FACTORS INFLUENCING COMPETITIVE STRATEGIES IMPLEMENTATION IN INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER LEARNING IN KENYA: A CASE STUDY OF UNITED STATES INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY- AFRICA

BY

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UNITED STATES INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY-AFRICA

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UNITED STATES INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY-AFRICA

SUMMER 2018
STUDENT DECLARATION
I the undersigned, declare that this is my original work and has not been submitted to any institution other than United States International University-Africa for Academic credit.

Signed:

_________________________________ Date_______________________________

Victor Makanga (638698)

This project has been presented for examination with my approval as the appointed supervisor.

Signed:

_________________________________ Date_______________________________

Dr. Fred Newa

Signed: _______________________________ Date___________________________

Dean Chandaria School of Business
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The general objective of the study was to find out the factors that influenced successful implementation of competitive strategies in institutions of higher learning. To achieve this the study sought to show whether the commitment of top-level management had an impact on the implementation of the competitive strategies. Further, the study also sought to establish the role of communication in implementation of competitive strategies in institutions of higher learning. In addition, the study looked at organization’s culture and how it affected the implementation of competitive strategies.

The study adopted a descriptive research design which assessed the relationship between the independent variables (top university management practice, communication and organizational culture) and the successful implementation of competitive strategies. The population for this study was USU-Africa members of staff and faculty. Stratified random sampling was utilized to come up with the desired sample size through the use of proportions that brought about a sample size of 111. Data analysis was conducted using SPSS through computation of means and frequencies to show the different attributes of the study sample. Correlation and regression analysis were computed to infer the existing strength and degree of relationship between the variables under study. Presentation of the findings was done through the use of tables and figures.

The findings revealed that top management commitment to the strategic direction of the university was the most important factor in strategy implementation. Top manager’s knowledge on what clearly needs to be done in order to successfully implement a strategy was very crucial. Most of the respondents agreed that top managers at USIU-Africa demonstrated their willingness to give energy to the implementation of competitive strategies. The results also showed that there although it was a low positive correlation (Pearson value of 0.388) it was still statistically significant association between commitment of top level management and the implementation of competitive strategies.

The study also showed that information given by management was always clear and that the information sources were sufficient for strategic decision making. Most of the respondents agreed that communication with employees is timely on formulated strategies. The findings however showed that there was some level of uncertainty on whether the organization had a two-way-communication program that permitted and solicited questions from employees about issues regarding the formulated strategies. The findings revealed
that there was a very high statistically significant (Pearson value 0.612) correlation between communication and implementation of competitive strategies.

The research findings revealed that most respondents agreed that USIU-Africa used research and development to come up with viable and actionable strategic decisions. Participants were not certain of the existence of a decision making policy. Most of the respondents agreed that the company had yearly forecast of the university market that it utilized in assessing strategic decisions. Results from correlational analysis indicated that there was a strong positive statistically significant correlation (Pearson value of 0.562) between the organizational culture and implementation of competitive strategy where the significant value 0.000 was less than alpha value 0.05 and 0.01 tested at 95% and 99% confidence level respectively. This being an indicator that the organizational culture had a great influence on the implementation of competitive strategies.

The study concluded that for effective strategy implementation, effective communication has to be put in place. Effective communication will involve the engagement of all the organization’s stakeholders at all the levels of decision making. Communication that is efficient positively impacts the implementation of competitive strategies in universities in Kenya. Communication at USIU-Africa had a positive impact on the implementation of competitive strategies as shown from the significant correlation analysis. This is an indication that improving the communication both internal and external to the organization will lead to better implementation of the competitive strategies.

A good organization culture such as one that promotes flexibility and adaptability motivates and creates a conducive environment for the institution to implement competitive strategies. This variable through correlation analysis was shown to be the second highest in significance on the implementation of competitive strategies. The study hence concluded that the organization’s culture significantly influenced competitive strategy implementation.

The study recommended that institutions need to improve their internal and external communication. They should come up with systems that are effective for communication through the utilization of information technology and the use of centralized information systems. Institutions of higher learning including USIU – Africa should also cultivate a culture that supports individual and team development. The culture should be flexible and
adaptable; this is because more often than not implementation of strategies leads to changes in the organization. The institution has to be flexible to be able to adapt to these changes.
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Primarily, I would like to thank God Almighty who gave me the strength and ability to be able to work on this study.

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CHAPTER ONE

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

For any organization to remain relevant in the face of the turbulent environment, it has to come up with effective strategies that will enable it remain relevant and competitive. However much these strategies will be implemented does not guarantee that the business will achieve its objectives, this could probably be attributed to ineffective strategy implementation. Successful strategy formulation does not guarantee successful strategy implementation (Ginsberg, 1988). It is always more difficult to do strategy implementation than to do strategy formulation (David, 1997). Failure in the implementation process is usually the main weakness for most strategic management processes (Wooldridge and Floyd, 1990).

Strategy can be defined as a complex concept that enables an organization to engage in different processes and activities. According to Mintzberg (1987), strategy can be articulated by what he labeled as the “5 Ps of strategy”. Understanding strategy as a plan, a ploy, a position, a pattern, and as a perspective is important. The five ways of thinking are important in understanding strategy but neither of them can be used on its own in understanding the concept. According to Dettwiller, Lindelof and Lofsten (2006), Changes in the business environment lead to different responses by different firms so as to ensure that the changes do not render strategies adopted as obsolete. Companies therefore need to have strategies in order to survive and dominate in their industries.

There is a need for firms to learn how to continuously adapt to the changing external environmental and focus on improving service delivery to their target customers. By ensuring that the level of service delivery is superior then firms are able to gain superior performance. Porter (1985) defined two competitive strategies that firms can adopt; Low Cost and Differentiation. Porter further states that the two competitive strategies when combined with different activities within a firm will lead to three generic strategies that enables a firm in improving its performance in an industry. The three generic strategies are cost leadership, differentiation, and focus.

Porter (1985), asserts that when firms adopt these competitive strategies their main aim is to have superior performance and therefore gain a competitive advantage. When a firm chooses to use the Low cost they aim to be cost leaders in the market by providing their
goods and services at very low prices that will enable them to capture a large percentage of the market which will eventually increase their profits. When a firm chooses to use differentiation then they aim at providing goods and services that are not available to other companies and hence are more attractive to the consumers as compared to those provided by their competitors. When organizations adopt the right competitive strategies then they are able to deliver superior value to their target customers and gain competitive advantage over their competitors.

Competitive strategies can be defined as long term action plans that are contrived in order to help an organization acquire a higher level of competitive advantage over its rivals. Competitive strategies are important to companies that are heavily infused with alternatives for consumers. Porter (1996) stated that the concept of strategic management was developed out of the need for organizations to seek competitive advantage. Organizations that need to succeed in competitive industries must look for ways to gain competitive advantage in their industry of operation. According to Porter (1985) when a company gains competitive advantage it is able to gain superiority over other firms in the industry.

The pursuit of competitive advantage is arguably the central theme of the academic field of strategic management (Furrer 2008; Hoskisson et al. 1999; Porter 1996). Pearce and Robinson (1988, p. 6) define strategic managements, ‘the set of decisions and actions resulting in formulation and implementation of strategies designed to achieve the objectives of an organization’ Certo & Peter (1990) define strategic management as, ‘a continuous, iterative process aimed at keeping an organization as a whole appropriately matched to its environment’. Strategic management is concerned with defining organizational performance, variables of strategic choice and competitive advantage. Strategic choice determines the market in which to participate and where to position the organization within those markets (concepts which, as we will see in the next section, are closely aligned with the market-based view of strategy) (Kotha & Vadlami, 1995).

Barney (1997) argues that firms pursue competitive strategies when they seek to improve or maintain their performance through independent actions in a specific market or industry. Five distinct competitive strategy approaches stand out. These are low-cost provider strategy, a broad differentiation strategy, a best-cost provider strategy, a focused (or market niche) strategy based on low costs, and a focused (or market niche) strategy based on differentiation. A company’s competitive strategy is increasingly effective the more it
provides good defenses against the five competitive forces, shifts competitive pressures in way that favor the company, and helps create sustainable competitive advantage (Thompson, Strickland & Gamble, 2007).

The prominent role of competitive advantage may derive from both the economic and military origins of the strategy literature (Whittington 1993). Ramos-Rodríguez and Ruíz-Navarro (2004) identify three roots of strategic management: economics, sociology and psychology. In their view, transaction cost theory, agency theory, evolutionary economics and the resource-based view of the firm derive from the economic roots of the discipline, while contingency theory, resource-dependence theory, and organizational ecology derive from the sociological roots. They also argue that organizational behavior theory and the structural patterns of Mintzberg’s (1978) concepts belong to the psychological roots of the discipline (Ramos-Rodríguez & Ruíz-Navarro 2004). Nag et al. (2007) carried out a large-scale survey of strategic management scholars in an attempt to present a fundamental definition of strategic management. They propose the following definition: ‘The field of strategic management deals with(1) the major intended and emergent initiatives (2) taken by general managers on behalf of owners, (3) involving utilization of resources (4) to enhance the performance (5) of firms (6) in their external environments’ (Nag et al. 2007). They substantiate their findings by carrying out a second study amongst associated disciplines, such as economics, sociology, marketing and management. Based on this second study, they augment the definition with the concept of internal organization (characterized by notions such as process, routines, organizing, internal, practices and implementation)

Porter (1985) argued that competitive advantage is a key determinant of superior performance. The superior performance of a firm arises from sustainable completive advantages that are the result of either monopoly rents, Ricardian rents or Schumpeterian rents (Peteraf 1993; Powell 2001). Monopoly rents are usually obtained from a protected market position when there is lack of competition. It has been described as ‘deliberate restriction of output’ (Peteraf 1993). Ricardian rents generate firm-specific resources by idiosyncratic, intangible, internal inputs such as knowledge, leadership or culture (Peteraf, 1993). Schumpeterian rents come from the dynamic capability of renewing advantages over time by innovation (Peteraf 1993; Powell 2001). The following sections will provide an introduction to the key theories that underpin the study of strategy and competitive advantage.
Competitive advantage is a common theme in the management literature. However, despite its prominence in both academic and practitioner fields for the past few years, the concept of competitive advantage continues to be vague (Flint, 2000; Klein, 2002). The issue of ambiguity in the notion of competitive advantage can be attributed to three major factors. Firstly, competitive advantage has its origin in unclear definitions or different meanings (Rumelt, 2003). Secondly, different research streams on competitive advantage (e.g., the activity-position view, the resource-based view, the relational view) exhibit differences in their assumptions, units of analysis, and strategic implications (Dyer & Singh, 1998). Thirdly, even scholars of the same research stream—i.e., the resource-based view—have changed their explanatory logics over time (Stoelhorst & Bridoux, 2007). This section first discusses the concept of competitive advantage. Then, an overview of the three major research streams of competitive advantage is presented. Lastly, the common issues related to competitive advantage are discussed.

Porter (1985) further went on to say, “Competitive advantage grows fundamentally out of the value a firm is able to create for its buyers that exceeds the firm’s cost of creating it” (p. 3). However, Porter only suggested three types of generic strategy, differentiation, cost leadership and focus, which may lead to superior financial performance. He did not explicitly define competitive advantage. In the literature, it is not uncommon for scholars to treat competitive advantage as different things in their analyses. For instance, some scholars view it as superior financial performance (Peteraf, 1993; Ghemawat & Rivkin, 2001). Some researchers treat it as an attribute of the firm (Barney, 1991; Peteraf & Barney, 2003). Some researchers regard it as some types of strategies or activities that enhance financial performance (Ghemawat, 1986; 1991; Porter, 1996). Some even use the term without explicitly defining it (Porter, 1985).

Furthermore, the concept of competitive advantage is not just a simple one. It includes at least three important aspects that are evident from the literature: (1) the sources of competitive advantage; (2) the factors that sustain a competitive advantage; and (3) the issue of appropriating benefits that are generated by a competitive advantage (Coff, 2003). Studies on the sources of competitive advantage are frequently concerned with its durability. For example, Chaharbaghi and Lynch (1999, p. 49) suggest “sustainable competitive advantage represents a process that meets the competitive needs of the present
Barney (1991) posits the association between source and durability of competitive advantage.

Regarding durability of competitive advantage, competitive dynamics among the players in the industry is the key issue. The activity-position view has addressed imitation and substitution as two sorts of activities performed by (potential) competitors that would threaten the durability of competitive advantage. According to Ghemawat and Rivkin (2001), imitation is the activity of firms, using a successful business model diffused in the same industry; on the other hand, substitution is a new business model used by other firms trying to replace the existing model of an incumbent firm. For the purpose of investigating competitors, Porter (1980) suggests a four-constituent framework, including: future goals, assumptions, current strategy, and capabilities. Porter also emphasises the importance of monitoring and interpreting behaviours of competitors based on ongoing efforts.

Porter (1985) discusses barriers to imitation, which are used to make competitive advantage more sustainable, according to his three generic strategies—cost leadership, differentiation, and focus. These barriers could prevent imitators, which may be a competitor currently using a different strategy or a potential competitor new to the industry, from replicating an incumbent firm’s successful competitive strategy. Regarding durability of cost advantage, he illustrates a series of cost drivers. The cost drivers include: (1) economies of scale, (2) interrelationships with sister business units, (3) linkages with independent suppliers and channels, (4) proprietary learning, (5) tacit knowledge regarding product or process technology, (6) timing and (7) integration of strategic action. As for differentiation, Porter suggests (1) uniqueness of resources, (2) cost advantage in differentiating, (3) multiple sources of differentiation, and (4) switching costs of customers. With regard to a focus strategy, Porter recommends barriers which are similar to cost advantage and differentiation. In particular, the feature of the specific segment determines the strength of above-mentioned barriers to imitation.

