

# EFFECT OF TRAINING AS A KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT STRATEGY ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ORGANIZATION'S STRATEGIC VISION IN KENYA

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**Abstract:** The objective of this study is to investigate the effect of training as a Knowledge Management Strategy on the Implementation of the Organizations Strategic Vision. KM is a crucial aspect of any progressive business in today's world. The study adopted a cross-sectional research design. The research was done in Nairobi in organizations that have adapted the OPI Business Model of KIM. The target population was 30 organizations that have adapted the OPI business model from KIM. Purposive sampling technique was used so that the researcher can capture the characteristics, experiences, attitudes and perception of these unique cohorts. Questionnaires were used to collect quantitative and qualitative data to examine the variables so as to detect patterns of association. The finding of the study revealed that training positively affected implementation of strategic vision. The study concluded that adoption of effective strategic vision implementation process has an effect in the success of the vision set as well as institution. It is also important that the institution explore the need to adopt participation strategic vision implementation process where all the employees through their section heads, present their views, which are then considered by the strategic vision implementation committee.

**Keywords:** Training, Knowledge Management, Strategy Implementation.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Knowledge Management involves networks of individual, organizations, markets and technologies interconnected across geographic and cultural boundaries. It is used as a tool to ensure leading edge technology in organizations. It assesses the growth of organizations through high efficiency and innovation. It stimulates a cross functional cooperation of organizations across the globe. It facilitates networking opportunities of community of practice and helps to maintain consistency in doing business around the world through knowledge communities.(Teigland, 2007).

Knowledge management (KM) as we understand it today was popularized in the 1990s. KM is a strategic tool that enables workers at all levels to contribute constructively to the long-term success of an organization. It is an effective way of turning any organization into a fast learning one, with focus towards a sustained competitive advantage. It develops core competencies in business innovation to influence market needs,(Pasha & Ronen, 2011).

It is a highly competitive world and if organizations need to stay relevant they need to have an edge over their competitors. One way to do this is to communicate their vision, mission and goals to all their staff so they are able to steer business to the next level. This can be done through knowledge management. KM has strategic importance to organizations because it is dependent on the corporate strategy. KM is a discipline that is growing very fast, designed to provide strategy, process, and technology to increase organizational learning. Hence it contributes immensely to innovation within an organization. KM has a positive effect on the organizational performance in that it encourages innovation, product improvement and employee efficacy but it is difficult to prove,(Rasula, 2012).

KM can be used to obtain first-mover advantage and sustain competitive advantage once it has been created. First mover advantage is the strategic advantage companies earn by being the first in an industry to use information technology to substantially lower cost or to differentiate a product or service from that of a competitor. These companies usually have a high market share and profits. KM is useful data that can influence the employee's choice and behavior. However, sustaining competitive advantage occurs when information technology adds value and is different across the firms. This technology is more advantageous if it is difficult to create or acquire, (William, 2013).

Organizational knowledge is the collective and shared experience accumulated through systems, routines and activities of sharing across the organization, (Johnson, 2008). Sharing knowledge and experiences is a social process that relies on communities of interest. It can be formal or informal, but the vehicle that drives this is the Internet connection. If organizations want to grow exponentially they have to make Internet connection accessible to all employees. Exchange of knowledge occurs where there is a culture of trust without strong hierarchies or functional boundaries. Deliberately managing knowledge in a systematic and holistic way can increase awareness of benefits to both individuals and organizations, (Guyo, 2012).

This paper sets out to show the correlation between KM and strategy implementation in enhancing organization performance. Since middle level managers are the ones who drive strategy in the organization it is important that top-level management puts in place proper KM policies that can enhance strategy implementations using technology.

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

What makes organizations not pursue a strong knowledge management policy with managers at all levels? Studies have shown that organizations that are capable of managing knowledge successfully have a clear internal and external competitive strategy. Knowledge is very dynamic. New trends and innovation are taking place at a fast pace. Organizations have to be on top of their game by constantly seeking new ways of capturing and disseminating KM. Technology has advanced so much that firms that had invested millions of dollars in a state of the art intranets intended to improve knowledge sharing are no longer in use. Inexpensive and effective ways of sharing information using social media are now widely in use. Mobile-learning as a form of transferring knowledge has grown tremendously in the last five years. It is expected to grow from \$7.98 billion in 2015 to \$12.2 billion in 2017, (Zamir, 2016).

The biggest challenge in KM is to ensure participation by employees in the knowledge sharing collaboration and re-use to achieve business results. This requires changing traditional mindset and organizational culture from knowledge hoarding to knowledge sharing and creating an atmosphere of trust among employees, (Bhojaraju, 2005). KM involves changes that may not easily gain the organizational acceptance unless the leadership mobilizes the middle managers to provide an environment conducive to widespread sharing of knowledge, (Mohamed, 2004). Mungai (2014) duly asserts that KM involves capturing tacit and explicit knowledge and sharing this knowledge with workers across the board. Capturing tacit knowledge because it is not easily codified challenges most organizations. Tacit knowledge is critical in an organization's ability to sustain a long-term competitive advantage. An Organization such as KIPRA values knowledge but does not practice tacit knowledge management. Despite both tacit and explicit knowledge prevailing, no real effort has gone into management of tacit knowledge.

