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**CALIBRATING IMPLEMENTATION OF STRATEGIC PLANS AMONGST COMMERCIAL BANKS IN KENYA: AN ANALYSIS OF LEADERSHIP ROLE**

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**ABSTRACT**

*In this age of turbulence, steering an organization to attain remarkable success depends on a leader's ability to craft and effectively implement strategies. Strategies may fail to be implemented due to poor leadership. The main objective of the study was to examine implementation of strategic plans amongst commercial banks in Kenya: An analysis of leadership role. Specifically the study focused on leadership roles of communication and commitment. The study employed mixed research design. The study targeted 731 staff of Cooperative bank in Nairobi County. Data was collected from a sample of 252 staff. The study employed stratified and simple random sampling methods. Open ended and closed ended questionnaires were the main data collection tools. Data was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. For descriptive statistics frequencies, mean, standard deviation and percentages were used and for inferential statistics Karl Pearson's correlation and regression analysis were used. Qualitative data was analyzed using content analysis. The study established that leadership role as measured through communication and commitment positively and significantly influenced implementation of strategic plans. The study recommended for leaders to not only ensure effective communication but also be committed in order to enhance effective implementation of strategic plans.*

**Key words:** *Communication, Commitment, Implementation of strategic plans, Leadership role*

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## INTRODUCTION

Favaro (2015) concerted that the role played by strategy implementation has gradually created interest in management research. According to Kihara, Bwisa and Kihoro (2016) strategy implementation ascertains an organizations survival as well as success. Successful strategy implementation is necessary for an organization to achieve its goals (Elbanna, Andrews & Pollanen, 2015). Flawed implementation may cause an outstanding strategy not to deliver expected results (Raes, Heijlties, Glunk & Roe, 2011; Hickson, Miller & Wilson, 2003).

Gebhardt and Eagles (2014) posited that strategic plan implementation had generally been accepted all over the world across all sectors due to its contribution to remarkable organizational performance. Success in strategy implementation happens when the actual performance in regards to a strategic plan exceeds the target (Njagi & Kombo, 2014). Failure in implementation may be due to several factors such as poor leadership, organizational culture, organizational structure, inadequate resources, decision makers non commitment, lack of communication (Kalali, Anvari, Pourezzat & Dastjerdi, 2011; Variyam & Kraybill, 2013; Mbaka & Mugambi, 2014; Kibicho, 2015; Mwangi, 2016; Odero, 2016).

According to Letting (2009) poor leadership is one of the main hindrances to successful strategy implementation. The leadership role in owning up, steering as well as bolstering strategy implementation efforts is critical for a firm's success. Leaders have encountered a number of challenges in the area of strategy implementation and therefore strategic leaders must take more time to reflect and act on strategy implementation (Speculand, 2011). Successful leaders are actively involved in building structures, organizational processes as well as teams that propels implementation of both their vision and strategies (Dess, Lumpkin & Eisner, 2010). A leader

needs to effectively communicate to employees so that they may be well informed about the strategy to be implemented and how they could contribute to successful implementation. Several studies have emphasized on the importance of communication in strategy implementation (Guzami, 2013; Otieno, 2013; Odero, 2016). According to Lynch (2012) and Wanjiku and Ombui (2013) the most crucial precondition for successful strategy execution is top level executive's commitment to follow the strategic direction.

According to Aldaibat and Irtaimeh (2012) globally the banking sector has encountered unprecedented challenges with the rise of privatization and also globalization. Banks should adopt and implement strategies in order to survive and even thrive in the competitive environment. Nyamongo and Temesgen (2013) posited that Kenyan commercial banks are in dire need to simultaneously enhance customer experience, meet the compounding regulatory requirements as well as reduce operational costs.

### Statement of the Problem

It has been noted that about 70% of strategies that have been planned have failed due to poor strategy execution as a result of absence of managers commitment and indecisiveness (Lynch, 2012; Wanjiku & Ombui, 2013; George & Desmidt, 2014). Apparently, studies have indicated management team's lack of commitment as a factor that undermines strategy implementation (Hunger & Wheelen, 2008) ;Wilkinson, Nutley & Davies, 2011; Birken, Lee & Weiner, 2012). Further lack of communication to employees may hinder successful implementation of strategies (Mazzola & Kellermanns, 2010).

The banking industry is experiencing intensified competition as it faces slow balance sheet growth, gradual increase of new entrants, great pressure including an uncertain economic outlook (Boohene *et al.*, 2013). According to Mukhalasie (2014) banks

have not only struggled from diverse stages but also embraced diverse organizational strategies demonstrating that it has not been an easy task to obtain optimal strategy implementation. Thus the need for leaders to actively engage themselves in the implementation process cannot be overemphasized. Leaders need to be committed and to communicate to staff.

