# Influence of Organization Practices on Strategic Plans Implementation in the Public Sector: A Case of Ministry of Lands and Physical Planning in Kenya

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*Abstract:* **Strategic planning may sound similar to the business planning process, but differs in fundamental ways. The overall objective of this study was to analyze the implementation of the strategic plan in Public Sector taking a case of the ministry of lands in Kenya. The study delved the organization structure, organization culture, top management commitment to the management and communication as the key determinants of implementation. The study was based on organizational culture theory, communication theory, stakeholder theory and institutional theory. The respondents of the study were senior managers, top managers, heads of departments and heads of sections. This research study adopted a descriptive survey approach on a targets population of 365 management staff in the ministry of lands headquarters in Nairobi. The sample size consisted of 110 management staff in the ministry. Primary data was gathered directly from respondents and for this study; a semi-structured questionnaire was utilized. Secondary data was also collected for this study. The study concludes that commitment of top management effects strategic plan implementation in Ministry of lands and physical planning in Kenya. The study further concludes that Ministry of lands and physical planning in Kenya uses communication as a means of achieving strategic plan implementation. The study also concludes that organizational culture has an effect on strategic plan implementation in the Ministry of lands and physical planning in Kenya. The study also concludes that organizational structure influences strategic plan implementation at Ministry of lands and physical planning in Kenya.**

*Keywords:* **Communication, Organizational Culture, Strategic Implementation, Organization structure, Top management commitment, Organization Practices, Strategic plans.**

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Implementing strategy has always been a challenge for organizations across the industry. Ability to implement strategy is the deciding factor between success and failure of a company's strategy. Implementation manifests the strategic intent of a company through various tactical and competitive actions to achieve the desired results, which otherwise may remain as distant dreams. Great strategies are not discovered over a couple of strategic sessions. In fact, great strategies evolve as a result of rigorous monitoring of progress towards strategic goals, when emerging realities are discussed threadbare, the learning of which helps in revising the strategies. In effect, it can be said that meticulous implementation has strategy development embedded in it. Similarly, companies need to incorporate strategy implementation in the planning phase itself. This can be done by involving person's key to execution during the planning phase.

An organization's structure and design is a key factor in the implementation process. The challenge facing managers during strategy implementation is how to match the new strategy with structure without affecting the current on-going business. According to [5], strategy implementers are faced with the challenge of answering the following question: How

should we best structure and organize to be able to deliver strategy? Finding an answer to the above question is hard. Finding the right structure and design to carry out new strategy is a result of a well thought and negotiated process between various stakeholders in the organization. Considerations should be made based on the long-term vision of the firm.

An organization's structure determines the work to be done and how to do it given the organization's strategy [9]. They further argued that an organization's structure affects how strategic leaders perform their duties hence the importance of the organizational structure cannot be overlooked. To overcome structural challenges during implementation, there is need to find a structural fit with the strategy. [14] Point out, making strong supportive "fits" prevents internal activities from conflicting with the strategy and hence brings the organization's work effort into closer harmony with the strategic plan. Therefore, a firm that succeeds in the implementation of its strategy is one that ensures that there is harmony between its structure and the strategic plan.

[1] Have observed that corporate culture requires internal integration such that collective identity and togetherness determine day to day communications, acceptable behaviors and power allocations in the organization structures. Similarly, external adaptation for dealing with outside environment will be very much in need when trying to implement a strategic plan. [2] Has also added that the environment of an organization will affect how the culture relates to implementation. He argues that for external focus, such culture could be adaptability or mission culture whereas an internal focus could lean the organization's culture towards clan-based or bureaucratic culture.

## 2. EMPIRICAL REVIEW

Organizational change usually involves a change in the organization's structure. Organizational structure refers to the clustering of tasks and people into smaller groups. Therefore organization structure is of both strategic and operational advantage in change management. [4] Stated that organizational change is a strategic imperative. This simply means that major or radical shifts in organizational design reflect changes happening in the broarder social, economic, political and technological environment. Organizations must be able to respond rapidly to external changes if they are to survive, and that the necessary internal restructuring is likely to be strategic or 'mold-breaking.' The mold that needs to be broken is the rigid, autocratic, bureaucratic approach to organization and management. The new organizational framework required appears to be one that emphasizes flexibility, creativity, and participation.

People from cultures that view relationships regarding hierarchy have a preference for highly structured teams. People from cultures that see relationships regarding groups want teamwork to be the norm and people from cultures that emphasize the individual feel most comfortable with voluntary and informal teams. Mixing these culture types can have a significant impact on an organization [6]. In comparing cultures of different countries, cross-cultural researchers have concentrated effort on an examination of a set of cultural value dimensions developed by [11]. People's dominant value systems have been crystallized in the institutions these people have built together: their family structures, educational structures, religious organizations, associations, forms of government, work organizations, law, literature, settlement patterns, and buildings. All of these reflect common beliefs that derive from the prevailing culture. Whereas the value systems affect human thinking, feeling, action, and the behavior of organizations and institutions in predictable ways, the value dimensions reflect fundamental problems that any society has to cope with but for which solutions differ from country to country [11].

