
**ENVIRONMENTAL UNCERTAINTY AND STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION
WITHIN PRIVATE CHARTERED UNIVERSITIES IN KENYA
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Abstract

The study objectives were to establish the influence of environmental uncertainty on strategy implementation within private chartered universities in Kenya and to determine the approaches that private universities employ to reduce the effects of environmental uncertainty. The design of the study was a cross sectional survey. This study considered the Universities that are Private, Chartered and are registered and authorized by the Commission for University Education (CUE) to run education in Kenya. There are a total of seventeen (17) Universities. The study collected data from the top managers; these included the Vice Chancellors, their deputies, registrars and Heads of strategy management teams. Questionnaires were used in gathering primary facts for the study. Standard deviation, mean scores, frequency distribution tables and percentages were used to present data. Then the results from questions that were open ended were coded. Standard deviation and the Mean were applied for the Likert scale responses. Recommendations and conclusions concerning the study were extracted from the outcome of the research. The study established that environmental uncertainties greatly influence strategy implementation within private chartered universities in Kenya and that universities employ various strategies in dealing with the effect of environmental uncertainty, they include: coming up with a register of risks and mitigating measures; concentrate on co programs; controlling of costs; ensuring quality education is offered; ensuring a good student body; have less aggressive strategy; have the right information about the costumers; tailor products to suit the current market. The study recommends that private Universities should be encouraged to lean more on areas like research and other areas of activities that are income generating instead of highly depending on tuition fees. This can be done through seeking affiliations with research institutes like KEMRI and KARI. They should also seek bilateral agreements with the government seeking the introduction of subsidized programmes for low income qualified students. This can be done through grants and scholarships instead of loans from HELB which is questionable on how they deal with private university students. Universities should conduct continuous monitoring and evaluation of strategies adapted to ensure that their strategies are always at per with the dynamic and uncertain environments they operate in. it is also recommended that Private Universities should embrace strategic leadership as this helps these institutions to become more competitive. The study recommends replication of the study in public universities. The study also recommends a comparative analysis between Private and Public Universities performance in relation to the effects of environmental uncertainty on their strategies.

Key words: environmental uncertainty, strategy implementation, private universities, chartered

Introduction

Implementation of good strategic plans plays a vital role in the success of a business. As illustrated by Kiruthi (2011), organizations with appropriate plans and strategies fail as a result of poor implementation. According to Aosa (2012), developing good plans is useless unless they are translated into action in the implementation stage. To guarantee the survival of any entity, the ability, and effectiveness of the firm's management and strategic management skills is put to test. This is seen by how effective they are in implementing strategies in a dynamic business environment. Environmental uncertainty influences and affects the decision making and strategy implementation process of any organization diversely as depicted by past researchers. Scott (2005) points out that escalated levels of uncertainty in organizations translates to inadequacy in strategy competitiveness and declining planning process of firms. Xu and Meyer (2013) noted that strategy implementation entails making resources and capabilities in order to achieve objectives and targets set. It requires that firm's internal and external environments are in sync.

The association among firms and the environment can be derived from the application of the Open Systems Theory of firms (OST). The theory clearly shows the idea that firms are strongly affected by their environments (Bastedo, 2004). To guarantee effective strategic control and management, firms need to have sufficient knowledge and understanding of their environment (Davis & Powell, 2012). The Open Systems Model is a more current and relevant centered on the changing management models which purposes to construct a fit, innovative and a robust system in a changing and unpredictable environment. It is very important to master the model to enhance strategic goal attainment as the implementation process relies on the management model the organization adopts (Alexander, 2005).

The higher education sector is experiencing increased competition due to the dynamic activities in the environment which stimulates multiple changes as Fehnel (2001) contends. The private varsities have experienced massive growth in the recent past despite the difficulties they face. Among the problems, are fiscal shortages, inadequate capacity to enroll the desired number of students, and limited financial resources (Mathooko, 2013). According to Al-Fattal, (2010), further evidence exists in proving the high competition in this sector, escalating the challenges in the private universities. In addition, the private varsities strive to maintain their ranking in the market so as to attract more students and stakeholders into the institutions. Using the Kenyan example where there are thirty private universities across the country, seventeen (17) have been recognized and accredited by the CUE (Commission for University Education). So as to maintain the position and ranking status, these institutions require having in place viable strategy implementation policies ensure survival in the dynamic and uncertain environment.

