

# THE MODERATING EFFECT OF ENTREPRENEURIAL ORIENTATION ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION AND SERVICE DELIVERY IN COUNTY GOVERNMENTS IN NORTH RIFT, KENYA

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**Abstract:** Service delivery is a key responsibility of any government to its citizens. County governments are better placed to provide services to the citizens at the local level. The county government's strategic plan outlines its strategy to provide quality services. However, complains on the quality of services provided are common among the citizens. The objective of this study is to analyze the moderating effect of entrepreneurial orientation on the relationship between strategy implementation and service delivery in county governments. The data was collected using questionnaires and interview schedule from a sample of 180 employees selected by stratified sampling. The data was analyzed by correlation and regression analysis. The study revealed that entrepreneurial orientation moderated the relationship between strategy implementation and service delivery by increasing the contribution of strategy implementation to service delivery by 6%. Regression analysis revealed that the moderating effect was statistically significant.

**Keywords:** Strategy implementation, Service delivery, Entrepreneurial orientation.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

All around the world local governments are seeking better ways of achieving local economic development and improving the lives of their citizens. This is as a result of increased democratic reforms with transformations taking place in the global economy. These changes have brought about challenges, opportunities and responsibility to the local governments to work together to improve the livelihoods of their citizens, (United Nations, 2005).

In Turkey, the local authorities have attempted to separate public policy making and service delivery and in the process move away from the traditional public administration models to more strategic approach. (Andrews, Beynon & Genc, 2017).

In South Africa, local governments are considered a key part of the reconstruction and development in the country. The government has endeavoured to grow the economy by ensuring a responsive, accountable, effective and efficient local government system. The local government system in South Africa faced challenges that included capacity and skills constrains, weak intergovernmental support and oversight and issues associated with inter-governmental fiscal system.

This led to the government coming up with a turnaround strategy to counter these challenges (Republic of South Africa, 2009).

According to Transparency international (2016), 45 per cent of Kenyans were unlikely to re-elect their governors. The significance of strategy implementation in the county governments is seen in terms of the services delivered by the public organization which provide value to the citizens (Genc, 2017). To provide services successfully, county governments need extensive planning which involves allocation of financial resources, human resources coordination and leadership. With increase in the size of the organization the more complex the implementation process becomes.

Orlando, Alexandra and Reuben (2018) in a study on entrepreneurial orientation and firm performance observed that entrepreneurial orientation affected the performance of organizations as it enables the organization to leverage its resources and in the process gain competitive advantage. This enables the organization to take advantage of opportunities and increase its performance. The study focused on small and medium enterprises in Portugal. The study differed from the current study as it adopted different variables. Krauss (2011) in a study on entrepreneurial orientation and service firms found that there is a significant relationship between EO and performance. The study focused on service firms in Austria. The study adopted different variables from the current study.

### **Statement of the Research Problem**

According to the Constitution, County Governments in Kenya are required to formulate integrated development plans which would serve as a basis for budgetary resource allocation (RoK, 2013). According to Wheelen and Hunger (2008), organizations which engage in strategic plans outperform those that do not. Organizations that implement strategic plans do better than those that do not. It is therefore anticipated that proper strategic implementation of strategic plans will lead to better service delivery in County Governments. Strategy implementation is determined by resource allocation, leadership of the organization, organizational culture, organizational structure and the technology adopted by the organization.

County Governments have experienced challenges such as inadequate human, financial and physical resources (Watuka, 2018; Gichuhi, 2015). The fourth Devolution Conference observed that county governments had the challenge of balancing between satisfying the people's expectations and controlling public finances (CoG, 2017). Entrepreneurial orientation of the county government entails the behaviour of its leaders such as innovation, pro-activeness and risk taking in pursuit of the organizational goals. The entrepreneurial orientation of the leaders can assist the county government to overcome challenges such as inadequate resources. Innovative and pro-active leaders give the organization competitive advantage by enabling the organization to develop unique capabilities to meet its service delivery needs.

A number of studies have been conducted on strategy implementation such as Onserio (2018) who did a study on strategy implementation and organizational performance using organizational environment as a moderating variable. Andrews, Beynon and Genc (2017) conducted a study on strategy implementation style on public service effectiveness, efficiency and equity. A few studies have been conducted on strategy implementation and service delivery using entrepreneurial orientation as a moderating variable. This study therefore was carried out to add to the existing literature and contribute new insights on the link entrepreneurial orientation and the relationship between strategy implementation and service delivery in the county governments in Kenya.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Theoretical Background**

This section reviews pertinent theories that underpin the study. The study was guided by the following theories: Theory of planned behaviour; Resource based theory; Path Goal Theory; Upper Echelons Theory; Systems Theory; and Miles and Snow Typology model.

