

# Factors Affecting Strategy Implementation In Private Universities In Kiambu County, Kenya

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**Abstract:** Organizations formulate excellent strategies that must be effectively and efficiently implemented to ensure organizational success. The general purpose of this study was to evaluate factors affecting strategy implementation in Private Universities in Kiambu County, Kenya. The objectives of the study were; to determine the influence of management commitment and resource availability, on strategy implementation in Private universities in Kenya. The study used a descriptive research design. The study had a sample size of 133 respondents. Stratified and simple random sampling techniques were applied in sample selection and data collected using questionnaires. Quantitative data was analyzed through descriptive statistics. The study applied both correlation and regression analysis to measure the degree of relationship between the study variables. The study established that management's commitment was a positive signal for the organization to enhance strategy implementation and that the top management was responsible for making quick decisions required to manage any crises that arose during strategy implementation. The study also found that there was insufficient funding to support strategy implementation; use of information technology enhanced planning processes which were important in strategy implementation and that successful strategy implementation required clarity of duties and tasks to be done. The study recommends that the institutions should train its management to equip them with the right skills so that they are to cope up with the new roles of strategy implementation or hire competent management personnel that have the right skills, altitudes and capabilities to drive through their strategy implementation process.

**Keywords:** Privatization, Higher Education Institutions, Strategy, Strategy implementation, Management.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

According to Quddus and Rashid (2000) private institutions are an important element of some of the strongest higher education systems to be found today. They can respond efficiently and effectively to changing demand, and they increase educational opportunities with little or no educational cost. This influence of both private and social determinants of demand for university education has led to a high overall demand for university places. This is evident in the numbers of those who qualify for university places from the secondary level, and also those who demand for continuing education. The demand at a private level is associated to the expected benefits, level of disposable income among other determinants.

The purpose of this study was to establish the factors that affect strategy implementation in Private Universities in Kiambu County, Kenya. Locally, various studies have been conducted on the subject of factors influencing strategy implementation. For instance, Mbaka and Mugambi (2014) did a study on the factors affecting successful strategy implementation in the Water Sector in Kenya; Mukhalasie (2014) did a study on the factors affecting strategy implementation in Kenya Commercial Bank; Wairimu (2014) conducted a study on the factors affecting strategy implementation in public universities in Kenya; Abok (2013) looked at the factors affecting effective implementation of strategic plans in Non-Governmental Organizations in Kenya, while Lotay (2016) focused on the factors affecting strategy implementation in microfinance institutions in Kenya using the case of KWFT. However, none of these studies assessed the factors influencing strategy implementation in the Private Universities in the country. Informed by this knowledge gap, this study sought to establish the factors that affect strategy implementation in Private Universities in Kiambu County, Kenya.

**1.1 General Objective:**

To establish the factors that affect strategy implementation in Private Universities in Kiambu County, Kenya.

