

STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION AT TANGAZA COLLEGE, KENYA

BY

KINYANJUI GEORGE GRACESON

A RESEARCH PROJECT SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF BUSINESS IN  
PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF THE  
DEGREE OF MASTER OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION OF THE UNIVERSITY OF  
NAIROBI

OCTOBER, 2011

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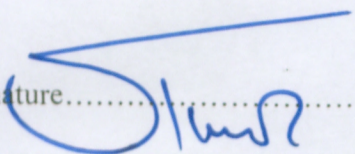
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DECLARATION

STUDENT'S DECLARATION

This research project is my original work and has not been presented for a degree at any other University or Institution.

Signature.....

Date 8/11/2011.....

KINYANJUI GEORGE GRACESON

REG.NO. D61/9195/2006

SUPERVISOR'S DECLARATION

This research project has been submitted for examination with my approval as the candidate's University Supervisor.

Signature .....

Date 8-11-2011.....

For MR. JEREMIAH KAGWE  
LECTURER  
DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION  
UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI

## DEDICATION

My special dedication goes to my entire family for their prayers and support during the period of this study. It is their encouragement and resilience that has made this work a success

I wish to express my sincere appreciation to my family for their understanding and support during the project. I also wish to acknowledge the valuable assistance I received from my Supervisor who was always willing to offer guidance and share his skills and knowledge with me.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I thank the Almighty God for His guidance and providence which enabled me to undertake this project that was too involving in terms of time and resources.

I wish to express my sincere appreciation to my family for their understanding and support during the project. I acknowledge the valuable assistance I received from my Supervisor who was always willing to offer guidance and share his skills and knowledge with me.

## ABSTRACT

The strategy of an organization involves matching its corporate objectives and its available resources. In the development of strategy, managers are concerned with reconciling the business with the allocation of resources available. The implementation process involves the collective wisdom, knowledge, and even subconscious minds of the collaborators. Strikingly, organizations fail to implement about 70 per cent of their new strategies. This study aimed at determining the challenges that Tangaza College faces in strategy implementation and the research was conducted through a case study since it is a research on one organization. Both primary and secondary data was used for the study. An interview guide was administered among Heads of Departments and their assistants at Tangaza College to collect primary data and afterwards the results were edited for completeness and consistency. Conceptual content analysis was used in analyzing the data.

The study found out that Tangaza College had a bureaucratic University structure. Validation, administration and review of programmes are controlled and managed wholly clearly defined procedures. The management formulates missions while the operating units are given autonomy to perform their administrative roles with flexibility to suit their areas of specialization. The study also found out that causes of delay in communicating with employees concerning issues related to the strategy implementation were poor vertical communication, lack of employee participation, lack of training and education. The College management implements strategic change stage by stage by analyzing the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats as well as any misaligned elements of each operating unit. The analysis reflects the move occurring in the continuing education. Contextualization is attained by means of programme diversification, progression ladders and professional recognition. The study recommends that Tangaza College should have a strategy to train its employees by arranging seminars to enlighten them on new ways of management. Furthermore, there is a clear need to improve on vertical communication and to adopt good management practices that will positively affect strategy implementation in the organization.

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## CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of the Study

Empirical research in recent years has made significant contributions to the strategy implementation. These efforts, however, have not provided complete answers to many of the core strategic dilemmas faced by top executives (Hambrick and Fredrickson, 2001). In many respects, strategy implementation remains an intuitive and philosophical undertaking. As such, managers are still faced with some critical judgment calls when formulating strategy for their companies, each of which involves apparent contradictions that must be negotiated if a firm is to succeed. Family owned businesses experience challenges in their strategy implementations. Regardless of their legal structure (for instance, corporation, limited liability company, or partnership), the family-owned business can avoid many problems down the line and better position itself for success if relationships between business owners are carefully documented (Tutelman and Hause, 2008).

For the owners of a family business, a well-designed agreement for the business entity can help ensure that the owners/partners understand their rights, duties and obligations to the business and to each other. The written agreement should include provisions that address multiple issues, including rules for managing and controlling the business; how distributions will be made to the owners; restrictions on transfer of shares due to divorce or death; buy-sell provisions, succession planning; and how dissolution of the business will be handled if the owners can no longer work together (Nyberg and Jensen, 2009).

The single most common (and costly) mistake that family business owners make is their failure to formally document in writing the terms of their business arrangement (Claver et al, 2009). In fact, many business owners assume when dealing with family members that there is no real need for a written agreement. According to Claver et al, (2009) strategic planning for family-owned businesses requires that integrating family issues, such as the long-term personal and professional goals of family members, the family mission, commitment to establishing and operating the business, vision of the firm in the future, participation (active or passive) of family members in management and handling of issues such as compensation, benefits and performance evaluation (Chakrabarty, 2009).

### **1.1.1 Concept of Strategy**

All organisations exist in an environment that impacts how they formulate and implement strategies. This relationship with the environment creates both problems and opportunities. Strategy refers to the resources and activities of an organization to the environment in which it operates. According to Davies and Walters (2004), it is through Strategy management that a firm will be able to position and relate itself to the environment to ensure its continued success and also secure itself from surprises brought about by the changing environment. He further argues that this can be done by firstly, positioning of the firm through strategy and capability planning in its rightful competitiveness, and secondly, use of real time response through issue management and thirdly, systematic management of resistance during strategy implementation (Grant, 2003).

The strategy of an organization involves matching its corporate objectives and its available resources. In the development of strategy, managers are concerned with reconciling the business the organization is in with the allocation of resources. This allocation process is concerned with the general purposes of an organization, whether it is part of the grand plan, the overall objectives or a 'strategy' designed to keep the organization in business (Grant, 2003).