Several studies have been conducted on implementation of strategies. However, the studies have been done in different contexts in Nigeria (Ubi, Ojie & Akaa, 2019), Tanzania (Salum,2018). Further, the studies have been done in different sectors public secondary schools (Ng'ang'a & Ombui, 2013);insurance companies (Abok, 2013), manufacturing (Mumenya, Mokaya & Kihara, 2014), County government (Kagumu, 2018), Shipping companies (Katana,2017). This study was done in commercial Banks. Additionally, majority of the studies have focused on combined effect of many other factors that influence implementation such as organizational structure, organizational culture, innovation, human resource (Kibet,2014; Kibicho, 2015; Mwangi, 2015).. For analysis some studies only used descriptive statistics (Mutie & Irungu, 2014; Madegwa, 2014) unlike the current study which utilized both descriptive and inferential statistics. Despite several studies being done, they have not underscored the role of leadership in terms of communication and commitment and in implementation of strategic plans. This study intends to fill the highlighted contextual, conceptual and methodological gaps by focusing on role of leadership in implementation of strategic plans amongst commercial banks in Kenya. The paper answered the following questions; Firstly, does communication influence implementation of strategic plans amongst commercial banks in Kenya? Secondly, does

commitment influence implementation of strategic plans amongst commercial banks in Kenya?

### **Research Objective**

The main objective of the study was to calibrate implementation of strategic plans amongst commercial banks in Kenya: An analysis of Leadership role. The specific objectives were;

- To examine the influence of communication on implementation of strategic plans amongst commercial banks in Kenya
- To assess the influence of Commitment on implementation of strategic plans amongst commercial banks in Kenya

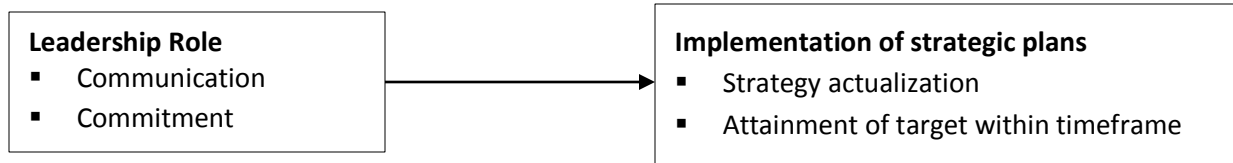
The research was guided by the following research hypotheses;

- **H<sub>01</sub>**: There is no significant relationship between communication and implementation of strategic plans amongst commercial banks in Kenya
- **H<sub>02</sub>**: There is no significant relationship between commitment and implementation of strategic plans amongst commercial banks in Kenya

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **The Higgins's Eight (8) S Model**

This model was put forth by Higgins (2005) who posited that for new strategies to succeed, organizational factors such as structure, system and processes, leadership style, staff, resources and shared values should be aligned with the new strategies. All these factors are vital for successful strategy execution. Style which is one of the "S"s refers to leadership or the management style exhibited by the leaders or managers especially when relating to subordinate staff or those working under them. Leadership style is about the role of leaders in terms of whether they are committed to their job and whether they effectively communicate to staff in regards to implementation of strategic plans.



**Independent Variable**

**Dependent Variable**

**Figure 1: Conceptual Framework**

**Conceptual Review**

One aspect of leadership role involves enhancing communication within the organization. According to Wanjiku (2013) the management should effectively communicate with the operational staff. If the communication is not effective the operations staff does not clearly understand the expectation of the management and therefore there are instances where the strategy is not achieved due to poor communication. Management should also promote bottom up communication and enhance a feedback mechanism by communicating to the staff on the decision made by management or the board of directors. Top down flow of communication is essential for developing bottom up support (Kotler & Keller, 2012). It is the duty of the leader to provide the instructions or directions to meet the requirements of situation (Azhar, Ikram, Rashid & Saqib, 2012).

According to Otieno (2013) communication is also seen as a key aspect of good leadership and supportive leadership will consequently comprise of able communicators who are able to articulate the strategic initiatives and get staff buy in as to ensure their effective participation. Efficient communication should be able to give compressive explanation of new duties, responsibilities and obligations which are to be carried in a given organization. Before turning to its customers an organization must first persuade its employees about the importance of strategy (Mazzola & Kellermanns, 2010). Barriers to successful strategy implementation may be created by the lack of knowledge with lower management and non-

management employees (Mazzola & Kellermanns, 2010).

Commitment is necessary to promote strategy implementation by using the role of middle managers to coordinate various activities for implementation of strategy (Kissi, Dinty & Lu, 2012). Lack of commitment emanates in the form of low priority for action implementation which result in delay in taking decision and action thereby compromising the quality implementation of strategy (Permana, 2017). Studies by Wachira (2014) and Kohtamaki, Krause and Ronkko (2012) emphasized the importance of strategic commitment of middle managers in enhancing strategy implementation.