Research Problem

The complexity of the University structures, culture, size, values, and management systems involved in managing privately owned universities makes strategic plan implementation a huge and important undertaking. According to Cater and Pucko (2010), strategy implementation is a key undertaking and is designed by many firms as a routine and not a pre-planned process. Competitive and effectively implemented strategies targets gaining profits and stabilizing organizations against forces in the market that destabilizes the business environment in which they operate (Porter, 1980). The ability of firms to effectively implement strategies enables them to gain a competitive advantage over rivals in the uncertain markets. Despite the complexity in the strategy implementation process and time

involved, the strategic management team need to keenly address the dynamic environmental nature of the market and uncertainty that the future holds (Dusek, 2006).

The gap that hinders attainment of organizations goals emerges when the organization strategies are not properly and effectively executed. According to Pferrer and Suffon (2006), failure to achieve firm goals creates anxiety in decision makers as they face the pressure to ensure the strategic plans of the firm becomes executed plans rather than shelved plans. Also, a gap in strategic plan implementation is created by the inability of the organization to translate existing information and knowledge into useful action plans. Fehnel (2001) points out that there has been an escalating competition in universities and colleges under the rapid changes in the dynamic conditions in the environment in the recent past. The main ideal in the above suggestion is that the strategic plans require being fully executed using viable implementation models. The environmental realities ought to be put under consideration in the piloting, monitoring, evaluating, innovating, and implementing the strategies. Alternatively put, there is need to study the risks, uncertainties involved in order to ascertain that new strategies play a role in attaining the main objectives of the institution.

In a period where the higher education sector is facing rapid and uncertain changes due to government regulations and other factors, strategy implementation becomes an important issue if these universities are to achieve their purpose. According to an article published on the 19th of January 2018 by The Standard Newspaper, tough times lay ahead of Universities as they register low number of student enrollments. Out of the over 600,000 who sat for the Kenya Certificate of Secondary School Education exams, only over 70,000 were able to score a C Plus to join the public universities (The Standard Newspaper, 19th January 2018). This has left Private Universities hard hit and struggling to remain afloat the National Government seeks to bring in more regulations in the higher education sector.

Diverse studies have been conducted attributing to many organizational responses to changing environments and strategy execution process. The primary goal of strategy implementation studies, according to Karimi, (2007), is the desire to get solutions or remedy to inefficiency in strategy formulation and implementation processes. Additionally, Mathooko (2013) holds a view that dynamism is brought by the institution's internal competition. Lastly, Holowka (2015), points out that at least 70 % of organizations that come up with good strategies fail during the implementation stage. This is caused by the diverse issues that they have to deal within the environment. To wrap it all up, the various views depict the reality that face institutions that are unprepared to handle the uncertainties in the environment while executing their strategies. Therefore, this study will seek to answer the question, what is the influence of environmental uncertainty on strategy implementation within chartered private universities in Kenya?

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the research encompassed:

- i. To establish the influence of environmental uncertainty on strategy implementation within private chartered universities in Kenya.
- ii. To determine the approaches that private universities employ to reduce the effects of environmental uncertainty.

Theoretical Foundation

Open Systems Theory of Institutions forms the basis of this research and studies will revolve around this theoretical concept. The theory was initially developed by Bertalanffy (1975)

and was immediately applicable across all management theory. Under strategic management, this theory clearly shows the strong relationship between firms and their environments (Bastedo, 2004). He continues to note that the forces in the environment that surround the firm have the potential to influence the operations of the firm. For effective management of strategy and operations, the organization's management needs to have sufficient knowledge about the environment in which they operate (Pfeffer & Salancik, 2003). The external forces in the environment control the behaviors of institutions as the operations of any entity depend on the environment as Ansoff and McDonnell (1990) notes. In the modern world, this theory drives management practices designed to create big firms in the uncertain and dynamic environment. The firms in the environment behave like bodies or individuals that mutually relate and interact with each other and function as open systems in the environment depending on each other for raw materials, inputs, and markets for each other's output.

