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Effect of Strategy Implementation on Service Delivery in Government Corporations: A Case of Kenya Bureau of Standards

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Abstract

Successful strategy implementation is a key for any organization's survival. Many governmental corporations around the globe cannot sustain their competitive advantages, despite having a robust strategy formulation process, because they have not done sufficient assessment of strategy implementation on service delivery. Considering the higher failure rates in implementation of strategies in these corporations, more attention should be given by their executives to implementing the strategy. Several reasons are frequently offered for lack of effectiveness in service delivery. While this field of research has attracted significant research interests and subsequently added quality theories and models in the western world, this topic has not attracted much attention in Africa. Hence, this study sought to assess strategy implementation on service delivery of Government corporations, a case of Kenya Bureau of Standards (KEBS). There are two objectives for this project; to establish the effect of leadership on service delivery in KEBS and the effect of staff commitment on service delivery in KEBS. The study adopted a descriptive survey design.

The targeted population was 997 and the sample size of 100 respondents working at the KEBS head office where employees were divided into three categories; Top level leadership staff, Mid-level leadership staff and junior staff. Questionnaires were used to obtain data, which was analyzed by the use of descriptive statistics. Correlation and regression analysis was used to assess the relationship between strategy implementation and service delivery. The study found out that leadership and staff commitment has a positive and significant effect on service delivery in KEBS. Thus the study concluded that leadership and staff commitment positively affect service delivery at the Kenya Bureau of Standards. The study recommended that the leadership and staff commitment at Kenya Bureau of Standards should remain fully committed throughout strategy implementation process so as to improve on service delivery.

Keywords: *Leadership, Staff commitment, Service delivery and Kenya Bureau of Standards*

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Background of the study

Strategy implementation involves organization of the firm's resources and motivation of the staff to achieve objectives (Barry & Elmes, 2007). The strategy implementation process is usually the most complicated and time consuming part of strategic Leadership (Rowe, Dickel & Dickel, 2004). Most managers know a lot more about strategy formulation than implementation. Although intricately linked strategy implementation is fundamentally different from strategy formulation, strategy implementation is difficult and worthy of Leaderships alienation across all levels of an organization. Historically, numerous researchers in strategic Leadership bestowed great significance to the strategic formulation process and considered strategy implementation as a mere by-product or invariable consequence of planning (Quinn, Mintzerg,& James, 2008). Fortunately, insights in this area have been made recently which temper our knowledge of developing strategy with the

reality of executing that which is crafted (Olson *et al.*, 2005). However, as strategy implementation is both a multifaceted and complex organizational process, it is only by taking a broad view that a wide span of potentially valuable insights is generated.

Hunger and Wheelen (2008) suggests that there are many problems which over half of the corporations experienced frequently, such as the involved employees have insufficient capabilities to perform their jobs, lower-level employees are inadequately trained, and departmental managers provide inadequate leadership and direction. These three are the most frequent strategy implementation problems in relation to human resource. Line-level employees may use delay or prevent attempts toward change that they find particularly threatening or disagreeable. Martin (2003) suggests that managerial tactics and leadership style can play a crucial role in overcoming the lower-level obstructionism that is prevalent (to some degree) in many implementation efforts.

Kenya Bureau of Standards (KEBS) was established July 1974 by the enhancement of the CAP 496 of the laws of Kenya. KEBS is run by a Board of Directors known as the National Standards Council (NSC). It is the policy-making body for supervising and controlling the administration and financial Leadership of Bureau. The managing Director is the Chief Executive responsible for the day-to-day administration of the Bureau within the guideline formulated by the NSC. Kenya Bureau of Standards (KEBS) is the government principal body that is mandated to facilitate and /or guide the development of appropriate standardization and conformity assessments mechanism for goods and services in the country. Over the last three decades, the scope of KEBS activities has expanded from development of standards and provision of standardization of a few commodities and code of practice to cover Metrology Standardization Testing Quality Assurance (MSTQ) testing for commodities and cover in all sectors of the economy not only in Kenya but also East African Community Region (EAC).