According to Rajasekar (2014) key responsibilities of the leadership include streamlining of processes, keeping employees motivated and committed to strategy implementation, aligning the organizational structure and coordination of activities. Obstacles to effective implementation of strategies are created by lack of commitment to strategies formulated (Mazolla & Kellermanns, 2010; Kalali, Anvari, Pourezzat & Dastjerdi, 2011; Wanjiku, 2013). According to Kibet (2014) lower rank employees may not support strategy implementation due to lack of management’s commitment to their roles. Thus top managers should be committed to the implementation process as commitment influences strategy implementation. Mapetere, Mavhiki, Tonderai, Sikomwe and Mhonde (2012) found that due to low leadership involvement in strategy implementation there was partial strategy success. For successful implementation of strategies all managers and implementers in all organizational

levels need to be involved in the implementation process (Al-Kandi, Asutay & Dixon, 2013). Actual involvement may result in focus being placed on effective implementation, which therefore minimizes potential conflicts and any resistance to change. Strategies fail due to lack of commitments of the policy makers, lack of strategic leadership, lack of interest and absence of efficient leadership to implement (Joostle & Fourie, 2009).

### **Empirical Review**

Results from several surveys have confirmed that even the best-formulated strategies may fail to produce superior performance for the firm if they are not successfully implemented. A study conducted by Beer and Eisenstat (2000) in united states on strategy implementation and learning silent killers indicated leadership, teamwork as well as strategic direction as being imperatives for successful strategic plan implementation. The study identified Laissez-faire leadership style, unclear strategy, absence of teamwork from management team, poor communication, poor coordination and unready middle managers as being the strategy implementation silent killers

A study carried out at Kenya Revenue Authority by Kiplagat (2008) confirmed organizational politics, inadequate resources, structure and culture, resistant to change, Government decisions, inadequate communication and uncontrollable factors as the major challenged experienced while implementing strategies. An interview guide was used for data collection.

Mapetere *et al.* (2012) stated that the reasons which cause failure of the strategies and despite having the best strategies they could not bring forth results in Zimbabwe was only on account of negative leadership behavior which shows the strategy executive people were not liable, they were less committed to the strategy. Lack of creative strategic vision in the organization they could not motivate and

boot up morals of staff to obtain the determined objectives, communication among the middle level management and high level management in the organization remained very low.

Using case study design Mbaabu (2012) conducted a study to ascertain strategy implementation challenges faced at the Deposit Protection Fund Board and management of the challenges. Data was collected from seven respondents by use of an interview guide. For data analysis content analysis was utilized. Findings revealed a number of challenges for instance liquidation, policy related due to weak frameworks, economic as well as operational challenges. Further it was established top management commitment, encouraging change in the cultural mindset of people and communicating the strategy to staff were the measures undertaken to mitigate the challenges. The target population for this study was too small as only seven respondents were interviewed.

Using descriptive survey, Abok (2013) conducted a study on Factors affecting effective implementation of strategic plans and established that Communication was necessary for implementing strategic plans and particularly top down communication in NGO's. The study also revealed that management style, organizational culture, stakeholders and organizational resources affected the effectiveness of strategic plan implementation.

Guzamin (2013) and Otieno (2013) in their studies on strategy implementation in Community Based Organizations and Barclays bank in Kenya respectively underscored the importance of communication for implementation to be successful. Otieno's (2013) study targeted 10 managers out of whom only six responded. The target population was too small and the results of the study could not be generalized to include all banks.

A study conducted in public secondary schools in Kiambu County on factors that influenced

implementation of strategic plans confirmed that leadership was the most important followed by resource allocation, communication and lastly organization structure (Ng'ang'a & Ombui, 2013). The same sentiment was echoed by on the aspect of leadership being the most significant factor that influenced effective strategy implementation at Bidco Oil Refineries (Mumenya, Mokaya & Kihara, 2014).

M'mbui (2014) identified lack of top management commitment to strategic plan, ineffective leadership for strategy execution, ineffective organizational culture and structure and non-functional reward and motivation policies and procedures as key impediments to the implementation of strategy. Case study design was adopted and for data collection self-administered questionnaire and in-depth interview. Content analysis was used to analyze data.

A study conducted at the Kenya police service by Manana, Okwisa, Mutiso, Kanyoro and Gongera (2014) established that factors such as organization structure, managerial skills including communication and also staff training affected the implementation communication and staff training affect strategic plan implementation in the service. Descriptive research design was used and data was gathered using both questionnaires and interviews. A study carried out by Abdalla (2014) in the Kenya oil market specifically at oil Libya on factors that affected successful strategy implementation confirmed that frequent internal communication, and resources affected strategy implementation. However organizational culture was found to be insignificant. Descriptive research design was used and questionnaires were used to collect data.

