



A PERCEPTION-BASED VIEW OF EMPLOYEES AND STRATEGIC PLAN IMPLEMENTATION IN PUBLIC TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION TRAINING INSTITUTIONS IN KENYA

Kipkirui Joseph Rono¹ⁱ,

Emily Bomet²,

Laban Ayiro³

¹Lecturer University of Kabianga
and PhD Candidate, Moi University,
Kenya

²Dr., Senior Lecturing,
Moi University,
Kenya

³Professor of Education,
Daystar University,
Kenya

Abstract:

Despite the existence of strategic plans in public Technical and Vocational Education training institutions in Kenya, there seems to be a problem in the implementation process. This study therefore sought to investigate the influence of employees' perception on strategic plan implementation in public Technical and Vocational Education training institutions (TVET) within Rift valley region, Kenya. The study was guided by the following hypothesis: Ho: There is no statistically significant difference between employee's perception and strategy implementation in public TVET within Rift valley region, Kenya. Change Management theory supported the specific objectives of the study. The study adopted descriptive survey research design using both qualitative and quantitative approach. The target population was 1255 employees in selected public TVET institutions; while a sample size of two hundred ninety four (294) respondents was drawn using purposive and stratified random sampling. Primary data were collected using questionnaires and interviews and analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. The findings revealed that employees perception based on their level of management and implementation of strategic plan were strongly positively related and significant. It accounted for 94.5% of the total variations in strategic plan implementation. The findings are expected to be of value to the management and decision makers to form a basis for improving implementation of strategic plans in higher education. The study revealed that there was a diversity in

ⁱ Correspondence: email jkipkirui@kabianga.ac.ke, emilybomett@gmail.com, ayiolaban@gmail.com

opinion between the top management and lower management on strategic plan implementation and thus calls for special attention to all employees so as to ensure successful implementation.

Keywords: employees, perception, strategic plan implementation

1. Introduction

Strategic plan as a tool for improving institutional performance and competitiveness has been taken seriously by both private and public institutions (Demirkaya, 2015). Strategic management is a systematic approach to the major and increasingly important responsibility of general management to position and relate the institution to its environment in a way which will assure its continued success and make it secure from surprises. According Gebhardt and Eagles cited in Venance S. S. (2018) strategic plan implementation has generally been embraced across all sectors in the world due to its contribution and role in enhancing effectiveness of institutional performance. Although institutions may have clear and sound strategies successful implementation may not be realized if people entrusted to execute it have varied views and perceptions. Employees play a very crucial role in strategic plan implementation. They are the key implementing agents of the strategies developed and as such, their perceptions are very critical in strategic plan implementation. Employees perceptions if not well taken care, the whole strategic may fail (Kobia and Mohammed, 2006).

Perception according to Saha (2008) is an influential phenomenon as employees usually act upon their perceptions. He argues that employee perception acts as a critical component in the work place and it plays a key role in employees' performance. Robbins (2004) defines employee perception as *"a process by which individuals organize and interpret their impressions in order to get meaning of their environment"*. He argues that perception is not necessarily based on reality but on individual's view of a particular situation. He adds that in dealing with employees' behavior, perception becomes important because employees' behavior is based on their perception of what reality is, not on reality itself. He further argues that without perception, nothing can be done in the organization and a perception that is accepted by all is good for high performances. Cole (1997) defines employees as individuals who over a given period of time invest a greater proportion of their lives in their institutions. Unlike other resources in an organization, employees are complex and are influenced by and act on the basis of their perception. Perception is the process by which individuals select, organize and interpret information inputs to create a meaningful picture of the world (Kottler, 2000). How an individual acts therefore is influenced by his or her perception of the situation. Therefore, understanding the ways in which employees establish certain reactions to change will provide an opportunity for developing strategy that stimulate everyone to the common objectives of the organization. Perceptions affect the working relationships of employees as individuals and as groups. An individual's attitude significantly influence what they pay attention to, how they interpret information and what they

remember (Omondi, P. 2017). Different individuals may be in the same environment but perceive things differently. Further, according to Kottler (2000) employees develop a set of filters through which they make sense of the conditions they are exposed to. These are referred to as personal constructs which channel the way employees conceptualize and anticipate events. Thus employees will mostly likely have perceptions of the institutions strategic plans even before it is implemented. Bennet (1997) argued that perception is influenced by intelligence, expectations, motivations and interest. This therefore imply that even though individuals work in the same institution and in the same environment their perceptions will be different as they will have different levels of intelligence, different personalities, motivations and interests. This also means that perception is gradual and can change as new information and experiences are acquired. These perceptions in turn affect strategic plan implementation of the institutions as some employees are reluctant to collaborate with their colleagues.

