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EFFECT OF LEARNING AND LEADERSHIP ON IMPLEMENTATION OF BUSINESS STRATEGY IN THE BANKING SECTOR, KENYA

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ABSTRACT

In the Banking sector, banks have traditionally relied on asset bases and size for competitive advantage but this is becoming more difficult to sustain owing to competition. Despite the benefits gained by knowledge management in other industries, there is need to establish whether knowledge management would be of strategic importance in the banking sector. This study sought to establish the effect of knowledge management factors on implementation of business strategy at banking institutions in Chuka town. Exploratory research design was used in the study. The target population of the study was seventy-nine staff, of the six commercial banks in Chuka town. A sample of seventy-four staff was selected from the population. A census survey of ten management staff was conducted. Stratified sampling was done between banks and within each bank stratification was done in the two levels: middle level and management. A proportionate sample size of sixty-four middle level staff was selected. Primary data was collected from employees of the banks through the use of questionnaires and interview schedules. Data was then analyzed using descriptive statistics such as percentages and frequencies through Statistical Package for Social Sciences. Learning and Leadership affected implementation of business strategy at 74% and 71% respectively. These research findings would be useful to commercial banks in helping them to carefully align their Learning and Leadership style towards effective implementation of business strategy.

Key Words: *Organizational Learning; Sustainable Competitive Advantage; Business Strategy*

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Management support in form of leadership is widely recognized as an important factor in the implementation of business strategy. Management may be hesitant toward the implementation of strategy, hence representing an implementation problem. Both middle management attitudes and senior management attitudes toward implementation are important influences on the extent of plan implementation. It may be difficult to secure top management commitment for implementation; commitment being defined as acceptance of plans values and willingness to exert effort on their behalf.

In Kenya as with all organizations worldwide, banks require resources, skills the people in the banks employ, and the organizational capabilities built up over time. The knowledge and skills required includes economic, social, legal, management, governance communication, knowledge of the 'community' served, and policy skills. The banking sector reforms, seen in the last two decades, have been aimed at making banks operate more competitively. These changes include making business units more performance oriented and commercially focused, including changes in market approach and penetration. These changes have made outsourcing more viable and desirable, but required a greater emphasis on strategic management

Banks in Kenya are continuing to focus on streamlining their interface with their customers with a view of becoming more customer-centric. The goals of this become more responsive to the customer and effectively compete in the market. However the integration of knowledge management as a practice in banks has not been undertaken. To date there is still an acute sparseness of research on knowledge management in Kenya and Africa. This may be attributed to emergent phase at which knowledge management is in. This current state therefore necessitates research efforts to establish the effect of certain knowledge management factors on implementation of business strategy. Despite the benefits gained by knowledge management in other industries, there is need to establish whether knowledge management would be of strategic importance in the banking sector. This study therefore sought to establish the effect of Learning and Leadership on implementation of business strategy at banking institutions in Chuka Town

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Business Strategy Implementation and Knowledge Management

Strategic management involves the systematic analysis of an organization's external environment, its internal strengths and weaknesses compared to the environment, and the identification of opportunities to create competitive advantage. Early research in strategic management started in the 1950s, with leading researchers such as Drucker, Chandler and Selznick. Drucker (1954) pioneered the theory of management by objectives (MBO). Drucker predicted in the 1960s the rise of knowledge workers in the information age (Drucker, 1968). Chandler (1962) recognized the importance of a corporate-level strategy that gives a business its structure and direction; as he put it, "structure follows strategy." Selznick (1957) established the ground work of matching a company's internal attributes with external factors.

Hofer and Schendel (1978) have identified three distinct levels of strategy in a commercial context. These are: Corporate strategy, which deals with the allocation of resources among the various businesses or divisions of an enterprise Business strategy, which exists at the level of the individual business or division, dealing primarily with the question of competitive position Functional level strategy, which is limited to the actions of specific functions within specific businesses.

Strategic decisions according to Wilson and Gilligan (1997) are concerned with seven principal areas: They are concerned with the scope of an organization's activities, and hence with the characterization of an organization's boundaries. They relate to the harmonizing of the organization's activities with the opportunities of its substantive environment. Since the environment is in flux, it is necessary for this to be considered via adaptive decision-making that anticipates changes. They require the matching of an organization's activities with its resources. In order to take advantage of strategic opportunities it is necessary to have funds, capacity and personnel on hand when required. They have major resource implications for organizations- such as acquisition of additional capacity, dumping of un-usable capacity, or reassigning resources in a fundamental way. They are determined by the values and expectations of those who determine the organization's strategy. Any relocation of organizational boundaries will be determined by managerial inclination and conceptions as much as by environmental potential. They also affect the organization's long-term direction. They are complex in nature, since they tend to be non-routine and may involve a large number of variables. As a result, their effects will typically extend throughout the organization.
Many large organizations are broken up into Strategic Business Units (SBUs) for management and planning purposes. This is most common where a firm operates multiple businesses, with each business requiring its own strategic plan and operating independently (Aaker 2001; Robbins, Bergman, Stagg, & Coulter, 2000). Each SBU focuses on its own market as their customers, markets and products will be different from the corporation as a whole. Most banks have taken this format and thus their branches focus on their immediate surrounding market.

Robbins et al (2000) explain three echelons of strategic management: Corporate-level strategy seeks to determine what business a corporation should be in. Business-level strategy seeks to determine how a corporation should compete in each of its businesses. Functional-level strategy seeks to determine how to support the business-level strategy. These different levels of strategy are required where organizations have diverse lines of business, and/or are divided into SBUs, some of which may be functional departments providing support services to the organization.

