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Josphat Andrew Wafula and Stephen Makau Muathe

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The Role of Strategic Management in the Performance of Turkana County Government, Kenya

Josphat Andrew Wafula

School of Business, Kenyatta University, Kenya
Email: josphat.wafula@gmail.com

Stephen Makau Muathe

School of Business, Kenyatta University, Kenya
Email: muathesm@yahoo.com

Abstract

Organizational performance is crucial to the survival of public and private entities worldwide. In particular, there is increasing public pressure for Kenyan public entities to deliver on their mandate. Strategic management would go a long way in ensuring that public entities such as the county governments in Kenya deliver on their mandate. This study sought to establish the influence of strategic management on performance of devolved governments with particular focus on the Turkana County in Kenya. The specific objectives of the study were to determine how the performance of the Turkana county government is influenced by the strategic management components of strategy formulation, environmental scanning, strategy implementation and strategy evaluation. A survey research design was adopted for the study with data being collected from departmental technical officers in the county using a self-administered structured questionnaire. The study findings indicate that strategy management positively influences the performance of the Turkana County Government. The study offers valuable recommendations for effective county governments management and future research.

Keywords: Strategic Management, Devolved Governance System, County Governments Performance

1. Introduction

Organizational performance is the process of accomplishing performance goals or expected results (Juma & Okibo, 2016). Performance of an organization is an issue of interest to managers in both private and public sectors globally. Effective organizational performance comes with effective strategic management practices (Lawal, Omone & Oludayo, 2012).

Generally, strategic management is popularized as an effective management approach that contributes to the performance of organizations. Strategic management practices are traditionally entrenched in the private sector. However, the public sector has over the last decade embraced the practice of strategic management (Guchu, 2014).

The strategic management framework consists of strategy formulation, environmental scanning strategy implementation and strategy evaluation. On the other hand, organizational performance has varied perspectives. For instance, Istanbul (2013)



views the performance of an organization as the state of competitiveness of the firm in attaining a given level of efficiency and productivity within the confines of an assured, viable and sustainable market.

Assessing organizational performance is undertaken using a number of approaches. The first approach is by the use of the balance-scorecard (Kaplan & Norton, 2001) which proposes four approaches to assessing performance of a firm: customer perspective, business processes perspective, financial perspective and learning and growth perspective.

The second method of performance measurement for an organization is the use of the Deming model. Which emphasizes on the identification of distinctions in the process of production and sorting them out. Finally, the BALDRIGE model advocates that the standards used to measure organizational performance must result from its business strategy (Maria, Florica, & Catalina, 2002).

A number of studies have been conducted to establish the effect of strategic management adoption on the performance of organizations. Khan and Huda (2016) carried out a study on the impact of strategic management on the performance of three health care facilities in Karachi, Pakistan and found a strong positive association between strategy formulation and organizational performance of the health care facilities. Waweru and Omwenga (2016) also established a strong correlation between strategic management practices and performance of private construction firms in Kenya.

Further studies have been by Ofunya (2016) on the effects of strategic management practices on performance of the Kenya Post Office Savings Bank and Yunus (2010) who studied the relationship between strategic management practices and corporate performance of selected small business enterprises in Lagos metropolis, Nigeria as well as Njeru (2015) whose study was on the influence of strategic management practices and performance of small and medium-sized enterprises in Kenya. All these studies conclude that there is a positive relationship between strategic management of organizations and their performance. This study focuses on the implications of strategic management in a public sector entity.

1.1 Overview of Turkana County

Turkana County is one of the poorest counties in Kenya. However, like the rest of 46 counties in Kenya, its residents have high expectations that the promised benefits of devolved government will enhance their standards of living. The residents of Turkana County have welcomed devolution with much anticipation owing to convenient service delivery, infrastructure improvement and more increased community participation in matters affecting them. The county is equally endowed with oil and underground water aquifers yet to be fully exploited. There are 17 administrative divisions in the county, six sub-counties and a total of 30 administrative wards aimed at delivery of county services to the grassroots.



1.2 Study Objective and Conceptual Framework

The objective of the study was to assess the influence of strategic management adoption on the performance of the Turkana County Government. The study was guided by the conceptual framework depicted in Figure 1.