The implementation process of the strategic plan is defined as the procedures and actions that are undertaken to achieve the goals and objectives of the strategic plan (Mohammad, 2011). Mintzberg (2004) argues that a good implementation of strategic plan is dependent on the learning and development environment for employees who are the true foot soldiers of implementation. Employees and managers of institutional organization are crucial aspects that have great effects in terms of implementation success. Moreover, the way in which employees view the strategy is according to their role, power and interest, and determines their attitude towards it (Stiles, 2000). It is therefore important for management to understand the way in which employees think and how they perceive the world in order to be successful in the implementation stage (Carrol, 2000). Further, according to Rodriguez and Hickson cited in Nyakeriga C. K. (2015), the success factors in strategy implementation are somewhat different between public and private sectors. In private sector the success of strategy implementation is more dependent on resources whereas in public sector the essential challenge is to attain appropriate employee participation. Successful implementation requires that the strategy, the organization, the people and their relationships, the systems and the measures all must be aligned and made to work towards a common goal (Mwangoe, 2011). Effective strategies are bound to fail or succeed depending of on how implementing agencies monitor, evaluate and constantly manage factors both in immediate internal and external environment of the organization. Strategy implementation always involves the introduction of change to an organization. Managers spend a lot of time evaluating alternatives and selecting a strategy. Frequently this strategy is then announced to the organization with the expectation that organization members will automatically see why the alternative is the best one and will begin immediate implementation. When a strategic change is poorly introduced, managers may actually spend more time implementing changes resulting from the new strategy than was spent in selecting it.

According to Thompson et al (2007), effective strategy implementation depends on competent personnel and effective internal organizational systems. No organization can hope to perform the activities required for successful strategy implementation

without attracting, motivating and retaining talented managers and employees with suitable skills and intellectual capital. It was further reinforced by Cummings and Worley (2005) who said that the task of implementing challenging strategic initiatives must be assigned to executives who have the skills and talent to handle and can be counted on to turn decisions and actions into results to meet established targets. Without a smart, capable result-oriented management team, the implementation process ends up being hampered by missed deadlines, misdirected or wasteful efforts. Building a capable organization is thus a priority in strategy execution. The execution of a strategy depends on individual members of organization especially key managers. The top manager's actions and the perceived seriousness to a chosen strategy will influence subordinate managers' commitment to implementation. The personal goals and values strongly influence a firm's mission, strategy and key long term objectives. The right managers must also be in the right positions for effective implementation of a new strategy. Top management goodwill and ownership to drive the process is also critical to effective implementation of strategy.

According to Thompson (1997), the strategic leader must direct the organization by ensuring that long term objectives and strategies have been determined and are understood and supported by managers within the organizations who will be responsible for implementing them. Understanding the ways in which employees react to strategic plan implementation strategies will certainly provide a potential avenue for developing new strategic plan implementation strategies that may bring employees' perceptions and attitudes into alignment with the ones desired, thereby, eliciting desired reactions to strategic plan implementation process in public TVET institutions.

Executors of strategies in the institutions comprised of top management, middle management, lower management. Hierarchy provides organisational information about who is in charge, and a structure, which can filter down throughout the entire organisation. Moreover, it builds the frame of reference for running organisational operations and provides orientation for organisational members, and a reference point to comply with, where action is directed towards the organisational strategy. The importance of organisational hierarchy is that it provides structure to the organisation, across and throughout the organisation as a whole. Effectiveness of strategy implementation is affected by the quality of people involved in the process (Govindarajan, 1989). The people working in an organization are the key to achieve effective implementation of the strategy. Johnson and Scholes (2007) refer to people as being at the heart of strategy and further acknowledge that the knowledge and experience of people can be the key factors enabling success of strategies. For implementation to be successful, Hrebniak (2006) states that implementation of strategic plan demands ownership and commitment across all levels of management. Strategic plan implementation requires integrative point of view. Not having clarity on the objectives of the strategy, the tasks and activities in the implementation, and the responsibilities that employees should take, could also have an adverse impact on the implementation of strategy. When the strategy is not completely understood by the employees involved in the implementation, it will be difficult for them to effectively

work towards the determined goals. Moreover, if employees do not know which responsibilities they have, conflicts may arise, or activities may be forgotten all together (Beer et al, 2000; Corboy, 1999; Al-Ghamdi, 1998; Alexander, 1985). It is important therefore to understand the perceptions of employees because employees' behavior is based on their perception of what reality is, not on reality itself. The employees' perceptions and interpretations of strategy control is the way in which such is implemented (Sebaa A. A., 2010).