### **Theory of Planned Behavior**

This study was anchored on the theory of planned behaviour among other theories. This theory was propagated by Azjen (1991). They asserted that a person's behaviour is determined by the intention to perform. This theory has been used to explain people's behaviour and performance. According to the theory, the individual's behaviour is determined by the individual's attitude and beliefs which determine how the individual acts hence affecting his or her performance. The

theory argues that, if there is a change in an individual's belief and volitional control it will trigger a change in the way he or she behaves, hence affecting his or her performance.

According to Southey (2011), there are three factors that affect behaviour: the attitude which consist of the opinions that the individual has about their own behaviour; Subjective norms which entails the opinions that others have about the behaviour; and behavioural control which is the ability of the individual to deal the behaviour. The theory assert that behavioural control gives an idea about the skills that is required to achieve a certain behaviour and the challenges that may be faced in the process. Subjective norms are determined by the beliefs that are accepted or rejected by the individual. The normative beliefs which constitute the influence from others underlie the subjective norms. Attitudes on the other hand constitute the individuals positive or negative feelings relating to certain behaviour. Individuals tend to act when they consider the behaviour as positive. Attitudes are adopted depending on the individual's beliefs.

The theory of planned behaviour is suitable for the study because the process of strategy implementation is determined by intent which underlies strategic planning process. The key intention of strategy implementation is to provide service to the citizens. Service delivery process depicts the behaviour that comes as a result of the intentions which are underlying in the county strategic plan. The strategy implementation process is dependent on the attitudes of the key implementers in the county government. When the leaders and all the employees involved in strategy implementation have the right attitude and skills, the expected outcomes of service delivery will be achieved.

According to the theory of planned behaviour, the skills of the employees have an effect on behavioural control which affects the quality of services delivered. It is important that the employees of the county government are equipped with the required skill so as to improve service delivery. The county governments should therefore allocate adequate resources to achieve this objective.

### **Miles and Snow Typology Model**

Miles and Snow topology was proposed by Raymond E. Miles and Charles C. Snow in 1978. They proposed that the strategies of an organization were as a result of how they tackled three issues: the entrepreneurial, engineering or operational and administrative issues. Entrepreneurial problem entail how the organization produces and delivers its services, engineering or operational problem consists of how the organization chooses technologies and processes of production and the administrative problem consists of how the organization establishes its roles and relationships (Sollosy, 2013).

According to Youssef and Christodoulou (2017), the way organizations address these problems leads to four strategic orientations in organizations namely: prospector, analyzer, defender and reactor orientation. Prospectors are organizations who aggressively seek out opportunities to improve their products or services. These organizations embrace innovation as a method of solving problems. They are always successful in turbulent environment. County governments with prospector orientation tend to exhibit characteristics such as seeking innovative ways of addressing issues within its ranks. Activities in such counties are centralized and there is little specialization among the staff. The organizational structure also tends to have fewer levels of management departments collaborating in their operations.

Defender organizations on other hand are organizations that struggle to maintain a stable market share and business environment. They seek to use technologies that ensure low cost of production in their operations and will always use standardized technological processes. County governments adopting this orientation will always exhibit centralized control of activities, formal procedures with every post in the organization having discrete functions.

Analyzer organization is one that shares the characteristics of both prospector and defender. These organizations seek to develop new ways of addressing issues but at the same time ensuring stability in its existing market. An analyzer tries to maintain a "balance" between maximizing on opportunities and minimizing risks in operations. An analyzer tends to specialize in a limited area of operation. According to DeSarbo, Benedetto, Song and Sinha (2005) an organization adopting an analyzer orientation fails to achieve efficiency of a defender and cannot fully exploit opportunities as a prospector would. However, Hambrick (2003) argues that analyzer strategic position is the most adoptive strategic orientation which provides a more sustainable competitive advantage to the organization in changing competitive environment. County governments with analyzer orientation tend to seek to maintain its status while at the same time developing new ways of carrying its operations to improve service delivery. They will develop ways of ensuring efficiency but at the same time ensuring low cost in its operations.

