

THE EFFECT OF COMMUNICATION MODE FOR STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION ON WATER SERVICE PROVISION IN KAKAMEGA COUNTY, KENYA

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Abstract: *Strategy communication mode can create a great difference between goal attainment and its shortfalls. Strategy implementation is at the basis of success / failure and be ascribed to a number of reasons, including 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. This study sought to establish the effects of strategic implementation on water service provision in Kakamega County, Kenya. The study was guided by the following objective: To assess the effect of Communication mode for strategy implementation on urban water service provision in Kakamega County, Kenya. This study was anchored on the systems theory and the resource-based theory. This study adopted mixed method design. This study was carried out in Kakamega County, targeting 176 employees of Kakamega County Urban Water and Sanitation Company. The study adopted stratified sampling whereby each staff category was sampled separately. Nevertheless, Krecjie and Morgan formulae was adopted to sample each category. Therefore, the study sample size was 130. A semi-structured questionnaire was used to collect primary data from the respondents. Data was analysed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. The study adopted correlation, simple linear regression and multiple linear regression. The study found out that communication mode had no significant effect on water service provision in Kakamega County, Kenya. The study recommends great emphasis and focus on different aspects of communication for strategy planning rather than strategy implementation.*

Keywords: *communication mode, strategy implementation; water service provision*

1. Back-ground to the Study

A strategic plan is a document that establishes the direction of an organization (Bungay, 2019). Strategy is a pattern for organizations to achieve their objectives and goals (Tapera, 2014). Strategy implementation happens to be a more challenging and delicate task than that of strategy formulation (Magiri, Ngui and Mathenge, 2018). To be competitive, organizations must therefore develop good strategies and appropriately realign the organizational structure, systems, leadership behavior and human resource policies (Kamau, Kibuine & Mugambi, 2018). Strategic management process is a continuous culture of appraisal that a business adopts to outdo the competitors (George, 2018). The process of strategic management includes goal setting, analysis, strategy formation, strategy implementation, and strategy monitoring (Bungay, 2019). Research integrating behavioural assumptions and real options models offers the potential to more rigorously explore how aspirations, bias, and various forms of uncertainty interplay in the strategic management process (Bryson,

Lauren and David, 2018). The first part of strategic management is to plan and set goals (Ferlie and Edoardo, 2015).

Some of the key elements include empathy which is the caring individualized attention the firm provides its customers and assurance to build confidence (Magiri, Ngui & Mathenge, 2018). Also a firm should ensure there is consistent and good customer service with established communication channels (Ngile, 2015). Quality customer service delivery should be responsive and flexible to evolving user needs, and ensure sustainability, availability, timeliness, dependability and reliability (Aguoru, Umogbai & Ozowa, 2018). Water service provision is the fundamental aim of any water firm and the assessment of clients' satisfaction therefore forms an important component in continuous evaluation of water service provision run for the public hence the necessity of adequate strategic plan implementation (Miruka, 2016).

The water services management in Kakamega County is overseen by Water Services Regulatory Board (WASREB). WASREB regulates water services in Kenya and enforces licencing conditions with Water Service Providers (WSPs), in this case Kakamega County Urban Water and Sanitation Company limited (KACUWASCO) (Devolution Hub, 2016). To compliment these efforts, Kenya Markets Trust (KMT) and Kenya Integrated Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (KIWASH) has been instrumental in assisting KACUWASCO at improving the water sector. However, major progress has only remained at the policy and legislation level; with maintenance issues resulting into below average water production thus creating a scarcity of clean water and poor service provision by KACUWASCO (Devolution Hub, 2017).

1.1 Statement of the Problem

The Water Services Providers in Kenya are presently observed to lack the capacity to equitably and sustainably supply water as envisioned in their mandate (WRMA, 2015). At the county levels, water access is expected to improve livelihoods (Karimi, 2018). Among the top 11 very large WSPs, Kakamega Water and Sanitation Company has the lowest number of active water connections standing at 31,518; which is much lower compared to neighbouring Kisumu Water and Sanitation Company that has 54,589 active water connections (WASREB, 2018). Moreover, Kakamega Water and Sanitation Company produces the least amount of water per cubic millimetre; standing at 5,573mm³ as compared to Gatundu Water and Sanitation Company that serves a smaller population but produces 7731mm³ of water (WASREB, 2018); thus, demonstrating that there is inadequate water access to most households (Cofek, 2018). Consequently, this study sought to fill this gap by focusing on effects of Communication mode for strategy implementation on Urban Water Service Provision in Kakamega County, Kenya.