United States International University - Africa, also known as USIU- Africa, is a private university in Kenya, the largest economy in the East African Community. United States International University (USIU) was founded by William C. Rust and subsequently registered under the Companies Act (Cap 486) on 18th September, 1969. Since its
establishment as a university in 1970, USIU has had four Vice Chancellors at its helm. In 1999, USIU received its accreditation from the Commission for Higher Education (CHE) in Kenya. USIU-Africa successfully sought to separate itself from the new entity, becoming an independent institution in 2005. In 2008, USIU received accreditation as an independent university from the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) in the United States.

1.2 Problem Statement

Ansoff (1965) noted that while implementing strategy is such an important activity, it is not easy. A reason for this difficulty may be that strategy implementation is a multifaceted and highly complex organizational phenomenon (Wernham, 1985). DeLeon (1999) argues that the complexity of implementation is more than daunting and apparently impenetrable and results in lacking predictive powers. Implementation is difficult and complex because the process is messy, ambiguous and often involves many departments in the firm (Schofield, 2004). Part of this complexity arises from the social and political aspects of an implementation, which need to be taken into account.

Businesses need strategies in order to ensure that resources are allocated in the most effective way (Zekiri, 2011). Conflict arises between the long term goals of the firm and the immediate needs that tend to dominate our thinking. Strategies would differ in the different areas of business laced with the time aspect, and its formulation and therefore implementation cannot be perfect (Zekiri, 2011). Competitive advantage is meant to allow a firm sustain profits that exceed the industry average.

In the current turbulent economic times, Universities in Kenya operate under increasingly competitive and ever-changing business environment. The ever changing environment in which higher education institutions operate puts them under pressure to continually review their strategic plans or formulate new ones to suit the existing trends. Further, without a proper strategy implementation, even the most superior strategy is meaningless. According to Aosa (1992), once strategies have been developed, they need to be implemented; they are of no value unless they are effectively translated into action. This is necessary if higher education institutions are to remain competitive and relevant to current market trends.
Several studies have been done on challenges in strategy implementation within the Kenyan university sector. These include Musyoka (2008) who studied challenges in strategy implementation at Jomo Kenyatta Foundation and Nyakiri (2012) who studied the challenges of strategy implementation at the University of Nairobi. These researchers have revealed a number of problems in strategy implementation. These include weak management roles, lack of proper communication, and lack of commitment to strategy, lack of ownership and awareness or misunderstanding of the strategy. Other problems are unaligned organization systems, structures, resources, poor coordination and sharing of responsibilities, inadequate capabilities, competing activities and uncontrollable factors in the external environment (Muthuiya, 2004).

According to Mintzberg, H. (1996) business strategies could follow one of three modes: planning, entrepreneurial, and adaptive mode. Using Porter (1990) matrix of strategy companies can use this approach to gain competitive advantage. This matrix tries to compare scope versus the sources of competitive advantage. This strategy focuses more on the work efficiency since it aims at lowering costs than those of competitors.

Although these researchers focused on areas of strategy implementation, there still exists Knowledge gap as none of them has addressed challenges of strategy implementation within higher education portfolio. It is therefore against this background that this study will seek to determine the competitive strategies and the challenges in their implementation within higher education context.

Challenges for implementing competitive advantage are dependent to a large extent on the conditions for the sustainability of competitive advantage (Hamel, 1990). Low order advantages such as cheap labor costs are easy to imitate whereas high order advantages such as cutting edge technology, customer satisfaction and brand reputation are more difficult to imitate and sustain. They do require sustained investments and long term business plans. Another critical factor is the distinct number of sources; many sources are difficult to imitate as compared to fewer ones (Porter, 1990). The challenge of constant improvement and always being ahead of the game. This means that companies must not rest when it comes to creating new advantages. In essence this should be done at the same rate if not faster than how competitors are replicating old ones.
The organization of companies as a collection of independent strategic business units as per the market demand or products to some extent limits the ability to develop competencies. It’s these competencies that give a firm key competitive advantage over competitors (Porter, 1994).

1.3  **General Objective**

The general objective of the study was to find out the critical success factors influencing competitive strategy implementation in institutions of higher learning.

1.4  **Specific Objectives**

The following were the specific objectives of the study:

1.4.1 To examine the influence of university management practices as a critical factor in successful strategy implementation in institutions of higher learning.

1.4.2 To establish the impact of effective communication as a critical success factor of competitive strategies implementation in institutions of higher learning.

1.4.3 To determine the influence of the organization’s culture, as a critical success factor of competitive strategy implementation in institutions of higher learning.

1.5  **Significance of the Study**

1.5.1 **USIU Africa**

The study may be of much benefit to the entire USIU-Africa community since it will offer guidelines on how to best implement their strategy within the university’s departments. They will acquire insights on how to develop their capabilities and use the resources available for sustainable competitive advantage. Members of staff will gain an understanding on what role they play in successful strategy implementation to ensure USIU is able to persist in the competitive environment. The research results will contribute new knowledge in the field and may be used as a point of reference and source of secondary data on strategy implementation in USIU-Africa.

1.5.2 **University Management**

The study may assist management to prioritize resource allocation during budgeting and strategic planning. The study provides an insight into formulation, adopting competitive strategies and how to overcome challenges in implementing these strategies. It enables the management of institutions of higher learning to successfully implement adopted strategies for better performance. Moreover, the study should be of invaluable use to institutions of higher learning and key education policy makers and stakeholders in the provision of teaching and learning as Kenya strives to eliminate illiteracy levels in its bid to achieve the
Vision 2030 goals as well as do away with the notion that quality has been compromised in institutions of higher learning with the production of “half-baked graduates”.

1.5.3 Ministry of Education Kenya and Policy Makers
The government, the policy makers and the regulators of higher education will gain an understanding in formulating the appropriate legislations and policies for the industry that will cater for the changes in the business environment within higher education. The policy makers and regulators can form a basis to partner with higher education institutions to formulate competitive strategies that will guarantee quality and affordable higher education in Kenya.

1.5.4 Potential Investors
These findings will also be of great advantage to the potential investors in the higher education sector since they will be able to access the information on the competitive strategies and ways of curbing challenges currently present. The study should contribute to the frontiers of knowledge by assessing the various factors that affect implementation of competitive strategies hence aid other institutions of higher learning to critically assess the factors affecting the implementation of their respective strategies.

1.5.5 Significance to Future Researchers and Academicians
The results of this study will be useful to scholars and researchers who can use it when doing further research. It will aid in contributing towards other studies done on competitive strategies and implementation challenges being adopted by other institutions of higher learning. The findings of this study will enrich existing knowledge in the field of competitive strategies especially in the higher education sector. Finally, the study should open up further discussions on how game theory and resource-based view theory affect strategy implementation in firms who are in the process of implementing their competitive strategies in a highly competitive environment.

1.6 Scope of the Study
The study covered competitive decisions that institutions of higher learning embraced to curb the increasing competition in Kenya. The scope was on implementation of strategic decisions in both public and private universities in Kenya. The USIU-Africa strategic plans were; Enhance and Entrench research throughout the university as a competitive differentiating niche for increasing locally and global relevant applied institutional research works. Expand and increase the number of innovative programs to grow diverse student
population both for undergraduate and graduate students over the next five years. Expand and strengthen long-term academic partnerships with key strategic institutions. Retain students, faculty, and academic support staff. Attract and recruit competent and diverse faculty and academic support staff. Provide and maintain excellent student support services and co-curriculum activities. The study was conducted in a period of three months, between April and August 2018 at USIU-Africa to the management board, members of faculty and staff. Members of faculty were key informants to this study since a large percentage of these served in both public and private universities.

1.6.1 Limitations of the Study
As McGrath (1994) stated, every study has inherent limitations. This study was confined to USIU-Africa only being an approach of convenience hence limiting the scope to private institutions. This paves way for further research since the orientation of public universities and private universities is not similar even in terms of challenges experienced as well as the competitive strategies that the institutions may choose to adopt.

1.7 Definition of terms
1.7.1 Implementation
Implementation is the carrying out, execution, or practice of a plan, method, or any development for doing something. As such, implementation is the action that must follow any preliminary thinking in order for something to actually happen (Pearce & Robinson, 2005)

1.7.2 Strategy Implementation
The set of decisions and actions that result in formulation and implementation of plans designed to achieve company’s objectives (John & Richard, 2007).

1.7.3 Intelligence
Intelligence is information that is analyzed, interpreted, and infused with developed implications (Fleisher and Bensoussan, 2007).

1.7.4 Strategic intelligence
The gathering, analysis, and dissemination of data relevant to strategic decision making. (Fleisher and Bensoussan, 2007).
1.7.5 Analysis

Analysis is the application of scientific and non-scientific methods and processes to interpret data or information. Analysis produces insightful intelligence findings and actionable recommendations for decision makers (Fleisher & Bensoussan 2007).

1.7.6 Competitive Strategies

According to (Dirks & Wijn, 2002), “Various strategies call for different information, and, to that end, the management control process starts with the identification of CSF. In general the chosen strategy determines the CSF, and the subsequently form the basis for the design and functioning of the management control systems. Therefore the most important role of management control systems is to support the implementation of strategies”. “The CSF follow from the vision and mission of the organization and from a strategic evaluation of the market” (Dirks & Wijn, 2002).

1.7.7 Organizational factors

Organizational factors could be categorized as activities, connections, pathways, and improvement activities, which form the four rules of organization success (Sobek and Jimmerson, 2003).

1.8 Chapter Summary

This chapter introduced the subject matter of the research study the factors likely to influence competitive strategies implementations in institutions of higher learning in Kenya. Particularly, it outlined the initial research focus and discussed the evolution of competitive strategy and resulted in a new research problem. Further, it introduced the research objective by presenting the specific research objectives, the research scope and definitions of key terms used in this study. Chapter two outlines the critical literature review of competitive strategies and implementation challenges. Later, after a critical review of literature, chapter three will discuss how the research was conducted, this includes, research design, methodology and how data was collected and analyzed. The fourth chapter will focus on the analysis and interpretation of the research findings based on the research objectives. The final chapter will give a summary of findings, conclusions and recommendations from the study.
CHAPTER TWO

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction
This Chapter will deal with the theoretical foundations of the study, concept of competitive strategic decisions, strategy implementation challenges in higher education institutions and the critical success factors in development of competitive strategy that foster competitive advantage. There are complex issues facing the entire system of post-secondary education including, but not limited to, the rising cost of higher education, new federal policies and initiatives, increasing competition, shared governance, public accountability, advancements in technology, the growth of online education and massive open online courses, educational quality and assessment, and student accessibility and satisfaction.

2.2 The Effect of University Management Practices in Successful Strategy Implementation

2.2.1 Strategy implementation
David (2003) describes strategy implementation as hard and time consuming but vital phase in strategic management. Thompson and Strickland (1990) view it as interplay between several forces. There is no one best way of strategy implementation but organizations must successfully implement their strategic plans. One of the hallmarks of any well managed organization is the ability to optimally reposition itself in a competitive business environment (Drucker, 1954). This can only be achieved by anchoring core activities of the organization to the realization of the set objectives. Strategic management forms a basis on which such businesses are run. The strategic management process involves formulation, implementation and evaluation of decisions geared towards achieving organizational objectives. Strategy implementation though deemed difficult (David, 1997), is undoubtedly a critical phase for organization’s survival. Formulated strategies may fail if implementation is not effectively and efficiently done (Steiner, 1979).

Strategy is the determination of the basic term goals and objectives of an enterprise and adoption of course of action and the allocation of resources necessary for carrying out those goals (Chandler, 1962). According to Irwin (1995), strategy implementation is an internal operations driven activity involving organizing, budgeting, motivating, culture building, supervising, and leading to make the strategy work.
Strategy implementation challenges arise from sources that are internal and external to the organization. The challenges will depend on the type of strategy, the type of organization and prevailing circumstances. Many challenges can be avoided if strategy development is coupled with implementation (Musyoka, 2011). Previous studies (Okumus, 2003 and Speculand, 2009) established that the main inhibitors to the execution of strategies include execution taking more time than planned, lack of communication, lack of coordination and support from other levels of management, resistance from lower levels, lack of control systems and execution being viewed as a set of discrete isolated tasks.

As plainly as Buul (2010) puts it a good strategy implementation starts with the formation of a good strategy. If the strategy adopted is not applicable the implementation process is deemed to fail from the beginning. The determination of strategic decisions and implementation planning should include a thorough analysis of the obstacles and risks the organization may face when implementing the strategy. These risks can be both internal and external. Although it is not realistic to expect that all potential risks will be identified, it will give the organization the opportunity to create contingency plans for the identified risks, which could negatively impact the implementation of the strategy or the organization at large (Alexander, 1985).

Implementation of strategies has not been an area of many studies as Hitt et al., (2006) affirms stating that implementation is directly connected to the strategy formulation process. Literature also clearly states that implementation could be a great determinant of how an organization performs (Hitt et al., 2006). This being easily illustrated by a case where two different organizations adopt a similar strategy but the results are evidently different. Clearly this can be explained by the fact that the resources, capabilities and the uniqueness of the organization is different.