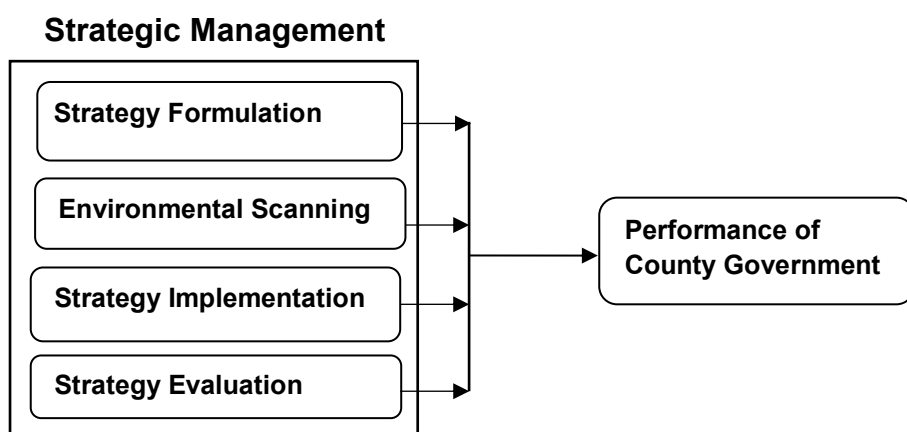


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework of Strategic Management and Performance of County Government

Source: Researcher (2018)

2. Methodology

The study adopted a survey research design with inferential statistics namely, regression analysis being utilized to establish the relationship between the study variables. The units of study were 11 Turkana County Government departments and respondents were the departments' technical staff consisting of the directors, deputy directors, human resource officers and their assistants in the respective departments. A total of 88 respondents were targeted for interview through self-administered structured questionnaires. Content validity of the research instruments was ensured through the use of measures previously used in related studies. For the independent variable component of strategy formulation, measures used included vision, mission, and objectives of the County; environmental scanning adopted measures outlining opportunities and threats from external and internal environment of the County government; strategy implementation used measures relating to the budgets, structure, policies and leadership; while strategy evaluation was measured through monitoring, controls and contingencies. Finally, for the dependent variable of performance of County government, measures used included resource utilization, residents' satisfaction and realization of operational and financial plans. The reliability of all measures exceeded the recommended 0.7 Cronbach's alpha coefficients threshold.



3. Results and Discussions

To assess the effect of strategic management adoption on the performance of Turkana County Government, a multiple regression analysis was conducted, the results of which are highlighted in Tables 1 (a)- (b).

Table 1(a): Results of the Overall Significance of the Regression of Turkana County Government Performance on Strategic Management

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	13.437	3	4.479	12.882	.000 ^b
	Residual	41.030	63	.348		
	Total	54.467	66			

a. Dependent variable: Performance of Turkana County government

b. Predictors: (Constant), Strategy formulation, strategy implementation, strategy evaluation, environmental scanning

Source (Survey data, 2019)

Table 1 (b): Results of the Individual Significance of the Regression of Turkana County Government Performance on Strategic Management

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		95% Confidence Interval for B		
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.	Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1	(Constant)	-3.044	.823		-3.700	.000	-4.674	-1.415
	X1	.887	.177	.398	5.009	.000	.537	1.238
	X2	.705	.180	.312	3.907	.000	.347	1.062
	X3	.279	.111	.185	2.513	.013	.059	.499
	X4	.294	.122	.195	2.418	.017	.053	.535

Dependent variable: Performance of Turkana County government

Key: Y = County Government Performance; X1 = Strategy Formulation; X2 = Strategy Implementation; X3 = Strategy Evaluation; X4 = Environmental Scanning

Source (Survey data, 2019)

The study data in Table 1(a) indicates that, overall, there is a statistically significant relationship between strategic management and the Turkana County Government performance (p-value = 0.000). This relationship is positive as indicated in Table 1(b) which reveals statistically significant positive relationship between the Turkana County Government performance and the strategic management framework components namely strategy formulation ($\beta = 0.398$; $p = .000$); environmental scanning ($\beta = 0.195$; $p = .017$); strategy implementation ($\beta = 0.312$; $p = .000$); and finally strategy evaluation ($\beta = 0.185$; $p = .013$).

4. Conclusions and Recommendations

Based on the study findings, it is concluded that strategic management has statistically significant positive effect on the performance of the Turkana County Government. These results concur with previous studies that have sought to determine the effect of



strategic management on the performance of organizations in the private sector (Waweru & Omwenga, 2016; Njeru, 2015; Ofunya, 2016).

Consequently, the County Government of Turkana is urged to enhance its strategic management practice particularly on the aspects of strategy formulation and strategy implementation which have the highest positive effect on its performance. Other county governments in Kenya are also urged to adopt strategic management practice given the positive effect on organizational performance.

However, there is need to replicate the study in other counties in Kenya to enhance the generalizability of the findings and also establish the critical contextual factors that may inhibit or facilitate the relationship between strategic management practice and the adoption of county governments.

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