Business strategy is concerned with managerial decisions and actions that determine the long-term prosperity of the organization. An organization must have a clear strategy and its strategy must be carefully developed and implemented to match its resources and environment in the pursuit of its organizational goals. Two meanings behind the often used term "strategy," as Steele (1989) pointed out, are the ideational content of strategy and the process of formulating strategy. Lester (1989) suggested that organizations sustain their strategic positions in the market by following seven best practices: continuously improving products and services, breaking down barriers between functional areas, flattening organizational hierarchies, strengthening relationships with customers and suppliers, effectively using information technology, having a global orientation and enhancing human resource quality.

To effectively support the implementation of strategic plans, an organization needs an acceptable support infrastructure. As strategy implementation involves syntheses of organizational capabilities, additional assets and competences may require sourcing (Grant, 1991). The acquisition of new competences can involve a number of approaches including strategic recruitment, mergers, acquisitions, alliances or retraining (Porter, 1996; Sveiby, 1997).

Strategy implementation involves the development of measurable short-term objectives, the translation of strategic plans into functional or tactical plans, and the communication of the plans to stakeholders. Developing measurable objectives involves the translation of long-term goals into precise short-term objectives that provide clarity, motivation and facilitation of corporate strategies. Functional plans identify and coordinate activities designed to meet short- and long-term objectives. Communication of the plans to stakeholders involves the transfer of the 'vision' to those who will have to implement it, and the creation of policies based on the strategic plans (Kotter, 1995; Pearce & Robinson, 1994). Strategies may be transitional – long duration, or transformational – short duration. In both cases, the way business activities are performed will change. This requires strategic planners to be both catalysts for change and change managers. Effectively communicating the vision requires establishment of a sense of urgency, the formation of a guiding coalition, removing obstacles to the vision, the planning for and creation of quick-wins, the consolidation of improvements and the institutionalizing of the new approach (Feurer & Chaharbaghi, 1995; Kotter, 1998).

Global knowledge management has changed how firms in service industries formulate, implement, and sustain competitive advantage (Schulte, 2004). Moreover, information technology and telecommunications have been driving forces behind the globalization of many industries (Roche & Blaine, 2000). Giraldo and Schulte (2005) have found that there correlations between knowledge management technologies, knowledge flows, communities of practice, and actions conducted to adapt an organization to its external and internal environments.

Moreover, scholars have identified the need for an organizational transformation that emphasizes collective knowledge and team development. It is clear in their literature that survival depends on converting the organization into a knowledge based organization (Drucker, 2001). Knowledge is becoming a critical resource for global success and is a source of competitive advantage (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995; Grant & Spender, 1997: Grant, 1997; Spender, 1997). Consequently, efforts in developing collaboration and knowledge management are essential to the survival of the firm that attempts to compete in the global knowledge economy (Doz, Santos, & Williamson, 2001).

Both external and internal knowledge are sources of competitive advantage (Stankosky, 2005). Frameworks have been posited that attempt to understand the flow of knowledge and the knowledge creation process within an organization as a source of competitive advantage (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995). Others suggest that a relationship between organizational knowledge and competitive advantage be moderated by the firm's ability to integrate and apply knowledge. Many scholars have explored the impact of accumulating knowledge, creating value, and establishing competitive advantage (Choo & Bontis, 2002; Liebowitz & Wilcox, 1997). However, only a small number of studies focusing on how embedded knowledge management is in organizations (Serenko & Bontis 2007; Kruger & Johnson, 2009) have surfaced.

There has been research of knowledge-based economies in the western world, and to a large extent, economies of sub-Saharan Africa may not be considered knowledge-based economies in the broad sense of the phrase. A knowledge-based economy is an economy in which the production, distribution and use of knowledge are the main drivers of growth, wealth creation, and employment across all industries. The distinguishing feature of modern knowledge-based societies is the extent and pace of growth and disruption in the accumulation and transmission of knowledge, much of which is new or is deployed in contexts distant from those of its creation (Steinmueller, 2002). For example, the amount of knowledge created and consumed in South Africa is much higher than in other sub-Saharan African countries. In Kenya, knowledge is scarcely being seen as a new source of competitive advantage for corporations, countries and regions. As a potential source of competitive advantage, knowledge does not just happen, some conditions must exist for knowledge to be created, effectively managed and shared. A region or a country or organization must have in place the appropriate tools for transferring knowledge and for managing it. Such conditions are inadequate in sub-Saharan Africa. Most business organizations in Kenya have not as yet embraced knowledge as a new source of competitive advantage. As such, conditions for effectively creating and sharing of knowledge in the country are wanting. However, Steinmueller (2002) considers all societies to be knowledge-based in their dependence on a collection of physical objects and cultural establishments whose production and articulation demands knowledge. There is need to acquire and sustain competitive advantage in sub-Saharan Africa. This may not be realized if management of knowledge is limited.

Sanghani (2008) reveals that not much is known regarding knowledge in small and medium sized organizations such as strategic business units. The same study recommends for knowledge management to achieve acceptance and understanding more studies are required in organizations of different types and sizes. Clearly, more research must be done to develop a comprehensive understanding of the factors of knowledge management and their impact on business strategy.
According to Calabrese and Stankosky, (1999) Knowledge Management rests on four pillars, which lead to effective enterprise learning a critical component of business strategy.

