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INFLUENCE OF TRANSFORMATIONAL CHANGE PRACTICES ON STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION IN COUNTY GOVERNMENTS IN KENYA: THE CASE OF BOMET COUNTY

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Abstract

Strategy implementation is a crucial phase in every organization's development plan. This study therefore sought to establish the role of transformational change practices on the implementation of strategy. The study was guided by four main objectives namely; to determine the role of restructuring on strategy implementation, to establish the role of new technology on strategy implementation, to assess the role of transformational leadership on strategy implementation and to analyze the role of human capital development on strategy implementation, by the county governments of Kenya. Theoretical review explored Contingency theory, McKinsey 7s model, Chandler strategy-structure proposition and Transformational leadership theory. Empirical review looked at past scholarly works related to the variables of the study. This was case study. A sample size of 150 respondents was selected. Data collection employed interview questionnaire which was pre-tested and certified. The study employed both descriptive and inferential statistics where quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive statistics which include frequency distribution tables and measures of central tendency (the mean), measures of variability (standard deviation) and measures of relative frequencies. Results were analyzed by use of computer SPSS and presented in form of tables, pie charts, graphs, percentages, frequencies and regression analysis. Restructuring, new technology, transformational leadership and human capital development influenced strategy implementation in the county government of Bomet. The study thus recommends the use of transformational change practice to improve strategy implementation.

***Keywords:** Strategy Implementation, technology, restructuring, transformational leadership*

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I. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background Information to the Study

Even developed correctly, any strategy is not considered effective since it requires to be implemented before it can create value for its organization (Heide, Gronhaug & Johannessen, 2002).Executives should therefore pay careful attention to the implementation of strategies to avoid common pitfalls that result in failure. Olson, Slater and Hult (2005) states clearly that, 'doing is harder than dreaming'. Strategy implementation is much more difficult than formulating it. Herbiniak (2006) argued that while strategy formulation is difficult, making strategy work and executing it is even more difficult. Similarly, Cater and Pucko (2010) concluded that while 80% of firms have the right strategies, only 14% have managed to implement them well. However,a number of approaches can greatly enhance the effectiveness of strategy implementation. Strategy implementation success is extremely important because it has direct ramifications on the success and survival of the business (Gichuhi, 2015). Effective strategic implementation tools have been sought for use by businesses and governments across the world to enhance performance and improve productivity.

The use of Strategy span many centuries. However, its application in management is fairly recent. Johnson et al (2008) defines strategy as the direction and scope of an organization over the long-term which achieves advantage for the organization through its configuration of resources within a challenging environment, to meet the needs of markets and to fulfill stakeholder expectations. It can therefore be said to be the spelling out of long-term goals and objectives, the courses of action and the allocation of the right resources to achieve goals. Strategy is concerned with long-term direction of an organization and strategic decisions are mainly concerned with the scope of an organization's activities.

The public sector in Kenya has evolved gradually since independence embracing novel development strategies often motivated by past system failures. Successive regimes have rebranded themselves to encourage growth in the economy and win public confidence. Up until the year 2000, Kenya's economic performance was situational in nature in that no serious strategies were in place to guide economic growth. Much of the period's economic performance was poor. Some of the reasons for this poor performance include poor implementation of economic policies, mismanagement and weak institutions of governance (GOK, 2003). However, the years from 2002 to date have registered some of the highest economic growth in the history of Kenya (NESC, 2012). For instance, the country achieved a GDP annual Growth rate of 6% in 2006 up from 0.6% in2002. This is attributed to the government's ambitious efforts to turn around the economy and increase growth. Perhaps the first ambitious strategy was the Economic Recovery Strategy for Wealth and Employment Creation (ERS). Its aim was to reverse decades of slow and stagnant economic growth that had adversely undermined the wellbeing of Kenyans (GOK, 2003). In year 2005, the Government accepted a follow-up recommendation by the National Economic and Social Council (NESC) to prepare a long-term vision to guide the development up to the year 2030. This was done in recognition of the fact that the goal of economic recovery, as outlined in the ERS, had largely been accomplished. This long-term national planning strategy is anchored on three mainpillars namely; economic, social and political, under which flagship projects and other priority programs will be implemented during the next 23 years