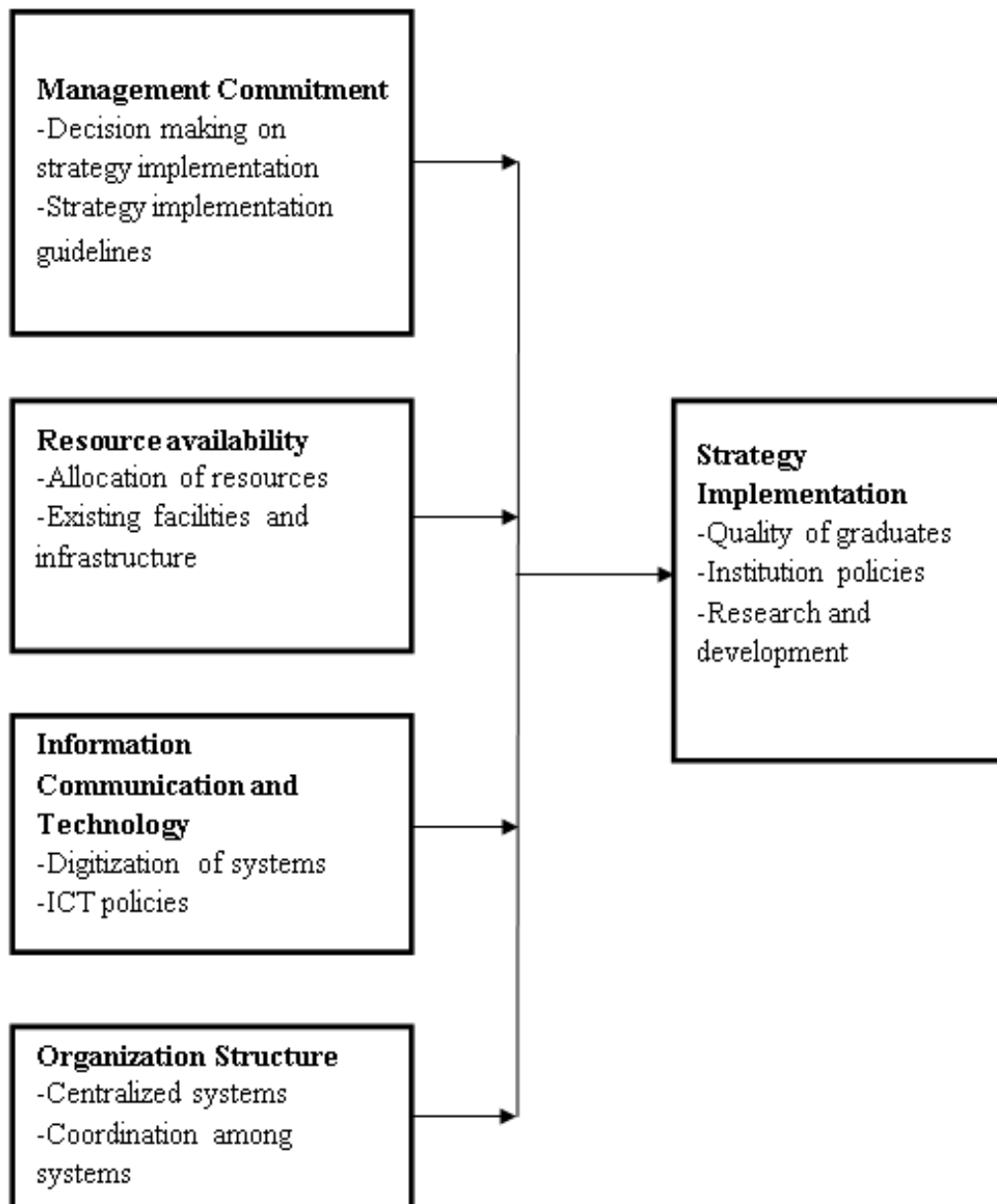
**1.2 Specific Objectives:**

1. To determine the influence of management commitment on strategy implementation in private universities in Kiambu County, Kenya.
2. To establish the influence of resource availability on strategy implementation in private universities in Kiambu County, Kenya.
3. To determine the influence of Information Communication Technology on strategy implementation in private universities in Kiambu County, Kenya.
4. To determine the influence of organizational structure on strategy implementation in private universities in Kiambu County, Kenya.

**2. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**

**Independent variables**

**Dependent variable**



### **2.1 Management Commitment and Strategy Implementation:**

The most challenging and important aspect of strategy implementation is the management of a given organization. The manager's role in the implementation process is leading and keynoting the tone: pace, and style of strategy implementation. There are many ways to proceed. A strategy implementer can opt for an active, visible role or a low-key, behind the scenes role. He or she can elect to make decisions authoritatively or on the basis of consensus, or delegate much or little, to be deeply involved in the detail of implementation or to remain aloof from the day-to-day problems. The commitment of top management to support and implement the strategies that are planned for is critical in an organization (Waithaka, 2013).

Kibachia, Iravo and Luvanda (2014) survey of risk factors in the strategic planning process of parastatals in Kenya state that strategic plan implementation is not a top-down-approach and the success of any implementation depends on the level of involvement of top managers. The affected middle managers' knowledge (which is often underestimated) must already be accounted for in the formulation of the strategy therefore making sure that these managers are a part of the strategy process, their motivation towards the project will increase and they will see themselves as an important part in the process.

### **2.2 Resource Availability and Strategy Implementation:**

Resource allocation is a central management activity that allows for strategy execution. The real value of any resource-allocation program lies in the resulting accomplishment of an organization's objectives. Vergert (2010) in his comparative study of two higher education institutions in Dutch observed that an organization has four key resource areas, namely people, information, finance and technology. It is important to mention these key resource areas briefly because (the lack of) these resources can influence strategy realization. For example when there is limited budget available for the development of new study programs this can have a negative effect on the realization of an educational strategic objective concerning the development of new study programs.

### **2.3 Information Communication Technology and Strategy Implementation:**

In the UNESCO World Conference report on global trends in Higher Education (2009) articulated the growth of distance learning to the rapid advancements in information and communications technologies (ICTs). ICTs have had an extraordinary impact on everything from teaching and learning; institutional management, administration, and finance; to external relations; library services; research production and dissemination; and student life. ICT has broken down barriers of time, space, and privilege; lowering costs; and has enabled collaboration and creativity in teaching, learning, and research. ICTs and related technologies have vastly expanded the potential to deliver postsecondary education at a distance but have also exacerbated inequalities within and across countries. The challenge is for the private institutions to integrate the new ICT's to improve quality, particularly in terms of teaching and learning.

### **2.4 Organization Structure and Strategy Implementation:**

According to Peter (1993), the main purpose of examining the structure of an organization is to determine ways that better suited the structure to strategy. Aligning the structure to strategy involves aligning how organization does things, exposure of the customer to the organization, activities and flow of work, authority and control of the tasks and communication flow between these activities. This helps to assess how fit the organization structure is to strategy implementation.

## **3. METHODOLOGY**

The study used a descriptive research design. Lavrakas (2008) describes a descriptive survey research design as a systematic research method for collecting data from a representative sample of individuals using instruments composed of closed-ended and/or open-ended questions, observations, and interviews.

