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ABSTRACT

The study sought to examine the influence of strategic management practices on the performance of private universities in Kenya. The study targeted 30 private universities in Kenya both chartered and those with the letter of interim authority. The specific objectives of the study were to examine the relationship between customer processes and organisational performance; to determine the relationship between internal business process and organisational performance and to establish the relationship between employee growth and organisational performance. The study applied correlational research design. The author used judgmental procedure to select 120 representatives from the following categories of individuals in the private universities; vice chancellors, deputy vice chancellors, deans of schools and heads of sections. Applying multiple regression model and content analysis tools the study analysed quantitative and qualitative data respectively. Results showed that service culture, service quality, customer experience and feedback are key determinants of performance in the sampled private universities in Kenya. It was also established that organisation structure of many private universities does not match the internal business processes. Further findings indicated that employee growth was a key factor affecting performance of private universities in Kenya.

Keywords: *Customer Processes, Internal Business Processes, Strategic Employee Growth, Performance of Private Universities*

INTRODUCTION

Globalization and removal of borders between countries has led to very important reflections in higher learning institutions. Emergence of distance learning and joint programs, export of higher learning services by the countries such as the USA, England and Australia have led to international and intercontinental cooperation's among universities (Rehber, 2015). As the numbers of private universities continue to grow, so does the competition for market survival intensifies (Poddar, 2014). Competition for survival has been the guiding force for existence and it has been associated with strategic management practices. According to Henry (2014), the adoption of a clear strategic perspective in an organization is one of the factors that affect the performance of these organizations. Thompson and Martin (2014), defines strategic management practices as the art and science of formulating, implementing, and evaluating cross-functional decisions that enable an organization to achieve its objectives. The authors argued that strategic management practices involves formulating organization's objectives, implementing, and controlling cross-functional decisions focused on achieving these objectives in the present and future environments. Strategic management practices and organizational performance in higher learning institutions goes together, but studies show that most private universities around the world place less emphasis on making effective strategy for improved performance (Stahl, Sharplin, Peter & Grigsby, 2014). Recent studies done in Kenya over the past years, show that public universities in Kenya have faced many challenges (Poddar, Gadhawe, Pearce & Robinson, 2013). Among these challenges are: enrollment beyond their capacity to plan and finance, fiscal challenges beyond their control, decline in quality beyond their anticipation, and weak management practices. To help solve some of these problems, private universities have increasingly emerged and gained ground in the country as an alternative to higher education provision (Oketch, 2013). Major management theories such as those of Chandler (1962) and Child (1972), both cited in Meier, O'Toole, Boyne and Walker (2014) emphasized that private firm can exercise strategic choice, even in the face of external constraints. The way and manner they face strategic issues can affect the overall growth and development of the organization. It goes without saying that the strategic framework must also address fundamental issues such as resource base, infrastructure constrains, appropriate level of technology and raw materials input.

Private universities in Kenya like any other parts of the world, are fundamental institutions in the society which must be restructured in order to compete with the leading public and international universities (Nayeri, 2015). According to the Commission for University Education (CUE, 2017), private Universities in Kenya are established in accordance with the Universities Act 1985 (CAP 210B) and the Universities Rules, 1989 (Establishment of Universities, Standardization, accreditation and Supervision). The private universities offer both undergraduate and postgraduate programs and CUE is mandated with responsibility of ensuring that private universities adhere to the standards of a university (CUE, 2017). It is considered that implementation process of the increasing expectations from private universities can be made possible by good management of these institutions, and this can be achieved when private universities adapt and implement a more professional management style along with the concept of strategic management (Nzuki, 2014). In parallel with the changes, transformations and extension in higher education and other fields in the world, the demand for higher education has also increased rapidly in Kenya as well (Muturi, 2014). A 2017 report by CUE shows that the number of chartered private universities has reached 30 in total (see Appendix III). Along with this extension, the main reason for the high number of students per lecturer is because the number of lecturers has not increased enough in number when compared to that of students (CUE, 2017). In order to meet ever-increasing expectations and achieve sustainable competitive advantage in Kenya, and in the world, private universities must implement strategic management practices which are directly related to the concept of quality, human and technological infrastructures (Ngirwa, 2013).

Statement of the Problem

The general problem is that strategic management practices are practiced in an unsystematic and uncoordinated manner by the private universities in Kenya (Mutegi, 2012; Teece, 2014; Alexander, 2015; & Henry, 2014). Dixon (2014), conducted a cross-sectional survey in 100 private universities in the United Kingdom and the findings revealed that at the initial stages of strategic management practices recorded higher prominence and down to the evaluation stage fewer universities were involved. Lack of knowledge on strategic management practices in private universities is one of the factors that affect the performance of these organizations (Henry, 2014). In USA, Muogbo (2013) studied on the impact of strategic management practices on organizational growth and development and the results indicated that lack of resources was a major drawback for successful strategic management practices. Hunger (2013) conducted an empirical study focusing on healthcare professions in South Africa and found a significant correlation between positioning strategies and financial performance. Some of the local studies done on strategic management practices include a study conducted by Kivuja (2013) about strategic management in SME's at Kariobangi light industries. Lwova (2013) conducted a random sampling study about strategic management practices of savings and credit coop societies in Mombasa County. Mbondo (2014) focused on strategic management practices at the Kenya police staff Sacco. A study by Ng'ang'a (2013) focused on real time strategic management practices in the Kenyan companies listed at the Nairobi Securities Exchange. The specific problem is that, there has been limited of generally absent studies on strategic management practices on private universities in Kenya. The study, therefore sought to fill the gap by examining the influence of strategic management practices on the performance of private universities in Kenya.

Objectives of the Study

To examine the influence of strategic management practices on the performance of private universities in Kenya. The specific objectives were:-

- To examine the effect of customer processes on performance of private universities in Kenya.
- To determine the relationship between internal business process and performance of private universities in Kenya.
- To establish the relationship between strategic employee growth and performance of private universities in Kenya.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Framework

Resource Based Theory

This theory was developed by Birge Wenefeldt in 1984. It is a method of analysing and identifying a firm's strategic advantages based on examining its distinct combination of assets, skills, capabilities and intangibles as an organization. The RBV's underlying premise is that an organisation differ in fundamental ways because each firm possess a "unique" bundle of resources-tangible and intangible assets and organizational capabilities to make use of those assets. Each firm develops competencies from these resources, and when developed especially well, these become the source of the firm's competitive advantage (Pearce & Robinson, 2014). In the context of this theory, it is evident that the resources that an organisation has will play a big role in the strategic management practices. This is because no matter how good the strategies are, without the necessary resources to enable the implementation, they remain in the planning phase. The resource-based approach sees organisations with superior systems and structures being profitable not because they engage in strategic investments that may deter entry and raise prices above long run costs, but because they have markedly lower costs, or offer markedly higher quality or product performance. A leading text of the 1960s (Learned, 2012) noted that the capability of an organization is its demonstrated and potential ability to accomplish against the opposition of circumstance or competition, whatever it sets out to do. According to Learned (1969), every organization has actual and potential strengths and weaknesses; it is important to try to determine what they are and to distinguish one from the other. Thus what an organisation can do is not just a function of the opportunities it confronts; it also depends on what resources the organization can master. Gratton (2013), proposed that the real key to a company's performance or even to its future development lies in its ability to find or create a competence that is truly distinctive. The resource-based perspective puts both strategic management practices and diversification into a new strategic light. Empirical work on the relationship between performance and diversification by Wemerfelt and Montgomery (2014) provides evidence for this proposition. It is evident that the resource-based perspective focuses on consideration of managerial strategies for developing new capabilities (Wernerfelt, 2014). Indeed, if control over scarce resources is the source of economic profits, then it follows that such issues as skill acquisition, the management of knowledge and know-how (Shuen, 2012), and learning become fundamental strategic issues. The Resource based view theory is therefore used to explain how private Universities gain competitiveness through innovatively delivering superior value to customers, they focus on the strategic identification and use of resources for developing a sustained competitive advantage.