KEBS developed its first strategic plan in 2003 and signed the first performance contract with the government in 2005. Most of the plans laid out in the strategic plan have not been met due to serious challenges in implementation.

1.2 Statement of the problem

In Kenya, it's a ministerial requirement that public organizations develop and implement strategies as a means of enhancing results-based leadership and efficiency in their operations. Ideally these plans should provide direction in regard to resource targeting and program implementation (MOE, 2005). However, there have been concerns expressed by government bureaucrats, politicians and a big proportion of the public over what they perceive as lack of and/or inadequate planning and strategizing practices in government institutions (Githua, 2004). Moreover, the performance of the public sector in general and government corporations in particular has consistently fallen below expectations.

Guthi and Macmillan (2006) analyzed that motivation as an effect to successful service delivery. The study uses expectancy theory to predict that middle managers will intervene in organizational decision-making processes leading to strategy implementation when their self-interest is at stake. It develops the notion of 'counter effort', as an extension of expectancy theory. Implications of the study for the Leadership of strategy implementation are developed. The study failed to address on staff commitment which is a key strategy on service delivery. This researcher therefore sought to assess the effect of strategy implementation on service delivery in government corporations, a case of KEBS.

1.3 Specific objectives

- i. To establish the effect of leadership on service delivery in KEBS
- ii. To find out the effect of staff commitment on service delivery in KEBS.

1.4 Research questions

- i. To what extend does leadership affect service delivery in KEBS?
- ii. How does staff commitment affect service delivery in KEBS?

2.0 Literature Review

2.1 Theoretical review

The theories that underpinned this study include Resource-Based View Theory, Theory of Strategic Balancing, Service Delivery Theory, Information Quality Theory and Decision Making Theory. This are presented in figure 1 below.

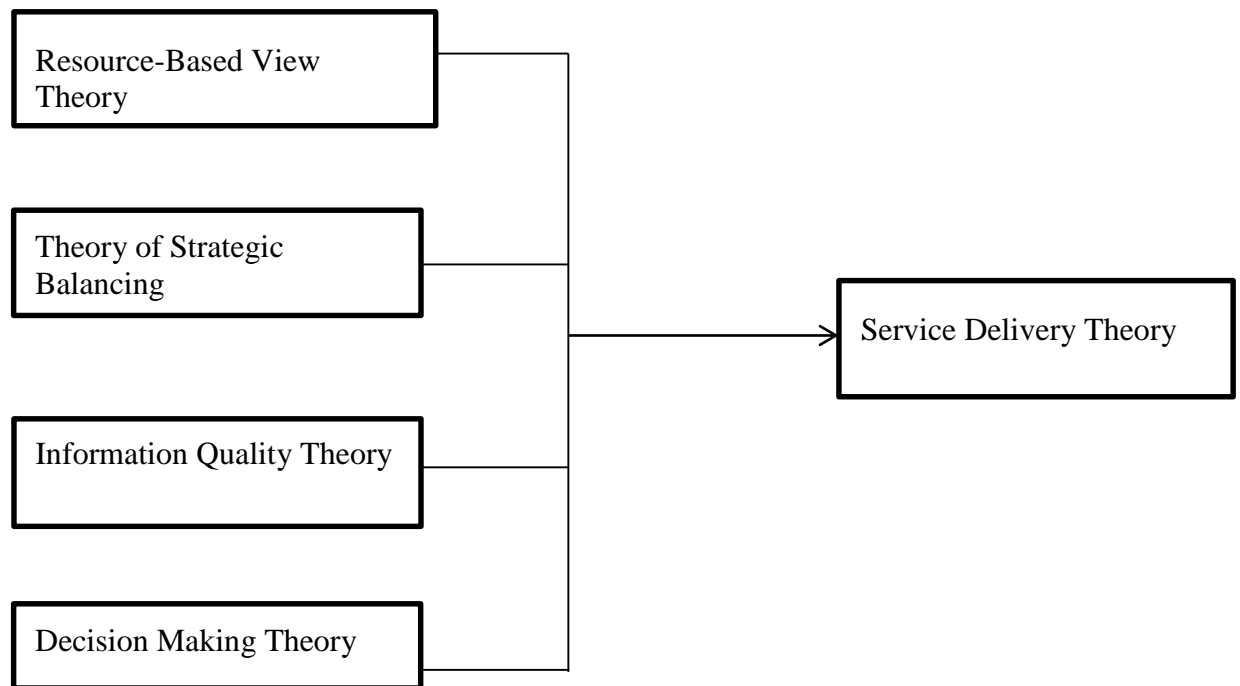


Figure 1: Theoretical Framework

2.2 Empirical review

The topic points out the important figurehead role of leadership and staff commitment in the process of strategy implementation. Christen (2010), takes the board as one of the key