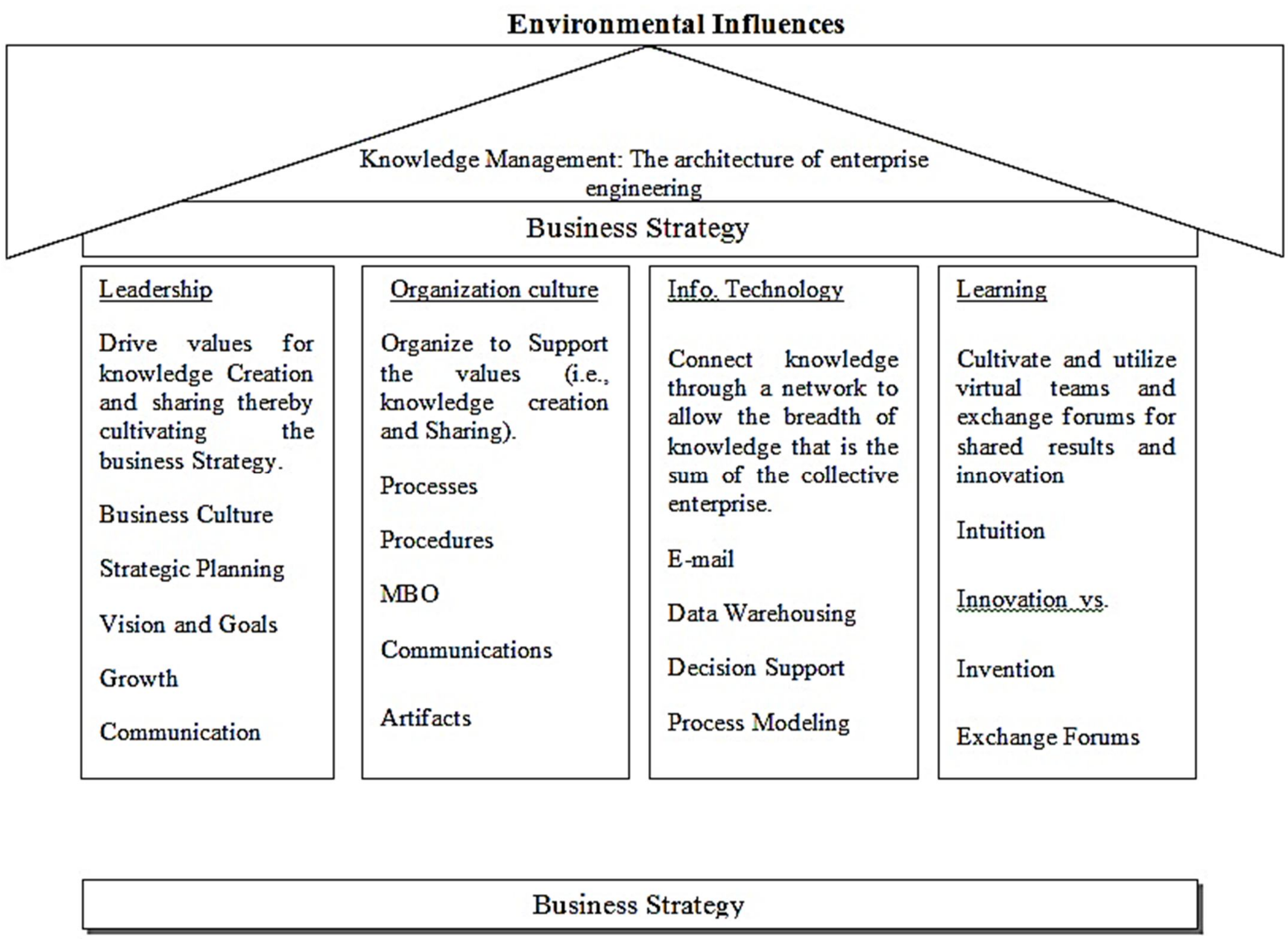

Figure 1: Knowledge Management Pillars Source: Stankosky & Calabrese, 1999.

Their framework has been widely accepted as basic in the discipline of knowledge management. The framework relies on the premise that if an organization is able to critically examine the four factors well, understanding of the composition of KM infrastructure and process capabilities that are expected to provide coherent and systematic knowledge support to strategy is imminent. This study though critical in knowledge management research its authors recommended more explicit research findings were needed to be able to acceptably conclude that the four pillar framework can be generalized to several industries.
The four pillars reveal that knowledge management is specific is certainly reliant, since it must be designed to each firm's structures and processes (Tsoukas, 1996). These studies also highlight the diversity of ways, in which knowledge can be managed, capitalized, transferred, and collectivized (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995). The gap is to ascertain how the various resources and capabilities required in gathering and diffusion of knowledge can be linked together. It is in this context that organization culture, learning, information technology and leadership require careful consideration. Tsoukas (1996) reveals that "the knowledge firms need to draw upon is also innately indeterminate." The result of this should be sustainable competitive advantage

Davenport, DeLong and Beers (1998) suggest that "knowledge is information pooled with experience, context, interpretation and deliberation." This cautions organizations not to disregard the contextual nature of knowledge. "Knowledge is synthesized and works through a progression of productive collaboration among individuals as well as through exchanges between those individuals and the thought devices within which they operate" (Poitou, 1997). Thought or cognitive devices are defined as "organized and consolidated sets of intellectual objects, associated to each other and set spatially for the intention of producing goods or knowledge" (Poitou, 1997).This aspect is important in allowing comprehension of how learning can be used to lead to successful implementation of business strategy.

According to Swan (1999), knowledge management is often defined as a process that can take several paths: For creation sharing that includes transfer of knowledge was considered. Retention follows with capture and codification.

Simoni (2005) provides a lucid classification and analysis of three KM approaches: Approaches of the objectification type emphasize the codification of knowledge. Knowledge assumed to be an object that can be precisely defined, captured, and moved from one place to another, capturing and formalizing knowledge at the end. A variety of methods are put forward for large-scale projects or for retaining strategic expertise within a firm. These methods have a certain degree of relevance to the conservation of knowledge, but since they take no account of socio-organizational context, they do not encourage the transfer of knowledge. This aspect leaves a research gap in the socio-organizational facet. Disproportionate use of knowledge objectification techniques and computing systems has been criticized. Research by Von Krogh, Ichijo, and Nonaka (2000), for example, are concerned with relations within organizations and seek to make out the attitudes likely to facilitate knowledge creation at the diverse stages of its development within organizations. This research underscores the need for research into relations as they are heavily influenced by organization culture and leadership particularly in the banking sector as this is a knowledge intensive sector.

