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**EFFECT OF STRATEGIC CHANGE MANAGEMENT ON ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE IN PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES  
IN KENYA**

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## EFFECT OF STRATEGIC CHANGE MANAGEMENT ON ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE IN PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES IN KENYA

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### ABSTRACT

*The quality of university education has become such a high profile issue, in the 21st century due to the changes and challenges that face the entire education system in the world. The challenge that most managers in Kenyan public universities are facing in today's rapidly changing economy is to ensure organizational performance using the right tools to evaluate their own performance against rival results. This study sought to investigate effect of strategic change management on organizational performance in public universities in Kenya. It was guided by the following specific objectives: To establish how visionary leadership in change influences organizational performance and to find out how planning for change influences organizational performance. The study employed a descriptive research design and was carried out in two of Kenya's public universities; Kenyatta University and Moi University which were purposively sampled. The sample constituted management and administrative personnel who comprised the following: principals of colleges, deans of faculties, registrars (academic and administration) and Heads of Departments in the two public universities. A sample of 65 respondents participated in the study. Data was collected using a semi structured questionnaire and analysed using both descriptive and inferential statistics with the help of SPSS version 20. The results were then presented in form of tables and graphs. The results of the study indicate that while the predictor variables Planning Change and Visionary Leadership were significantly related to the Organizational performance. Visionary Leadership significantly influenced the Organizational performance of public universities. Recommendations drawn from the study included leadership support through leadership alignment and buy-in in the change process.*

**Key Words:** Visionary Leadership, Planning for Change, Change Management, Organization Performance

## INTRODUCTION

Conceptually, the change process starts with an awareness of the need for change. An analysis of this situation and the factors that have created it leads to a diagnosis of their distinctive characteristics and an indication of the direction in which action needs to be taken. Possible courses of action can then be identified and evaluated and a choice made of the preferred action (Armstrong, 2006).

Change is an alteration in the existing conditions for an organization. Even in most stable organizations change is necessary to maintain stability. Change Management means defining and adopting corporate strategies, structures, procedures and technologies to deal with change stemming from internal and external conditions (Benedict, 2007). In its most simple and effective form, change management involves working with an organization's stakeholder groups to help them understand what the change means for them, helping them make and sustain the transition and working to overcome any challenges involved. From a management perspective it involves the organizational and behavioural adjustments that need to be made to accommodate and sustain change (Branson, 2008). Strategic change is concerned with broad, long-term and organization-wide issues involving change. It is about moving to a future state that has been defined generally in terms of strategic vision and scope. It will cover the purpose and mission of the organization, its corporate philosophy on such matters as growth, quality, innovation and values concerning employees and customers, competitive positioning and strategic goals for achieving and maintaining competitive advantage and for product-market development (Armstrong, 2009).

In order to keep pace in a constantly evolving business world, organizations or institutions often

find it necessary to implement major enterprise-wide changes affecting their processes, products and people. Going beyond project management and technical tasks undertaken to enact institutional changes, change management leads the "people side" of major change within an organization. The primary goal of change management is to successfully implement new processes, products and business strategies while minimizing negative outcomes (Benedict, 2007). According to Armstrong, (2009), organizations are systems which, as affected by their environment, contain a set of practices or activities that fit together and interact to achieve a purpose. As such organizations or institutions exist to achieve a purpose. They do this through the collective efforts of the people who work in or with them. The process of organizing can be described as the design, development and maintenance of a system of coordinated activities in which individuals and groups of people work cooperatively under leadership towards commonly understood and accepted goals.

Burnes, (2004) stated that change has become a constant phenomenon which must be attended to and managed properly if an organization is to survive. Changes in technology, the marketplace, information systems, the global economy, social values, workforce demographics, and the political environment all have a significant effect on the processes, products and services produced. The culmination of these forces has resulted in an external environment that is dynamic, unpredictable, demanding and often devastating to those organizations which are unprepared or unable to respond. Furthermore, organizational managers are keen on ensuring a high performance organization. This is the case as high performance organizations (HPO) are the role models of the organizational world. According to Epstein (2004), a HPO is one that has strong financial results; satisfied customers and employees; high levels of individual

initiative; productivity and innovation; aligned performance measurement; reward systems and strong leadership.

Leaders play an important role in setting an example for all those values, behaviours and considerations expected from employees. Leaders have to achieve that changes in an organization are accepted and implemented in a way resulting not only in better job performance but also in general understanding and satisfaction of all. Therefore, it is reasonable to set the expectations of key employees that is, what they should achieve and how they should behave in order to implement successful change (Pagon et al., 2008). Organizations have an important role in our daily lives and therefore, successful organizations represent a key ingredient for developing nations. In the last 22 years, there were 6 Nobel prizes awarded to researchers who have focused on the analysis of organizations and institutions. Continuous performance is the focus of any organization because only through performance organizations are able to grow and progress (Gavrea et al., 2011).