Balanced Score Card

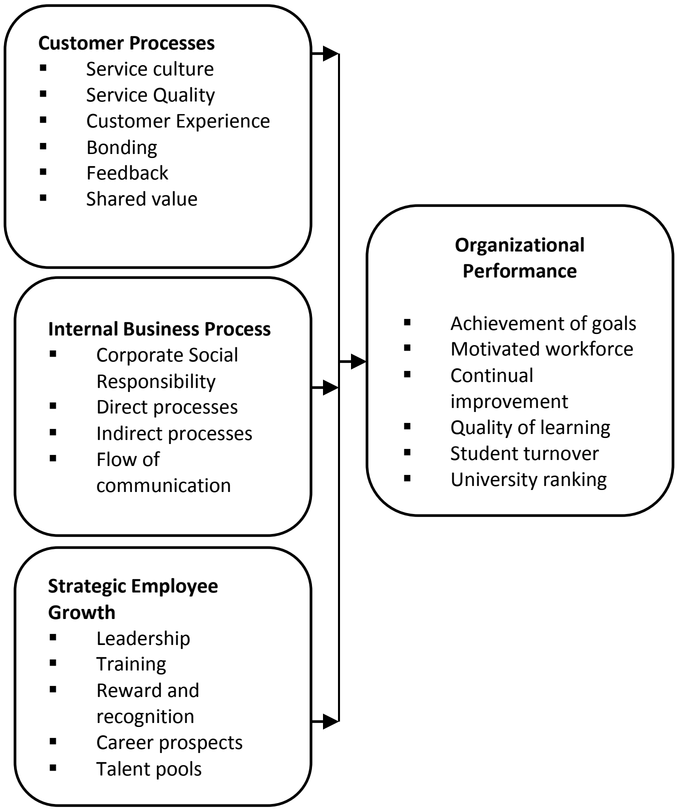
The Balanced Score Card (BSC) is the mostly widely applied management system in organizations (Wiersman, 2012), its popularity comes from the principle that it brings all of the strategic objectives of an organisation into a single and balanced framework (Kaplan and Norton, 2003). According to Kaplan and Norton the objective of the BSC is to create a system, which could measure the performance of an organization and to improve any back lags that occur. BSC helps the management to understand its objectives and roles in the bigger picture. It also helps management team to measure the performance in terms of quantity. The balanced scorecard also plays a vital role when it comes to communication of strategic objectives. BSC provides a solution for this by breaking down objectives and making it easier for management and employees to understand. Planning, setting targets and aligning strategy are two of the key areas where the BSC can contribute.

One of the main reasons for many organizations to be unsuccessful is that they fail to understand and adhere to the objectives that have been set for the organization (Lawrie, 2014). The balanced score card is necessary to; increase the focus on the business strategy and its outcomes, improvise organizational performance through measurements and align the workforce to meet the organization's strategy on a day-to-day basis. BSC is necessary because it targets the key determinants or drivers of future performance, improves the level of communication in relation to the organization's strategy and vision and helps to prioritize projects according to the timeframe and other priority factors (Hanson & Towle, 2000). According to Kaplan and Norton (2003) BSC is composed of four strategic perspectives which include: financial, customer, internal business process and learning and growth ones. Kaplan and Norton asserted that financial perspective emphasize on shareholder satisfaction, key goals and measures here generally involve (gross and/or net) profitability, return on capital employed, residual income, economic value added, sales growth, market position and share, cash flow. Customer perspective focuses on "real" customer satisfaction, key goals and indicators here typically stress common customer concerns such as delivery time, quality, service and cost (Mathews, 2015). In Internal business perspective, key goals and measures here should highlight critical skills and competencies, processes and technologies that will deliver current and future organizational (customer/financial) success (Lawrence, 2014). Learning/growth perspective focus on underpinning the other three perspectives, key long-term goals and indicators in this regard typically relate to improving flexibility and investing for future development and new opportunities (Atkinson, 2006). These functions have made the balanced scorecard an effective management system for the implementation of strategy. The balanced scorecard has been applied successfully to private sector companies, non-profit organizations, and government agencies (Lawrence, 2014).

Stakeholders Theory

The arguments in support of the stakeholder concept are rooted in the theories of duties and rights (Beer, 2014). According to Beer, the idea that a person, by virtue of being a person, possesses intrinsic moral rights can be traced back to Immanuel Kant who developed a theoretical framework through which these principles could be derived, called the categorical imperative. By this, he meant that this theoretical framework should be applied to every moral issue regardless of who is involved, who profits, and who is harmed by the principles once they have been applied in specific situations (Howell and Letza, 2014). Donaldson (2013), posits that, a major purpose of stakeholder theory is to help board of directors and managements understand their stakeholders' environments and manage more effectively within the terms of the relationships that exist for their organisations. It is also the purpose of stakeholder theory to help directors and managers improve the value of the consequences of their actions, and minimize the harms to stakeholders. With respect to the current study, guardians and Students are the key customers in the learning institutions, private universities included. Lecturers and other subordinate staff are the internal customers and therefore based on stakeholder theory, these groups have a say in regard to the management of the university (Preston, 2014). Thus according to Preston, teleological ethical approach could be applied to the stakeholder theory in which the consequences of any actions taken by the managements are judged whether they benefit more stakeholders of their organisations. Jensen (2014), teleology is a philosophical attempt to describe things in terms of their apparent purpose, directive principle or goal. In utilitarianism terms, the more the outcomes of decisions taken by the private university boards result to happiness to the majority of the stakeholders the better it is for the institution and its stakeholders (Philip, 2016). As (Logsdon and Wood, 2013) point out, stakeholder theory can contribute to organization's performance and redefining the institution through a focus on performance measurement.

Conceptual Framework



Independent variables **Dependent variable**

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Strategic Management Practices

Strategic management practices involve the art and science of formulating, implementing, and evaluating cross-functional decisions that enable an organization to achieve its objectives (Jossiah, 2014). It is the formal process, or set of processes, used to determine the strategies (actions) for the organization. According to McKernian (2013), strategic management practices focuses on many areas, including the integration of management; marketing; finance/accounting; production/operations; research and development; and computer information systems (Strategic management as a practice involves behaviors and actions that are determined by both individual human agency and structural/institutional forces. Studies done in the developed countries show that individuals and groups who are embedded in social structures that are reproduced and shaped by individual and group actions make strategic choices (Jarzabkowski, Balogun & Seidl 2017). A study conducted by Vinzant (2014), assert that strategic management is a process carried out at the top of the organization, which provides guidance, direction and boundaries for all aspects of operational management.