The first Bomet County Government Integrated Development Plan was rolled out in September 1st 2013 in accordance with the requirement of Article 220 (2) of the constitution of Kenya. The Implementation period 2013-2018 was characterized by poor adherence to the strategic blueprint. This is evidenced by the failure of the county to achieve its core strategic objectives outlined in the strategic plan. This implies that Strategic implementation still remains a challenge to the County Government despite a lot of effort and resources committed to the planning.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Strategic plan implementation is a process that continues to register dismally amongst many private and public organizations. Nutt (1999) suggests that as many as half of strategies are not implemented. Another study by Paps and Kauffman (2005) rates the implementation at between 10% and 30%. Mintzberg (1994) observed that more than half of the strategies formulated by organizations are never actually implemented. Cater and Pucko (2010) noted that while 80% of firms have the right strategies, only 14% have managed to implement them well. The shelves of many organizations hold strategic masterpieces that only continue to gather dust. A heightened interest has therefore been provoked in this field as to what may hinder or aid the effective implementation of strategy.

Gichuhi (2015) conducted a study to find out the challenges facing strategy implementation in Muranga County and the measures taken by the county to address these challenges. His research found out that the main challenge to the strategy implementation was the lack of adequate resources in physical, financial and human capital. Elwak (2013) in his study to find out the challenges of strategy implementation at Mazars Kenya interrogated how industry forces, changes in economic conditions and managers and employees involvement affected strategy implementation. None of the studies reviewed considered the impact of transformational change practices of restructuring, new technology, innovation and skills enhancement in influencing strategy implementation. It is against this background therefore, that this research seeks to assess the role of transformational change practices on the effective implementation of strategy in the counties of Kenya.

1.3Objectives of the Study

The study was guided by the following objectives:

1.3.1 General Objective

The general objective of the study was toassess the influence of transformational change practices on strategy implementation in county governments in Kenya: the case of Bomet County.

1.3.2 Specific Objectives

- To determine the influence of restructuring on strategy implementation in Bomet County Government.
- To establish the influence of new technology on strategy implementation in Bomet County Government.
- To assess the influence of transformational leadership on strategy implementation of in Bomet County Government.
- To analyze the influence of Human capital development on strategy implementation in Bomet County Government.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1Theoretical Literature

2.1.1 Contingency Theory

Developed in the 1960s by Fred Fiedler, the contingency theory of organizational strategy presently provides a major framework for the study of organizational design (Donaldson, 2001). It holds that the most effective organizational design is where the structure fits the contingencies. In other words, there is no one-size-fits-all structure. As a start-up, your company has an entrepreneurial style, but as a mature company its structure will likely evolve into something else depending on the contingencies you face. In the business world, transformational change involves a company making a radical change in its business model, often requiring changes in company structure, culture and management. Companies may undergo transformational change in response to crisis, or in order to reposition themselves in the market. Transformational changes also occur in response to changes in technology, or as companies adapt to take advantage of new business models.

The contingency theory of organizational structure may be referred to more succinctly as structural contingency theory (Pfeffer, 1982). Further, structural contingency approaches to organization structure have been criticized as being inherently static and therefore fail to deal with organizational change and adaptation (Galunic and Eisenhardt, 1994). It suffice to say the heart of structural contingency theory is statics, in the sense that it deals with how a static state of fit between structure and contingency. However, structural contingency theory writings are within a functionalist tradition of social science (Merton, 1968) that sees organizations as adapting to their changing environments (Parsons, 1961). Therefore, organizations change from one fit to another over time causes high performance (Woodward, 1965).