### **1.1.2 Strategy Implementation**

Once strategies have been agreed on, the next step is implementation; this is where most failures occur. It is not uncommon for strategic plans to be drawn up annually, and to have no impact on the organization as a whole. The implementation process involves the collective wisdom, knowledge, and even subconscious minds of the collaborators. This powerful phenomenon is becoming a requirement to effectively compete in today's global marketplace (Hills, 1997). Implementing strategies successfully is vital for any organization, either public or private. Without implementation, even the most superior strategy is useless. The notion of strategy implementation might at first seem quite straightforward: the strategy is formulated and then it is implemented. Implementing would thus be perceived as being about allocating resources and changing organizational structure. However, transforming strategies into action is a far more complex and difficult task (Grant, 2003).

### 1.1.3 An Overview of Higher Education in Kenya

The first Kenyan higher educational institution was The Royal Technical College of East Africa, opened in Nairobi in 1956. In 1961, the Royal Technical College was renamed the Royal College of Nairobi and turned into a university college. In 1963, when Kenya attained its independence, the Royal College became the University College of Nairobi. In 1970, the University College of Nairobi was renamed the University of Nairobi. Kenyatta College, a teacher-training institution situated on the outskirts of Nairobi, became a constituent college of the University of Nairobi in 1972 and was elevated into a full -fledged university in 1985. Since then, the government of Kenya has established 5 other public universities.

Kenya has 7 public and 26 private universities and more than 200 public colleges with an enrollment of about 300,000 students. Roughly 80% are enrolled in public universities, while 20% of the total university student population attends private universities. More than 180,000 students enroll in middle-level colleges. The middle-level colleges cater to a variety of post-secondary career courses leading to certificate, diploma, and higher diploma awards. By 1990, Kenya had about 160 middle-level colleges; by 2010 it is estimated that the country had more than 250 of them.

Of the 26 private universities, only 12 are accredited. The other 14 are mainly small religious institutions that award degrees through larger universities based in the West (mainly the United States). The growth of the private university sector in Kenya has been fuelled by several factors, including: the limited opportunities available in public universities; the constant closures of state-funded universities; the need to complement government managed higher institutions of learning; and the determination by some religious organizations to open higher learning institutions largely for their followers.

The leading private universities generate substantial income from student fees. As profit-making institutions, fees are charged strictly in accordance with market forces on the basis of full cost recovery. In spite of this massive expansion, gender and regional imbalances have shaped and continue to shape the development of higher education in Kenya as in other African countries. The proportion of girls' enrollment declines as they move up the educational ladder. As a result, female students make up about 30 percent of total enrollments in the public universities. Female

students' under-representation is higher in engineering and technical-based professional programs. Gender parity is evident in all the accredited private universities, with women comprising 54.5% of the 1999-2010 total student enrollments. Most women enroll in private universities because they fail to secure admission into the public universities, and also due to the fact that the course offerings in these institutions are in the social sciences, education, arts, business administration, accounting, and computer science.

#### **1.1.4 Tangaza College**

Tangaza College was founded in August 1986 with 27 students, all studying theology for ordained ministry. During the intervening 20 years it has grown enormously, and now has over 1,000 students, male and female, lay and religious studying in seven different Institutes. The original College building, Nuru House, has been extended with the addition of D wing. Pamoja House was purchased and Imani House was built. Most recently the female hostel was added. This remarkable growth is testimony to the support of the Board of Governors and the many congregations who send students to Tangaza.

Tangaza College history is rooted in the evangelization of eastern Africa by the missionary and religious congregations who founded the College. It records the faith, generosity and self-sacrifice of those who willingly engaged in a variety of tasks, some for which they had been trained, some for which they had not. The college continues this tradition of missionary endeavor. Tangaza College is linked to religious orders in both Europe and North America. The college had a specific beginning 20 years ago as a collaborative seminary for missionary and religious congregations. Since then it has grown and multiplied. Their missionary and religious roots remain strong. Tangaza College has over 1,000 students, good physical facilities, an exceptional library and a large committed staff.

Academically, Tangaza is a constituent College of the Catholic University of Eastern Africa (CUEA) and is dependent on CUEA for accreditation of graduate level programmes. Tangaza College has its roots in the Mystery of the Incarnation. Now at the dawning of a new century, and in the spirit of the Second Vatican Council, the people of Tangaza commit themselves to participate in the New Evangelization. This will be realized primarily through commitment to academic excellence and a personal transformation of its students, both lay and religious. The

principal elements in this vision are: To train students who are altogether competent in their respective fields and to form agents of transformation in light of Jesus' mandate to make disciples of all nations; to move toward achieving university status, by the progressive development of educational programmes and high quality research, and of corresponding infrastructure and culture; and in that process to promote the integration of the various programmes and institutes that presently constitute the institution.

## 1.2 Research Problem

Crafting and formulating a strategy represents just but the easy part, implementing it does pose tremendous challenges. Implementation of strategy implies at times changing the way things are done and may evoke sensitivities as new changes brought about by strategy implementation disrupt the status quo. The apathy to strategy implementation can be ascribed to several reasons, among them: greater likelihood of failures in implementing strategies; higher complexity in the process of strategy implementation; strategy implementation being considered to be less glamorous than formulation; and practical difficulties in research involving middle-level managers ( Alexander, 1985).

