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The Strategic JOURNAL of Business & Change MANAGEMENT
ISSN: 2312-9492 www.strategicjournals.com
Vol. 5, Iss. 4, pp 888 - 901, October 27, 2018. www.strategicjournals.com, ©Strategic Journals

# DETERMINANTS OF SUCCESSFUL STRATEGIC CHANGE IMPLEMENTATION IN THE COUNTY GOVERNMENT OF KAKAMEGA, KENYA

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**Accepted: October 26, 2018**

***ABSTRACT***
*This study sought to determine the influence of organizational factors on strategic change implementation in the County Government of Kakamega. The specific objective was to assess the influence of organizational communication on strategic change implementation in the County Government of Kakamega. This study was anchored to The Burke- Litwin Model of Organizational Change and Institutional Theory. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The target population of the study was 548 top level and middle level managers. Sampling frame consisted of Agriculture, Public Service, Social Services, Education, Health Services, ICT, Lands & Housing, Trade & Industrialization, Roads, Public Works & Energy, Finance and Economic Planning. Purposive and stratified sampling techniques were chosen and used to select the sample population of 232 respondents according to Yamane recommendation. Structured questionnaire were pre tested for validity and reliability was the main primary data collection tool. The primary data was analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics with SPSS as the analysis tool. The correlation findings indicated that there existed a significant relationship between organizational communication and strategic change implementation (P=0.582, P=0.000). Simple linear regression analysis revealed that organizational communication accounted up to 33.9% variation in strategic change implementation ($R^2$=0.339). This implied that enhancement of transformational leadership will result to significant increase in strategic change implementation. The study concluded that organizational communication influenced strategic change implementation in the County Government of Kakamega. The study recommended that management should ensure employees are aware of the need for strategic change through proper communication channels using various mode and channel of communication. This would ensure that all communications from the management on strategic change management are delivered effectively to all employees.*

***Key Words:*** *Strategic Change Implementation, County Government, Organizational Communication.*

## INTRODUCTION

Changes in an organization's environment, such as new technological trends or customer needs, demand the renewal of a firm's strategies and processes. Lichtenthaler (2016) observed that in managing the required internal changes, companies have to establish special units, often called change management functions. Brandi and Elkajaer (2011) concluded that change becomes the norm for vital and growing organizations. They further noted that organizations are continuously adopting numerous methods to initiate change for the betterment of organizational outcomes. According to Antonio and Varkey (2010) the inevitability of change promises that as soon as one becomes familiar with something, it is already time to enhance it. To survive in the market place, an effective new technique must be adopted through practicing the concept of change and creating a dynamic organization that is willing and flexible to apply the necessary changes (Abdul, Alyaa & Fatima, 2013). Kuruvilla and Ranganathan (2010) noted that the business world is changing at an ever-increasing pace due to globalization, the revolution in information and communication technologies, and increasing importance of financial markets which have intensified competition in the current business environment. These reasons among others indicate that change is inevitable.

Wang and Wang (2017) considered strategic change as the change in corporate decisions regarding products and markets in response to dramatic environmental shifts. Batra (2016) notes that bringing strategic change is far more difficult to accomplish in large established firms as compared to new ventures. Strategic change involves the constituting of a new reality in the minds of organizational members (Jaynes, 2015). In their study, Tarus and Aime (2014) found out that strategic change is an important phenomenon as it represents the means through which organizations maintains co-alignment with shifting competitive, technological, and social environments which pose threats to their continued survival and effectiveness.

Lamprinakis (2016) observed that one way for organizations to implement strategic change is through participative and inclusive change management- which contributes toward a successful organizational change by increasing the legitimacy and acceptance of the change process. The author further notes three areas that are particularly important in strategic change: communicating, debating and finally implementing change. Johannsdottir et al. (2015) notes that it is highly unlikely that top-down views can inspire acceptance of change or bottom-up actions of employees. Shen, Gao and Yang (2017) argued that an organization must design/proper patterns to create better internal climates to improve knowledge flows and accessibility in work unit, and legitimize successful organizational change. Rod, Ashill, and Saunders (2009) reiterated in their study that managers put emphasis on the utilization of internal communication portals such as intranet, staff newsletters, and notice boards to signal the issues that are prevalent and suggest ways in which employees can participate in suggesting and implementing solutions.