Madegwa (2014) sought to ascertain the effect of top management commitment, activities coordination, responsibilities of individuals and organizational culture on implementation of strategy at National Cereals and Produce Board. The study used

descriptive research design. The target population was comprised of 781 managerial staff in different managerial levels and various farmers. Questionnaires were used to collect data which was analyzed descriptively. Findings revealed that top management commitment, coordination of activities, individual responsibilities and organization culture influenced strategy implementation, This study only utilized descriptive statistics for analysis.

Mutie and Irungu (2014) carried out a study on strategic plan implementation determinants at Church Commissioners for Kenya. Structured questionnaires were used to gather data which was analyzed descriptively. Results indicated that leadership, culture, technology and unique resources determined successful strategy implementation. The study employed case study design.

Kibet (2014) carried out a case study of family bank Kenya and analyzed the factors that affected strategy implementation .interactive interviews was the main data collection tool and data was analyzed using content analysis . The study confirmed that the top management commitment, communication process, activity coordination and organizational culture influenced strategy implementation.

Mbaka and Mugambi (2014) identified relationship among different departments and different strategy levels, executors, communication, organization structure, strategy formulation process, implementing tactics, consensus, commitment, employees and inadequate resources as some of the factors that affect strategy implementation. The study adopted desk study where only secondary data was analyzed.

In his study on influence of strategy implementation in the Kenyan oil marketing industry Abdalla (2014) concluded that there was a significant positive relationship between internal communication and strategy implementation in the Kenyan oil marketing industry and there was also a significant positive



relationship between resources and strategy implementation in the Kenyan oil marketing industry. But regarding organizational culture there was an insignificant positive relationship between organizational culture and strategy implementation. The research design adopted was descriptive design. Similarly a study conducted by Odero (2016) to ascertain whether communication affected strategy implementation revealed that a relationship exists between communication and strategy implementation in the banking industry in Kakamega County, Kenya. The study used descriptive survey research design.

According to Nyakeriga (2015) successful strategy planning implementation can be achieved through engaging employees, having a full and active executive support, aligning the initiatives, widespread perceived need for the strategic planning effective communication, thorough organizational planning and competitive analysis, aligning budgets and performance, and by monitoring and adapting.

Using mixed research design Kibicho (2015) conducted a study in Kenyan insurance firms on strategy implementation determinants and confirmed that managerial competence, resource strength, corporate culture as well as innovation influenced implementation of strategies. Katana (2017) carried out a study on strategy execution determinants in Kenyan shipping companies. The study confirmed that strategic leadership, organizational culture and organizational resources influenced strategy execution whereas organizational structure was found to be insignificant. The study recommended for leaders to exhibit more commitment and dedication and to develop a vision that may guide employees in the achievement of organizational objectives. The study utilized cross sectional survey research design and data was collected using structured questionnaires.

Salum (2018) conducted a study in Tanzania's executive agencies on factors that influenced strategic plan implementation. The study focused on top management support, organizational resources, organizational culture and stakeholders' role and established that they were all statistically significant. Descriptive research design was used and data was collected using both questionnaires and an interview guide. This study had communication, empowerment, employee involvement, employee rewards and decision making as an indicator of top management support.

Kagumu (2018) sought to ascertain determinants of strategy implementation of in Kenyan county governments the study focused on organizational culture, leadership, resources, and organizational structure. Semi-structured questionnaire was used for data collection and analyzed descriptively, inferentially and for qualitative data using content analysis. All the four independent variables were found to have a significant influence on the dependent variable which was Implementation of Strategic Plans by the county governments in Kenya. Organizational Structure had the greatest influence, followed by Leadership Characteristics with organizational Culture and Organizational Resources came last. Leadership Characteristics had leadership type, leadership role and Communication as its indicators while Implementation of Strategic Plans had Development projects, Public participation and Financial viability as its aspects.

Ubi, Ojie and Akaa (2019) conducted a study on Strategic Implementation issues and Performance of Selected Manufacturing Companies in Nigeria and established that decision making was affected by poor goal alignment, lack of commitment and middle managers low efforts which affected the performance negatively. Thus absence of strategic commitment undermined strategy implementation.

## METHODOLOGY

The study applied mixed research design that involved triangulation of various research designs. This approach has the ability to not only increase validity of the outcomes but also compensating for each research methods weaknesses (Creswell & Plano, 2011, Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004; Northouse, 2013). The study utilized both qualitative and quantitative designs. Quantitative design was employed for quantifying the hypothesized influence of leadership role while for open ended questions that were meant for further interrogation qualitative design was employed. Several scholars have used mixed research design in related studies (Kibicho, 2015; Mwangi, 2016).

