

# EFFECT OF STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP STYLE ON QUALITY ASSURANCE IN INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER LEARNING IN KENYA

<sup>1</sup>Millicent Atieno Mboya, <sup>2</sup>Susan Were, <sup>3</sup>Romanus Odhiambo Otieno

<sup>1,2</sup>College of Human Resource Development, Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology

<sup>3</sup>College of Pure and Applied Sciences, Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology

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**Abstract:** The main objective of this study was to examine the effect of strategic leadership style on quality assurance in institutions of higher learning in Kenya. This study focused on 19 public chartered universities and 18 private chartered universities. Using stratified sampling, 249 leaders were selected to represent the total population. The study used a mixed research approach of exploratory and descriptive designs. The questionnaire was used to gather relevant information from the respondents. Data collected was analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. Linear regression curves were developed and these revealed positive correlations between strategic leadership style and quality assurance in institutions of higher learning in Kenya. The study recommended that leaders of institutions of higher learning be trained on the use of appropriate strategies.

**Keywords:** Strategy, Leadership Style, Quality Assurance, Higher Learning Institutions.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Australian study by Scott, Coates, and Anderson (2008) found that the selection and development processes for higher education leaders are often unrelated to what is necessary to negotiate the daily realities of their work; the nature and focus of leadership development programs don't always address the capabilities that count, and that the central role of university leaders in building a change capable culture is either unrecognized or misunderstood.

Rooijen (2013) argued that the result of mixing leadership with ego normally results in something rather ugly or unpleasant and in the context of higher education, where the main task is to lead specific types of professionals, that style is most unlikely to bring lasting success. The proposal of Rooijen (2013) is that Leadership should never be an ego trip, and although one needs to believe passionately in a vision in order to be credible, that vision does need to be fit for purpose.

A study carried in Uganda by Muriisa (2015) stated that, 'African University' today, like any other university, has clear mandates and roles; research, teaching and community service, clearly laid down on paper in many of the universities' manuals and strategic plans. But, in reality, these roles are not performed at all or are performed in a manner that may not warrant clear roles. This situation calls for rethinking what role should universities play. The role of leadership has been overlooked yet it occupies a central role in the performance of the university.

A research done by Higher Education South Africa (2010) posits that the roles of governance, leadership and management are crucial in the management of transformational change in higher education and, paradoxically, they in turn need to be transformed in order to deliver in this respect. They create an environment conducive to a culture of tolerance and understanding, effective strategic planning and shared decision-making in a variety of strategic issues, such as achieving equity in participation and success by both students and staff.

A number of studies have been carried out on the subject of management and its impact on quality assurance. In Kenya, Owino, Ogachi and Olel (2011) reported that senior management of public and private universities should deliberately take short term leadership courses to boost their managerial skills as a significant step towards delivery of quality education. This will help them to appreciate and respond appropriately to the changes being experienced in management of higher education. This is consistent with findings of Mayer *et al.* (2011) which stated that effective university managers require targeted and appropriate training. They found that researchers who at a certain point in their careers decide to take on management responsibilities have rarely been trained for their new positions.

Ayiro and Sang (2012) observes that the notion of quality is hard to define precisely, especially in the context of tertiary education where institutions have broad autonomy to decide on their own visions and missions. Any statement about quality implies a certain relative measure against a common standard; in tertiary education, such a common standard does not exist. Various concepts have evolved to suit different contexts ranging from quality as a measure for excellence to quality as perfection, quality as value for money, quality as customer satisfaction, quality as fitness for purpose, and quality as transformation.

It is worth noting that leadership styles are essential in determining quality assurance of any institution of higher learning; this is proved by Hofstede dimension of power such as, gender egalitarianism, power distance, reciprocal approach, a balance relationship with the group as well as quality of a person (Irawanto, 2009). These aspects can either influence quality assurance negatively or positively. When it comes to power distance where power lies with the boss then teamwork might not be achieved and this is an essential element of quality assurance as you have to involve all the stakeholders. The positive side of that is seen in almost all leadership style has a positive effect on delivery of quality assurance; this is because it is the responsibility of the boss who passes quality down the line.

