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**STRATEGIC PLAN IMPLEMENTATION AND SERVICE DELIVERY IN  
STATE CORPORATIONS IN KENYA: A CASE OF KENYA MEDICAL  
RESEARCH INSTITUTE**

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**Abstract**

The purpose of the study was to investigate the influence of strategic plan implementation on service delivery in state owned corporations in Kenya: A case of Kenya Medical Research Institute. The study was guided by the following objectives; to determine whether strategic leadership influences service delivery at Kenya Medical Research Institute, to establish how the organizational structure influence service delivery at Kenya Medical Research Institute, to determine whether human resources influence service delivery at Kenya Medical Research Institute and to establish how the government policy influences the service delivery at Kenya Medical Research Institute. The study used descriptive research design. The target population was drawn from employees from various departments at KEMRI headquarters comprising of 769 employees. Questionnaires were used as the research instruments. For validity the supervisor appraised the instrument and a pilot study was also carried out to identify items in the instrument which were ambiguous and inappropriate in order to improve their validity and reliability. Both stratified sampling and simple random sampling were used in the study. The data was analyzed using both descriptive statistics and inferential statistics to investigate the influence of strategic plan implementation on service delivery at KEMRI. The study revealed that there was a relationship between the independent variables – strategic leadership, organization structure, human resources and government policy – and the dependent variable – service delivery. The independent variable ranking showed that strategic leadership was the first and most significant independent variable followed by organization structure and human resources. The study recommends that the organization should ensure that it is governed by clear system of rules, regulations, policies and procedures. It is also recommended that the organization should revise its organization structure to match the changes in strategy requirements. Another recommendation is that the organization should have a clear policy in place on the recruitment of employees to ensure that those considered for employment have adequate knowledge, skills and experience. It is further recommended that the government should find a way of providing a linkage between the State owned corporations and policy makers.

**Keywords:** Strategic plan implementation, strategic leadership, organization structure, human resources, government policy, service delivery

**INTRODUCTION**

According to Rouse (2016), strategic planning is a process in which organizational leaders determine their vision for the future as well as identify their goals and objectives for the

organization. The process also includes establishing the sequence in which those goals should fall so that the organization is enabled to reach its stated vision. In order for an organization to align their operations to the dynamic operational environment, they have to constantly formulate and implement strategies (Johnson and Scholes, 2008). A strategy is an important component of organization planning towards the attainment of organizational objectives as it translates plans into actions and the intended results so as to deliver on organizational objectives. According to Mbithi (2016), the test of successful strategy implementation is whether actual operational results is as per the targeted results or superseded the outcome as set out in the strategic plan. This is because failure to achieve the set targets signifies weak strategy which has been poorly implemented

According to Berman (2009) strategy implementation is the process through which a chosen strategy is put into action. It involves the design and management of systems to achieve the best integration of people, structure, processes and resources in achieving organizational objectives. According to Aosa (2002), once strategies have been developed, they need to be implemented; they are of no value unless they are effectively translated into action. This is necessary if organizations are to remain competitive and relevant to current market trends. According to Thompson and Strickland (2004), implementation is an integral component of strategic plan process and it is viewed as the process that turns the formulated strategy into series of action and the result ensure the vision, mission, strategy and strategic objectives of the organization are successfully achieved as planned. Implementation is the process that turns strategies and plans into actions in order to accomplish strategic objectives and goals. Implementing your strategic plan is as important, or even more important, than your strategy. The critical actions move a strategic plan from a document that sits on the shelf to actions that drive business growth. Sadly, the majority of companies who have strategic plans fail to implement them (Olsen, 2011).

According to Somerville and Elliott (2011), the public sector has been triggered by pressure for change as an outcome of copious external factors. Such factors include technological improvements, globalization, innovation and changes in political, social and economic orders. Recently firm performance has become an important façade in public management particularly in the recent years where governments have been determined to advance on customer service delivery (Kang'ethe, 2015). Therefore, governments are constantly launching initiatives that are geared towards improving services to their citizens.