Strikingly, organizations fail to implement about 70 per cent of their new strategies. (Miller, 2002) Another recent study is a bit less alarming; it says 40 per cent of the value anticipated in strategic plan is never realized. Evidence keeps piling of how barriers to strategy implementation make it so difficult for organizations to achieve sustained success. Bridging the gap between strategy formulation and implementation has since long been experienced as challenging. Several studies have been done on the strategies that the organizations have employed over time (Aaltonen and Ikávalko, 2002). However, no known study has been done to explore the challenges encountered in strategy implementation by the Tangaza College in Kenya.

Locally, Karimi (2007) carried a research on challenges of strategic implementation in Mathare slum upgrading in Nairobi, Kiuna (2007) did a research on strategy formulation in commercial banks. Kung'u (2007) carried out a survey on strategy implementation challenges in the main stream churches in Kenya while Mecha (2007) did a study of strategy choice at the Kenya Pipeline Company using Ansoff's grand strategies matrix. Therefore to the best of the researcher's knowledge there are no local studies that have ever focused on strategic

implementation in any learning institution in Kenya. It is in light of this that the study aims at filling the research gap that exists by carrying out a case study of strategy implementation at Tangaza College.

### **1.3 Research Objectives**

The study aimed at determining the factors that influence implementation at Tangaza College.

### **1.4 Value of the Study**

The study would be valuable to the following:

- i. Tangaza College managers and other managers in other industries, it would help them understand the strategy implementation challenges and how to overcome them; it helps different firms achieve success better than others.
- ii. The study would be a source of reference material for future researchers on other related topics
- iii. It would also help other academicians who undertake the same topic in their studies this is because the study would highlight other important relationships that require further research; this may be in the areas of relationships between intelligence and firm's performance.

## CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 Introduction

This chapter summarizes the information from other researchers who have carried out their research in the field of strategy implementation. The specific areas covered here are strategy implementation, strategy implementation process, types of strategy implementation and finally the challenges of strategy implementation.

#### 2.1.1 Strategy Implementation

Strategy implementation has attracted much less attention in strategic and organizational research than strategy formulation or strategic planning. Alexander (1991) suggests several reasons for this: strategy implementation is less glamorous than strategy formulation, people overlook it because of a belief that anyone can do it, people are not exactly sure what it includes and where it begins and ends. Furthermore, there are only a limited number of conceptual models of strategy implementation. In the world of management, increasing numbers of senior people are recognizing that one of the key routes to improved business performance is better implementation (Renaissance Solutions, 1996). However, at the same time, it is also understood that implementation is one of the more difficult business challenges facing today's managers (Piercy, 1992). Within this, management ability, or competence, is seen as an important contributor to achieving this aim (Boyatzis, 1982).

Implementing strategies successfully is about matching the planned and the realizing strategies, which together aim at reaching the organizational vision. The components of strategy implementation communication, interpretation, adoption and action – are not necessarily successive and they cannot be detached from one another. Okumus and Roper (1998) observe that despite the importance of the strategic execution process, far more research has been carried out into strategy formulation rather than into strategy implementation, while Alexander concludes that literature is dominated by a focus on long range planning and strategy content rather than the actual implementation of strategies, on which "little is written or researched (Alexander, 1985). Reasons put forward for this apparent dearth of research effort include that the field of strategy implementation is considered to be less "glamorous" as a subject area, and

that researchers often underestimate the difficulties involved in investigating such a topic – especially as it is thought to be fundamentally lacking in conceptual models (Alexander, 1991). More practical problems associated with the process of strategy implementation, meanwhile, include communication difficulties and “low” middle management skill levels (Otley, 2001).

### **2.1.2 Effectiveness of Strategy Implementation**

Strategic decisions determine the organizational relations to its external environment, encompass the entire organization, depend on input from all of functional areas in the organization, have a direct influence on the administrative and operational activities, and are vitally important to long-term health of an organization (Grant, 2000). Strategies must be well formulated and implemented in order to attain organizational objectives. Thompson (1993) determined that the strategy implementation process included the many components of management and had to be successfully acted upon to achieve the desired results. Here, the critical point is that effective and successful strategy implementation depends on the achievement of good “fits” between the strategies and their means of implementation.

Chakravarthy and White (2001) have taken into consideration that no matter how effectively a company has planned its strategies, it could not succeed if the strategies were not implemented properly. Hendry and Kiel (2004) also clarified that the more ineffective the top management decisions, the more ineffective are the choices made at lower levels of management. Similarly, if top management's strategic choices tend to be successful, it reflects favorably on choices made in other parts of the organization. Simons (1994) refer to three categories of factors that affected strategic decision-making process: environmental factors; organizational factors; and decision-specific factors. Here, environmental factors mean external agents such as national culture, national economic conditions, and industry conditions. Organizational factors refer to organizational structure, organizational culture, structure of decision making bodies, impact of upward influence, and employee involvement.

Decision-specific factors can be explained as time, risk, complexity, and politics. According to Porter (1980) strategists must assess the forces affecting competition in their industry and identify their company's strengths and weaknesses, then strategists can devise a plan of action



that may include first, positioning the company so that its capabilities provide the best defense against the competitive force; and/or second, influencing the balance of the forces through strategic moves, thereby improving the company's position; and/or third, anticipating shifts in the factors underlying the forces and responding to them, with the hope of exploiting change by choosing a strategy appropriate for the new competitive balance before opponents recognize it. Woolridge and Floyd (1990) emphasized that the strategy implementation could be more difficult than thinking up a good strategy. Hendry and Kiel (2004) explained that the real value of a decision surfaced only after the implementation of a decision. In other words, it will not be enough to select a good decision and effective results will not be attained unless the decision is adequately implemented.