According to Mintzberg (2013), there are three theoretical groupings or modes of strategy formulation: the planning mode that depicts the process as a highly ordered, neatly integrated one; Adaptive mode that depicts the process as one in which many decision makers with conflicting goals bargain among themselves to produce a stream of incremental, disjointed decisions and finally; Entrepreneurial mode where a powerful leader takes bold, risky decisions toward his vision of the organization's future. According to Greenly (2013), in the planning mode, there exists a more comprehensive system of formal strategic planning with written strategic and operating plans. The author posit that goals are articulated as clearly as possible and the execution is planned in detail. Similarly, a study by Fulmer (2014), noted that strategic management practices involves a number of critical steps including scanning the environment for information, selecting relevant data and interpreting it, building a strategic model, testing it and putting into action. Fulmer (2014), emphasized that, a better understanding of the environment of an organization helps in identifying key issues and ways of coping with complexity and change. Additionally, according to Kazmi (2013), a traditional approach to such analysis is the SWOT framework, which enquires into the strength, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of an organization. The organization's strengths and weakness include internal organizational factors to address, whereas the opportunities and threats represent external environmental factors in the organization's periphery. The internal factors, which include personnel, finance, and manufacturing capabilities, may be analyzed based on functional approach, value chain approach or resource based view approach. The external factors may include macroeconomic matters, technological change, legislation, and socio-cultural changes, as well as changes in the marketplace or competitive position (Regner, 2013). Okongwu (2013), contend that analysis of external factors encompasses looking at political and regulatory influences, economic factors and influences, societal and cultural influences, and technological innovations (PEST Analysis). Okongwu (2014), emphasized that organization needs to analyze the competitive environment and identify rivalry between competing sellers, companies offering substitute products, suppliers of resource inputs, buyers, and potential new entrants. The analysis of the concerns of the stakeholders, employees, customers, suppliers and the society in general is crucial in order to develop objectives that stakeholders would support.

Customer Processes and Organisational Performance

Customer processes is a comprehensive strategy and process of acquiring, retaining, and partnering with selective customers to create superior value for the company and the customer (Andereson, Fornell & Lehmann, 2013). According to Doyle and Roth (2013), Customer processes management enables any organization to work in a competitive environment and manage to supersede competitor efforts with its customer centric approach. Andereson (2013), emphasize that monitoring customer processes through the balanced scorecard helps nonprofits collect information about customers' perceived value, service quality, delivery time and costs, and customers' satisfaction. Thus, they will be able to align their strategic plans to the achievement of higher customer intimacy, superior service quality perception, and operational Excellency. A study conducted by Fornell (2015), found that the financial perspective of the balanced scorecard is imperative for a private university because it captures information about how efficiently they are using scarce resources and public/donor funds to offer quality services. Information obtained from this perspective improves university accountability towards the public and enhances its fund raising potential. Consequently, makes mission achievement much imminent (Fornell, 2013). Moreover, a study by Lehmann (2013), observed that in public and private universities, the customer perspective gains a greater weight because their satisfaction justifies mission achievement. Further results showed that universities have a diverse customer base including donors who provide organizations with funds, beneficiaries who receive services without normally paying for them and the general public. Thus, the customer perspective of the balanced scorecard has to incorporate performance effectiveness as perceived by various customer segments. Similarly, Aluko (2014), noted that based on assessment information gained from the customer perspective, the university can easily identify critical performance measures in the other four perspectives (internal business processes, employees' learning and growth, financial processes, and volunteers' development). According to Kaplan and Norton (1992), monitoring customer processes through the balanced scorecard helps nonprofit institutions collect information about customers' perceived value, service quality, delivery time and costs, and customers' satisfaction. Thus, they will be able to align their strategic plans to the achievement of higher customer intimacy, superior service quality perception, and operational Excellency. Jossiah (2014), emphasized that financial perspective of the balanced scorecard is imperative for nonprofit organizations because it captures information about how efficiently they are using scarce resources and public/donor funds to offer quality services. A study conducted by Wiley (2013), showed that often customer service takes place while performing a transaction for the customer, such as making a sale or returning an item. According to the author, customer service can take the form of an in-person interaction, a phone call, self-service systems, or by other means. Similarly, Duke (2014), contend that customer service is an extremely important part of maintaining ongoing client relationships that are key to continuing revenue. For this reason, many private universities have worked hard to increase their customer satisfaction levels. Often there are many more people working behind the scenes at a university than there are customer service representatives, yet it is primarily the personnel that interact directly with customers that form customers' perceptions of the university as a whole. Moreover, Kang (2013), argues that customer processes are pre-trial beliefs about a product or service and (Cooper, 2014). Expectations of customers are formed with the aid of sources of information, which include prior exposure to service, word of mouth, expert opinion, publicity and communications controlled by the firm or institution as well as prior exposure to competitive services. According to Davies (2014), Service Culture is built on elements of leadership principles, norms, work habits and vision, mission and values. The author argues that culture is the set of overriding principles according to which management controls, maintains and develops the social process that manifests itself as delivery of service and gives value to customers. Once a superior service delivery system and a realistic service concept have been established, there is no other component as fundamental to the long-term success of a service organization as its culture.

