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CHALLENGES OF STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION: A CASE STUDY OF KENYA MEDICAL TRAINING COLLEGE

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A hand in a blue suit sleeve points towards the word 'Strategy' which is displayed on a glowing, circular screen. The background is dark blue with abstract light patterns and a large, curved graphic element in red, white, and blue.

Strategy

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Abstract

Purpose: The purpose of this study was to determine the challenges that affect the implementation of strategic plan at KMTC.

Methods: This study adopted a case study research design. The study used both primary and secondary data. The study population was the KMTC headquarters offices and all constituent KMTC campuses which had the chance of implementing the strategic plans (<http://www.kmtc.ac.ke> on 24th February 2015). The study respondents was the top management at the KMTC headquarters, principals and HOD of various satellite KMTC campuses. Primary Data was collected with the help of a semi structured questionnaire The study was a Census involving all the 28 KMTC campuses which had the chance of implementing both strategic plans to completion. Data was analyzed by use of SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Science). The descriptive statistics such as tabulations, percentages, mean, standard deviation and frequencies was used in the data presentation.

Results: The findings of the study are that the strategic plan had been implemented satisfactorily at the institution with various aspects remaining to be streamlined. These areas included communication of the strategic plan organization-wide and monitoring and evaluation of the plan. There were several challenges experienced during the implementation of the plan. The main challenge being inadequate financing of the plan and even where the plan financed, late disbursement was experienced.

Unique Contribution to Theory, Practice and Policy: The study recommends that a proper monitoring and evaluation system be put in place and that a proper communication system be in place to update staff on the plan. The researchers further recommend that an office be created to oversee the implementation of the plan.

Key Words: *Strategic Plan, Challenges, KMTC*

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Strategic management is the set of decisions and actions that result in the formation and implementation of plans designed to achieve a company's objective and comprises of critical tasks which include formulation, implementation and control. (Pearce & Robinson, 2005). According to Alexander (1985), the ten most frequently occurring strategy implementation problems include underestimating the time needed for implementation and major problems surfacing that had not been anticipated, in addition uncontrollable factors in the external environment had an adverse impact. Without proper strategic implementation the whole process does not attain its threshold to yield the expected benefits to the organization (Thompson & Arthur, 2007).

Achieving a competitive advantage position and enhancing firm performance relative to their competitors are the main objectives that business organizations in particular should strive to attain. According to the resource-based theory, the source of firm's competitive advantage lies in their internal resources, as opposed to their positioning in the external environment. Competitive advantage thus depends on the unique resources and capabilities that a firm possesses (Barney, 1995). While proponents of the contingency theory argue that there is no one or single best way or approach to manage organizations. Organizations should then develop strategies based on the situation and condition they are experiencing (David, 2005).

The whole point of a strategy is that it will be implemented successfully. Effective implementation results when organization resources and actions are tied to strategic priorities and set objectives achieved, and when key success factors are identified and performance measures and reporting are aligned (Deloitte & Touché, 2003). Despite having well drafted strategic plans at the Kenya Medical training college (KMTC) the full yield of these plans are yet to be realized. This can be clearly seen from the slow attainment of its key result areas such as research and consultancy, financial sustainability and building institutional capacity. The aim of this study is therefore to establish the strategy implementation challenges that KMTC faces.

Li *et al*, (2008) posit that there is no universally accepted definition of strategy implementation. Shah (2005) and Hill and Jones (2009) define strategy implementation as a process through which formulated strategies are put into action within constraints of time and resources. According to Sorooshian *et al*, (2010), strategy implementation is a totality of activities and choices required of a strategic plan and the process through which strategies and policies are put into action. Nyamwaza and Mavhiki (2014) however contend that strategy implementation is a process by which an organization develops, utilizes and amalgamates its structures, controls systems and culture to follow strategies that lead to competitive advantage and improved performance. Jalali (2012) describes strategy implementation as a dynamic, iterative, integrative and complex process comprising of activities and decisions that turn plans into realities to achieve set goals.

Grant and Robert (2005) observes that, strategy is about winning, it is not a detailed plan or program of instructions; it is a unifying theme that gives coherence and direction to the actions and decisions of an individual or an organization. Once corporate strategies have been agreed upon and long term objectives set, the strategic management process moves into critical new

phase- translating strategic plans into organizational action. In other words, moving from “planning their work” to “working their plan”. Managers successfully make this shift when they do four things well that is: identify short term objectives, initiate specific functional tactics, and communicate policies that empower people in the organization and design effective rewards (Pearce & Robinson, 2005).

Strategy implementation entails identification of measurable, mutually determined annual objectives which convert long-term objectives into specific, short-term goals. It also includes the development of specific functional strategies which translate grand strategies at business level into current action plans for sub units of the company. Thus execution must be controlled and evaluated if the strategy is to be successfully implemented and adjusted to changing conditions. However, during implementation, various challenges are encountered and need to be addressed if the strategy is to be realized (Odhiambo, 2005).

Mintzberg (1994) noted that, the plan rather than the implementation comes in for scrutiny when a strategy fails because it is less problematic to analyze. Successful strategy implementation, it is suggested, requires sound mechanisms for directing activity and behaviour, especially including effective communication systems as well as appropriate strategic and management controls (Goold, 1991). The importance of enabling sound “two-way” communications within organizations is seen as fundamental to the effective implementation of strategy (Alexander, 1985; Rapert *et al.*, 2002), with a particular emphasis on facilitating useful feedback and “bottom-up” messages (Otley, 1999). Other challenges will come in the form of finding the fits between strategy and internal organization structure, strategy and allocation of budgets and staff size, strategy and organizational systems of reward and incentives, strategy and internal policies, practices and procedures, and internal organization. These factors play a big role during strategy implementation, (Thompson & Strickland, 2003; Machuki, 2012).