Change, complexity, ambiguity, and uncertainty are the composition of the organizational environment making environmental prediction very difficult. Due to this, organization's management has to deal with various difficulties in reaching positive and constructive decisions. Institutions that are in very risky environments face higher risks of survival due to higher chances of management making wrong strategic decisions (Waldman *et al.*, 2001). According to the theory, uncertainty in any environment range from resource, competition, customer, and technological uncertainty making the organization experience practical challenges in their daily operations. When institutions such as private universities device growth strategic plans, they have to redesign their competitive advantage strategies as well.

Moreover, the Open Systems Theory emphasizes the importance of an institution to create and mold a relationship with its external forces that will help it adopt successively to the changing trends, values, expectations, and policies in the environment in which it operates (Preffer, & Salancik, 2003). The organization's human resources need to have a good association with the external environmental forces also as their behaviors shape the changes in the environment; either positively or negatively. Based on Bradley, Wiklund and Shepherd (2011), the relationship between employees and the environment restructures the firm's strategies and could add value or underscore the system's performance. Some organizations adapt well in this interaction and succeed while others fail terribly in this relationship and their strategies also fail. Shane and Stuart (2002) wrap it up simply; the organization needs to appreciate and value the association and interactions in the environment to improve the chances of strategic decisions for the survival of the firm.

However, it is important to note that the open system has got some underlying limitations. This model can be limited when carrying out research on knowledge and experience. It has seen little use on research guides. Ashmos and Huber (1987) indicate that researchers have been unable to make proper use of the contributions of the theory on empirical research. Evan and Jones (2004) notes that for a researcher to make proper use of the model one need the help of the four general processes – outputs, feedback, inputs and transformations. Due to this, it is difficult to achieve a good balance on management of the internal and external environment.

Environmental Uncertainty

Uncertainty is a phenomenon deeply rooted in our lives and affects many of our choices and decisions. It starts from people's everyday small choices and covers the strategic decisions of multinational corporations. In the field of organization and management the issue of uncertainty is not new. It is because lack of understanding and facing uncertainty in

organizational decision-making, cost too much. These costs arise in the form of unforeseen results, negative effects or lost opportunities (Abbott, 2010).

Dequech (2011) combines the three main distinctions of uncertainty as follows: The first distinction is created between substantive and procedural uncertainty (Dosi & Egidi, 1991). Substantive uncertainty is due to the lack of information necessary to take decisions. Procedural uncertainty arises from limitations in the computational and cognitive ability of factors in the presence of information. The second distinction is between weak and strong uncertainty. When there is a unique and absolutely reliable probability distribution, the uncertainty is weak and when there is no such distribution, uncertainty is strong. If the strong uncertainty is due to the lack of information, it is substantive and if it results from the conflict between subjective and computational ability and complexity of a situation, it is procedural. Weak uncertainty is always substantive (Dequech, 2000) and is classified in two categories of Knightian Risk (including objective probability) and Savage's Uncertainty (including subjective probability). In the former, probability is a part of the real world, but in the latter, probability indicates way of thinking about the world. The third distinction is created between ambiguity and fundamental uncertainty, both of which are types of strong and substantive uncertainty. Ambiguity means uncertainty about the likelihood of events that are caused by lack of information and knowledge. When the decision maker has such uncertainty, he/she is aware of all possible events, but does not know the probability of each. But the fundamental uncertainty exists when we do not know the list of events and we believe that the future will be built by what people do.

According to Dequech (2011), all fundamental uncertainties exist simultaneously with procedural uncertainty. The interdependence of people's decisions creates procedural uncertainty about the consequences of the individual's action. The amount of procedural uncertainty changes over time, even if the amount of complexity is not changed; because the computational power of individuals rises over time (e.g. by development of computers) and since this happens for others, the complexity of the interdependence between their decisions rises spontaneously.