2.2.2 Top Management Level of Commitment

The effectiveness of the implementation of a strategy is highly influenced by the quality of people involved in the process who comprise of top managers, middle managers, persons in lower and non-management profiles who are playing different roles in a strategy’s implementation (Govindarajan, 1989). Some authors like Smith & Kofron, 1996; Hrebianiak &Snow (1982), for example, found out that the process of interaction and
participation among top management team leads to greater commitment to the firms’ goals and strategies. This hence enabled the successful implementation of the firms selected strategies (cited in Dess & Priem, 1995). Schaap (2006) takes the board as the key subjects of Strategy Implementation and discuss how to access board effectiveness in guiding strategy execution. Noble & Mokwa (1999) put forward three dimensions of commitment that emerged as central factors which directly influence strategic outcomes; Organizational commitment, Strategy commitment or Role commitment. Their findings revealed that an individual manager’s performance will in the long run influence the execution of the universal strategy. Relationships among different units/departments and different strategy levels, several studies treat institutional relationships among different units/departments and different strategy levels as significant factor that affects the outcome of Strategy Implementation.

Thompson, Strickland & Gamble, (2007) stated that a company’s strategy deals exclusively with the specifics of management’s game plan for competing successfully. He proposes three questions that can be used to test the merits of one strategy versus another and distinguish a winning strategy from a flawed one. These questions are firstly, how well does the strategy fit the company’s situation? Secondly, is the strategy helping the company achieve a sustainable competitive advantage? Finally, is the strategy resulting in better company performance?

Strategies are often formulated without considering the implementation that is needed to actually put the strategy to action (Giles, 1991). According to Giles (1991) there are three reasons why poor strategic planning is an obstacle to strategy implementation and these are; strategy is not really a strategy but a mixture of budgets and management wish list, strategy is not executable and the executors do not accept the strategy as their own because they did not participate in its formulation. Notable challenges to successful strategy execution about which there appears to be a degree of agreement include Beer and Eisenstat’s (2000), six silent killers of strategy execution.

These are; top-down senior management style, unclear strategic intentions and conflicting priorities, an ineffective senior management team, poor vertical communication, weak coordination across functions and inadequate down-the-line leadership skills development. On the hand, Corboy and O’Corrbui (1999) identified the deadly sins of strategy execution as: lack of understanding of how the strategy should be executed, staff not fully
appreciating the strategy, unclear individual responsibilities in the change process, difficulties and obstacles not acknowledged, recognized or acted upon and ignoring the day-to-day business imperatives.

Effective leadership is a critical component for organizational success and more importantly in the sustainability and success of SMEs. While existing studies have shown that the possession and practice of certain traits alone does not guarantee leadership success, there exists evidence, to the effect that, effective leaders are different from other people in particular key aspects (Mwangi, et.al, 2013).

Jackson, Amaeshi and Yavuz (2008) observed that, the SMEs’ success is intertwined with Management practices to the local context. Jackson and colleagues argue that organizations, SMEs included, are mirrors of societal values of the localities they are domiciled. Value addition to the bottom line and enhancement of share holders wealth is seen as the constraints of success in the western context (Jackson, 2012). SMEs represent a unique cluster of organizations normally dominated by founders, with limited resources and operating in highly volatile and competitive environments. Success and sustainability therefore requires exceptional effort from the role players creating a great amount of need for extra-ordinary leadership capability (Mwangi, R.M. et.al, 2013).

Developments in the fields of entrepreneurship and leadership have seen the development of the concept of entrepreneurial leadership. The concepts of entrepreneurial orientation and transformational leadership define the entrepreneurial orientation (Engelen, Gupta, Strenger & Brettel, 2010). It emphasizes opportunity – and advantage-seeking behaviors by embracing higher tolerance to risk, being proactive and encouraging innovation (Wang, 2012). The study carried out by Mwangi, et.al (2013), found out that successful SMEs leaders in the targeted East African nations (Kenya and Uganda), deliberately and continually sought to inspire their employees to higher levels of commitment, had a clear vision of the future, anticipated uncertainties and threats and learnt to take lessons from failures and were very resourceful.

According to Avevor (2016), most SMEs in Ghana were either managed by owners or part owners which mainly were actually family businesses. A good number of these owners do not have the intellectual and technical capital to successful run the establishments (Abor,
Even though some of the SME owners would wish to acquire the services of experienced managers to run their businesses, most indications is that they either lack the capital resources to cover the hefty remuneration packages demanded by the prospective employees or the uncertainty in the SMEs sector discourages the candidates to take up the jobs for the fear of job security. This is thus seen as a critical impediment to the success of SMEs due to lack of technical and people management know-how. Chittithaworn, Islam, Keawchana, & Yusuf (2011) indicated that, the success of SMEs in Thailand is plagued by the lack of technical knowhow that is critically needed for the employees and also required for the management. For SMEs in Thailand to be successful the right technically skilled personnel should be hired. SMEs have to ensure they continually update their employees’ and management skills and move with technology.

Ineffective leadership is a factor mentioned by almost all researchers as a reason hindering the implementation of strategy. Alexander (1985) found that ineffective coordination of implementation activities is one of the causes of failure. This finding is confirmed by Al Ghamdi (1998), who performed a similar research in the United Kingdom. Beer and Eisenstat (2000) mention the quality of direction, which describes multiple ways in which senior management can be ineffective. The top level Management sometimes bypasses middle management and directly obtains information from and gives orders to the lower level employees causing ineffective communication lines in the implementation team. Additionally, this causes a situation in which conflicts are avoided and value adding discussions on decision-making are lost.

Ownership of the strategy and related implementation activities is also another challenge in strategy implementation. Giles (1991) names ownership as the most important reason for failure. If the strategy is not owned by the employees involved in the implementation, it may lead to counter implementation which causes the organization to move in the wrong direction. Moreover, when key people in the formulation of the strategy are not participating in the implementation, ownership is lost in many cases causing the increase of time needed for the implementation (Corboy and O’Corrbui, 1999). When the affected employees and managers are not at all involved in the formulation of the strategy, it will be more difficult for them to feel ownership of the strategy (Alexander, 1985). Inadequacy of any form of resources, such as inadequate funds, equipment and facilities, and human resources skills and experience is often a big challenge during strategy
implementation. Swartz (1985) argues that the challenge to management is that it might need to recruit, select, train, discipline, transfer, promote and possibly even lay off employees to achieve the organizational strategic objectives. Often, as a result of the large number of concurrent change programs, it is difficult to secure the resources to execute the strategy as most of the organization’s resources will already be allocated. Furthermore, as such resources are limited, the executives will compete fiercely for them and once within their control, they will endeavor to own them to secure their own goals (Lovallo and Kahneman, 2003).

Lack of the right skills and abilities of the people involved in the strategy implementation have also been found to cause problems (Alexander, 1985). Furthermore, employees do not always receive the correct training and instruction to be able to perform their work which may have changed due to the newly implemented strategy (Al-Ghamdi, 1998). A survey of executives from 200 global companies with sales of more than US $500 million, identified several inhibitors to strategy execution, inadequate or insufficient human resources contribute significantly to an organizational challenge of successful implementation of strategies. Due to the skill shortage, it is not only difficult to recruit the right talent but also to retain that talent. High executive turnover sees too many key managers depart before a strategy is fully executed (Muell and Shani, 2008).

Important risks due to internal and external factors that could affect the implementation of strategy are not identified properly before the start of and during the implementation. Major problems can occur during the implementation which causes delays or even inability to implement the strategy (Corboy and O’Corrbui, 1999). Executives have stated that top management is likely to underestimate the likelihood of risks and may even be blind to the risks they face (Alexander, 1985). Competitive position is a key issue in the operating environment. Anticipated new substitute or competing products may render the organization’s products uncompetitive (Pearce and Robbinson, 2003).

2.3 The Effect of Effective Communication in Strategy Implementation

2.3.1. Effective Communication

Effective communication is an important requirement in any objective of successfully implementing a strategy. Communication in an organization plays a major role in training,
acquisition of resources in the process of strategy implementation. Nielsen (1983) emphasized that for organizations to achieve a consensus both internally and externally depends entirely on the information level that has been spread across many layers of the organization. Noble (1999b) states that the lack of a shared understanding is likely to bring forth obstacles to successful strategy implementation. Riel, C. B. (2015) states that communication is the heart of an organizational performance. The success of an organization’s efforts to acquire resources or carry out its activities heavily depends on how professionally the company communicates with the resource holders.

Many researchers have emphasized the importance of adequate communication channels for the process of strategy implementation. Alexander (1991) notes that communication is mentioned more frequently than any other item that promotes successful strategy implementation. Communication includes explaining what new responsibilities, tasks, and duties need to be performed by the employees in order to implement the strategy. It answers the why behind the changed job activities, and explains the reasons why the new strategic decision was made. Rapert and Wren (1998) find that organizations where employees have easy access to management through open and supportive communication channels outperform those with more restrictive communication environments.

Operating environment changes such as in the Customer profiles, this need to be anticipated and strategies adjusted to match customer expectations (Pearce and Robbinson, 2003). Major cost increases due to cost hikes by creditors or suppliers may present unprecedented challenges. Lack of clarity on the objectives of the strategy, responsibilities, tasks and activities 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).

Poor or ineffective communication, i.e. top-down, bottom-up and across functions and divisions could negatively affect the strategy implementation. When information is not flowing effectively from bottom to top, top management may not be aware of problems jeopardizing the implementation of the strategy and therefore, notable to respond to these problems (Alexander, 1985). The information flow does not only include people
communicating with each other but also information systems through which management is monitoring the implementation efforts. These are in some cases also not providing adequate information towards top management (Al-Ghamdi, 1998).

2.3.2. Channels and Forms of Communication

Channels of communication are the mediums that are used by the sender of information to pass it over to the receiver (Thill & Bovee, 1999). These channels are either, oral, electronic medium, written or broadcasted medium. In a business context, the oral medium of communication is highly adopted since its fast and the receiver is in a position to analyze the message even by assessing the non-verbal cues of the sender.

Electronic medium of communication can be through telephones or through any other electronic form. With the dynamics in technology electronic medium of communication has become more efficient. The main advantage of electronic medium is when information being transmitted is highly confidential (Thill & Bovee, 1999).

Written communication is more advantageous in case future reference of the communication made will be needed. As Thill & Bovee (1999) puts it that in an organization, written communication is mostly preferred; organizations print out memos, notices and send emails out and within the organization.

Feedback loops are other communication mechanisms that help in evaluation of the processes, policies and decision making process. A feedback loop as the name suggests is a circular communication style whose main objective is to continually detect errors both horizontally and vertically within the organization. Feedback loops are very important in strategy implementation, since leaders and policy makers can detect these loops and make the necessary changes (Kim, 2013).

2.3.3. Corporate Branding and Communication

According to Dowling, G.R. and Roberts, P.W., (2002) corporate brand refers to the features or characteristics of an organization that both internal, external parties and general public as whole perceives the organization. The main purpose of a corporate brand is to establish the position of a company by creating value in its activities, products and services. Any organization that wants to stand out based on its brand is therefore tasked to work on its communication strategy. Communicating about a company’s brand has become more
important in recent years and has a direct growing relationship on how a company’s communication system can be assessed.

In assessing the systematic effectiveness of a company’s communication structure and the accompanying communication activities has been an area of interest for many practitioners for years (Schultz, 1994). He also suggested that computation of a Return on Investment (ROI) can be a measure of the results of an integrated marketing and communication strategy. This can be achieved by assessing the different kinds of consumer exposure which comprises; the level of media coverage, the product impressions and as well as the personal contacts.

Another way of measuring the results of communication is through its net effect on the company’s brand equity. As a consumer, brand equity can mean the differential effect that knowledge of a company’s brand and their response to the company’s brand. Brand equity can therefore measure the strength of the consumer’s associations with the brand which includes brand awareness and brand image (Schultz, 1994).

Communication has to focus on the establishment of strong brands that directly identifies an organization speaking with one voice that the external environment can identify with (Sargeant, 2008). Corporate communication planners need to think like strategist if they are intending to have an impact on their organization’s long term competitive advantage (Christopher et al., 1991). A good communication plan is a pool of utilization of available resources, sharing a common understanding of the work plan put in place in the attainment of the desired goals. The best communication plans are achieved and sustained by external and internal communication planners who aim at key target audiences using multiple channels and working closely with human resource managers. As an item of the corporate strategy marketing communications needs to be consistent with the laid out mission, vision and core values of the organization (Christopher et al., 1991).

2.3.4. Role of Top Management in Effective Communication

A key role of the top management is communicating the organization’s vision and mission and guide in strategic planning (Van Riel, 2001). Successfully implemented strategies has been as a result of involvement of teams at all levels of planning with the aim of building
a shared vision and mission and eventually increasing an individual’s motivation to see the laid out plans succeed.

Clarity and consistent communication from mapping desired outcomes to designing performance measures is very essential in the success of an organization. Successful leaders have been associated with often engaging their teams by simply telling the story of their shared vision and proper communication of the milestone in its attainment (Van Riel, 2001).

According to Boyatzis, Rochford, & Taylor,(2015) on the role of communication in achieving shared vision under new organizational leadership, the author emphasizes that that having a clear vision within an organization, through its goals, was as a result of communication-related activities. The literature shows great relation to the study to be undertaken in this project, because of the international dynamics of an organization, and the role that communications plays in ensuring the existence of shared goals and shared obligation to achieve these goals.