Kenya Medical Training College

KMTC, the only public middle level health training institution under the Ministry of health, started in 1927 with four students at Kenya Institute of Administration (KIA), Kabete. Situated about three kilometers on the northern side of Nairobi city, Kenya, KMTC headquarters and the main campus, Nairobi, stand on a 20-acre piece of land, opposite Kenyatta National Hospital, along Old Mbagathi Road. In 1990, it became a Semi-Autonomous Government Agency through an Act of Parliament, Cap.261, Legal Notice No. 14, Laws of Kenya. In 1994, the name Kenya Medical Training College was adopted as a unifying title for the College. Since then KMTC operates independent of the Ministry Of Health under a Board of Management

With over 22, 000 students attending more than 50 medical courses, KMTC makes the biggest contribution to the health sector in Kenya. KMTC currently produces more than 6000 graduates every year for both the Kenyan public and private health sectors, this accounts for more than 80 percent of the hospitals' workforce. The institution has over 1,500 members of staff. The national distribution of the College is its biggest uniqueness. With 30 constituent colleges spread throughout the country as far as Lodwar and Garissa, Loitoktok and Kisumu, the impact of the College in improving healthcare is felt in all parts of the country. KMTC is found almost in

every corner of this country, strategically located next to a provincial or district hospitals where students go for clinical attachment.

Today, more than eight decades since it was established, KMTC has grown tremendously, curving a niche for itself as one of the largest medical training institution in East and Central Africa- drawing students from Uganda, Tanzania, Burundi, Rwanda, Namibia, Sudan and Nigeria. (About -us, KMTC, 2008).KMTC is currently in the process of implementing the strategic plan (2013-2017) most of it based on the experiences of the previous strategic plans (2005-2010) and (2008-2012).The implementation status of the two previous strategic plans is well outlined in the consecutive plans creating an avenue for critical analysis to establish the implementation challenges leading to the slow achievements of its various strategic objectives

1.1 Statement problem

Buil (2010) points out that strategy implementation has become the most important challenge faced by organizations today. Further, Hrebiniak (2008), argues that implementation of strategies organization wide has become a very difficult task in most firms. Allio (2005) conducted a survey involving 276 senior executive in 2004 and found that 57% of firms were unsuccessful in implementing strategies. Machuki (2012) suggests that to solve this challenge, an organization needs to match strategies with structures, staff, management style, shared values, systems and skills, a process termed as strategy institutionalization. Despite all these suggestions, there still is no agreement on best practices for strategy implementation.

Organizations have to overcome the various challenges facing them in a turbulent environment so they need to discover more efficient ways of operation. The health training institutions in Kenya are not left out in this scenario. Public middle level training institutions such as KMTC are facing several operational challenges such as inadequate financial resources, political interference, high staff turnover and competition from other institutions of higher learning, the courses offered by such institutions especially diplomas are slowly losing their demand as degree courses are now easily available to the same market. This calls for an effective strategy implementation in order to counter the turbulence in the environment.

Previous studies done in the area of strategy implementation have concluded that the major challenges experienced during implementation included leadership of executive Director, set organizational procedures, management skills, employee training, and financial resources . Other major challenges as inadequate resources, departure of advocates and supporters of strategic decisions leaving during the implementation which undermine staff commitment and enthusiasm, uncontrollable factors. Poor management and Poor leadership style, lack of tight fit between strategy and various other organizational factors. Failure to predict implementation time, lack of feedback on progress, lack of link between reward systems and strategic performance, unsupportive culture and lack of focus and ability on the new strategy which leads to implementation problems. Although the above studies dealt with the challenges of strategy implementation in different organization. There is none that established such challenges in the context of middle level health training institutions. This study seeks to fill that knowledge gap by answers to the following research questions: “What are the strategy implementation practices at

the Kenya Medical training college? What are the strategy implementation challenges faced by Kenya medical training college?”

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Foundation

Okech (2013) asserts that, strategic management has many theories that guide it. There are emergent theories and perspective theories of strategic management. Emergent theories include survival based theories, uncertainty based theories, human resource based theories and innovation and knowledge based theories of strategic management. Perspective theories of strategic management are industry and environment based theories, resource based theories, game based theories and cooperation and network based theories of strategy.

The study is anchored on Resource Based View (RBV) and contingency theory. RBV was originated by Penrose (1959). Wernerfelt's (1984) explains that a firm's internal resources are its source of competitive advantage. The basis of this is that a firm which possesses valuable, rare, inimitable and non-substitutable resources registers superior performance in the industry (Rumelt, 1984; Barney, 1996; Dierickx and Cool, 1989). However, Barney's (1991) specification of the characteristics necessary for a sustainable competitive advantage seemed to be a seminal article in popularizing the theory within the strategy and other literatures. In any organization, resources which are rare, valuable, inimitable and non-substitutable can provide sources of sustainable competitive advantages.

Porter (1985) implied that, strategy is about achieving competitive advantage through being different, which is, delivering a unique value added to the customers, having a clear and actionable view of how to position yourself uniquely in your industry. Thompson et al (2003) asserts that, strategy is the match between an organization's resources and skills and the environment opportunities as well as the risks it faces and the purposes it wishes to accomplish.