subjects of strategy implementation and discusses how to assess board effectiveness in guiding strategy execution. Grobblers (2008) found that the process of interaction and participation among the Leadership team typically leads to greater commitment to the firm's goals and strategies. This, in turn, serves to ensure the successful implementation of the firm's chosen strategy.

McCarthy *et al.* (2009) considers a more comprehensive set of managerial background and personality variables than (Nzuve, 2009). They analyzed the individual managerial characteristics (e.g., functional background, industry familiarity, locus of control, problem-solving style) and competitive strategy and finds that greater R&D experience and greater internal locus of control on the part of the Strategic Business Unit (SBU) general manager contribute to implementation effectiveness in the case of a differentiation strategy followed by SBUs, but hamper it for a low-cost strategy SBUs; general managers who have manufacturing experience and who are feeling types contribute to performance in the case of low-cost SBUs, but hamper performance for differentiation-strategy SBUs; experience in general Leadership and industry familiarity are beneficial in a universalistic sense; experience in finance and accounting (surprisingly) has a negative effect on performance.

Pearce and Robinson (2010) found that the level of effort that an individual manager will apply to the implementation of a particular strategy depends on perception of individual and the organization's potential to perform, and his perception of the likelihood that successful performance will lead to an outcome that he desires. Managers who believe their self-interest is being compromised can redirect a strategy, delay its implementation, reduce the quality of its implementation, or sabotage the effort by what Pearce and Robinson (2010) call "upward intervention". Upward intervention, in their conception, may include subversive behaviors such as verbal arguments, objecting memos, coalition formation, the deliberate creation of barriers to implementation, and even sabotage.

Passive intervention can take the form of giving a strategy a low priority or taking too much time implementing strategic decisions, both of which can result in unnecessary delays and inhibit the implementation effort. Doyle (2008) set up a conceptual model of implementation effort by middle managers in a multinational context. He refined Pearce and Robinson (2010) insights by identifying the relative importance of the three determinants of implementation effort: perceived ability, perceived probability of success, and perceived consistency between personal goals and the strategic change goals. As a further extension of this theory, He found that the personal characteristics of the middle managers influence their perceptions. He also found that national culture characteristics influence the perceptions of middle managers.

Doyle (2008) also found that if middle leadership do not think the strategy is the right one, or do not feel that they have the requisite skills to implement it, then they are likely to sabotage its implementation. He refers to groups within the organization who will inevitably disagree with the strategy. These groups may sabotage strategy implementation by deliberate actions or inactions, if implementing the strategy may reduce their power and influence. Thus, Doyle (2008) sees the perceived ability and perceived consistency between personal goals and the strategic change goals as the decisive soft factor. Martin (2003) believes that the approach of matching strategy and managers' style ignores the causal role of the organizational context or the interaction of personality and context on implementation actions. It is widely accepted that different strategies need to be implemented in different ways.

Strategic decisions are nevertheless formulated by senior-level managers of the firm and then administratively imposed on lower-level Leadership and non-Leadership employees with little consideration of the resulting functional-level perceptions (McCarthy & Cowan, 2009). If lower-level leadership and non-Leadership personnel are not aware of the same information, or if information must pass through a chain in the organization, consensus

regarding that information may never come about. Thus, the lack of shared knowledge with lower-level leadership and non-Leadership employees creates a barrier to successful strategy implementation. Nzuve (2009) think that the shared understanding of middle leadership and those at the operational level to the Leadership team's strategic goals is of critical importance to effective implementation. Strategy implementation efforts may fail if the strategy does not enjoy support and commitment by the majority of employees and middle leadership. This may be the case if they were not consulted during the development phase.

