

## The Role of Strategic Leadership in Strategy Implementation in the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions (ODDP) in Nakuru County, Kenya

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**Abstract:** The overall aim of the study was to elucidate on how strategic leadership influences strategy implementation in the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions (ODPP) in Nakuru County, Kenya. The key research question of this paper is if strategic leadership is a driver of successful strategy implementation in the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions selected. Theoretical underpinning for the study was based on three theories namely Resource Based View, Open Systems Theory, as well as Institutional Theory. Data was collected using self-administered semi-structured questionnaires. Reliability of the research instruments was 0.610, established using the Cronbach's alpha coefficient indicating that the conditions of reliability were met. Construct validity of the instruments was established by sharing the information of the instruments with experts in the area of strategic planning and implementation. Data analysis was conducted using inferential analysis with the aid of SPSS version 20. The computed value of the Spearman correlation coefficient was  $r = 0.560$ , which was significant at  $P < 0.05$ . The study findings are therefore critical to various stakeholders in the Criminal Justice System, especially the Office of Director Public Prosecutions. These study findings strengthen the Government's understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of strategy implementation and make this a basis for strategy implementation process in the office of the DPP and other Government offices.

**Keywords:** Strategic Direction, Leadership Skills, and Capacity Building.

## INTRODUCTION

In order to explore how strategic leadership influences strategy implementation in the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions, it is critical to understand the conceptualization of the term strategy implementation. Hourani [1] argues that strategy implementation encompasses activities such as communication, interpretation, and adoption of strategic plans. Yet another definition was given by Alcaide-Muñoz, Bello-Pintado and Merino-Diaz de Cerio [2] who opine that the process of strategy implementation comprises of all the activities and choices required for the execution of the strategic plan. In addition, De Oliveira, Carneiro and Esteves [3] define strategy implementation as interventions from the management aimed at aligning organization actions with strategic intention. Prayogo [4] reveal that strategic implementation involves communication, interpretation, adoption, and enactment of strategic plans in an organization. Clear understanding of the notion of strategy implementation is therefore very critical in the current study in order to enhance performance in ODPP in Nakuru County.

Recent studies emphasize the critical role played by strategic leadership in the process of strategy implementation. Ilyas, Munir and Sobarsyah [5] view

strategic leadership as the process of influencing other individuals to make decisions, which can help achieve organizational viability in the long term and endeavors at the same time to maintain financial stability in the short-term. Furthermore, it establishes the linkage that exists between strategic leadership and strategy implementation in organizations. Strategy implementation hereinafter is defined as an important component of the strategic management process across diverse industries. In a recent study conducted in Greece, Belias, Trivellas, Koustelios, Serdaris, Varsanis and Grigoriou [6] anticipate an improved management of tourism sector with adoption of strategic management practices.

Empirical studies conducted in various parts of the world provide prove that indeed the process of strategy implementation needs to be directed by proper strategic leadership in the organization. Locally, studies have pointed out the need to have clear communication about the whole process of strategy implementation to guarantee its success [7]. While conducting a study in Kenyan public universities, Sila and Gichinga [8] observe that organizational culture is critical in strategy implementation, especially by focusing on issues such as communication that provides a strategic direction to all the employees. Chepkwei, Wanyoike and Koima [9]

use the case of Kenyan Saccos to point out that strategic leadership is an important aspect in the whole process of strategic implementation.

In a recent study conducted in Turkey by Bilgin, Bilgin and Kilinc [10], it is concluded that civil society organizations fully utilized strategic leadership in the process of strategy implementation in most of the operations. In spite of the challenges faced, Africa has also had success stories with regard to strategy implementation in organizations. Studies conducted in some African countries provided direction as to how strategy implementation can be influenced by strategic leadership. After conducting an empirical study on Zimbabwean commercial banks, Goromonzi [11] emphasized the need for organizations to come up with a culture that could be essential in the process of strategy implementation. Such studies may have been conducted outside the Kenyan context, but the findings provide directions as to how strategic leadership is a critical component in the process of strategy implementation.

Generally, many scholarly articles present a case of need for organization to have strategic leadership in order to achieve strategies. Studies carried out within the Kenyan context also point out at the kind of potential that can be harnessed, especially with the realization that strategy implementation is influenced by strategic leadership. In a recent study conducted by Lemarleni, Ochieng, Gakobo and Mwaura [12], organizational culture as well as financial stability was found to be critical in the process of strategy implementation. Similarly, Ng'ang'a [13] focusing on the Kenyan tourism sector emphasized the need for institutions to have strategic leadership to enhance organizational performance. This concurred with the findings of Buya, Simba and Ahmed [14] who found that strategy implementation was heavily dependent on the kind of leadership applied in the National Police Service.