About Commitment of top-level management, some studies have examined the relationships between top management and middle management in the context of strategic plans implementation: On the one hand, middle managers expect direction and support from their top management. If they receive this guidance, then they will provide support for the strategy in return. One of the key factors determining their level of support is their demographic situation (such as age, gender, educational background, and business experience). [16] Investigated the relationships between middle managers' formal position, their strategic influence, and organizational performance. They used a sample of 43 managers who were purposively sampled. Their findings suggest that managers with formal positions in boundary-spanning sub-units report higher levels of strategic influence activities than others; firm performance is associated with more uniform levels of downward strategic influence, and more varied levels of upward influence among middle management cohorts; middle managers' strategic influence arises from their ability to mediate between internal and external environments.

At least, numerous researchers have already emphasized the importance of communication for the process of strategic plans implementation [13] based on interviews with 21 presidents and 25 governmental agency heads. The content of

such communications includes explaining what new responsibilities, tasks, and duties need to be performed by the affected employees. It also consists of the why behind changed job activities, and more fundamentally the reasons why the new strategic decision was made firstly.
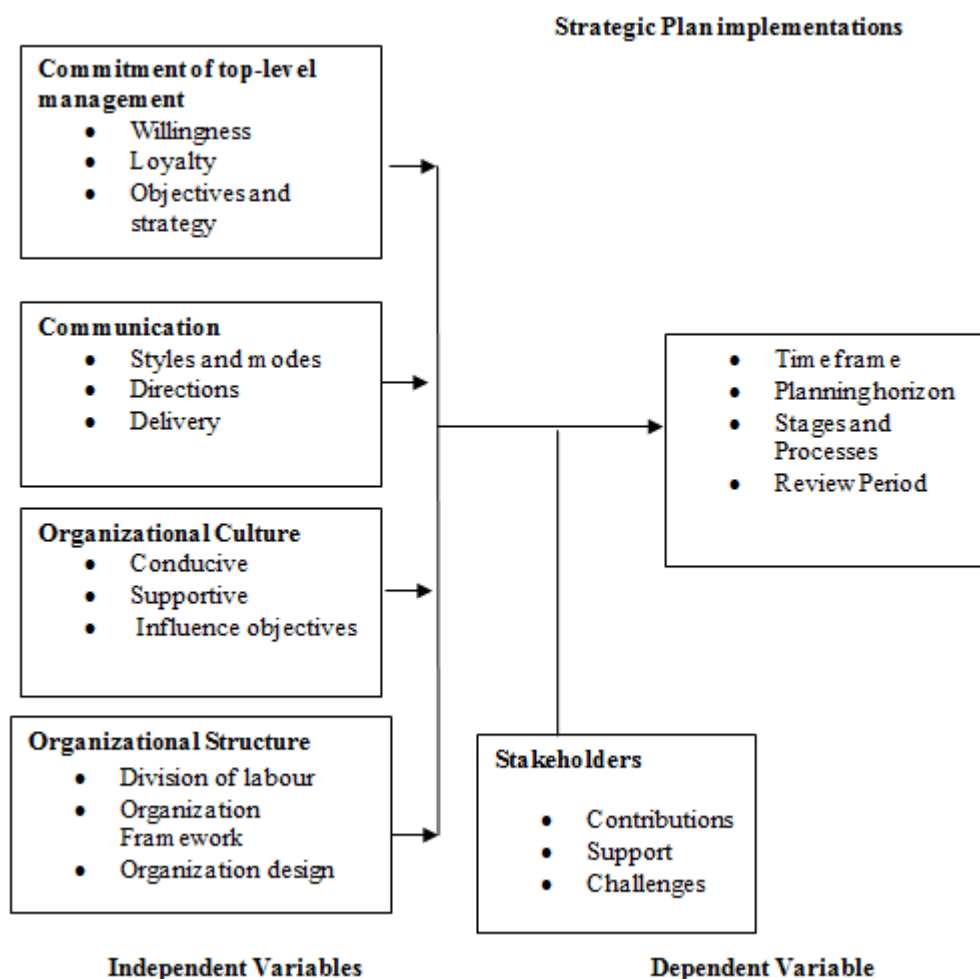
## 3. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK



**Figure 2.1: Conceptual Framework**

## 4. SUMMARY AND CRITIQUE OF EXISTING LITERATURE

The study reflects on the effect of the commitment of top management, the effect of communication, effect of co-ordination of activities and the effect of organizational culture. First, executors or people issues receive the most attention. This is especially true about managers whose role is analyzed in depth in many studies [8]. However, researchers frequently ignore the role of non-management.