2.2 Organizational Learning and Knowledge Management

The idea of organizational learning or learning organizations has been developing for more than two decades. Several researches and books attest to this (Daft & Weick, 1984; Fiol et al., 1985, Senge, 1990; Schwandt, 1994; Argyris, 1996; Garvin, 1998). Schwandt's (1996) approach provides a divergent view to present strategic management practices that deal only with performance change that insists all organizations activities "add value" to their end products, as opposed to through performance and collective learning. He focuses on explaining an alternate explanation of change by thinking of organizations as dynamic social systems being formed, reformed, and consuming energy Schwandt defines the organization as blend of actors, objects, and norms. The use of the term dynamic refers to the social system's patterns of continuous change or growth characterized by complex relationships among actors and between actors and their environment. Schwandt's model is described in detail by two operational systems. The first one is a learning system; the second one is a performing system.

The learning system is represented by four components of subsystems, which inter-dependently create a system of social action. The four learning subsystems do not function independently—they are nonlinear and interdependent. Each subsystem is responsible for carrying out vital functions for the organizational learning system to adapt to its environment. They are (a) environmental interface, (b) action/reflection, (c) dissemination and diffusion, and (d) memory and meaning. Each subsystem keeps a critical dependency on each of the other subsystems for process inputs. In other words, the output function of one subsystem becomes an input for each of the other subsystems.

Each of these interdependent relationships among the subsystems is maintained through sets of "interchange media." These form physical patterns and invisible networks that link the learning subsystems. The four interchange media corresponding subsystems are new information (product of the environmental interface subsystem), goal referenced knowledge (product of the action-reflection subsystem), structuring (product of the dissemination and diffusion subsystem), and sense making (product of the memory-meaning subsystem). The performing system is represented as well by four components of subsystems. The four performing subsystems do not function independently-they are interdependent. The four subsystems are (a) acquisition of resources, (b) production/ service, (c) management and control, and (d) reinforcement. This subsystem provides the organizational performance system with the pattern maintenance/latency function. It comprises those elements that contribute to the maintenance and management of tensions regarding the standards, norms, and values that the organization uses to reinforce the organization's performance. Therefore a focused study on learning and its relationship to business strategy is required as it is core to creative problem solving that is characterized with strategy.

(Robey et al., 2002), have defined organizational learning as a process that enables the attainment of, access to and reconsideration of organizational memory, thereby providing direction to organizational action. As thinking entities, organizations are able to observe their own actions, testing to discover the effects of other actions, and adjusting their actions to advance performance (Filol & Lyles, 1985). The breadth and depth of organizational learning are linked to its four constructs namely: knowledge acquisition, information distribution, information interpretation and organizational memory (Huber1991).

Knowledge acquisition is the process by which knowledge is attained (Tippins & Sohi, 2003; Robey et al., 2002; Huber, 1991). Information distribution is the process by which knowledge obtained is transferred and shared through formal and informal channels (Maltz & Kohli, 1996; Slater & Narver, 1995). Information interpretation is the process by which business units reach an agreement with regard to the meaning of information (Slater & Narver, 1995; Tippins & Sohi, 2003; Daft & Weick, 1984) and organizational memory denotes to organizations' storing knowledge for future utilization (Walsh & Ungson, 1991; Huber, 1991).The studies above have not addressed how learning affects implementation of business strategy but have focused on acquisition, validation, transfer and storage of knowledge.

Effective learning relies on a culture of openness, mutual trust, and a self-critical disposition. Consistent with the literature of organizational learning and learning, the accessibility to expertise and trusting working environment help the business units and individuals overcome learning anxiety and learn faster. (Schein, 1998; Wastell, 1999). The determination of how learning determines implementation of business strategy is crucial to organizations

2.3 Leadership and Knowledge Management

Leadership and management roles are entwined, and the distinction between management and leadership is not always evident. Classical functions such as planning, organizing, and controlling are considered within the boundaries of management. Management is also tasked with decision making-specifically related to processes and functions-to progress effectiveness. Leadership is characterized with motivation and support to people in order to appreciate their potential and achieve challenging goals. Among the leadership styles, situational leaders concentrate on various tasks and relationship behaviours (Hersey & Blanchard, 1996), in comparison, transformational leaders inspire people, meet their developmental needs, and encourage novel approaches and more endeavor for problem solving (Selzer & Bass, 1990).

Resource integration and efficient and effective use of their utilization are important tenets of management and they help manage complexity. Leadership, on the other hand, has its efforts aimed at towards encouraging people about the need to change, aligning them to a new way of doing things and motivating people to work together to achieve knowledge management objectives. As is true with projects, uniqueness, complexity, and unfamiliarity are some of the characteristics of knowledge management when it is initiated in an organization. As a consequence, leadership is influential to success as it provides vision and aptitude to deal with with change (Kotter, 1999). Additionally, the role of management and leadership in creating and transferring knowledge within an organization is more challenging because of the dynamic nature of the organization structure and culture as a result of virtual teams and outsourcing. By defining processes and roles, and communicating what is expected of all the members of the KM community, one can establish both predictability and openness.

Trust and open communication are indispensable to foster human relationships; predictability and openness are significant factors in instituting trust (Gray & Larsen, 2005). Establishing trust in e-based teams where face-to-face interaction is limited or non-existent-is an exigent task. Effective and frequent communication using information technology can be a solution. With virtual teams, organizations usually employ electronic media for written communication and group meetings (video-conferencing). By communicating clearly and effectively, managers can establish an environment of openness and transparency. It can lead to a work environment where team members willingly share information, experiences, and knowledge. These factors also instill trust-among all the participants- in their leader. Trust, in turn, encourages participants to collaborate, network, and innovate. The potential underlined above in regard to leadership leaves no doubt of its importance in research regarding knowledge management.