According to higher education world over is undergoing rapid transformation in the face of changing environmental dynamics. In Kenya, this transformation has seen a rapid expansion of public higher education institutions (HEIs) in the recent past making higher education the biggest growth area in Kenya despite the various challenges posed. The biggest criticism of the proliferation of universities, so far, is that some of the new ones may have the status, but lack personnel and facilities (Mathooko, 2014). Like many organizations, the survival, growth and prosperity of these public HEIs depend on how they respond to changes taking place in the environment. In view of this, strategic change management plays a key role in positioning them in their quest to achieve

sustainable competitive advantage. Therefore, for organizations to remain truly competitive over time as the environment changes, they have to learn to adapt and reorient themselves to the changing environment. For this reason, there has to be a deliberate and coordinated leaning to a gradual systematic realignment between the environment and the organization's strategic orientation that results in improvement in performance, efficiency and effectiveness (Mathooko, 2014).

The nature of higher education around the world is changing. This is true for teaching, for research, and for the management of higher education institutions. Universities in many countries are faced with less public funding, more demands by external stakeholders as well as increasing national and international competition. This implies the need for changes within higher education institutions. More autonomy for tertiary institutions, a strategy pursued by many governments around the world, allows universities to take advantage of opportunities, but at the same time brings new risks (Ramsden, 2007). Higher education institutions have to identify ways to harness their strengths, to deal with uncertainties, they have to introduce new management tools in order to use the scarce resources prudently and efficiently to ensure performance (Mayer & Wilde, 2013).

We are presently witnessing the transformation process of higher education. Globally higher education policies are gradually moving from state-controlled system towards a system that embraces university autonomy, accountability and peer based quality assurance (Mayer & Wilde, 2013). The close of the 20th century witnessed remarkable changes within the universities in Africa. This period saw an increase in enrolment figures; for instance, from an estimated enrolment of 181,000 in 1975, universities in Africa enrolled 1,750,000 in 1995.

According to the Global Education Digest (UNESCO, 2000), African higher education had an enrolment of 2,051,751 in 2004. A striking characteristic of the history of higher education in Africa has been the rapid increase in the number and variety of institutions since the 1960s. From a low of 52 in the 1960s, the number of universities almost trebled to 143 by 1980, and more than doubled to 316 by 2000 (UNESCO, 2000). The profound and transformative impacts of globalization continue to drive major changes in higher education globally both at the systems and institutional levels, and as a result, policy makers and educational leaders continually engage change efforts to ensure that curricula and training programs are responsive to the needs of the modern economy (Altbach & Knight, 2007).

The environment in which organizations operate is continuously changing, thereby posing challenges to the organizations, and higher education institutions are no exception (Ramsden, 2007). Much government concern about the quality of education derives from the widespread belief that poor quality will frustrate efforts to use education as an effective level of economic growth and development at a time in world history that is experiencing an acceleration of globalization. The understanding of what constitutes the quality of education is, therefore, evolving. Conventional definitions have included literacy, numeracy and life skills, and these have been directly linked to such critical components as teachers, content, methodologies, curriculum, examination systems, policy, management and administration (Ross & Genevois, 2006).

The history of formal higher education in Kenya can be traced to the early 20th century when the British colonial powers established Makerere College in Uganda to replace the traditional non-formal forms of education that existed previously in East Africa.

Rising demand for higher education led to the founding of the Royal Technical College in Nairobi in 1956 as a constituent campus of Makerere College (Mutula, 2002). The Royal Technical College, re-named the University College in 1961, became the University of Nairobi in 1970, the first fully-fledged university in post-independence Kenya (Nyaigotti-Chacha, 2004; Odhiambo, 2011; Sifuna, 2010). The intervening decades were characterized by continuous growth in demand for (and dramatic albeit unplanned expansion of) higher education (Sifuna, 2010; Odhiambo, 2011; Oanda & Jowi, 2012; Owuor, 2012). A search on the Commission for University Education's (CUE) website reveals Kenya currently has twenty three public universities with several constituent colleges and campuses and seventeen chartered privates also with a number of constituent colleges (CUE, 2015).

In addition, Kenya has several technical, industrial, vocational, and entrepreneurship training institutions, hereafter referred to as non-university institutions. Despite its rapid expansion, Kenya's public higher education system faces a number of serious challenges including: massification; overcrowding; ever-growing demand; erosion of the non-university subsector due to acquisitions and takeovers by public universities in search of space; insufficient/declining public funding; curricula that are not responsive to modern-day needs of the labor market; declining quality; lack of basic laboratory supplies & equipment; crumbling infrastructure; poorly equipped/stocked libraries; poor governance; and rigid management structures (Boit & Kipkoech, 2012; Gudo et al., 2011). Kenya's public universities have witnessed decades of record growth in enrollment from just 3,443 students in 1970 to nearly 200,000 in 2010. Although there have been efforts over the years to expand the public higher education system, rapid and sustained double-digit growth in demand has consistently outpaced supply. The annual rate of

growth in enrollment between 2005 and 2010, for instance, averaged nearly 40 percent (Nganga, 2010; Owuor, 2012).

Until 2007, Kenya had only seven public universities; however, in preparation for the increased number of students transiting to university as a result of free primary and secondary, a number of tertiary institutions were upgraded to university colleges. This was despite the fact that some did not have the basic infrastructure for university training but this shortcoming was overtaken by political influence. This action is bound to bring about many challenges among them competition, human resource management, financial management, quality assurance, operations, infrastructural, change management and strategic management among others. In Kenya, most decisions about higher education development have been politicized. The consequences of politicized university governance have been unplanned growth of university education and diminished democratization of decision-making within university leadership (Odhiambo, 2013).