## **2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

It has been observed that in Kenya today the impact of research into leadership has not had the influence that it should have had on governance and leadership in higher education (Michieka, 2016). This may create major gaps in terms of governance and leadership in institutions of higher learning in Kenya. Michieka (2016) argues that there are various questions on how leaders of higher education institutions are identified, prepared, the personal predispositions individuals bring to the exercise of such positions and their personal experiences regarding what energizes or inhibits the performance of their work. Magoha (2017) reported that “in a hierarchy where there is learning, training and experience, employee tends to rise to his level of incompetence”. The suggestion as per to Magoha was that leadership is not possible for all despite their desire or training and his question was, can every one lead when given the opportunity? The answer was no, arguing that not everybody has the innate intelligence, the desire and the drive to lead. That is, despite all the learning, training and experience the individual may possess, without the innate component of leadership, he or she cannot be a strong and effective leader. Focusing on the above studies, little has been done on the best strategic leadership styles to be used in the institutions and it is for this reason that the current study was based.

## **3. LITERATURE REVIEW**

This style will be measured using, communication as stated in Hofstede dimension of leadership. Specifically, will be used to prove whether this type of leadership style follows bureaucracy in work related issues or they are fond of results only (Irawanto, 2009). The aspect of communication as shown in the diagram will determine whether leaders of this kind depend heavily on policy and communicate well. It will also measure how well the leaders understand and execute their job in the institution. Apart from and communication mentioned above, the researcher would like to measure strategic leadership style using expertise and ownership, significantly, expertise and ownership will determine whether the superior has a sense of belonging in the work place and their loyalty to work

This is a future oriented style that is able to articulate a vision that is shared through socialization and common values. It acts in the present to shape the future, to create what can be, starting from what is. The strategic leader is able to plan the future with an eye to both day-to-day activities and strategic responsibilities, implementing strategies that have both an immediate and a long-term impact on survival, growth, and competitive advantage. The leader has strong and clear expectations from followers, peers, and superiors, acts in an ethical way, and exerts financial and strategic control within the organization (Orazi *et al.* 2014, Phipps, 2011). Long (2005) argue that, there is a positive relationship between strategic leadership and quality assurance in terms of their approach. Team leaders need to be given time to think, listen and challenge daily activities in the unit in order to provide quality service delivery and satisfactory supervision to subordinates.

This is the ability to anticipate, envision, maintain flexibility, think strategically, and work with others to initiate changes that will create a viable future for the organization. It is a situation in which the leader is able to influence followers to make autonomous decisions on a daily basis in a way that maintains short-term stability while ensuring long-term viability of the organization. It refers to the people at the top of the organization transcending their role and leads the self in terms of personal strength development and awareness, lead the followers in terms of interpersonal influence, and lead the organization in terms of aligning the competitive environment, strategic movements, and organizational goals (Orazi *et al.*, 2014). In terms of leader's decision making in this approach of leadership, the possibility of creating an atmosphere of quality assurance is high and as Sitati *et al.* (2012) stated in their study on quality assurance, leaders are the ones who are formally charged with taking decisions, directing others and creating a framework of rules, systems and expectations within which the organization operates.

A study carried by Schrieshem (2011) argued that strategic leadership cannot be enacted without active participation of followers across the organization; it spans multiple levels and involves leadership of the self, of others and of the entire organization and due to the multi-functionality of strategic leadership, subordinate managers possess greater expertise than the strategic leader and that strategic leadership primarily is a function of managing through others. In relation to quality assurance, Sitati *et al.* (2012) in their study found that beside communication, decision making and thinking strategically, a participative leader that seeks to involve other people in the process, possibly including subordinates, peers, superiors and other stakeholder's fosters stakeholders' commitment by encouraging quality in the organization and therefore reduce animosity.

Strategic leaders set directions for the organization and their power is increased when they scan and cope with the critical sectors of their environment. Such leaders communicate decisions for their organization's future, formulate the organization's goals and strategies, develop structures, processes, controls and check on core competencies for the organization, manage multiple constituencies, choose key executives, groom the next generation of executives, provide direction with respect to organizational strategies, maintain an effective organizational culture, sustain a system of ethical values, and serve as the representative of the organization to government and other organizations and constituencies as well as negotiate with them (Bass,2007). Based on this study, strategic leadership style is one of the styles of focus that institutions have endeavored to use in order to gain quality assurance.

Bass (2000) noted that with this approach, executives concentrate on systematically envisioning the desired future state for the organization and specifically laying out the plans on how to get there. In this process, they consult with managers, employees, suppliers, analysts, shareholders and customers. Other companies are visited. Academic scientists and technologists are questioned. Focus is on the future without neglecting to honor the past.