Hitt et al (1998) argued that it was essential that strategic level manager's demographic characteristics should have been examined for the formulation and implementation of strategic decisions. Westphal and Fredrickson (2001) stated that there were mostly individual barriers to strategy implementation such as too many and conflicting priorities, insufficient top team functions, a top down management style, inter-functional conflicts, poor vertical communication, and inadequate management development. Most companies trying to develop new organization capacities failed to get over these organizational hurdles: competence, co-ordination, and commitment. Sandelands (1994) indicated that there were difficulties to conjecture the commitment, time, emotion, and energy needed to translate plans into action. McGrath et al. (1994) explained that the political turbulence might be the most important issue facing any implementation process. Market, people, finance, operation, adaptability, and environmental factors play a vital role to long-term successful strategy implementation.

Intended strategies would be implemented as they have been envisioned if three conditions were met. First, those in the organization must understand each important detail in management's intended strategy. Second, if the organization is to take collective action, the strategy needs to make as much sense to each of the members in the organization as they view the world from their own context, as it does to top management. Finally, the collective intentions must be realized with little unanticipated influence from outside political, technological, or market forces.

Petersen and Welch (2000) noted two dimensions of strategy implementation: structural arrangements, and the selection and development of key roles. According to Govindarajan (1989), effective strategy implementation is affected by the quality of people involved in the process. The quality of people as skills, attitudes, capabilities, experiences and other characteristics required by a specific task or position. Structure refers to the way in which tasks and people are specialized and divided, and authority is distributed; how activities and reporting relationships are grouped; the mechanisms by which activities in the organization are coordinated (Kaplan and Norton, 2004).

Systems refer to the formal and informal procedures used to manage the organization, including management control systems, performance measurement and reward systems, planning, budgeting and resource allocation systems, and management information systems. Staff refers to the people, their backgrounds and competencies; how the organization recruits, selects, trains, socializes, manages the careers, and promotes employees. Skills refer to the distinctive competencies of the organization; what it does best along dimensions such as people, management practices, processes, systems, technology, and customer relationships (Kaplan and Norton, 2004).

## 2.2 Models of Strategy Implementation

At the firm level, extant research has observed that the effective relationship between strategy and structure is a necessary precondition to the successful implementation of new business strategies (Drazin and Howard, 1984; Olson et al, 2005). The relevant literature (Noble, 1999; Noble and Mokwa, 1999) has advocated factors that influence the effective implementation of strategies, for example; organisational structure; control mechanisms; strategic consensus; leadership (Grant, 2002); and communication. However, prior research has neglected to ascertain whether the "style" of strategy implementation undertaken has any impact on the effectiveness of the implementation effort.

Mintzberg (1993) proposed that firms differ in terms of their structure and that theory should move away from the "one best way" approach towards a contingency approach, in that structure should reflect the firm's situation and strategies. The structure of a firm influences the flow of

information and the context and nature of interpersonal interaction within it. Structure also channels collaboration, prescribes means of communication and co-ordination as well as allocating power and responsibility (Miller, 2004). Downsizing has resulted in the roles of employees altering dramatically as structure is re-engineered. These firms are characterized by decentralized decision-making, small senior executive teams and an emphasis on horizontal rather than vertical communication (Webster, 1992). With firms evolving in terms of structure it follows that the style of strategy implementation will differ depending on the style of organisation and management that exists in the firm. In general terms, Nutt (1995) and Gupta and Govindarajan(1984) find that types of leadership style can play a critical role in overcoming barriers to implementation and an improvisational approach to implementing strategic change in an organisation.

### 1.3 Factors that influence strategy implementation

Strategic typologies are becoming ever popular in researching strategy (Sun and Hong, 2002). Taxonomic approaches have become commonplace in marketing theory and in the study of strategy especially. The majority of extant taxonomy models in strategy implementation tend to be normative in nature (Parsa, 1999). Alternatively, they are developed from organisational observation, and as such, become context specific and frequently lack any broader theoretical grounding (Hooley et al., 1992). In contrast, Bourgeois and Brodwin's (2004) model is comprehensive, is based on specific theoretical assumptions and has been used by authors such as Parsa (1999). Bourgeois and Brodwin (2004) to refute the traditional approach to strategy implementation as simply an adjunct to the strategy formulation phase of the strategy process. Co-evolutionary theory (Lewin and Volberda, 1999) indicates that as firms grow and evolve from small to larger and multidivisional organisations, the strategy implementation methods also evolve simultaneously. The various strategy implementation models described by Bourgeois and Brodwin (2004) are meant to meet the changing needs of firms as they evolve through various stages of the organisational life cycle (Parsa, 1999). In contrast to the earlier descriptive models, this model is more prescriptive with an, albeit limited, empirical basis.

The change model can be identified through the changing of structure and staff to convey the firm's new priorities; alternating planning, performance measurement, incentive compensation systems; and using of cultural adaptation techniques to introduce system changes. The senior

managers not only pass the strategy to their subordinates, but also take part in the implementation phase (DeWit and Meyer, 2004). However, the change model has its limitations under the circumstances of inaccurate information, disincentives against objectivity by managers, and motivational problems. Each implementation style differs in the extent of centrality, the extent of group interaction, the degree of control exerted, the influence of firm culture and the way in which strategy develops. Bourgeois and Brodwin (2004) postulate that these are not mutually exclusive forms, and do not indicate that any style is necessarily better than the other. In spite of this stance however, we argue that hierarchical structures, similar to that advocated by the “change” style of implementation (Grant, 2002) are essential for creating the efficient and flexible co-ordination of strategy implementation.