Pearce and Robinson (2010), thinks that obtaining employee commitment and involvement can promote successful strategy implementation (on the basis of telephone interviews with CEOs). Some CEOs believe that one way to accomplish this is to involve employees and managers right from the start in the strategy formulation process. Involvement and commitment should also be developed and maintained throughout the implementation process. If middle and lower level managers and key subordinates are permitted to be involved with the detailed implementation planning, their commitment will be likely to increase. Quinn, Mintzberg, and James (2008) suggest that there are three fundamentally different sources of low to negative individual manager commitment to implementing a particular strategy: low perceived ability to perform successfully in implementing that strategy; low perceived probability that the proposed outcomes will result, even if individual performance is successful; low capacity of the outcome to satisfy individual goals/needs. Middle managers with low or negative commitment to the strategies formulated by senior Leadership create significant obstacles to effective implementation.

Davis *et al.* (2007) put forward three dimensions of commitment that emerged as central factors which directly influence strategic outcomes: organizational commitment, strategy commitment and role commitment. Organizational commitment is defined as the extent to which a person identifies with and works toward organization-related goals and values

(McCarthy& Cowan, 2009). Strategy commitment is defined as the extent to which a manager comprehends and supports the goals and objectives of a marketing strategy. Role commitment is defined as the extent to which a manager is determined to perform his individual implementation responsibilities well, regardless of his beliefs about the overall strategy. The primary dependent variable in Quinn, Mintzberg, and James (2008) study is implementation success, which they define as the extent to which an implementation effort is considered successful by the organization.

At the individual level, role performance is a critical outcome which they define as the degree to which a manager achieves the goals and objectives of a particular role and facilitates the overall success of the implementation effort. Quinn *et al.* (2008) findings suggest that an individual manager's implementation role performance will influence the overall success of the implementation effort. Both, strategy commitment and role commitment, were shown to influence role performance. However, the most commonly studied dimension, organizational commitment, showed no relationship to role performance in either of their samples.

2.3 Conceptual framework

Conceptual framework is defined as the result of when a researcher conceptualizes the relationship between variables in the study and shows the relationship graphically or diagrammatically (Kothari, 2006). The conceptual framework allows the quantitative conceptualization; operationalization, data collection and measurement of the variables identified (Kuul, 2004). According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003), conceptual framework also presents the various variables in the study. This study is based on the examination of the relationship between the independent variables (Leadership and staff commitment) and the dependent variable is service delivery at KEBS. Figure 2 shows the conceptual representation.

