

Influence of Strategic Management Practices on Access to Water and Sanitation Services in Kenya

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Abstract:

Globally, more than 3.4 million people die each year from water, sanitation and hygiene-related causes, 99 percent of these deaths occur in the developing world. In the 2015/2016 financial year, access to water in Kenya stood at 54% for urban and 51% for rural areas. This low access to water and sanitation services could be as a result of the management practices in the water services providers. Previous studies have revealed the unsuccessful attempts to improve access of water and sanitation services through privatization and structural reforms in the water sector. These studies did not assess how management practices such as the strategic management practices can enhance access to water and sanitation services. The objective of the study was to determine the influence of the strategic management practices on access to water and sanitation services. The study adopted a combination of descriptive and explanatory research designs. The target population consisted of the 86 water service providers in Kenya. The sample comprised of 70 water service providers who were selected using the stratified random sampling. The respondents of the study included the 70 general managers of the selected water service providers. Primary data was collected by the use of questionnaires. The instruments were tested for validity and reliability through the content validity index (CVI=0.833) and the Cronbach Alpha's internal consistency index ($\alpha=0.773$) for reliability. The study found out that the influence of level of application of strategic management practices on access to water and sanitation services was statistically significant recording Adjusted $R^2 = 0.59$ ($t=7.2$, $p<0.05$). The study recommended that the water service providers should use well-structured planning mechanism, have well written mission and vision, base decisions and actions on formulated organization policies and use resource control teams to ensure the access to water and sanitation services to its customers is enhanced.

Keywords: Strategic Management Practices, Water Service Providers, Access to Water and Sanitation Services

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I. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Strategic management is the process and approach of specifying an organization's objectives, developing policies and plans to achieve and attain these objectives, and allocating resources so as to implement the policies and plans. Strategic management, therefore, can be seen as a combination of strategy formulation, implementation and evaluation (David, 2005). Strategic management can, therefore, influence the effectiveness of the quality management system in the water service providers which is increasing the access to water and sanitation services a relationship that was investigated in this study.

According to Mehra (2001) strategic decisions are basically the essential core of the strategic management. Strategic management represents the concept of how to utilize the resources of the organization in the most efficient way possible, with the variable environment as a reference point. In the process of strategic decision-making many factors have their impact including the complexity of the environment, the system of values as well as motivation. The strategic decisions lead to the improvement of the strategic position and the resolute action taking in the present. In long term strategic decision making there's the probability of not being able to foresee all the business possibilities in short term. In terms of discontinuity, the business subjects must possess flexibility for quick response to changes, which may occur, as well as focus on the possibilities, which can bring about long-term positive results. Long-term strategic decision-making can bring positive results if there's confidence in the strategic programmes and plans.

According to the World Health Organization (2008) the water supply for each person must be sufficient and continuous for personal and domestic uses. These uses include drinking, personal sanitation, washing of clothes, food preparation, personal and household hygiene. Water service providers all over the world are now beginning to realize that the only way to improve the access to water and sanitation services is by implementing the quality management system and supplementing this with strategic management practices (Nanda, 2005).

Access to water supply and proper sanitation is fundamental to the elimination of poverty and the achievement of Millennium Development Goals, (Kinoti, 2010). Globally, more than 3.4 million people die each year from water, sanitation and hygiene-related causes, 99 percent of these deaths occur in the developing world (WHO, 2008).

The water and sanitation crisis claims more lives through disease than any war claims through guns (UNDP, 2006). According to the United Nations (2006), about 1.1 billion people in the world do not have access to safe drinking water and approximately 2.4 billion people lack adequate sanitation. Water supply and sanitation in Kenya is characterized by low levels of access, as well as poor service quality in the form of interrupted water supply (Bichanga, 2013). This has given rise to over 3,100 children dying annually from diarrhea (UNDP, 2012). In the 2015/2016 financial year, water coverage in Kenya stood at 54% in the urban areas and 51% in the rural areas (WASREB, 2016). These statistics are too grim to be ignored and, therefore, they warranted investigation on possible causes and remedies. This study sought to relate this situation with quality management system and strategic management interventions.

As a means of improving access to safe water, many governments, Kenya included, have supported privatization of the water sector. The motivation behind privatization has largely been the perceived potential efficiency gains which is hoped could translate into increased access and improved service quality (Asingo, 2005). Despite the privatization of water provision units by the government, the provision of water services,

considered in terms of area coverage, water quality and hours of continuous supply is still unsatisfactory. In Zambia, for example, after the commercialization of water services, the accessibility to safe water decreased from 73% in 1990 to 53% in 2005 (World Bank, 2006). According to the impact report data on continuity of water supply in 2006-2007 financial year, only seven (7) out of 122 WSPs in Kenya were water supply continuous. Nevertheless, instances of water scarcity were still prominent in Kenya as shown by statistics on Eldoret, Homa Bay, Kisumu, Nakuru, and Kisii (Owuor, 2009). This shows that privatization as an intervention in the water sector did not yield the desired results.