The population of the study consisted of 731 employees which included 86 managers and 645 employees of Co-operative bank of Kenya within Nairobi County. Data was collected from a sample of 252 staff (managers and employees) who were selected to participate in the study. The sample size of the study was determined by use of Krejcie and Morgan (1970) formula. It utilized stratified and simple random sampling methods to pick the samples. Open ended and closed ended questionnaires were the main data collection tool that sought information on leadership role and implementation of strategic plans.

The items of the questionnaires were subjected to Cronbach Alpha coefficient test whereby leadership role (communication and commitment) and implementation of strategic plans yielded an r-value of 0.884 and 0.875 respectively. This indicated a high reliability value of the questionnaire. Data was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. For descriptive statistics frequencies, mean, standard deviation and percentages were used and for inferential statistics Karl Pearson's correlation and

regression analysis were used. The simple regression formulae used was:-

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \epsilon \dots \dots \dots \text{equation I.}$$

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_2 X_2 + \epsilon \dots \dots \dots \text{equation II}$$

Whereby Y = implementation of strategic plan,

$\beta_0$  = Constant,

$B_1, B_2$  = Coefficients of determination

$X_1$  = Communication

$X_2$  = Commitment

$\epsilon$  = Error term

Data was collected using the open ended questionnaire and analyzed by use of content analysis.

## RESULTS

A total of two hundred and fifty two (252) questionnaires were distributed out of which 179 were returned giving a response rate of 71%. This response rate is adequate as proposed by Kothari (2011) who alluded that responses between 60% - 70% were adequate while responses above 70% were considered as being excellent.

### Descriptive statistics results on leadership role of communication

The study sought to determine whether communication as a leadership role influences implementation of strategic plans amongst commercial banks in Kenya. Respondents were expected to agree or negate to the statements on communication on a five (5) point Likert scale (where 1= strongly disagree 2= Disagree, 3= Neutral, 4= Agree and 5= Strongly agree). The results are presented in Table 1 below.

**Table 1: Descriptive Statistics on Communication**

	Frequency and Percentage (%)					Mean	Standard Deviation
	SDA	D	N	A	SA		
Managers ensure clear communication	0	8(4.5)	21(11.7)	80(44.7)	70(39.1)	4.18	.81
Adequate information sharing	0	13(7.3)	21(11.7)	80(44.7)	65(36.3)	4.10	.87
Managers pay pivotal role in communication	0	7(3.9)	55(30.7)	87(48.6)	30(16.8)	3.78	.77
Management communicates strategy	0	7(3.9)	41(22.9)	81(45.3)	50(27.9)	3.97	.82
There is effective communication on implementation	0	6(3.4)	23(12.8)	95(53.1)	55(30.7)	4.11	.75
Valid N (listwise)	179						

Regarding communication as an indicator of leadership majority of the respondents 80(44.7 %) were in agreement that managers ensure clear communication of responsibility and accountability for important actions during implementation of strategic plans as shown by the mean score of 4.18, 80(44.7%) were in agreement that there was adequate information sharing between organizational leaders or business units responsible for implementation of strategies as shown by the mean score of 4.10, 87(48.6%) were in agreement that managers play a pivotal role in strategic communication on the implementation of strategic plans as shown by a mean score of 3.78, 81(45.3) % agreed that management communicates the

organization strategy to be implemented clearly to the employees as shown by a mean score of 3.97, 95(53.1%) agreed that there was effective communication on the implementation of strategic plans in the organization as shown by a mean score of 4.11.

#### **Descriptive statistics results on leadership role of Commitment**

The study sought to determine whether commitment as a leadership role influences implementation of strategic plans amongst commercial banks in Kenya. Respondents were expected to agree or negate to the statements on commitment. The results were presented in Table 2 below.

**Table 2: Descriptive Statistics on Leadership role of Commitment**

	Frequency and Percentage (%)					Mean	Standard Deviation
	SDA	D	N	A	SA		
Feeling of ownership	0	0	43(24.0)	73(40.8)	63(35.2)	4.11	.76
Managers ensure appropriate processes are implemented	0	8(4.5)	48(26.8)	73(40.8)	50(27.9)	3.92	.85
Management is committed and inspires and motivates	0	18(10.1)	48(26.8)	49(27.4)	64(35.8)	3.89	1.01
Managers demonstrate willingness to give energy	0	17(9.5)	35(19.6)	77(43.0)	50(27.9)	3.89	.92
Managers support and are committed to implementation	0	7(3.9)	34(19.0)	82(45.8)	56(31.3)	4.04	.81

As for the indicator on leadership commitment, 73(40.8%) were in agreement on the statement that there's a feeling of ownership of strategy among managers and employees in my organization as shown by a mean score of 4.11, 73(40.8%) agreed that managers ensure appropriate processes are implemented to meet organizational objectives as shown by a mean score of 3.92, 64(35.8%) strongly agreed that management were committed to the strategy implementation and that management inspired and motivated employees to support the process as shown by a mean score of 3.89, 77(43.0%)

agreed that managers demonstrated willingness to give energy and loyalty to the implementation process as shown by a mean score of 3.89 and 82(45.8%) were in agreement that that managers support and are committed to implementation of strategic plans in the organization as shown by a mean score of 4.00.