### **2.3 Factors that influence strategy Implementation**

The following are variables that play a key role in strategy implementation:

#### **2.3.1 Organisational Culture**

One of the major challenges in strategy implementation appear to be more cultural and behavioural in nature, including the impact of poor integration of activities and diminished feelings of ownership and commitment (Aaltonen and Ikåvalko, 2002). Corboy and O'Corrbui (1999), meanwhile, identify the deadly sins of strategy implementation which involve: a lack of understanding of how the strategy should be implemented; customers and staff not fully appreciating the strategy; difficulties and obstacles not acknowledged, recognised or acted upon; and ignoring the day-to-day business imperatives. Marginson, (2002) contend that strategy implementation evolves either from a process of winning group commitment through a coalitional form of decision-making, or as a result of complete coalitional involvement of implementation staff through a strong corporate culture.

Organisational culture refers to the leadership style of managers – how they spend their time, what they focus attention on, what questions they ask of employees, how they make decisions; also the organizational culture (the dominant values and beliefs, the norms, the conscious and unconscious symbolic acts taken by leaders (job titles, dress codes, executive dining rooms, corporate jets, informal meetings with employees). In Collaborative Model of strategy implementation, organisations have both a strong culture and deep-rooted traditions. The

challenges of successful implementation results from lack of cultivation of strong cultural values to meet the changing organisational needs. The distinction between “thinkers” and “doers” begins to blur but does not totally disappear.

In organisations adopting the cultural model that emphasizes a lower level employee participation in both strategy formulation and implementation there is separation of “thinkers” and “doers”. It seeks to implement strategy through the infusion of corporate culture throughout the firm. The cultural model contradicts and challenges the basic objectives from the economic perspective of a firm (Parsa, 1999). A “clan-like” (Ouchi, 1980) organisation is expected to prevail, where a powerful culture results in employees aligning their individual goals and behaviours with those of the firm. However, a high level of organisational slack is needed to instill and maintain a cultural model. This model has several limitations: it assumes well-informed and intelligent participants; firms with this model tend to drift and lose focus; cost of change in culture often comes at a high price; increased homogeneity can lead to a loss of diversity, and creativity consequently (Parsa, 1999).

### 2.3.2 Commitment

The healthiest family firms formally, and systematically, commit to strategy development. An annual, balanced process comprises both internal and external analysis, and convenes not just the family, but also key non-family managers. In practice, off-site workshops that integrate education, analysis, and strategy development work best. Part of the agenda should be to lay out the rationale for resource allocation, and demystify the priority-setting process. 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. Based on empirical work with 93 firms he observed that senior executives were over optimistic in the planning phase and it is noteworthy that the first two issues which occurred most frequently in Alexander's study are planning issues. He also found the effectiveness of coordination of activities and distractions from competing activities inhibited implementation, in addition key tasks were not defined in enough detail. With regard to people, the capabilities of employees involved were often not sufficient, leadership and direction and “training and

instruction given to lower level employees were not adequate" (Alexander, 1985, p. 92). Although the least frequent in this study in many cases the information systems used to monitor implementation were not adequate.

Reed and Buckley (1988) discuss problems associated with strategy implementation identifying four key areas for discussion. They acknowledge the challenge and the need for a clear fit between strategy and structure and claim the debate about which comes first is irrelevant providing there is congruence in the context of the operating environment. They warn that, although budgeting systems are a powerful tool for communication, they have limited use in the implementation of strategies as they are dominated by monetary based measures and due to their size and the game playing associated budget setting "it is possible for the planning intent of any resource redistribution to be ignored" (Reed and Buckley, 1988, p. 68). Another problem is when management style is not appropriate for the strategy being implemented, they cite the example of the "entrepreneurial risk taker may be an ideal candidate for a strategy involving growth, but may be wholly inappropriate for retrenchment" (Reed and Buckley, 1988, p. 68).

Nutt, (1995) points out that subtle changes taking place in the attitudes of employees towards working, their employers, and their lives are requiring companies to change their personnel management techniques accordingly to motivate their employees and instill them with commitment. Employees want to work for companies they can be proud of, which exhibit values and viewpoints similar to their own, and are concerned about long-term goals. He states that there are certain phases in commitment-building. They include the scientific phase where management motivates workers using the carrot and stick method, the human relations phase where firms treat employees with fairness and kindness, and a phase emphasizing human resources principles, where managers make better use of their employees' creativity and imagination.

### 2.3.3 Coordination

Strategic managers may choose to commit to a course of action for an extended period and enjoy the benefits of organizational learning and a clear customer image. Alternatively, an organization can remain flexible so that it does not become committed to products, technology, or market approaches that may become outdated. In a perfect world, organizations commit to predictable,

successful courses of action, and strategic change is incremental. However, outcomes are not always predictable in a dynamic environment. Hence, for most firms, strong arguments can usually be made for substantial strategic shifts, even when performance is not lacking (Grewel and Tansuhaj, 2001).

Al Ghamdi (1998) replicated the work of Alexander (1985) in the UK and found for 92 percent of firms implementation took more time than originally expected, that major problems surfaced in 88 percent of companies, again showing planning weaknesses. He found the effectiveness of coordination of activities as a problem in 75 percent and distractions from competing activities in 83 percent cases. In addition key tasks were not defined in enough detail and information systems were inadequate in 71 percent of respondents. What is interesting is that there is congruence between these findings, which implies that lessons have still not been learned; as Al Ghamdi states, "the drama still continues" (Al Ghamdi, 1998, p. 322).