According to Judson, (1991), only one in every ten companies does an effective job of formulating strategy and equally implementing it. For the rest, a well –crafted strategy is left to languish on the dusty bookshelf. Organizations seem to have difficulties in implementing their strategies. The major challenge that can affect successful implementation of strategies is the discord between top level management and lower level employees. This implies that top management either disregards their role in implementation or is unaware of it. Hrebiniak's (2006) study found that top management often had an attitude towards implementation where they believed their role was to plan the strategy while the lower level employees carried out the demands and implementation requirements. Therefore, if the strategy failed the fault would not lie with the managers but instead with the employees who were not successful in implementing an otherwise viable and sound plan. Though all institutions have a slight separation between plan and execution, if this separation becomes dysfunctional, implementation difficulties and problems will arise. For implementation to be successful, Hrebniak (2006) states that implementation demands ownership across all levels of management. Commitment from the top all the way down is required. Implementation should be regarded as a key function and responsibility of managers.

The strategy literature claims that between 50% and 80% of strategy implementation efforts fail (Allio 2006: Atkinson 2006: Cater and Pucko 2010: Farrias and Johnson 2000: Judson 1999). Further, Guth and Macmillan (1986) studied strategy implementation versus middle management self-interest, and suggested that "*middle managers who believe that their self-interest is being compromised can not only redirect a strategy, delay its implementation or reduce the quality of its implementation, but can also even totally sabotage the strategy*". Kettunen (2010), on the other hand contend that teachers and other experts have the power to subvert, constrain or ignore changes that they do not accept, more so if they are not actively engaged in strategy process. Thus even with a good strategic plan implementation process successful outcome is unlikely if the beliefs and opinions of the implementers are not adequately addressed. Strategic plan implementation strategies consist of ongoing, ephemeral decisions that may be interpreted in a diverse set of ways.

Okumu (2003) cited in Elwak R. (2013) concur with the above researchers by asserting that challenges of strategy implementation include poor leadership and management, unhealthy organization politics, lack of motivation of staff, lack of involvement and participation of staff, the negative perception and resistance emanating from employees and other stakeholders. The high failure rate in implementation as discussed above calls for need to investigate the factors that

influence the strategy implementation process in the organizations or institutions. It is important for managers to understand and identify the pitfalls and challenges that can occur during the process to improve the effective implementation. To know which pitfalls can emerge could help to prevent them and can lead to a more proactive approach. From the foregoing literature, it would seem that high failure rate of effective strategy implementation can be found in the existence of human behavior attributes as opposed to organization and systems related factors.

In recent years, the use of strategic planning by higher education institutions in Africa and elsewhere has become widespread (Fehnel R. 2000). Lufunyo (2013) in his submission said that countries in Africa have been undertaking public sector reforms over the last three decades with a view to improving accountability, transparency, efficiency, and effectiveness as part of efforts to improve quality delivery of public services. The reforms were packaged with performance tools in public service; the famous tools include strategic plans and performance contracts. However various scholars have submitted that many organisations in Africa context creates strategic plans which are rarely executed according to the planned programmes and thus institutions fail to make good use of the precious information depicted in strategic plan document (Wanjiku & Ombui, 2013; Joyce & Drumaux, 2014). Technical and vocational education and training (TVET) is concerned with the acquisition of knowledge and skills for the world of work. The purpose of TVET is to make people self-employable and to be a vehicle of transition for individuals to the world of work thus leading to income-generation which is expected to contribute to the individuals' and their communities' well-being. In Kenya, Public universities and tertiary institutions including public TVET started using strategic plans in 2007 as part of the wider public management initiatives to enhance their operations and service delivery (MOHEST, 2008).

The Vision 2030 has placed special demands on TVET as the leading engine that the economy must essentially rely upon to produce adequate levels of the middle level manpower needed to drive the economy towards the attainment of the vision. Moreover, the Constitution of Kenya 2010 has also created demands that require the technical and vocational education and training sector to develop policies and strategies to facilitate faster economic growth. Ministry of Education (MOE) Strategic Plan (2012-2017) further asserts that successful implementation of strategic plans is expected to improve efficiency in the education sector and thus consequently improve the human capital for Kenya's economy. TVET needs to respond to numerous challenges, such as a rapidly increasing in population, growing youth unemployment, the high cost of education against stagnating resources, rural urban migration, rising social and economic insecurity, reduction in jobs due to economic liberalisation and new technologies, as well as the people's clamour for accountability (Barasa & Kaabwe, 2001). However, there seems to be a problem in the implementation of strategic plan in public TVET sector in Kenya as evidence by weak managerial behavior, weak institutional policies and poor implementation of planned programmes. The public TVET institutions have therefore failed to realize the precious benefits associated with

strategic plans.. Hence, this paper sought to investigate the influence of employees' perception on strategic plan implementation in Public Technical Vocational Education and Training institutions (TVET) under the Ministry of Higher Education Science and Technology (MOHEST) in Rift Valley region, Kenya.