### Descriptive Statistics on Implementation of Strategic Plan

Respondents were expected to agree or negate to the statements on the implementation of strategic plans. Results are presented in Table 3 below.

**Table 3: Descriptive Statistics on Implementation of Strategic Plans**

	Frequency and Percentage (%)					Mean	Standard Deviation
	SDA	D	N	A	SA		
Implementation affects organization operations	0	3(1.7)	24(13.4)	61(34.1)	91(50.8)	4.34	.77
Organization has a clear definition of outcomes of strategy implementation	0	6(3.4)	33(18.4)	77(43.0)	63(35.2)	4.10	.81
Organization usually achieves the milestones	0	18(10.1)	38(21.2)	80(44.7)	43(24.0)	3.83	.91
Organization implements formulated strategies	0	0	21(11.7)	91(50.8)	67(37.4)	4.26	.65
Objectives of strategic plans are normally realized	0	6(3.4)	24(13.4)	79(44.1)	70(39.4)	4.19	.79
Implementation happens within anticipated timeframe	0	6(3.4)	53(29.6)	78(43.6)	42(23.5)	3.87	.81
timeframe set is realistic	0	0	31(17.3)	92(51.4)	56(31.3)	4.14	.68
Short term goals are achieved	0	0	33(18.4)	80(44.7)	66(36.9)	4.18	.72
Medium term goals are achieved	0	0	15(8.4)	129(72.1)	35(19.6)	4.11	.52
Long term goals are achieved	0	0	30(16.8)	103(57.5)	46(25.7)	4.09	.65
Valid N (listwise)	179						

The respondents 91(50.8%) strongly agreed that implementation process affects organization's operations and hence the performance of the organization as shown by a mean score of 4.34, 77(43.0%) agreed that the organization has a clear

definition of outcomes of strategy implementation to be realized as shown by a mean score of 4.10, 80(44.7%) agreed that the organization usually achieves the milestones as set out in the strategic plan as shown by a mean score of 3.83, 91(50.8%)

agreed that the organization implements formulated strategies effectively as shown by a mean score of 4.26.

Further majority 79(44.1%) agreed that the objectives of the strategic plan are normally realized as shown by a mean score of 4.19, 78(43.6%) were in agreement that in my organization implementation of strategies happens within the anticipated timeframes as shown by a mean score of 3.87, 92(51.4%) agreed that the time frame set by the organization for implementing strategies is realistic as shown by a mean score of 4.14, 80(44.7%) agreed that in my organization short term goals are achieved on time

as shown by a mean score of 4.18, 129(72.1%) agreed that in my organization medium term goals are achieved on time as shown by a mean score of 4.11 and 103(57.5%) were in agreement that in my organization long term goals are achieved within the time horizon set in the strategic plan as shown by a mean score of 4.09.

### Inferential Analysis Results

#### Correlation Analysis Results

Pearson correlations was obtained between variables to ascertain the extent to which the variables were correlated and results are recorded in table 4.

**Table 4: Correlations**

		communication	commitment	Implementation of strategic plans
Communication	Pearson Correlation		1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)			
	N	179		
Commitment	Pearson Correlation	.556**	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		
	N	179	179	
Implementation of strategic plans	Pearson Correlation	.736**	.680**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	
	N	179	179	179

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

Moreover there was a strong positive correlation between leadership roles of communication and commitment and implementation of strategic plans at 99% confidence level ( $r=0.736$ ;  $p<0.01$  and  $r=0.680$ ;  $p<0.01$ ) respectively. The findings on leadership are in line with Nyakeriga (2015) who found a strong

positive correlation between leadership and strategy implementation. The findings also coincided with Omuoso (2013) who proved that effective implementation of corporate strategy at KenGen was largely supported by core leadership

### Regression Analysis Results

#### Regression Analysis Results on influence of communication on implementation of strategic plans amongst commercial banks in Kenya

**Table 5: Model Summary<sup>b</sup> on Communication**

Model	R	R <sup>2</sup>	Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics					Durbin-Watson
					R <sup>2</sup> Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change	
1	.736 <sup>a</sup>	.541	.539	.32060	.541	208.836	1	177	.000	1.596

a. Predictors: (Constant), communication

b. Dependent Variable: implementation of strategic plans

The model summary as presented in Table 5 shows that R squared = 0.541 implying that 54.1 % of the variations in dependent (implementation of strategic plans) variable is explained by the independent variable (communication). This therefore means that

other factors not studied in this research contribute 45.9% of implementation of strategic plans. The Durbin-Watson for communication is 1.596 which means there's no autocorrelation problem.