Strategy is a deliberate search for a plan of action that will develop a business's competitive advantage and compound it. For any company, the search is an iterative process that begins with recognition of where you are now and what you have now. It is the process of specifying the organization's objectives, developing policies and plans to achieve these objectives, and allocating resources to implement the policies and plans to achieve the organization's objectives (Thompson, Strickland & Gamble, 2007). While according to Johnson and Scholes (2002), strategy is the direction and scope of an organization over the long term, which achieves advantage for the organization through its configuration of resources within a challenging environment, to meet the needs of markets and to fulfill stakeholders' expectations.

Proponents of the contingency theory argue that there is no one or single best way or approach to manage organizations. Organizations should then develop strategy based on the situation and condition they are experiencing (David, 2005). Strategic management and contingency theory, a strategic fit between strategic considerations and organizational capabilities and resources is critical to competitive advantage development. In an environment characterized by intense global competition and technological dynamism, firms may seek to provide product/service at lowest

feasible costs or to make differentiation in serving some particular geographic markets and/or customer groups (Porter, 1980). Firms rely only on their own capabilities will be at a competitive disadvantage. Therefore, firms may choose to form alliances to complement and reinforce a firm's knowledge and capability base should reflect its strategic intents and focus (Mody, 1993).

Aulakh and Kotabe (1997) suggested a contingency approach by associating two or more independent variables with a dependent outcome to explain the effects of strategy-structure alignment on organizational performance. Following the contingency argument, this study proposes the competitive advantage through an identified variable must match strategic factors, and organizational capabilities, and this fit is the critical determinant of company performance. Accordingly, a fit is defined as the degree of conformity to the theoretically derived relationships between the antecedent variables and thus competitive advantage can be developed (Horton & Richey, 1997).

Success Factors in Strategy Implementation

Implementation of strategy is the process through which a chosen strategy is put into action. It involves the design and management of systems to achieve the best integration of people, structure, processes and resources in achieving organizational objectives. Once the creative and analytical aspects of strategy formulation have been settled, the managerial priority is one of converting the strategy into operationally effective action. Indeed a strategy is never complete, even as formulation until it gains a commitment of the organization's resources and becomes embodied in organizational activities. Therefore, to bring the result, the strategy should be put to action because the choice of even the soundest strategy will not affect organizational activities and achievement of its objectives. Therefore, effective implementation of strategy is a must for the organization. Judging from this definition, it can be observed that the scope of managerial activities associated with strategy implementation is virtually coexistence with the entire management process. This is because the entire management process is geared up according to the needs of the strategy (Kinyoe, 2012).

The level of success of a strategy depends on the degree of participation in planning and on acceptance of the goals, indicators and targets set. Therefore effective implementation of strategy plan is likely to be successful if it rests on meetings and consensus between the management and staff, rather than a top down imposition of plans and targets (Song, 1983). Goal setting involves managers and subordinates jointly establishing and clarifying employee's goals. The first element of goal setting is establishing goals that are perceived as challenging but realistic and to which there is high level of commitment. It involves having employees participate in the goal setting process so as to increase motivation and performance. Participation also convinces employees that the targets are achievable and can increase their commitment to achieving them. Participation in goal setting is likely to be seen as legitimate, resulting in the desired commitment to the implementation of a strategy (Cummings & Worley, 2005).

Okumus (2001) identifies ten key variables that are important for successful strategy implementation. The factors are; formulation, environment uncertainty, organizational structure, culture, operational planning, communication, resource allocation, people, control and outcome. Pearce and Robinson (2003) assert that to effectively implement strategy, mechanisms such as

organizational structure, information systems, leadership styles, assignment of key managers, budgeting and rewards and controls systems must be in place.

Challenges of Strategy Implementation

Strategy implementation is the final step in the strategic management process and it is where the strategy is put into action. No matter how creative the formulated strategy may be, the organization will always operate in a turbulent and competitive environment. Strategy implementation involves using several tools including parts of the firm that can be adjusted to put strategy into action. Once a new strategy is selected, it is implemented through changes in leadership, structure, information and control systems, and human resources (Nutt, 1989). There are many organization characteristics and challenges that routinely would stand on the way of strategy implementation. They include politics, resistance to change, structure, culture, leadership, policies, reward and ownership of the strategy (Burners, 2000). These challenges hinge on the strategies themselves and are of both institutional and operational in nature.

In the organizational behavior literature, organizational culture has been defined in many ways by various authors and researchers. However, many would agree that organizational culture can be referred to as a set of values, beliefs, and behavior patterns that form the core identity of organizations and that help in shaping their employees' behavior (Rashid et al., 2003; Pool, 2000). Organizational culture is not just any thoughts, values, and actions, but rather the unifying patterns that are shared, learnt, aggregated at the group level, and internalized only by organizational members. These values are then taught to new members in the organization as the correct way to think and feel in relation to those problems.

Resource allocation brings challenge to strategy implementation if they are not allocated according to priorities established by annual objectives. All organizations have at least four types of resources that can be used to achieve desired objectives which include financial, physical, human and technological (Thompson and Strickland, 1993). There are a number of factors that commonly prohibit effective allocation of resources. This include overprotection of resources, too much emphasis on short run financial criteria, organizational politics, vague strategy targets, reluctance to take risks and lack of sufficient knowledge (David, 2003).

Implementation of strategy demands ownership at all levels of management i.e. top management, middle management, lower management and non-management. Effectiveness of strategy implementation is, at least in part, affected by the quality of people involved in the process (Govindarajan, 1988). Here, quality refers to skills, attitudes, capabilities, experiences and other characteristics of people required by a specific task or position (Peng & Littlejohn, 2001). Committing to and owning the process is central to effective execution. The execution tasks, jobs, and responsibilities vary across levels, but they are all interdependent and important. Top management is crucial in guiding strategy implementation in an organization.