The county government of Bomet was a result of Constitution of Kenya 2010 that significantly restructured and redesigned the system of government to conform to the devolution strategic commitments. Studying the structural contingency theory will assist in understanding how organizations ought to carry out restructuring to support the implementation of strategy.

2.1.2 Chandler Strategy-structure Proposition

For far too long, strategy and structure was seen as two separate entities. However, Chandler (1962) made a statement that “structure follows strategy” This implies that structure is the design of the organization through which strategy is administered. Very often, organizations may revise structures as a way of improving efficiency, creating synergy, promoting teamwork, and reducing cost. But as Johnson et al (2008) puts it, one may succeed in doing that but ends up in the same situation or worst. It is important to note that structure is not simply an organization chart. It is the sum of all the people, positions, procedures, processes, culture, technology and related elements that comprise the organization. It defines how all the pieces, parts and processes work together. Thus, structure must therefore be totally integrated with strategy for the organization to achieve its mission and goals (Kavale, 2012). Chandler’s theory assumes an already existing strategy such that structure is built upon a strategy. That is exactly why, after coming up with functional structures, then strategists adopt the already given strategy (Mintzberg, 1987).If an organization adopts a new strategy, it must put in place a new structure for the successful implementation of the new strategy. This strategy-structure fit is further corroborated by Kavale (2012) who asserts that once strategy has been directed by the environmental forces, then strategists identify a structure to match with the strategy, a factorreferred to as the strategic alignment. This is followed closely to the matching of the strategy and structure to the capability of the firm, an exercise called matching. Johnson et al (2008) calls this a strategic fit.

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2.1.3Transformational Leadership Theory

Transformational leadership model is a leadership approach to change. It emphasizes on the approach a leader takes in transforming an organization. This concept was first introduced by James MacGregor Burns (1978) in his descriptive research on political leaders. According to Burns, transformational leadership is a process in which "leaders and followers help each other to advance to a higher level of morale and motivation". A transformational leader is often responsible for challenging an organization's existing structure and inspiring employees to work harder and take the company forward. These leaders bring about transformational change through their vision and drive (chro.com). In making a distinction between management and leadership, Burns claimed that the differences are in characteristics and behaviors. He established two concepts: "transforming leadership" and "transactional leadership". According to Burns, the transforming approach creates significant change in the life of people and organizations. It redesigns perceptions and values, and changes expectations and aspirations of employees. Bass & Bass (2008) observed that, in its ideal form, transformational leadership creates valuable and positive change in the followers with the end goal of developing followers into leaders. The now retire IBM CEO Lou Gerstner is a good example of such a leadership. IBM was in the brink of Bankruptcy in 1983. Noting that the company had become so rigid, Gerstner set about changing the culture to one of that focuses on teamwork, creativity and innovation. He fostered cooperation among employees and created a more customer-focused business culture (Martha Lagace, 2002)

Unlike in the transactional approach, transformational approach is not based on a "give and take" relationship, but on the leader's personality, traits and ability to make a change through example, articulation of an energizing vision and challenging goals. Transforming leaders are idealized in the sense that they are a moral exemplar of working towards the benefit of the team, organization and/or community. Burns theorized that transforming and transactional leadership were mutually exclusive styles. Transactional leaders usually do not strive for cultural change in the organization but they work in the existing culture while transformational leaders can try to change organizational culture (Burns, 1978)

In spite of the numerous criticism of Transformational leadership, the concept continues to receive more accolades in recent studies (Yulk, 1999). For instance studies spanning various sectors including the military and business have shown that transformational leaders were rated as more effective, high performers, high achievers and more promotable than their transactional counterparts. (Rubin, et al, 2005). The review of transformational leadership theory for the purposes of this study is essential in understanding how this practice may influence organization outcomes. The analysis by other scholars provides an opportunity to unearth what has been left out.