Owino *et al.* (2011) studying on role of institutional managers in quality assurance found out that visionary and creative leadership is critical to the transformation of higher education. The recommendation is that administrative and management structures of the public universities should be analyzed and streamlined to create efficient, effective, responsive and lean structures to avoid wastage of resources, duplicated responsibilities and overlapping mandates where members of different levels are members at next level and to institute checks and balances. Power to make decisions should be devolved to operational units (faculties, institutes and departments). These operational units should be strengthened to enable them to discharge their functions effectively. The recruitment of deans, directors of institutes, heads of departments, administrators and managers for the operational units should be done competitively at all levels and remuneration be pegged to competence and performance.

Arika and Enginoğlu (2016) argued that all strategic leaders are understood by their contributions of envisioning the future of organization, articulating the path, and accompaniment on the implementation phase. Its views are related by those of transactional leaders that get things done no matter what follows. One of the major challenges that hinder quality assurance as reported by Haris (2013) study is the competition between universities for students; this has leads to students seeing themselves increasingly as customers and demanding not only higher quality of teaching but also that the educational programmes provided by universities are adapted to their needs rather than being determined by the wishes and interests of the teachers. In particular students increasingly have an eye on the job market and the skills and competencies which will position them strongly for employment.

Arika & Enginoğlu (2016) reported in their study that the style is a strategizing process which provides better corporate sustainability and longevity. It is influenced by two major elements, namely internal and external elements. Internal elements are the organizations' structure, vision, values, goals, strategies, and management style while external elements

are composed of customers, suppliers, partners, competitors, investors, and government. Haris (2013) stated that, quality assurance in higher education systems comprises of internal and external quality assurance systems. Higher education institution can perform and manage its quality assurance with both internally driven mechanism and externally mechanism organized by The National Accreditation Agency of Higher Education.

This style of leadership is typically concentrated at the top of the organization (CEOs, top management team members); thus, their group of followers is potentially very large and communicating with all of them directly could be impossible or undesirable. Nevertheless, there usually exists a of followers where the top managers communicate to distant followers via their more proximal followers such as divisional or department managers. Top leaders therefore rely on the mid-level managers to act as surrogates to spread their message and vision in a favorable light, this relationship can have a significant influence on the way that the leader's vision is communicated and leadership is enacted (Schrieshem,2011).

Even though strategic leadership style seems to be more appealing in terms of its approach, their style of communication raises issues and as Sitati *et al.* (2012) argue in their study, the fundamental starting point for a leader is having a good understanding of human nature, such as needs, emotions, and motivation. Leaders must come to know their employees' attributes in relation to communication. The channel of communication has to be clear to all stakeholders; it has to be a two-way. Leaders have to know that what and how you communicate either builds or harms the relationship between themselves and their employees.

Empirically, studies have showed that the context can dictate the content of a leader's vision in this style: when market forces push an organization to, for instance, give up their low-cost strategy, a leader's vision may be restricted to pursuing a product differentiation strategy. Accordingly, the leader's traits, cognitions and behaviors may have little explanatory power whereas the context can directly explicate the leadership outcome (Schrieshem, 2011). More specifically, all situations are different as stated by Sitati *et al.* (2012) on their study on quality assurance. What you do in one situation as a leader will not always work in another. You must use your judgment to decide the best course of action and the leadership style needed for each situation. For example, you may need to confront an employee for inappropriate behavior, but if the confrontation is too late or too early, too harsh or too weak, then the results may prove ineffective. The situation normally has a greater effect on a leader's action than his or her traits. This is because while traits may have an impressive stability over a period of time, they have little consistency across situations.