Internal Business Processes and Organisational Performance

The internal business process perspective captures measures regarding organizational operations and processes necessary to meet customers' expectations and increase their satisfaction (Kaplan and Norton, 2000; Niven, 2008). In other words, internal business processes are more about value chain management. Revising and improving internal business processes is dependent upon performance measures identified by the customer processes perspective of the balanced scorecard. Thus, this perspective can pursue diverse objectives which all aim at improving customers' value perception (Niven, 2008). The success of higher learning institutions depends on the depository of skills and competencies implicitly held by its staff which represents its human capital. Therefore, there is an obligation on universities to continuously improve employees' learning and growth potential, manage information sharing, and provide an adequate organizational climate conducive to improving overall organization's performance as represented by mission achievement (Niven, 2008). However, according to Schumpeter (2014), it is important to recognize that skills development and other investments in human capital comprise only one set of factors necessary for productivity growth. Skills development alone cannot raise enterprise and national productivity (Mitchell & Flin, 2013). Other factors and policies are likewise insufficient if they are implemented in isolation of skills development. Skills development must be an integral part of broader development strategies if it is to deliver on its substantial potential to contribute to overall productivity and high performance (Mitchell & Flin, 2013). Moreover, a study by Cakmaka (2013), emphasize that inability to learn new skills because of inadequate basic education or lack of opportunity slows the transfer of all factors of production from lower to higher value added activities. Effectiveness of strategic management practices is, at least in part, affected by the quality of people involved in the internal business processes (Govindarajan, 2014). A recent study conducted by Viseras, Baines, and Sweeney (2016) grouped 36 key success factors into three research categories: people, organization, systems in learning environment. Their intriguing findings indicate that strategic management practices success depends crucially on the human or people side of strategic management, and less on organization and systems related factors. Similarly, Harrington (2016) finds that a higher level in total organizational involvement during strategic management had positive effects on the level of implementation success, firm profits and overall firm success. Several researchers have emphasized the effect of top management on strategic management practices (Hrebiniak, 2013; Smith & Kofron, 2014; Schmidt & Brauer, 2015; Schaap, 2016). Most of them point out the important figurehead role of top management in the internal business processes of strategic management. Schmidt and Brauer (2013), for example, take the board as one of the key subjects of strategic management practices and discuss how to assess board effectiveness in guiding strategy execution. Hrebiniak (2016), posit that the process of interaction and participation among the top management team typically leads to greater commitment to the firm's goals and strategies. This, in turn, serves to ensure the successful management of the firm's strategy. Smith and Kofron (2009) believe that top managers play a critical role in the management - not just the formulation - of strategy. Nutt, (2015) points out that subtle changes taking place in the attitudes of employees towards working, their employers, and their lives are requiring companies to change their personnel management techniques accordingly to motivate their employees and instill them with commitment. According to Birnbauma (2013), internal business process perspective is the area that most operational managers feel comfortable with. This is the area where measurement takes place on things they know and manage on a daily basis. The key to these measures is that they form the foundation of the Vehicle to Drive the business forward and deliver what the customer needs. Similarly, according to Aosa (2014), internal business processes can take the form of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). Aosa contends that CSR for many universities is not just about compliance or requirements to be a supplier, but is a statement demonstrating Business Excellence to their target market. The main areas covered under CSR are Health, Safety & Wellbeing, Environmental impact, Quality Management and Ethical Trading. All of these areas of critical importance to any company. They cover the safety and wellbeing of staff, contractors, visitors, consumers/customers and also the planet.

Strategic Employee Growth and Organisational Performance

Employees’ growth captures information about human capital and information technology needed to achieve competitive advantage (Kaplan and Norton, 2000). This dimension is mainly concerned with evaluating the skills, knowledge, and competencies held by organizational human capital and finding out ways to continuously improve them. Due to increased professionalism pressures in human resources management in universities, they are called upon to apply extensive internal controls and sophisticated volunteers’ training and development techniques (Stirling, Kilpatrick, and Orpin, 2011). Ghemawat (2014), posit that employee growth focuses on the intangible assets of an organization, mainly on the internal skills and capabilities of the employees that are required to support the value-creating internal processes. According to Ghemawat (2014), growth perspective focuses on: Human Capital-Jobs and people issues, Information Capital- Systems and technology issues and Organization capital (Organizational climate and quality of work-life). Similarly, according to Wit and Meyer (2014), organisational change is a vital strategic management practice by any organisation determined to succeed. The authors noted that, the way labour is divided within an organization influences how strategic change will be implemented. Therefore organization structure is of both strategic and operational advantage in change management strategy (Burnes, 2014). Additionally, Huczynski and Buchanan (2003) stated that organizational change is a strategic imperative. According to Burnes, this simply means that major or radical shifts in organizational design reflect changes happening in the wider social, economic, political and technological environment. Private universities must be able to respond rapidly to external changes if they are to survive, and that the necessary internal restructuring is likely to be strategic or 'mould breaking' (Burlton, 2013). The mould that needs to be broken is the rigid, autocratic, bureaucratic approach to organization and management (Burlton, 2013). The new organizational framework required appears to be one that emphasizes flexibility, creativity and participation. Flexibility has further been emphasized as essential in dealing with many uncertainties in the environment. Mintzberg, Quinn and Ghosal (2014) observe that successful organizations actively create flexibility. This requires active horizon scanning, creating resource buffers, developing and positioning champions, and shortening decision lines. Private universities need to be innovative to ensure their existence. Kanter (2014) noted that established universities can afford falling into the classic traps that stifle innovation by widening the search for new ideas, loosening overly tight controls and rigid structures, forging better connections between innovators and mainstream operations, and cultivating communication and collaboration skills. A study by Thompson (2013), show that innovations involve ideas that create the future. But the quest for innovations is doomed unless the managers who seek it take time to learn from the past (Thompson, 2013). According to Yin (2016), getting the balance right between the highest returns from current activities and exploring requires organizational flexibility and a great deal of attention to relationships. Hill and Jones (2013), note that strategic managers also turn to restructuring as a means of implementing strategic change aimed at improving performance. They further note that when private universities rely on innovation as the source of their competitive advantage, they need to adopt flexible structures such as matrix or cross-functional team structures, which give people the freedom to experiment and be creative. Moreover, Abdulkadir (2014), asserted that the process of strategic planning shapes a company's strategy choice. It reveals and clarifies future opportunities and threats and provides a framework for decision making throughout a company. Similarly, according to Mutunga (2014), strategic planning helps universities to make better strategies through the use of more systematic, logical and rational approach to strategic choice. Individuals in the organization will strive to achieve clear objectives that are set (Mutunga, 2014). Mulcaster (2015), argued that strategic planning results in a viable match between the university and its external environment. Similarly, a study done by Latham (2016), found that strategy concerns an analysis of the organisations environment, leading to what the firm, given its environment, should achieve. According to Davenport (2015), environmental scanning and analysis allows the organisation to be connected to its environment and guarantees the alignment between the organisation and its environment. Davenport, argues that environmental analysis reveals the market dynamics, business opportunities and challenges, customer expectations, technological advancements and the firm's internal capacities and this provides the basis for strategy selection.

Organisational Performance

According to Bokor, (2015), the performance of an organisation is determined by the strategic management practices it adopts. Strategic management practices which result in high performance are identified with activities that generally lead to success in the industry; that is key success factors. These activities are associated with initiatives in industry (Miller & Friesen, 2013). Researchers have identified such initiatives to include emphasis on product quality, product and service innovations, development of new operating technologies, and discovery of new markets (Robinson & Pearce, 2014). Activities associated with high performing strategies also include emphasis on customer service and support, extensive advertising, and use of external finance. Further, because high performing strategies involve initiative-taking, they are often referred to as proactive strategies (Steiner, 2013). Organisations which perform below average tend to follow others in the industry and to react to events in their environment. Such organisations are characterized by strategies which emphasize risk avoidance and involve little innovation. Strategies of low performing organisations include limitations of more successful firms in the industry, but usually fall short in some important respect. The activities that comprise these strategies are often not well integrated and are mismatched with the demands of the environment. Strategic management practices consists of the analyses, decisions, and actions an organization undertakes in order to perform exceptionally well (Dess, Lumpkin, & Eisner, 2013). This means that strategy implementation managers must focus on building competitive advantages that are unique, valuable in the market place and also difficult for competitors to copy or substitute. According to James and Robert (2014), university management should undertake a comprehensive study and adoption of strategic management practices in all and every aspect and areas of its concern so as to synergies, restructure, re-engineer and reposition its operations and thus enhancing the quality of its product/service within the dynamics of a fluid market and thereby bring about an improvement of its revenue base, its profitability, performance and effectiveness. Barney (2014) notes that competitive performance is sustained when other firms are not able to duplicate the firm's strategy. Thus sustained organisational performance exists only after efforts to replicate that advantage have failed (Adeleke, 2014). It is for this reason that organizations are focusing on methods and strategies that are difficult to imitate (Adeleke, 2014). According to Robert (2014), for an organisation to accomplish its mission and objectives in the light of growth and profitability, management need to have a positive rethink towards the use of strategic management practices. Robert argues that the success of an organisation strategy depends primarily on the value judgment, energy and skill of its top managers and the strategic implementation within the context and parameter of the uncertainty and ambiguity of the environment subjected to volatility. Strategic training should be given to all employees in the organisation in order to enhance their performance. According to Porter (1985), the choice of a competitive strategy will be based upon the attractiveness of the industry for long term success and also on the competitive position of the firm in the industry. Moreover, according to Mintzberg (2014), not all industries offer equal opportunities for sustained profitability and the inherent profitability of an industry is one essential ingredient in determining the performance of the firm. A firm in a very attractive industry may not earn attractive profits if it has chosen poor strategic management practices. Similarly, Reneta (2013), an excellent strategic management practice may not result to high profits if it is in a poor industry. According to Reneta (2013), an organisation will have many sources of strategies and it will adopt the one that yields it the highest advantage. But most organisations have failed to recognize the need for increase in strategic management practices through improvement on the level of motivation of their workers through incentives, training and development (Reneta, 2013).

