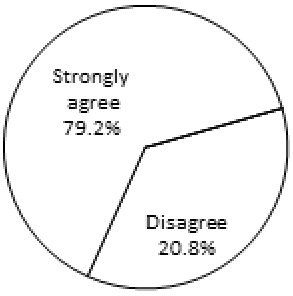

Figure 4.2 Influence of Availability of Resources on Implementation of Strategic Plans

The findings indicate that majority (79.2%) of the respondents agreed that availability of resources influences implementation of strategic plans to a great extent.

The researcher further required the respondents to indicate the extent to which they agreed with availability of resources factors on implementation of strategic plans in Co-operatives Societies. Table 4.8 shows the findings.

Table 4.8 Availability of Resources factors and their Influence on Implementation of Strategic Plans

	Mean	Std. Deviation
Most of SACCO's staff are computer literate	3.3542	1.3126
SACCO funds activities in the strategic plan using its own funds	3.2708	1.4694
Recruitment and selection process supports implementation of SACCO's strategic plans	2.9375	1.4053
SACCO's level of technology supports implementation of its strategies	2.6875	1.4754
The SACCO continuously develops competences and skills of its staff	2.5833	1.3812
SACCO allocates adequate funds for implementation of its strategic plans	2.5833	1.3966
SACCO's competences are correctly aligned with its strategies	2.0333	1.4923

Table 4.8 presents findings of the influence of availability of resources on implementation of strategic plans using a 5 point Likert scale with 1 representing factors with the least influence while 5 represent factors with the highest score. The findings show that responses on SACCO's staff being computer literate had the highest mean (3.3542) and the least standard deviation (1.3126) whereas correct alignment of organizational competences with organizational strategies had the lowest mean (2.0333) and the highest standard deviation (1.4923); funding of activities using own funds (3.2708); recruitment and selection process supporting implementation of strategic plans (2.9375); SACCO's level of technology supporting implementation of SACCO's strategies (2.6875); continuous development of competences and skills of staff (2.5833), and; allocation of adequate funds for implementation of strategic plan (2.5833).

The findings indicate that levels of technology in majority of SACCOs in Turkana County were still low which concurs with Nkuru (2015) who argues that the uptake of ICT in SACCOs is low. Strategic use of ICT will enable Co-operatives to actualize their strategic objectives thereby enhance their organizational effectiveness, attractiveness and competitiveness. The findings also indicate that majority of SACCOs in Turkana County did not allocate adequate resources to implement their strategies. This can be attributed to the mode of funding of strategies employed by majority of SACCOs in Turkana County which, according to the findings, relied mainly on SACCOs own funds which, according to the findings, were not adequate. Manyara (2003) argues that there is inadequate financing of Co-operatives from own sources. SACCOs should use a mix of both debt and equity in their capital structure for smooth implementation of their strategic plans(Kamau, 2015). The findings also show that majority of SACCOs in Turkana County had not aligned their organizational competences with their business strategies. This can be attributed to the recruitment and selection process employed by majority of SACCOs in Turkana County which, according to the findings, was not correctly aligned with

SACCOs' strategies. The findings also indicate that majority of SACCOs in Turkana County did not continuously develop competences and skills of their staff. Burma (2014) argues that enhancing employees' skills leads to greater job satisfaction and organizational effectiveness.

4.5 Influence of Levels of Risk on Implementation of Strategic Plans

The researcher first sought to determine whether levels of risk influence implementation of strategic plans. The findings are as indicated in figure 4.3.

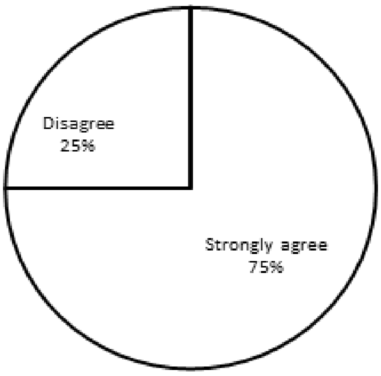

Figure 4.3 Influence of levels of risk on implementation of strategic plans

The findings indicate that majority (75%) of the respondents agreed that levels of risk influence implementation of strategic plans to a great extent. The researcher further required the respondents to indicate the extent to which they agreed with levels of risk factors on implementation of strategic plans in SACCOs. The findings are indicated in table 4.9.