Service quality is considered an important tool for an organization's struggle to differentiate itself from its competitors (Dabholkar, (2015). According to Wijetunge (2016), the relevance of service quality to organizations is emphasized as it offers a competitive advantage to organizations that strive to improve it and hence bring customer satisfaction. According to the Public Sector Research Centre (2007), reforms in the Kenyan public sector aimed at improving service delivery have received considerable focus during the last decade. Global trends such as rising customer expectations, budgetary constraints, global competition for investment, public sector reform programmes and changing demographics have transformed the environment in which the public sector operates. In order to deliver on customer promise, an organization should focus on five key strategic enablers: understanding their customer, pulling down the walls,

empowering the institution, realizing benefits and delivering the promise. The improvement in customer experience and outcomes span seven key areas: speed, engagement, responsive, value, integration, choice and experience.

The Government Owned Entities Bill (2014) defines a Government Owned Entity as a State or County corporation or agency and includes a subsidiary. These Entities have a distinct legal form and are established to operate in commercial affairs. In Kenya, these Government Owned Entities (GOEs), include Parastatals, state corporations, or semi-autonomous government agencies provide critical services to the economy, they provide critical infrastructure to the state, and the Government, through The Treasury, overlooks and monitors the performance of these GOEs (Executive Office of The President of Kenya, 2013).

Kenya Medical Research Institute (KEMRI) is a State Corporation established through the former Science and Technology (Amendment) Act of 1979, which has since been replaced by the Science, Technology and Innovation Act, 2013. The 1979 Act established KEMRI as a National body responsible for carrying out health research in Kenya. This premier public health research institution has close interaction with policy makers both at the National and county levels. The Institute has highly skilled and experienced staff from multiple disciplines enabling a multi-disciplinary approach to research for health. KEMRI has also developed strong and diverse partnerships with the National, regional and international research community. In order to improve its competitive edge in research for human health, KEMRI restructured its systems and processes to ensure efficiency and facilitate excellence in research and innovation during the Plan period 2013 – 2017.

In the Strategic Plan (2013 - 2017), KEMRI's activities focused on these following broad areas: health research and innovation, product development and service delivery, health research in the context of devolution, financial sustainability, management systems, processes and human resource capacity, KEMRI University, infrastructure and facilities. This strategic plan has been developed in line with the Kenya constitution 2010, Kenya Vision 2030, the Second Medium Term Plan (MTP - 2013 -2017), performance contracting guidelines, and the National Integrated Monitoring and Evaluation Systems Master Plan.

The strategic plan indicated that in the strategy implementation, KEMRI would look for innovative ways of attracting the necessary resource inflows in support of the plan implementation and lay emphasis on efficient utilization of available financial resources on prioritized activities. In this regard, KEMRI works methodically in its annual planning and budgeting exercises to ensure that adequate financial resources are obtained for its operations. Further, the cost of implementing the targets as outlined in this strategic plan requires financial resources beyond the current available finances from exchequer funding. By implementing a results-based monitoring and evaluation framework for the Strategic Plan, KEMRI would ensure efficient utilization of resources, adherence to annual operational plans and realization of strategic objectives. To this end, the Institute would develop a Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Policy in line with the National M&E framework.

This study therefore sought to investigate the influence of strategic plan implementation on service delivery at KEMRI with specific focus on strategic leadership, organizational

structure, human resources and government policy and how these four influence service delivery in the organization.

### **Statement of the Problem**

According to Sage (2015), strategy implementation is the second stage in strategic management process that involves operationalization of the strategic plan into work activities that leads to the realization of the organization goals and objectives. The stage is the most important and most difficult in the entire strategic management practices. Carter and Pucko (2010) noted that there is a high failure rate in strategy implementation in most organizations all over the world which does not only discourage the stakeholders involved but also makes it difficult for these organizations to fully realize their goals. The public sector has been faced with a myriad of challenges in its endeavour to achieve its mission emanating from both internal and external environment. The poor perception the government ministries have received, is considered by many that it is because there are various challenges these institutions face in try to implement its strategies and serve the greater public good (Somi, 2017).

It has been noted that Government Owned Entities in Kenya are continuously in the battle for improving their organizational performance. The government realized that GOEs should be able to execute their duties just like private sector institutions, and hence the introduction of Parastatal Reform Programme (PSCU, 2014). Leadership in public sector tend to face the great challenges due to the prominent rule-based and too bureaucratic leadership styles, non-performance based HRM culture, and lack of innovative management practices (Ireland and Hitt, 2005). In the implementation the KEMRI 2013 – 2017 strategic plan, the organization strived to ensure efficient utilization of resources, adherence to annual operational plans and realization of strategic objectives. KEMRI hoped to develop a Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Policy in line with the National M&E framework but has not yet been able accomplish this ([www.kemri.go.ke](http://www.kemri.go.ke)).