**Table 6: ANOVA<sup>a</sup>**

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	21.465	1	21.465	208.836	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	18.193	177	.103		
	Total	39.658	178			

a. Dependent Variable: implementation of strategic plans

b. Predictors: (Constant), communication

The ANOVA table 6 showed that the regression model can be used to explain the influence of communication on implementation of strategic plan

as it is significant at 99% confidence level p-value being 0.000.

**Table 7: Coefficients<sup>a</sup>**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	1.662	.171		9.709	.000		
	Communication	.608	.042	.736	14.451	.000	1.000	1.000

a. Dependent Variable: implementation of strategic plans

From the regression findings in Table 7 above, the substitution of the equation ( $Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \epsilon$ ) becomes:  
 $Y = -1.662 + 0.608 X_1$

Where Y is the dependent variable (implementation of strategic plan) and  $X_1$  is communication.

A unit increase in communication will lead to 0.608 increase in implementation of strategic plans. From the table above there is no multicollinearity since the tolerance is not more than one and the VIF is between 1 and 10.

### Regression Analysis Results on influence of commitment on implementation of strategic plans amongst commercial banks in Kenya

**Table 8: Model Summary<sup>b</sup>**

Model	R	R <sup>2</sup>	Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics					Durbin-Watson
					R <sup>2</sup> Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change	
1	.680 <sup>a</sup>	.462	.459	.34717	.462	152.035	1	177	.000	1.661

a. Predictors: (Constant), commitment

b. Dependent Variable: implementation of strategic plans

The model summary in Table 8 above showed that R squared = 0.462 implying that 46.2 % of the variations in dependent (implementation of strategic plans) variable is explained by the independent variable (commitment). This therefore means that other

factors not studied in this research contribute 53.8% of implementation of strategic plans. The Durbin-Watson for commitment is 1.661 which means there's no autocorrelation problem.

**Table 9: ANOVA<sup>a</sup>**

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	18.324	1	18.324	152.035	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	21.333	177	.121		
	Total	39.658	178			

a. Dependent Variable: implementation of strategic plans

b. Predictors: (Constant), commitment

The ANOVA Table 9 above showed that the regression model can be used to explain the influence of commitment on implementation of strategic plan as it is significant at 99% confidence level p-value being 0.000.

**Table 10: Coefficients<sup>a</sup>**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	2.097	.165		12.678	.000		
	Commitment	.507	.041	.680	12.330	.000	1.000	1.000

a. Dependent Variable: implementation of strategic plans

From the regression findings in Table 10 above, the substitution of the equation ( $Y = \beta_0 + \beta_2 X_2 + \epsilon$ ) becomes:  $Y = -2.097 + 0.507 X_2$  Where Y is the dependent variable (implementation of strategic plan) and  $X_2$  is commitment.

A unit increase in commitment will lead to 0.507 increase in implementation of strategic plans. From the table above there was no multicollinearity since the tolerance is not more than one and the VIF is between 1 and 10.

### Multiple Regression Analysis Results on combined influence of communication and commitment (leadership role) on implementation of strategic plans amongst commercial banks in Kenya

**Table 11: Model Summary<sup>b</sup>**

Model	R	R <sup>2</sup>	Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics					Durbin-Watson
					R <sup>2</sup> Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change	
1	.805 <sup>a</sup>	.647	.643	.28192	.647	161.478	2	176	.000	1.598

a. Predictors: (Constant), commitment, communication

b. Dependent Variable: implementation of strategic plans

The model summary in Table 11 above showed that  $R^2 = 0.647$  implying that 64.7 % of the variations in dependent (implementation of strategic plans) variable is explained by the independent variables (communication and commitment). This therefore

meant that other factors not studied in this research contribute 35.3 % of implementation of strategic plans. The Durbin-Watson for commitment is 1.598 which meant there's no autocorrelation problem.

**Table 12: ANOVA<sup>a</sup>**

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	25.669	2	12.834	161.478	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	13.989	176	.079		
	Total	39.658	178			

a. Dependent Variable: implementation of strategic plans

b. Predictors: (Constant), commitment, communication

The ANOVA table 12 above showed that the regression model can be used to explain the influence of leadership role (communication and commitment)

on implementation of strategic plan as it is significant at 99% confidence level p-value being 0.000

**Table 13: Coefficients<sup>a</sup> for leadership role (communication and commitment)**

Model		Unstandardized		Standardized	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
		Coefficients		Coefficients			Tolerance	VIF
		B	Std. Error	Beta				
1	(Constant)	1.226	.162		7.571	.000		
	communication	.428	.044	.518	9.613	.000	.691	1.448
	commitment	.292	.040	.392	7.273	.000	.691	1.448

a. Dependent Variable: implementation of strategic plans

As depicted in Table 13 above, unit increase in communication will lead to 0.428 increase in implementation of strategic plans. A unit increase in commitment will lead to 0.292 increase in implementation of strategic plans. From the table above there is no multicollinearity since the tolerance is not more than one and the VIF is between 1 and 10.