Table 4.9 Levels of Risk factors and their Influence on Implementation of Strategic Plans

	Mean	Std. Deviation
Staff understand risk associated with SACCO's business	3.7083	1.2709
SACCO continuously implements and improves on its risk management	3.5833	1.3966
SACCO's risk appetite enhances its pursuit of profitable opportunities	3.5825	1.3194
SACCO lends, borrows and invests as per the SACCO Act and regulations	3.5208	1.3682
SACCO's risk mitigation measures reduce the likelihood of loss or potential severity of losses	3.3750	1.4385
SACCO has surplus capital and liquidity reserves for managing uncertainties	2.2500	1.2116

Table 4.9 presents the findings of the influence of levels of risk on implementation of strategic plans using a 5 point Likert scale with 1 representing factors with the least influence while 5 represent factors with the highest score. The findings show that responses about staff understanding risk associated with SACCO's business had the highest mean (3.7083), whereas responses about the SACCO having surplus capital and liquidity reserves for managing uncertainties had the lowest mean (2.2500) and the least standard deviation (1.2116); continuous implementation and improvement on risk management (3.5833); SACCO's risk appetite enhancing its pursuit of profitable opportunities (3.5825); SACCO lending, borrowing and investing as per the SACCO Act and regulations (3.5208); and, SACCO's risk mitigation measures reducing the likelihood of loss or potential severity of the losses (3.3750).

The findings indicate that majority of SACCOs in Turkana County were faced with capital and liquidity challenges and that majority of SACCOs' in Turkana County faced challenges in managing unforeseen risks. This is attributable to the findings that majority of SACCOs in Turkana County lent, borrowed and invested as per the SACCO Act and regulations. Co-operatives should device capital formation methods that can guarantee them adequate capital to implement their strategic intents without necessarily compromising on their seven principles and core values to enable them acquire competitive advantage in a hypercompetitive and dynamic business environment. Kamau (2015) argues that the strategy implementation team needs to determine sources of funds that include appropriate mix of debt and equity in an organization's capital structure to enable smooth implementation of their strategies. The findings concur with Maorwe

(2011) who argues that historically, Co-operatives have used their own reserves as a source of business capital. Co-operatives' capacity to build internal capital is affected by poor business performance and partly by government policies.

The findings also show that risk mitigation measures in majority of the SACCOs in Turkana County did not reduce the likelihood of loss or potential severity of the losses. Lam (2015) argues that firms should have an enterprise risk management programme that enables them to identify, assess, measure, and manage key risks. Poorly managed risks can lead to losses and jeopardize the success of strategic plans of SACCOs. According to RIMS Executive Report (2012), firms should take measured risks to generate value, avoid intolerable losses and create awareness of and actions to prevent excessive levels of risk that may cause adverse consequences. Firm's strategy, risk appetite and risk tolerance are inseparable hence should be designed and changed together.

4.6 Influence of M and E on implementation of strategic plans

The researcher first sought to determine whether M and E influence implementation of strategic plans. The findings are as indicated in figure 4.4.

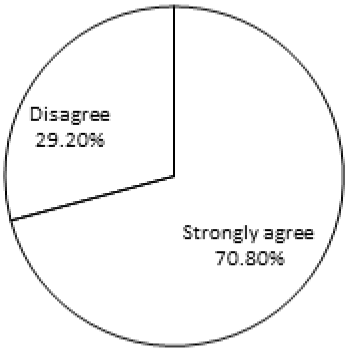

Figure 4.4 Influence of Monitoring and Evaluation on implementation of strategic plans

The findings indicate that majority (70.8%) of the respondents agreed that M and E influences implementation of strategic plans to a great extent. The researcher further required the respondents to indicate the extent to which they agreed with M and E factors on implementation of strategic plans in SACCOs. The findings are indicated in table 4.10.