Several scholars in Kenya have conducted researches on the strategy implementation in the public sector (Somi, 2017; Muendo, (2016); Awino, Wandera, Imita and K'Obonyo (2009) with a special focus on organizational performance. None of these studies have focused on strategic plan implementation and service delivery specifically at Kenya Medical Research Institute hence the gap that this study intended to fill.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The general objective of the study was to investigate the effects of strategic plan implementation on service delivery in state owned corporations in Kenya: a case of Kenya Medical Research Institute, whereas its specific objectives were:

- (i) To determine whether strategic leadership influences service delivery at Kenya Medical Research Institute.
- (ii) To establish how the organizational structure influence service delivery at Kenya Medical Research Institute.

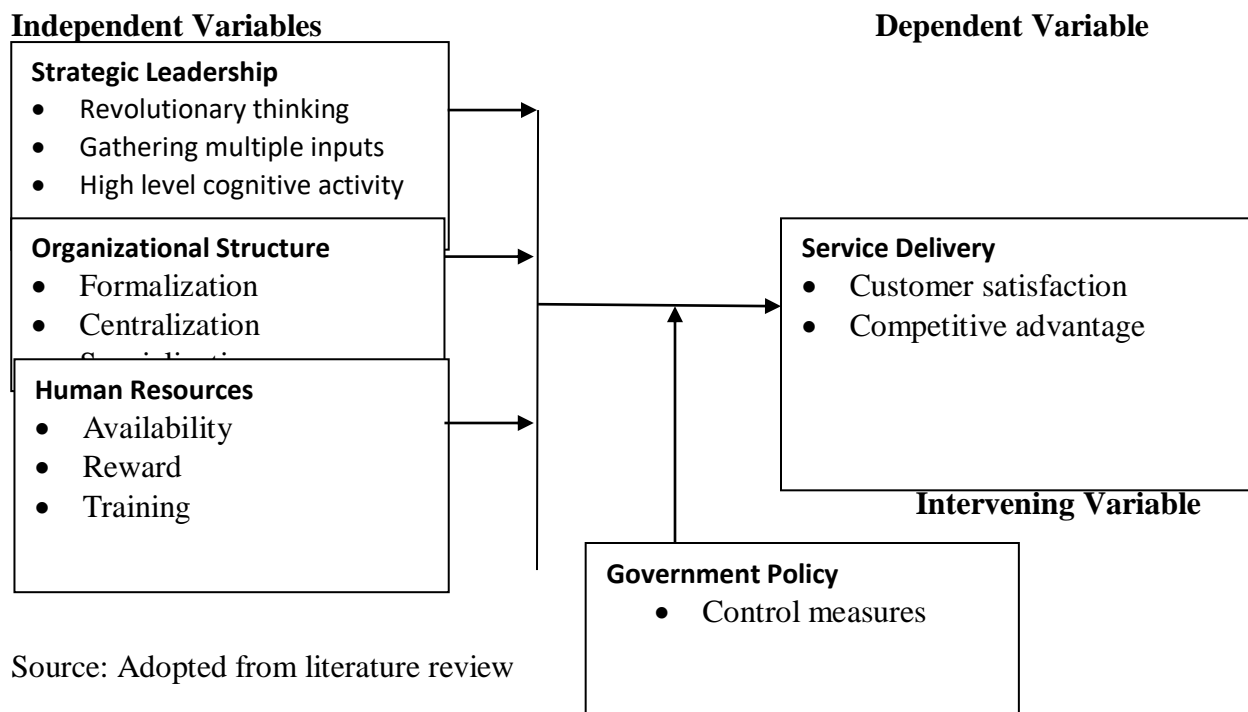
- (iii) To determine whether human resources influence service delivery at Kenya Medical Research Institute.
- (iv) To establish how the government policy influences the service delivery at Kenya Medical Research Institute.