2. Purpose and Objective of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the influence of employees' perception on the implementation of strategic plans in Public TVET institutions in Rift Valley region, Kenya. Specifically, it sought to find out if there is any difference between employees' perception and the implementation of strategic plan. The following null hypothesis was tested at an alpha ($\alpha= 0.05$) level of significance:

Ho: There is no statistically significant difference between employee's perception and implementation of strategic plan

3. Theoretical and Conceptual Framework of the Study

The study was based on Change Management theory. Lewin (1947) introduced the idea of a change model consisting of three steps or phases to creating successful organizational change. Lewin suggested that change occurs in three phases of unfreezing, moving, and refreezing. Lewin (1947) focused on change efforts to be on a group and not individuals. When group values remain the same, an individual will continue to resist; however, if the group standard is first changed, then the individual resistance is reduced (Lewin, 1947).

The first stage, unfreezing, refers to the process of destabilizing the status quo by identifying dissatisfaction in the status (Lewin, 1947). According to Lewin, different cases and changes may face different problems at the unfreezing stage. Burnes and Cooke (2013) have added their interpretation and further explanation of Lewin's original vague process. Inducing guilt or survival anxiety involves nurturing the belief among the organizational members that change is necessary if the organization is to survive. Burnes & Cooke, (2013) submitted that at this stage, old behaviors make way for the successful adoption of new behaviors or processes.

At the second stage, moving, the status quo is not sustainable, and change is introduced (Lewin, 1947). Those affected by change start to feel guilt and survival anxiety, and they question their physiological safety by resisting the change (Lewin, 1947). Burnes & Cooke, (2013), argued that in this stage, the organizational leaders should first identify what needs to be changed and how to implement changes. Leaders should then develop an implementation strategy to meet these goals or change target. The complexity of forces that can affect groups as well as the members of these groups during a change process calls for leaders to take into account all of these forces using trial and error to explore all possible options to bring about change (Burnes & Cooke, 2013). It is during this phase when staff reacts and adjust to change, before accepting it as the norm.

The third stage of this model, refreezing, occurs after changes result in an ideal state. Refreezing is necessary to stabilize the group at a new quasi-stationary equilibrium (Lewin, 1947). For refreezing to occur, group life cannot return to its previous state; instead, it must gain permanency (Lewin, 1947). The new ways and behaviors adopted from the change process must correspond with or match the overall group personality as well as the environment of the organization, or this may result in a new round of disconfirmation and change (Burnes & Cooke, 2013). Change is a group activity to make sure the norms and routines accommodate new individual behaviors (Lewin, 1947). The necessity for refreezing is to ensure that members do not return to previous behaviors (Burnes & Cooke, 2013).

The three-phase model has been widely applied in many studies to introduce organizational changes (Trinidad Kristy, 2016). Scheuer (2015) and Van den Heuvel et al. (2013) showed that Lewin’s model constitutes an operational framework that can be used to predict human behavior, especially resistance to change, while offering a solution for ensuring changes will be successful implemented.

The concept of change management is grounded in the principle of sustained measurement of and feedback from people, processes, and systems within organization, in which people behave as they are measured (Berger, Sikora, and Berger, 1994). These basic concepts as associated with the theory of change management form the basis of employees’ perception of management practices and strategic plan implementation which this study sought to focus on.

Therefore, in this study, while holding other things constant, successful implementation of strategic plans is theorized as the dependent variable to employees’ perception. The predictor variable (employees’ perception) positively or negatively influences the successful implementation of the strategic plan (dependent variable) in the public TVET institutions.

Figure 1 displays the conceptual framework and how the variables were operationalized in this study.