Given the importance of a strategic leadership in the process of strategy implementation, it is imperative that the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions in Kenya uses the best practices that will ensure effective and seamless strategy implementation. The study findings therefore provide evidential recommendations with regard to strategy implementation in the office of the DPP, Nakuru County.

Excellent performance in the office of the DPP is pegged on providing quality, impartial and timely prosecutorial services anchored on Article 10 of the Constitution of Kenya 2010. The ODPP Strategic Plan (2011-2015) envisioned challenges on the performance of prosecutorial services and even formulated strategic objectives to mitigate the same. The Strategic Plan

2011-2015 envisioned ten (10) strategic issues that it needed to address in order to effectively discharge its mandate and attain its vision. These included limited prosecutorial independence, weak institutional framework, lack of organizational capacity, over-reliance on manual systems, weak inter-agency collaboration, delay in prosecutorial services, negative perception by the public, lack of facilitation of victims and witnesses, poorly investigated cases and lack of mainstreaming of cross cutting issues as stipulated in Chapter 4 of the Plan.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Despite the well formulated strategies and strategic objectives at the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions (ODPP) emphasizing on certain basic tenets that support the attainment of the prosecution mandate, prosecution counsels in various courts nationwide are still experiencing myriads challenges which have impacted negatively on their services. The most notable challenges include uncertainties in jurisdiction, constraints in finances, inadequate capacity to implement frameworks in legislation to enable the organization to fight various crimes, lack of prosecutorial independence, backlog of criminal cases, use of manual systems, high staff turnover and poor stakeholder relations. The question then would be, if all along the Strategic Plans at ODPP have been focusing on eliminating these challenges by counsels in the field, why is it that the challenges still exist, and what would be the problem? In realization for the need to have seamless implementation of strategies at the ODPP, the current study focuses on the aspect of strategic leadership, which could be the panacea to the challenges.

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **Resource Based View**

Resources play a critical role in organizational competitive strategy. In this regard, the aim of Resource Based View is to emphasize the key role played by organizational resources in achieving competitive advantage over other organizations. Hoskisson, Gambeta, Green and Li [15] point out that Resource-Based View posit that organizations achieve competitive advantage from value creation through investments held by key stakeholders especially employees, suppliers, as well as customers. Other scholars such as Alexy, West, Klapper and Reitzig [16] contend that organizations need to come up with effective approaches for controlling the valuable resources which can be utilized to enhance competitive advantage over other organizations.

While focusing on the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions in Nakuru County, this theory is critical in its application and understanding by the staff that proper utilization of unique and scarce resources helps in implementing organizational strategies. In view

of various contributions by various authors on the theory of Resource Based View, it is appropriate that this theory be applied in the current study due to the constant engagement of ODPP in the process of strategy execution to meet organization objectives.

### Open System Theory

This is yet another critical theory in exploring the concept of strategy implementation in organizations. The theory is premised on the notion that most institutions have some sort of interrelatedness between the internal and external environment for them to function smoothly. Recently, Nzioka [17] highlighted the important role played by the external environment to the organization in the whole process of implementation of strategy. This provides direction as to the need for organizations to work closely with external environment in order to achieve organizational goals. Mbithi [18] reveals that the theory, which initially started as only applicable in the subject of biology, can be applied in the process of strategy implementation. This is because an open system continuously interacts with its environment, and it is with this view that organizations, which implement strategies, need to be in constant touch with the external environment in order to meet the organization objectives.

Performance of any organization is measured by how well it meets the set organizational goals; hence, the achievement of organizational goals and strategies depends on how well it interacts with the external environment. Similarly, the Office of the Director of Public Prosecution should embrace both the internal and external environment for it to function smoothly. Application of the Open Systems Theory therefore is important in ensuring that strategic leadership in an organization engages various stakeholders in order to implement various strategies effectively.

### Institutional Theory

This theory is crucial in trying to understand how leadership influences strategy implementation. The focus of institutional theory is to bring to elucidate the importance of organization's interdependence between internal and external environment in order to function efficiently. In a study conducted by Regueira [19] the researcher unequivocally points out that organizations function like units, which need to be interrelated and interdependent, taking into account the importance of the external influence in the attainment of organizational goals.