1.2 Objective of the study

To assess the effect of Communication mode for strategy implementation on water service provision in Kakamega County, Kenya.

1.3 Research Hypothesis

H0₁: Communication mode has no significant effect on water service provision in Kakamega County, Kenya.

2. Reviewed Literature

Mwanthi (2018) study titled, 'Linking Strategy Implementation with Organizational Performance in Kenyan Universities.' The study sought to establish whether strategy communication, organizational leadership, employee participation, and resource allocation had a positive influence on strategy implementation in Kenyan universities. The study also sought to establish whether Kenyan universities successfully implement their

strategic plans and how this impacted on organizational performance. The study was conducted in 10 universities; 5 public and 5 private universities. The sample size was composed of 384 university employees. The study found that all the four factors; strategy communication, organizational leadership, employee participation and resource allocation had a positive influence on strategy implementation. The study concluded that indeed the success in strategy implementation was favored by strategy communication. However, the study focused on Kenyan Universities and not the WSPs; a gap the current study sought to fill.

A study by Nzisa (2016) sought to assess the factors affecting strategy implementation process in e-business based companies. The study was guided by the following research questions: How does communication affect implementation of strategies in e-businesses? To what extend do organizational resources affect the implementation of strategies in e-business? Do management styles affect implementation of strategies in e-businesses? A descriptive research design was used for the study in particular reference to e-business in Nairobi County. The study was undertaken using a sample of 113 e-businesses from which 98 responded to the questionnaire. A qualitative approach was adopted to collect data using questionnaires that were emailed and hand delivered. The data was then interpreted with use of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The results and findings of the study were represented in the form of tables, graphs and charts. It was noted that communication, organizational resources and management styles had a great importance on implementation of strategic plans on e-business based companies. However, the study focused on e-business based companies and not the WSPs; a gap the current study sought to fill.

3. Research Methodology

This study adopted a mixed method. The combination of descriptive survey and correlational research designs in this study enabled the researcher to establish facts; examine relationships; describe, analyze and interpret data accordingly. The study targeted 176 staff of KACUWASCO. The study sampled 130 respondents using Krecjie and Morgan (1970) formulae. The study adopted both simple linear regression and multiple linear regression. The sampling procedure that was adopted is illustrated in the table 3.1 below.

Table 3.1: Sample size determination

Category	Population	Sample	Description
Senior managers	20	19	Krecjie and Morgan (1970)
Lower cadre staff	156	111	Krecjie and Morgan (1970)
Total	176	130	

A semi- structured questionnaire was used to collect primary data from the lower cadre staff. The questionnaires were preferred in this study because respondents of the study are assumed to be literate and quite able to answer questions asked adequately. The study adopted a key informant interview guide to collect data from the key informants also known as the senior managers. Mean and standard deviations were used as measures of central tendencies and dispersion respectively.

4. Study Findings and Interpretation

The study sought to analyze the response rate. Out of a total of 130 questionnaires distributed, only 115 questionnaires were fully filled and therefore suitable for data entry and analysis. Consequently, a response rate of 88.46% was achieved.

This study sought to assess the effect of communication mode for strategy implementation on water service provision in Kakamega County, Kenya. A five-point Likert scale was used to measure the response indices such that; 1=Not at all; 2=Small extent; 3=Medium extent; 4=Large extent; 5=Very large extent. The findings based on quantitative analysis are displayed in table 4.1, table 4.2, table 4.3, table 4.4 and table 4.5. Table 4.1 displays the descriptive statistics.

Table 4.1: Communication mode for strategic implementation

Statement	N	Mean	SD
Communication through social media for strategy implementation has been adopted in the organization	115	3.2870	1.05768
Communication through mainstream media for strategy implementation has been adopted in the organization	115	3.4174	.96412
Notices are given in good time for strategy implementation meetings within the organization	115	3.6174	.84379
Stakeholder meetings for strategy implementation has been adopted in the organization	115	3.6522	.84856
Top leadership are fully involved in communication for strategy implementation in the organization	115	3.7913	.76658
Valid N (listwise)	115		
Composite Mean		3.55306	

Source: Researcher (2020)

The respondents were asked if communication through social media for strategy implementation had been adopted in the organization; a mean of 3.287 denoting medium extent was obtained. This implies that communication through social media for strategy implementation had been adopted in the organization to a medium extent. The respondents were also asked if communication through mainstream media for strategy implementation had been adopted in the organization. A mean of 3.4174 denoting medium extent was obtained. The interpretation of this finding is that communication through mainstream media for strategy implementation had been adopted in the organization to a medium extent. When the respondents were asked if notices were given in good time for strategy implementation meetings within the organization, a mean of 3.6174 denoting large extent was obtained. This finding implies that notices were given in good time for strategy implementation meetings to a large extent within the organization. A question on whether stakeholder meetings for strategy implementation had been adopted in the organization obtained a mean of 3.6522 denoting large extent was obtained. The interpretation of this finding is that stakeholder meetings for strategy implementation had been adopted to a large extent in the organization.