More recent articles confirm notable barriers to successful strategy implementation about which there appears to be a degree of accord including Beer and Eisenstat's (2000, p. 37) who assert that six silent killers of strategy implementation comprise: a top-down/laissez-faire senior management style; unclear strategic intentions and conflicting priorities; an ineffective senior management team; poor vertical communication; weak co-ordination across functions, businesses or borders; and inadequate down-the-line leadership skills development (Beer and Eisenstat, 2000). It is recognised that such change requires a shared vision and consensus (Beer et al., 1990) and "failures of strategy implementation are inevitable" if competence, coordination and commitment are lacking (Eisenstat, 1993).

Corboy and O'Corrbui (1999), meanwhile, identify the deadly sins of strategy implementation which involve: a lack of understanding of how the strategy should be implemented; customers and staff not fully appreciating the strategy; unclear individual responsibilities in the change process; difficulties and obstacles not acknowledged, recognised or acted upon; and ignoring the day-to-day business imperatives. Overall though, it is increasingly acknowledged that the traditionally recognised problems of inappropriate organisational structure and lack of top management backing are not the main inhibiting factors to effective strategy implementation (Aaltonen and Ikävalko, 2002).

### 2.3.4 Communication

One of the central, ongoing challenges in every organization regardless of its size is bridging the line of demarcation between “insiders” and “outsiders”. Formal strategy development helps break down the barriers; clear communication of that strategy is the logical next step. A crucial component of the message is a clear set of performance metrics. Too often in family businesses middle managers don't know what they're being judged on, and many suffer from trying to satisfy competing performance metrics (for example; growth versus profitability). The solution: distilling the strategy and the metrics that count into a small set of easily understandable measures, and sharing them throughout the organization. Simplicity and communication by the company leadership enhance the chances for manager buy-in, and commitment to implementation.

Rather, the major challenges to be overcome appear to be more cultural and behavioural in nature, including the impact of poor communication and diminished feelings of ownership and commitment (Aaltonen and Ikåvalko, 2002). Aaltonen and Ikåvalko recognise the role of middle managers, arguing they are the “key actors” “who have a pivotal role in strategic communication” (Aaltonen and Ikåvalko, 2002) meanwhile Bartlett and Goshal (1996) talk about middle managers as threatened silent resisters whose role needs to change more towards that of a “coach”, building capabilities, providing support and guidance through the encouragement of entrepreneurial attributes.

Many family organizations are faced with the challenge of lack of institution of a two-way-communication program that permits and solicits questions from employees about issues regarding the formulated strategy.

### 2.3.5 Management Controls

In addition, another inhibitor to successful strategy implementation that has been receiving a considerable amount of attention is the impact of an organisation's existing management controls (Langfield-Smith, 1997) and particularly its budgeting systems (Marginson, 2002). Although it is increasingly suggested that budgets suffer from being bureaucratic and protracted, and that they focus on cost minimisation rather than value maximisation (Brander Brown and Atkinson, 2001),



they still represent the main integrative control mechanism in many, if not most, business organisations (Otley, 2001).

There is increasing evidence that strategy implementation is linked to the top executive's philosophy and personality (Kotey and Meredith, 1997). Management's self-interest, personalities, interpretations, and influences on strategy have also been examined (Grant, 2002). Simply stated, examining the strategy formulation process without considering the personal and philosophical idiosyncrasies of the manager is shortsighted. To facilitate the implementation in general implementation instruments should be applied to support the processes adequately. Two implementation instruments are the balanced scorecard and supportive software solutions.

A strategic planning system cannot achieve its full potential until it is integrated with other control systems like budgets, information and reward systems. The balanced scorecard provides a framework to integrate the strategic planning and meets the requirements that the strategic planning system itself can display. The strategy implementation perspective demands systems with different criteria than those of conventional systems. The supportive character in monitoring and tracking the implementation process should be in the center of interest.

## CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### 3.1 Introduction

This chapter is a blueprint of the methodology that was used by the researcher to find answers to the research question. In this chapter the research methodology is presented in the following order, research design, data collection method and finally the data analysis.

### 3.2 Research Design

This research was conducted through a case study since it is a research on one organization. A case study is an in-depth investigation of an individual, institution or phenomenon (Mugenda and Mugenda, 2003). Since this study sought to identify the strategy implementation challenges at Tangaza College, a case study design is deemed the best design to fulfill the objectives of the study. Kothari, (2004) and Yin (1994) noted that a case study involved a careful and complete observation of social units.

### 3.3 Data Collection

Both primary and secondary data was used for the study. An interview guide was administered among heads of departments and their assistants in Tangaza College to collect primary data. The interview guides will have open-ended questions. The use of an open-interview strategy enabled better exposure of the interviewees' personal perspectives, their deeper thoughts, emotions and ambitions (Paton, 1990). This less structured approach allowed the interviews to be much more like conversations than formal events with predetermined response categories, permitting the respondents' views to unfold, rather than the predisposition of the researcher (Marshall and Rossman, 1997, p. 80). The interview guide was administered on a face to face basis. Secondary data sources will be also employed through the use of previous documents.

### 3.4 Data Analysis

After the interview guides were filled up, they were edited for completeness and consistency. Being a case study, conceptual content analysis was most useful in analyzing the data. Conceptual content is defined by Creswell (2003) as a technique for making inferences by systematically and objectively identifying specific characteristic of messages and using the same approach to relate trends. Bryman and Bell, (2003) describe it as a technique used to make inferences by systematically and objectively identifying specific characteristics and messages.

## CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents analysis and findings of the study as set out in the research methodology. The study findings are presented on determining the strategy implementation challenges at Tangaza College. The data was gathered at Tangaza College using face to face in depth interview which was facilitated by an interview guide with open-ended questions as the research instrument.