Boyatzis, Rochford, & Taylor, (2015) studied the relationship between shared vision and perception of future sustainability of an organization, shared vision and existence of proper communication channels in an organization, shared vision and perceptions of organizational leadership, shared vision and perceptions of the effectiveness of the public information or communications unit and finally, preferences for specific channels in communicating ideas about shared vision. The literature showed the extents to which internal communications within an organization affects implementation of organizational goals and the role of communications managers and communication activities in acquiring a shared commitment to achieving these goals.

Leadership accompanied by vision goes beyond being charismatic and its abilities to create and articulate realistic and timely vision for the future of the organization. Understanding of the company’s vision makes sure the followers engage all of their skills, knowledge and abilities to make sure the vision have been achieved. Vision captures the followers’ emotions, skills and sticks them together as a team. Visionary firms have been found to outperform comparison companies six-fold on standard financial criteria, and their stocks outperformed the general market by fifteen times (Huy Q., 2011).
2.4 Effect of Organization’s Culture on Strategy Implementation

2.4.1. Organization’s Culture

The most important part in any strategy implementation is the organization’s culture. Organization culture is a collection of norms, beliefs and attitudes that are shared by the organization members on how they interact with each other and the external parties. Organizational culture creates a strong bond of cohesion and enhances a spirit of understanding in the attainment of the desired goals (Buul, 2010).

Lack of synergy between strategy and culture may obstruct the smooth implementation of strategy by creating resistance to change. Aosa (1992), states that it is important that the culture of an organization be compatible with the strategy being implemented because where there is incompatibility between strategy and culture, it can lead to a high organizational resistance to change and de-motivation, which in turn can frustrate the strategy implementation effort.

According to Mullins (2007), culture impacts most aspects of organizational life, such as how decisions are made, who makes them, how rewards are distributed, who gets promoted, how people are treated and how organization responds to environmental changes. Higgins (2005) defines organizational culture as the fundamental suppositions and values that are commonly shared by people in an organization that is run reflexively. For an organization to function efficiently there has to be a commonly acknowledged set of practices. John (2006) refers to these combined and lightly considered suppositions as the model of an organization.

Brines (2007) says that in order for any strategy within an organization to be formulated, grown and implemented successfully, the strategy must fully be aligned to the organization’s culture. Initiatives and goals must be developed within an organization and designed in such a way that it fits in the organizational culture. This will enable the organization to embrace the strategy and create an environment that boosts its achievement. The environment created will enhance cultural diversity and will help in clarification of the strategy among the members of the institution.
2.4.2 Culture and Strategy Implementation Fit

A healthy organizational culture could be an important prerequisite for a successful strategy implementation. Peters and Waterman (1982) identify McKinsey’s 7s framework of superordinate goals which argues that effective organizational change is the relationship between strategy, structure, systems, style, skills, staff and shared values. He further observes that organizations succeed through strong, unified cultures that are produced and reproduced by physical artifacts, symbols, ceremonies, stories, slogans, dress and setting. The best organization cultures are those that are consistently executing on the strategies that make for good leadership development and actualization of organizational goals. Top management aim at creating enterprise wide standards, practices, and metrics for leadership. They cascade programs and processes down through the organization to improve impact and drive cultural change (Fulmer, 2005).

Decision making forms one of the most important functions of a manager. Making decisions involves making a judgment regarding how to act in a given situation after considering alternative courses of action (Yeyarathnam, 2006). Decisions made by top level executives can be said to be the most crucial in determination how strategy will be implemented (Rao, 2009). The culture of an organization also makes employees identify what they believe is critical, achievable and personally important to them (Kachru, 2005). Peters and Waterman (1982) recognizes that many organizations unaware of the cultural diversities within which they exist find themselves unable to successfully implement strategies (Harison, 2004). Comerford (1985) argues that a culture that is grounded in strategy-supportive values, practices and behavioural norms adds to the power and effectiveness of a company’s strategy execution effort.

A constricted culture strategy fit is required for an organization to be able to successfully implement strategy. A tight culture strategy fit furthers an organization’s execution of strategy, provides clear guidance on ‘how we do things around here’, produces significant peer pressure to conform to the acceptable norms and promotes strong employee identification and commitment to a company’s vision, performance targets and strategy (Comerford, 1985). Oliver (1992) identifies cultural fit as one of the forms of fit that affects an organization’s adaptation processes.
By considering two dimensions, stability versus flexibility and internal focus versus external position, Cameron and Quinn (1999) proposed a model which describes four types of culture: Clan, Adhocracy, Hierarchy and Market.

2.4.3. Dimensions of Culture

Clan culture also known as family culture focuses on internal issues but its emphasis is on flexibility rather than stability. In this kind of culture, partnership, teamwork, and corporate commitment to employees are regarded as main characteristics (Cameron and Quinn, 2006). Clan oriented cultures are family-like, with a focus on mentoring, nurturing, and “doing things together” (Tipster, 2013).

Adhocracy culture tends to external organization matters and emphasizes flexibility and change more than resistance (Cameron and Quinn, 2006). Adhocracy oriented cultures are dynamic and entrepreneurial, with a focus on risk-taking, innovation, and “doing things first” (Tipster, 2013).

Hierarchy culture, based on Weber’s bureaucracy theory, focuses on internal efficiency, cooperation and sticking to dominant characteristics (Cameron and Quinn, 2006). Hierarchy oriented cultures are structured and controlled, with a focus on efficiency, stability and “doing things right” (Tipster, 2013).

Market culture is control oriented and focuses on external organization affairs. Organizations with this culture use observation and resistance to reach higher level of productivity and competitiveness (Cameron and Quinn, 2006). Market oriented cultures are results oriented, with a focus on competition, achievement, and “getting the job done” (Tipster, 2013).

Although some organizations are said to be effective if they engage in harmonious internal attributes, others are still considered effective based on their concentration on competition with other organizations outside their boundaries. Many studies done in the public sector show that hierarchical culture will eventually lead to improved organizational performance because of their primary internal focus on managing themselves effectively (Moynihan and Pandey, 2004; Acar et al., 2014). A different view is observed in the private sector where, adhocracy culture is seen to improve an organization’s performance because of innovativeness of its output (Durendez et al., 2011; Prajogo and McDermott, 2011).
Clan culture assumes more of human affiliation stating that humans behave appropriately when they have trust, loyalty to the membership of the organization. Adhocracy culture is more inclined to change where employees are believed to perform better when they understand the importance of the task they are engaged in. The market culture is focused on achievements in that human are known to behave appropriately when they are rewarded for their various achievements. Finally the hierarchy culture addresses the behavior of employees is better when they have clearly defined roles and the presence of well outlined guidelines, (Cameron and Quinn, 2011).

These organizational culture categories are helpful in providing a foundation upon which strategy planners can use to structure their solutions and account for the important role that culture plays. Aligning a company’s strategy with its culture reduces the disruptive nature of the change, even though it is still part of change. Strategic leaders must strive to ensure that culture and strategy work in collaboration for success, and in a balanced and efficient manner (Pearce and Robinson, 2003).

2.4.4. Organization Culture Challenge

One of the major challenges in strategy implementation appears to be cultural and behavioral in nature, including the impact of poor integration of activities and diminished feelings of ownership and commitment (Aaltonen and Ikavalok, 2002).

Corboy and O'Corrbui (2006) identify the deadly sins of strategy implementation that 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, recognized 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.

Organizational Culture is a strength that can be a weakness. It is strength because it eases and economizes communication, facilitates organizational decision-making and control and may generate higher levels of cooperation and commitment to the organization that are necessary for strategy implementation. However, it can be a weakness when important shared beliefs and values interfere with the need for business, its strategy and the people
working on a company’s behalf. This is a major weakness because it is hard to change the content of a culture (Pearce and Robinson, 2003).

In a collaborative Model of strategy implementation, organizations have both a strong culture and deep-rooted traditions. The challenge of successful implementation results from; lack of cultivation of strong cultural values to meet the changing organizational needs. The distinction between “thinkers” and “doers” begins to fade but does not totally disappear.

2.5 Development of Competitive Strategies

In the business world, competition strategies have gained importance depending on the intensity of the competition and some studies that can be taken as a basis such as Miles and Snow (1978), Porter (1980; 1985) have been included in the literature.

While defining the competition strategy, Porter (1980; 1985) puts an emphasis on the strategic position that the organization will be able to obtain an income that is above the sector average. Later he connects the concept of competition strategy with five competition strengths –the introduction to the market, the risk of substitute product, the bargaining power of the purchasers, the bargaining power of suppliers and the level of the competition between present competitors - that affect the competition structure of the sectors that organizations are in. The author states that, at this stage, there are three general competition strategies which will bring the success in coping with the five competition strengths and getting a long-term, sustainable strategic position. These are the total cost leadership strategy, the differentiation strategy and the focusing strategy. The total cost leadership strategy is to be able to present a standard product to the consumers by producing goods and service with the lowest cost in the market. The differentiation strategy means to present a product which is accepted unique in the sector by differentiating the product and the service the company has. The focusing strategy is the strategy which is developed to have a cost advantage and a product/service advantage by focusing on a narrower part of the market or geographic region.

Apart from the approaches mentioned above, there are other approaches trying to explain the concept of competition strategy and to enrich its content. For instance, while Pralahad and Hamel (1990) connect the concept of competition strategy with the construction of a basic core perspective addressing to the future, Barney (1991) connects it with mental and financial supplies of the organization which are difficult to copy. Day (1995) explains the
concept as getting a market-centred competitive position based on environmental analysis. Similarly, Mintzberg (1996) makes a multi-dimensional evaluation by connecting it with variables such as price, image, product design, quality and differentiation and focuses it on the market. The explanations made in the 2000s about the concept also include the concepts related to the business world today. For example, Evans and et al. (2003) evaluate the competition strategies with an integrated approach in the content of organization, sector, product and supply markets and relationships with the other sectors. Value setting approaches belonging to Hitt and et al. (2005) and based on basic cores which are focused on customer and shareholder seem to support the views of Evans and et al (2003). Fitzroy and Hulbert (2005) give importance to the innovation and growth, too.

As a service sector, the airline sector is seen as a sector which is open to changes, which has a high flexibility of demand, dense uncertainty and competition (Taşgit, 2008). When the changes happening in the recent years and their effects on the structural and functional positions of the sector and organizations are examined, it is seen that the airline sector is in a restructuring period and there have been serious changes based on globalization and markets. Entering new international markets and strategic alliances are accepted as the most important ones of the changes (Glisson and et al. 1996). On the other hand, the developments affecting the structural characteristics of the organizations are affective in this change, too. These can be put into order as legal regulations, developments related with the density and form of the competition, increasing usage of the technology and the introduction of the new transporting models such as regional transportation, the hub and spoke transportation model in the international arena, and point to point carriers in the domestic arena (Chan, 2000). In addition, because of the structural characteristics of the sector, the elements such as trust, customer-satisfaction and loyalty, service quality, adjustment to technological changes and price gain importance and appear to be performance determiners (Driver, 2001).

The secondary resources show that airline companies have determined three different playgrounds to continue their operations. These are basically scheduled and non-scheduled flights, network operations, low cost and charter operations. The strategy that companies which have a network system usually implement is to find new markets through differentiating products with intensive search and development studies in order to expand their flight networks (in domestic or international areas). These firms especially focus on differentiation and industrial trademark so that they can get more customers and form
strong means of distribution (Kılınç and et al. 2009; 179). Basic characteristics of the firms which use the low-cost model are cheap and short-distance flights. Charter operations are considered as the operations of the firms which do not have a big fleet, generally prefer chartering in tourism seasons and whose competitive positions in the sector are not affected much (Taşgit, 2008).

When the literature of airline sector is reviewed, it is seen that this sector holds a lot of interest in the U.S.A. and Europe and comprehensive studies based on sector-models are done, whereas the studies in this field have newly started in Turkey (Kılınç and et al., 2009). For instance, Chan (2000), in his sector-based study, evaluates the developments from 1978 to1998 with a strategic point of view. The author states that the sector witnessed important players’ going in and out, different legal regulations were fulfilled, the structure and intensity of the competition became different, and trade making/differentiation became the most important element of the competition in that period. In his study on European airline sector, Huettinger (2006) discusses the changes and future trends in the sector with the appearance of low-cost carriers in the European market. According to him, the sector is changing into a more competitive structure. Glisson and et al. (1996), parallel to the changes in the American airline sector, note that the merging and strategic alliances changed the structures of the markets and the form of the competition.

In their model-based studies, Alamdari and Fagon (2005) discuss the basic characteristics of the low-cost model and aim to determine the elements that affect the profitability of the low-cost carriers. Anon (2005), in his model based study, discusses how low-cost carriers have changed the structure of the sector and the success conditions of low-cost carriers against the sector leaders. In another model-based study, Franke (2004) evaluates the factors of each model that affect the success in the competition between network carriers and low-cost carriers

2.6. Chapter Summary
The researcher has listed the items to be used for research especially for this chapter. This chapter sought to establish the components of competitive strategy and critically review its literature. The competitive strategies that have been competitive strategic decisions that have been implemented in higher educations in Kenya, and strategy implementation challenges. It also reviewed the Critical success factors (CSF) on development of
completive strategies that foster competitive advantage in higher education. The next chapter will focus on the research methodology of the study and would include, research design, methodology and how data will be collected and analyzed. After that, the preceding chapter will provide an analysis of the data, which would include its validity and reliability
CHAPTER THREE

3.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the approach that was employed by the researcher to carry out the study. It is distinctively alienated into five sections. Section one discusses the research design that was adopted by the study. The second Section sheds light about the population, sampling design, sampling frame, sampling technique, and sample size. Section three elaborates on the data collection method. Section four discusses the research procedure employed while the fifth section expounds on how the researcher analyzed and interpreted data that was collected from the field of study.