According to Hrebiniak (2005) the process of interaction and participation among the top management team typically leads to greater commitment to the firm's goals and strategies. This, in turn, serves to ensure the successful implementation of the firms chosen strategy. Some strategies fail because there was no effective communication of the strategy to the concerned

employees. The communication that should be done includes explaining the new responsibilities, tasks and duties to the affected employees. There is also need to explain why the new strategic decision is being made.

Hrebiniak (2005), making strategy work presents a formidable challenge. A number of factors such as politics, resistance to change cause a major setback hence without carefully planned execution, strategic goals cannot be achieved. Ansoff and Mc Donnell (1990) noted that while implementing strategy is such an important activity, it is not easy. Most excellent strategies fail when attempts to implement them are made. David (1997) asserted that 10% of formulated strategies are successfully implemented while 90% of well formulated strategies fail at implementation stage. The reasons advanced for failure in strategy implementation are; fit between strategy and structure, allocation of resources, organizational culture, leadership, rewards system and the nature of strategy itself. Organizations have to strike a balance between all these factors in order to ensure that crafted strategies are put into action. Implementation of strategy does not automatically follow strategy formulation. There is always some resistance, which occurs whenever there is a departure from historical behavior, culture and power structure. All these cause delays, additional costs and instability in the process of change.

Another challenge that organizations face in strategy implementation is matching structure with strategy. Changes in strategy of the organization require changes in the way the organization is structured. Structuring dictate how policies and objectives are established. When an organization changes its strategy, the existing organizational structure may become ineffective. Symptoms of an ineffective organization structure include too many people, too much attention being directed at solving interdepartmental conflicts, too large a span of control and too many unachieved objectives (David, 1986).

According to Alexander (1985), underestimating the time needed for implementation is the most frequently occurring strategy implementation problem. Implementation time is the time required to effectively implement a strategy or strategies earlier formulated. Enough amount of time is to be provided by the formulators depending on the task. The formulators must ensure that they do not exaggerate on the time needed and on the other side they should not underestimate it. This can only succeed when there is coordination and team work.

Burns (1996) a survey of 3 fortune 500 US firms revealed that over half of the corporation experienced the following 10 problems when they attempted to implement a strategic change. He listed the problems in order of frequency as; Implementation took more time than originally planned, unanticipated major problems arise, activities were ineffectively coordinate, competing activities and crisis took attention away from implementation, the involved employees had insufficient capabilities to perform their jobs, lower level employees were in adequately trained, uncontrollable external environment factors created problems, departmental managers provided inadequate leadership and direction, key implementation task and activities were poorly defined and the information system inadequately motivated activities.

David (1997) asserts that organizations have at least four types of resources that can be used to achieve desired objectives, namely financial, physical, human and technological. The various activities necessary to implement any particular strategy should be defined in terms of each type

of resource required. Muthuiya (2004) identified strategy implementation challenges at AMREF as inadequate resources, unsupportive organization culture, major obstacles surfacing during implementation, implementation taking too long than anticipated and uncontrollable or unforeseen factors in the environment. Machuki (2005) Identified challenges of strategy implementation at Cooper Motors Corporation (CMC) as unsupportive structure and culture, resistance to change, uncontrollable factors in the environment, inadequate resources, implementation taking too long than expected, unsupportive processes and procedures among others.

Koske (2003) identified challenges at Telkom Kenya as poor management, lack of resources, poor leadership style, limited IT capacity, government regulations and unsupportive culture. He further noted that structure in itself will not ensure success of strategy, although an inappropriate choice of structure could impede success. Koske (2003) observes that there are many organizational characteristics, which act constraint strategy implementation. The challenges concern connecting strategy formulation to implementation, resources allocation, match between strategy and structure, linking performance and pay to strategies and creating strategy supportive structure. Awino (2001) identified lack of fit between strategy and structure as a factor affecting successful strategy implementation. Further, he cited inadequate information and communication systems, and failure to impart new skills as some of the factors affecting strategy implementation at Higher Education Loans Board. Aosa (1992) observes that lack of compatibility between strategy and culture can lead to high organizational resistance to change and poor motivation, which can in turn frustrate the strategy implementation.

Managing change is difficult but absolutely critical for successful strategy execution (Hrebiniak 2008). Wharton-Gartner's study (Hrebiniak 2005b) found that problems with change management constitute the single biggest threat to strategy implementation. Leaders must therefore identify areas of necessary change and overcome any potential resistance to change. This problem was, for example, ranked as one of the largest obstacles to strategy execution by American managers (Hrebiniak 2005b). Another common cultural problem is the domination of the short-term orientation in a company. Two independent studies conducted by Alexander (1985) and Al-Ghamdi (1998) report that competing short-term activities distract attention from strategy implementation in 64% and 83% of companies, respectively. This scenario should be monitored and controlled if the firm is to implement its strategy successfully.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a case study research design. The study used both primary and secondary data. The study population was the KMTC headquarters offices and all constituent KMTC campuses which had the chance of implementing the strategic plans (<http://www.kmtc.ac.ke> on 24th February 2015). The study respondents was the top management at the KMTC headquarters, principals and HOD of various satellite KMTC campuses. Primary Data was collected with the help of a semi structured questionnaire The study was a Census involving all the 28 KMTC campuses which had the chance of implementing both strategic plans to completion. Data was analyzed by use of SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Science). The

descriptive statistics such as tabulations, percentages, mean, standard deviation and frequencies was used in the data presentation.