### 4.2 Demographic information

The study sought to find out the position held by the respondents in the institution. The respondents were Heads of Institutes, Heads of Departments, Humana Resource Officers and Accountants. Most of the respondents had an undergraduate degree, some had postgraduate degrees and others had various professional qualifications. They had worked at Tangaza College for many years ranging from 5 to 15 years.

### 4.3 Findings of the Study

The study sort to find out the factors that influenced strategy implementation at Tangaza College and these factors are discussed at length in the following paragraphs.

*Organizational culture* affected strategy implementation in the College positively. As The College has to fight for survival in a very competitive environment, its structure is comparatively rational. Its control process is mostly centralized, by virtue of clear sets of operating and decision guidelines and principles. The management formulates missions while the operating units are given autonomy to perform their administrative roles with flexibility to suit their area specialism. Its structure is predominantly functional with matrix.

Aspects of organization culture that affect strategy implementation are style of management and leadership. A framework that integrates the formulation of strategy with the human factors that both create the demand outside the organization and form the core capability inside the organization to deliver the prescribed strategy to the marketplace is enhanced. The strategic

alignment model brings together the external market's dynamics, the organization's strategic responses and the organization's internal capability to execute the desired alignment, through the appropriate subcultures and leadership styles built into the organization. This seeks to improve the alignment between markets, strategy, culture and leadership, on the premise that the better the alignment, the better bottom-line performance.

*The level of commitment of top management* is a factor in strategy implementation at Tangaza College. The management formulates missions while the unit areas are given autonomy to perform their administrative roles with flexibility to suit their area specialism. The commitment to their work increases performance both academic and growth. The School leader and its unit leaders have to possess high energy and keep a clear focus on objectives. They must be drivers and set unambiguous directions for their subordinates. Besides, they should emphasize results and data. Rapid responses to the market and an innovative mindset will allow them to adopt and operationalize revolution in their units and The University. Communication process affected strategy implementation at Tangaza College. The top management were able to communicate their strategies to all the staffs.

Causes of delay in *communicating with employees* concerning issues related to the strategy implementation were poor vertical communication, lack of employees' participation, lack of training and education.

Underdevelopment of integrated communications plan affected strategy implementation at Tangaza College. The planned strategies and the reality interact with each other through communication, interpretation, adoption and action. If this interaction is successful, the organizational vision may be achieved. Academic qualifications have become a critical competitive tool. Though staff found it hard to afford funding their studies, they tried their best to learn in order to increase their competitiveness.

It was also found that the *responsibility of managers* affected strategy implementation at Tangaza College. Unit leaders have to exhibit capabilities to implement a strategy in response to the change. On the one hand, they have to evaluate the internal cultural capacities of their units. On the other hand, they have to demonstrate their leadership style to shape the culture so as to

drive the strategy. Understanding that it is infeasible to incorporate all changes at the same time, the process has to be prioritized.

The *management controls/practices* affected strategy implementation at Tangaza College. The successful implementation of a pathfinder strategy requires an entrepreneurial culture to support the necessary capabilities. Its supported culture has to be flexible embracing creativity as well as individualism. The Built Environment School leader acts as culture manager, shapes its culture and leads the transformations to increase its internal capabilities. Tangaza have introduced the concept of brainstorming to her unit staff members. It was further found that coordination of activities affected strategy implementation at Tangaza College and that often the management was not able to coordinate the staff and students effectively.

The policies in place ensure co-ordination of activities across functions at Tangaza College. Shifting in the continuing education market conditions, students become more knowledgeable. They look for reputable degrees and knowledge to support their work. It is not as notable as The University in its academic aspects while it is not as practical as the Polytechnic and the Vocational Technical Colleges. Lacking clear academic identity, the built environment students would take it as an institutional agency. That defeats the loyalty of the customers and the leader becomes incapable of building on its strength and developing its core competence. Unit academic identity is strategically established through building tripartite partnering relationships with each of The University's cognate faculties, overseas universities and the professional institutes in the built environment industry.

#### **4.4 Discussion**

The study has shown that even the most excellently formulated strategies will fail if they are not properly implemented. It has further demonstrated that strategy implementation is not possible unless there is stability between strategy and each organizational dimension such as organizational structure, reward structure, resource-allocation process, etc.

Furthermore, it has been shown that strategy implementation skills are not easily mastered. In fact, virtually all managers find implementation the most difficult aspect of their jobs, more

difficult than strategic analysis or strategy formulation. For instance, U.S. managers spend more than \$10 billion annually on strategic analysis and strategy formulation. Managers themselves report that less than half the plans resulting from these efforts are ever implemented. Outside observers put the success rate even lower than 10%. Strategies that are not implemented constitute little more than academic exercises.

In my view therefore, the findings of the study are in congruence with the literature review wherein the major factors that influence strategy implementation were discussed at length and it was demonstrated that the ability to implement strategies is one of the most valuable of all managerial skills.

## **CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter provides the summary of the findings from chapter four, and it also gives the conclusions and recommendations of the study based on the objectives of the study.

### **5.2 Summary of the Findings**

The study found that Tangaza College had bureaucratic university structure. Validation, administration and review of programmes are controlled and managed wholly by procedures. The structure is comparatively rational. Its control process is mostly centralized, by virtue of clear sets of operating and decision guidelines and principles. The management formulates missions while the unit areas are given autonomy to perform their administrative roles with flexibility to suit their area specialism. Organizational culture affected strategy implementation in the university positively. Aspects of organization culture that affect strategy implementation are style of management and leadership. A framework that integrates the formulation of strategy with the human factors that both create the demand outside the organization and form the core capability inside the organization to deliver the prescribed strategy to the marketplace is enhanced. The strategic alignment brings together the external market's dynamics, the organization's strategic responses and the organization's internal capability to execute the desired

alignment, through the appropriate subcultures and leadership styles built into the organization. The level of commitment of top management is a factor in strategy implementation at Tangaza College. The management formulates missions while the unit areas are given autonomy to perform their administrative roles with flexibility to suit their area specialism. The commitment to their work increases performance both academic and growth. The School leader and its unit leaders and possess high energy and keep a clear focus on objectives. Communication process affected strategy implementation at Tangaza College. The top management were able to communicate their strategies to all the staffs.