2.2ConceptualFramework

Independent variable **Dependent variable**

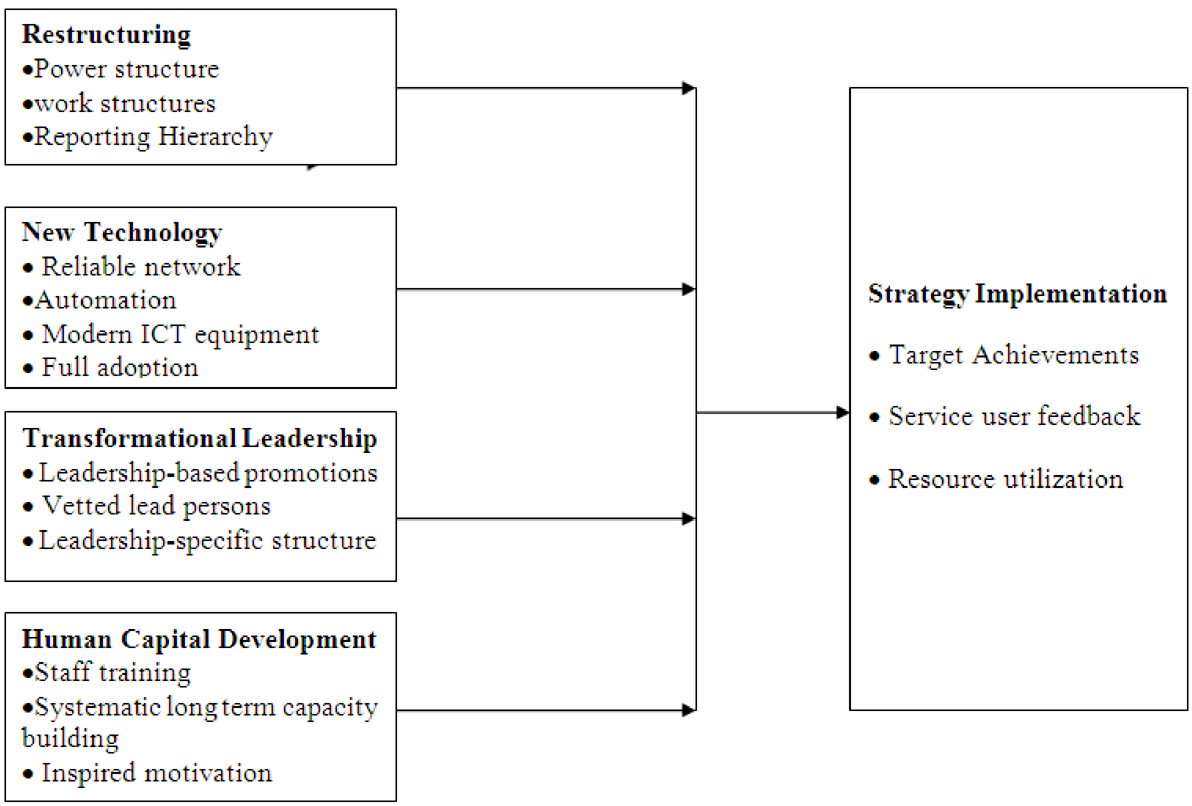

Figure2.1:Conceptual framework

2.3Empirical Literature

Restructuring an organization is arguably the most transformational change. Organizations tend to be structured in different ways that define the hierarchy (who is in charge, who reports to who), the agreed roles, responsibilities and levels of authority. The organizational structures define who makes decisions and, in some cases, defines the processes for how those decisions get made. Organizational structures also exist at many levels; across the enterprise, within individual departments and in the form of temporary organizations which may include committees, task forces and project teams (Marshak, 2005)

A research study by Cater and Pucko (2010) concerning some of the leading Slovenian companies showed that adapting the organizational structure to serve the execution of strategy has a positive influence on performance. Mogoi (2013) also established that there must be well and organized structures in the organization which was to have people who have equal skills and knowhow. The study also revealed that lack of clear communication channels were affecting strategy implementation and hence needed to be addressed through a well-defined organization structure.