Further, a study by Chen and Jing [20] reveals that institutional theory is one of the most important theories in the process of strategy implementation for organizations. Hazen, Skipper, Ezell and Boone [21] contend that the external environment to any given

organization mostly influences the organizational processes and structures and generally the performance of the organization. Institutional theory was chosen for the current study due to the fact that the ODPP, just like any other organization, implements strategies on a day-to-day basis and hence needs the knowledge of how external environment impacts on the process of strategy implementation.

### Empirical studies

Local studies have provided direction and in depth understanding on the importance of strategic leadership in the implementation of strategies in organizations. Chepkwei, Wanyoike and Koima [9] established that the process of strategy implementation is influenced by strategic leadership in the organization. While conducting a survey in Kenyan Commercial Banks, Olaka, Lewa and Kiriri [22] highlighted the various aspects of strategy implementation as defined in the vision and mission, support from the top management, including issues such as incentive compensation which are strongly associated with the process of strategy implementation.

Recently, a study conducted by Kabetu and Iravo [7] in international humanitarian organizations operating in Kenya found *inter alia* that, communication of the strategic direction is important in the entire process of strategy implementation. Njoroge [23] using the case of Sameer Africa Kenya LTD revealed that one of the key determinants of strategy implementation has to have sufficient top management support. Further, in a study conducted by, Onjure, Wanyoike, and Mung'atu [24] on the implementation of electronic commerce strategy in Kenyan commercial banks, it was revealed that strategic leadership was an important determinant of success of strategy implementation in an organization. In a study focusing on Kenyan public and private universities, it was established that competitive advantage of the institutions was enhanced by incorporation of various aspect of strategic leadership by the management [25].

Understanding the kind of linkage that exists between strategic leadership and strategy implementation is critical especially in the context of the current study. In a study that sought to establish the role of strategic leadership in strategy implementation at UNICEF Somalia, Muasya [26] found that strategic leadership that builds strong organizational culture helps the process of strategy implementation in the organization. Egyptian pharmaceutical industry, El Khoully, AbdelDayem and Saleh [27] established that strategic leadership is a critical component when it comes to the process of strategy implementation in an organization. In a study focusing on Kenyan motor vehicle industry by Njeri [28], it established that some aspects of strategic leadership such as communication, personal involvement, as well as leadership competence

played a key role in the whole process of strategy implementation. It has been further established by some authors that strategic leadership enhances unity of the employees towards organizational vision and mission, thus improving the process of strategy implementation [29]

The Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions (ODPP) in Nakuru County, could harness the benefits of the strong linkage that exists between strategic leadership and strategy implementation for the development of the organization. The general result of this linkage could be well coordinate strategy implementation and enhanced overall performance of the organization.

### Research gaps

Having conducted a review of the pertinent literature, some areas on strategic leadership and strategy implementation remain unaddressed as far as studies in the extant literature are concerned. The study gaps especially focus on the kind of methodology that the studies used, the context under which the research study was carried out as well as the concept focused on.

Chepkwei, Wanyoike and Koima [9] established an association between strategic leadership and strategic implementation in Kenyan Sacco's while Kabetu and Iravo [7] conducted a study that narrowed down only to humanitarian organizations. On the other hand El Khouly, AbdelDayem and Saleh [27] established the role played by strategic leadership in enhancing strategy implementation in the context of Egyptian pharmaceutical industry. In yet another empirical study by Onjure, Wanyoike and Mung'atu [24] focused on how strategic leadership influenced strategy implementation in Kenyan commercial banks. Njeri [28] established a linkage between strategic leadership and strategy implementation in the context of Kenyan motor vehicle industries. A study conducted by Kahiga [29] established the importance of the process of strategic leadership in National Bank of Kenya and study conducted by Kising'u [25] sought to understand the role of strategic leadership in the process of strategy implementation in public and private universities in Kenya.

The research gap identified is that in as much as so many studies have been focused on the need to establish the role of strategic leadership in implementation of strategies, a research on constitutional offices such as the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions has not been unraveled. The study therefore investigated the role strategic leadership has in strategy implementation in the Office of Director of Public Prosecutions, Nakuru County.

## METHODOLOGY

### Research design

The study was conducted by use of case study research design. Some scholars have advocated use of case study in order to have in-depth understanding of the situation on the ground [30]. The investigator selected this technique since it is concerned with depth rather than breadth and places more stress on the complete study of a partial number of events or conditions and other interrelations.

### Sampling Procedure

The study was carried out using census method due to the small size of the population of the study; the study therefore involved the whole population of the study as the participants.