**Significance of the Study**

The findings of this study will be significant to KEMRI staff as it is expected to point out to the staff the effort that has been put by the management and areas that need adjustments for total integration and implementation of quality service delivery. It will also be significant to the government, who can use the results to gauge the level of implementation and to be able to estimate the level of funding that the Institute needs to integrate its processes. The local and international collaborators might find the findings relevant in gauging the level of efficiency in the overall implementation of quality systems and can enable them decide on areas that need their assistance. Finally, the suppliers who are contracted providers of goods, works and services to enable the Institute meet its obligations and customer requirements would benefit from the study through knowledge of the nature of quality expected from them as they do business with the Institute.

**Conceptual Framework**

The study was guided by the following conceptual framework.



Source: Adopted from literature review

From the framework above, strategic plan implementation is explained by three elements namely: strategic leadership which involves revolutionary thinking, multiple inputs and high level cognitive activity; structure which involves formalization, centralization and specialization and human resources under the parameters availability, reward and training. By the means of arrows, these strategic implementation elements are capable of influencing service delivery through indicators such as customer satisfaction and competitive advantage. In addition, the framework includes government policy as the intervening variable which may affect strategic plan implementation since they provide the control measures and guiding principles to help in strategy implementation in state owned corporations.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### ***Theoretical Framework***

#### ***Resource Based Theory***

The resource based theory contends with an organization's interior assets and abilities are the best source of CA over different firms. It applies an arrangement of rules to figure out which of those assets speak to qualities or shortcomings which assets produce central skills that are source of CA (Pearce II et al, 2008). These rules get from the possibility that resources are more significant when they are; basic to satisfying a client's need superior to that of rivals; rare consequently hard to find, or without substitutes or are difficult to mimic; appropriable thus all benefits are held by the organization; and when they are strong or feasible after some time. An approach to strategy with this view then seeks to find or develop distinctive competencies and resources, applying them to produce superior value. To the degree that these capabilities can be kept extraordinary, to the firm, they can be utilized to build up an upper hand (Munge, 2014).

This theory is of significance for the study as it helped the researcher to understand whether there exists unique resources and capabilities in the Institute to give it an edge when implementing strategies in a manner that influences the performance positively.

#### ***The Behavioural Theory of the Firm***

The behavioural theory of the firm has been classified as part of an organizational economics approach to strategic management has its precedents, notably in the work of Barney and Ouchi (2006). The theory emphasizes the actual process of making business decisions and provides detailed observation of the ways in which organizations make these decisions. Cyert and March (2002) present the rudiments of a behavioural theory of the firm that have proven to be relevant both to economic theory and to the theory of complex organizations. Organizations provide those in responsible positions the means for exercising authority and influence over others. Organization influences the environment of information and strategies in which decisions are carried out.

This theory relates to the study as it shows the importance of organizations making key decisions and providing the ways in which the organizations make these decisions. The theory therefore relates to the strategic plan implementation which requires strategic leadership, a good organizational structure and competent human resources in order to provide quality service delivery.

## **Empirical Studies**

### ***Strategic Leadership and Service Delivery***

Kihara (2016) in his study on the influence of strategy implementation on the performance of manufacturing SMEs we find that, four out of five drivers (leadership styles, structural adaptations, human resources and technology) tested were found to be significant and positive influence on the performance of manufacturing SMEs. The study recommended that organizations should build stronger capacities and capabilities in leadership skills by adopting more of the transformational leadership qualities, maintain flexible structures that are well matched to their goals, maintain a proper balance between strategy and human resources and pay close attention to their technology requirements. Igbaekemen and Odivwri (2015) established that leadership impacts significantly on employee performance and participative leadership styles helps to improve performance among employee. The study concluded that democratic or participative types of leadership is the best of all the leadership styles because of the benefits that will be derived from it by the employees amid the overall result to the organization as a whole.

### ***Organization Structure and Service Delivery***

Mbithi (2016) highlights that there are several factors affecting strategy implementation; these include the organizational structure, organizational culture, leadership style, communication, employee involvement and Information Communication Technology infrastructure. Tusiime (2013) further highlights that there is a relationship between organizational structure and service delivery and proposes that public organizations should always build proper organizational structures depending on the activities undertaken.

### ***Human Resources and Service Delivery***

Somi (2017) postulates that government owned entities should invest in recruitment process to ensure that their organizations do not only have adequate numbers of employees, but also employees with competitive talent to enhance organizational performance. Further, long-term incentives for human resources such as pain leave, vacations, good salaries and wages, and bonus payments should be considered. Mutiso (2013) also highlights that there is a positive relationship between quality of service and HR recruitment and selection as well as performance management. The study suggests that recruitment and selection, training and development, compensation management and performance management should be improved through provision of proper framework for capacity building.