Reactor organization is one that fails to exhibit any specific strategic orientation. Such organizations do not have any clearly defined strategy. The changes in the environment will always take such organizations by surprise. Some reactor organizations may have some strategies but in most cases such strategies may no longer be relevant since they have not been modified in view of the changes in the environment. According to Helmig, Hinz and Ingerfurth (2014), Reactor organizations do not have a predictable organizational strategy as it tends to respond to the pressure imposed on it by the environment.

According to Yossef and Christodoulou (2017) organizations adopt their strategies depending on how they perceive the business environment. This leads to the development of different strategic orientations. Organizations adopting prospector orientation have an advantage over others in turbulent environments. In stable working environment those adopting a defender strategic position do much better. Organizations with reactor orientation are the most disadvantaged.

### **Concept of Strategy Implementation**

Strategic planning is a systematic decision making process that focuses attention on important issues and on how to resolve them. Strategic planning provides a general framework for action. It provides a way to determine priorities, make wise choices and allocate scarce resources to achieve agreed upon objectives.

Boyne (2001) argues that strategic planning is difficult in political set up because of the short attention spans of elected officials on strategic issues. To political leaders what is important one day may be of little importance the next day. Strategy implementation is defined by Qi (2010) as the execution stage of strategic management process which comprises of decision regarding matching the strategy and resources, structure and the motivation systems of the organization. According to Pearce and Robinson (2007) strategy implementation is a process by which a set of agreed work philosophies is translated into functional and operational targets.

The question of strategy implementation has been widely debated in the field of strategic management by scholars such Hussey (2000) who asserted that strategy implementation is one of the most difficult areas of management. It is an enactment of the intended plans put in place in strategy formulation. Some researchers have noted that many organizations have failed to achieve their objectives because they have not adequately addressed the implementation process. According to some researchers, less than 50% of strategies formulated by many firms get to be implemented. (Andrews *et al*, 2017).

According to Kihara *et al* (2016) strategy implementation determines the survival and success of the organization. However, David (2011) asserts that successful strategy implementation does not guarantee successful strategy implementation. This is because strategy formulation is more of an intellectual process while strategy implementation is an operational process. The main issues in strategy implementation include establishing annual objectives, allocating resources, altering existing organizational structure, restructuring and reengineering, revising reward and incentive plans, minimizing resistance to change, matching managers with the strategy, developing strategy support culture, adopting production or operational processes, developing an effective human resource function, and if necessary, downsizing. (David, 2011).

Many organizations have developed strategic plans for their organizations in the quest to improve the performance of their organizations. Many scholars have made attempts to understand the concept of strategy and organizational performance. A major question in strategy is why some organizations perform better than others? Of interest to many scholars is the formulation and choice of strategy that gives the organization a competitive advantage while adding value to the shareholders. Although this has been examined in different contexts, it cannot be fully addressed by considering strategy formulation and the choice of strategy only. An excellent strategy can fail to deliver the expected results due to flawed implementation (Raes, Heijlties, Glunk & Roe, 2011; Hickson, Miller & Wilson, 2003). While agreeing with this statement Elbanna, Andrews and Pollanen (2015) assert that successful implementation of strategies is crucial for the achievement of organizational goals. Strategy implementation has been described as fragmented and eclectic (Noble, 1999) and is often seen as an art than a science.

Strategy implementation is a challenge in many organizations due the low success rate. According to Raps (2004) many companies have reported a success rate of between 10 to 30 per cent which is puzzling to managers. According to Price Waterhouse Coppers (2016) very few organizations have successfully managed to close the gap between the strategy and their organizations. Organizations which are able to align their strategy and their capabilities succeed in meeting their objectives.

According to Kaplan and Norton (2001), strategy implementation is a greater challenge to managers today compared to determining the right vision and the quality of the strategy itself. While strategy formulation is difficult and challenging, strategy implementation is more problematic (Hrebiniak, 2005). He underscores the important challenges that contribute to the complexity of strategy implementation which include the culture of the organization which may not be appropriate for the challenges ahead; incentives and how people are rewarded for seniority or for 'getting old' not for performance or competitive achievement; the need to overcome problems with traditional 'silos' in the organizational structure; the challenges inherent in managing change as the organization adapt to new competitive conditions. Ooko (2015) underscores the challenge brought about by the increased turbulence in the business environment which is compounded by the increased competition and rapid technological advancement. He asserts that the rate and impact of change is greater now than ever before especially with the emergence of new methods of production and services. Managers who are able to manoeuvre through these challenges ensure that the organization maintains a competitive position. To deal with these challenges, Pearce and Robinson(2009) proposes that management need to employ processes that are considered to be able to position the organization optimally in the competitive environment by anticipating the environmental changes and unexpected internal demands of the organization.