Ring (1996) examined trust at the inter-personal level and found it as an antecedent to forming ongoing networks. Although it has been observed to evolve mutually, trust is more vital for leaders as they attempt motivating participating employees to accomplish a vision and to achieve goals. And by building trust, leaders can also alleviate a conflict, which is considered a restraint to knowledge creation and transfer. Since people are motivated by challenges and opportunities to further their career goals, participants are often interested in accomplishing personal and professional goals in addition to carrying out their routine responsibilities. Therefore, it is imperative that knowledge management leadership understand and support the personal aspirations of the people and align them with the objectives of the organization. As a prerequisite to successful implementation of knowledge management in organizations, leadership of the organization is in charge of practicing strategic planning and systems thinking approaches, making best use of resources, fostering a culture that supports open dialogue and team learning.

Research has shown that top management involvement, knowledge management leadership, and the culture of the organization are important driving factors based on which a successful knowledge management system can be built (Anantatmula & Kanungo, 2007). With the involvement of top management, knowledge management initiatives will achieve support and active participation of the senior executives of the organization. Top management involvement would also ensure that knowledge management initiatives will have strategic focus. The research has also indicated that competent leadership of a knowledge management initiative combined with the support from the top management would lead to budgetary support for knowledge management initiatives. An organization culture that encourages open and transparent communication among the employees of the organization would lead to increased collaboration and knowledge sharing at hierarchical levels of the organization, which leads to knowledge sharing.

Increased communications with the aid of standard processes, along with information technology infrastructure, make it straightforward and enhance collaboration. The organization should have a structure that facilitates personal interactions and supports communities of practice to acquire tacit and explicit knowledge within the organization, and this structure should be extended to virtual teams through appropriate communication tools. Likewise, information technology infrastructure should facilitate the efficient capture of explicit knowledge and support knowledge sharing within and outside the organization by developing processes and systems that are easy to use. The organization should identify means and provide opportunities for individual learning, and link it to organizational learning and business performance especially strategy implementation. Such organizations should develop metrics to measure the results of learning and challenge people to perform better by setting tougher targets. Velasquez and Odem (2005) describe the benefits of knowledge brokers i.e. leaders who are in an advantageous position to connect knowledge seekers with solutions, or those who have the know-how to help.

3.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

The literature review presented indicated that there has been limited research into what constitutes knowledge management environment factors and their effect on business strategy implementation. This is particularly true in the banking context where there has been little research into knowledge management itself (Dilnutt 2000; Jones, 2001). Hence, the nature of the research was initially exploratory and 'theory building' (Hussey & Hussey, 1997; Perry, Riege & Brown, 1999; Perry 2001; Ticehurst & Veal 1999). This has been selected for two key reasons: the lack of quantitatively testable hypotheses due to the early pre-paradigmatic stage of the development of knowledge management as a discipline (Perry, 1998); and the potential richness of the data to be collected. Exploratory Research design was utilized in the form of self-administered questionnaires and one on one interview (researcher-administered questionnaires) to obtain relevant data to the study. It is the researcher's view that to a great degree the research was to be exploratory since the focus was on gathering new information and ideas in the area of Knowledge Management. The researcher used primary data which will be obtained through the use of questionnaires and data from relevant reports.

3.2 Sampling Procedure and Sample Size

The sampling frame outlined the list of elements from which the sample was drawn. It comprised of the entire population derived from each bank's staff. There were two main sampling designs: Purposive sampling was used to select middle level and management staff. A census survey of ten management staff was carried out as the number was considered too small for sampling. Stratified sampling was done between banks and within each bank. The basis for stratification was to achieve the meaningful responses from each bank and the two levels of staff owing to the uniqueness of each stratum. Stratification was done in the two levels: middle level and management. A proportionate sample size was selected randomly from the middle level staff of each bank totaling to 64 staff. Gay (1981) suggests that for a sample to be sufficiently representative, the sample size should be at least 30 percent of the target population to achieve normal distribution. On the other hand, Kathuri and Pals (1993), observe that for a population of 68, a sample size of 59 would be sufficiently representative. However this study therefore interviewed 64 respondents from the mid-level staff to cater for possible attrition and errors. The final sample size arrived at consisted of 74 respondents that comprised of management and mid –level staff.

Table 1: Sampling Matrix

Name of Bank	No. of Middle level staff	Sample size of middle level staff	Management
Kenya Commercial Bank	13	12	2
Barclays Bank	6	6	2
Co-operative Bank,	14	13	2
Equity Bank	28	26	2
Postbank	4	4	1
K-Rep Bank	4	3	1
Total	**69**	**64**	**10**

3.4 Data Collection

Data was collected through questionnaires that were administered to both middle level and top level staff. Questionnaires were administered to the respondents by the researcher. The researcher and respondents scheduled appointments at each of the banks. Questionnaires were filled by the respondents and interviews conducted by the researcher. The researcher allowed the respondents four days to complete the questionnaire and a day for the interview. Data for this study was collected over a period of 3 months.

3.5 Data Analysis

Completed questionnaires were scrutinized and responses grouped and prepared for analysis using SPSS computer package. This involved data cleaning, editing, coding and arrangement for analysis. Data was then analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS version 18.0) software. Descriptive statistics in the form of percentages, frequencies and ratios were used. SPSS was found appropriate for exploratory research owing to its versatility in aggregation, selection, sorting and weighting of cases (Levesque, 2005), transformation and restructuring of data (Slater and Atuahene-Gima, 2004). Data was entered into the Data Editor and variables defined. In this case in the variable view tab the first column had the name of the variable and the rows under this column showing each of the questions as a variable. The Data View was then used to enter the data with the data entered in Variable View being the headings for the columns in Data View. Data from the interview schedule was analyzed by categorizing responses by a particular respondent and comparing this to the same individual's responses on the questionnaire.