### **Statement of the Problem**

Changes arise out of the need for organizations to exploit existing or emerging opportunities and deal with threats in the market. In order to ensure success, it is crucial that organizations seek to create a competitive advantage and wherever possible innovate to improve their competitive positions. This implies the readiness to change within the organization and the ability to implement the proposed change (Epstein, 2004). Universities in Kenya today are operating in a highly turbulent and dynamic environment as a result of liberalization of the higher education industry, resulting in an influx of many players. As a result, this has brought about managerial challenges to higher education institutions, especially public universities in

achieving organizational performance (Mathuku & Ogutu, 2014).

Higher education plays a crucial role in the supply of high level manpower for the socio-political and economic development of a nation (Ekundayo & Ajayi, 2009). Universities in Kenya have experienced various changes, prompting responses from players in the higher education sub-sector with the objective of mitigating risks and taking advantage of opportunities. This has triggered research in the area of strategic change management through application of clear and sustainable response strategies. Past research has been carried out on problems facing the public universities, especially focusing on funding, resources (human and physical), staff remuneration, political interference and research in view of changing environments and government policies (Mathooko, 2013).

In the past, studies on strategic change management have been conducted mainly in for-profit organizations. In HEIs, Ofori and Atiogbe (2012) looked at the challenges facing strategic planning in universities in Ghana while Mutula (2002), Ndirangu and Odoto (2011) investigated the problems facing university education and the challenges in teaching and learning in Kenya's public universities, respectively. Mayer and Wilde (2013) looked at managing change at Universities in Africa and Southeast Asia. While these studies compare well with the current study, they do not address organizational performance in respect to strategic change management. This study, therefore, sought to establish effect of strategic change management on organizational performance in public universities in Kenya.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The general objective of this study was to assess effect of strategic change management on

organizational performance in public universities in Kenya. The Specific Objectives of the study were:

- To establish the influence of visionary leadership in strategic change on organizational performance in public universities in Kenya
- To find out the influence of planning for strategic change on organizational performance in public universities in Kenya

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Theoretical Review

In an effort to understand organization change, four theories of change management were explored: Kurt Lewin's three step change theory (1951), Lippit's phases of change theory (1958), Social Cognitive theory (Bandura, 1977; 1986) and the Theory of Reasoned Action and Planned Behaviour (Ajzen, 1985).

### Kurt Lewin's change theory

Kurt Lewin, a noted organizational theorist, is the pioneer of addressing how and why change occurs (Griffins, 2005). He identified three stages of change, (unfreeze-change-freeze) which provide a high level approach to change. The concept behind this theory is that it would enable a manager make radical changes in the organization; minimize the disruption of the structures' operations and make sure that the change is adopted permanently (Morrison, 2014). The first step is unfreezing which means getting people to gain perspective on their day to day activities, unlearn their habits and open up new ways of reaching their objectives (Morrison, 2014). In this case, in any university set up the management and its employees would unlearn their old habits and learn new habits to suite the new environment. Individuals who are to be affected by the impending change must be led to recognize why the change is necessary (Griffins, 2005). Unfreezing

is also altering the present stable equilibrium that supports existing behaviors and attitudes. This process must take account of the inherent threats change presents to people and the need to motivate those affected to attain the natural state of equilibrium by accepting change (Armstrong, 2009).

It is vital for the management of public universities to understand that a change process involves resistance and conflict in its implementation strategy. In any change process, management should ensure the employees understand the change and make them part of the change as they have a role to play as well. Inclusion brings about ownership of the change management process. Next the change itself is implemented and it comprises of developing new responses based on new information (Griffins, 2005). This step takes more time as it involves a transition period. In order to gain efficiency, people will have to take on new tasks and responsibilities. This entails a learning curve that will at first slow the organization (Morrison, 2014). Finally, refreezing involves reinforcing and supporting the change so that it becomes a part of the system (Griffins, 2005). Refreezing is stabilizing the change by introducing the new responses into the personalities of those concerned (Armstrong, 2009). Change will only reach its full effect if it is made permanent. Once the organizational changes have been made and the structure has regained its effectiveness, every effort must be made to cement them and make sure the new organization becomes standard (Morrison, 2014).

Therefore, Lewin's model illustrates the effects of forces that either promote or inhibit change. Specifically, driving forces promote change while restraining forces oppose change. Hence, change will occur when the combined strength of one force is greater than the combined strength of the

opposing set of forces (Robbins, 2003). The challenge in any strategic change process lies in making the change permanent and smoothening out the challenges so as to ensure continuous improvement, quality and organizational performance. Lewin's work was expanded and modified by Rogers (2003) who described five phases of planned change: awareness, interest, evaluation, trail and adoption. Another change theorist, Ronald Lippitt (Lippitt et al., 1958) identified seven phases.