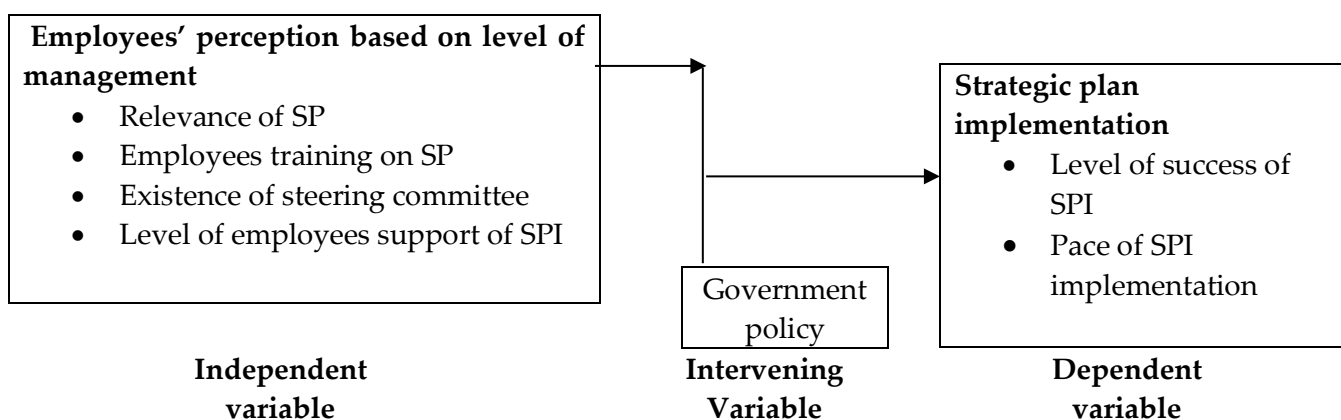


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework
(Source: Author)

4. Methodology

The study was carried out in all the seven public TVET institutions under Ministry of Higher Education Science and Technology in Rift Valley region, Kenya. The main reason for this choice is that public TVET institutions in Rift valley region portray typical characteristics of TVET institutions in Kenya, which consist of National polytechnic, Institute of technology and Technical training institutions and thus the findings of the study can be generalized to all TVET institutions.

Descriptive survey design was used in this study with the aim of collecting information from employees of public TVET institutions in respect to employees' perception of management practices on strategic plan implementation. This study adopted a mixed method approach. The study was informed by pragmatic philosophical worldview. Tashakkori and Teddlie, (2003) contend that the philosophical underpinning which is appropriate for mixed method approach is pragmatism because it involves many approaches for collecting and analyzing data rather than subscribing to only one way. Pragmatism opens the door to multiple methods, different worldviews, and different assumptions, as well as different forms of data collection and analysis.

The target population of this research consists of the employees of the public TVET institution who have taught for at least one year. This study was carried out in all the seven Public TVET institutions in Rift valley region which were purposively selected, namely, Rift Valley Technical Training Institute, Eldoret National polytechnic, Rift Valley Institute of Science and Technology, Kaiboi Technical Training Institute, Ol'lessos Technical Training Institute, Kitale National polytechnic and Maasai Technical Training Institute which started to prepare and implement strategic plans in 2008. These are public institutions with a target population of one thousand two hundred and fifty five (1255) academic staff (lecturers) and administrative staffs. In this study the researcher used Krejcie and Morgan formula (1970) as quoted by Kasomo (2001) to determine the required sample size. The entire target population yielded a total sample size of two hundred and ninety four (294) based on Krejcie and Morgan table for determining sample size. Thus, total sample size based on the three strata are 7 principals, 14 registrars and Deans of students, 49 heads of departments and 224 academic staff, totaling a proportional sample size of 294.

Table 1: Target population and Proportionate Sample Sizes in Various Institutions

Institution	Population (Lecturers)	Proportionate Sample Size
Eldoret National Polytechnic	295	69
Rift Valley Technical Training Institute	170	40
Kitale National Polytechnic	160	38
Kaiboi Technical Training Institute	130	30
Ol'lessos Technical Training Institute	120	28
Masai Technical Training Institute	120	28
Rift Valley Institute of Science and Technology (RVIST)	260	61
Total	1255	294

The instruments, which were used to facilitate collection of relevant data from this study, were questionnaires, interview schedules. The choice of the instruments was guided by the nature of data that was to be collected, time available for the study as well as objective of the study. A survey questionnaire was used to collect and measure data on the influence of employees' perception on strategic plan implementation in public technical training institutions. The quantitative portion of the instrument used a Likert-type scale to record responses. The questionnaire consisted of closed ended questions. According to Kombo and Tromp (2006), questionnaires can be used to cover a wide area and there is no bias on the side of the researcher and respondent. The instrument is an appropriate data collection method when relationships between variables such as correlations need to be established to answer the research questions (Kothari, 2013; Wilson, 2014).

Piloting was carried out to ensure that the instruments used to collect data are relevant, detect deficiencies in the questionnaire and correct before the actual study begin. The instruments in this study were pilot-tested among 13 administrative and academic staffs of Keroka Technical Training Institute which was not part of the sample for the study. The results were used to test the validity and reliability of the research tools. Pilot testing ensured that there were no problems with the wording of the draft questionnaire, and also check on the layout to ensure it is neither confusing nor encouraging any particular response. It also facilitated refinement of the questionnaire in the best way possible so that respondents in the main survey would have no problem in answering the questions and no problem in recording the data (Saunders et al 2000). Further, the instruments were reviewed and revised by experts in strategic management and their recommendations were incorporated in the final questionnaire. The validation by the expert ensured face validity and content validity of the instruments. The reliability of the instruments was established by using test-retest method to estimate the degree to which the same results could be obtained with repeated measure of accuracy of the same concept. A correlation coefficient of 0.85 was obtained and thus was considered high enough to judge the instrument as reliable for the study