Empirical Review

The existing literature has clearly demonstrated that managing strategies successfully is about matching strategic management practices which together aim at reaching the organizational vision. Bokor (2015) did a random sampling on 30 private and public universities in the United States of America (USA) with the main objective of establishing the influence of management style on the performance of learning institutions. The findings of the study indicated that strategic management practices differ depending on the style of organization and management that exists in the firm. The study concluded that Superiority of an organisation means that the firm performs a given function distinctly from the way other firms perform the same function. Consequently, the study recommended two distinct performance yardsticks that a firm may use to measure its success, that is, financial performance and strategic performance. Financial performance is concerned with factors such as sales revenue and profitability, whereas strategic performance is considered in terms of competitiveness, technical progress, and market position. Steiner (2013), in his study about the relationship between employee growth and company performance, conducted a census within the service industry in Kenya. The findings revealed that strategic employee growth was treated as a premise to realize commitment and consensus. The study concluded that strategic employee growth is an important factor, and managers should make decisions that take the interests of the company's stakeholders into consideration. Similarly, a cross-sectional survey conducted by Jossiah (2014) aimed to establish the impact of customer processes in the banking sector in Kenya. Findings showed that organisations do not care about both internal and external customers. Additionally, the study concluded that trying to meet the needs of different stakeholders' interests can lead to managers being unaccountably for their actions. Gitau (2015) conducted a descriptive survey which sought to assess the adoption of strategic management practices in Kenyatta University. The study found out that Kenyatta University was faced with various challenges in the strategic management at the different levels. The study also found that commitment of top management affects strategic management in Kenyatta University. The study concluded that organizational structure influenced strategic management at Kenyatta University. Watuka and Mbondo (2014) did a census on all the 43 commercial banks in Kenya. The purpose of the study was to establish the influence of strategic management practices on the growth of commercial banks in Kenya. The study established that commercial banks practice environmental scanning to a large extent and on specific environmental scanning customer analysis was indicated first as most practiced of the analysis. Kakunu (2012) in his descriptive study, sought to achieve two objectives: to investigate the current strategic management practices in the Kenya's banking sector; and to identify factors that influence the banks strategic management practices in Kenya. The most significant factors that were found to influence strategic management practices were technological environment, economic environment, global environment, political and legal environment, bank structure, bank resources, and socio-cultural environment. The study recommends that there is need for firms to stress on strategic evaluation process as much as they do planning and execution. Kivuja (2013) conducted a descriptive census on all service firms in Kenya, aimed to investigate the influence of internal business processes and the performance of SMEs at Kariobangi light industries. The findings indicated that managers face difficulties when trying to understand the business environment because the environments consist of so many different influences. The study concluded that managers of any organisation are human beings that can make errors and therefore, the need to reduce the complexity of the internal business processes by the use of environmental analysis methods.

METHODOLOGY

The study applied correlational research design. Correlational research design is a quantitative method of research in which a study has two or more quantitative variables from the same group of subjects and the researcher wants to determine the relationship between the two variables. On study population, according to a report by the commission for university education (CUE, 2017), Kenya had a total of 30 private universities whereby 17 of them were chartered while 13 had letters of interim authority. This made the study target population. Both qualitative and quantitative data was used for the study.

The following formula for multiple regression was used:

$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta_4 X_4 + \varepsilon$

Where;

Y= the dependent variable (Performance in Private Universities in Kenya)

β_0 = Constant Term

β_1, and β_2, are constants regression coefficients representing the condition of the independent variables to the dependent variable.

X_1 – customer processes

X_2 – internal business processes

X_3 – strategic employee growth

ε = Error term explaining the variability of economic development as a result of other factors not accounted for.

RESULTS AND FINDINGS

The study sought to find out the actual number of respondents who participated in the questionnaire response compared to the targeted sample size. 120 questionnaires were administered across 30 private universities in Kenya. The results show that 100 participants responded positively to the questionnaire survey giving a response rate of 83% which is in line with Russel (2001) who observed that a study should be of an adequate size relative to the objectives of the study. Most of the respondents were within the age category of 25-34 years (35, 35%), followed closely by age category 35-34 (20, 20 %.). This was followed by age category 45-54 (19, 19%), followed by age group 18-24 (17, 17%). The least percentages of respondents interviewed were in the age categories 55-64 (6, 6%) followed by age group 65-75 at 1%. Finally, only 2 respondents interviewed had 75years and above. The results showed that majority of the participants were between the age category of 24 and 35 years. On level of education, majority of respondents interviewed had reached degree level (39, 39%), followed by Higher diploma level (26, 26%). 19% of the respondents interviewed were found to have attained masters level. 17% had attained a diploma while a small percentage of respondents (3, 3%) had a PhD. This showed that most participants in the study were either a degree holder or a diploma holder. The findings further revealed that the highest percentage of respondents (39%) had worked for the institution for a period of between 6 and 10 years during the time of the study. Followed by 26% of the respondents who had been in the institution for a period of between 3 and 5 years when this study was being undertaken. Followed by 21% of respondents who had worked for the institution for less than 2 years during the time of the study. The results meant that majority of the participants had worked for the institution for at least five years which suggested that they had good experience on the effect of strategic management practices on performance within the institution.

Response on Strategic Management Practices

The researcher sought to know the commonly adopted strategic management practices by the universities, as well as the effect of strategic management practices on the performance of private universities in Kenya.