## **3. LITERATURE REVIEW**

The first Independent variable is training and clarity of procedures of the strategic vision. High performance is dependent on good training. Good training is determined by the quality of information the workers receives. Therefore, clarity of procedures is an independent variable. It has a causal effect on the employees who intern perform their duties better by having a clear understanding of work procedures. The organizations strategic vision is achieved when there is clarity. If there is a clear KM policy in place, strategic vision is easy to achieve. The organizations strategic vision can be manipulated to affect the validity of the study, (Cooper & Schindler, 2014). There is a new breed of middle level workers known as millennials who subscribe to a different work ethic. Millennials have grown up in an environment filled with electronic gadgets and are increasingly online in a socially networked world. They are the generation that has received the most marketing attention. As the most ethnically diverse generation, they tend to be tolerant of differences. This type of worker is hired based on their ability and passion and talent as opposed to those who were earlier hired solely because of academic qualifications or because they had contacts. Their concept of the office is a world online workspace as opposed to the normal brick and mortar. Therefore their working hours are very flexible. A study done by Mountain View

California on October 29th 2014 revealed that millennials are the “generation considered best at key skills businesses require to remain agile and innovative. Millennials’ advantages over prior generations include the ability to adapt, come up with fresh ideas and keep up to date on emerging technology,”(Techo.com , 2016).

Technology is a big factor in transferring KM policies to middle and lower level cadre workers. This can take the form of micro and mobile learning. Micro-Learning instructional technology a branch of e-learning, digital technology, informal learning that is web based Micro-Learning e.g. emails, SMS, podcast, flashcards, videos Facebook, twitter and applications (short content 120 words not more than 4 minutes, one concept at a time), gamification. Learning in small groups makes it easy to develop and identify talent. When talent is matched with passion it is easy to retain the workers who perform well in an organization.

Micro-Learning is a way of teaching and discharging content to learners in small bits. The learners are in control of what and when they are learning. It is a trend that is fast growing and the majority of learners are millennials. By 2025, Millennials alone will make up that 75 percent of the workforce. The average attention span of the millennial generation is 90 seconds,(e-Learning Industry.com, 2016). Micro-Learning is fast, mobile and can be accessed from laptops, smart phones, tablets, and desktops as schedules permit,(Maklouf, 2015). It is the future of work place training.

#### 4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a cross-sectional research design. The research was done in Nairobi in organizations that have adapted the OPI Business Model of KIM. The target population was 30 organizations that have adapted the OPI business model from KIM. Purposive sampling technique was used so that the researcher can capture the characteristics, experiences, attitudes and perception of these unique cohorts. Questionnaires were used to collect quantitative and qualitative data to examine the variables so as to detect patterns of association.

#### 5. FINDINGS

Respondents were asked whether they were aware of the organizations strategic vision, 88% of the respondents indicated that they were aware while 12% indicated that they were not aware. On whether their organization has knowledge management policy, 80% indicated that there is KM policy in their organization while 20% indicated that there is no KM policy in their organization. Majority of the respondents (85%) indicated that they use technology to relay information within the information, 10% indicated that they use technology for emails and internet browsing while 5% indicated that they use the technology for improving customer service.

Respondents were required to indicate the extent to which they agreed to various statements on training and their role on implementation of strategic vision. Items that were measured on a five point Likert-Type scale ranging from 1 being “Strongly Disagree” to 5 being “Strongly Agree”. Means of between 3.7138- 4.2174 and standard deviations of between 0.59974- 0.94058 were registered. The study findings therefore revealed that majority of the respondents (77%) agreed that the training ensures clarity of business process and procedures to a great extent (4.2174). They further agreed that training facilitates skills development and promotes innovation in the organization (4.1739). It was clear from the research findings that training promotes the development of strategic vision to a moderate extent (3.7138). The findings are as presented in Table 1.

**Table 1: Training**

Statement	Mean	Std. Deviation
Training ensures clarity of business process and procedures	4.2174	.59974
Training facilitates skills development and promotes innovation in the organization	4.1739	.65033
Training improves efficiency in the organization	3.7286	.93764
Training promotes the development of strategic vision	3.7138	.94058

On how the respondents learn about organization vision, 45% indicated that they learnt from colleagues, 25% indicated that they learnt from documentations, 20% from formal training while 20% from seminars. On whether the organizations have continuous KM training requirements for staffs, 75% of the respondents indicated there is policy while 25% indicated there is no continuous policy for KM training. Majority (52%) of the respondents indicated that they are trained semi-annually on KM, 20% indicated that they are trained when need arises, 13% indicated they are trained annually while 15% indicated that they have been trained quarterly in knowledge management. From this study it was

evident that at 95% confidence level, the variables produce statistically significant values for this study (high t-values,  $p < 0.05$ ). A positive effect is reported for all the aspects under study hence influencing implementation of strategic vision positively. The results of the regression equation shows that for a 1- point increase in the independent variables, level of strategic vision implementation is predicted to increase by 0.903, given that all the other factors are held constant. The findings therefore revealed that training has role in implementation of strategic vision.

The coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ) and correlation coefficient (R) shows the degree of association between level of strategic vision implementation and aspects under study. The research findings indicated that the coefficient of determination (the percentage variation in the dependent variable being explained by the changes in the independent variables)  $R^2$  equals 0.843, that is, strategic vision implementation level explains 84.3% of observed change in strategic vision implementation aspects under study. The P- value of 0.011 (Less than 0.05) implies that the regression model is significant at the 95% significance level. From this study it is evident that at 95% confidence level, the variables produce statistically significant values and can be relied on to explain level of strategic vision implementation.

## 6. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Adoption of effective strategic vision implementation process has an effect in the success of the visions of organization. Proper and adequate training need to be given to all employees in order for effective implementation of organization strategic vision. The organizations should ensure that they adopt and implement training policies so as to ensure employees are equipped with necessary skills to perform their duties. With existing dynamic change in business environment it is paramount for continuous training so as to adopt competitive edge within the market. Well trained staff are more productive and therefore they will result in better performance within their organizations.

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