In an attempt to address the management crises legacy in the water sector, the Government of Kenya introduced reforms in the water sector through the Water Act (Republic of Kenya, 2002). Several reforms have been implemented within the water sector in Kenya. However, water service studies done within the sector reveal that the management of water resources and water supply has continued to be a major problem. Water reforms have not been sufficiently implemented as expected since most of the expected outcomes of the water sector have not been attained (Wambulwa, 2008). These efforts concentrated on industrial organizational factors ignoring the management practices in the water service providers; hence, a concept worth an investigation. It is also evident that the structural reforms adopted by the government have not produced the intended effect on the access to water and sanitation services probably because of the management practices in the water service providers. This is a question that this study sought to answer.

Studies conducted by the Ministry of Water and Irrigation on the national water strategy in Kenya between 2005 and 2007 discovered that the institutional frameworks to effectively carry out the water sector reforms were not properly functional. Moreover, the water sector lacks resources and capacity required to carry out the water sector reforms (Ombogo, 2009). However these studies only concentrated on factors from outside the water service providers as means of improving access to water and sanitation services ignoring the management practices such as the strategic management practices which this study investigated.

Ujunwa and Modebe (2012) carried out study on the adoption of strategic management approach in the capital market development in Nigeria. The study used a case study research design. The study found out that strategic management approach ensured capital market efficiency following its perceived pivotal role in economic development. The study noted that strategic management practices did not only promote the efficiency of the capital market, but will leverage its role in promoting economic growth. This study assessed the leveraging role strategic management practices on the performance of capital markets in terms of its efficiency and economic growth. However, this study did not address how strategic management practices influence the access to water and sanitation services. Further, the current study filled the methodological gap by adopting descriptive and explanatory research design.

Askarany and Yazdifar (2012) investigated the diffusion of strategic management tools. The study used a survey research design. The study examined the relationship between the adoption of strategic management tools and organizational performance in both manufacturing and non-manufacturing organizations in New Zealand. The study found out that there is a significant association between the diffusion of strategic management tools and organizational performance. Contextually, the current study assesses the influence of strategic management practices on the access to water and sanitation services in Kenya

Muogbo (2013) carried out a study on the effect of formal strategic management on organizational growth and development in 21 selected firms in Nigeria. Data was collected from 63 respondents and analyzed using descriptive statistics. Hypotheses were tested using Chi-square. The study found out application of formal strategic management was not common in many organizations. The study also found that application of formal strategic management had a significant effect on the firms' competitiveness. However, this study did not address how strategic management practices can enhance access to water and sanitation services. Further, to fill the geographical gap, the current study was carried out in Kenya.

Studies done by Ujunwa and Modebe (2012), Askarany and Yazdifar (2012) and Muogbo (2013) are similar in the sense that they assessed the influence of strategic management practices on the organizational performance and competitiveness. However, the studies are different in the sense that while Ujunwa and Modebe (2012) used a case study research design, Askarany and Yazdifar (2012) and Muogbo (2013) used a survey research design. However, these studies did not assess how strategic management practices can enhance the access to water and sanitation services in Kenya.

II. STATEMENT OF THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

Globally, more than 3.4 million people die each year from water, sanitation and hygiene-related causes, 99 percent of these deaths occur in the developing world. In the 2015/2016 financial year, access to water in Kenya stood at 54% for urban and 51% for rural areas. This low access to water and sanitation services could be as a result of the management practices in the water services providers. Previous studies have revealed the unsuccessful attempts to improve access of water and sanitation services through privatization and structural reforms in the water sector. These studies, however, concentrated on industrial organization factors such as legal and regulatory framework as means of improving access to water and sanitation services ignoring management practices such as the quality management system. Prior studies have sought to establish the effect of strategic management practices on organization performance as well as the on service delivery. However, none of these studies sought to establish how strategic management practices influences the access to water and sanitation services in Kenya.