### Theory of reasoned action and planned behaviour

The theory of reasoned action states that individual performance of a given behaviour is primarily determined by a person's intention to perform that behaviour. There are two major factors that shape the individual's intention. First, the individual's attitude towards the desired behaviour must be positive for change to occur (Robbins, 2003). This translates to mean that the attitude of the change agents in any public university must be positive in order to influence the desired behaviour of change by the staff. The change agent has a lot of control over the way change is introduced and handled in the institution. Second, the influence of the person's social environment or subjective norm is another factor that shapes the individual's attention. Every institution has its own culture; this includes the beliefs of their peers and what they believe the individual should do as well as the individual's motivation to comply with the opinions of their peers. In many of our public universities, managers are trying to eliminate adversarial relationships with staff and adopt a more collaborative relationship which can be enhanced through project teams. This is because changing attitudes and values is perhaps the hardest thing to do in any change process (Griffins, 2005).

The theory of planned behaviour includes the concept of perceived control over the opportunities, resources, and skills necessary to perform the desired behaviour. The concept of perceived behavioural control is similar to the concept of self-efficacy. A vital aspect of the behavioural change process is perceived behavioural control over opportunities, resources and skills necessary to perform behaviour (Robbins, 2003).

### Conceptual framework

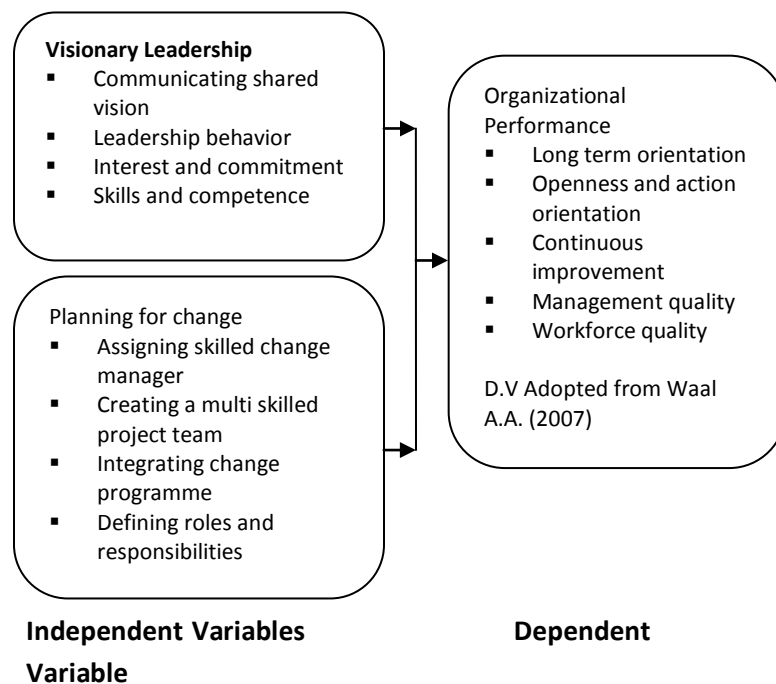


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

### Empirical Review

#### Visionary Leadership

Visionary leadership stands apart from other leadership behavior on the fact that leaders create an inspiring vision and communicate that vision among subordinates so that organizations moves from good to better. Further, visionary leadership refers to the capacity to create and communicate a view of a desired state of affairs that clarifies the



current situation and induces commitment to an even better future (Kirkpatrick, 2004). Visionary leadership is said to have positive effects on follower outcomes, resulting in high trust in the leader, high commitment to the leader, high levels of performance among followers, and high overall organizational performance (Valenzuela, 2011).

There has been considerable theoretical and empirical work conducted on organizational performance. An emerging area within this work is the role attributed to leadership in facilitating organizational performance enhancement (Jing & Avery, 2008). During the past four decades, the impact of leadership styles on organizational performance has been a topic of interest among academics and practitioners working in the area of leadership (Giambatista, 2004; Rowe et al., 2005). Perhaps the most prominent reason for this interest is the widespread belief that leadership can affect the performance of organizations (Rowe et al., 2005). Scholars and practitioners suggest that effective leadership behaviours can facilitate the improvement of performance when organizations face challenges such as change management, competitive markets and decreasing returns (McGrath & MacMillan, 2015). Visionary leaders create a strategic vision of some future state, communicate that vision through framing and use of metaphor, model the vision by acting consistently and build commitment towards the vision (McShane & Glinow, 2010). Some scholars (Zhu et al., 2005) suggest that visionary leadership will result in high levels of cohesion, commitment, trust, motivation and hence performance in the new organizational environments.

According to Wang (2010), universities are responsible for themselves in resources seeking and market seeking. They need to be self-sufficient and be accountable to the stakeholders. Increasing call

for accountability to performance but with less financial supports from governments has caused university managers much burden in management control. University managers may need to seek external resources to meet the extra demands by academic activities. They may also need to ensure that the university resources are properly allocated. The managers need to undertake full responsibilities for their actions within the regulations to obtain value for money.

### **Planning for Change**

Norris and Poulton (2010) stated that planning is a core competency of successful organizations, leaders, and managers. It pervades all organizational units and processes. Higher education planning in all its forms engages a broad cross section of administrative leaders, staff, faculty, students, alumni, and other stakeholders. Planning is ongoing, on different time frames and schedules. It aims to improve an institution's capacity to fulfill its mission of service, sustain its values and provide enhanced value to its stakeholders. All of this occurs in the face of strong competition, significant environmental change, uncertainty, and accountability pressure.