Sources and Approaches to Environment Uncertainty

All the decisions that are made and the aids that are given to counter and reduce uncertainty are a part of uncertainty (Ashill & Jober, 2010). On the other hand, Johnson and Scholes (1999), points out that extent to which an environment is analyzed can be perceived as a portion of its increasing dynamism. This situation illustrates the environmental complexity, which initiates more business uncertainties. Furthermore, dynamism is depicted by natural factors such as: needs of the clients, innovation, rivalry in the environment, and supply conditions. Business environment is unpredictable and not easy to forecast as Ashill and Jober (2010), concludes that an environment with many variables is faced with a high rate of change.

Plans and strategies are a requirement if management has to avoid failures (Leavey, 2007). He continues to note that organizations can make use of flexibility in order to deal with uncertainty. Organizations can also make use of mock forecasting in order to pre-determine uncertainty and avoid it, (Bowen, 2002). Korenak, (2000), relays that it is important that all employees are considered when negotiating a method of handling uncertainty. He continues to give an illustration which equates the willingness of an organization to welcome uncertainty and the ability of its human resources to accept it. In the first section called status quo, both the firms and the workers are involved in evading uncertainty. In the second segment named unsettling climate, the firms experience anomaly, forcing its workers to

search for support. These workers become uneasy and this leads to loss of determination because of the abnormality of the business surroundings. In the third section, stifling climate; firms try to prevent uncertainty and yet the employees tend to support it. In the fourth Segment known as dynamic environment, both firms and workers support uncertainty. This support leads to continuous change, dynamism and energy within the firm as noted by (Clampitt, DeKoch & Cashman, 2000).

Collis (1992) advocated an approach that should be well utilized by firms to aid in control uncertainty. The model examines two scopes; namely, Amount of investment and time. Management of the organization always makes investment plans to partake in the future. In case there are delays, the open options provide a chance of rising flexibility. In the initial section; insurance, the organization commits many resources during the present time making the future predictable. Under the second quarter; dedicated, there is commitment to ensure specific strategies prevail and therefore all resources are allocated to work. The organization get a lot of benefits if there is no uncertainty and if uncertainty exits the organization makes a lot of losses. The third part; incremental stage, portrays delays to undertake investments within a given environment and this marginally reduces the associated risks involved. In the final fraction called opportunistic, for the strategies to be successful, there should be a lot of uncertainties present. In this section strategy is accepted and eliminates the uncertainty and closes the available opportunities. The assumptions are that investments last for a short period and that minimization of fixed cost are influenced by variable costs.

Courtney (2003) undertakes a strategy centered on three aspects; shaping, reserving the right to play and adapting. He advocated that firms can counter uncertainty by applying any of the strategies. Also, (Raynor, 2007) recommends that firms should be concerned about the future by predicting some of the future events. To achieve this, management need to have the ability to understand the organization structures and also applications. After this comprehension, the organization must initiate suitable strategies for each circumstance. All the facts collected at the previous stages are then put into work immediately.

Strategy Implementation

Successful strategy implementation starts with a good strategy. If the formulated strategy is not worth implementing, the implementation is deemed to fail from the start. To ensure that an implementable strategy is formulated, key employees from different levels of the organization should be involved in the formulation process. This way, valuable knowledge from all organizational levels is used to create the strategy that best fits the ultimate goals of top management, and can realistically be implemented considering the available resources of the organization, and the market conditions. Moreover, involving key personnel already in the process ownership of strategic decisions, which is crucial for the success of the strategy implementation. Key implementation personnel should also be involved in the detailed implementation planning to increase their commitment (Giles, 2010; Alexander, 2005).

Once the strategy has been formulated, communication is one of the most important vehicles for successful implementation. First of all, management should inform all employees about the content, meaning of, and reasons for the new strategy. However, they should not only inform the employees, they should also leave room for questions from and discussion with the affected employees. Communication also involves the explanation of new tasks and responsibilities to the affected employees. Throughout the implementation process, communication should flow bottom-up to allow management to monitor the implementation process and determine whether changes to the approach are needed (Neilson, Martin & Powers, 2008; Beer & Eisenstat, 2010).

Sufficient resources are another crucial factor in strategy implementation. First, because of the large scope of most strategic decisions, sufficient funding is needed for the implementation process. People are the second important resource. Personnel with the right skills for the new strategic decisions should be involved in the implementation. Furthermore, these employees should have enough time available for the implementation. They should either be freed from other tasks or they should understand the priorities given to their different tasks. Enough time should, in general, be allocated to the implementation process (Higgins, 2005).