Mogoi (2015) analyzed the effects of technology on strategy implementation in Nairobi City County. Results of his study showed that respondents were in favor of involvement of technology in the strategy implementation process. His results points out to the possible high application of IT in the strategy implementation, evaluation and control. He came to the conclusion that in order to enhance competitiveness in strategy implementation and management process, there was need to align technology with strategy.

In a study involving 172 Slovenian companies, Cater and Pucko (2010) demonstrated that while a well-formulated strategy, a strong and effective pool of skills, and human capital are extremely important resources for strategy success, poor leadership is one of the main obstacles in successful strategy implementation. Lorange (1998) argued that the chief executive officer (CEO) and top management must emphasize the various interfaces within the organization. Eisenstat (2000) analyses the same issue of leadership and suggests that in the absence of effective leadership, conflicting priorities will result in poor coordination because employees will suspect that top management prefers to avoid potentially threatening and embarrassing circumstances.

According to Hussey (1985), training is a power weapon for implementing strategy but management in majority of cases either does not aware of this option or ignore it due to certain organizational limitations. Hussey conducted survey research based on two grounds. Firstly, the variables which are considered important for strategy implementation can be altered through training/education. Secondly, top management should review the training objectives and initiatives on regular basis because it positively affects the strategy implementation process. Hussey found that a majority of companies had faith in on the annual training appraisal for assessing training needs instead of periodic reviews. A minority of respondents explicitly related trainingobjectives to corporate strategy. In a reply to Alexander's (1985) ten most frequent problems of strategy implementation, Hussey suggest that six of them might be solved through proper training.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1ResearchDesign

The study employed a descriptive case study design. The major purpose of descriptive research is to provide information on characteristics of a population or a phenomenon (Muathe, 2007). This approach is usually the best method for collecting information that will demonstrate relationships and describe the world as it exists. The most common descriptive research methods include survey and developmental studies. Surveys include questionnaires, personal interviews, phone surveys, and normal surveys while developmental studies seek to determine changes over time (Muathe, 2007).This method was therefore the most effective in assessing the effect of change management on employee performance in Bomet County Government.

3.2Target Population

The study targeted population of employees working under the chief officers in all the ten departments within the County Government of Bomet. This includes the directors, assistant directors, accountants, procurement officers, sub-county administrators and program co-coordinators. These are employees who are involved in the day to day implementation of programs, projects and tasks that impact on the overall strategy.

3.3Sample Size and Sampling Technique

The researcher selected a sample size of 150 respondents using a stratified sampling method. Under stratified sampling the population is divided into several sub-populations that are individually more homogeneous than the total population. Each of the ten departments formedthe strata from which random samples wiredrawn. The researcher considered10% from each strata in obtaining the sample size.

3.4ResearchInstrument

Questionnaires were used to collect primary data for this study. Sekaran and Bougie (2010) describes primary data as "information obtained first-hand by the researcher on the variables of interest for the specific purpose of the study" (180).

3.5Data Analysis and Presentation

Collected data were cleaned, organized and then analyzed. Analysis refers to the "computation of certain measures along with searching for patterns of relationships that exists among data groups" (Kothari, 2004). This being a quantitative data, this was accomplished electronically using computer software called SPSS, version 21.This version was used since it the most recent and has got advance features. Descriptive statistics like frequencies, percentages, mean, median and mode were used to present data. Regression analysis was also used to illustrate the data. The regression took the following form:

$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \chi_1 + \beta_2 \chi_2 + \beta_3 \chi_3 + \beta_4 \chi_4 + \epsilon$ where: Y = Strategy implementation, β_0 = the constant, χ_1 = restructuring, χ_2=New Technology, χ_3 = Transformational Leadership, χ_4= Human Capital Development, β_{1-n} = the regression coefficient or change included in Y by each χ, ϵ = error term.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1Inferential Statistics

The inferential statistics were conducted using the linear correlation and multiple linear regressions.