Roles, responsibilities, budgets and resources should be clearly defined. A change strategy should be developed and the project plan should be documented detailing all tasks and milestones. This plan should also provide for timely short term wins throughout the project (Kotter, 2007). Successfully managing the complexity of change in public universities is virtually impossible without a robust plan that is supported by strong project management. The formal procedure of applying a planning process in preparation for change helps organizations to: - (Prosci, 2012) take stock of their current position; identify what is to be achieved, and what the future position following the change is

expected to be; detail precisely the who, what, when, where, why and how of achieving and implementing the change objectives; assess the impact of the change on the organization and the people within it, as well as other stakeholders and ensure alignment with the organization's business model/strategy.

Fundamentally, planning ensures that institutions are aware of the implications of what they want to do and are prepared for all reasonable eventualities. It can also be the point at which an assessment is made about whether or not a proposed change should proceed. However, even in situations where change results from a directive and is therefore not subject to testing whether or not it should proceed, planning is still an important way to scope out the likely impacts of the change and the strategies that can be used to accommodate them (Prosci, 2012).

### **High Performance Organizations**

HPOs use 'bundles' of human resources, skills utilisation practices and work organization arrangements to increase organizational performance and competitive advantage (Payne, 2008). HPOs are characterized by a number of elements that have been identified by various authors such as Kotter (2002), Morton (2003) and Waal (2007 & 2013). This research looks at five main HPO factors that is, long-term orientation, openness and action orientation, continuous improvement, management quality and workforce quality. Long term orientation is what separates a HPO from other companies. In a HPO, long-term continuity of the organization always takes priority over achieving short-term profit. This type of long-term thinking extends to all stakeholders: customers, suppliers, employees, government, interest groups, society and generally everyone who has a relation with the organization should be

positively affected by it. Long term orientation covers five areas that is stakeholder orientation, customer orientation, longevity, promotion from within and a secure workplace (Waal, 2013).

According to Keller (2011), openness and action orientation in a HPO is evident when there is an open culture which means that management values the opinions of the employees and involves them in important organizational processes. Making mistakes is allowed and is regarded as an opportunity to learn. Employees spend a lot of time on dialogue, knowledge exchange and learning to develop new ideas aimed at increasing their performance and make the organization performance driven. According to Kotter (2007), managers are personally involved in experimenting thereby fostering an environment of change in the organization. Continuous improvement starts with a HPO adopting a strategy that will set the company apart by developing many new options and alternatives. After that, the organization will do everything in its power to fulfil this unique strategy. It continuously simplifies, improves and aligns all its processes to improve its ability to respond to events efficiently and effectively and to eliminate unnecessary procedures, work and information overload. The company also measures and reports everything that matters so it rigorously measures progress, consequently monitors goal fulfilment and confronts the brutal facts.

People in a HPO feel a moral obligation to continuously strive for the best results. The organization continuously innovates products, processes and services thus constantly creating new sources of competitive advantage by rapidly developing new products and services to respond to market changes (Waal, 2013). In a HPO, management maintains trust relationships with people on all organizational levels by valuing employees' loyalty, treating smart people with

respect, creating and maintaining individual relationships with employees, encouraging belief and trust in others, and treating people fairly (Payne, 2008). Managers at a HPO work with integrity and are a role model by being honest and sincere, showing commitment, enthusiasm and respect, having a strong set of ethics and standards, being credible and consistent, maintaining a sense of vulnerability and by not being self-complacent. They apply decisive, action-focused decision-making by avoiding over-analysis but instead coming up with decisions and effective actions, while at the same time fostering action-taking by others (Hughes et al., 2012).

HPO managers coach and facilitate employees to achieve better results by being supportive, helping them, protecting them from outside interference, and by being available. Management holds people responsible for results and is decisive about non-performers by always focusing on the achievement of results, maintaining clear accountability for performance, and making tough decisions. Managers at a HPO develop an effective, confident and strong management style by communicating the values and by making sure the strategy is known to and embraced by all organizational members. A HPO assembles and recruits a diverse and complementary management team and workforce with maximum work flexibility. The workforce is trained to be resilient and flexible. They are encouraged to develop their skills to accomplish extraordinary results and are held responsible for their performance, as a result of which creativity is increased, leading to better results (Waal, 2013).

### **Organizational performance**

Successful organizations represent a key ingredient for developing nations. Continuous performance is the focus of any organization because only through performance organizations are able to grow and

progress. Thus, organizational performance is one of the most important variables in the management research and arguably the most important indicator of the organizational performance (Gavrea, et al., 2011). Great pressure has been exerted on public organizations to increase the quality of services, efficiency and effectiveness in utilization of resource in new public management reform. As one kind of public organizations, universities have experienced great changes since then. Managerialism and entrepreneurialism concepts have been increasingly applied to university management. The ideology of university as a corporate actor has increasingly gained importance in systematic coordination in recent years (De Boer et al., 2007).

Organizational performance can be measured using indicators in efficiency, effectiveness, timeliness, work place environment. Efficiency and effectiveness are the central terms used in assessing and measuring the performance of organizations (Mouzas, 2006). A measure of effectiveness assesses the ability of an organization to attain its pre-determined goals and objectives. Effectiveness is the extent to which the policy objectives of an organization are achieved (Asmild et al., 2007). Organizational efficiency is concerned with the resources consumed to accomplish a task or produce an output or income. Resources include personnel, materials, facilities, energy, time and money. Workplace environment or the organizational climate of an organization includes physical amenities and the organizational culture (Mouzas, 2006).