### Target population

The researcher targeted 54 respondents all serving within Nakuru County. The respondents comprised of 24 Prosecution Counsels, 12 Former Police Prosecutors and 18 Judicial Staff. The 24 Prosecution Counsels were all drawn from Molo, Naivasha, and Nakuru Sub-Counties forming up the ODPP Nakuru Branch. The 12 Former Police Prosecutors all served under the County Criminal Investigation Officer (CCIO), Nakuru having formally prosecuted at Nakuru County. The 18 Judicial Staff were working at Nakuru Law Courts and had tried criminal cases while discharging their mandate on a daily basis.

### Validity and Reliability of the Research Instruments

A pre-test of the questionnaire was conducted before the investigator would embark to conduct the main research to test its effectiveness. The investigator employed a participatory type of pretest where there was an interview session with 6 respondents in Bomet Law Courts. According to Sheatsley [31], the study found that it often takes about 12-25 cases to unravel major difficulties as well as weaknesses in a pilot study. The explanations and reactions to some questions determined how the respondents understood the questions. It turned out that the questionnaire needed to be amended, as some of the questions were broad and not well understood. The respondents in the main study when compared answered those questions that never called for any amendments or adjustments the same way. Weisberg *et al.*, [32] found that investigators measure reliability by comparing the answers given by respondents.

To determine content validity, expert judgment was used where supervisors were engaged in checking and assessing the accuracy of data instruments. To ensure reliability of instruments, Cronbach's alpha coefficient method was used where reliability coefficient values were computed. Cohen and Marrison [33] assert that Cronbach alpha coefficient values above



0.7 are assumed to indicate that the instrument is reliable. The study established the reliability of the questionnaires used, of which the value of 0.61 was obtained on the role of leadership in strategy implementation at the ODPP showing that the instrument was reliable enough.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS**

**Correlation of strategic leadership and strategy implementation**

Table-1 below provides results of Spearman’s Correlation Coefficient between strategic leadership

and strategy implementation. The results presented in Table-1 below provide evidence of a statistically significant relationship between strategic leadership and strategy implementation in the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions, Nakuru County, Kenya ( $r=0.56$ ,  $p<0.001$ ). Therefore, strategic leadership of the management in the organization influenced the process of strategy implementation. With a statistically significant correlation coefficient of  $r = 0.560$ , strategic leadership was therefore an important determinant of strategy implementation at the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions in Nakuru County.

**Table-1: Spearman’s Correlation Statistics of strategic leadership and strategy implementation in the Office of the Director of Public Prosecution’s in Nakuru County, Kenya**

|   |
|---|
| Correlation between strategic leadership and strategy implementation  |
| n=54  |
| r= 0.56***  |
| Probability: P < 0.001 (2 tailed)                                     |
| ***. Correlation is highly significant at the 0.001 level (2-tailed). |

The results of the study corroborate the findings by Jabbar and Hussien [34] who indicates that Strategic Leadership has a significant impact on strategic management process. That it helps to determine the vision and mission of the organization. The study by Jabbar and Hussien [34] found that, strategic leadership facilitates the execution of effective strategies which help in achieving the vision of the organization. The findings of the study are also in line with the findings by El Khouly, AbdelDayem and Saleh [27] who reported that a positive linkage between strategic leadership and strategy implementation in organizations. Furthermore, the results of this study are also in agreement with the findings by Onjure, Wanyoike and Mung’atu [24] who found that that strategy implementation was influenced by the kind of strategic leadership employed in the organization.

In summary therefore, it is important to appreciate the fact that strategic leadership is an important aspect in the whole process of implementation of strategy. The Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions could benefit from the findings of the current study that some of the strengths and weaknesses experienced in the process of strategy implementation could be addressed in line with the results obtained and the resultant results. The findings of the study provided direction as to the need to have capacity building mechanisms to ensure that each employee in the office of the ODPP is equipped with skills geared towards better implementation of various strategies.

**CONCLUSIONS**

Strategic leadership is an important aspect of leadership, which, in accordance with the study findings, plays an important role in strategy implementation at the ODPP. It is also important to take

note that some of the aspects of strategic leadership such as proper communication to all employees, as well as availability of necessary resources are critical to ensure strategy implementation. Having established that strategic leadership plays an important role in the process of strategy implementation, the study strongly recommends that institutions especially the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions come up with ways and means of ensuring that there is capacity building for the staff to understand the role of strategic leadership in fulfilling various organizational objectives. Further research could also examine how the interaction of multifactor in the organization could influence strategy implementation.

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