4.0 RESULTS

4.1 Demographics of Respondents

4.1.1 Gender of Respondents

Demographics of respondents used in this study focused on the gender, age, level of education, designation and how long respondents had served in their current positions. Gender and age of respondents is a pointer of the employee diversity in an organization. This determines their opinion about how to implement strategies of an organization. A diverse age for example, leverages on in experiences of the youth and the cautious attitude by the old. Table 1 below shows the descriptive statistics on gender of respondents.

Table 1: Gender of Respondents

Gender of Respondents	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percent
Valid male	35	62.5	62.5
Female	21	37.5	100.0
Total	56	100.0	

Source: Research Data, 2017

From table 1, the majority of respondents were males with a percentage frequency of 62.5 %. Females represented a third of the respondents with a percentage frequency of 37.5 %.

4.1.2 Age

Respondents were asked to indicate their ages. From pilot study, the ages were categorized into five clusters of below 25 years, 25 to 30 years, 31 to 40 years, 41to 50 years and over 50 years of age. Table 2 shows an analysis of ages of respondents as reported by them.

Table 2 Age of respondents

Age of respondents	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 25-30	1	1.8	1.8
31-40	8	14.3	16.1
41-50	15	26.8	42.9
Over 50	32	57.1	100.0
Total	56	100.0	

Source: Research Data, 2017

From the Table, majority of respondents were aged above 50 years which represented 57.1% of respondents. This was followed by those within the age bracket of 41 to 50 years with a percentage of 26.8%. Only 8 respondents indicated their ages to be between 31 and 40, representing 14.3 % of respondents. One respondent was in the age bracket of between 25 and 30

years. This demography is a representation of most organizations which promote staff based on their level of experience which by extension depends on age. Since the questionnaires were aimed at senior level managers, it is expected that they will be the most experienced hence their advanced age bracket.

4.1.3 Level of Education

The level of education of respondents was sort in the study. Levels of education were based on a respondent having a higher diploma, a university degree, a post graduate degree or diploma, a PhD and any other qualification. The Table 3 shows the levels of education of respondents based on the criteria set above.

Table 3: Level of Education

	Level of Education	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	H Diploma	1	1.8	1.8
	Degree	9	16.1	17.9
	PGD/Dip	44	78.6	96.4
	4	1	1.8	98.2
	PhD	1	1.8	100.0
	Total	56	100.0	

Source: Research data, 2017

Table 3 above shows the level of education of respondents. From the table, majority of respondents were holders of post graduate diploma or degrees with a percentage of 78.6%. This was followed by those who held a first degree with 16.1 %. Only one person had a higher diploma. One more person had a doctoral degree representing 1.8% in both cases. This data shows that majority of respondents were capable of implementing strategies set by the college given their advanced levels of education.

4.1.4 Designation of Respondents

The questionnaire focused on strategy implementers. According to the researchers, there were three levels of managers who are charged with the responsibility of strategy implementation. These levels included the heads of departments, the principals and senior managers. Respondents were asked to indicate their designation. Table 4 shows a breakdown of respondents by designation.

Table 4: Designation of Respondents

	Designation of Respondents	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	HoD	9	16.1	16.1
	Principal	44	78.6	94.6
	Senior Mgt	3	5.4	100.0
	Total	56	100.0	

Source: Research Data, 2017

From table 4, majority of respondents were principals, representing 78.6 % of respondents. Principals are the heads of constituent campuses and are responsible for the day to day running of campuses. They are also key in the implementation of strategies since they oversee the daily operations in campuses. This was followed by the heads of departments who formed 16.1% of respondents. Only three senior managers responded to the questionnaires, forming 5.4% of the returned questionnaires.

4.1.5 Period of Service in the Current Position

Researchers sort to determine how long respondents had served in their current positions. This was grouped into five levels namely, less than 5 years, 5 to 7 years, 8 to 10 years, 11 to 13 years and over 13 years. The period of time spent in the current position was useful in determining the level of competence in strategy implementation. Table 5 shows the period respondents had served in their current positions.

Table 5: Period of Service in the Current Position

	Duration in Current Position	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Less 5 Years	23	41.1	41.8
	5-7 Years	13	23.2	65.5
	8-10 Years	6	10.7	76.4
	11-13 years	5	8.9	85.5
	over 13 Years	8	14.3	100.0
	Total	55	98.2	
Missing	System	1	1.8	
	Total	56	100.0	

Source: Research Data, 2017

From table 5, majority of respondents had spent less than 5 years in their current positions forming 41.1% of total respondents. 23.2% of respondents had spent between 5 and 7 years in their current position. 10.7 % had spent between 8 and 10 years while 8.9% of respondents had spent between 11 and 13 years in their positions. 14.3% of respondents had spent above 13 years in their current positions.

The vast majority of respondents who had spent less than 5 years in their current positions may be principals since the tenure of this group of employees is 3 years renewable upon satisfactory performance. Those respondents with above 7 years of tenure may be representing senior managers and heads of department who have no term limits and could serve for a longer period of time.

4.2 Knowledge on Strategic Direction

It is vital for every employee to know about their organization. To be exact, each employee needs to know what the vision, mission and values of their organization are. This therefore enables them to relate organizational objectives to their core mandate. Strategic plan therefore becomes a synchronized adoption to organizational goals. Implementation of any strategy depends on a clear understanding of why the organization exists and what it stands for. In view

of this, respondents were asked to indicate and state the organization's vision and mission. Table 6 shows various responses to this inquiry. The statements were interpreted in accordance to the actual vision and mission of the institution. Since respondents were given sufficient time in their work environment to fill the questionnaire, it is highly likely that they may have referenced their responses on the mission statements in their offices. Conspicuous hanging of mission statements is a requirement of QMS.