Article 1(3) and (4) of the Constitution of Kenya (CoK), (2010) establishes two levels of government; the national and county levels of government. As a result 47 county governments and the Senate were established following the March 4, 2013, General Election as part of the implementation of devolution. Devolution was one of the major issues at the formation of the Constitution of Kenya Review Commission (CKRC) between 2000 and 2004 which considered people's participation through the devolution of power, respect for ethnic and regional diversity and communal rights including the right of communities to organize and participate in cultural activities and the expression of their identities. The devolved governments were expected to spur economic growth, political stability, and social advancement in line with Vision 2030 (Murithi, Njeru, Chege, Muluvi, Odhiambo, & Otieno, 2013). The devolved system called for creation of new governance structures considered central to the new devolved governance framework including governors, county women representatives, county ward representatives, and senators (Laibuta, 2013).

Success of change depends on people's willingness to let go their current reality, have an ending got through a confused period, then a new beginning, however, no matter how good an idea is, it will always have early adopters, average adopters and laggards (Alande, 2013). Effective implementation of devolution as stipulated in the CoK, 2010 should transform Kenya and aid achievement of Kenya Vision 2030. Devolution, however, has experienced a share of challenges during its implementation such as late disbursement of funds from the National Government, a contravention of section 17(6) of the Public Finance Management Act (PFMA), 2012. This has adversely affected the operations and development agenda because of delayed transfer of funds. Successful implementation of devolution requires a comprehensive and well-coordinated government strategy based on consultation and cooperation between the various arms and departments of government. The County Fiscal Strategy Paper (CFSP) as provided for in the PFMA, outlines the macroeconomic performance of the county which informs and guides the formulation of budget, tax and revenue policies. The main result of the CFSP process is an estimate of resources that will be available to finance county recurrent and capital expenditures in a given financial year.

Kakamega County is one of the forty seven (47) devolved units established and their functions provided for in the CoK, 2010. According to the First County Integrated Developmen Plan (CIDP) (2013- 2017), Kakamega County boarders Vihiga County to the South, Busia and Siaya Counties to the West, Bungoma and Trans Nzoia County to the North, Uasin Gishu to the North East and Nandi County to the East. It covers an area of approximately 3050.3Km2. Administratively the County has 12 Sub- Counties and 60 Wards. According to the 2009 Population and Housing Census, the County population stood at 1,660,651 with an estimated population growth rate of 2.5 %.

Since the devolution of the governance structure; the country has undergone various changes. Organizational transformation impacts on the performance of an organization during the period of rethinking and uncertainty that precedes radical organizational transformation. Irmer, Jimmieson, Prashait and Restubog (2011) observed that organizations may change strategy and processes, undergo mergers and acquisitions, restructure or downsize in the quest for a competitive edge in a global market place. The change in the structure and leadership has greatly affected the performance of the county socially, financially and economically. The County Government of Kakamega has had its fair share of challenges during the implementation of the new form of governance which required a change of strategy. For instance there was a sharp decline in the local revenue collection during the first three quarters of the FY 2013/14. Consequently in the FY 2014/15, the total County revenue collection from local sources stood at Kshs. 516.89 Million a figure far much lower of the budgeted target of Kshs. 903.5 Million (Annual County Governments Budget Implementation Review Report (ACGBIRR), 2015). This challenge in revenue collection could probably be attributed to new leadership, emerging culture in the County, communication and lack of skills and competencies among staff for the accomplishment of tasks required under devolution. Revenue being one of the most important aspect for strategy implementation and service delivery in Kakamega County, it was necessary to relook at the factors that influence implementation of strategy/strategies as a whole during change process among County Governments so as to avert devolution failure.