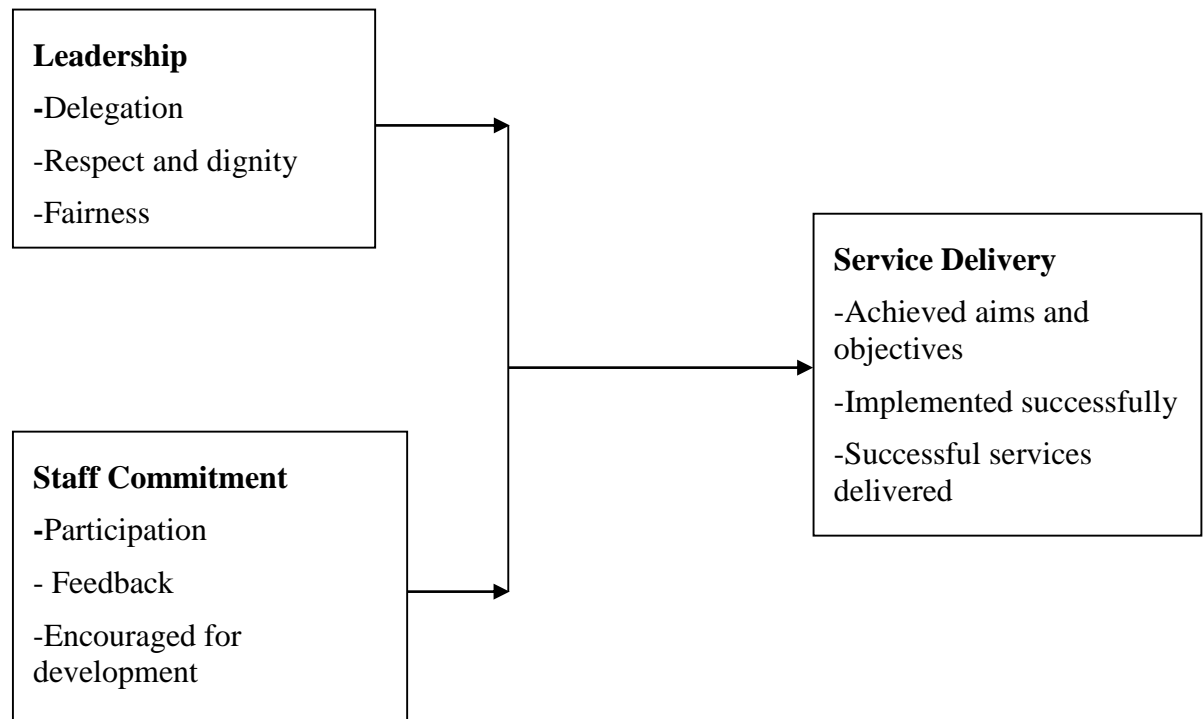


Figure 2: Conceptual framework

3.0 Research methodology

The study adopted a descriptive survey design. The targeted population was 997 and the sample size of 100 respondents working at the KEBS head office where employees were divided into three categories; Top level Leadership staff, Mid-level Leadership staff and junior staff. Questionnaires were used to obtain data, which was analyzed by the use of descriptive statistics. Correlation and regression analysis was used to assess the relationship between strategy implementation and service delivery

4.0 Results and Discussions

4.1 Introduction

The research objective was to assess strategy implementation on service delivery of Government Corporation a case of Kenya Bureau of Standards. This chapter discusses the interpretation and presentation of the findings obtained from the field. The chapter further presents the background information of the respondents, findings of the analysis based on the objectives of the study. The descriptive and inferential statistics have been used to discuss the findings of the study.

4.2 Leadership

4.2.1 Descriptive statistics of Leadership

The study sought to establish the different aspects of Leadership on service delivery in government corporations. Respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which they agree with a number of statements.

According to the respondents, to a great extent, senior executives involve lower-level managers in strategy formulation and its implementation ($M=4.27$, $SD=.812$), senior executives have not spared any effort to persuade the employees of their ideas ($M=4.11$, $SD=.919$) and middle managers play a pivotal role in service delivery ($M=4.00$, $SD=.926$). To a moderate extent, top managers demonstrate willingness to give energy and loyalty to the service delivery process ($M=3.96$, $SD=1.077$). Table 1 shows the descriptive statistics of leadership.

The findings of this study are in agreement with those of Aaltonen and Ikavalko (2002) that lack of Leadership backing are the main inhibiting factors to effective strategy implementation on service delivery. As Bartlett and Goshal (2006) argues that findings confirmed that middle managers role needs to change more towards that of a "coach", building capabilities, providing support and guidance through the encouragement of entrepreneurial attributes. Senior executives involve lower-level managers the strategy

formulation and its implementation Senior executives have not spared any effort to persuade the employees of their ideas Middle managers play a pivotal role in strategic communication Top managers demonstrate willingness to give energy and loyalty to the implementation process.

Table 1: Descriptive statistics of Leadership

| Statements | N | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|------|----------------|
| senior executives involve lower-level managers in strategy formulation and its implementation | 96 | 4.27 | 0.812 |
| senior executives have not spared any effort to persuade the employees of their ideas | 96 | 4.11 | 0.919 |
| middle managers play a pivotal role in service delivery implementation | 96 | 4.00 | 0.926 |
| top managers demonstrate willingness to give energy and loyalty to the service delivery process | 96 | 3.96 | 1.077 |

4.2.2 Chi square test between Leadership and Service Delivery

To establish the significance of the effect that Leadership had on the service delivery, a chi-square test was done. The chi-square tests results show that the effect is significant as the p value $< .05$. The results are presented in table 2 below.