Creating an implementation plan could help to manage the strategy implementation. Such an implementation plan should identify and explain, for example: the scope and goals of the implementation, the main implementation activities and how they are supposed to be executed, the key personnel involved and the responsibilities and authority they have, the planned timelines for the total implementation and the individual activities, the risks that could adversely impact the implementation, the contingency plans, which minimize the impact in case the risks occur, the planned communication effort and how the progress of the implementation is reported and monitored. The plan should however be balanced, i.e. include detailed information but not too detailed. Having too little detail would not provide enough guidance to the involved employees and could lead to an ineffective and inefficient implementation. On the other hand, too much detail would make the plan rigid and would leave management and the employees unable to correctly respond to changes in the environment (Neilson *et al.*, 2008; Alexander, 2005).

Empirical Studies

Many scholars have done various researches on environmental challenges concerning strategy implementation. Dunlop, Firth and Lurie (2013), noted that during the implementation stage there are major failures of strategies. They argued that the failure at implementation stage is as result of adaption difficulties, translation and a failure to sustain change. Bryson, (2010), advocated that organizations should improve their strategies and respond immediately by transforming, and aligning their strategies into suitable plans. According to David (2011), strategy implementation needs to incorporate understanding and commitment to avoid challenges.

Olsen, Slater and Hult (2015) carried out a study in which they were studying the performance of firms in relation to strategy implementation, organizational structure and behaviors of employees. They concluded that organizations that study the behaviors of their employees and try to match their structure and strategy usually succeed. This study keenly proved the connection between strategy, structure and behavior. Ireland and Hickson (2013) studied the connection between organization performance and strategy implementation excluding major environmental components that influence implementation as a continuous activity. A lot of research and studies have increasingly been done concerning strategy implementation for a solution. This is as a result of inadequate and inefficient processes in strategy formulation up to implementation stage.

A research was done by Karimi (2007) and Kitutu (2009) which revealed the problems concerning strategy implementation at the Department for Public Works in Kenya. The outcomes showed issues like inadequate communication, lack of coordination, government interference and incorrect strategic choices as the major problems that impede strategy implementation. However, there is need for a research to be carried out to find out the effect of environmental uncertainty on implementation of various strategies.

Research Methodology

The study adopted a cross sectional survey design. A cross-sectional survey collects data to make inferences about a population of interest (universe) at one point in time. The target population will be 17 Private University in Kenya that are Chartered, registered and authorized by the Commission for University Education (CUE) to run education in Kenya. The population of this study comprised of 68 senior employees of (17) private universities in Kenya, these senior employee includes Vice Chancellors, their deputies, registrars and Heads of strategy management teams.

Questionnaires were used in gathering primary facts for the study. The questionnaire comprised both closed ended and open-ended form of questions. After the questionnaire had been designed, the researcher distributed the questionnaires to the major players on strategy implementation within these institutions. These included, The Vice Chancellors, their deputies, registrars and Heads of strategy management teams. The correspondents were requested to examine the questionnaire to ascertain the questionnaires correctness in design and content. After this, the amendments were done to rectify any weakness.

Filled questionnaires were then edited to enhance completeness of the survey and also to certify consistency. Then, the edited questionnaire was checked for any omissions and errors. Exploration of data was carried out. Standard deviation, mean scores, frequency distribution tables and percentages were utilized to inspect the data used and also summarize the data. The research analyzed the questionnaires with respect to the aims set. Then the results from questions that were open ended were coded, the standard and the mean were applied for the Likert scale responses.