Schrieshem (2011) also argued that the context can also impede the dissemination of critical information related to the leader's vision and strategies. The organizational culture may be such that it endorses rationality over emotionality and limits communication to the objective information required for task completion. When a new leader wants to spread his vision using inspirational language and one-on-one discussions about values with middle managers in this type of context, he or she may encounter pitfalls along the way and a long process of overhauling the organization's culture would be necessary to align it with the leader's vision, at times, overriding the new leader's personal influence. In line with the assertion of the above information,

Owino *et al.* (2011) in their study reported that there is a significant indirect relationship that exists between leadership and organizational effectiveness. Changes in an organizational strategy bring about new management challenges which, in turn require new strategies to be successfully implemented. To guarantee that standards and quality of educational provisions are being maintained in the universities, will require that management understands the new challenges and effectively restructure the organizations to achieve the expected outcomes. Bass (2007; cited Beer and Eisenstat 2000) arguing that strategic leadership is about formulating and implementing an effective strategy that involve the following components and practices: top-down direction which accepts upward influence, clear strategies and priorities, an effective top management team with a general management orientation, open vertical communication, effective coordination, and allocation of clear accountability and authority to middle management? Its practices should include: focusing attention on outcomes and processes, seeking to acquire and leverage knowledge, fostering learning, and creativity, improving work flows by attention to relationships, anticipating internal and external environmental changes, maintaining a global mindset, meeting the diversity of the interests of the multiple stakeholders, building for the long-term while meeting short-term needs, and developing human capital.

The aspect of top-down direction as determinant of strategic leadership style can be linked to the process of internal quality assurance that goes through. A study carried in Indonesia by Haris (2013) narrated how internal quality assurance is carried; the process goes through a function from study program, program/faculty to university level. Each level must have representative of each learning service element such as lecturers, students and academic supporting staff.

#### 4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study focused on 19 public chartered universities and 18 private chartered universities. Using stratified sampling, 249 leaders were selected to represent the total population. The study used a mixed research approach of exploratory and descriptive designs. The questionnaire was used to gather relevant information from the respondents. Data collected was analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. Linear regression curves were developed.

#### 5. FINDINGS

This section examines the independent variable strategic leadership style which was studied under the specific indicators: hierarchy, communication, expertise and ownership. The section summarises descriptive statistic on the variable strategic leadership style.

##### **Hierarchy:**

This was the first item under strategic leadership style and covers the first three statements in table 1. Under this indicator, the respondents were first asked to rate the extent at which the leader command communication as far as strategic leadership is concerned in relation to their position of work. 13.8% strongly agree, 36.8% agree 35.6% were neutral, 10.9% disagree and 2.9% strongly disagree. Findings agree with other scholars. Schrieshem (2011) noted that strategic leaders concentrate at the top of the organization (CEOs, top management team members); thus, their group of followers is potentially very large and communicating with all of them directly become impossible or undesirable. Nevertheless, there usually exists a follower where the top managers communicate to distant followers via their more proximal followers such as divisional or department managers. Top leaders therefore rely on the mid-level managers to act as surrogates to spread their message and vision in a favorable light, this relationship can have a significant influence on the way that the leader's vision is communicated and leadership is enacted

Sitati *et al* (2012) also observes that the style of communication by strategic leaders raises issues. They argue that the fundamental starting point for a leader is having a good understanding of human nature, such as needs, emotions, and motivation. Leaders must come to know their employees' attributes in relation to communication. The channel of communication has to be clear to all stakeholders and not just leaders; it has to be a two-way. Leaders have to know that what and how they communicate either builds or harms the relationship between themselves and their stakeholders. The study concludes that leaders command communication, the implication is that this type of communication can have a significant influence on the goal of achieving quality assurance.

Secondly, to know the extent to which they design structure, 29.1% strongly agree, 47.4% agree 18.3% were neutral, 2.3% disagree and 2.9% strongly disagree. Finding corroborate with Bass (2007) who observe that strategic leadership is about formulating and implementing an effective strategy that involve the following components and practices: top-down direction which accepts upward influence, clear strategies and priorities, a communication, effective coordination, and allocation of clear accountability and authority to middle management. The study concludes that leaders design structure in their institution.

Owino *et al*. (2011) studying on role of institutional managers in quality assurance found out that visionary and creative leadership is critical to the transformation of higher education. The recommendation is that administrative and management structures of the public universities should be analyzed and streamlined to create efficient, effective, responsive and lean structures to avoid wastage of resources, duplicated responsibilities and overlapping mandates where members of different levels are members at next level and to institute checks and balances. The study concludes that leaders are satisfied with the manner they design structure in their institution.

Control of work Station by the leader was also rated under hierarchy as follows: 23.4% strongly agree, 49.1 agree 19.4% were neutral, 7.4% disagree and 0.0% strongly disagree. Findings agree with those of other scholars. Schrieshem (2011) noted that, the context can dictate the content of a leader's vision in this style: when market forces push an organization to, for instance, give up their low-cost strategy, a leader's vision may be restricted to pursuing a product differentiation strategy. Accordingly, the leader's traits, cognitions and behaviors may have little explanatory power whereas the context can directly explicate the leadership outcome.