**Statement of the Problem**

Devolution represents a strategic change in the form of governance in Kenya (CoK, 2010). Since assuming office in 2013, the performance of Kakamega County Government compared to the defunct Local Authority has experienced its fair share of challenges in terms of provision of leadership, communication of new strategies, lack of a vision and mission statement at inception. Among issues observed during the transition period is the decline in revenue collection as per (ACGBIRR, 2015) which could be attributed to decline in employee performance and resistance to the strategic change. Such a situation calls for appropriate leadership, proper communication, induction of employees to the change, and ensuring that the new organizational values, beliefs and norms are provided for in its vision and mission. Though political leadership was in place in Kakamega County, other dimensions of transformational leadership (Avolio & Bass, 2004) at inception were missing, the vision and mission had not been developed, no clear communication framework and some employees lacking the necessary competencies despite the Transition Authority (TA) having been in place. Although Stensacker et al. 2014 suggested that leadership was the most important factor during strategic change implementation as compared to other factors; it cannot be the only factor influencing strategic change in the County Government of Kakamega as other factors including communication also play an important role during strategic change process. The late disbursement of funds to Counties which does not conform to provisions of section 17(6) of the PFM Act worsens the situation. The above mentioned factors have not been researched comprehensively among County Governments in Kenya, and therefore this study sought to find out the influence of organizational communication on strategic change implementation among County Governments in Kenya- context of County Government of Kakamega and fill this research gap.

**Objectives of the Study**

- To assess the influence of organizational communication on strategic change implementation in the County Government of Kakamega.

**Research Hypotheses**

This study sought to test the following null hypothesis;

$H_0$: There is no significant relationship between organizational communication and strategic change implementation in the County Government of Kakamega.

**LITERATURE REVIEW**

**Theoretical Review**

**Institutional Theory**

This theory has its origins in the late nineteenth century, and has since received contributions from the social sciences, highlighted by Marx studies, Weber, Cooley, Veblen and Commons (as cited by Scott, 2004). According to Rafael, Ronaldo, Sidnei, and Fabio (2016), the theory considers processes by which structures, including schemes; rules, norms, and routines, become established as authoritative guidelines for social behavior.

Critical institutionalism authors in relation to rational processes of choice and perspective based on efficiency, reflects the approaches based on the strategic planning process, and brings the premise that organizations are under pressure to adapt (Rafael *et al.*, 2016). Predominant in institutional theory is the understanding that the rational decision-making capacity of the systems is affected by the contingencies of context (DiMaggio & Powell, 1991). In this perspective, the institutional environment is defined as crucial to organizational behavior. Rafael et al. (2016) that in recent times the institutional analysis are based on literature called "new institutionalism", ranging from three streams: Institutionalism of rational decision, which is based on economic transactions as central units responsible for training markets, hierarchies and organizations; Historical institutionalism, which analyzes social structures existing economic and political in a given context to check patterns or regularities in social interaction processes, Sociological institutionalism or organizational institutionalism, which deals with the understanding of rules and socially constructed norms inducing behavior of individuals and organizations.

The strategic capacity of organizations is defined by effective action in the organizational context. For this reason the manager needs to make strategic decisions to develop, integrate and use organizational skills to the creation of a competitive advantage. The difficulty of the organization is to recognize the value of their skills, which hampers the ability to compete in the market (Cepeda & Dusya, 2007) as cited by (Rafael *et al*., 2016).

In regard to this theory, Rafael et al. (2016) considered the fact that for competition it is difficult to assimilate or imitate knowledge. In this sense, industry companies need to constantly invest in capacity building and training of its employees, causing them to generate ideas and create innovative products and services to market. Further, effective use of resources and organization of knowledge are key factors for the best performance in the organization. Practices should be promoted for a better organizational communication, such as internal communication networks, and creation of a focused internal environment autonomy and freedom of employees in the transformation of ideas into innovation.

**The Burke- Litwin Model of Organizational Change**

In 1992, Burke, W and Litwin, G, published a high level change process theory, in which certain elements cause changes of other elements. The Burke-Litwin change model involves defining and establishing a cause-and-effect relationship between twelve (12) organizational dimensions that are key to organizational change. As quoted in their study, Otsu and Otsupius (2016) the model strives to bring a change in the performance of an organization by establishing links between performance and the internal and external factors which affect performance. This change model is based on assessing the organizational as well as environmental factors which can be adjusted so as to ensure a successful change. Moreover, Burke and Litwin distinguished between transformational factors and transactional factors.

Transformational change happens in response to the external environment, which directly affects the mission, strategy, leadership and culture of the organization. In turn, the transactional factors are affected by structure, systems, management practices and work climate. These transformational and transactional factors together affect motivation, which in turn affect performance. There is a feedback also, because the organizational performance can directly affect the external environment.

Though Otsu and Otsupius (2016) suggested that this model strives to bring a change in the performance of an organization by establishing links between performance and the internal and external factors, the same can be used to explain the relationship between the independent and dependent variables during strategic change implementation in this study.