Table 4.10 Monitoring and evaluation factors and their influence on implementation of strategic plans

	Mean	**Std Deviation**
Feedback from monitoring and evaluation determines SACCO's strategic business changes	3.5625	1.3194
Monitoring and evaluation has made strategic decision making in the SACCO to be easy and efficient	3.3958	1.3951
SACCO's frequency of monitoring and evaluation supports implementation of its strategic plan	3.2917	1.4434
Changes in SACCO's strategic plans are communicated effectively	3.2083	1.3677
SACCO's internal controls support implementation of its strategic plan	2.7708	1.5607
SACCO conducts regular training on monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of its strategic plans	2.3958	1.2504

Table 4.10 presents the findings of the influence of M and E on the implementation of strategic plans using a 5 point Likert scale with 1 point representing factors with the least influence while 5 points represent factors with the highest score. The findings show that responses about feedback from M and E determining SACCO's strategic business changes had the highest mean (3.5625) whereas responses about conducting regular training on M and E of implementation of strategic plans had the lowest mean (2.3958) and the least standard deviation (1.2504); strategic decision making in the SACCO made easy and efficient by M and E (3.3958); frequency of M and E supports implementation of SACCO's strategic plan (3.2917); effective communication of changes in SACCO's strategic plan (3.2083), and; internal control mechanisms support implementation of SACCO's strategic plan (2.7708).

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The findings indicate that majority of SACCOs in Turkana County did not conduct regular training on M and E of the implementation process of their strategic plans. Regular training of staff on M and E of strategy implementation ensures that there is no gap in the knowledge of M and E of the implementation process normally occasioned by staff attrition, hiring of new staff and changes in SACCO's leadership. The findings also indicate that majority of SACCOs in Turkana County experienced a breakdown in communicating their strategic changes. Communication is the bloodstream of any socio-economic system and ensures proper coordination and functionality of the system and Co-operatives, being open ended systems, have to ensure that their communication is seamless for them to implement their strategic plans effectively. This concurs with Beer and Eisenstat (2000) who argue that poor vertical communication is a barrier to effective strategy implementation and also concurs with Ndegwa (2013) who contends that effective communication enables firms to accomplish their strategies by decreasing the level of resistance to change.

The findings also indicate that majority of SACCOs in Turkana County had poor internal strategy control mechanisms which can be attributed to the low frequency of M and E in majority of the SACCOs in Turkana County as responded to by majority of the respondents. Poor strategic control limits the ability of SACCOs to deliver on their strategic intents by creating a drift in the implementation process. M and E needs to be done regularly and consistently and should be aligned with the business strategy for it to be a valuable tool for effective implementation of strategic plans in SACCOs. The findings are in agreement with Hrebiniak (2005) who argues that strategic control provides timely and valid feedback about organizational performance so that change and adaptation become a routine part of the implementation effort and also allow for the revision of execution-related factors if desired goals are not being met.

5. SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary of findings

The general objective of the study was to examine factors affecting implementation of strategic plans in Co-operative Societies in Turkana County. The study was guided by four specific objectives namely: To examine the influence of top leadership commitment and support on the implementation of strategic plans in Co-operative Societies; To examine the influence of availability of resources on the implementation of strategic plans in Co-operative Societies; To examine the influence of levels of risk on the implementation of strategic plans in Co-operative Societies, and; To examine the influence of monitoring and evaluation on the implementation of strategic plans in Co-operative Societies. Data was collected from 48 respondents using open ended questionnaires from four SACCOs in Turkana County from board members, supervisory committee members and CEOs/managers of the SACCOs under study.