Finally, the respondents were asked if top leadership were fully involved in communication for strategy implementation in the organization. A mean of 3.7913 denoting large extent was obtained. The interpretation of this finding is that top leadership were fully involved in communication for strategy implementation to a large extent in the organization. In summary, a composite mean of 3.55306 was obtained; denoting large extent. This finding implies that, communication mode for strategy implementation was adopted to a large extent in water service provision in Kakamega County, Kenya.

Table 4.2 displays the results of the correlation analysis.

Table 4.2: Correlation coefficients for communication mode for strategic implementation and water service provision

		Communication Mode For Strategy Implementation	Water Service Provision
Communication Mode For Strategy Implementation	Pearson Correlation	1	.530
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.056
Water Service Provision	Pearson Correlation	.530	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.056	
N		115	115

Source: Researcher (2020)

A correlation coefficient of 0.53 at a significance level of 0.056 was obtained for communication mode for strategic implementation and water service provision. This implies that indeed communication mode for strategic implementation is positively correlated to water service provision in Kakamega County, Kenya. Consequently, the study embarked on a regression analysis as shown below. A simple linear regression analysis for communication mode for strategic implementation and water service provision was done. Table 4.3, table 4.4 and table 4.5 displays the results of the regression analysis.

Table 4.3: Regression model summary for communication mode for strategic implementation and water service provision

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.330 ^a	.417	.408	.63248

a. Predictors: (Constant), Communication Mode For Strategy Implementation

Source: Researcher (2020)

The study obtained a regression coefficient (R^2) of 0.417 denoting 41.7%. This implies that communication mode for strategic implementation accounted for a 41.7% change in water service provision in Kakamega County, Kenya. A 41.7% change is important but is categorized to be below fifty percent and therefore not very significant.

Table 4.4: Analysis of variance for communication mode for strategic implementation and water service provision

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	.778	1	.778	1.944	.066 ^b
1 Residual	45.203	113	.400		
Total	45.980	114			

a. Dependent Variable: Water Service Provision

b. Predictors: (Constant), Communication Mode For Strategy Implementation

Source: Researcher (2020)

The analysis of variance (ANOVA) results shows an F value of 1.944 which is greater than F critical at a significance level of 0.05. Consequently, the model adopted was statistically significant. This finding implies that the regression model adopted for communication mode for strategic implementation and water service provision was statistically significant.

Table 4.5: Regression coefficients for communication mode for strategic implementation and water service provision

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	3.253	.370		8.786	.000
¹ Communication Mode For Strategy Implementation	.143	.103	.130	1.394	.066

a. Dependent Variable: Water Service Provision

Source: Researcher (2020)

The regression coefficients obtained resulted in the following equation/model:

$$Y=3.253+0.143X_1+0.37$$

Since the model for hypothesis testing was: If: $p_1 < 0.05 \rightarrow$ reject H_0 ; model: $Y=\alpha+\beta_1X_1+\epsilon$

Then: $p_1=0.066$ which is greater than 0.05 \rightarrow we accept H_0 ; model: $Y=3.253+0.143X_1+0.37$

In summary, the null hypothesis is accepted as it is: Communication mode for strategy implementation has no significant effect on water service provision in Kakamega County, Kenya. This implies that strategy implementation is a function of multiple variables that interplay to realize service delivery. This result is similar to the findings of Mwanthi (2018) sought to establish whether Kenyan universities successfully implement their strategic plans and how this impacted on organizational performance and established that success in strategy implementation was favored by communication mode. However, dissimilar findings were established in a study by Nzisa (2016) who established that communication had a great importance on implementation of strategic plans on e-business based companies.

5. Conclusion

The study was guided by the following hypothesis; **H₀**: Communication mode has no significant effect on water service provision in Kakamega County, Kenya. In summary, the study established that communication mode for strategy implementation had no significant effect on water service provision in Kakamega County, Kenya. In conclusion, the null hypothesis was accepted.

Recommendations

The study recommends great emphasis and focus on different aspects of communication for strategy planning rather than strategy implementation. A well communicated strategic plan that involves all parties right from the planning stage is thus recommended.

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