Table 2: Chi square results of Leadership and Service Delivery

| | Value | df | Asymp. Sig. (2-sided) |
|------------------------------|--------|----|-----------------------|
| Pearson Chi-Square | 98.035 | 44 | .000 |
| Likelihood Ratio | 83.988 | 44 | .000 |
| Linear-by-Linear Association | 9.729 | 1 | .002 |
| N of Valid Cases | 93 | | |

4.3 Staff Commitment

4.3.1 Descriptive statistics of Staff Commitment

Respondents were also asked to rate the extent they agree with specific elements of staff commitment that affect service delivery. They were to do so in a scale of 1-5 where 1 was 'Not at all' and 5 was to a 'Very great extent'.

The respondents indicated that to a moderate extent, peoples' considerations have been integrated into strategy implementation ($M=3.74$, $SD=.998$), there is a fit between the intended strategy and the specific personality profile of the key players in the different organizational departments ($M=3.69$, $SD=1.072$), individual personality differences has influenced strategy implementation ($M=3.67$, $SD=.973$), there are enough human resources to participate in strategy implementation ($M=3.44$, $SD=1.235$) and staff commitment in the strategy implementation process are clear ($M=3.41$, $SD=1.209$). Results are presented in table 3 below.

These results are congruent with those of Lorange (1998) human resources are key success factor within strategy implementation. Lorange (1998) attributed past strategy implementation failures to the fact that the human factor was absent from strategic planning.

Table 3: Descriptive statistics of Leadership

| | N | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|------|----------------|
| Peoples' considerations have been integrated into strategy implementation | 96 | 3.74 | .998 |
| There is a fit between the intended strategy and the specific personality profile of the key players in the different organizational departments | 96 | 3.69 | 1.072 |
| Individual personality differences has influenced strategy implementation | 96 | 3.67 | .973 |
| There are enough human resources to participate in strategy implementation | 96 | 3.44 | 1.235 |
| Individual responsibilities in the strategy implementation process are clear | 96 | 3.41 | 1.209 |

4.3.2 Chi square test between Staff Commitment and Service Delivery

A chi-square test was conducted to establish the statistical significance of the effect that staff commitment have on strategy implementation, it was revealed that staff commitment significantly affect service delivery. This was confirmed by *p value* < .05. Chi-square tests results are shown below. The results are presented in table 4 below.

Table 4: Chi square results of Leadership and Service Delivery

| | Value | df | Asymp. Sig. (2-sided) |
|------------------------------|--------|----|-----------------------|
| Pearson Chi-Square | 98.724 | 60 | .001 |
| Likelihood Ratio | 88.960 | 60 | .009 |
| Linear-by-Linear Association | 11.715 | 1 | .001 |

4.4 Discussion on the Regression Analysis

A regression analysis was done to establish the effect of independent variables (leadership and staff commitment), on the dependent variable (service delivery). According to the

regression analysis results, the independent variables leadership and staff commitment, explain 53.5% of change in the dependent variable service delivery. These results are shown in table 5 below.

Table 5: Model Summary

| Model | R | R Square | Adjusted R Square | Std. Error of the Estimate |
|-------|-------------------|----------|-------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 | .732 ^a | .535 | .505 | .818 |

a. Predictors: (Constant), Leadership, Staff commitment.

The F-ratio found in the ANOVA table measures the probability of chance departure from a straight line. On review of the output found in the ANOVA table, it was found that the overall equation was statistically significant ($F=7.373$, $p<.000$). These results are shown in table 6 below.

Table 6: Analysis of Variance

| Model | | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|-------|------------|----------------|----|-------------|-------|-------------------|
| 1 | Regression | 19.755 | 5 | 4.939 | 7.373 | .000 ^b |
| | Residual | 63.635 | 91 | .670 | | |
| | Total | 83.390 | 96 | | | |

a. Dependent Variable: Service delivery.

b. Predictors: (Constant), Leadership and staff commitment.