3.2 Research Design

According to Cooper and Schindler (2014), a research design can be concisely defined as a blueprint for the collection, measurement, and analysis of data. It could also refer to the plan, organization and structure of investigation geared towards obtaining relevant answers to research questions or simply a framework guiding analysis of data collected from the field. In a nutshell, the research design or plan constitutes the master program of the research and comprises an outline of what the researcher will do from the onset of writing of the research questions or specific objectives to the final analysis of data.

Descriptive research design was employed in this study. The descriptive research approach consisted of purely describing the state of affairs or things as they were and was mainly formalized with substantial structure or research questions to be answered. Descriptive studies in various researches are used to describe phenomena associated with a subject population or to lay an estimate proportion of the population that has certain characteristics (Cooper & Schindler, 2014). The attempts in descriptive approach is to describe characteristics of an event or situation or either a group of elements in a population thereby describing a given state of affairs as fully and as carefully as possible (Thapa, 2013). A descriptive study as used by a researcher is carefully designed for ensuring very comprehensive description of the situation and can either involve the collection and analysis of qualitative information or quantitative data. Qualitative for instance could refer to the data gathered to describe how consumers go through a precise decision making process. Quantitative data are such as production figures, satisfaction ratings, or sales.
Quantitative data may be collected via structured interviews, surveys, direct observations, and reviews of records or documents for gathering numeric information. Qualitative information is mainly gathered and collected by use of in-depth interviews, focus groups, and reviews of relevant documentaries for types of themes (Sekaran & Bougie, 2013).

The study attempted to gather quantitative data from the management board, members of staff, faculty and students at USIU-Africa. Quantitative data was widely used since it inferred to drawing of conclusions. It stands out as more objective than qualitative since it provides observed effects of a program on a problem or condition. The researcher can be guaranteed to get fixed responses and various statistical tests in analysis are possible with the use of quantitative data (Ekanem, 2010).

3.3 Population and Sampling design

3.3.1 Population

Population basically refers to an all-inclusive group of the events, people or things of interest that the researcher wishes to investigate in any study. It encompasses all the elements about which the researcher wishes or is interested in making some inferences based on sample statistics. Population could also mean a group comprising or covering a set of potential measurements or including not only those cases actually being observed but also those that are potentially observable. Thus, it remains the entire collection of certain individuals of interest, events or objects bearing distinct and common observable characteristic or set of people, well-defined elements, events or services, (Kithae, 2012; Sekaran & Bougie, 2013; Cooper & Schindler, 2014). The Target population for this research was 691 members of USIU-Africa community, who were not homogeneous in nature.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strata</th>
<th>Population size(N)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Faculty</td>
<td>291</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff</td>
<td>400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>691</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: USIU-Africa HR Records*
3.3.2. Sampling Design

3.3.2.1. Sampling Frame

Sampling frame is a list of the items or people forming a population from which a sample is taken. A sampling frame therefore involves collection of data from a sample which has been selected and identified for observation and analysis (Kithae, 2012; Cooper & Schindler, 2014). The sampling frame for this study encompassed USIU-Africa staff and USIU-Africa faculty.

3.3.2.2. Sampling Technique

Sampling as a process basically involves predetermining the number of observations to be taken from an identified population. Data may be collected from part of the population so called sample. A sample is preferred to censors because of its lower costs and the possibility of greater speed of data collection in a given time frame (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2010).

Sampling design in research studies can either be probability or non-probability. In the former, the elements have equal chance of being selected while in the latter sampling, the elements do not have some equal chance of being selected. This study adapted a stratified probability sampling technique since the population from which the samples were picked did not constitute a homogeneous assemblage, members of USIU-Africa, staff and faculty.

According to Sekaran and Bougie (2013), a stratified sampling is simply a probability sampling design that initially splits the entire population into meaningful non overlapping sub-sections and then randomly selects or choose the subsets from each sub-section. Stratified sampling is usually two fold - can either be proportionate (each stratum’s size proportionate to the stratum’s share of population) or disproportionate (where each stratum’s size is not proportionate to the stratum’s share of the vast population (Kumar 2008; Kithae, 2012; Sekaran & Bougie, 2013; Cooper & Schindler, 2014). This study used proportionate stratified random sampling because of advantages such as greater statistical efficiency, easier to carry out and capable of providing a self-weighting sample- meaning that the population mean could be approximated simply by calculating the mean of all entire sample cases. A greater precision was ensured with this kind of sampling technique by ensuring a representative sample was obtained. Further, it guaranteed ample sample points to substantiate an analysis of sub-groups (Cooper & Schindler, 2014).
3.3.2.3. Sampling Size

The sample size is a smaller set of the larger population (Cooper and Scindler, 2006). The target population was divided into 2 strata i.e. USIU-Africa staff and faculty. Many researchers argue that the size of sample depend on many factors such as the number of variables in the study, the type of research design, the methods of data analysis and size of the access population but many agree that sample should be at least thirty percent (30%) of accessible population which will be adapted for this study. Proportionate stratified random sampling was used to select participants of this study from each stratum while purposive method of sampling was applied to all members of the management board. According to the university records the total population of staff members was 400 and faculty members were 291. Using the Slovin’s formula (1960), since we know not of the behavior of the population in relation to their views on strategy implementation, however the population size is known or estimated nearby, the formula adopted:

\[ n = \frac{N}{1 + N \cdot e^2} \]

where; \( n \) – number of samples

- \( N \): Population size
- \( e \): Error tolerance (0.05)

A sample of 168 faculty members and 200 staff members was arrived at using Slovin’s formula as shown on column 3. The selected 30% strata proportion obtained from the sample gave a total of 51 faculty and 60 staff giving a total data collection sample of 111.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strata</th>
<th>Population size(N)</th>
<th>Number of samples (n)</th>
<th>30% Proportion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Faculty</td>
<td>291</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>691</td>
<td>368</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.4 Data Collection Methods

Data collection is the process of gathering and measuring information on targeted variables in an established systematic fashion, which then enables one to answer relevant research questions and evaluate outcomes. A self-administered questionnaire was used to collect
data from the sampled respondents. Sekaran and Bougie (2013), claim that a questionnaire is none other than a pre-formulated written set of questions to which respondents in the field records their answers. The questionnaire as a data collection tool was used because of three distinct advantages. First, a questionnaire is practical in nature and the respondent simply participates by filling out the questions. Secondly, large amounts of information can be collected from a huge number of individuals in the field during a short period of time and in a comparatively cost effective way. Thirdly the questionnaire can be administered by the researcher himself or by any number of people authorized by the researcher with limited effect to its validity (Cooper & Schindler, 2014). The descriptive research design allowed the use of a semi structured questionnaire i.e. comprising both the closed and open ended questions. The questionnaire for this study was divided into four main sections. Sections one gathered demographic data relating to attributes such as gender, age, and job status. The second section collected information pertaining to the first specific objective on the influence that management practice have on strategy implementation. Section three gathered data on the influence that communication has on competitive strategies implementation. The fourth section collected information pertaining to the third specific objective that assessed the influence of the organizational culture in successful implementation of strategic decisions.

3.5 Research Procedures

According to Cooper and Schindler (2014), pilot testing is mainly conducted to help the researcher detect any weakness in design and instrumentation as well as providing proxy data for selection of probability sample. Ten copies were directly delivered to the area of study for pilot testing two weeks before the actual data collection time. Sekaran and Bougie (2013), argue that the main advantage of personally administered questionnaire is that the researcher or at times a member of the research team can gather all the completed responses within a short time and any query or doubt arising from respondent can be clarified on the spot. The researcher did a pilot test of ten questionnaires before actual data collection commenced to ascertain whether all objectives were addressed from the responses given.

After changes resulting from the pilot study were made, the researcher proceeded to administer the questionnaires individually to the selected sample which was members of staff and faculty at USIU Africa. This was done through the drop and pick method where the researcher dropped the questionnaires to the target respondents and picked them up two days later. The two days period was given to ensure that the respondents were not filling in
the data under pressure. The researcher also exercised care by maintaining records of questionnaires administered and those received back.

### 3.6 Data Analysis Methods

Nabintu (2013), argues that data analysis could mean a process of inspecting, then cleaning, followed by transforming and finally modeling of data with the goal of discovering useful information to support decision making. Once raw data was received, preparation and description of the data followed. Data preparation involved editing, coding then data entry. The first step was editing the raw data from the field. Editing aimed at detecting errors and omissions and correcting them. Neville (2011), argues that the purpose of editing is to check whether data has been uniformly entered, complete and well organized in a manner to streamline the coding.

The next step was to code the data. Coding involved assigning numbers or other distinct symbols to answers such that it became easier to group responses into a limited number of categories. Categorization in a nutshell entailed using rules to partition a specific body of data. Cooper and Schindler (2014), claims that Categories shall always and usually be appropriate to the research problem, be exhaustive of the entire data and lastly mutually exclusive. Coding of the data was done in SPSS. SPSS is a computer program for data management and analysis designed to do statistical data analysis including descriptive statistics such as means, median and frequencies (Sekaran & Bougie, 2013).

Reliability of the items of the questionnaire was ascertained by running the Cronbach alpha test to ascertain the level of consistency in the attributes measuring different aspects of the study. Reliability is the extent to which the tools give consistent (Kothari, 2004). The research will adopt Cronbach α coefficient to test the reliability of the questionnaire. Cronbach’s alpha reliability coefficient ranges between 0 and 1. This was computed using SPSS. Regression and correlation analysis were used to measure the degree of relationship between the variables under study.

### 3.7 Chapter Summary

This chapter discussed the research methodology. The research design was discussed first where the researcher defined research design and the type of design used in the study. The
chapter then explained the target population for the study. The researcher elaborated on sampling design, sampling frame, sampling technique and the sample size. Data collection methods were expounded upon including the instrument used to collect data. A research procedure was also deliberated upon. The chapter finally discussed data analysis methods for the study. The next chapter (four) presents the results and findings of the study, and the preceding chapter (five) offers the recommendations and conclusions of the study.
CHAPTER FOUR

4.0 RESULTS AND FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction
The previous chapter focused on research methodology and outlined the method and procedures used to carry out the study. This chapter presents the results and findings of the study on the research questions with respect to the data collected from the respondents. The initial section covers the response rate of the study, and the reliability results of the questionnaire, the second subsection focuses on the background information with respect to the respondents, consequently the third, fourth and fifth subsections presents findings with regards to the research questions of the study.

4.1.1. Response Rate
The sample size for the study was 111 in this regard the researcher printed and distributed 121 questionnaires to the target population. During the exercise, the researcher used email, made phone calls and paid a visit to the organization and its divisions in order to keep in touch with the respondents to answer any questions that arose as well as to ensure a high response rate.

The researcher collected 97 filled questionnaires, and after data sorting and cleaning was able to come up with 90 questionnaires that were duly filled and could be used for analysis. These results managed to achieve a response rate of 81.08% which is considered above the required threshold, as shown in table 4.1. This response rate was also considered to be sufficient to proceed with data analysis as stated by Mugenda (2003) who says that 50% is a sufficient response rate, 60% is a good response and 70% rate and above is a wonderful for questionnaires that are hand-delivered.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questionnaires</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Responded/filled</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>81.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Responded or Not Utilized</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>18.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.2 Reliability Analysis
Reliability refers to the extent to which a measuring instrument contains variable errors, that is, errors that appear inconsistently from observation to observation during any one measurement attempt or that vary each time a given unit is measured by the same
instrument. Construct validity is established by relating measuring instruments to a general theoretical framework in order to determine whether the instrument is tied to the concepts and theoretical assumptions they are employing (Schrettle et al., 2013). Cronbach’s alpha type of reliability co-efficient value of .70 or higher is considered as usually sufficient (Muhammad, 2013). The results in the tables below show Cronbach’s alpha of well above 0.7 and most of it close to 0.7 implying that the instruments were sufficiently reliable for measurement and displayed a high level of consistency.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 4. 2 Reliability Statistics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commitment of top level management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization’s culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competitive Strategies</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 4.3 Demographic Information

The findings of this study provided primary data for the evaluation of the factors influencing competitive strategies implementation in institutions of higher learning in Kenya.

#### 4.3.1 Gender

Pertaining the gender of participants, 48 respondents (53.3% of the total respondents, N = 90) were male while the minority 42 respondents (46.7% of the total participants, N = 90) were female. This showed that both genders were included in the study and that USIU-Africa was cognizant about gender balance. These statistics is presented in Figure 4.1 below.
4.3.2 Age Bracket of Respondent

The statistics on the age bracket of respondent showed that 30 respondents were aged between 21-30 years (representing 33.33%, N = 90). The majority group consisted of 33 respondents who were aged between 31-40 years (this accounted for 36.67% of the total sample size, N = 90). 13 participants indicated that they were aged between 41-50 years of age (representing 14.44%). 11 participants were aged between 51-60 years (accounting for 12.22% of the total study sample size). The minority age group consisted of 3 respondents who were aged above 60 years. These statistics are shown in the figure 4.2 below;
### 4.3.3 Highest level of academic qualification

From the survey findings on the highest level of academic qualification of respondents; 18.9% (17 participants) had PhDs, 39 of the 90 respondents (43.3%) had master’s degrees, and 30 respondents (33.3%) had bachelor’s degrees. Only 2 participants had diplomas. The 1 missing value accounted for all our 90 participants. These findings are shown in the Table 4.3 below.