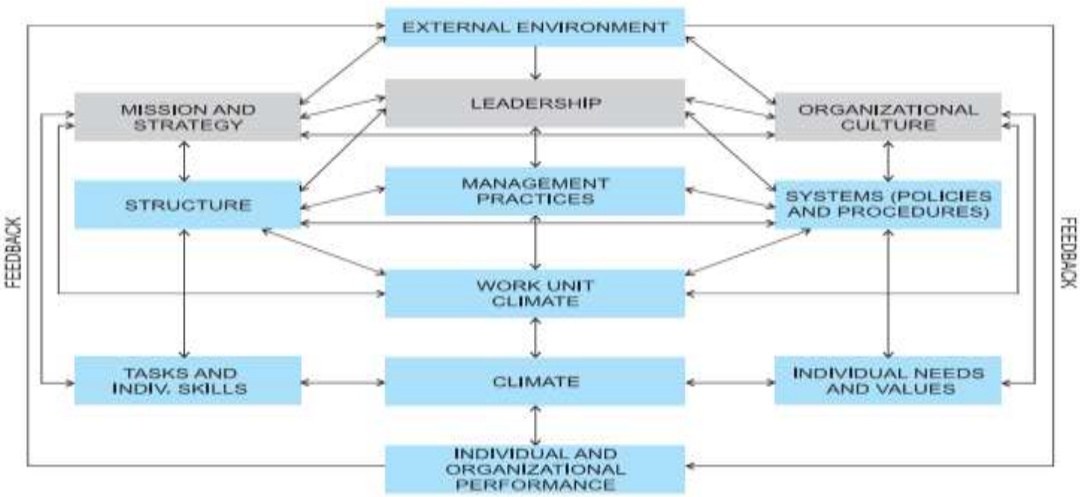
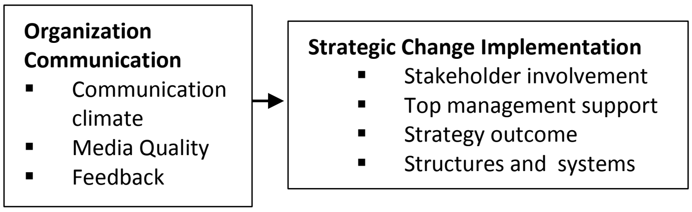



**Figure 1: The Burke - Litwin Model**

Source: Modern Theory of Organization (collected and edited by prof. dr. Štefan Ivanko) Ljubljana, January 2013

**Conceptual Framework**




**Independent Variable** **Dependent Variable**

**Figure 2: Conceptual Framework**

**Source: Author (2018)**

### Empirical Literature Review

### Organization Communication and Strategic Change Implementation

Communication includes explaining what new responsibilities, tasks, and duties need to be performed by the employees in order to implement a strategy (Gachua & Orwa, 2015). According to Mbaka and Mugambi (2014), effective communication is an important requirement for effective strategy communication in an organization that eventually leads to strategy implementation. Organization communication plays a significant role in training, knowledge dissemination and learning during the process of strategy implementation. This ensures that every staff member understands the strategic vision, the strategic themes and their role in delivering the strategic vision. It is further noted that organizations where employees have easy access to management throughout open and supportive communication climates tend to outperform those with more restrictive communication environments (Mbaka & Mugambi, 2014).

Focusing also on the role of communication is Gachua and Orwa (2015). They found out that information technology and communication affects strategy implementation. Consequently, they found out that effective communication is essential during strategy implementation as it aids adequate information sharing between organization leaders and those responsible for strategy. On the other hand information technology infrastructure provides a platform for implementation process. They further confirm that many researchers have emphasized the importance of adequate communication channels for the process of strategy implementation. Sila and Gichinga (2016) observed that organizational culture affects implementation of strategy by communication. They emphasized that leadership has to come up with a strategic communication model that aims at reaching everyone in the Public Universities for successful strategy implementation.

Mbaka and Mugambi (2014) in their discussion on factors affecting successful strategy implementation in the water sector in Kenya, established that there was lack of communication between the strategy formulators and the employees. Employees are not well informed about the strategies and the various tasks they are supposed to perform. In certain cases, the employees are not even aware of the vision and the mission of their organizations. The study adopted a desk study by reviewing existing literature, government reports, articles, websites, journals and books.