The study found that causes of delay in communicating with employees concerning issues related to the strategy implementation were poor vertical communication, lack of employees participation, lack of training and education. Underdevelopment of integrated communications plan affected strategy implementation at Tangaza College. The planned strategies and the reality interact with each other through communication, interpretation, adoption and action. The responsibility of managers affected strategy implementation at Tangaza College. Unit leaders had to exhibit capabilities to implement a strategy in response to the change. The management controls/practices affected strategy implementation at Tangaza College. How the management was able to coordinate the staffs and the students was sometimes a problem. The policies in place ensure co-ordination of activities across functions at Tangaza College. Unit academic identity is strategically established through building tripartite partnering relationships with each of The University's cognate faculties, overseas universities and the professional institutes in the built environment industry.

### **5.3 Conclusions**

Based on its bureaucratic university structure the management of Tangaza College formulates corporate objectives while the unit areas are given autonomy to perform their administrative roles with flexibility to suit their areas of specialization. The level of commitment of top management is a significant factor in strategy implementation at Tangaza College.

Each operating unit implements the strategic change stage by stage. The management of each unit formulates strategic change by means of analyzing the unit strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats as well as any misaligned elements. The analysis reflects the move

occurring in the continuing education market in the competitive environment. Acknowledging the discrepancies in many different aspects, the leader identifies the variety of options to mandate change in the unit.

The study concludes that Tangaza College starts with building the foundations in terms of academic identity and culture management. These are considered to be internal capabilities for carrying out any further work. It is achieved through coherence with The University, partnership with overseas universities as well as partnering with the cognate professional institutes in the built environment industry. Unit culture capabilities enhancement is accomplished through the elimination of dysfunctional culture elements, the establishment of learning attitudes and team building. Contextualization is attained by means of programme diversification, progression ladders and professional recognition. These are the concrete elements to which the continuing education students aspire. A further pathfinder strategy of reinforcement is acknowledged as a means to build the unit competitive advantage in the market and lead it to become more systematic and legitimate.

#### **5.4 Recommendations to Tangaza College**

Based on the findings of the study the following recommendations are made to Tangaza College:

- a) The College should formulate a comprehensive training programme to train its employees to enlighten them on contemporary styles of management. Training would involve seminars and workshops and management retreats. During these training sessions management should inculcate to the employees the concept of strategy implementation and ensure that there is a significant acceptance by the employees.
- b) Management should encourage good vertical communication by creating a working environment conducive to free 'down up' interaction between the employees and management. The management can then use this channel to articulate the importance of strategy implementation and emphasize the critical role the employees are expected to play.



- c) The management should cultivate a good organization culture. This acts as a glue that binds the employees together thus creating a sense of belonging and through it management can be able to mobilize the employees towards the achievement of corporate objectives like strategy implementation. In other words, the management needs, as much as is practically possible, to include all the staff in strategy formulation in order to cultivate a sense of ownership amongst the staff.
- d) Management needs to be committed to ensure effective strategy implementation. As has been stated elsewhere in this study it has been found that ineffectiveness of coordination of activities and distractions from competing activities inhibited implementation, in addition key tasks were not defined in enough detail. With regard to people, the capabilities of employees involved were often not sufficient, leadership and direction and training and instruction given to lower level employees were not adequate.

To address this management should aim at establishing a structure that allocates adequate priority to strategy implementation as a key results area for management. It would also be management's key responsibility to ensure that employees are clearly instructed about the role they are expected to play in strategy implementation and that adequate resources are deployed to improve employees' skills required to achieve this objective.

### 5.5 Recommendation for Further Studies

This study has reviewed the factors that influence strategy implementation at Tangaza College. The study focused only on Tangaza College, thus the same study should be carried out in other Colleges and other institutions of higher learning to find out if the same findings will be obtained. Moreover, the study focused on an academic institution thus the same study should be carried out in other sectors of the economy to find out if the same findings will be obtained.

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APPENDICES

Appendix I: Interview Guide

Factors that Influence Strategy implementation at Tangaza College

Section A: Demographic Questions

1. Position held in the institution.....
2. Department.....
3. What is your highest level of education? .....
4. Duration the organization (Year(s))? .....

Section B: Factors that plays a key role in Strategy Implementation

1. How is organizational culture a key factor in strategy implementation at Tangaza College?  
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.....  
.....
2. In your own view, how does organizational culture affect strategy implementation?  
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.....  
.....
3. Which aspects of organization culture affect strategy implementation?  
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4. How does the level of commitment of top management a factor in strategy implementation at Tangaza College?

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5. How does communication process affect strategy implementation at Tangaza College?

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6. What causes delay in communicating with employees concerning issues related to the strategy implementation?

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7. How does underdevelopment of integrated communications plan affect strategy implementation at Tangaza College?

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8. How does the responsibility of managers affect strategy implementation at Tangaza College?

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9. What are the management controls/practices that affect strategy implementation at Tangaza College?

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10. In your own opinion, how does coordination of activities affect strategy implementation at Tangaza College?

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11. What are the policies in place that ensure co-ordination of activities across functions at Tangaza College?

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