**Table 4.3 Highest Level of Academic Qualification**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Qualification</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PhD</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>19.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master's Degree</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>43.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor's Degree</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>33.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diploma</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>89</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Missing</strong></td>
<td><strong>1</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>90</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 4.3.4 Period respondent has worked at USIU-Africa

Respondents were asked to indicate the period that they had worked at USIU-Africa. Thirteen respondents (14.4%, N = 90) indicated that they had worked for less than 1 year at USIU-Africa. The majority category comprised of 43 participants (representing 47.8%, N = 90) who had worked at USIU-Africa for between 1-5 years. Twenty one respondents
(23.3% of the total sample size, N = 90) indicated that they had worked between 6-10 years at USIU Africa while 8 respondents (8.9%) on the other hand indicated that they had worked between 11-15 years at USIU-Africa. The minor category consisted of only 5 respondents (5.6% of the total participants) who have worked at USIU-Africa for a period exceeding 15 years. These statistics is shown in figure 4.3 below.

Figure 4. 3 Working Experience

WORKING EXPERIENCE AT USIU-AFRICA

4.3.5 Level of management in the university

The statistics on the level of management of respondents, indicated 49 of the 90 respondents (representing 54.44%, N = 90) were staff members, this accounted for the majority group. The second biggest group consisted of 27 participants (30.0%) who were faculty members. 8 respondents (representing 8.89%, N = 90) were non-staff members while the least category consisted of 6 participants (representing 6.67%, N = 90) who were in USIU-Africa management category. These statistics is shown in Figure 4.4 below.
### 4.3.6 Participant's division

Participants were asked to indicate the divisions they belong to in USIU-Africa. 5 respondents (5.6%, N = 90) indicated that they belonged to the administration division. 13 respondents (representing 14.4% of the total respondents) indicated that they were from the finance division. 5 participants (5.6% of the total respondents) showed that they belonged to the university advancement division. The majority group comprised of 41 participants who were from the academic and student affairs division. 24 of the 90 respondents showed that they were working in the ICT division. The 2 missing values accounted for all our 90 participants. These statistics are shown clearly in the table 4.4 below;

**Table 4. 4 Participants Division**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Division</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Administration</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finance</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>14.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University Advancement</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic &amp; Student Affairs</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>46.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICT</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>27.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing System</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>90</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## 4.4 Cross Tabulations of the Demographic Information

Cross tabulations presents the results of the entire group of respondents as well as results from sub-groups of survey respondents. This will enable us to examine relationships within
the data that might not be readily apparent when analyzing total survey responses. Invalid cases (missing data) are excluded from this cross tabulation analysis. Table 4.5 shows the distribution of gender among the level of academic qualification. The number of males is above that of females among all the academic level qualification categories apart from the bachelor’s degree level where the gender was equally represented.

**Table 4.5 Gender versus Level of Education**

4.4.1 Gender of participant * Highest level of academic qualification Cross tabulation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender of participant</th>
<th>PhD</th>
<th>Master's Degree</th>
<th>Bachelor's Degree</th>
<th>Diploma</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the table 4.7, below we can conclude that participants who have worked for longer periods are those above 41 years age brackets. The age distributions among the working experience at USIU-Africa is clearly shown.

**Table 4.6 Age Bracket versus Working Experience**

4.4.2 Age bracket of participant * Period respondent has worked at USIU-Africa cross tabulation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age bracket of participant</th>
<th>Period respondent has worked at USIU-Africa</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Less than 1 year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-30 years</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31-40 years</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41-50 years</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51-60 years</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Above 60 years</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.7 below shows that majority of the PhD holders (14 of the 17 PhD holders) were faculty members, majority group of those who had master’s degrees were staff members (24 of the 39 participants with master’s degree). 21 of the 30 respondents with a bachelor’s
degree were staffs while 2 of the 3 participants who indicated that they had diplomas were also staff members at USIU-Africa.

Table 4. 6 Academic Qualification vs Level of Management

### 4.4.3 Highest level of academic qualification * Level of management in the university cross tabulation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Highest level of academic qualification</th>
<th>Level of management in the university</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PhD</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master's Degree</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor's Degree</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diploma</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Total                                  | 6          | 26      | 49    | 8         | 89    |

4.5 The Role of Top Management Commitment in Competitive Strategy Implementation

Using a five-point Likert Scale, the study sought to know the respondents’ level of agreement on various statements relating to commitment of top level management in competitive strategies implementation. Respondents were provided with several statements where they were to rate either Strongly Agree; SA (1) Agree; A (2) Neutral; N (3) Undecided; D (4) Strongly Disagree; SD. (5). Descriptive statistics such as frequency, mean and standard deviation were jointly used to summarize the responses as presented in Table 4.8 below.

The mean for commitment of top level management ranged from 3.48 to 4.27 indicating that most respondents agreed with the statements that were used to measure the commitment of top level management in competitive strategies implementation. The research findings reveal that most respondents agreed when asked if top management commitment to the strategic direction of the university is the most important factor in strategy implementation (Mean = 4.27). Participants agreed that top managers clearly know what needs to be done to implement a competitive decision. (Mean = 3.61). Most of the respondents agreed that top managers usually demonstrate their willingness to give energy to the implementation of competitive strategies (Mean = 3.59). Majority of the participants were uncertain when asked if the management timely implements a decision that they have agreed on (Mean = 3.48). Most of the respondents averagely agreed that the university
management must set measurable objectives for each strategic process implementation. (Mean = 4.20). From the study, most of the participants agreed that management should be readily available, prepared, and excited to participate in the opening of strategic meetings. (Mean = 4.14). Most respondents agreed that effective executive management will define the objectives of the company, review the data/outputs of processes. (Mean 4.13). Most of the respondents agreed that effective executive management will take action based on these reviews of the defined the objectives of the company. (Mean 4.27).

Table 4. Descriptive statistics on Commitment of top level management

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Top management commitment to the strategic direction of the university is the most important factor in strategy implementation</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
<td>32.2%</td>
<td>51.1%</td>
<td>4.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Top managers clearly know what needs to be done to implement a competitive decision</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
<td>12.2%</td>
<td>23.3%</td>
<td>42.2%</td>
<td>18.9%</td>
<td>3.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Top managers usually demonstrate their willingness to give energy to the implementation of competitive strategies</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
<td>14.8%</td>
<td>27.3%</td>
<td>37.5%</td>
<td>19.3%</td>
<td>3.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The management timely implements a decision that they have agreed on</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
<td>15.6%</td>
<td>27.8%</td>
<td>36.7%</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
<td>3.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management must set measurable objectives for each strategic process implementation.</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>4.5%</td>
<td>13.5%</td>
<td>39.3%</td>
<td>42.7%</td>
<td>4.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management should be readily available, prepared, and excited to participate in the opening of strategic meetings.</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
<td>4.4%</td>
<td>13.3%</td>
<td>41.1%</td>
<td>40.0%</td>
<td>4.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effective executive management will define the objectives of the company, review the data/outputs of processes.</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
<td>6.7%</td>
<td>6.7%</td>
<td>48.9%</td>
<td>36.7%</td>
<td>4.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effective executive management will take action based on these reviews of the defined the objectives of the company.</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>10.1%</td>
<td>14.6%</td>
<td>48.3%</td>
<td>24.7%</td>
<td>4.27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.6.1 Correlation Analysis between top management level of commitment and Strategy Implementation

The researcher conducted correlation analysis to find out the degree of the relationship between the commitment of top management and the level of competitive strategies
implementation. The results showed that there was a low statistically significant positive correlation Pearson value of 0.388 between commitment of top level management and the implementation of competitive strategies since the sig. value 0.000 was less than alpha value 0.05 and 0.01 tested at 95% and 99% confidence level respectively. The findings are as displayed in the table below.

Table 4. 8 Correlation Analysis between top level management commitment and implementation of competitive strategies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Top_Level_Management_Commitment</th>
<th>Competitive_Strategies_Implementation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Top_Level_Management_Commitment</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation 1.388**</td>
<td>.388**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competitive_Strategies_Implementation</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation .388**</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

4.6 The Role of Communication in the Implementation of Competitive Strategies

One of the research objectives was to assess the role that communication played in enhancing the implementation of competitive strategies. Descriptive statistics in the form of frequencies and the use of mean were computed to assess the respondents’ ratings on attributes that assessed communication. The ratings were done on a five point Likert scale where 1 was Strongly Disagree, 2 was Disagree, 3 was Neutral, 4 Agree and 5 was Strongly Agree. The findings revealed that the mean for effects of effective communication in competitive strategies implementation ranged from 3.13 to 3.90 indicating that most respondents were neutral while others agreed with the statements that were used to measure effect of effective communication in competitive strategies implementation. The research findings reveal that most respondents agreed to the statement that the information that is given by management was always clear (Mean = 3.69). Participants also agreed that the information sources are sufficient for strategic decision making (Mean = 3.61). Most of the respondents agreed that communication with employees is timely on formulated strategies (Mean = 3.53). Majority of the participants were uncertain that the organization has a two-
way-communication program that permits and solicits questions from employees about issues regarding the formulated strategy (Mean = 3.13). Most of the respondents showed uncertainty to the statement that information about organizational developments at all levels is usually disseminated (Mean = 3.21). From the study, most of the participants were uncertain that an integrated communications plan was developed at the organization to enhance competitive strategy implementation (Mean = 3.43). Most respondents agreed that communication is key to illustrating management commitment to a business management system (Mean 3.90).

Table 4.9 Descriptive statistics on communication

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The information that is given by management is clear</td>
<td>4.6%</td>
<td>13.8%</td>
<td>19.5%</td>
<td>32.2%</td>
<td>29.9%</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>3.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The information sources are sufficient for strategic decision making.</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>20.0%</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
<td>45.6%</td>
<td>17.8%</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>3.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication with employees is timely on formulated strategies</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
<td>20.2%</td>
<td>19.1%</td>
<td>43.8%</td>
<td>15.7%</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>3.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The organization has a two-way-communication program that permits and solicits questions from employees about issues regarding the formulated strategy</td>
<td>8.9%</td>
<td>20.0%</td>
<td>32.2%</td>
<td>26.7%</td>
<td>12.2%</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>3.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information about organizational developments at all levels is usually disseminated</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
<td>27.0%</td>
<td>24.7%</td>
<td>39.3%</td>
<td>6.7%</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>3.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An integrated communications plan was developed at the organization to enhance competitive strategy implementation</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
<td>15.6%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>34.4%</td>
<td>14.4%</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>3.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication is key to illustrating management commitment to a business management system.</td>
<td>4.5%</td>
<td>12.4%</td>
<td>11.2%</td>
<td>32.6%</td>
<td>39.3%</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>3.90</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.7.1 Correlation Analysis between Communication and Strategy Implementation

All attributes assessing communication were computed to form the communication variable and further correlation analysis was done to assess the degree of association between the two variables. The findings revealed that there was a very high statistically significant (Pearson value 0.612) correlation between communication and implementation of competitive strategies. This being backed up by the p –value 0.000 which was less than alpha value 0.05 and 0.01 tested at 95% and 99% confidence level respectively. This therefore meant that improved communication would directly impact on the successful implementation of the competitive strategies. The summary of the correlation analysis findings is as displayed in the table below.

### Table 4. 10 Correlation between communication and competitive strategies implementation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Competitive_Strategies_Implementation</th>
<th>Communication</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Competitive_Strategies_Implementation</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>.612**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

4.7 The Role of Organizational Culture in Competitive Strategies Implementation

Aspects relating to the organization’s culture were rated on a five point Likert scale to assess the influence they had on the implementation of competitive strategies. The rating scale was 1 meaning Strongly Disagree, 2 was Disagree, 3 was Neutral, 4 was Agree and 5 was Strongly Agree. The mean for statements on influence of organizational culture ranged from 3.32 to 3.89 indicating that most respondents were neutral with the statements that were used to measure the influence of organizational culture in competitive strategies implementation. The research findings reveal that most respondents agreed that the company uses research and development to come up with viable and actionable strategic decisions (Mean = 3.74). Participants were uncertain to the statement that the company has a working decision making policy (Mean = 3.38). Most of the respondents agreed that the company has yearly forecast of the university market (Mean = 3.54). Majority of the
participants were uncertain that their organization’s culture ensures it has the right people on board during strategy implementation (Mean = 3.32. Most participants were uncertain that their organizational culture supports feedback loops that are used by leaders and policymakers to make necessary amendments (Mean = 3.39). Most of the respondents averagely agreed that their vision centered culture makes it easier for us to clarify outcomes thus influencing strategy implementation (Mean = 3.89).