***Government Policy and Service Delivery***

Ibrahim and Muritala (2015) in their study on the impact of government fiscal and monetary policies on business performance have suggested that governments should be consistent and maintain its policy framework to spur confidence of foreign and local investors. Metho (2015) suggests that the government should establish an effective feedback loops between policy development and delivery. His study further suggests that the government should ensure that implementation is consistent and aligned with policy objectives.

**Research Methodology**

This study used descriptive survey design as it was appropriate in establishing the relationship between variables and also facilitated the collection of current information. This research design enabled the collection of discrete numerical data from the population in order to provide factual descriptive information and also enabled the researcher to collect data at a particular point in time.

The target population in this study comprised of members of top management team, tactical team and technical team based at the KEMRI headquarters. The study therefore sampled 30% of the target population which resulted to 78 employees as shown in Table 1 below. The study utilized stratified random sampling because it ensure each subgroup within the population receives proper representation within the sample (Marshall, 2016).

*Table 1: Distribution of Target Population and Sample Size*

<b>Category</b>	<b>Target Population</b>	<b>Sample Size</b>
Human Resources	32	3
Production	15	2
Accounts and Finance	35	4
Procurement	28	3
Corporate Affairs	9	1
Research Centres	500	50
General Services	150	15
<b>Total</b>	<b>769</b>	<b>78</b>

A questionnaire was used as the main research instruments for data collection. The questionnaire was formulated under the light of the norms of formulating an efficient and effective questionnaire. It was a structured questionnaire consisting of closed ended questions for



the purpose of obtaining richer information. With the permission from the Head of Human Resources at KEMRI, the researcher distributed the structured questionnaire to the employees.

Descriptive analysis was done and the presentation was based on the descriptive statistical measures of central tendency. SPSS was therefore useful in transferring the data into more understandable information through coding, tables and graphical representation of the findings. The descriptive analysis assisted the researcher to make a conclusion of the influence of strategic plan implementation on service delivery at KEMRI, in relation to the concepts, theories and methods that had been used in this research.

**Results and discussion of findings**

**Table 2: Influence of Strategic Leadership on Service Delivery**

In order to establish the influence of strategic leadership on service delivery, a number of questions were drawn from the variable, strategic leadership. The results are as presented in table 2 below.

Items	Strongly Disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Neutral (%)	Agree (%)	Strongly Agree (%)
I tell others in simple words what they need to do	-	-	22.4	63.2	14.5
I help others solve problems using new ways	-	-	13.2	65.8	21.1
I am satisfied when employees meet their targets	-	-	-	34.2	65.8
I like helping others develop themselves	-	-	25.0	63.2	11.8
I give feedback on employee performance	-	-	39.5	51.3	9.2
I help employees to rethink about issues that they never thought of or questioned before	-	6.6	31.6	57.9	3.9
I give personal attention to others when they are in need	-	-	25.0	60.5	14.5
As long as things are working, I do not try to change anything	-	53.9	25.0	21.1	-
I welcome ideas from other employees on how to improve performance	-	5.3	34.2	48.7	11.8
I reward employees when they achieve their targets	-	-	3.9	52.6	43.4

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Items	Strongly Disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Neutral (%)	Agree (%)	Strongly Agree (%)
I remind employees of the standards they need to maintain while doing their work	-	-	21.1	60.5	18.4

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Table 2 above shows that majority of the respondents 63.2% agreed that they tell others in simple words what they need to do while 22.4% neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement. However, these results are in contrast with those of Shembe (2014) who established that leaders are not playing any significant role in service delivery within the organization. As was established in the study, 65.8% of the respondents agreed that they help others solve problems using new ways while 13.2% neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement. These results are in tandem with those of Igbaekemen, et. al. (2015) who established that participative leadership styles helps to improve performance among employee. The study further established that 65.8% strongly agreed that they are satisfied when employees meet their targets while 63.2% of the respondents agreed that they like helping others develop themselves. According to the study, 51.3% of the respondents agreed that they give feedback on employees performance while 39.5% neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement.