Gachua and Orwa (2015) further conducted a study on factors affecting strategy implementation in Public Universities in Kenya, and concluded that information technology and communication had the greatest effect on strategy implementation (dependent variable), compared to other independent variables including culture, structure and top management commitment. The research design adopted was a case study and data collected using guide interview schedule and questionnaires. Random sampling was selected where a sample size of 50 respondents represented the entire population where 36 out of the 50 questionnaires were filled and returned. Analysis of data was done descriptively.

## METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a descriptive research design. In this study the target population of 548 was drawn from top and middle level management across ten (10) ministries in the County Government of Kakamega. Sampling frame consisted of county ministries of Agriculture, Public Service, Social Services, Education, Health Services, ICT, Lands & Housing, Trade & Industrialization, Roads, Public Works & Energy, Finance and Economic Planning. The study sampled 232 respondents as recommended by Yamane (1967). Primary data was collected using structured five point Likert Scale Questionnaires consisting of closed ended questions. Content validity was used as a measure of the degree to which the data collected using the questionnaire represents the objective of the study. The data gathered from the pilot test was subjected to Cronbach's alpha a coefficient of reliability that gave an alpha value of 0.881 which was acceptable in social sciences. Quantitative data obtained was analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. The descriptive statistics used included means, frequency and standard deviation. Inferential statistics involved Pearson correlation while linear simple regression was used to test the relationship between independent and dependent variables with significance level of 0.05 (95.0% confidence level).

## FINDINGS

### Organizational Communication

The sampled respondents were presented with 8 statements on the organizational communication in relation to strategic change management. The study sought to find out their level of agreement from Strongly Disagree-1, Disagree-2, Neutral-3, Agree-4 and Strongly Agree-5 while SDV is standard deviation. The relevant results were shown in Table 1.

**Table 1: Descriptive Results for Organizational Communication**

| No | Statement | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Mean | SDV |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | The County Government vision, mission and core values are displayed in all conspicuous locations in offices for both employees and citizenry | 4.59% (9) | 17.35% (34) | 9.18% (18) | 35.71% (70) | 33.16% (65) | 3.76 | 1.216 |
| 2 | All employees are made aware of the need for strategic change through proper communication channels | 10.71% (21) | 15.31% (30) | 14.29% (28) | 41.84% (82) | 17.86% (35) | 3.41 | 1.247 |
| 3 | Rewarding of outstanding employees who demonstrate core values is communicated through County Government communication channels | 13.78% (27) | 21.43% (42) | 20.92% (41) | 34.18% (67) | 9.69% (19) | 3.05 | 1.225 |
| 4 | The County Government informs employees on the progress of strategic change implementation through quarterly newsletters/bulletins | 3.06% (6) | 18.37% (36) | 29.59% (58) | 42.86% (84) | 6.12% (12) | 3.31 | .944 |
| 5 | The County communicates to employees through notice boards | 6.12% (12) | 9.18% (18) | 14.29% (28) | 42.86% (84) | 27.55% (54) | 3.77 | 1.135 |
| 6 | Deliberations and resolutions of the County Executive Committee are effectively cascaded to all employees | 12.24% (24) | 13.78% (27) | 27.04% (53) | 29.59% (58) | 17.35% (34) | 3.26 | 1.248 |
| 7 | Feedback from employees is channeled back to the Executive effectively through departmental meetings | 12.24% (24) | 12.24% (24) | 28.06% (55) | 35.71% (70) | 11.73% (23) | 3.22 | 1.181 |
| 8 | This organization allows for staff to brainstorm on opinions regarding strategic change process during seminar and workshop forum. | 10.71% (21) | 15.82% (31) | 19.9% (39) | 40.31% (79) | 13.27% (26) | 3.30 | 1.200 |
| | **Overall Mean** | | | | | | **3.39** | **1.175** |

From Table 1, 68.87% (135) of the sampled respondents agreed that the County Government vision, mission and core values are displayed in all conspicuous locations in offices for both employees and citizenry. A mean of 3.76 and standard deviation of 1.216 implying that there was great deviation from mean. This agreed with Quirke (2008) who indicated that communication can be utilized to convey the vision, set the goals, and high-light the important drivers for changing existing organizational attitudes, beliefs, and practices. The results also revealed that 59.7 % (117) agreed that all employees were made aware of the need for strategic change through proper communication channels. Mayhall (2009) indicated that employees could only work effectively if they could participate in the organization and they could only participate if they were fully informed. They needed to know the purpose of the change; they needed to feel safe about their main concern such as: job security, benefits, compensation, base pay, and job performance.