The data collected was analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics which involved measures of central tendency and measures of variations. As for inferential statistics, this study used Pearson product correlation analysis, ANOVA and multiple regression analysis

5. Findings

5.1 Response Rate

Questionnaires were self-administered and the study population comprised of five Technical training institution and two National polytechnics whereby a total 294 questionnaires were given out by the researcher to the respondents. Two hundred and forty two (242) questionnaires were completely filled, returned and used for analysis in this study. This represents a response rate of 82 percent of the sample size. Zikmund *et*

al., (2010) noted that a response rate of over fifty percent (50%) is adequate for analysis, sixty percent (60%) good while seventy percent (70%) and over to be very good enough. Since the overall response rate in this study was eighty two percent (82%), it was regarded excellent for reliable information and adequate for further analysis.

5.2 Demographic Characteristics

The demographic characteristics of the respondents in this study was sought through gender of the respondent, respondents' Level of Education, respondents' teaching experience in Technical Training Institution and respondents' level of management. Majority, 57% of the respondents interviewed were male while 43% were female. The difference between the male and female respondents is small. This shows that there was a gender balance in the distribution of respondents hence the likelihood of getting balanced responses

The findings exhibited that most respondents' highest level of education was bachelor's degree as accounted for by 43.6 percent of the respondents, with 33.7 percent with diploma as the highest education level and only 19.3 percent of the respondents with master's degree as the highest level of education. Only 3.3 percent of the respondents accounted for respondents having a PhD degree. Generally most of the respondents' level of education was high with about 65 percent reporting to have bachelors' degree and above. This meant that the respondents had adequate knowledge as far as strategy implementation was concerned and also have no problem in interpreting strategic plan for implementation. The representation on the level of education agreed with Ferlie and Ongaro (2015) who argued that strategic plans are not simple, but rather complex, requiring people with high level logistical skills.

The study found out that 29.8% of the respondents have a teaching experience in the technical training institution for 6 to 10 years, 27.3% for 11 and 15 years while 22.7% for 1 and 5 years and 20.2% for 16 years and above. The results indicate that majority of the respondents (77%) have worked in the technical training institution for over 5 year and therefore they have knowledge on the factors that affect implementation of strategic plans in the institutions. These findings reaffirmed Ghafoor (2013) who argued that employees with long services translate into valuable experience in the execution of strategic plans.

The respondents in the study consisted of lower level management staff (72.3%), Middle level management staff (19 %), and Top level management staff (8.7 %). The result depict that staff in all cadre were involved in the study hence findings represent the opinions of employees of the organization pertaining the influence of employees' perception of leadership strategy on strategic plan implementation.

5.3 Influence of Employees' Perception on Strategic Plan Implementation

The study sought to investigate the influence of employees' perception on the implementation of strategic plan. The result was obtained using cross tabulation in SPSS. The findings are presented in Table 2:

Table 2: Employees’ Perception on strategic plan implementation

Statement	Level of management	Number and percentage			Total
		No	Not sure	Yes	
Employees training on strategic plan implementation?	Lower level	78(44.6%)	15(8.6%)	82(46.8%)	175
	Middle level	19(41.3%)	3(6.5%)	24(52.2%)	46
	Top level	4(19%)	0	17(81%)	21
Existence of steering committee	Lower level	30(17.2%)	17(9.7%)	128(73.1)	175
	Middle level	10(21.7%)	7(15.2%)	29(63.1%)	46
	Top level	3(14.3%)	0	18(85.7%)	21
Relevancy of strategic plan implementation	Lower level	8(4.6%)	68(38.9%)	99(56.5%)	175
	Middle level	5(10.9%)	9(19.6%)	32(69.5)	46
	Top level	1(4.7%)	3(14.3%)	17(81%)	21
Employees excitement about strategy implementation	Lower level	57(32.6%)	54(30.9%)	64(36.5%)	175
	Middle level	14(30.4%)	14(30.4%)	18(39.2%)	46
	Top level	8(38.1%)	12(57.1%)	1(4.8%)	21
Awareness about consequences of failure to implement strategy	Lower level	18(10.3%)	35(20%)	122(69.7)	175
	Middle level	6(13%)	9(19.6%)	31(67.4%)	46
	Top level	1(4.7%)	4(19.1%)	16(76.2%)	21
Individual interest to implement strategy	Lower level	63(36%)	51(29.1%)	61(34.9%)	175
	Middle level	17(37%)	9(19.6%)	20(43.4%)	46
	Top level	4(19.1%)	1(4.7%)	16(76.2%)	21
Convinced that the strategy being implemented is the right one	Lower level	31(17.7%)	40(22.9%)	104(59.)	175
	Middle level	11(23.9%)	3(6.5%)	32(69.6%)	46
	Top level	1(4.7%)	2(9.5%)	18(85.8%)	21

The findings on Table 2 showed that majority of the employees from lower level cadre (53.2%) have not been trained or were not sure if they have been trained on strategic plan implementation, while 47.8% and 19% were of the same opinion from middle level and top level management respectively. These results indicated that there were challenges in strategic plan implementation in public TVET institutions because majority of the employees haven’t been capacity built.