4.0 EMPIRICAL RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Composition of Sample Respondents

Twenty four out of a sample size of seventy-four declined to take part in the study thus leaving a total of forty-three respondents. These were staff from Barclays Bank and Co-operative bank who were denied the authority to take participate in the study. Three pointers to the nature of the composition of the respondents were considered to be relevant. These were the respondents' banks, the position held in the bank and the age of the respondents. Table 2 presents the proportion of respondents from each bank.

Table 2: The Proportion of Respondents from each Bank

Name of the bank	Respondents	Percent
Kenya Commercial Bank	12	27.9
K-Rep bank	7	16.3
Post bank	5	11.6
Equity Bank	19	44.2
Total	**43**	**100.0**

From Table 2, the highest percentage of respondents were from Equity Bank at 44.2% followed by Kenya Commercial Bank at 27.9% and Post Bank had the lowest number of respondents at 11.6%. This outcome can be explained from the fact that Equity Bank has the highest number of staff with Post bank having the least. Also demographic factors such as staff distribution by job title, gender and age were regarded as imperative in establishing trends in the responses. Table 3 gives the proportion of staff in different job titles within the sample.

Table 3: Staff Distribution by Job Title

Job title	Respondents	Percent
Managers	7	16.3
Mid level staff	36	83.7
Total	**43**	**100.0**

Majority of the respondents were mid-level staff with a number of 36 and a percentage of 83.7%. This was to be expected as the banking industry uses a model that is almost the same with two or three managers representing the top level staff and section heads and clerks representing the mid-level staff. Owing to the relatively small number of managers all were taken as respondents.

Table 4 presents staff distribution by gender giving the proportion of how many members of staff were of each gender.

Table 4: Staff Distribution by Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Male	25	58.1
Female	18	41.9
Total	**43**	**100.0**

In terms of gender the research revealed that 58.1% of respondents were male and 41.9% were female as shown in Table 4.

Table 5 presents staff distribution by age and the findings discussed as follows.

Table 5: Staff Distribution by Age

Age of Respondents	Frequency	Percentage
20-25	9	21.43
26-30	24	57.14
31-35	5	11.90
36-40	1	2.38
41-45	2	4.76
46-50	1	2.38
Total	**42**	**100**

The age of the respondents ranged between 22 years and 47 years, with the highest frequency of respondents being between 26 to 30 years. Twenty four respondents fell into this category giving a percentage of 57.14%. Seventy eight percent of the respondents are of the age of thirty years and below. This trend could be explained by the fact that banks are of late employing fresh graduates who fall into this category.

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4.2 Effect of Learning on Implementation of Business Strategy

This section describes the results attributed to the effect of Learning on implementation of business strategy with focus on resource utilization, adoption of knowledge, employee engagement and support for strategic goals.

4.2.1 Effect of Learning on Resource Utilization

Learning in organizations has been identified as central to firm's success. Organizations that learn seem to have the capacity to reinvent themselves, to manage knowledge and to adjust to changing competitive conditions. The following elements were investigated: acquisition of new skills, reinforcement of new skills, effect of learning tools, and effect of analysis of competitor strengths. The outcome of analysis is presented in Table 6.

Table 6: The Effect of Learning on Resource Utilization

Elements of Learning	on resource utilization				
	Not Important	Fairly important	Important	Very important	Extremely Important
Acquisition of new skills	1(2.3%)	1(2.3%)	10(23.3%)	18(41.9%)	11(25.6%)
Reinforcement of new skills	1(2.3%)	1(2.3%)	8(18.6%)	17(39.5%)	14(32.6%)
Learning tools	0(0%)	5(11.6%)	14(32.6%)	16(37.2%)	6(14.0%)
Analysis of competitor strengths	0(0%)	3(7%)	8(18.6%)	21(48.8%)	9(20.9%)
Learning on identification of knowledge and skill gaps	0(0%)	5(11.6%)	9(20.9%)	16(37.2%)	12(27.9%)
Learning on preservation of knowledge and experiences	2(4.7%)	5(11.6%)	8(18.6%)	17(39.5%)	11(25.6%)

The first element was on acquisition of new skills for resource utilization sought to elicit views on how respondents attached importance to motivation towards implementation of business strategy. About forty two percent of the respondents viewed acquisition of new skills as very important in encouraging staff on effective resource utilization. In comparison 25.6% viewed the same as extremely important with 23.3% feeling that motivation was important. A relatively small percentage of 2.3% felt that acquisition of new skills for resource utilization was fairly important. A similar percentage felt it was not important. In regard to reinforcement of new skills, a strong majority of respondents, 39.5% felt that it was very important for staff to reinforce newly gained skills as a means of achieving effective resource utilization with a view of implementing business strategy. From the responses, it can be concluded that 95.3% of the respondents attached some level of importance on reinforcement of newly gained skills. In comparison, 76% of

respondents pointed out that they engage in reinforcement of innovative ideas through codification and sharing with other facing similar issues.
The importance of having learning tools on resource utilization yielded some remarkable results returned the following results: About 37.2% of the respondents considered it very important for the organization to have learning tools so as to facilitate effective resource utilization. In comparison, 32.6% of respondents felt it was important to have learning tools that facilitate effective resource utilization. No respondent indicated that it was not important to have learning tools that facilitate effective resource utilization. This indicates the views of the respondents who consider this to be a strong factor in eliciting effective resource utilization in implementation of business strategy.