**Table 4. 11Descriptive statistics on organization’s culture**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The company uses research and development to come up with viable and actionable strategic decisions</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
<td>9.0%</td>
<td>22.5%</td>
<td>44.9%</td>
<td>21.3%</td>
<td>3.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The company has a working decision making policy</td>
<td>5.6%</td>
<td>17.8%</td>
<td>24.4%</td>
<td>37.8%</td>
<td>14.4%</td>
<td>3.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The company has yearly forecast of the university market</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
<td>13.3%</td>
<td>28.9%</td>
<td>43.3%</td>
<td>13.3%</td>
<td>3.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Our organization’s culture ensures it has the right people on board during strategy implementation.</td>
<td>5.6%</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>28.9%</td>
<td>15.6%</td>
<td>3.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Our organizational culture supports feedback loops that are used by leaders and policymakers to make necessary amendments</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
<td>21.1%</td>
<td>20.0%</td>
<td>44.4%</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
<td>3.39</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**4.8.1 Correlation Analysis between Organizational Culture & Strategy Implementation**

Results from correlational analysis indicated that there was a strong positive statistically significant correlation (Pearson value of 0.562) between the organizational culture and implementation of competitive strategy where the significant value 0.000 was less than alpha value 0.05 and 0.01 tested at 95% and 99% confidence level respectively. This being an indicator that the organizational culture had a great influence on the implementation of competitive strategies. The summary of the correlation analysis is as shown in the table 4.13 below.
Table 4.12 Correlation Analysis between organization's culture and competitive strategies implementation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Correlations</th>
<th>Competitive_Strategies_Implementation</th>
<th>Organizations Culture</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Competitive_Strategies_Implementation</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.562**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizations Culture</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

4.8 Competitive Strategies Decisions

Some of the competitive strategies that the organization adopted according to majority of the respondents was hiring qualified teaching personnel, product differentiation and Embracing technological changes in service delivery processes as stated by 36.7%, 34.8% and 32.6% of respondents respectively. However the organization seemed to have done poorly in market diversification in terms of opening new branches as 55.2% of the respondents stating that the organization had not at all embraced that strategy. The findings are as shown in the table below.
Table 4. 13 Descriptive on competitive strategies decisions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of Competitive Strategies Decisions</th>
<th>Not at all Extent</th>
<th>Small Extent</th>
<th>Moderate Extent</th>
<th>Large Extent</th>
<th>Very large extent</th>
<th>Total Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Product differentiation</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
<td>10.1%</td>
<td>16.9%</td>
<td>34.8%</td>
<td>34.8%</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Product development through introduction of new courses</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
<td>8.9%</td>
<td>14.4%</td>
<td>48.9%</td>
<td>26.7%</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of concentrated growth on key area of expertise</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
<td>12.4%</td>
<td>20.2%</td>
<td>43.8%</td>
<td>22.5%</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Market diversification strategies by opening new branches</td>
<td>55.2%</td>
<td>14.9%</td>
<td>5.7%</td>
<td>12.6%</td>
<td>11.5%</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Embracing technological changes in service delivery processes</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
<td>10.1%</td>
<td>10.1%</td>
<td>46.1%</td>
<td>32.6%</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improvement in customer care services</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
<td>9.0%</td>
<td>21.3%</td>
<td>44.9%</td>
<td>21.3%</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hiring qualified teaching personnel</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
<td>46.7%</td>
<td>36.7%</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identifying donors to fund institutional’ projects</td>
<td>6.8%</td>
<td>13.6%</td>
<td>14.8%</td>
<td>42.0%</td>
<td>22.7%</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.9 Sources of Competitive Strategies Decisions

The researcher sought to find out the various utilized sources of competitive strategies decisions in the organization. The findings revealed that most of the competitive strategic decisions were based on the current situation, as illustrated by 50% of the respondents who said on a large extent the current situation brings forth the decisions to be adopted. It was also clear that university data sheets and university management reports were also largely used to bring forth competitive strategies. The organization also utilized university business intelligence system to come up with competitive strategies as indicated by 37% of the respondents. Respondents also disputed the largely utilization of contracted university consultants in coming up with competitive strategic decisions. The summary of the sources of competitive strategies are as shown in the figure below.
4.10 Regression Analysis of Top Management Commitment, communication and organizational Culture

The researcher conducted linear regression analysis to determine the measure to which the commitment of top management, communication strategy and the organization’s culture influenced the implementation of competitive strategies. To achieve this the researcher computed the top management, communication and organization culture and run a regression analysis. The results on the regression model summary as displayed in table indicated that the R-square value 0.475 indicated that 47.5% of the competitive strategies implemented were influenced by the commitment of top level management, communication styles adopted and the organization’s culture while the remaining 52.5% were other factors influencing implementation of competitive strategies that were not covered in this study.

Table 4. 14 Model summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>R</th>
<th>R Square</th>
<th>Adjusted R Square</th>
<th>Std. Error of the Estimate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>.689a</td>
<td>.475</td>
<td>.454</td>
<td>3.03091</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. Predictors: (Constant), Organizations Culture, Top_Level_Management_Committment, Communication
4.11.1 Significance of the Regression Model

It was important to assess if the regression model adopted was statistically significant. The table below shows that the independent variables i.e. organization’s culture, top management commitment and communication significantly predict the implementation of competitive strategies since the p-value 0.00 is less than alpha 0.05 tested at 95% confidence level. The model was sufficient and therefore adopted for prediction of the implementation of strategic competitive decisions.

*Table 4. 15 Significance of the Model*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Regression</td>
<td>622.536</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>207.512</td>
<td>22.589</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>688.983</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>9.186</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1311.519</td>
<td>78</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. Dependent Variable: Competitive_Strategies_Implementation  
b. Predictors: (Constant), Organizations Culture, Top_Level_Management_Commitment, Communication

4.11.2 Analysis of Regression Coefficients

All the independent variables were assessed on the degree of significance in predicting the implementation of competitive strategies. From the findings communication was the highest predictor of the implementation of competitive strategies since it had the highest t-value and also the sig value was less than 0.05 tested at 95% confidence level. Organizations culture was a second predictor of the implementation of competitive strategies with a sig. value 0.001 which was also less than 0.05 alpha value tested at 95% confidence level. An interesting observation was made from the findings that indeed the commitment of top level management was not a significant predictor of the implementation of competitive strategies. Top level management commitment displayed a negative relationship with the implementation of competitive strategies.

The regression equation to be adopted based on the regression coefficients in the table below, then was:

\[ Y = b_0 + B_1x_1 + B_2x_2 + B_3x_3 \]

*Where;*  
\( Y \) was Competitive Strategies Implementation  
\( b_0 \) was a constant
B1 was the top management commitment regression coefficient
X1 represented Commitment of top level management
B2 was communication regression coefficient
X2 represented communication variable
B3 was organization’s culture regression coefficient
X3 represented organization’s culture

The Model; Competitive Strategy Implementation = 4.622 – 0.038 Top level management commitment + 0.619 communication + 0.374 Organization’s culture

This implied that holding all factors constant, for every increase in commitment of the top level management there would be a 3.8% decrease in competitive strategy implementation although not statistically significant. A positive improvement in communication and on the organization’s culture would lead to a 61.9% and 37.4% increase in the implementation of competitive strategies respectively.

Table 4.16 Analysis of coefficients

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Unstandardized Coefficients</th>
<th>Standardized Coefficients</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Std. Error</td>
<td>Beta</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Constant)</td>
<td>4.622</td>
<td>2.915</td>
<td>1.586</td>
<td>.117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Top_Level_Management_Commitment</td>
<td>-.038</td>
<td>.096</td>
<td>-.047</td>
<td>-.395</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Communication</td>
<td>.619</td>
<td>.155</td>
<td>.508</td>
<td>3.980</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizations_Culture</td>
<td>.374</td>
<td>.104</td>
<td>.335</td>
<td>3.616</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. Dependent Variable: Competitive_Strategies_Implementation

4.11 Chapter Summary

This chapter has presented the results and findings of the study. Findings were presented in frequency tables and graphs/figures. Reliability tests, correlation analysis and regression analysis were also conducted. The presentation was aligned to the research objectives and covered reports of the extent to which communication, the commitment of top level management and the organization’s culture has influenced the successful implementation of competitive strategies. The next chapter presents discussions conclusions and recommendations.
CHAPTER FIVE

5.0 DISCUSSIONS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction
This chapter summarizes the research presented and the study findings interpretation and discussion. This section is divided into five sub sections; 5.1 was introduction, 5.2 shows the summary of the research, section 5.3 entails the discussion of findings, 5.4 presented the conclusion of the study while the last section offered the recommendations of the study.

5.2 Summary
The general objective of the study was to find out the factors that influenced successful implementation of competitive strategies in institutions of higher learning. To achieve this, the study sought to show whether the commitment of top-level management had an impact on the implementation of the competitive strategies. Further, the study also sought to establish the role of communication in implementation of competitive strategies in institutions of higher learning. In addition, the study looked at organization’s culture and how it affected the implementation of competitive strategies.

This study employed a descriptive research design. The population that was targeted in the study was the institution’s management, faculty, regular staff and non-staff. The sample size used was 111 drawn from all departments of the University. The study used questionnaires to collect primary data that was used to evaluate the factors that influence the implementation of the competitive strategies. In the findings, demographic information was also collected that assisted in the analysis of the factors. The constructs of this demographic information are; gender, age bracket of the respondents, the highest level of academic qualification, period respondent has worked at the USIU – Africa, management level of the respondent in the University, and the participant's division of operation in the university.

5.3 Discussion
5.3.1 The Role of Top Level Management Practice in Strategy Implementation

The commitment of top-level management was seen in the study to have an influence on the implementation of competitive strategies. The responses from the participants of the study showed that management’s commitment to the strategic direction of the institution was one of the most critical factors in successfully implementing competitive strategies. It
was evident that management clearly understood what was needed and required to be done in the implementation process. They also demonstrated their willingness to collaborate in strategy implementation. Management also set objectives that were measurable so as to calibrate the performance process. Lastly, reviews ought to be done on the output and results of the process. The measures of the management’s commitment in regards to respondents’ responses were presented using a descriptive statistics table and correlation results computed.

The findings revealed that top management commitment to the strategic direction of the university was the most important factor in strategy implementation. Top manager’s knowledge on what clearly needs to be done in order to successfully implement a strategy was very crucial. Most of the respondents agreed that top managers at USIU-Africa demonstrated their willingness to give energy to the implementation of competitive strategies. The results also showed that there although it was a low positive correlation (Pearson value of 0.388) it was still statistically significant association between commitment of top level management and the implementation of competitive strategies.

The top level management is at the forefront of the implementation of the strategies. The effort they put towards the achievement of the strategies determines whether the strategies are going to be successful. The stakeholders and employees could view inadequate management and lack of focus on the strategies as non-commitment to the success of the strategies. On the other hand, clear focus, concise direction, and visionary leadership will motivate all the stakeholders in the institution to work towards implementing competitive strategies successfully.

The findings helped the study to establish that top-level management commitment is necessary for the successful implementation of competitive strategies in the institution. The variable, management’ commitment was shown in the findings to have a positive impact on strategy implementation. Therefore, the improvement of the top level management’s commitment to the strategies will facilitate and fast-track the process of implementing competitive strategies in higher learning institutions in Kenya. The study’s findings support those found by Muringi & Waiganjo, (2017) who assert that management willingness and commitment have a significant impact on the implementation of strategies in learning institutions.
The literature based on a strategy execution perspective positions that good coordination within an organization is required to successfully implement a strategy. Coordination refers to the active participation, collaboration between members and top leaders of the organization (Drucker, 1954).

5.3.2. The Role of Communication in Strategy Implementation

The findings in the study establish that communication had a critical role in competitive strategies implementation. The responses showed that indeed communication was vital in the dissemination of information from the management. The information must be clear and concise for the employees to focus their efforts in the given direction. The findings further showed that the information needed to be timely and sufficient. The institution had developed a two-way communication program to ensure that feedback on the strategies implementation was carried out. There was a program as the respondents agreed also effective in formulating decision-making policies. The respondents further agreed that the development process at all levels ought to be communicated to the whole organization. This would help every other department review the progress in relation to the strategy implementation.

In addition, the study established that communication was key in the illustration of the management’s commitment to the institution’s management system. The system provided the mechanism with which the implementation process was carried out. An integrated communication plan that was developed by the institution had enhanced the implementation of the competitive strategy as shown by the responses. Alexander (2003), suggests that effective communication should provide the workforce with a concise and clear explanation of the responsibilities, roles, duties, and obligation in an organization. Hence, communication is vital in focusing the employees towards the implementation process. Eppler (2008), states that institutions with environments that restrict communication, the workforce performs poorly. This is compared to employees working in open and supportive communication environments.

The plans and programs developed by the organization can be described as information systems as they help to collect and disseminate information through a centralized point. Thus, they are essential in the facilitating strategy formulation and implementation. According to Zaribaf (2010), corporate communication and corporate strategy have a connection, in that; the utilization of communication is a strategy of management. It is also
necessary for the communication to be direct so as to reach individuals as opposed to communication that is generalized effectively. Direct communication will enable the review of the implementation process, where stakeholders can raise concerns and issues. According to Patterson and Radtke (2009), communication that is aligned to strategy helps the organization by strengthening partnerships, improving the organizations reputation, and optimizes resources that are scarce in the achievement of the strategic changes.

The correlation analysis depicted communication as a variable of implementation of competitive strategies. The findings from the analysis showed that the correlation between the two variables was low although still statistically significant. This proves that the improvement of communication can positively affect the successful implementation of competitive strategies.

Forman (2005) suggests that there are several approaches and best practices that lead to the successful implementation of the strategy. These are such as aligning the institution’s communication with the strategy implementation process, emphasizing on the focus on reputation and brand of the institution, elevating internal communication in the organizational structure and employing information technology to promote communication.