Furthermore over 56% of employees from all cadres agreed that steering committee exists, strategic plan being implemented was relevant to the institutions, they were aware about consequences of failure to implement strategy and were convinced that the strategy being implemented is the right one for their institutions. On the other hand, over 57% of the respondents from all cadres did not agree or were not sure about their excitement on strategy plan implementation. This findings paint a dark picture on the state of strategic plan implementation in public TVET institutions in rift valley region of Kenya.

Further the study found out that 65.1% of the lower level management and 56.6% of the middle level management did not have personal interest to help implement institution strategic plan but 76.2% of the top management were personally interest to help implement institution strategic plan. The agreement among top, middle and lower level managers would result to successful implementation of the strategy. If there is no understanding among them, it may create obstacles to successful strategy

implementation. The findings indicated a clash of ideas on the aspects of strategic plan implementation among the three levels, top, middle and lower level management.

Further analysis was undertaken to establish the nature of relationship between the variables using the following hypothesis:

H₀: There is no statistically significant difference between employee's perception and implementation of strategic plan in public TVET institutions

Correlation analysis was used to test the relationship between employee's perception and implementation of strategic plan in public TVET institutions. According to Sekaran and Bougie (2010), Pearson correlation analysis indicates the strength, direction, and significance of bivariate relationship among the variables. The larger the correlation coefficient, the stronger the level of association. Further, the correlation may be either positive or negative depending on the direction of the relationship between the variables (Hair et al., 2007). Table 3 presents the correlation coefficient benchmarks for making the decision on a variable.

Table 3: Correlation coefficient benchmark

Coefficient Range	Strength of Association
± 0.91 to ± 1.00	Very strong
± 0.71 to ± 0.90	High
± 0.41 to ± 0.70	Moderate
± 0.21 to ± 0.40	Small but definite relationship
± 0.01 to ± 0.20	Slight, almost negligible

Source: Hair et al (2007).

The results of Pearson correlation analysis on the relationship between employees' perception and strategic plan implementation is provided in Table 4:

Table 4: Correlation for Employees perception and strategic plan implementation

		Strategic plan implementation	Employees perception
Strategic plan implementation	Pearson Correlation	1	.972**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	242	242
Employees perception	Pearson Correlation	.972**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	242	242

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The results from table 4 shows that employees' perception was positively correlated to implementation of strategic plan in public TVET institutions. The result showed a coefficient of $r = 0.972$ and $P = 0.000$, which shows that the two constructs, employees perception and implementation of strategic plan were very strongly positively related with the p -value = 0.000 which was less than the threshold of 0.05 level of significance.

The strength of the relationship being clear allows the study to use other tests to test the significance of the relationship between employees' perception and strategic plan implementation. This study used multiple linear regression analysis to establish the nature of the relationship between the study variables. Inferential statistics were also performed to test the null hypotheses of the study for possible rejection or acceptance. The null hypotheses were rejected if the *p*-value was less than 0.05 and accepted if the results showed it was greater than 0.05.

Table 5: Model Summary for Employees' Perception on Strategic Plan implementation

Model	R	R Square Adjusted	R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.972 ^a	.945	.945	.78540

a. Predictors: (Constant), Employees perception.

The coefficient of determination *R* Square = .945 at significance level of 0.05 indicates that, 94.5% of the total variations in strategic plan implementation are influenced by employee's perception. This implies that, there is a positive contribution of employees' perception by 94.5% on influencing implementations of strategic plans in public TVET institutions in rift valley region and 6.5% is contributed by other factors. The result of the Pearson's correlation coefficient (*r*) is 0.972 and the result of the standard error of the estimate is .78540. This means that the variability in the prediction is .78540.

Further analysis was done using Analysis of variance (ANOVA) to establish if the difference between employees' perception and strategic plan implementation is significant.

Table 6: Analysis of Variance for Employees perception

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	2565.033	1	2565.033	4158.233	.000 ^b
Residual	148.046	240	.617		
Total	2713.079	241			

a. Dependent Variable: Strategic plan implementation.

b. Predictors: (Constant), Employees' perception.