Research Findings

Strategy Implementation in the University

Statements	Mean	Std. Dev.
To what extent is your University strategy implementation process management driven or people driven?	2.7333	.8995
To what extent do the Education Sector and government policies change	3.1167	.9037
The extent of competition among stakeholders in the education sector.	3.3500	.9536
The extent at which the business environment has become very dynamic, turbulent and difficult to forecast	3.0167	.9654
The extent the University conduct market analysis before introducing a new programme or investing into a new market.	3.3167	1.1716
The extent at which your university does development and research	2.9500	1.1560
To what extent would you say the University is up to date with the Technology?	3.4667	.9107
The extent at which the university meets the expectations and needs of the students?	3.4667	.9649
The extent of existence of counter strategies in your university.	3.0333	1.1927

From the findings the respondents indicated that their universities are up to date with Technology to a very great extent as shown by a mean of 3.4667, the university meets to a very great extent the expectations and needs of the students as shown by a mean of 3.4667, the competition among stakeholders in the education sector is to a great extent as shown by a mean of 3.3500, the University conducts market analysis to a great extent before introducing a new programme or investing into a new market as shown by a mean of 3.3167, the

Education Sector and government policies change to a great extent as shown by a mean of 3.1167, the existence of counter strategies in universities are to great extent as shown by a mean of 3.0333, the business environment has become very dynamic, turbulent and difficult to forecast to a very great extent as shown by a mean of 3.0167, the universities do development and research to a great extent as shown by a mean of 2.9500, and University strategy implementation process management driven or people driven is to a great extent as shown by a mean of 2.7333.

Approaches of Managing Environmental Uncertainty

Respondents were asked to indicate the response of their university regarding dynamics of strategy implementation. The universities are able to meet needs of staff and students by involving them in any kind of implementation that needs to be carried out; this helps them to put focus on the students and therefore meet their needs. Ensuring they are informed of the changes that are currently there in the education sector and become adept to technological changes and change the systems to meet the changes made in technology. The university works with the government adhering to ISO certification and also to the CUE regulations and standards.

Regarding market analysis, they conduct proper market analysis and research before introducing new programs; this enables them to meet the needs of the students. Some of the universities have strategic plan implementation and management meetings to ensure that they get maximum development and research. In those meeting, they discuss on the strategies to be implemented are discussed and agreed on in order to safeguard the interest of the institution. Strategies used by the institution are re-strategized to help the university adopt the environment with minimal negative implications. Other universities have introduced customer centric environment and also aid students in mentorship and accessing internship opportunities after completing their course work. Knowing what the competition what the competition is offering and improve what is offered in the institution. Another way they respond is by stepping up and be in tandem with requisite government regulations and also strategies and work with the terms and conditions of renovating the institution.

Extent of Agree or Disagree

Statements	Mean	Std. Dev.
To what extent has the university set up good approaches to deal with environmental uncertainty.	2.8333	1.1072
To what extent are the employees consulted in coming up with strategic responses towards market dynamics	3.0500	1.0156
The commitment and involvement of top management in formulating counter strategies to deal with market uncertainties.	2.8833	1.0266
The extent at which the university respond to market changes.	3.4000	0.8477
The flexibility of strategic plans to effectively suit market changes?	3.1167	0.8654
The extent of which the implemented strategies suit the University environment.	3.1833	0.9476
At which extent would you say the university monitors the environment continually to identify changes and respond to them on time?	2.9667	0.8823
The level of extent at which the University involve the student body in formulating programmes that are required by the society?	2.8500	1.1764
The appreciation of Student body towards the University Strategies.	3.4407	1.0549

From the findings the respondents indicated that the appreciation of Student body towards the University Strategies is to a great extent as shown by a mean of 3.4407, the university responds to a great extent to market changes as shown by a mean of 3.4000, the implemented strategies suit the University environment to a moderate extent as shown by a mean of 3.1833, the flexibility of strategic plans to effectively suit market changes are moderate as shown by a mean of 3.1167, employees are moderately consulted in coming up with strategic responses towards market dynamics as shown by a mean of 3.0500, the university monitors the environment continually to a moderate extent to identify changes and respond to them on time as shown by a mean of 2.9667, the commitment and involvement of top management in formulating counter strategies to deal with market uncertainties is to a moderate extent as shown by a mean of 2.8833, the University involve to a moderate extent the student body in formulating programmes that are required by the society as shown by a mean of 2.8500, the university has to a moderate extent set up good approaches to deal with environmental uncertainty as shown by a mean of 2.8333.