The study showed that communication at USIU – Africa was supportive of feedback, it was facilitated through a two-way process, and helped to illustrate the management’s commitment towards the implementation of the competitive strategies. This would enable a higher proportion of the workforce to participate in the process.

5.3.3 The Role of Organization Culture in Strategy Implementation

The study found that the organizational culture had a significant impact on the implementation of competitive strategies and determined whether they will be successful. These findings support Forman (2005) assertion that corporate and organizational culture influence and affect the implementation of strategies.

The study’s finding established that the institution was using research to develop actionable and viable policies that guided decision making. Hence, the organization’s culture was steeped in the reliance of data and proven practices. The findings further showed that the institution ensured that they had the right people working on the strategy implementation process. The alignment of career objectives and expertise to the organization’s strategy
implementation was emphasized. This was to ensure that the process was efficiently and effectively worked on.

The University’s culture also supported feedback loops. This provided the policymakers and top-level management with the necessary information to understand how the implementation process was working and progressing. The use of research and forecasting enabled the institution to be flexible by being able to adapt to the changing environment. Therefore, flexibility and adaptability being a part of the organizations culture, the implementation process becomes efficient and effective. According to Jung Chi (2008), organizations that are flexible are able to handle change and create a setting that encourages communication and innovation. Further, Akan (2006), asserts that an organizational culture provides leaders with an opportunity to work in a team and individually.

The correlation analysis of organizational culture and the implementation of competitive strategies indicated that organizational culture had a statistical significance. This was computed using the data collected from the respondents and their responses on how the culture of the institution affects the process of implementing strategies.

Today’s business environment is increasingly becoming competitive, more so for institutions of higher learning. To have a competitive advantage that is sustainable, institutions need to look for new ways to improve performance and promote continuous development in the implementation of strategies. A great competitive strategy does not guarantee the institution success. A favorable organization culture and climate will facilitate the implementation. Strategies will usually change the way the institution conducts its business, if the culture is not flexible, there could emerge hindrances to the implementation (Cristian-Liviu, 2013). It was prudent for leaders and managers in institutions of higher learning to create a dynamic culture that can absorb change. This was shown by the findings that organizational culture affects the implementation of strategies. Therefore, the findings proved that higher learning institutions in Kenya should encourage and improve great organizational culture so that they can better facilitate the implementation of competitive strategies.

5.4 Conclusion

5.4.1. Role of Top Management in Strategy Implementation

The study concludes that top-level management commitment had a positive relationship with the implementation of competitive strategies in higher learning institutions. This
indicates that the increase in commitment among the top level management will motivate the implementation of the strategies by the workforce in the Universities. As a variable, it was shown that it had statistical significance towards impacting the implementation of the competitive strategies. Through the correlation analysis, this variable was shown to have the third highest significance on the implementation of strategies.

5.4.2. Role of Communication in Strategy Implementation
The study has further concluded that communication that is efficient positively impacts the implementation of competitive strategies in universities in Kenya. The study showed that the communication in USIU – Africa, as the case study, had a conducive communication environment that fosters the implementation of competitive strategies. This is an indication that improving the communication both internal and external to the organization will lead to better implementation of the competitive strategies. From the results of the correlation analysis, communication as a variable was shown to have the highest significance in influencing the implementation of competitive strategies.

5.4.3. Role of Organization Culture in Strategy Implementation
The study further concluded that the organization’s culture significantly influences that competitive strategy implementation. A good organization culture such as one that promotes flexibility and adaptability motivates and creates a conducive environment for the institution to implement competitive strategies. This variable through correlation analysis was shown to be the second highest in significance on the implementation of competitive strategies.

5.5 Recommendations
5.5.1 Recommendations for Improvement
5.5.1.1 Role of University Management Practice in Strategy Implementation
The commitment of the management was identified from the study to be an important determinant of strategy implementation. The authority tasked with top-level management recruitment in USIU – Africa and other higher learning institutions should hire individuals with qualifications that are necessary to drive the implementation. Managers who are able to communicate their commitment to stakeholders in the institutions. The managers existing in the institutions should also be mandated to focus their vision and direction towards implementation of the strategies. The managers should innovate their methods of inspiring employees to focus on the objectives and goals of the organization. Teamwork
should be encouraged by the leaders and facilitate an environment that ensures maximum productivity.

5.5.1.2 Role of Communication in Strategy Implementation
Communication was revealed in the study to be the most important and most significant variable in the implementation of competitive strategies. Institutions need to improve their internal and external communication. The institutions should come up with systems that are effective for communication. The utilization of information technology will further improve communication across the board. The use of information systems will provide for the centralization of information. This will enable easy and faster access to information in the institutions. Therefore, implementation of the competitive strategies is made easier as the systems facilitate the process.

5.5.1.3 Role of Organizational Culture in Strategy Implementation
The study found that just as organization culture is important in many organizations; it is so in institutions of higher learning. A culture that supports employee feedback and communication between the different levels of the organization is important. The beliefs and values shared in the organization determine the how well the implementation will be done. Institutions of higher learning including USIU – Africa should cultivate a culture that supports individual and team development. The culture should be flexible and adaptable; this is because more often than not implementation of strategies leads to changes in the organization. The institution has to be flexible to be able to adapt to these changes.

It is also important to align the strategies with the culture in the organization. Therefore, research should be conducted to identify and understand the organizational culture in order to align it with the strategies to be implemented. The research will guide the planning department to mitigate against any hindrances towards competitive strategy implementation.

5.5.2 Recommendations for Further Research
The research conducted could be further broadened towards the identification of more variables that could also impact implantation of the competitive strategies. These variables could be the performance of employees, political and legal factors, regulations, and policies. The case study was conducted on a private university, the environment that they operate in is different, and they have unique characteristics regarding structure, staff, culture, and resources. Hence, it is recommended that the same study is conducted on
public universities’ implementation of competitive strategies. The participation of the top level management was less than any other group in the study. The management amounted to about 6%; this was so because of the accessibility of the managers, fear of participating in the study due to disclosure of information and maintenance of confidentiality. However, the limitation did not in any way affect the data collection and the data that was used to conduct, analyze and interpret the study. Further research should be done to investigate the factors influencing competitive strategy formulation.
REFERENCES


Coff, R.W. (1999). When competitive advantage doesn't lead to performance: The resource-based view and stakeholder bargaining power,


APPENDIX 1: QUESTIONNAIRE

My name is Victor Makanga, a student in United States international university, pursuing a master’s degree in business administration. This questionnaire is distributed in order to gather information regarding the competitive strategies and implementation challenges in higher education institutions in Kenya. Through your participation, the study will be able to make possible recommendations that will highlight and identify the key competitive advantage decisions in higher education, establish the strategy implementation challenges and critical success factors (CSF) on development of competitive strategies. The information you provide will be treated with confidentiality and will solemnly be used for the purpose of this study.
SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

1. Please indicate your gender
   Male [ ]  Female [ ]

2. Kindly select your age bracket
   21 - 30 years [ ]  41 - 50 years [ ]
   31 – 40 years [ ]  51 - 60 years [ ]
   41 – 50 years [ ]  above 60 years [ ]

3. What is your highest level of Academic qualification?
   PhD [ ]  Diploma [ ]
   Master’s Degree [ ]  Certificate [ ]
   Bachelor’s Degree [ ]

4. How long have you worked at USIU-Africa?
   Less than 1 year [ ]  11-15 years [ ]
   1-5 years [ ]  above 15 years [ ]
   6-10 years [ ]

5. What is your level of management in the university?
   Management [ ]  Staff [ ]
   Faculty [ ]  Non Staff [ ]

6. Kindly select your Division
   Administration [ ]  Academic & Student Affairs [ ]
   Finance [ ]  Legal Services [ ]
   University Advancement [ ]  ICT [ ]
SECTION B: COMMITMENT OF TOP LEVEL MANAGEMENT

Kindly tick your level of agreement with the following statements relating to the level of top management commitment in competitive strategies implementation

1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Top Management Level of Commitment</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Top management commitment to the strategic direction of the university is the most important</td>
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<td>factor in strategy implementation</td>
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<td>Top managers clearly know what needs to be done to implement a competitive decision</td>
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<td>Top managers usually demonstrate their willingness to give energy to the implementation of</td>
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<tr>
<td>competitive strategies</td>
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<td>The management timely implements a decision that they have agreed on</td>
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<td>Management must set measurable objectives for each strategic process implementation.</td>
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<td>Management should be readily available, prepared, and excited to participate in the opening of</td>
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<td>strategic meetings.</td>
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<td>Effective executive management will define the objectives of the company, review the data/outputs</td>
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<td>of processes.</td>
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<td>Effective executive management will take action based on these reviews of the defined the</td>
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<td>objectives of the company.</td>
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</table>
SECTION C: COMMUNICATION

Kindly tick your level of agreement with the following statements relating to the effective communication in competitive strategies implementation

1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Communication</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The information that is given by management is clear</td>
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<td>The information sources are sufficient for strategic decision making.</td>
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<td>Communication with employees is timely on formulated strategies</td>
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<tr>
<td>The organization has a two-way-communication program that permits and solicits questions from employees about issues regarding the formulated strategy</td>
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<td>Information about organizational developments at all levels is usually disseminated</td>
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<td>An integrated communications plan was developed at the organization to enhance competitive strategy implementation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Communication is key to illustrating management commitment to a business management system.</td>
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SECTION D: ORGANIZATION’S CULTURE

Kindly tick your level of agreement with the following statements relating to the influence of the organization’s culture on the competitive strategies implementation

1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization’s Culture</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The company uses research and development to come up with viable and actionable strategic decisions</td>
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<td>The company has a working decision making policy</td>
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<td>The company has yearly forecast of the university market</td>
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<td>Our organization’s culture ensures it has the right people on board during strategy implementation.</td>
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<td>Our organizational culture supports feedback loops that are used by leaders and policymakers to make necessary amendments</td>
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<tr>
<td>Our vision centered culture makes it easier for us to clarify outcomes thus influencing strategy implementation</td>
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</table>
SECTION E: COMPETITIVE STRATEGIES

Please state the extent to which your organization have used the following strategies to gain competitive advantage.

1 = Not at All, 2 = Small Extent, 3 = Moderate Extent, 4 = Large Extent, 5 = Very Large Extent

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competitive Strategies</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
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<th>5</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Product differentiation</td>
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<td>Product development through introduction of new courses</td>
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<td>Use of concentrated growth on key area of expertise</td>
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<td>Market diversification strategies by opening new branches</td>
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<td>Embracing technological changes in service delivery processes</td>
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<td>Improvement in customer care services</td>
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<td>Hiring qualified teaching personnel</td>
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<tr>
<td>Identifying donors to fund institutional’ projects</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

What is your institutional source of competitive decision advantage decisions?
1 = Not at All, 2 = Small Extent, 3 = Moderate Extent, 4 = Large Extent, 5 = Very Large Extent

(Tick all that Apply)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sources of Decisions</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>University Management Reports</td>
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<td>University Data Sheets</td>
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<td>University Business Intelligence System</td>
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<tr>
<td>Based on current situation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Contracted University consultants</td>
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Others ........................................................................................................................................

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Thank you very much for your input!!!
Appendix II: List of Universities in Kenya

Public Chartered Universities

1) University of Nairobi  
2) Moi University  
3) Kenyatta University  
4) Egerton University  
5) Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology (JRUAT)  
6) Maseno University  
7) Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology (MMUST)  
8) Dedan Kimathi University of Technology  
9) Chuka University  
10) Technical University of Kenya  
11) Technical University of Mombasa  
12) Pwani University  
13) Kisii University  
14) University of Eldoret  
15) Maasai Mara University  
16) Jaramogi Oginga Odinga University of Science and Technology  
17) Laikipia University  
18) South Eastern Kenya University  
19) Meru University of Science and Technology  
20) Multimedia University of Kenya  
21) University of Kabianga  
22) Karatina University  
23) Murang’a University College (JRUAT)  
24) Machakos University College (KU)  
25) The Co-operative University College of Kenya (JRUAT)  
26) Embu University College (UoN)  
27) Kirinyaga University College (JRUAT)  
28) Rongo University College (MU)  
29) Kibabii University College (MMUST)  
30) Garissa University College (MU)  
31) Taita Taveta University College (JRUAT)

Private Universities in Kenya

1) Chattered Private Universities in Kenya  
2) African Nazarene University  
3) Catholic University of East Africa  
4) Daystar University  
5) Kabarak University  
6) Kenya Methodist University (KEMU)  
7) Pan African Christian University  
8) St. Paul’s University  
9) Strathmore University  
10) University of East Africa Baraton  
11) United Stated International University (USIU)  
12) Mount Kenya University (MKU)
13) African International University
14) Kenya Highlands Evangelical University
15) Great Lakes University of Kisumu (GLUK)
16) Scott Theological College
17) KCA University (KCAU)

Private Universities operating under the letter of Interim Authority
  1) Aga Khan University
  2) Genco University
  3) Kiriri Women University of Science and Technology
  4) Presbyterian University of East Africa
  5) Adventist University of Africa
  6) GRETSA University
  7) The East African University
  8) Management University of Africa
  9) Pioneer International University
 10) Riara University
Appendix III. Research Budget

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BUDGET ITEM</th>
<th>ESTIMATED COST</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Estimated Printing Costs</td>
<td>Ksh 1500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estimated Internet Costs</td>
<td>Ksh 5000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estimated Telephone Costs</td>
<td>Ksh 2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estimated Transport Costs</td>
<td>Ksh 6000</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>Ksh 14500</strong></td>
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</table>