Table 6: Mission Statement

Mission and Vision	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Yes	51	91.1	92.7
Valid No	4	7.1	100.0
Missing Total	55	98.2	
Missing System	1	1.8	
Total	56	100.0	

Source: Research Data, 2017

Table 6 show responses on the vision and mission of KMTC. Majority of respondents correctly stated the mission and vision of the college, constituting 91.1%. Four respondents seemed not to know the mission statement of the college. One respondent failed to fill this part of the questionnaire.

Researchers sort to determine if respondents knew about the existence of a strategic plan and the period the strategic plan was effective. A yes to whether the strategic plan existed would be evidenced by the correct response on the period the plan was effective. Table 7 below shows the responses on this questionnaire item.

Table 7: Existence Strategic Plan and Duration

Existence of Strategic Plan	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Yes	54	96.4	96.4
Valid No	2	3.6	100.0
Total	56	100.0	

Source: Research Data, 2017

From the table above, majority of respondents knew about the existence of a strategic plan and the duration of years it was in place. This represented 96.4 % of the respondents. Two respondents representing 3.6% did not know about the existence of a strategic plan and the duration it was effective.

4.2.1 Implementation of the Strategic Plan; Current Status

Effective implementation of a strategic plan requires the aspect of structures, strategy, skills, staff, systems, and leadership style (peters and watermans, 1982). The researchers sort to determine the levels to which KMTC had put in place these mechanisms to ensure successful

implementation. Respondents were asked to indicate whether there were competent personnel to effectively guide implementation. Table 4.9 shows responses to this questionnaire item.

Table 8 Personnel to Guide Strategy Implementation

Personnel		Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	42	75.0	77.8
	No	12	21.4	100.0
	Total	54	96.4	
Missing	System	2	3.6	
Total		56	100.0	

Source: Research data, 2017

Table 8 shows responses on the competence of staff to implement strategy. From the table, majority of respondents were confident about existence of competent staff to implement strategy. This represented 75% of respondents. However, 21.4% of respondents did not think the college had competent staff to guide strategy implementation. Those who agreed that the college had competent staff enumerated the experience of staff, their knowledge having undergone management course and that some lecturers had training in strategic management. Those who were of the contrary opinion cited lack of sensitization on the strategic plan and the how it could be implemented.

Style of leadership, especially top management support is essential for success of strategy implementation. Respondents were asked to indicate if top management supported strategy implementation efforts and if they provided the necessary leadership necessary for successful implementation of strategy. Table 9 represents responses on the questionnaire item on top management leadership.

Table 9: Top Management Support

Top Management Support		Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	45	80.4	81.8
	No	10	17.9	100.0
	Total	55	98.2	
Missing	System	1	1.8	
Total		56	100.0	

Source: Research data, 2017

Table 9 shows the respondents' opinion on whether top management provided leadership necessary to allow strategy implementation efforts to be successful. Most respondents agreed that top management provided necessary leadership to support strategy implementation. This represented 80.4 % of respondents. However, 17.9 % of respondents indicated that there was lack of support by top management. Those who agreed that there was top management enumerated reason including allocation of resources, the fact that some indicators were part of performance contract of top managers, facilitation of meetings, use of circulars to line managers,

and that successful implementation was tied to organizational image which top managers were interested in keeping.

Respondents with contrary opinion cited top management lethargy, inability to tie performance to rewards, lack of periodical review of strategic plan, disjointed coordination and the fact that the strategic plan was a mere document which was not given sufficient attention by top management.

Communication of strategy is essential in implementation efforts. Respondents were asked to indicate whether there was sufficient communication of strategy to staff across the organization. Table 10 indicates responses on whether there was sufficient communication of strategies to staff.

Table 10: Communication of Strategy

Communication	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Yes	26	46.4	46.4
No	30	53.6	100.0
Total	56	100.0	

Source: Research Data, 2017

Table 10 shows responses on whether there was sufficient communication of strategy to staff. Majority of respondents disagree that there is sufficient communication of strategy to staff. This view is shared by 53.6 % of respondents. Only 26 respondents representing 46.4 % of respondents agree that communication is sufficient. Those in support of sufficient communication cite proper communication channels and organization of trainings on some aspects of strategy. Those with dissenting opinions cite lack of understanding of strategies since time is not allocated to discuss each strategy.

Successful implementation of strategy requires continuous monitoring and evaluation to identify challenges and come up with timely interventions. Monitoring also enables identified loopholes to be sealed and allows adjustments to be done on strategies based on existing environmental challenges. Respondents were asked to indicate whether there was a mechanism in place to continuously monitor implementation of strategy. Table 11 show responses on monitoring of implementation.

Table 11: Monitoring of Implementation

Monitoring	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Yes	33	58.9	60.0
No	22	39.3	100.0
Total	55	98.2	
Missing System	1	1.8	
Total	56	100.0	

Source: Research Data, 2017

Table 11 shows responses as to whether there was continuous monitoring of strategy implementation. From the table, 58.9% of respondents agree that monitoring is done while

39.3% of respondents do not agree that there is continuous monitoring. Respondents citing availability of monitoring mechanisms cite quality management systems and frequent auditing as enablers of monitoring.