5.1.1 Influence of Top leadership commitment and support on implementation of strategic plans

Majority of the respondents agreed that top leadership commitment and support influences implementation of strategic plans to a great extent. The study established that majority of SACCOs in Turkana County had not established staff training programmes. It was also established that majority of SACCOs in Turkana County had difficulties in allocating resources toward their strategies, a pointer to why majority of the SACCOs in Turkana County had difficulty in implementing their strategic plans. This is in agreement with Wangari (2011) who argues that many strategies fail because not enough resources were allocated to successfully implement them. The study also established that majority of SACCOs in Turkana County did not use rewards and incentives as a way of gaining employees' buy-in and as a motivator for superior staff performance. Rajasekar (2014) argues that ensuring employees' buy-in and directing their capabilities and business understanding toward the new strategy is a key challenge in successful strategy implementation. The study also established that top leadership of most SACCOs in Turkana County did not involve lower-level managers to a larger extent in the formulation and implementation of their strategic plans, a pointer to the low employees' buy-in of the boards' ideas on their SACCO's strategic plans in majority of the SACCOs in Turkana County. Johnson, Scholes and Whittington (2008) contend that involving middle-level managers in the original strategy formulation can improve implementation since the middle level managers involved in the original strategy formulation will be better at interpreting strategic intentions into action, have a stronger personal commitment to strategic goals, and communicate the strategy more effectively to their teams.

5.1.2 Influence of Availability of Resources on implementation of strategic plans

Majority of the respondents agreed that availability of resources influences implementation of strategic plans to a great extent. The study established that the levels of technology in majority of the SACCOs in Turkana County were still low and that the levels of technology did not support implementation of strategic plans in majority of the SACCOs in Turkana

County. Nkuru (2015) argues that the uptake of ICT in SACCOs is low. Low levels of technology are an impediment to the realization of SACCOs' strategies. The study also established that majority of SACCOs in Turkana County did not have the requisite funds needed to implement their strategic plans and that majority of SACCOs' in Turkana County funded their strategic plans using their own funds which, according to the study findings, were not adequate. Manyara (2003) argues that there is inadequate financing of Co-operatives from own sources due to limiting By-laws which specify low share capital requirements, and also due to non-payment of annual contributions. The study also established that majority of SACCOs in Turkana County had not aligned their organizational competences and, recruitment and selection process with SACCOs' strategies. The study also established that majority of SACCOs in Turkana County did not have a HRD policy, a pointer to why there was lack of continuous development of competences and skills of staff in majority of SACCOs in Turkana County. Johnson, Scholes and Whittington (2008) assert that knowledge and experience of people influence success of strategies and that human resource strategy should be aligned to organizational strategies to ensure success of such strategies.

5.1.3 Influence of Levels of Risk on implementation of Strategic Plans

Majority of the respondents agreed that levels of risk influence implementation of strategic plans to a great extent. The study established that majority of the SACCOs in Turkana County were faced with capital and liquidity challenges which hindered their ability to cushion them against unforeseen risks. The findings are in agreement with Maorwe (2011) who argues that historically, Co-operatives have used their own limited reserves as a source of business capital. The study also established that risk management strategies employed by majority of the SACCOs in Turkana County had not helped to improve business performance in majority of the SACCOs in Turkana County, a pointer to why risk mitigation measures employed by majority of SACCOs in Turkana County did not reduce the likelihood of loss or potential severity of losses incurred by majority of the SACCOs in Turkana County. This can be attributed to the findings that majority of SACCOs in Turkana County did not have effective strategies to enable them identify probable risks. This is in agreement with Lam (2015) who argues that organizations should have an enterprise risk management programme that enables them to identify, assess, measure, and manage key risks. The study also established that majority of SACCOs in Turkana County had not aligned their risk management programmes with their business strategies. The findings indicate that risk management programmes that are not aligned with business strategies hinder the ability of SACCOs to implement their strategies as originally designed.

5.1.4 Influence of M and E on Implementation of Strategic Plans

Majority of the respondents agreed that M and E influence implementation of strategic plans to a great extent. The study established that majority of SACCOs in Turkana County did not conduct regular training on M and E of the implementation process of their strategic plans. The study also established that majority of the SACCOs in Turkana County experienced a breakdown in communicating their strategic business changes. This is in agreement with Beer and Eisenstat (2000) who argue that poor vertical communication is a barrier to effective strategy implementation and is also in agreement with Ndegwa (2013) who contends that effective communication enables organizations to accomplish their strategies by helping to decrease the level of resistance to change without which firms can implement very little of their strategies. The study also established that majority of the SACCOs in Turkana County had poor internal strategy control mechanisms. The findings are in agreement with Hrebiniak (2005) who argues that strategic control provides timely and valid feedback about firm performance so that change and adaptation become a routine part of the implementation effort and also allow for the revision of execution-related factors if desired goals are not being met. The study also established that majority of SACCOs in Turkana County had low frequency of M and E of the implementation process of their strategic plans. Kamau (2015) argues that M and E needs to be done regularly and consistently with major strategies being reviewed at least once a year. M and E should also be aligned with the business strategy for it to be a valuable tool for effective strategy implementation.