More specifically, all situations are different as stated by Sitati *et al*. (2012) on their study on quality assurance. What you do in one situation as a leader will not always work in another. You must use your judgment to decide the best course of action and the leadership style needed for each situation. For example, you may need to confront a stakeholder for

inappropriate behavior, but if the confrontation is too late or too early, too harsh or too weak, then the results may prove ineffective. The situation normally has a greater effect on a leader's action than his or her traits. This is because while traits may have an impressive stability over a period of time, they have little consistency across situations. The study concludes that control of work station is properly aligned to quality assurance.

#### **Communication:**

This was the second item for strategic leadership style. Under this indicator, the respondents were first asked to rate the extent at which the leader is receptive to stakeholders in relation to their position of work. 27.4% strongly agree, 52.6% agree 14.9% were neutral, 5.1% disagree and 0.0% strongly disagree. These findings disagree with past studies by Schrieshem (2011) that noted the organizational culture of strategic leaders may be such that it endorses rationality over emotionality and limits communication to the objective information required for task completion. When a new leader wants to spread his vision using inspirational language and one-on-one discussions about values with middle managers in this type of context, he or she may encounter pitfalls along the way and a long process of overhauling the organization's culture would be necessary to align it with the leader's vision, at times, overriding the new leader's personal influence. The study concludes leaders are receptive to stakeholders, even though this does not reflect on findings of other scholars.

In regard to know the extent to which the leader depends on policy, 26.3% strongly agree, 50.3% agree 17.7% were neutral, 5.1% disagree and 0.6% strongly disagree. Findings agree with those of other scholars. Bass (2000) noted that leaders using strategic leadership style put emphasis on people policies, programs and principles. The executive knows the capabilities of the personnel, and is systematic in the way he or she manages and leads. Quality training and performance assessment with feedback are provided. People are empowered and rewarded for initiatives at all levels of the organization. Values of commitment and integrity are stressed.

In relation to the above information, Eromafur (2013) also commented that, the litany of good strategic management is to formulate sound strategic plan, implement it, execute it to the fullest. A strategic leader must be visionary, must possess excellent entrepreneurial skills, must be a good strategic thinker and effective strategy implementer, must be a cultural builder and process integrator, must be resource acquirer and capabilities builder, must coach, inspire, motivate, empathize, tactful or sanction unwarranted or unwholesome behavior. A strategic leader must be above all dynamic and proactive. The study concludes that dependency on policy is properly aligned to quality assurance.

Findings in table 1 below indicate that 13.1% of the respondents strongly agree that the leader is an all rounded communicator, 17.7% agree 24.6% were neutral, 31.4 % disagree and 13.1% strongly disagree. Findings corroborate with Schrieshem (2011) who argued that strategic leadership cannot be enacted without active participation of followers across the organization; it spans multiple levels and involves leadership of the self, of others and of the entire organization and due to the multi-functionality of strategic leadership, subordinate managers possess greater expertise than the strategic leader and that strategic leadership primarily is a function of managing through others. The study concludes that leaders are not all rounded communicators, hence lack of implementation of quality assurance goal. Long (2005) argue that team leaders need to be given time to think, listen and challenge daily activities in the unit in order to provide quality service delivery and satisfactory supervision to subordinates. The study concludes that leaders are not all rounded communicators, this poses a negative implication to quality assurance.

#### **Expertise:**

This was the third item for strategic leadership style. Under this indicator, the respondents were first asked to rate the extent at which the leader execute jobs in relation to their position of work. 32.6% strongly agree, 43.4% agree 15.4% were neutral, 8.0% disagree and 0.6% strongly disagree. Findings corroborate with Arika and Enginoğlu (2016) who observe that all strategic leaders are understood by their contributions of envisioning the future of organization, articulating the path, and accompaniment on the implementation phase. Its views are related by those of transactional leaders that get things done no matter what follows. Bas (2007) also noted that strategic leaders set directions for the organization and their power is increased when they scan and cope with the critical sectors of their environment. Such leaders communicate decisions for their organization's future , formulate the organization's goals and strategies, develop structures, processes, controls and check on core competencies for the organization , manage multiple constituencies, choose key executives, groom the next generation of executives, provide direction with respect to organizational strategies, maintain an effective organizational culture, sustain a system of ethical values, and serve as the representative of the organization to government and other organizations and constituencies as well as negotiate with them. The study concludes that job execution is aligned with quality assurance.