A further probe was done to establish who does the monitoring and how frequent it was done. Table 12 indicates how frequent monitoring is done. Responses were summarized into those who felt monitoring was not done at all, sometimes, and often. Most respondents mention that monitoring is done by heads of departments, auditors and principals.

Table 12: Frequency of Monitoring

	Frequency	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Not at all	10	17.9	19.2
	Sometimes	16	28.6	50.0
	Often	26	46.4	100.0
	Total	52	92.9	
Missing	System	4	7.1	
Total		56	100.0	

Source: Research Data, 2017

From table 12, respondents agree that there is frequent monitoring. This represents 46.4 5 of respondents. However, some respondents indicate that monitoring is only done sometimes, representing 28.6% of respondents. 17.9 % of respondents cannot cite the frequency of monitoring. Those who indicated that no monitoring was done were not sure of the intervals monitoring was done.

Researchers sought to determine if there were policies in place to support strategy implementation. In order to analyze this item, the analysis was based on first, knowledge of existing policies and second, identification of specific policies. Frequency tabulation was done do determine whether respondents knew of any policies and secondly, a summary of those policies were analyzed. Table 13 show responses to this questionnaire item. It is important to note that this item was generally poorly responded to with 10 respondents not indicating their preference.

Table 13: Measures to ensure Policies support strategy Implementation

	Policies	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	policies	27	48.2	58.7
	Don't know	19	33.9	100.0
	Total	46	82.1	
Missing	System	10	17.9	
Total		56	100.0	

Source: Research data, 2017

Table 13 shows the responses on whether measures were taken to ensure policies existed to support strategy implementation and specific policies which support strategy implementation. 27 respondents consisting of 48.2% were aware of measures that enabled policies supported strategy

implementation. 33.9% were not aware of any measures to support strategy implementation. Among the measures mentioned were proper communication, availability of performance contracting, and provision of sufficient resources.

4.3 Qualitative Statistics and Analysis

This section presents qualitative statistics and analysis of primary data gathered for this research. The statistics detail the mean, standard deviation, coefficient of variation, t-values and significant levels.

4.3.1 Challenges of Implementation of Strategic Plan

Respondents were asked to indicate to what extent they encountered the stated challenges in the course of strategy implementation at the institution. The rating was done in a 5-point likert scale ranging from the lowest;1 meaning not at all to the highest 5 meaning to a very great extent. Table 14 illustrates the analysis of challenges in strategy implementation at KMTC.

Table 14: Challenges Facing Strategy Implementation at KMTC

Challenges of Strategy Implementation	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Coefficient of Variation % (Cv)	t	Sig. (2-tailed)
Inadequate funds	56	3.61	1.056	0.293	25.557	.000
untimely funding	56	3.68	1.193	0.324	23.084	.000
Lack of Top Mgt Commitment	55	2.62	1.130	0.431 0.404	17.180	.000
Resistance to change	56	2.61	1.056	0.589	18.472	.000
political Interference	56	2.07	1.219	0.426	12.717	.000
Org. Culture	56	2.63	1.121	0.503	17.522	.000
Lack of skills	56	2.39	1.201	0.362	14.907	.000
Inadequate staffing	56	3.57	1.291	0.426	20.697	.000
Inadequate structures	56	2.91	1.240	0.385	17.567	.000
Poor Communication	56	2.79	1.074	0.392	19.412	.000
Lack of buy in	56	3.00	1.176		19.098	.000

Note: The Ranking was on a 5-point Likert scale: 1-Not at All, 2-Little Extent,3-Moderate Extent, 4-Great Extent, 5-Very great Extent

Source: Research Data, 2017

The results show that the tests were significant at 95% confidence level. All the mean values are above 2.5 and tend towards 5 meaning that most respondents tended to agree with the fact that there were challenges in strategy implementation. The highest mean was 3.68 indicating that most respondents agreed that challenges of funding was a great impediment to strategy implementation. The lowest mean was 2.07 on political interference showing that respondents did not think that this was a major challenge. Coefficients of variation show that the highest variability was on Resistance to change (58.9%) followed by organizational culture at 50.3%. The highest t-value was 25.557 while the lowest t-value was 12.717 meaning that there was a

significant difference between the population mean and the hypothesized mean. The test showed that all the test items on challenges in strategy implementation had statistical significance with P-Values < 0.05.

4.3.2 Organizational Factors

Organizational factors are essential for implementation of strategy. Respondents were asked to indicate how various organizational factors were essential for strategy implementation. Ranking was done in a Likert scale of 1 to 5. Table 15 illustrates the analysis of organizational factors.