5.2 Conclusion

This study examined the influence of top leadership commitment and support; availability of resources; levels of risk, and; M and E, on the implementation of strategic plans in SACCOs. The study concluded that top leadership commitment and support affect implementation of strategic plans. Top leadership commitment and support factors include: delegation of duties; establishment of staff training programmes; adherence to Co-operative policies, guidelines and governance; prioritization of activities in the strategic plan; maintaining membership consensus on strategic decisions; decision making process; competences of board and senior executives; communication of strategic changes; involving lower-level managers in the formulation and implementation of strategic plans; gaining employees' buy-in of board's ideas on the strategic plan; linking rewards and incentives to strategic relevant performance outcomes, and; adequacy of resource allocation.

The study also concluded that availability of resources affect implementation of strategic plans. Resource factors include: computer literacy of staff; correct alignment of organizational competences with organizational strategies; source of funds; recruitment and selection process; levels of technology; continuous development of competences and skills of staff, and; adequacy of funds allocated.

The study also concluded that levels of risk affect implementation of strategic plans. Levels of risk factors include: staff understanding of SACCO's business risk; availability of surplus capital and liquidity reserves for managing risks; continuous implementation and improvement on risk management; risk appetite enhancing pursuit of profitable opportunities; SACCOs lending, borrowing and investing as per the SACCO Act and regulations, and; capability of risk mitigation measures to reduce losses or potential severity of losses.

The study also concluded that M and E affect implementation of strategic plans. M and E factors include: strategic business changes after feedback from M and E; decision making after M and E; frequency of M and E; communication of strategic changes; internal control mechanisms, and; regular training on M and E of strategic plans.

The study also concluded that among the four variables studied namely: top leadership commitment and support; availability of resources; levels of risk, and; M and E, top leadership commitment and support influences implementation of strategic plans more than the other three variables.

5.3 Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the researcher makes the following recommendations:-

(i) SACCOs should foster continuous trainings on strategy implementation targeting everybody involved with implementation of SACCOs' strategic plans.

(ii) SACCOs should device capital formation methods that guarantee adequate capital to ensure success of their strategic objectives without necessarily compromising on the seven principles and core values. Leadership should endeavour to make communication in SACCOs a pivot of clarity on organizational strategies to ensure that everyone with a stake in SACCOs has the same understanding of the intents of SACCO's strategic objectives.

(iii) SACCOs should allocate resources in terms of people, finances and technology towards implementation of strategic plans in the right qualities, quantities and timelines. SACCOs should embrace current technology to enhance implementation of their strategies. This calls for SACCOs to create optimal alignment of ICT with their existing business strategies and to ensure effective use of ICT to obtain, increase and sustain competitive advantage.

(iv) To mitigate on the probable impact of risk, SACCOs should develop risk-conscious strategic plans by observing a balanced risk appetite which will enable SACCOs to pursue profitable opportunities.

(v) Monitoring and evaluation of strategy implementation should be regularised. Major strategies should be reviewed annually with implementation feedback mechanism being made highly responsive to inform on strategy performance thereby enable SACCOs to take prompt action to guarantee realization of organizational strategies.

5.4 Suggestions for further research

This study was limited to Turkana County only and examined factors affecting implementation of strategic plans in Co-operative Societies in Turkana County. The researcher recommends that similar studies should be carried out in other Counties in Kenya to assist in comparison of the findings.

The researcher further recommends that studies should be carried out to examine the influence of the legal and regulatory framework governing SACCOs on the implementation of strategic plans in SACCOs.

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Let the Almighty Lord God be exalted for ever for enabling me to undertake this noble research project.

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