The target population of this study consisted of Deputy Vice Chancellors and registrars in the administration function and other administrative officers involved in strategy implementation at the different levels of management in the private universities in Kiambu County. Random samples were taken from each stratum representing the whole population. Random sampling of respondents ensured that samples drawn were representative of the population of the university management. The study had a sample size of 133 respondents.

The study used a self-administered questionnaire as the data collection instrument. The questionnaire was designed in a way to help the respondents to give quick responses among several alternatives before them for easier analysis. The data

collected was analyzed through descriptive statistics using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS version 20.0). Frequencies, percentage, means and standard deviation were used in data analysis. Tables and graphs were used to present the study findings as appropriate.

For the purpose of analyzing the relationships of each of the independent variable on the dependent variable, the study used both correlation and regression analysis to test the research hypotheses. The regression model used was as follows;

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta_4 X_4 + \epsilon$$

Where:

Y= Strategy implementation (which is the dependent variable)

X<sub>1</sub> = Management commitment

X<sub>2</sub> = Resource availability

X<sub>3</sub> = Information Communication Technology

X<sub>4</sub> = Organizational structure

β<sub>0</sub> = Constant; β<sub>1</sub> – β<sub>4</sub> = Coefficients of independent variables and ε = Error term

In order to test the study hypotheses, t-test with a critical value of 1.96 and a p value of 0.05 were used to test the significance of management commitment, resource availability, Information Communication Technology and organizational structure on the private universities’ strategy implementation. According to Kothari (2004) an independent variable has significant effect if the t statistics is greater than + or – 1.96 or the p value is less than 0.05 from which the null hypothesis is rejected.

#### 4. RESEARCH FINDINGS

##### 4.1 Regression analysis results:

Table 4.1 Regression coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t statistic	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	6.182	.826		7.484	.0000
Management commitment	0.764	1.25	0.518	0.611	.0068
Resource availability	0.810	.938	0.573	0.864	.0014
ICT	0.661	1.56	0.464	0.424	.0261
Organization structure	0.609	1.603	0.391	0.380	.0342

Based on the regression results in Table 4.1 above, the study’s regression model became;

**Equation 1:**  $Y = 6.182 + 0.764X_1 + 0.810X_2 + 0.661X_3 + 0.609X_4 + \epsilon$

According to equation 1 above, taking all factors (that is, management commitment, resource availability, and ICT and organization structure) constant at zero, strategy implementation of the private universities would be 6.182. Equation 1 also shows that the four study variables namely management commitment, resource availability, ICT and organization structure had a positive influence on the level of the private universities’ strategy implementation with coefficients of 0.764, 0.810, 0.661 and 0.609, respectively. At 5% level of significance and 95% level of confidence, management commitment had a 0.0068 level of significance; resource availability had a 0.0014 level of significance, ICT had a 0.0261 level of significance while organization structure had a 0.0342 level of significance, implying that the most significant factor is resource availability followed by management commitment, ICT and organization structure, respectively.

#### 5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study concluded that strategy implementation in private universities in Kiambu County was influenced by management commitment through the management’s role in organizational strategic communication, strategic decision making, giving energy and showing loyalty to the strategy implementation process, providing direction and guidance in the strategy implementation process, hiring of competent staff to steer the strategy implementation process and assigning responsibility and authority to the various organizational units involved in the strategy implementation process.

The study concluded that resource availability played a significant role in the strategy implementation process of the private universities in Kiambu County though the institutions faced various challenges in respect of adequacy of resource

availability for strategy implementation as seen through insufficient funding, inadequacy of personnel, delayed disbursement of funds, mismatch of skills and talents and lack of staff training to support strategy implementation within the institutions..

The study also concluded that use of ICT had a significant effect on strategy implementation in the private universities in Kiambu County through its role in enhancing accountability, planning processes, internal communication and information flow, flexibility in organization operation and employees' competencies.

The study further concluded that organizational structure influenced the strategy implementation in private universities in Kiambu County. This was through providing clarity of duties and tasks to be done, providing clear channels of communication, ensuring effective coordination of organization activities, ensuring effective delegation of authority and responsibility to the various organizational ranks, supporting team-work efforts across the organization, allowing flexibility in organization operations in light of changes occurring during the strategy implementation process and providing control mechanisms for monitoring the progress of the strategy implementation process.

### **5.1 Recommendations:**

- i. The institutions should train its management to equip them with the right skills so that they are to cope up with the new roles of strategy implementation or hire competent management personnel that have the right skills, altitudes and capabilities to drive through their strategy implementation process.
- ii. The management of the universities should commit adequate financial and all other resources required to support the institutions' strategy implementation process. The funds should also be availed in time to avoid interruptions in the strategy implementation process.
- iii. The institutions should invest in ICT infrastructure that will give them valuable assistance in implementing new organizational policies, procedures and initiatives for the success of the strategy implementation process.
- iv. The management of the universities should develop effective organizational structures that enhance organizational communication and coordination of activities during the strategy implementation process. This can be achieved by adopting organic firm structures instead of hierarchical ones.

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