In regard to know whether the leader articulate vision of the institution, 30.9% strongly agree, 45.1% agree 16.6% were neutral, 6.3% disagree and 1.1% strongly disagree. Findings corroborate with Orazi *et al.* (2014) & Phipps (2011) who stated that strategic leadership style is a future oriented style that is able to articulate a vision that is shared through socialization and common values. It acts in the present to shape the future, to create what can be, starting from what is. The strategic leader is able to plan the future with an eye to both day-to-day activities and strategic responsibilities, implementing strategies that have both an immediate and a long-term impact on survival, growth, and competitive advantage. The leader has strong and clear expectations from followers, peers, and superiors, acts in an ethical way, and exerts financial and strategic control within the organization. The study concludes that articulation of vision in the institution is properly aligned to quality assurance.

Findings in table 1 below indicate that 25.7% of the respondents strongly agree that the leader shape future of the organization, 48.0% agree 21.1% were neutral, 5.1 % disagree and 0.0% strongly disagree. Findings agree with those of other scholars. Eromafur (2013) noted that, effective strategic leaders are willing to make candid and courageous, yet, pragmatic, decision-decisions that may be difficult, but necessary, through foresight, as they reflect on the external conditions facing the firm. They also need to understand how such decisions will affect the internal system currently in use in the firm. Effective strategic leaders must be proactive and visionary in motivating employees to superior performance. In effect they must develops strong partners internally and externally to facilitate execution of vision. The study concludes that leaders agree with the manner in which they shape future of the organization, even though this does not reflect in quality assurance.

#### **Ownership:**

Under this indicator, the respondents were first asked to rate the extent at which the leader have sense of belonging in relation to their position of work. 25.7% strongly agree, 51.4% agree 16.6% were neutral, 4.6% disagree and 1.7% strongly disagree. Findings corroborate with Bass (2000) who noted that strategic leadership is not limited to those at the top of the organization. All employees can lead, not just the boss, because of the information revolution. The basis of leadership is shifting from position to knowledge. Anyone with critical knowledge that can alter (organizational) direction can show leadership. Leadership should be bottom up as well as top down (Anon, 2000). Strategic leadership can make sense at all the levels of the organization although it keeps the organization head and planners busier than the rank-and-file

Orazi *et al.*, (2014) also noted that leaders using approach of strategic style have the ability to anticipate, envision, maintain flexibility, think strategically, and work with others to initiate changes that will create a viable future for the organization. It is a situation in which the leader is able to influence followers to make autonomous decisions on a daily basis in a way that maintains short-term stability while ensuring long-term viability of the organization. It refers to the people at the top of the organization transcending their role and leads the self in terms of personal strength development and awareness, lead the followers in terms of interpersonal influence, and lead the organization in terms of aligning the competitive environment, strategic movements, and organizational goals. The study concludes that leaders have sense of belonging, hence hope for quality assurance.

In regard to know the extent to which the leader has loyalty to Work, 28.6% strongly agree, 45.7% agree 17.1% were neutral, 8.0% disagree and 0.6% strongly disagree. Findings agree with those of other scholars. Bass (2007; cited Beer and Eisenstat 2000) argues that leaders using strategic leadership style as their approach should focus their attention on outcomes and processes, seeking to acquire and leverage knowledge, fostering learning, and creativity, improving work flows by attention to relationships, anticipating internal and external environmental changes, maintaining a global mindset, meeting the diversity of the interests of the multiple stakeholders, building for the long-term while meeting short-term needs, and developing human capital. Arika & Enginoğlu (2016) asserted that strategic leadership style is a strategizing process which provides better corporate sustainability and longevity. The study concludes that leaders are to their work, hence hope for quality assurance.