Coefficients table shown in table 7 below sought to identify which predictors are significant. For each predictor variable in the equation, the study was only concerned with its associated standardized beta and t-test statistic's level of significance (Sig.). Whenever $p < .05$, we find the results statistically significant. This means that when a p-value (SIG.) is less than or equal to .05, the corresponding beta is significant in the equation. From this

equation, Leadership ($P=.296$, $p=.005<.05$) and staff commitment ($P=.305$, $p=.05<.05$) were statistically significant.

Table 7: Regression of Coefficient Results

| Model | Unstandardized Coefficients | | Standardized Coefficients | t | Sig. |
|------------------|-----------------------------|------------|---------------------------|-------|------|
| | B | Std. Error | Beta | | |
| (Constant) | .893 | .571 | | 1.564 | .121 |
| Leadership | .353 | .122 | .296 | 2.887 | .005 |
| Staff Commitment | .311 | .162 | .305 | 1.923 | .050 |

5.0 Findings of the Study

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presented the discussion of key data findings. The researcher had intended to establish the effect of leadership on service delivery in KEBS and to find out the effect of staff commitment on service delivery in KEBS.

5.2 Findings

5.2.1 Leadership

On top Leadership support the study revealed that middle managers play a pivotal role in strategic communication. To ensure strategy is implemented as intended, senior executives must abandon the notion that lower-level managers have the same perceptions of the strategy and its implementation. Where top managers demonstrate unwillingness to give energy and loyalty to the implementation process the whole implementation process stands a high chance of failing. To ensure strategy is implemented as intended, senior executives must not spare any effort to persuade the employees of their ideas.

5.2.2 Staff commitment

The study established that individual personality differences often determine and influence implementation and that human resources are the key success factors within strategy implementation. It is desirable to create a fit between the intended strategy and the specific personality profile of the implementation's key players in the different organizational departments. Unclear staff commitment in the strategy implementation process may result to complexities or even failure in the whole process, it is important to integrate people's considerations into strategy implementation.

5.3 Discussions

The study further established that greater senior Leadership involvement would provide better knowledge about organizational objectives and hence a plan that can accomplish them better. The findings of this study are in agreement with those of Aaltonen and Ikavalko (2002) that inappropriate organizational structure and lack of top Leadership backing are the main inhibiting factors to effective strategy implementation and service delivery. The results also confirm the role of middle managers as the key actors who have a pivotal role in strategic communication (Aaltonen and Ikavalko, 2002). As Bartlett and Goshal (2006) argues that findings confirmed that middle managers role needs to change more towards that of a "coach", building capabilities, providing support and guidance through the encouragement of entrepreneurial attributes.

The study also established that senior leadership are likely to be moderated by a number of factors, including the resources available to the leader, how much discretion he or she has and how much support exists among subordinate managers for the strategy initiative. These results are congruent with those of Lorange (1998) human resources are key success factor within strategy implementation. Lorange (1998) attributed past strategy implementation failures to the fact that the human factor was conspicuously absent from strategic planning

6.0 Conclusions

From the findings the study revealed that leadership positively affects service delivery at Kenya Bureau of Standards. The study established that manager's commitment to performing their roles lead to the low ranks of employees having support and guidance through the strategy implementation process, thus the study concludes that Leadership positively affect service delivery at Kenya Bureau of Standards.

The study established that staff commitment affects service delivery in Kenya Bureau of Standards. The study also established that proper and clear staff commitment among the stakeholder was key to the implementation of strategy in the KEBS

7.0 Recommendations

The study recommends that the Leadership at Kenya Bureau of Standards should remain fully committed throughout strategy implementation process. This will help to ensure clear and unbiased oversight of the implementations process ensuring time deadline are met within the stipulated time. This will ultimately increase the success of project implementation and thus improved service delivery.

The study also recommends that the KEBS organization Leadership should work to ensure clarity of roles on every Leadership level. This will ensure that all workers and departments know what they need to achieve and which will this enable free work flows from one department to another without obstruction.

The study established that staff commitment affects strategy implementation and service delivery at KEBS. Thus, the study recommends for a proper and clear staff commitment among the stakeholder so as to improve the service delivery in the KEBS.

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