The analysis of variance (ANOVA) results indicated in Table 6 confirmed that the model goodness of fit is appropriate for this data since *F* = 4158.233 and the *p*-value of 0.000 which was less than the significant level of 0.05 with *df* = 240. Hence, the null hypothesis was rejected and concluded that there was significant linear relationship between employees' perception and strategic plan implementation in public TVET institutions in Kenya.

6. Discussion of the Results

This study sought to establish the influence of employee's perception on the implementation of strategic plan in public TVET institutions.

The findings of the objective showed that there exists a gap between the perception of top managers, middle managers and lower level employees on their roles and on aspects enabling their strategic plan implantation. It therefore results in an implementation gap which can hinder the successful implementation of the institution strategy. This finding agreed with the findings of Abok, 2013 who argued that the agreement among top, middle and lower level managers will result to successful implementation of the strategy and if there is no understanding among them, it may create obstacles to successful strategy implementation. Further, this finding was consistent with the views of Viseras et al., (2005) who found out that strategy implementation success depended crucially on the human or people side of project management, and less on organization and systems related factors. In fact Abok A.M, 2013 was of view that implementation failures occur at middle level and lower level management.

Furthermore the findings corroborate with findings of Atreya (2007) who argued that whatever the management has decided on strategy does not mean that subordinates will follow and cooperate in its implementation. The fact that top management was interested to implement the strategy did not convince middle and lower level management to follow suit. Moreover, the findings also agreed with Alexander (1985) who argued that when involved employees have insufficient capabilities to perform their jobs, lower-level employees are inadequately trained, and departmental managers provide inadequate leadership and direction then implementation of strategic plans would be unsuccessful.

The strong relationship between employees' perception and implementation of strategic plan could be due to the fact employees from various cadre tend to agree on various statements on strategic plan implementation. Majority of respondents indicated that they were aware about the consequence of failure and that the strategy implemented was the right one and relevant to their institutions. Niculae, 2006, asserted that problems on strategy implementation appear when the perception differences are extreme and persistent, not when there are insignificant disagreements. It could also imply that employees across all cadres of management level in public TVET institutions might not have conceptualize the whole issue of strategy implementation. This was supported by the fact that more than 47% of the implementers that is middle and lower level management have not been trained on strategic planning and strategic plan implementation.

Moreover, majority of the employees of all cadres were enthusiastic about strategic plan implementation. It is important for all institutions to sensitize employees of all cadres on strategic plan implementation and enhance level of interaction on issues relating to strategic plan implementation. Continuous communication across various cadres of employees helps to create positive perception of strategic plan implementation.

7. Conclusion

The study in this variable sought to investigate the influence of employees' perceptions and Strategic plan implementation in Public TVET institutions in North Rift region, Kenya. The results show that employees' perception affects implementation of strategies in the public TVET institutions and that strategy needs to be explained and understood by all employees of various cadres or level of management throughout the whole organization. The findings further revealed that employees perception based on their level of management and implementation of strategic plan were strongly positively related and significant. Employee's perception based on their level of management accounted for 94.5% of the total variations in strategic plan implementation. The main findings of the research showed that there exists a gap between the perception of top managers, middle managers and lower level employees on their roles and on aspects enabling their strategic plan implantation thus resulting in an implementation gap which can hinder the successful implementation of the institution strategy. The findings indicated a diversity of opinion and ideas on the aspects of strategic plan implementation among the three levels, top, middle and lower level management. This diversity in opinion between the top management and lower management on strategic plan implementation process cast aspersion on whether employees in public TVET institutions really understands the whole idea of strategic management process or they are just implementing it because it is a ministerial requirement.

Therefore, the result confirms that employees perception based on their level of management is very fundamental for effective implementation of strategic plans in public TVET institutions. These findings provide empirical evidence and basis for concluding that employee's perception facilitates a very high level to strategic plan implementation. The implication from the above interpretation, suggests that the level of strategic plan implementation is greatly enhanced if all employees of various cadres understand the strategy implementation process and are properly trained on matters relating to strategic plans.

8. Recommendations

The following recommendations are made to enhance effective strategic plan implementation in public training institutions:

- a) The diversity in opinion between the top management and lower management on strategic plan implementation calls for the need for institutions to ensure that all employees across all cadres are briefed on various strategy process in order enhance their understanding and commitment.
- b) There is need the institution management to involve all employees in the whole process of strategic plan implementation in order to ease employees understanding and participation.

- c) There is need for the top leadership of the institutions to involve all key stakeholders during formulation and implementation of strategic plans in order to avoid unforeseen conflicts and sabotage from employees which can jeopardize the entire process of implementation.
- d) There is need for the institutions to establish effective monitoring and evaluations framework which will be able to track progress of planned activities against the actual implemented activities and hence identify any discrepancies which need immediate actions. This will help to respond to the challenges in a timely manner for successful implementation of the entire process.

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