4.1.1The influence of restructuring on strategy implementation

The linear correlation was used to test the formulated hypotheses that leads to answering the following research question; what is the influence of restructuring on the implementation of strategy in Bomet County Government?

The formulated hypothesis to aid in answering the research question is as follows;
H_0: There is no significant statistical relationship between restructuring and implementation of strategy
H_1: There is significant statistical relationship between restructuring and implementation of strategy
The relationship between restructuring and the implementation of strategy is positively correlated and statistically significant ($r=0.682$; $p=0.000<0.05$).
This led to rejection of H_0 and acceptance of H1

Table 1: Linear Correlation between restructuring and the imple of strategy

		Implementation of strategy
Restructuring	Pearson Correlation	.682**
Motivation	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	147

4.1.2 Influence of new technology on strategy implementation

The linear correlation was used to test the formulated hypotheses that will lead to answering the following research question; what is the influence of new technology on the implementation of strategy in Bomet County Government?

The formulated hypothesis to aid in answering the research question is as follows;
H_0: There is no significant statistical relationship between new technology and implementation of strategy
H_2: Thereis significant statistical relationship between new technology and implementation of strategy
The relationship between new technology and implementation of strategy is negatively correlated and statistically significant ($r=0.881$; $p=0.001<0.05$).
This led to the rejection of H_0 and acceptance of H_2.
Table 2: Linear Correlation between new technology and implementation of strategy

	implementation of strategy
New technology Pearson Correlation	.881**
Sig. (2-tailed)	.001
N	147

4.1.3Influence of a transformational leadership on strategy implementation

The linear correlation will be used to test the formulated hypotheses that will lead to answering the following research question; what is the influence of transformational leadership on the implementation of strategy in Bomet County Government?

The formulated hypothesis to aid in answering the research question is as follows;

H_0:There is no significant statistical relationship betweentransformational leadership and the implementation of strategy

H_3: There is significant statistical relationship between transformational leadership and the implementation of strategy

Table 3: Linear Correlation between transformational leadership and implementation of strategy

	implementation of strategy
Transformational leadership Pearson Correlation	.325**
Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
N	147

The relationship between transformational leadership and the implementation of strategy positively correlated and statistically significant ($r=0.325$; $p=0.000<0.05$).This led to the rejection of $H_0$and acceptance of H_3.

4.1.4 Influence of human capital development on strategy implementation

The linear correlation will be used to test the formulated hypotheses that will lead to answering the following research question; what is the influence of Human capital development on the implementation of strategy in Bomet County Government?

The formulated hypothesis to aid in answering the research question is as follows;

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H_0:There is no significant statistical relationship between human capital development and the implementation of strategy

H_4: There is significant statistical relationship between human capital development and the implementation of strategy

The relationship between human capital development and the implementation of strategy positively correlated and statistically significant ($r=0.959$; $p=0.000<0.05$). This led tothe rejection of H_0 and acceptance of H_3.

Table 4: Linear Correlation between human capital development and implementation of strategy

		implementation of strategy
Human capital develpment	Pearson Correlation	$.959^{**}$
Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
N		147

4.2Regression Analysis

The conclusion of this study was based on the multiple linear regression which examines the cumulative effect of the independent variables on the dependent variable. The multiple linear regressions gave a multiple correlation coefficient of 0.961 which indicates that the relationship between the four independent variables cumulatively on the dependent variable is strong and positively correlated. The multiple linear regression also gave a coefficient of determination of 0.923 indicating that the three variables contributed to 92.3% of the variance in the dependent variable.

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Table 5: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.961[a]	.923	.920	.34774

a. Predictors: (Constant), restructuring, new technology, transformational leadership, Human capital development

The F-ratio in the ANOVA table tests whether the overall regression model is a good fit for the data. The table shows that the independent variables statistically significantly predict the dependent variable, $F(5, 141) = 337.515$, $p < .0005$ i.e., the regression model is a good fit of the data.