Few of the respondents, 43.87% (86) agreed that rewarding of outstanding employees who demonstrated core values was communicated through County Government communication channels with a mean of 3.05 and standard deviation of 1.225. Malek and Yazdanifard (2012) indicated that communication with employees should be an important and integrative part of the change efforts and strategies. The results further revealed that 48.98% (96) agreed that the County Government informs employees on the progress of strategic change implementation through quarterly newsletters/bulletins with a mean of 3.31 and standard deviation of 0.944. This agreed with Quirke (2008) who indication in strategy implementation, communication aims at providing content information, ideas and concepts; putting it in context making it relevant to the situation; having conversations to ensure all stakeholders are aware of strategic change implementation.

Majority of the respondents confirmed that the county communicates to employees through notice boards as shown by 69.41% (138) who agreed. Koivula (2009) indicated that communication is regarded as a key issue in the successful implementation of change because it was used as a tool for announcing, explaining or preparing people for change. On the other hand, 46.94% (92) of the respondents agreed that deliberations and resolutions of the County Executive Committee are effectively cascaded to all employees with a mean of 3.26 and standard deviation of 1.248. Therefore, Lewis (2000) indicated that a good leader, manager, or change agent takes steps to ensure that the communication process is being carried out effectively to all employees regardless of their cadre. Managers must make serious attempts to communicate the nature and the impact of the proposed changes. Similarly, 47.44% (93) agreed that feedback from employees is channeled back to the executive effectively through departmental meetings. Change efforts require the structuring of communication processes that provide employees feedback about their performance during change initiatives and provide feedback to management regarding strengths and weaknesses of the change initiative (Cameron & Quinn, 2011).

Lastly, 53.58% (105) agreed that the organization allowed for staff to brainstorm on opinions regarding strategic change process during seminar and workshop forum with a mean of 3.30 and standard deviation of 1.200. Yates (2010) revealed that successful change management depends on teamwork and communication with the employees involved in the change process and leadership with a vision that will enable the process rather than dictate the process. The overall mean was 3.39 with standard deviation of 1.175 implying that there is great deviation from the mean. Nickols (2010) indicated that effective communication is a perfect implement to prepare employees for change, help them to believe it, and feel safe about their future working life. On the other hand, effective communication helps management to make sure employees are capable executes the new way of working and use the new skills.

**Strategic Change Implementation**

The study sought to find strategic change management which was used as dependent variable in this study. The sampled respondents were presented with 12 statements so that their level of agreement from Strongly Disagree-1, Disagree-2, Neutral-3, Agree-4 and Strongly Agree-5 is determined. The pertinent results are shown in Table 2.