Public universities in Kenya are recognised in their performance by looking at some of the following factors such as enrolment rates, completion rates that is number of students who graduate annually, and webometrics ranking. According to Owuor (2012), University of Nairobi (UoN) has been ranked

as the best university in Kenya followed by K.U and Moi University in that order. As of January 2016, the ranking web of universities in Africa ranks UoN at the 6<sup>th</sup> position followed by K.U at 30<sup>th</sup> position and Moi University at 54<sup>th</sup> position. Research posits that enrolment rates have been increasing over the years in both private and public universities in Kenya with a great significance in female enrolment. The Economic Survey (2014) shows enrolment in universities (both public and private) rose to 324,560 students up from 240,551 students the previous year, with the number of universities in Kenya standing at 67.

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

Research design is a blueprint of the research to be undertaken showing tools required, resources needed, cost involved and the time schedule of anticipated progress (Ngau, 2004). This study employed a descriptive research design. The target population of interest in this study constituted the management and administrative personnel of Kenyatta University and Moi University. To get a sample, the researcher used the number of personnel found in each category of the target population accessed from the universities' websites. The researcher used purposive (judgemental) sampling which is a non-probability sampling method. Primary data was collected using questionnaires to be given to the registrars (academic and administration), principals of colleges, deans of faculties and HODs. These respondents were specifically targeted for their ability to provide pertinent information to the study. The questionnaire contained structured questions. The secondary data was obtained from journals, universities and government documents in public domain and other relevant internet sources. The data collection procedure for the study begun by obtaining a letter from the University Department of EPD of JKUAT and introducing it to the management of Kenyatta University and Moi

University respectively to permit the researcher to carry out the study in their institutions. A pilot study was undertaken on at least 10 respondents to test the reliability and validity of the research instrument. Information gathered during the pretesting was used to revise the instrument. After analyzing pilot results, irrelevant and baseless items were discarded and replaced with more relevant and logical ones that elicit the required responses. Observation of recent studies in the area of study and the results obtained from these studies were made to help ascertain the concurrent validity of the research instrument. An opinion was also sought from the research supervisors. The instrument in this case was scrutinized to find out whether it addressed all possible areas and intend to measure, ensure its completeness, accuracy and appropriateness. Data collected was coded and descriptively analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS version 20) and Microsoft excel. The qualitative analysis helped the researcher in giving recommendation in line with the conclusions drawn for the whole population under study (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003). Quantitative analysis provided findings that were presented using tables and graphs for further analysis and to facilitate comparison.

### **RESULTS AND INTERPRETATIONS**

A total of 61 respondents completely filled the questionnaires making a response rate of 93%. The characteristics of the respondents sampled are presented in the first part of this chapter. The second part involved analysis of effect of strategic change management on organizational performance in public universities in Kenya.

Majority of the respondent (55.7%) were male whereas (44.3%) of the respondent were female, this is an indication that both genders were involved in this study and thus the finding of the study did not suffer from. Majority of the respondents (36.1%)

were aged 31 to 45 years while the minority were above 60 years of age. These results show that the study sample was sensitive to the age of the respondents capturing opinions across all the age groups. Majority of the study respondents (29.5%) had 3-5 years of experience in their current job while the minority (3.2%) had below more than 20 years of experience. Most of the respondents (44.4%) were degree holders while a few (14.8%) had post graduate education.

### **Descriptive Statistics**

#### **Visionary Leadership**

To measure visionary leadership respondents were presented with five statements on likert scale and asked to state how much they agreed with each statement. The responses ranged from 1-strongly disagree through to 5-strongly agree. Most of the respondents (55%) agreed that the leaders in their institutions ensure high levels of performance regardless of changes taking place. Majority of the respondents (52%) agreed that the vision for the institution is clearly spelt out and has resulted in commitment and support by the employees, and that there exists open communication from the top management and among subordinates in the institution. Almost half of the respondents (48%) agreed that while going through changes in the institution, change managers provide the necessary resources and believe in the change. On the other hand, (47%) of the respondents agreed that the leaders of change in the institution are highly visible and respected by all employees.

#### **Planning Change**

To measure planning change respondents were presented with five statements on likert scale and asked to state how much they agreed with each statement. The responses ranged from 1-strongly disagree through to 5-strongly agree. Three

quarters of the respondents (75%) agreed that in the university they have skilled change leaders to drive change processes in the institution. (67%) agreed that assessments are carried out to ascertain whether proposed changes should take place. Two thirds of the respondents (65%) agreed that in the face of change, a strategy is put in place detailing tasks and milestones. Majority of the respondents (56%) agreed that roles and responsibilities are clearly defined. However, just slightly more than half of the respondents (52%) agreed that while planning for change in the institution, the management involves its subordinates to ensure participation and involvement.

#### **Organizational performance**

##### **Long term orientation**

To measure long-term orientation respondents were presented with four statements on likert scale and asked to state how much they agreed with each statement. The responses ranged from 1-strongly disagree through to 5-strongly agree.