The reviewed studies do not present a clear picture regarding the relationships among the implementation variables of communication, commitment, and consensus. Communication is treated as a premise to realize commitment and consensus. [15] Find that the viability of frequent vertical communication is a means by which strategic consensus may be enhanced. When vertical communication is frequent, the strategic consensus is enhanced and organizational performance improves. Several researchers just point out that communication is an important factor, but there are no in-depth analyses about how exactly communication influences strategic plans implementation. There is disagreement about the variables' exact meanings, content, relationships, and influence on strategic plans implementation. [1] Studied the role of executive development in strategy implementation. He was a comparative study of KCB and National Bank of Kenya. The study also did not capture the process of strategic management and the factors affecting its adoption. Based on this review it is evident that there exists a gap in the examination of the commitment of the top level management, communication, and organizational culture on strategic plans implementation in public sector.

## 5. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study used a descriptive survey design. This study targeted 365 management staff in the ministry of lands and physical planning headquarters in Nairobi. The unit of analysis included: Land administration and registration managers, physical planning managers, human resources managers, procurement managers, account managers, survey managers, valuation managers, and land adjudication managers. The study adopted stratified random sampling technique to identify the respondents. Stratified random sampling was used to select the samples to ensure that the sample selected is a representative of the population and thus the findings could be generalized. Stratified random sampling technique was used since the population is homogeneous.

The sample size consisted of 110 management staff in the ministry. The study used a questionnaire to collect primary data. The questionnaire comprised of both open and close-ended questions. Secondary data was also collected for this study. This data is useful for generating additional information for the study from already documented data or available reports, especially from the organization's websites. The study used content validity to ascertain the validity of the questionnaires. Content validity is concerned with sample-population representativeness. The researcher used the most common internal consistency measure known as Cronbach's alpha (α).

## 6. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

**Response Rate:**

A total of one hundred and ten (110) questionnaires had been distributed to the respondents, out of which 97 were completed and returned. This gave a response rate of 88.2%. According to [3], a response rate of 50% is adequate for a study, 60% is good, and 70% and above is excellent. Thus, a response rate of 88.2% was fit and reliable for the study.

**Reliability:**

When reliability is upheld, then the research instrument should collect similar results when administered to different sampled populations exhibiting related characteristics. A reliability coefficient of 0.75 was indicative of internal consistency in the items in measuring the concept of interest [3]. The suggestions made by the respondents on words and phrases that were not clear were incorporated in the final instrument. all the variables under study showed a Cronbach's alpha of above 0.75, implying that all the variables were reliable.

| Variable | Cronbach's alpha |
|---|---|
| organization structure | 0.769 |
| organization culture | 0.848 |
| top management commitment | 0.797 |
| Communication | 0.824 |
| strategic plans implementation | 0.786 |

**Organizational Structure:**

the respondents agreed to a great extent that the way labour is divided within the organization influences how strategies are implemented as established by the highest mean score of 4.625 with standard deviation of 0.563, and that the organization structure of the organization does not match the strategic plans as indicated by the lowest mean score of 3.645 with standard deviation of 0.261. Overall, organization structure affects strategic plans implementation in the Ministry of Lands and Physical Planning to a very high extent as indicated by the aggregate mean of 4.047 with aggregate standard deviation of 0.451. Similar to the study findings, [12], opined that factors relating to the organizational structure are very important and should be considered during strategy implementation. Proper strategy-structure alignment is a necessary precursor to the successful implementation of new business strategies. He further point out that changes in the competitive environment require adjustments to the organizational structure. If a firm lags in making this realignment, is may exhibit poor performance and be at a serious competitive disadvantage.

**Organizational Culture:**

From the findings, how managers make decisions affected strategic plans implementation to a great extent as established by the highest mean score of 4.374 with standard deviation of 0.256. While conscious and unconscious symbolic acts taken by leaders (job titles, dress codes, corporate jets, informal meetings with employees) also affected strategic plans implementation to a low extent as indicated by the lowest mean score of 2.279 with standard deviation of 0.243. Overall,

organization culture affects strategic plans implementation in the Ministry of Lands and Physical Planning to a high extent as indicated by the aggregate mean of 3.646 with aggregate standard deviation of 0.267. In line with the study findings, [7] noted that for a strategy within an organization to develop and be implemented successfully, it must fully align with the organizational culture. Lack of synergy between strategy and culture may obstruct the smooth implementation of strategy by creating resistance to change.