The effect of analysis of competitor strengths on resource utilization had the following responses: About 48.8% of the respondents felt it was very important to analyze competitor strength with a view of utilizing resources in a better way. Respondents were unanimous at 95.5% agreeing that effective use of resources is a source of competitive advantage while implementing business strategy. In comparison with respondents who felt it was very important to analyze competitor strengths, 20.9% felt it was important to carry out competitor analysis.

In relation to identification of skill gaps, the uppermost support of 37.2% was from respondents that felt strongly that identification of knowledge and skill gaps was very important. Most respondents felt that identification of skill and knowledge gaps was crucial to equipping staff with the necessary know-how to implement strategy. The second highest support, 27.9% was of respondents who felt it was extremely important to have identified knowledge and skill gaps. From the interview almost all the respondents felt that knowledge and skill gaps information should be integrated with the business strategy implementation plan.

4.2.2 The Effect of Learning on Adoption of Knowledge

The results of analysis of learning on adoption of knowledge are presented on Table 7. Eighty-three percent of respondents attached some level of importance to this aspect.

Table 7: The Effect of Learning on Adoption of Knowledge

Elements of learning	On adoption of knowledge				
	Not Important	Fairly important	Important	Very important	Extremely Important
Effect of learning techniques	2(4.7%)	5(11.6%)	8(18.6%)	17(53.5%)	11(25.6%)
Learning on preservation of knowledge and experiences	0(0%)	5(11.6%)	17(39.5%)	9(20.6%)	12(28.3%)

In relation to learning techniques encouraging involvement on utilization of organization resources, 53.5% of the respondents felt that it was very important for the organization to apply learning methods that are inclusive with a view of maximizing organization resource use while implementing business strategy. This aspect seems to have had the highest consensus amongst respondents about its importance with only 4.7%

indicating it was fairly important to have the same. In responding to the importance of adoption and preservation of knowledge, 39.5% of the respondents felt it was important to the organization to adopt and preserve knowledge. Most of the respondents associated knowledge with other assets utilized in the implementation of knowledge. There was a small difference amongst those who attached fair importance and those who felt it was very important at 11.6% and 20.6% respectively. Notably, a relatively high percentage felt it was extremely important to adopt and preserve knowledge at 28.3%.

4.2.3 The Effect of Learning on Employee Engagement

The results on the effect of learning on employee engagement were presented on Table 8 with at least 93% of respondents attaching some level of importance to the effect of learning on employee engagement.

Table 8: The Effect of Learning on Employee Engagement

Elements of learning	On employee engagement				
	Not Important	Fairly important	Important	Very important	Extremely Important
Learning methods chosen to encourage involvement	0(0%)	0(0%)	14(32.6%)	18(41.8%)	11(25.6)
Learning on creation of awareness of employee	0(0%)	3(7%)	20(46.5%)	13(30.2%)	7(16.3%)

In responding to the importance of learning methods that encourage employee engagement, 41.8% of the respondents felt it was very important to the organization to possess and practice learning methods that encourage employee engagement. Most of the respondents associated successful strategy implementation to staff involvement. This responses to this question are remarkable in that they fall within the mid responses at 25.6% for extremely important and 32.6% for important, leaving out the extremes of not important and fairly important.

4.2.4 The Effect of Learning on Support for Strategic Goals

Table 9: The Effect of Learning on Support for Strategic Goals

Elements of learning	On support for strategic goals				
	Not Important	Fairly important	Important	Very important	Extremely Important
Learning on creation of awareness of strategies	0(0%)	5(11.6%)	17(39.5%)	13(30.2%)	7(16.3%)
Learning on encouragement of employee involvement	1(2.3%)	3(6.9%)	8(18.6%)	15(34.9%)	12(27.9%)

The responses regarding the effect of learning on creation of awareness of strategies amongst employees as a means of achieving support for strategic goals were as follows: 39.5% of respondents responded by saying effect of learning on creation of awareness was important in securing support for strategic goals. Seven respondents representing 16.3% felt it was extremely important for learning to create awareness of strategy to secure support for strategic goals. In comparison, 34.9% of the respondents felt it was very important for learning to encourage employee involvement as a means of achieving support for strategic goals.

4.3 The Effect of Leadership on Implementation of Business Strategy

4.3.1 The Effect of Leadership on Support for Strategic Goals

Leadership in the management of knowledge has been observed to be a prime factor that establishes a setting that is conducive to application of knowledge management. Effective leaders are those seen to catalyze and coordinate knowledge management practices. Appropriate management of knowledge resources revolves round creating an environment in which knowledge participants develop their knowledge manipulation skills to expand and deepen their own knowledge resources. The effect of leadership on of having clear mission and vision on support for strategic goals had the following responses. About 44.2% of the respondents regarded it as very important to have clear mission and vision on employee involvement. Most of the respondents, from the interview agreed that leadership is drawn upon being able to communicate organization mission and vision and any changes that might affect both. The percentage of respondents who regarded it as extremely important to have a clear mission and vision to encourage employee involvement was relatively high at 30.2% while 16.3% felt it was important with 7.0% indicating it was fairly important to have a clear mission and vision to encourage support for goals.