Table 6: ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	204.066	5	40.813	337.515	.000[b]
	Residual	17.050	141	.121		
	Total	221.116	146			

a. Dependent Variable: implementation of strategy

The unstandardized coefficients which indicate the variance of the dependent variables with an independent variable when all other independent variables are held constant are indicated below.

Implementation of strategy = 1.239 + 0.056 restructuring + 0.296 new technology + 0.073 transformational leadership+ 0.390 human capital development. The coefficient for the intercept is 1.239 implies that if the factors(restructuring, new technology, transformational leadership, Human capital development) are equated to zero then the implementation of strategy will improve by a margin of 1.239. The beta coefficient of restructuring is 0.056 implying that a unit increase in restructuring will lead to an increase in implementation of strategy by a margin of 0.056. Similarly, the beta coefficient of new technology is 0.296 meaning that a unit increase in new technology leads to an increase in implementation of strategy by a margin of 0.296. Also, the beta coefficient of transformational leadership is 0.073 which implies that a unit increase will leads to increase in implementation of strategy by a margin of 0.073. Finally, a unit increase in human capital development leads to an increase in implementation of strategy by a margin of 0.390.

Table 7: Fit of the Model

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.239	.045		5.283	.000
	Restructuring	.056	.029	.062	1.932	.000
	New technology	.296	.045	.288	6.592	.000
	Transformational leadership	0.073	.022	1.023	3.318	.000
	Human capital development	.390	.070	.420	5.566	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Implementation of strategy

V. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMEDATIONS

It is clear from the findings that most of the departments have clearly defined their reporting structures, implemented staff rationalization and put in place new structures for M&E. Clearly delineated structures improve work flow and creates synergy thus enable strategy implementation to run smoothly. Furthermore, the departments have moved from manual to electronic platforms. However, they need to improve on redesigning jobs. Redesigning jobs helps remove redundancy and creates more efficiency. Effectiveness in the implementation process is also enhanced by redesigning jobs. The study noted that most departments have done considerably well in fully implementing IFMIS. However not much development has been made in expanding the use of computers, Internet, Intranet and other management systems to the sub-county levels. This means that all management systems and their operations are still handled centrally. This slows down operations related to the implementation of strategy and causes backlogs. Installations of custom-made and user-friendly features, reliable Internet connectivity and Intranet has considerably been done thus increasing efficiency and effectiveness.

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Transformational leadership issues seem not to have been dealt with satisfactorily. Most departments have not done well in promoting individuals that exhibit transformational traits and have not set-up multi-level structures that utilizes the traits. Lack of transformational leadership-based structure impacts negatively on employee sustainable performance and hence retards the process of strategy implementation. However, the study determined that vetting of project managers, inclusion of transformational traits in the organizational structure and the leadership-based recruitment has considerably been observed by majority of the departments.

The issue of Human capital development in the county departments rates very low. Most departments have not undertaken staff training, there are no regular skills upgrading, no internally developed expertise and there is very low adoption of motivational scheme. Training is a very important aspect when it comes to implementation and performance. According to Rodin-Brown (2008), capacity building and training need to be scoped out early in the implementation process. The different user groups have to be identified; their levels of knowledge determined; recruiting needs established; and training curricula explored. Training programs need to address various audiences, from senior members of the bureaucracy down to mid- and entry-level civil servants.

From the findings it is recommended that all county government activities should be done electronically and that the adoption of new technology should be cascaded to the sub-county and ward levels. Since there is a great significance in the relationship between transformational leadership and strategy implementation, county governments should put in place a strong policy on leadership-based promotions and recruitments to key positions. To further facilitate the transformational culture, the county should cultivate a culture that motivate staff towards becoming such leaders. There was lack of consensus among the respondents in relations to training and skills upgrading in human capital development. In this regard it is recommended that county government should undertake capacity building of employees through training and workshops.

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