**Commitment of Top Management:**

Top managers must demonstrate their willingness to give energy and loyalty to the implementation process for it to succeed with a highest mean of 4.312 with standard deviation of 0.657. They were however neutral on the statement that lack of top management backing is the main inhibiting factors as indicated by the lowest mean of 3.027 with standard deviation of 0.461. Overall, commitment of top management affects strategic plans implementation in the Ministry of Lands and Physical Planning to a very high extent as indicated by the aggregate mean of 3.941 with aggregate standard deviation of 0.440. Executives must lead, support, follow-up, and live the results of the strategic planning implementation process. Or, the strategic planning implementation process will fail. It's as simple as that. Without the full commitment of the organization's senior executives, don't even start strategic planning. Participants will feel fooled and misled. A vision statement and a mission statement, along with this year's goals, filed, unimplemented in a cabinet or computer is a serious source of negativity and poor employee morale. A successful implementation plan will have a very visible leader, such as the CEO, as he communicates the vision, excitement and behaviors necessary for achievement. The senior managers should play their role in motivating employees and providing leadership. Everyone in the organization should be engaged in the plan.

**Communication Process:**

From the findings, respondents agreed that it was essential both during and after strategic plans implementation to communicate information about organizational developments to all levels in a timely fashion as indicated by the highest mean score of 4.312. They were however neutral as indicated by a lowest mean score of 3.213 on the statements that communicating with employees was frequently delayed until changes had already crystallized. Overall, communication process affects strategic plans implementation in the Ministry of Lands and Physical Planning to a very high extent as indicated by the aggregate mean of 4.013 with aggregate standard deviation of 0.252. Organizational communication plays an important role in training, knowledge dissemination and learning in strategic management. In fact, communication is pervasive in every aspect of strategic management, as it relates to a complex way to organizing processes, organizational context and implementation objectives which, in turn, have an effect on the process of strategic management. Communication barriers are reported more frequently than any other type of barriers, such as organizational structure barriers, learning barriers, personnel management barriers, or cultural barriers.

**Stakeholders:**

Based on the study findings, respondents strongly agreed that during the strategic planning process, this stakeholder activism cannot be ignored as the foreign environment is bound to have the wish of seeing outcomes of that strategic plans in the future as indicated by the highest mean score of 4.356, and that transparency of strategic plans implementation as indicated by a lowest mean score of 3.967. Overall, stakeholders affect strategic plans implementation in the Ministry of Lands and Physical Planning to a very great extent as indicated by the aggregate mean of 4.146 with aggregate standard deviation of 0.346. One of the most important features of effective implementation is time factor or planning. Stakeholders' time consciousness would inspire the management team to ensure the implementation was as effective as required by the very stake holders.

**Regression Model:**

Model summary' table, provides information about the regression line's ability to account for the total variation in the dependent variable.

| Model | R | R Square | Adjusted R Square | Std. Error of the Estimate |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | .921[a] | .849 | .845 | .04131 |

Dependent Variable: Strategic plans implementation

Predictors: (Constant), commitment to top management, communication process, Organizational culture, organizational structure, and stakeholders

The table illustrates that the strength of the relationship between strategic plans implementation and independent variables. From the determination coefficients, it can be noted that there is a strong relationship between dependent and independent variables given $R^2$ values of 0.849 and adjusted to 0. 845. This shows that the independent variables (commitment of top management, communication process, Organizational culture, organizational structure, and stakeholders) account for 84.5% of the variations in strategic plans implementation.

## 7. CONCLUSION

The study concludes that organizational structure influences strategic plans implementation at Ministry of lands and physical planning in Kenya. Organizational structure helps in formulation, design, and implementation of policies and programs and regulates the communication from the bottom to the top and also helps in decision making. The current structure at Ministry of lands and physical planning in Kenya was based on clear functional organizational operations which make it appropriate and supportive to strategy implementation. The study concludes that strategic managers turn to restructuring as a means of implementing strategic plans aimed at improving performance.

The study revealed that the organizational culture supports the implementation of strategies. The organizational culture factors that affect strategy implementation were how managers make decisions, the leadership style of managers and the dominant values and beliefs. Poor organization rewarding culture, poor structure of office, inadequate staff, and poor regional representation

Top management's commitment to the strategic direction itself is the most important factor. Managers' commitment to performing their roles lead to the lower ranks of employees missing support and guidance through the encouragement of entrepreneurial attributes. Managers must not spare any effort to persuade the employees of their ideas for strategic plans implementation to be effective.

Organizational communication plays an important role in training, knowledge dissemination and learning during the process of strategy implementation. The ministry is faced with the challenge of lack of a two-way-communication program that permits and solicits questions from employees about issues regarding the formulated strategy. The study also concludes that it is essential both during and after strategic plans implementation to communicate information about organizational developments to all levels in a timely fashion. Finally, the study concludes that stakeholders influenced strategic plans implementation at Ministry of lands and physical planning in Kenya.

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