Most of the respondents (70%) agreed that management has been with the institution for a long time. Majority of the respondents (62%) agreed that the institution is a secure workplace for its employees. (59%) of the respondents agreed that the university maintains good and long term relationships with all stakeholders, clients, suppliers, employees, government, interest groups, society and generally everyone who has a relation with the institution. However, half of the respondents (51%) agreed that the new management is promoted from within the institution to there been well developed.

##### **Openness and Action orientation**

To measure openness and action orientation respondents were presented with five statements

on likert scale and asked to state how much they agreed with each statement. The responses ranged from 1-strongly disagree through to 5-strongly agree.

Most of the respondents (68%) agreed that there is open communication, opportunities for knowledge exchange and learning in the institution. More than half of the respondents, (61%) agreed that management welcomes change in the institution while another (56%) of the respondents agreed that employees are always involved in important processes. The institution is performance driven was supported by (52%) of the respondents while another (50%) agreed that management frequently engages in a dialogue with employees.

### **Continuous improvement**

To measure continuous improvement respondents were presented with seven statements on likert scale and asked to state how much they agreed with each statement. The responses ranged from 1-strongly disagree through to 5-strongly agree.

Most of the respondents (74%) agreed that the institution continuously innovates its products, processes and services. More than half of the respondents (64%) agreed that the institution continuously innovates its core competencies and (62%) agreed that in the university, processes are continuously improved. Another (61%) of the respondents agreed that the institution has adopted a strategy that sets it clearly apart from other institutions. However, the statement that everything that matters to performance is explicitly reported was supported by (56%) of the respondents while another (55%) agreed that in the university, processes are continuously aligned. The statement that in the university, processes are continuously simplified was supported by (52%) of the respondents.

### **Management Quality**

To measure management quality respondents were presented with ten statements on likert scale and asked to state how much they agreed with each statement. The responses ranged from 1-strongly disagree through to 5-strongly agree.

Most of the respondents (73%) agreed that the management focuses on achieving results. On the other hand the statements “management is decisive with regard to non-performers” and “Management has integrity” were the least rated at (35%) and (47%) respectively.

### **Workforce quality**

To measure workforce quality respondents were presented with four statements on likert scale and asked to state how much they agreed with each statement. The responses ranged from 1-strongly disagree through to 5-strongly agree.

Most of the respondents (65%) agreed that the management always holds employees responsible for their results, and that the university has a diverse and complementary workforce. On the other hand half of the respondents agreed that the management inspires employees to accomplish extraordinary results (52%) and that employees are trained to be resilient and flexible.

In assessing the performance of the selected universities in the past 5 years, the study focussed on the web ranking of the universities in Africa.

The results of the study indicate that Kenyatta University and Moi University have constantly performed poorly compared to University of Nairobi. Perhaps this explains why studies focussing on performance of universities in Kenya have focussed on University of Nairobi. According to Osabiyo (2015) there is dearth of information on the overall performance of universities in Kenya

since the focus of studies have been on the best performing university which is Nairobi University. McRoy and Gibbs (2009) argue that to understand performance of universities there is need of sampling non-performing institutions as well so as to get representativeness and understand the case for both negative and positive aspects to university performance.

While the universities have been improving on performance, the year 2014 saw a deviation to the trend. While Kenyatta University improved with a significant margin, the performance of Moi University dropped significantly.

The results of the study also confirm of change measures that have been put in place to ensure performance while meeting the changes by the

government in ensuring access to university education to all Kenyans. These efforts have seen an increase in the enrolment levels each year in the universities and introduction of new courses which has initiated several changes in the universities. However this has not reflected in the different performance of the universities.

**Correlation of Performance between Moi University and Kenyatta University**

Correlation test was run to assess whether the performance of Moi University and that of Kenyatta University were linearly related. The results indicated a weak negative linear relation between Moi University and Kenyatta University with Pearson correlation = -0.364, p = .000 (2-sided) as shown in table below.

**Table 1: Correlation on Performance of Moi University and Kenyatta University**

		Organization Performance
Visioning Leadership	Pearson Correlation	-0.3640. **
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	5

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The above Pearson correlation value indicated a weak negative correlation between the performance of Moi University and that of Kenyatta University such that a positive change in the performance of Kenyatta University would lead to a negative change in the performance of Moi University.

Despite being exposed to same change environment, the universities have proved to perform differently as indicated by the correlation results. Certainly change measures have different impacts in the universities. It all depends on the abilities of the organisation to effectively manage change and ensure that their rate of improved performance is maintained (Bhalla et al., 2011).

Going by the results of the study while Kenyatta University have showed constant adaptation to the changes and has recorded continued improvement in performance albeit at different rates, Moi University on the other hand have registered dwindling performance albeit at small margins apart from the year 2014 when it performed dismally.

**Inferential Statistics**

**Correlations**

**Correlation between Visionary Leadership and Organizational Performance**

Correlation test was run to assess whether Visionary Leadership and Organizational

Performance were linearly related. The results indicated a strong linear relation between Visionary Leadership and Organizational Performance with

Pearson correlation = .641, p = .000 (2-sided) as shown in table below.