**Table 2: Descriptive Results for Strategic Change Implementation**

| No | Statement | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Mean | SDV |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | All stakeholders are taken into consideration before implementing strategic change | 9.18% (18) | 10.71% (21) | 30.61% (60) | 33.67% (66) | 15.82% (31) | 3.36 | 1.14 |
| 2 | Employees are involved in arriving at strategies to be implemented | 9.18% (18) | 20.41% (40) | 26.53% (52) | 33.16% (65) | 10.71% (21) | 3.16 | 1.14 |
| 3 | Priority projects are identified through public participation | 3.06% (6) | 9.18% (18) | 6.63% (13) | 44.9% (88) | 36.22% (71) | 4.02 | 1.03 |
| 4 | Budget estimates are prepared in time to facilitate devolution programs | 3.06% (6) | 6.12% (12) | 12.76% (25) | 49.49% (97) | 28.57% (56) | 3.94 | .967 |
| 5 | The cost of the projects does not go beyond the budgeted cost | 4.59%(9) | 23.98% (47) | 12.24% (24) | 41.84% (82) | 17.35% (34) | 3.43 | 1.16 |
| 6 | The scope of the works do not change during project implementation | 9.18% (18) | 31.63% (62) | 21.94%\( 43) | 26.53% (52) | 10.71%(2 1) | 2.98 | 1.17 |
| 7 | Funds are disbursed on time from the National Government | 44.39% (87) | 22.45% (44) | 8.16% (16) | 14.29% (28) | 10.71% (21) | 2.24 | 1.41 |
| 8 | Success has been achieved during the devolution process | 1.53% (3) | 4.59% (9) | 32.14% (63) | 40.31% (79) | 21.43% (42) | 3.76 | 0.89 |
| 9 | Projects undertaken are completed on schedule | 11.22% (22) | 24.49% (48) | 32.14% (63) | 24.49% (48) | 7.65% (15) | 2.93 | 1.11 |
| 10 | Projects undertaken meet customer satisfaction | 4.59% (9) | 10.71% (21) | 42.35% (83) | 29.59% (58) | 12.76% (25) | 3.35 | .989 |
| 11 | Revenue collected from the County is at least 10% of the estimated County budget | 12.24% (24) | 31.12% (61) | 26.53% (52) | 25.51% (50) | 4.59% (9) | 2.79 | 1.09 |
| 12 | Kakamega County Government upholds provisions of procurement laws and other key laws during strategic change implementation | 1.53% (3) | 3.06% (6) | 35.71% (70) | 43.37% (85) | 16.33% (32) | 3.70 | .833 |
| | **Overall mean** | | | | | | **3.31** | **1.077** |

From the results in Table 2, 49.49% (97) of the sampled respondents agreed that all stakeholders are taken into consideration before implementing strategic change with a mean of 3.36 and standard deviation of 1.149. This implied that there great deviation from mean. With a mean of 3.16 and standard deviation of 1.146, 43.87% (87) of the respondents agreed that employees were involved in arriving at strategies to be implemented. Mangala (2015) found that early involvement of employees in the strategy process helps employees in understanding goals, style, and cultural norms and also prevents them from being taken by surprise, putting all employees at the same platform, helping the employees to own the process thus ensuring better results. Majority of the respondents confirmed that priority projects are identified through public participation of which 81.12% (159) agreed with a mean of 4.02 and standard deviation of 1.038. The results further revealed that 78.06% (153) of the sampled respondents agreed that budget estimates are prepared in time to facilitate devolution programs with a mean of 3.94 and standard deviation of 0.967. Mulongo (2012) found out that, stakeholders play a central role in setting up priorities and objectives of the company change initiatives in order to ensure relevance and appropriateness.

In regard to project costs, 59.19% (116) of the respondents agreed that the cost of the projects did not go beyond the budgeted cost. However, in Meru County, Boru (2016) indicated that most county projects are delay due to cost overrun due to inflation and mismanagement of funds. On the other hand, less than half of the respondents confirmed that the scope of works does not change during project implementation as indicated by a mean of 2.98 and standard deviation of 1.177. The respondents disagreed that funds are disbursed on time from the National Government as indicated by a mean of 2.24 and as indicated by 25% (49) of the respondents who agreed with funds timely disbursement. This is in agreement with KIPPRA (2018) who indicated to delays in release of funds by the National government has resulted to low rates of capital consumptions affected absorption rates for public works, transport and housing and industrial and enterprise development functions over the period under review. The results further revealed that 61.74% (121) agreed that success has been achieved during the devolution process with a mean of 3.76 and standard deviation of 0.89. Kubai (2015) indicated that in Meru County, majority of resident felt that local resources has not been adequately mobilized to ensure successful implementation of the devolution agenda.

The results further revealed that 32.14% (63) agreed that projects undertaken are completed on schedule with 2.93 and standard deviation of 1.11. Similarly, 42.35% (83) agreed that projects undertaken meet customer satisfaction with a mean of 3.35 and standard deviation of 0.989. Kanda, Muchelule and Mamadi (2016) indicated that most county projects face problems of completion through unmet client satisfaction requirements, cost escalations beyond the budgetary limits and late delivery times. This indicates that various county projects face enormous challenges of implementation. Lastly, 59.7% (117) agreed that Kakamega County Government upholds provisions of procurement laws and other key laws during strategic change implementation with a mean of 3.70 and standard deviation of 0.833. In Machakos County, Mbae (2014) concluded that there are a number of challenges faced by the county government in the implement of procurement laws in the county which affected county integrated strategic plan. The overall mean was 3.31 and standard deviation of 1.082 which shows that there is some deviation from the mean.