In relation to whether the leaders help employees to rethink about issues that they never thought of or question, 57.9% agreed that they help employees to rethink about issues that they never thought of or questioned before while 31.6% neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement. The findings by Ochieng (2016) concluded that top-notch decision making processes involving all or most of the stakeholders should be inculcated in all projects and programmes implemented by organizations. When asked to state if they give personal attention to others when they need, 60.5% affirmatively supported the statement while 25% neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement. The study found that 53.9% however disagreed that as long as things are working they do not try to change anything while 25% neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement. The study further found that 48.7% of the respondents agreed that they welcome ideas from other employees on how to improve performance 34.2% neither disagreed nor disagreed with the statement.

When asked whether they reward employees when they achieve their target, 52.6% of the respondents agreed. The results are supported by Igbaekemen, et. al. (2015) whose study established that good working condition, improved salary and other incentives enhance employee performance in the organization. It is also supported by Somi (2017) who established that long term incentives such as pain leave, vacations, good salaries and wages, and bonus payments enhanced performance of government owned entities. The study further established that 60.5% of the respondents agreed that they remind employees of the standards they need to maintain while doing their work. This is in line with Zheng, et. al. (2010) who suggest that knowledge management fully mediates the impact of organizational culture on organizational effectiveness.

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### **Statistical Analysis for Multiple Regressions**

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To help in determining the relationship between strategic leadership, organizational structure and HR as independent variables and service delivery as dependent variable, the study carried out regression analysis. The results are presented in the form of model of summary, Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) and regression coefficients. The findings are shown in the subsequent sections.

**Table 3: Model Summary**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted Square	R Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.741 <sup>a</sup>	.549	.535	.43091

a. Predictors: (Constant), Strategic Leadership, Organizational Structure, Human Resources, Government Policy

The table above shows that the coefficient determination is 0.741 which meant that 74.1% of the variation in service delivery is well described by independent variables, strategic leadership, organization structure, human resources and government policy. This therefore means that there exists a positive relationship between the independent and dependent variables. The remaining 29.9% can be explained by other variables which were not part of the current study. As shown in the model summary. There was high R square and adjusted R which is an indication that there exist high variations that can be explained by the model.

**Table 4: Coefficients<sup>a</sup>**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error			
1	(Constant)	2.041	.280		7.280	.000
1	Strategic Leadership	.465	.061	.521	7.663	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Service Delivery

The coefficient results in table 4 above shows that a unit increase in strategic leadership would lead to improvement in service delivery of the organization by a factor of 0.521 having a p-value of 0.000 which is less than the confidence level of 0.05. At 5% level of significance and 95% level of confidence.

**Summary of Findings**

**Influence of Strategic Leadership on Service Delivery**

As per the results, the study found that 63.2% agreed that they tell others in simple words what they need to do while 65.8% also agreed that they help others solve problems using new ways. The study also found that 65.8% strongly agreed that they are satisfied when employees meet their targets while 63.2% agreed that they like helping others develop themselves. The study further found that 57.9% agreed that they help employees to rethink about issues that they never thought of or questioned before while 60.5% agreed that they give personal attention to others when they are in need. However, 53.9% disagreed that as long as things are working they do not try to change anything. The study found that 52.6% agreed that they reward employees when they achieve their targets while 60.5% agreed that they remind employees of the standards they need to maintain while doing their work.

### **Conclusion**

Based on the findings, majority respondents agreed that they tell others in simple words what they need to do and that they help others solve problems using new ways. The respondents strongly agreed that they are satisfied when employees meet their targets and that they like helping others develop themselves. The respondents further agreed that they help employees to rethink about issues that they never thought of or questioned before and also that they give personal attention to others when they are in need. Majority of the respondents however disagreed that as long as things are working they do not try to change anything but on the other hand agreed that they rewards employees when they achieve their targets. The respondents agreed that they remind employees of the standards they need to maintain while doing their work.

### **Recommendations**

It is recommended that the top management should be enlightened on the importance of encouraging their team members to always come up with new ways of doing their work instead of accepting the status quo. It is also recommended that the organization should ensure that it is governed by clear system of rules, regulations, policies and procedures. This will ensure that all the employees know what role they are supposed to play in the strategy implementation. Another recommendation is that the organization should ensure that it gives adequate information to the employees before a new strategy is implemented.

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