For successful strategy implementation to take place a numbers of factors have to be in place. These factors include; ensuring the commitment of top executives, enhancing engagement at all levels of the organization, communicating a clear strategy, cascading accountabilities, selecting appropriate people to drive key initiatives, and the ability to monitor and track progress (Chetty, 2010). Hrebiniak (2005) proposes eight opportunity areas for successful implementation of strategy which include; developing a model to guide execution actions; understanding how the creation of strategy affects the implementation; managing change effectively including culture change; understanding power and using it for the success of implementation process; developing organizational structures that support information sharing, coordination, and clear accountabilities; developing effective controls and feedback mechanisms; knowing how to create an implementation- supportive culture; and exercising execution biased leadership.

Pearce and Robinson (2000) argue that to achieve its objectives, an organization has to adjust to its environment through strategy. Hunger and Wheelen (2008) while agreeing with this argument asserts that strategy implementation constitutes changes in the culture, structure and the whole management system of the organization. In relation to the same, Qi (2010) proposes seven factors which include ensuring adequate feedback systems, adequate resources, good leadership and directional skills, motivation for all the staff, coordination and communication, a suitable company structure and a good organizational culture. It is therefore apparent that for successful implementation the management has to carefully manoeuvre through these factors which require expertise and close monitoring of all areas of the organization.

The strategy implementation process is seen as having several parts. These parts include resource planning and the logistics which involve the process changes in the mix of resources required to implement the strategic plan. The organizational structure may also need to change and the system used to manage the organization may need to be improved (Ritson, 2011). Michel (2007) asserted that an institution that makes the best decisions and acts on them immediately wins. Therefore, an institution that implements its strategic plan effectively will definitely be successful.

## **2 Service Delivery**

Service delivery is a key function of the government to its citizens. According to the constitution of Kenya 2010, the services that were devolved include; health, water and sanitation, education, public transport, fire fighting, social welfare, road maintenance and housing. This was in line with the objects of the constitution which include promoting social welfare and economic development, provision of access to service and giving powers of self-governance to the people and enhance participation of the citizens in decision making. Devolution in Kenya like in many countries was motivated by service delivery at the lower levels of government.

## **3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The study used quantitative survey design where quantitative data was collected using questionnaires. Stratified random sampling was used to obtain a sample of 180 employees from the seven counties of the North Rift, Kenya. This enabled the study to obtain data from all categories of employees involved in strategy implementation in county governments. The data obtained was analyzed using correlation and regression analysis.



#### 4. RESULTS

##### Strategy Implementation, Entrepreneurial Orientation and Service Delivery (Hierarchical Multiple regression)

**Table 4.1: Model Summary**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.608 <sup>a</sup>	.370	.366	.53812
2	.651 <sup>b</sup>	.424	.416	.51640
3	.656 <sup>c</sup>	.430	.419	.51535

a. Predictors: (Constant), Strategy Implementation

b. Predictors: (Constant), Strategy Implementation, Entrepreneurial Orientation

c. Predictors: (Constant), Strategy Implementation, Entrepreneurial Orientation, SIEO.

**Table 4.2: ANOVA**

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	26.202	1	26.202	90.486	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	44.594	154	.290		
	Total	70.796	155			
2	Regression	29.995	2	14.997	56.239	.000 <sup>c</sup>
	Residual	40.801	153	.267		
	Total	70.796	155			
3	Regression	30.427	3	10.142	38.188	.000 <sup>d</sup>
	Residual	40.369	152	.266		
	Total	70.796	155			

a. Dependent Variable: Service Delivery

b. Predictors: (Constant), Strategy Implementation

c. Predictors: (Constant), Strategy Implementation, Entrepreneurial Orientation

d. Predictors: (Constant), Strategy Implementation, Entrepreneurial Orientation, SIEO

##### Source: Field data (2019)

The study tested the null hypothesis  $H_{05}$  that stated that entrepreneurial orientation has no significant effect on the relationship between strategy implementation and service delivery. This was tested using Hierarchical multiple regression where the contribution of each predictor variable is evaluated. The analysis showed that moderating variable (entrepreneurial orientation) has a significant effect on the relationship between strategy implementation and service delivery. This is because the significance obtained was 0.00 which is less than  $p < 0.05$ . The findings are consistent with Pleshko and Nickerson (2008) who asserted that strategic orientation has an effect on organizational performance. It also agrees with Andrews et al (2017) who in a study on strategy implementation style and public service effectiveness asserted that successful strategy implementation is dependent on the strategy implementation style adopted.