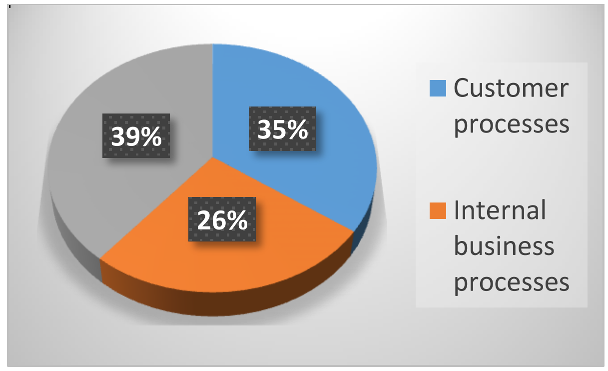


Figure 2: Strategic Management Practices Adopted by Private Universities

Figure 2 revealed that the highest percentage (38.95%) indicated strategic employee growth. Followed by customer processes (34.74%) while 26.32% indicated internal business processes. This meant that the institutions had embraced strategic management practices. This goes to mean that the universities were headed towards the right direct direction in terms of strategic management.

Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement/disagreement on the effect of customer processes on organisational performance within their institution.

Table 1: Frequency distribution on Customer Processes and Organisational Performance.

Statement	SD	D	U	A	SA
The institution has articulated a vision for the university.	8.42%	24.21%	8.42%	24.21%	34.74%
The vision statement is relevant to the institutions activities and mandate.	13.68%	15.79%	9.47%	21.05%	40.00%
The challenges of achieving effective customer processes results from lack of cultivation of strong shared values to meet the changing organizational needs.	11.58%	27.37%	8.42%	22.11%	30.53%
Customer experience influence performance in the organization.	7.37%	8.42%	11.58%	35.79%	36.84%

Table 1 indicated that the highest percentage (58.95%) of the participants agreed (34.74% strongly agreed, 24.21% agreed) that the institution had articulated a vision for the university. 32.63% disagreed (8.42% strongly disagreed, 24.21% disagreed). While 8.42% remained undecided. This meant that private universities were customer centric which goes to mean that private universities were able to work in a competitive environment. This supports findings of another study conducted by Kuper (2014) which found that student expectations are on the rise and universities have to trim budgets and increase efficiency. Additionally, table 2 also showed that 61.05% of the respondents interviewed agreed (40% strongly agreed, 21.05 agreed) that the vision statement was relevant to the institution's activities and mandate. 29.47% disagreed (13.68% strongly disagreed, 15.79% disagreed) while 9.47 remained undecided. This meant that private universities were able to align their strategic plans to the achievement of higher customer intimacy, superior service quality perception, and operational excellence. The findings are in line with another study conducted by Fornell (2013) which found that information obtained from vision statement improves university accountability towards the public and enhances its fund raising potential an consequently, makes mission achievement much imminent. More results in table 2 indicated that the highest percentage (52.64%) of the participants agreed (30.53% strongly agreed, 22.11% agreed) that challenges of achieving effective customer processes results from lack of cultivation of strong shared values to meet the changing organizational needs. 38.95% disagreed (11.58% strongly disagreed, 27.37% disagreed). While 8.42% remained undecided. This could mean that private universities do not apply balanced scorecard effectively to enhance performance effectiveness. This is supported by Kaplan and Norton (1992), who averred that monitoring customer processes through the balanced scorecard helps nonprofit institutions collect information about customers' perceived value, service quality, delivery time and costs, and customers' satisfaction. Additionally, 72.63% of the respondents interviewed agreed (36.84% strongly agreed, 35.79 agreed) that customer experience influence performance in the organization. 15.79% disagreed (7.37% strongly disagreed, 8.42% disagreed) while 11.58 remained undecided. This is in line with another study conducted by Wiley (2013) which showed that customer service takes place while performing a transaction for the customer, such as making a sale or returning an item.

Response on Service Culture and Strategic Management

The researcher sought to determine the effect of service culture on strategic management of private universities. Service culture is one of the parameters under customer relationships. Service culture is built on elements of leadership principles, norms, work habits and vision, mission and values. In the case of this study, service culture was used to determine how management controls, maintains and develops the social process that manifests itself as delivery of service and gives value to customers.

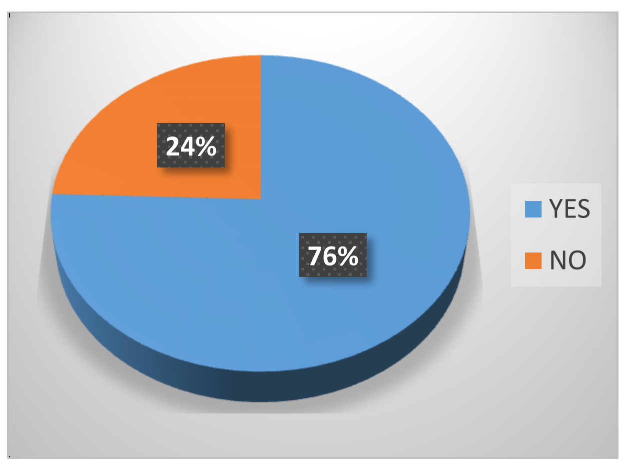


Figure 3: Response on Service Culture and Strategic Management

Figure 3 revealed that the highest percentage (76%) of the respondents interviewed indicated that service culture actually influence strategic management while only 24% of the respondents declined. The findings could mean that the sampled universities have clear mission and vision statement on quality service which also goes to mean that the respondents are aware of the direction the institution wants to go. The findings are in line with another study conducted by Duke (2014) which averred that there are many people working behind the scenes at a university than there are customer service representatives, yet it is primarily the personnel that interact directly with customers that form customers' perceptions of the university as a whole. This is amplified by Davies (2014) who asserted that once a superior service delivery system and a realistic service concept have been established, there is no other component as fundamental to the long-term success of a service organization as its culture.

Response on Service Quality

The researcher sought to establish the extent to which strategic management practices by private universities have enhanced service quality. According to Jossiah (2014) strategic management practices involve formulating, implementing, and evaluating cross-functional decisions that enable an organization to achieve its objectives like a quality service.

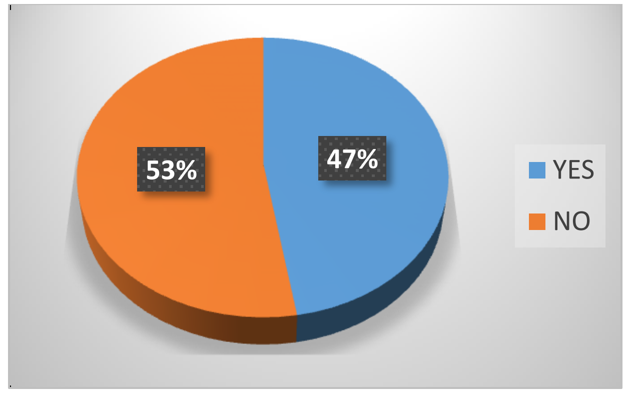


Figure 3: Response on Service Quality

Figure 3 revealed that the highest percentage (53%) of the respondents were not satisfied with the quality of services offered by their institution while 47% of the participants were satisfied with the service quality by the institution. This could mean that many private universities were not working hard to increase their customer satisfaction levels thorough skills development.

Response on Feedback and Organisation Performance

The researcher was interested to establish the extent to which feedback influence performance of private universities. In the case of this study, process of interaction and participation among the top management team typically leads to greater commitment to the firm's goals and strategies.