Table 10; The Effect of Leadership on Support for Strategic Goals

Elements of Leadership	on support for strategic goals				
	Not Important	Fairly important	Important	Very important	Extremely Important
Having a clear mission and vision of the organization	0(0)	3(7.0%)	7(16.3%)	19(44.2%)	13(30.2%)
Management leading by example	1(2.3%)	3(7.0%)	10(23.3%)	10(23.3%)	19(44.2%)
Motivation of employees by management e.g. by rewards and recognition	2(4.7%)	0(0%)	11(25.6%)	18(41.9%)	12(27.9%)
Clarity of roles and responsibilities	0(0%)	4(9.3%)	6(14.0%)	19(44.2%)	14(32.6%)
Implementation of open-door policy	0(0%)	5(11.6%)	6(14.0%)	9(20.9%)	22(51.2%)
Leadership on rewards for new knowledge adoption	2(4.7%)	4(9.3%)	8(18.6%)	17(39.5%)	12(27.9%)
Leadership on creation of a conducive environment for employee involvement	0(0%)	3(7.0%)	10(23.3%)	15(34.9%)	15(34.9%)

The effect of management leading by example returned one of the most interesting responses of the study. Almost half of the respondents, comprising of 19 respondents considering it as extremely important for the management to lead by example when implementing business strategy. From the interviews carried out, 71% of respondents felt the management was not actively engaged in leading by example. 23.3% of the respondents felt that it was important for management to lead by example as a means of securing employee involvement. Respondents interviewed felt less inclined to contribute towards implementation if managers were less actively involved. An equal number felt it very important to have the same. Respondents regarded motivation of employees towards encouraging employee involvement was an important question to determine to what level respondents rewards and recognition as a means of encouraging employee engagement. From the responses, 41.9% of respondents regarded motivation in its various forms as very important towards encouraging employee participation with 27.9% regarding it as extremely important. About 25.6% and 4.7% were the percentages of respondents who regarded it to be important and not important to have staff motivated with a view of encouraging their participation in the process of implementation of business strategy.

The effect of having clear roles and responsibilities towards encouraging employee involvement was an vital in establishing to what level respondents attach importance towards ensuring employee engagement. About 44.2% of respondents regarded having in place clear roles and responsibilities as very important towards encouraging employee participation with 32.6% regarding it as extremely important.14.0% and 9.3% of respondents who regarded it to be important and fairly important to have staff motivated with a view of encouraging their involvement in the process of implementation of business strategy.

Respondents considered rewards to employees for adoption of new knowledge adoption towards encouraging employee involvement was an vital in determining to what level respondents rewards as a way of encouraging employee engagement.39.5% of respondents regarded rewards as very important towards encouraging employee participation with 27.9% regarding it as extremely important.18.6% and 9.3% were the percentages of respondents who regarded it to be important and fairly important to have staff rewarded for adoption of new knowledge, with a view of encouraging their participation in the process of implementation of business strategy. 4.7% viewed rewards as not important in that perspective.

Respondents felt the creation of a conducive environment for employee involvement was vital in the organization achieving successful implementation of its business strategy. 34.9% the creation of an enabling environment for employee involvement that supports employee involvement. A relatively large percentage of 34.9% felt it was extremely important with only 7.0% declaring it was fairly important to create a conducive environment for employee involvement. From the interview 75% of the respondents viewed their organization as having an enabling environment for employee engagement.

4.3.2 The Effect of Leadership on Resource Utilization

Table 11: The Effect of Leadership on Resource Utilization

Elements of Leadership	Rating of importance on resource utilization				
	Not Important	Fairly important	Important	Very important	Extremely Important
Leadership on motivation of employees to adopt effective resource utilization	0(0%)	1(2.3%)	10(23.3%)	19(44.2%)	13(30.2%)
Leadership on resource allocation and utilization	1(2.3%)	6(14.0%)	10(23.3%)	13(30.2%)	13(30.2%)

30.2% of the respondents responded by saying effect of motivation towards effective resource utilization was very important; similarly the same percentage viewed it as extremely important. In relation to leadership on resource allocation 30.2% felt it was both very important and extremely important for leadership to be exercised in resource allocation and utilization. From the interview motivation was considered by respondents to be decisive in employees exceeding their resource utilization goals during implementation. About 23.3% felt it was important; this represented the views of 10 respondents. In comparison, 14.0 % felt it was fairly important for the leadership of the organization to motivate employees for effective resource utilization.

4.3.3 The Effect of Leadership on Knowledge Adoption

Table 12: The Effect of Leadership on Knowledge Adoption

Elements of Leadership	Rating of importance to knowledge adoption				
	Not Important	Fairly important	Important	Very important	Extremely Important
Having clear mission and vision of the organization	0(0%)	4(0%)	7(0%)	20(0%)	12(0%)
Leadership on encouragement of employee involvement	2(4.7%)	1(2.3%)	11(25.6%)	16(37.2%)	13(30.2%)

From the results 46.5% representing 20 respondents felt that it was extremely important for leadership to provide clear mission and vision with a view of achieving knowledge adoption. In regard to leadership encouraging employee involvement, 30.2% of the respondents considered this to be extremely important, underlining its significance amongst respondents in securing involvement in business strategy implementation.

5.0 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusion

The study sought to find out the effect of leadership and learning on implementation of business strategy. The following conclusions can be drawn from the study.

In learning the reinforcement of new skills was considered the most important aspect at 79% and creation of awareness the least at 65%. From the interview respondents indicated that learning design is essential to ensure the learning effectiveness of various levels of users. The effect of leadership on support for strategic goals was considered to be of moderate importance with 73% attaching importance to it. The implementation of an open door policy, leading by example and having a clear mission and vision were regarded as the most important by respondents, at 85%, 82% and 80% respectively. Knowledge requires the integration and careful consideration of leadership, organization, learning and technology in an organization setting in order for it to be utilized in business strategy implementation.

5.2 Recommendations

It is on the basis of this study that the researcher recommends the following:

i. Continuous training of knowledge users. People may lack the skills to carry out knowledge management processes, so training may be required to teach them about the benefits of knowledge management realization, the ways how knowledge management activities can be performed and which tools to use. Human resource departments ought to incorporate knowledge management training in training calendars.
ii. Alignment and active use the organization's stores of knowledge in the implementation of business strategy. Business units heads should continuously carry out this task in close collaboration with their teams to identify gaps and devise methods of dealing with the deficiencies.

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