The R square values obtained showed the contribution of the variables to relationship. Model 1 indicated the contribution of strategy implementation to service delivery which gave  $R^2$  value of 0.370 meaning it contributes 37%. Model 2 shows the relationship between strategy implementation and entrepreneurial orientation with  $R^2$  value of 0.424 implying a contribution of 42.4%. Model 3 indicates the combined effect of strategy implementation and entrepreneurial orientation on service delivery with  $R^2$  value of 0.43 implying a contribution of 43%. This means that the introduction of the moderating variable (entrepreneurial orientation) resulted in an increase in contribution in the relationship between strategy implementation and service delivery by 6%.

According to Miles and Snow (1978), there are four strategic orientations that can be adopted by an organization in the process of implementing their strategy: Prospector, Analyzer, defender and Reactor orientation. Prospectors adopt an

aggressive posture where they seek out new opportunities and are always fast movers in adopting new technologies. Defenders are organizations that focus on efficiency and always strive for stability in a narrow market. Analyzers are organizations that strive to maintain a balance between minimizing risks and taking advantage of opportunities while reactors are organizations that adopt a short term orientation always dictated by environmental pressure. They have no clear strategy and react to urgent matters.

According to Helmig, Hinz and Ingerfurth (2014), organizations with high entrepreneurial orientation provide better services to their citizens. County governments who adopt a prospector and analyzer orientation will show a better service delivery than those that adopt a defender and reactor strategy. However, Pleshko and Nickerson (2008) observed that Analyzers organizations performed better than prospector organizations. County governments who adopt a prospector orientation pursue new and innovative technologies that enable them to deliver better services.

County governments can improve their service delivery by changing their strategic orientation so as to be more aggressive and more focused in implementing their strategic plans. The county government’s strategic orientation is depicted by its strategic aggressiveness, innovation and its management characteristics.

The findings indicated that strategy implementation has a significant effect on service delivery at the county governments in Kenya. This is consistent with the findings of Genc (2017) who concur that strategy implementation has an effect on the performance of organization. The study further revealed that a high entrepreneurial orientation will make a positive contribution to service delivery.

**Table 4.3: Regression coefficients**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error			
1	(Constant)	.410	.350		1.172	.243
	Strategy Implementation	.893	.094	.608	9.512	.000
2	(Constant)	.339	.336		1.007	.316
	Strategy Implementation	.615	.116	.419	5.291	.000
	Entrepreneurial Orientation	.302	.080	.299	3.771	.000
3	(Constant)	1.985	1.335		1.488	.139
	Strategy Implementation	.150	.383	.102	.392	.695
	Entrepreneurial Orientation	-.163	.374	-.161	-.436	.663
	SIEO	.129	.101	.709	1.275	.204

a. Dependent Variable: Service Delivery

*Source: Field data (2019)*

This indicated that the effect of entrepreneurial orientation on the relationship between strategy implementation and service delivery is statistically significant. These findings are consistent with the findings of Kraus (2011) who in a study of the effect of entrepreneurial orientation on firms in Austria found that entrepreneurial orientation had significant effect on performance. However, the findings are contrary to Obiedat (2016) who in a study on the effect of strategic orientation on organizational performance in Jordan revealed that strategy orientation has no effect on organizational performance. This indicates that entrepreneurial orientation moderated the relationship between strategy implementation and service delivery and that the moderating effect was found to be significant. Therefore we conclude that we should reject the null hypothesis that entrepreneurial orientation has no significant effect on the relationship between strategy implementation and service delivery.

## 5. CONCLUSION

The study revealed entrepreneurial orientation has a moderating effect on the relationship between strategy implementation and service delivery in county governments. The findings showed that entrepreneurial orientation has a significant effect on the relationship between resource allocation, leadership, organizational culture, organizational structure and service delivery. The findings indicate that entrepreneurial orientation is an important variable in strategy

implementation process in county governments. The findings validate concur with Ireland, Kuratko and Covin (2003) that entrepreneurial orientation affect the performance of organizations. It also validates the findings of Andrews et al (2016) that entrepreneurial orientation affects the relationship between strategy implementation style and performance.

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