Table 2: Response on Feedback and Organisation Performance

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Very great extent	23	23%
Great extent	32	32%
Moderate	21	21%
Little extent	14	14%
No extent	10	10%
Totals	100	100%

When asked to what extent feedback influenced performance of the institution, the highest percentage (32%) of the respondents indicated great extent, 23% indicated very great extent, 21% indicated moderate, and 14% indicated little extent while 10% indicated no impact at all as shown in table 2. The findings were in line with another study conducted by Cooper (2014) which indicated that expectations of customers are formed with the aid of sources of information, which include prior exposure to service, word of mouth, expert opinion, publicity and communications controlled by the institution as well as prior exposure to competitive services.

On response on internal business processes and organisation performance, Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement/disagreement on the effect of internal business processes and performance within their institution.

Table 3: Frequency Distribution on Internal Business Processes and Organisation performance.

Statement	SD	D	U	A	SA
The institution is faced with the challenge of lack of a two-way-communication program that permits and solicits questions from employees about Issues regarding the formulated strategy.	23.66%	27.96%	10.75%	24.73%	12.90%
The organization structure of the institution does not match the internal business processes.	8.70%	14.13%	10.87%	29.35%	36.96%
The corporate social responsibility appears to be one that emphasizes flexibility, creativity and participation.	9.68%	21.51%	10.75%	23.66%	34.41%
Lack of communications causes more harm as the employees are not told about the new requirements, tasks and activities to be performed by the affected employees.	10.75%	13.98%	8.60%	32.26%	34.41%
Direct processes often conflict with the indirect processes of the institution.	6.52%	17.39%	15.22%	25.00%	35.87%
Tasks and responsibilities are adequately defined.	10.75%	13.98%	17.20%	29.03%	29.03%

Table 3 revealed that 51.62% disagreed that the institution was faced with the challenge of lack of a two-way-communication program that permits and solicits questions from employees about issues regarding the formulated strategy. 37.63% agreed while 10.75% remained undecided. This could mean that many private universities have enhanced open communication and information sharing. Further findings as per table 3 indicated that 65.31% of the participants agreed that organisation structure of the institution does not match the internal business processes. 22.83% disagreed while 10.87% were undecided. This means that private universities are not keen on the quality of people involved in the internal business processes who greatly affect the effectiveness of strategic management practices. Additionally, table 3 revealed that 58.07% agreed that corporate social responsibility appears to be one that emphasizes flexibility, creativity and participation. 31.19% disagreed while 10.75% remained undecided. This is amplified by a study conducted by Aosa (2015) which contends that CSR for many universities is not just about compliance or requirements to be a supplier, but is a statement demonstrating Business Excellence to their target market.

Table 3 showed that 66.67% of the participants agreed that lack of communications causes more harm as the employees were not told about the new requirements, tasks and activities to be performed by the affected employees. 24.73% disagreed while 8.60% remained neutral. The findings were supported by another study conducted by Hrebiniak (2016) which indicated that the process of interaction and participation among the top management team typically leads to greater commitment to the firm's goals and strategies. More results show that 60.87% of the participants agreed that direct processes often conflict with the indirect processes of the institution. 23.91% disagreed while 15.22% remained undecided. This could mean that many private universities do not continuously improve employees' learning and growth potential. It could also mean that private universities do not provide an adequate organizational climate conducive to improving overall organization's performance as represented by mission statement. Finally, as per table 3, 58.06% of the participants agreed that tasks and responsibilities are adequately defined. 24.73% disagreed while 17.20% remained undecided. This goes to mean that most private universities are keen on skills development which is an integral part that contribute to overall performance.

On response on strategic employee growth and performance, Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement/disagreement on the effect of strategic employee growth on performance within your institution.

Table 4: Response on Strategic Employee Growth and Performance.

Statement	SA	D	U	A	SA
Leadership style of managers does not appreciate performance of employees.	27.96%	22.58%	7.53%	13.98%	27.96%
Difficulties and obstacles are not acknowledged, recognized or acted upon.	11.83%	18.28%	18.28%	23.66%	27.96%
Managers make decisions without involving other shareholders.	7.53%	15.05%	17.20%	39.78%	20.43%
Customers and staff do not fully appreciate strategic employee growth.	4.35%	20.65%	10.87%	31.52%	32.61%

Table 4 showed that 50.54% disagreed that leadership style of managers did not appreciate performance of employees. 41.94% agreed while 7.53% remained undecided. The results meant that employees were motivated to meet targets which could also meant high performance; both individual and organisational. This was consistent with Hrebiniak (2016) who posit that the process of interaction and participation among the top management team typically leads to greater commitment to the firm's goals and strategies. Further findings indicate that 50.72% of the participants agreed that difficulties and obstacles were not acknowledged, recognized or acted upon. 30.11% disagreed while 18.28% remained undecided. This could meant that most employees in private universities are not rewarded when they meet targets or encouraged when they underperform. This was amplified by another study conducted by Harrington (2016) which asserted that a higher level in total organizational involvement during strategic management had positive effects on the level of implementation success, firm profits and overall firm success. Additionally, table 4 above reveals that 60.21% agreed that managers make decisions without involving other shareholders. 22.58% disagreed while 17.20% remained undecided. This means that private universities are lacking a clear top down communication approach. This goes to mean that many private universities are not in a position to deliver quality service to stakeholders. Finally, as per table 4, 64.13% of the participants agreed that customers and staff do not fully appreciate strategic employee growth. 25% disagreed while 10.87% remained undecided. This could mean that many private universities are not concerned with evaluating the skills, knowledge, and competencies held by their human capital and finding out ways to continuously improve them. This goes to mean poor performance if the employees skills is not enhanced.

Descriptive Statistics

In this section, the author was interested in examining the influence of strategic management practices on organisational performance of private universities. The researcher used factor analysis to reduce a large number of variables into fewer numbers of factors. This technique helped to extract maximum common variance from all variables and to put them into a common score as shown in table 5 below.

Table 5: Descriptive Statistics for Strategic Management Practices

STRATEGIC MGT PRACTICE	Item	F	Mean	Median	Std. Dev.
Customer Processes	SC	30	1.000	1.000	0.000
	SQ	27	0.903	1.000	0.301
	CE	27	0.903	1.000	0.301
	F	15	0.516	1.000	0.508
Internal Business Processes	CSR	24	0.806	1.000	0.402
	DP	30	1.000	1.000	0.000
	IP	30	1.000	1.000	0.000
	FoC	9	0.323	0.000	0.475
	CSR	30	1.000	1.000	0.000
	SV	0	0.032	0.000	0.180
Strategic Employee Growth	L	21	0.710	1.000	0.461
	T	9	0.323	0.000	0.475
	R&R	15	0.516	1.000	0.508
	CP	12	0.419	0.000	0.502

STRATEGIC MGT PRACTICE	Item	F	Mean	Median	Std. Dev.
	TP	27	0.903	1.000	0.301
Overall		411	0.623	0.614	0.132

Table 5 above revealed that service culture, direct processes, indirect processes and Corporate Social Responsibility affected organisational performance of private universities the most as indicated by 1.00 mean scores with 0.00 standard deviations. This was in line with a study conducted by Mintzberg (2014) which indicated that a firm may not earn attractive profits if it had chosen poor strategic management practices.