**Table 2: Visionary Leadership and Organizational Performance**

		Organization Performance
Visionary Leadership	Pearson Correlation	.641**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	61

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The above Pearson correlation value indicates that a strong positive correlation between Visionary Leadership and Organizational Performance such that a positive change in Visionary Leadership would lead to a positive change in Organizational Performance.

Correlation test was run to assess whether Planning Change and Organizational Performance were linearly related. The results indicated a strong linear relation between Planning Change and Organizational Performance with Pearson correlation = .697, p = .000 (2-sided) as shown in table below.

**Correlation between Planning Change and Organizational Performance**

**Table 3: Planning Change and Organizational Performance**

		Organization Performance
Planning Change	Pearson Correlation	.697**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	61

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The above Pearson correlation value indicates that a strong positive correlation between Planning Change and Organizational Performance such that a positive change in Planning Change would lead to a positive change in Organizational Performance.

Most of the respondents agreed that the leaders in their institutions ensure high levels of performance regardless of changes taking place. The findings support McGrath and MacMillan (2015) findings that effective leadership facilitates improved performance when organizations face challenges such as change management, competitive markets and decreasing returns. Majority of the respondents agreed that the vision for the institution is clearly spelt out and has resulted in commitment and support by the employees, and that there exists open communication from the top management

**SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

**Summary of major findings**

The influence of visionary leadership in strategic change on organizational performance



and among subordinates in the institution. Almost half of the respondents agreed that while going through changes in the institution, change managers provide the necessary resources and believe in the change. On the other hand, the respondents agreed that the leaders of change in the institution are highly visible and respected by all employees. These findings support McShane and Glinow (2010) who found out that a leader who create a strategic vision of some future state, communicate that vision through framing and use of metaphor, model the vision by acting consistently and build commitment towards the vision. Correlation test indicated a strong linear relation between Visionary Leadership and Organizational Performance. A positive change on visionary leadership will lead to a positive change in organizational performance. These results echo Valenzuela (2011) who found out that visionary leadership have positive effects on follower outcomes, resulting in high trust in the leader, high commitment to the leader, high levels of performance among followers, and high overall organizational performance.

#### **Influence of planning for strategic change on organizational performance**

Three quarters of the respondents agreed that in the university skilled change leaders drive change processes in the institution. Two thirds of the respondents agreed that assessments are carried out to ascertain whether proposed changes should take place. These findings support Norris and Poulton (2010) who found out that in higher education planning which focuses on continually engaging administrative leaders, staff, faculty, students, alumni, and other stakeholders will ensure improved an institution's capacity to fulfil its mission of service, sustain its values and provide enhanced value to its stakeholders. Majority of the respondents agreed that roles and responsibilities

are clearly defined. However, just slightly more than half of the respondents agreed that while planning for change in the institution, the management involves its subordinates to ensure participation and involvement. Correlation analysis indicated a strong linear relation between Planning Change and Organizational Performance. Similarly Prosci (2012) found out that planning for change helps organizations perform since they are able to take stock of their current position and improve on it; identify what is to be achieved, and what the future position is following the change; detail precisely the who, what, when, where, why and how to achieve organizational performance through the implementation of the change objectives.

#### **Conclusion**

The study was aimed at assessing the influence of Visionary Leadership and Planning Change on the organizational performance of public universities in Kenya. It was guided by two specific objectives including; to establish whether visionary leadership in strategic change influences organizational performance in public universities in Kenya and to find out whether planning for strategic change influences organizational performance in public universities in Kenya.

Results from regression model of organizational performance on Visionary Leadership and Planning Change revealed that the coefficients for Visionary Leadership and Implementing Change were significant at 5% level of significance. Therefore, Organizational Performance could be predicted using Visionary Leadership strategies. However, the coefficient for Planning Change was not significant. These findings support McRoy and Gibbs (2009) who found out that to ensure organizational performance, higher education institutions should be allowed to develop along the lines of free market pressures by putting up integrated strategic approach of the organizational development model

where participation is encouraged such that all employees are involved in the analysis, planning and implementation process. However, these findings contrast those of a study conducted by Osabiyo (2015) that revealed that one crucial reason why Kenyan public universities perform in rapidly changing economy is employing the right tools to evaluate their own performance against rival results. They demonstrate excellence in their operational performance as well as strategic planning for change.

### **Recommendations**

The following recommendations were drawn from the findings of the study:

**Leadership support:** From the results of the study visionary leadership has a significant effect on organizational performance through change implementation. Public universities are therefore advised to ensure leadership alignment and buy-in in the change process to ensure its successful implementation and organizational performance.

**Involve employees:** Public universities should advocate for change management processes that involve all the employees as the stakeholders. This

is because employees are the agents of change in the institutions and therefore should be able to identify with and understand the change process and strategies. Additionally in incorporating change strategies, employee opinions should be sought and included in the change management process.

### **Areas of further research**

This study has some limitations. It confined its focus to two public universities, Moi University and Kenyatta University. Hence, future research should examine effect of strategic change management on organizational performance with a larger sample incorporating most universities and also a comparison between private and public universities.

Whereas this research has relied on quantitative approaches to examine effect of strategic change management on organizational performance, an in-depth analysis of individual responses can generate useful inductive information and provide a richer understanding of the influence of strategic change management on organizational performance.

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