**Correlation between Organizational Communication and Strategic Change Implementation**

Pearson correlation was used to assess the relationship between organizational communication and strategic change implementation in the County Government of Kakamega. The results are as shown in Table 3.

**Table 3: Correlation between Organizational Communication and Strategic Change Implementation**

| | | OCM | SCI |
|---|---|---|---|
| **OCM**=Organizational communication | Correlation Coefficient | 1.000 | .582** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | . | .000 |
| | N | 196 | 196 |
| **SCI**=Strategic Change Implementation | Correlation Coefficient | .582** | 1.000 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | . |
| | N | 196 | 196 |

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

The study revealed a coefficient of correlation (rho) as 0.582**, P<0.01 at 99.0% confidence level. This showed that there exist a significant strong positive relationship between organizational communication and strategic change implementation in the County Government of Kakamega. This implied that increase in organizational communication would result to increase in strategic change implementation in the County Government of Kakamega.

**Regression Results of Organizational Communication and Strategic Change Implementation**

Simple linear regression analysis was conducted to find the proportion in the dependent variable (Strategic change implementation) which can be predicted from the independent variable (organizational communication) Table 4 showed the analysis results.

**Table 4: Regression Results of Organizational Communication and Strategic Change Implementation**

**Model Summary**

| Model | R | R Square | Adjusted R Square | Std. Error of the Estimate |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | .582[a] | .339 | .336 | .617 |

a. Predictors: (Constant), Organizational communication

**ANOVA[a]**

| Model | | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Regression | 37.920 | 1 | 37.920 | 99.559 | .000[b] |
| | Residual | 73.891 | 194 | .381 | | |
| | Total | 111.811 | 195 | | | |

a. Dependent Variable: Strategic change implementation

b. Predictors: (Constant), Organizational communication

**Coefficients[a]**

| Model | | Unstandardized Coefficients B | Unstandardized Coefficients Std. Error | Standardized Coefficients Beta | t | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | (Constant) | 1.799 | .164 | | 10.983 | .000 |
| | OCM | .475 | .048 | .582 | 9.978 | .000 |

a. Dependent Variable: Strategic change implementation

From Table 4, the results revealed a coefficient of determination ($r^2$) of 0.339 implying that organizational communication can explain up to 33.9 % of variance in strategic change implementation in the County Government of Kakamega. The F test gave a value of (1, 195) = 99.559, P<0.01, which supports the goodness of fit of the model in explaining the variation in the strategic change implementation. It also means that organizational communication is a useful predictor of strategic change implementation in the County Government of Kakamega. The unstandardized regression coefficient (β) value of organizational communication was 0.475 and it was significant at p<.001. This revealed that a unit change in organizational communication would result to change in strategic change implementation by 0.475 significantly.

The null research hypothesis posited $H_0$: There is no significant influence of the organizational communication on strategic change implementation in the County Government of Kakamega, was rejected. From the results, organizational communication had significant positive effect on strategic change implementation with P<0.01 and it significantly accounted 33.9% variance in strategic change implementation. These findings are in line with Sila and Gichinga (2016) who indicated that strategic communication has significant influence on strategy implementation in Public University a case of Jomo Kenyatta Unversity of Agriculture and Technology. Further, the findings also agreed with Gachua and Orwa (2015) who concluded that information technology and communication had the greatest effect on strategy implementation (dependent variable), compared to other independent variables including culture, structure and top management commitment.

## CONCLUSION

Basing on the results obtained, the study concluded that there is significant relationship between organizational communication and strategic change implementation in the County Government of Kakamega; thus the null hypothesis was rejected. Therefore, increase in organizational communication would result to increase strategic change implementation in the County Government of Kakamega. The study concluded that organizational communication influenced strategic change implementation in the County Government of Kakamega. Kakamega County Government has a strategic vision and mission. The County Government vision, mission and core values are displayed in all conspicuous locations in offices for both employees and citizenry and it was also found that the County communicates to employees through notice boards.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The study recommended that management should make all employees to be aware of the need for strategic change through proper communication channels. The study further recommended that the county government should come up with programs of rewarding outstanding employees who demonstrate core values and the same communicated through County Government communication channels. This would ensure that all communications from the management on strategic change management are delivered effectively to all employees.

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