Further results revealed that; shared value did not influence performance as indicated by mean scores of 0.032 and 0.18 standard deviations. This could mean that Performance of a firm whether short term or long term can be influenced by the exploitation of resources and capabilities that are deemed to be valuable and rare offering a greater advantage and provide leverage towards the attainment of the firm's strategic goals. This is supported by another study conducted by Reneta (2013) which argued that an excellent strategic management practice may not result to high profits if it is in a poor industry.

Table 6: Correlations

Probability	Organisational performance	Achievement of goals	Motivated workforce	C. Improvement
Organisational Performance	1.000			

Achievement of goals	0.200	1.000		
	0.289	-----		
Motivated workforce	(0.042)	(0.633)	(0.096)	1.000
	0.826	0.000	0.613	-----
C. Improvement	0.745	0.404	0.212	(0.363)
	-	0.027	0.261	0.049
	-	0.014	0.003	0.489

Strong positive correlation as per table 6 showed that Organisational performance was strongly associated with achievement of goals and motivated workforce. Additionally, moderate positive correlation as per the results in table 6 indicated that continual improvement had sizeable but not overwhelming effect on the organisational performance. This could mean that most private universities were not putting a lot of efforts in strategic employee growth which could affect individual performance.

Regression Results

Regression was used to determine which among the independent variables are related to the dependent variable (Organisational performance) and to explore the forms of the relationships. Predictive values are proportions of positive and negative results in statistics. In the case of this study, a positive predictive value implies likeliness to have a consequence on organisational performance while negative predictive value implies not likely to have a consequence on organisational performance.

Table 7: Regression Results

Dependent Variable: ORG PERFOMANCE				
In Private Universities				
Variable	Coefficient	Std. Error	t-Statistic	Prob.
ORGANISATIONAL PERFORMANCE	-0.015	0.003	-5.812	0.000
ACHIEVEMENT OF GOALS	0.092	0.034	2.709	0.014
MOTIVATED WORKFORCE	-0.110	0.016	-6.807	0.000
C. IMROVEMENT	0.001	0.000	3.721	0.001
CODE	0.032	0.003	11.869	0.000
C	0.513	0.025	20.154	0.000
Weighted Statistics				
R-squared	0.996	Mean dependent var		0.933
Adjusted R-squared	0.994	S.D. dependent var		0.633
S.E. of regression	0.020	Sum squared resid		0.007
F-statistic	445.835	Durbin-Watson stat		1.566
Prob(F-statistic)	0.000	Second-Stage SSR		0.007
Instrument rank	13			
Observations	30			

From table 7, coefficient of determination (R2= 0.99) indicated that 99% of observation explained organizational performance. The calculated F, (0.007) was greater than critical F, (0.000) therefore indicating that organisational performance had significant effect on achievement of goals. The achievement of goals coefficient showed that motivated workforce relationship with organizational performance was 0.001 and therefore from the foregoing regression results between motivated workforce and performance, there was a relative strong positive relationship between motivated workforce and organisational performance. The coefficients of organisational performance were found to be positive and significant related to achievement of goals.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Results showed that the following customer processes: - service culture, service quality, customer experience and feedback are key determinants of performance in the sampled private universities in Kenya. It has been reported that private universities have articulated a vision for the institutions. It is clear from the results that private universities are customer centric which goes to mean that private universities are able to work in a competitive environment. Results indicated that many private universities’ vision statement are relevant to the institution’s activities and mandate. However, results also showed that many private universities do not apply balanced scorecard effectively to enhance customer processes. It has also been reported that many private universities are not working hard to increase their customer satisfaction levels. It has been found that customer experience influence performance in private universities.

Internal business processes was broken down into five indicators which are: - Corporate Social Responsibility, direct processes, indirect processes and flow of communication. Results showed that many private universities have enhanced open communication and information sharing. However it was also reported that many private universities are not keen on the quality of people involved in the internal business processes who greatly affect the effectiveness of strategic management practices. Results showed that organisation structure of many private universities does not match the internal business processes. Findings showed that lack of clear communication causes more harm as employees are not told about the new requirements, tasks and activities to be performed by the affected employees. Correlation results shows that organisational performance is strongly associated with achievement of goals and motivated workforce. Additionally, continual improvement has sizeable but not overwhelming effect on the organisational performance.

The findings indicated that employee growth is a key factor affecting performance of private universities in Kenya. The variable was broken down into five parameters: - leadership, training, reward and recognition, career prospects, and talent pools. Results show that if managers does not appreciate performance of employees, then employees are not motivated to meet targets which could also mean poor performance; both individual and organisational. Findings have indicated that by using a balanced scorecard approach to evaluate the skills, knowledge, and competencies held by the human capital helps private universities to finding ways to continuously improve staff skills. This goes to mean poor performance if the employees skills is not enhanced.

Conclusions

The first research objective was to examine the effect of customer processes on performance of private universities in Kenya. The study has concluded that there is a relative strong positive relationship between customer processes and organisational performance.

The second research objective was to determine the relationship between internal business process and performance of private universities in Kenya. It is concluded that lack of clear communication affects negatively individual and organisational performance. It has been concluded that internal business processes affects achievement of goals and motivation of workforce.

The last objective was to establish the relationship between strategic employee growth and performance of private universities in Kenya. Primary findings have demonstrated that continual improvement of employee skills significantly affect organisational performance. It has been concluded that balanced scorecard approach is the best tool to evaluate the skills, knowledge, and competencies of employees to help private universities in finding ways to continuously improve staff skills.

Recommendations

As to the first objective on effect of customer processes on performance of private universities in Kenya. The study only focused on 6 aspects under customer processes: - service culture, service quality, customer experience, bonding, feedback, and shared value. The results reported that private universities are customer centric however they only focused on four aspects in achieving performance and ignored bonding and shared value. Therefore

the study recommends senior management to embrace all customer processes mentioned herein in order to achieve exceptional performance.
Regarding the second objective on relationship between internal business process and performance of private universities in Kenya. This study identified that past studies have not focused on corporate social responsibility in private universities. This study tried to find out the influence of CSR on performance of private universities and results showed a significant influence. The study therefore recommends private universities to embrace internal business processes and especially CSR as it is a key factor to enhance performance.

Regarding the third objective on relationship between strategic employee growth and performance of private universities in Kenya. The study identified a gap on implementation of strategic employee growth especially; training; reward and recognition. The study recommends private universities to ensure adequate training, reward and recognition of the staff members to enhance achievement of the goal.

Areas for Further Research

The study targeted all the 30 private universities which was quite difficult to collect credible data due to limitations of time and financial resources. The study recommends a case study to examine the effect of customer processes on performance of private universities in Kenya.

Additionally, the study utilized correlational research design which is a quantitative method of research in which a study has two or more quantitative variables from the same group of subjects. The study recommends a phenomenological approach which is particularly effective at bringing to the fore the experiences and perceptions of individuals from their own perspectives. It will help private universities to illuminate the specifics and identify phenomena through how they are perceived by the actors in a situation.

The study also recommends more mixed research method designs for impact evaluations, as qualitative data can enable a richer understanding of how and why management of customer processes influence organisational performance, as well as how they may in turn be affected by service culture.

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