The study further established that universities employ various strategies in dealing with environmental uncertainty. These strategies include coming up with a register of risks and mitigating measures; concentrate on co programs; controlling of costs; ensuring quality education is offered; ensuring a good student body; have the right information about the costumers; tailor products to suit the current market; having boundary spanning i.e. creating competitive intelligence; hiring skilled workers; introduce new programs that encourage students to progress to higher learning in the institution; involve all the parties in the university strategic plan; keep up with latest technology; introduce new policy (customer centrist) aimed at addressing the needful; using sound proof renovation; training and development of employees; trying to get constant feedback on applied strategies; and use of consumer retention before acquiring new customers.

Based on the various approaches employed by universities, the study found that those strategies were beneficial. By hiring skilled staff, it ensures that the hired lecturers know their content and are qualified for what they are teaching; researching on the market helps to be in per with what is new in the technology sector and not be left behind; students involvement helps in fighting for the right of students and ensuring their issues are addressed and helps to improve approach to different issues in relation to performance such as customer service and new systems; ensures that incase of any changes in the education system they stay informed; helps the institution get the target market and what is in the market; organization differentiation to promote flexibility and efficiency; set out all possible views in all aspects; the students are able to concentrate during evening classes with minimal noise from outside because of sound proof buildings; hiring qualified staff ensures the best manpower who will get the job well done; and because of well done research, customers' needs are met.

Conclusion

The study sought to establish the influence of environmental uncertainty on strategy implementation within private chartered universities in Kenya. The study found that in order for the universities to keep up with the changing environment they had to implement various strategic decisions. The study also revealed that universities encounter various uncertainties with the main challenge encountered being technological changes, followed by customer preference, and lastly multiple government regulations on higher education. The Education Sector and government policies change to a great extent, and also the business environment has become to a very great extent dynamic, turbulent and difficult to forecast, the universities do development and research to a great extent. The study therefore concludes that

environmental uncertainties greatly influence strategy implementation within private chartered universities in Kenya.

The study also sought to determine the approaches that private universities employ to marginalize the effects of environmental uncertainty. The study concludes that universities employ various strategies in dealing with the effect of environmental uncertainty. They include: coming up with a register of risks and mitigating measures; concentrate on core programs; controlling of costs; ensuring quality education is offered; ensuring a good student body; have less aggressive strategy; have the right information about the costumers; tailor products to suit the current market; having boundary spanning i.e. creating competitive intelligence; hiring skilled workers; introduce new programs that encourage students to progress to higher learning in the institution; involve all the parties in the university strategic plan; keep up with latest technology; introduce new policy (customer centrisism) aimed at addressing the needful; using sound proof renovation; training and development of employees; trying to get constant feedback on applied strategies; and use of consumer retention before acquiring new customers. The study also found that the strategies employed benefited the university.

Recommendations

The study recommends that private Universities should be encouraged to lean more on areas like research and other areas of activities that are income generating instead of highly depending on tuition fees. This can be done through seeking affiliations with research institutes like KEMRI and KARI. The study further recommends that they should also seek bilateral agreements with the government seeking the introduction of subsidized programs for low income qualified students. This can be done through grants and scholarships instead of loans from HELB which is questionable on how they deal with private university students.

Universities should conduct continuous monitoring and evaluation of strategies adapted to ensure that their strategies are always at per with the dynamic and uncertain environments they operate in. it is also recommended that Private Universities should embrace strategic leadership as this helps these institutions to become more competitive. The study recommends that the university should set up a branch on market research, innovation and technology center to understand the current market dynamics. This will enable the university to understand the market well and also monitor the current trends and establish which programs sell in the market and ensure they target the students for those programs.

The study also recommends more involvement of students and staff in brainstorming, marketing and in coming up with strategies, this will make sure that the strategies put in place meet the needs of the students and the expectations of the society. The study further recommends maximization or leveraging on technology to enhance its competitive intelligence, the university should also do more marketing planning.

Suggestions for Further Research

This study sought to establish the influence of environmental uncertainty on strategy implementation within private chartered universities in Kenya and also to determine the approaches that private universities employ to marginalize the effects of environmental uncertainty. The study recommends replication of the study in public universities. The study also recommends a comparative analysis between Private and Public Universities performance in relation to the effects of environmental uncertainty on their strategies.

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