Firm expectation by the leader was also rated as follows: 27.4% strongly agree, 50.3% agree 16.6% were neutral, 4.6% disagree and 1.1% strongly disagree. Findings agree with those of other scholars. Bass (2000) noted that with this approach, executives concentrate on systematically envisioning the desired future state for the organization and specifically laying out the plans on how to get there. In this process, they consult with managers, employees, suppliers, analysts, shareholders and customers. Other companies are visited. Academic scientists and technologists are questioned. Focus is on the future without neglecting to honor the past. Owino *et al.* (2011) in their study also reported that there is a

significant indirect relationship that exists between leadership and organizational effectiveness. Changes in an organizational strategy bring about new management challenges which, in turn require new strategies to be successfully implemented. The study concludes that leaders embrace firm expectation, hence hope in quality assurance.

**Table 1: Descriptive Statistics for Strategic leadership style**

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean	Std. Deviation
Command communication	2.9%	10.0%	35.6%	36.8%	13.8%	3.48	0.960
Designed Structure	2.9%	2.3%	18.3%	47.4%	29.1%	3.98	0.909
Control Work Stat	0.0%	7.4%	19.4%	49.1%	23.4%	4.11	3.075
Receptive	0.0%	5.1%	14.9%	52.6%	27.4%	3.90	0.920
Dependency on Policy	0.6%	5.1%	17.7%	50.3%	26.3%	4.02	0.795
Rounded communication	13.1%	31.0%	24.6%	17.7%	13.1%	3.97	0.837
Job execution	0.6%	8.0%	15.4%	43.4%	32.6%	3.99	0.925
Vision Articulation	1.1%	6.3%	16.6%	45.1%	30.9%	3.98	0.913
Shape Future	0.0%	5.1%	21.1%	48.0%	25.7%	3.94	0.822
Sense of Belonging	1.7%	4.6%	16.6%	51.4%	25.7%	3.95	0.873
Loyalty to Work	0.6%	8.0%	17.1%	45.7%	28.6%	3.94	0.911
Firm Expectation	1.1%	4.6%	16.6%	50.3%	27.4%	3.98	0.854
<b>Total</b>						<b>3.94</b>	<b>1.066</b>

The research found out that strategic leadership style has a positive influence on quality assurance in the institutions of higher learning in Kenya. The results indicate that the variables Quality assurance and Strategic leadership style had a significant relationship as indicated by a correlation coefficient of 0.536. The study established that there is a strong positive influence on quality assurance on the institutions of higher learning attributed to units of change in strategic leadership style. As much as leaders prefer this type of leadership, its channel of communication is questionable. Leaders of the institutions of higher learning must come to know their stakeholders' attributes in relation to communication. The channel of communication has to be clear to all stakeholders for them to achieve the vision or goal of an institution; it has to be a two-way. Leaders have to know that what and how you communicate either builds or harms the relationship between themselves and their stakeholders. Communication determines how effectively and efficiently the stakeholders will respond to quality assurance.

## 6. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Based on the research finding, strategic leadership style should not be relied on too much as its mode of communication is questionable when it comes to achievement of goals in the institutions. As much as it may look appealing to the leaders, its communication process tends to remain at the lowest management, meaning the messages derived for change does not reach all stakeholders in a correct way. This means the lowest stakeholders are unable to own the vision or what to be achieved by the organization. When it comes to quality assurance, there has to be team work and this means involvement of all stakeholders.

All leaders in the institutions of higher learning need to be aware of the positive and negative effects of strategic leadership style for them to perform their duties effectively. Without this, it is difficult for leaders to communicate their vision effectively, achieve team work, decide the best course of action, confront a stakeholder for inappropriate behavior, take action on different traits within the institution. Even though strategic leadership style seems to be more appealing in terms of its approach, their style of communication raises issues. The fundamental starting point for a leader is having a good understanding of human nature, such as needs, emotions, and motivation. Leaders of the institutions of higher learning must come to know their stakeholders' attributes in relation to communication. The channel of communication has to be clear to all stakeholders; it has to be a two-way. Leaders have to know that what and how you communicate either builds or harms the relationship between themselves and their stakeholders. Quality assurance should be about team work, the process should go through a function from study program, program/faculty to university level. Each level must have representative of each learning service element such as lecturers, students and academic supporting staff. Good leadership should seek to involve other people in the process, possibly including subordinates, peers, superiors and other stakeholder's to fosters stakeholders' commitment by encouraging quality in the organization and therefore reduce animosity. All situations are different when it comes to achievement of quality assurance. What you do in one situation as a leader will not always work in another. Leaders of the institutions of higher learning should use their judgment to decide the best course of action and the leadership style needed for each situation.



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