### Discussion of Findings

From the findings of the study, leadership influences implementation of strategic plans. Mutie and Irungu (2014) corroborate this finding. Leaders offer guidance and support to employees through communicating about the strategies to be implemented and new roles and also by being

committed to whole process of strategy implementation. According to Guzami (2013) communication includes explaining what new responsibilities, tasks and duties need to be performed by the employees in order to implement the strategy. From the findings of the study it can be seen that effective communication by the leaders influences implementation of strategies. These findings have been proved by other scholars (Otieno, 2013; Kibet, 2014; Wachira, 2014; Nyakeriga, 2015 & Kibicho, 2015). The findings are in agreement with Mwinzi (2014) who posited that management creates an environment of open sharing of ideas through communication; this will enhance implementation of strategies.



The findings of this study concur with those of Mukhalasie (2014) who proved that top managers in the organization were reportedly spending an inordinate amount of time analyzing, selecting, acquiring, or developing the necessary resources to ensure success in strategy implementation. The findings are also in agreement with Mapetere *et al.* (2012) who stated that the reasons which cause failure of the strategies and despite having the best strategies they could not bring forth results in Zimbabwe was only on account of negative leadership behavior which shows the strategy executive people were less committed to the strategy. In consensus, several studies Further Kibet (2014) and Wachira (2014) also proved that top management commitment influences strategy implementation (Mazzola & Kellermanns, 2010; Kibet, 2014 & Wachira, 2014; Katana, 2017). Wilkinson *et al.* (2011), Birken *et al.* (2012) and Wanjiku (2013) found that lack of management's commitment in the strategy implementation is a major challenge that undermines strategy implementation.

The respondents were asked to give their opinion through open ended questions on ways in which leadership influences implementation of strategic plan in the organization. The respondents indicated that availability of skilled and competent leaders enhanced implementation of strategic plans in the organization. This finding is corroborated by Katz (2010) who investigated management competencies and claimed that managers at all levels required human, technical and conceptual skills. These findings are in agreement with Nyakeriga (2015) who proved that recruitment of competent leaders influenced implementation of strategic plans in newly established universities. Further Wachira (2014) recommended that managers should have adequate skills to enable them to understand the plan and its components in order to achieve success. Kibicho (2015) also alluded to the fact that managerial competence was imperative for successful strategy

implementation in Kenyan insurance firms. Variyam and Kraybill (2013) argue in the same line that it is the owner-manager's lack of managerial competence that negatively impacts their ability to adequately address strategy business problems in the areas of finance, marketing, human resource management and the implementation of formal control systems. The respondents also indicated that leaders motivate and encourage them.

To ensure leadership supported implementation of strategic plans in the organization, the respondents recommended the enhancement of the level of managerial skills as this would promote shared vision, integrity and innovations and thus result in successful implementation of strategic plans. In addition, the respondents recommended that management should explain what new responsibilities, tasks and duties need to be performed by employees in order to implement the strategy.

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

The study sought to determine the influence of leadership role on implementation of strategic plans amongst commercial banks in Kenya. Having regards to the hypothesis of the study, the null hypothesis were rejected. The study confirmed that both communication and commitment as leadership roles significantly and positively influenced implementation of strategic plans amongst commercial banks in Kenya  $P (0.000) < 0.01$ . This article has provided a more nuanced understanding of how leadership roles of communication and being committed influences implementation of strategic plans amongst commercial banks in Kenya.

On communication the study recommends that managers should communicate to all stakeholders to ensure that the strategic process receives support from all concerned function. Communication in strategy implementation can be improved by clearly outlining the extent and scope of strategic change and the approaches outlined in the related policy

document. Also, management should explain what new responsibilities, tasks and duties need to be performed by employees in order to implement the strategy and they should also make it easy for employees to access them through open and supportive communications channels. Further the study recommends that managers should be committed to ensure successful implementation of the strategic plan.

#### **Areas for Further Research**

Further studies should be done in other banks and other organizations such as NGO's, SME's, SACCO's

as this study was limited to cooperative bank of Kenya and its findings and conclusion may not apply to other banks and other organizations. Further the study focused on leadership role with particular focus on communication and commitment. Future research should be carried out on other leadership roles such as strategic direction setting and employee empowerment. Further studies may be done on other leadership aspects such as leadership style and leadership competencies.

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