Table 15: Organizational Factors

Statements on Organizational Factors affecting Strategy Implementation	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Cv	t	Sig. (2-tailed)
The college has a budget which is tied to performance objectives	56	3.88	1.145	0.295	25.322	0.000
The college ensures suitable organization structure is in place to implement strategic objectives	56	3.70	1.043	0.281	26.519	.000
The college has an effective internal auditing program	56	3.95	1.017	0.257	29.051	.000
The systems used to manage the college have been adapted to ensure success of strategies	56	3.63	1.037	2.857	26.164	.000
The college has in place reference materials on quality management	56	3.75	1.179	0.314	23.794	.000
The college has a autonomous departments	56	3.16	1.449	0.459	16.318	.000
The departments have access and support of top management	55	3.82	1.020	0.267	27.761	.000
The management staff have a culture of trust	55	3.51	.998	0.284	26.086	.000
Department staff coordinate their activities in cooperation with other departments	56	3.54	1.008	0.285	26.238	.000
Staff	56	2.59	1.156	0.446	16.755	.000
Decision making is highly centralized	56	3.64	1.052	0.289	25.916	.000
There are systems in place to monitor what individuals do as compared to what they are expected to do	56	3.11	1.171	0.377	19.864	.000
Employees are encouraged to participate in decision making	55	3.29	.994	0.302	24.555	.000
Sufficient resources have always been allocated to departments to accomplish performance objectives	56	2.64	.923	0.350	21.427	.000
The need for training work force to ensure efficient service delivery has always been taken into account	56	3.11	1.056	0.340	22.014	.000
The college organizes team building activities for staff	56	3.23	1.062	0.329	22.784	.000
Top management encourages employee feedback on performance	55	3.42	1.049	0.307	24.174	.000
The management ensures there are qualified staff to undertake responsibilities	56	3.46	.914	0.264	28.369	.000
The organization has sufficient infrastructural facilities to ensure competitiveness	56	2.84	.949	0.334	22.384	.000
Organizational Culture encourages attainment of competence in work	56	3.13	.955	0.305	24.496	.000
The organization has highly motivated employees	56	2.98	.944	0.316	23.647	.000
The organization possesses unique resources	56	3.34	1.049	0.314	23.815	.000

Source: Research Data, 2017

Response to the questionnaire section on organizational factors was based on a ranking on a 5-point likert scale as follows; 1- Not at all, 2- Small Extent, 3- Moderate extent, 4- Large Extent, 5- Very large extent. Respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which the statements applied to their organization.

The highest mean was on college having effective auditing program which was 3.95 while the lowest mean was on how the organization rewarded staff on performance which was 2.59. The

highest t- value was 29.051 on the college having an effective auditing system while the lowest t-value was 16.318 on the departments being autonomous. All the values were significant at 95% confidence level meaning that there was a significant difference between the population mean and the hypothesized mean.

Table 15 gives the descriptive statistics on organizational factors. The respondents were asked to give a score on a likert scale between 1 and 5. Questionnaire items were aggregated into variables that described an organizational factor. For example, items that formed organizational culture included; the departments having a culture of trust and the organization encouraging attainment of competence in work. These were transformed into a single variable then a one-point t-test run on them. From the table, structure and systems had a very high mean score indicating that respondents agreed to a large extent that these variables applied to the organization as far as strategy implementation was concerned. The lowest mean was recorded on staff with 3.43. The highest variability was on staff which had a standard deviation of 0.914.

Table 15: Descriptive Statistics on Organizational Factors

Constructs	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	Sig. (2-tailed)	Coefficient of variation %
Structure	42	4.26	.828	33.352	.000	19.4
Policies	42	3.7024	.53316	45.003	.000	14.4
Staff	42	3.43	.914	24.298	.000	26.7
Systems	42	4.0317	.56458	46.280	.000	14
Management style	42	3.7393	.47415	51.109	.000	12.7
Culture	42	3.7619	.68287	35.702	.000	18.2

Source: Research data, 2017

5.0 SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary

There were two objectives of the study which were to determine the challenges of strategy implementation at Kenya Medical Training College and to determine the status of implementation of strategic plan. To determine the status of strategy implementation, several thematic areas we focused on. These areas included: staff competence to implement the strategic plan, whether the top management supported implementation efforts, whether there was a communication strategy to support implementation. Finally, respondents were asked whether there was monitoring of the plan and how frequent the monitoring occurred.

The study established that there were competent staffs to implement the strategic plan. Secondly, it was established that top management supported the efforts of strategy implementation to a large extent. The study however shows that there were no well established communication strategies to support implementation. While there was monitoring of implementation efforts, there was no proper schedule in place. Monitoring was mainly through financial audits which to a large extent failed to cover most areas in the strategic plan.

The second objective was to determine the challenges the college faced during the course of strategy implementation. The study explored several challenges such as inadequacy of funds, delay of funds for implementation, lack of top management support, resistance to change, political interference, organizational culture, lack of skills, inadequate staffing, inadequate infrastructure, poor communication and lack of buy-in. The finding of the study was that all these factors posed significant level of challenges when it came to strategy implementation. The greatest challenge was found to be lack of adequate funds to implement the strategies which had been set.

5.2 Conclusion

The study set out to determine the challenges faced by KMTC in implementing the strategic plan. The study also set out to determine the implementation status of the strategic plan. The study also determined the organizational factors affecting strategy implementation. The researchers found that there are several challenges affecting strategy implementation at KMTC namely: inadequacy of funds, delay of funds for implementation, lack of top management support, resistance to change, political interference, organizational culture, lack of skills, inadequate staffing, inadequate infrastructure, poor communication and lack of buy-in. The researchers conclude that there are several challenges the college must surmount to successfully implement its strategies. Further, the researchers found that the college is at different levels when it comes to implementation status. For example, the college has competent staff, there is top management support and there exists monitoring of the strategic plan to some extent though there is no established schedule for monitoring. There however does not exist a proper communication strategy that will ensure seamless implementation of strategic plan.

5.3 Recommendations

The study recommends that Organizations have to formulate various strategies according to the environment they are operating in. strategy implementation can never be a one method fit for all approach. recommend that the college should create an office specifically meant to implement the strategic plan. The office will be involved in the crafting of strategies, implementing strategies and monitoring and evaluating its successes or failures. The office will also be instrumental in solving emerging challenges during implementation. The study recommend that finance policies in the college be adopted to the paradigm that says 'Resources follow functions'. When functions are set as objectives in the strategic plan, then each cycle of budgeting should consider strategic priorities. The college should therefore tie budgeting process to the strategic planning cycle to ensure priorities in the strategic plan are well funded.

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