III. METHODOLOGY

The research adopted combination of descriptive and correlation research designs in seeking to establish the influence of level of adherence to quality management system standards on access to water and sanitation services in Kenya. The target population consisted of the 86 water service providers in Kenya. The sample comprised of 70 water service providers who were selected using the stratified random sampling. The respondents of the study included the 70 general managers of the selected water service providers. A questionnaire was used to collect data. The questionnaire comprised closed ended questions. The questionnaire was pretested before data collection for validation and reliability. Data was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The analyzed data was presented using tables. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences was used.

IV. FINDINGS

The objective of the study was to determine the effect of strategic management practices on access to water and sanitation services. In order to achieve this objective the measurement of the application of strategic management practices was first determined.

Accesses to Water and Sanitation Services in the Water Services Providers

Data relating to these indicators was obtained from the general managers of the selected water service providers, the general managers were requested to rate the access to water and sanitation services of the water service provider in terms of quality of drinking water, water coverage, sewerage coverage and hours of supply per day. Respondents were asked to provide answers on items in the questionnaire which were measured on a five point Likert scale where 5= Very High, 4=High, 3= Moderate, 2 = Low and 1= Very Low. The mean of each indicator was computed after which the mean of means was computed to assess how the managers of the water service providers rated the access to water and sanitation services. The research found out that the level of access to water and sanitation services was low. This is shown on table below:

Table I: Access to Water and Sanitation Services from the Water Service Providers

ITEM	VL		L		M		H		VH		M	SD
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%		
1. Indicate the level of water coverage of your water service provider	15	27.8	16	29.6	3	5.6	7	13	13	24.1	2.3	1.6
2. Indicate the level of sewerage coverage of your water service provider	0	0	17	31.5	33	61.1	3	3.7	2	3.7	2.5	0.9
3. Indicate the quality of drinking water of your water service provider	3	5.6	16	29.6	32	59.3	2	3.7	1	1.9	2.4	0.9
4. Indicate the hours of water supply per to customers of your water service provider	13	24.1	37	70.4	1	1.9	2	3.7	0	0	2.6	0.7
Mean of Means											2.5	1.0

Item one assessed the level access to water and sanitation services in terms of level of water coverage of the water service providers. The results recorded a mean score of 2.3 and a standard deviation of 1.6. The study found out that the respondents agreed with the fact that the water coverage of water service provider was low. Item two assessed the level of sewerage coverage of your water service provider. The results recorded a mean score of 2.5 and a standard deviation of 0.9. The study found out that the respondents agreed with the fact that the sewerage coverage of the water service providers was low. Item three assessed the quality of drinking water of your water service provider. The results recorded a mean score of 2.4 and a standard deviation of 0.9. The study found out that the respondents agreed with the fact that the quality of drinking water of the water service providers was low. Item four assessed the hours of water supply per day of the water service provider. The results recorded a mean score of 2.6 and a standard deviation of 0.7. The study found out that the respondents agreed with the fact that the hours of water supply per day of the water service providers were moderate. The

study commuted the mean of means of the four items that extricated the access to water and sanitation services. The mean of means was 2.5 and a standard deviation of 1.0. The results indicated that the level of access to water and sanitation services was low.

This is in agreement with Asingo, 2005 findings who indicated that many African countries have been unable to fully meet the demand for water and sanitation services. It also confirmed the UNDP 2012 findings which indicated that more than 50% Kenyan households do not have access to safe drinking water.

Application of Strategic Management Practices

The study conducted a survey on how the water service providers apply the strategic management practices. Strategic management practices were measured in terms of the use of well-structured planning mechanism, communicating the mission and vision to all stakeholders, basing decisions and actions on formulated organization policies and use of resource control teams. The study examined how strategic management practices were implemented. The respondents were asked to provide answers on each item that was measured by a five point Likert scale. Where 5=strongly agree, 4= agree, 3= agree, 2=disagree and 1strongly disagree. The results are presented in table below.

Table II: Application of Strategic Management Practices

ITEM	SA		D		N		A		SA		M	SD
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%		
1.The water service provider has a well written mission and vision	4	7.4	6	11.1	13	24.1	26	48.1	5	9.3	3.4	1.1
2.All the stakeholders of the organization understands the organizations mission and vision	6	11.1	5	9.3	17	31.5	23	42.6	3	5.6	3.2	1.1
3.The water service provider mission and vision are well displayed in strategic places in the organization	5	9.3	7	13	20	37	19	35.2	3	5.6	3.2	1.0
4.The organization has well developed plans of activities	7	13	7	13	12	22.2	21	38.9	7	13	3.3	1.2
5.The organization uses well-structured planning mechanism	9	16.7	13	24.1	16	29.6	13	24.1	3	5.6	2.8	1.2
6.The water service provider adheres to its plan of activities	3	5.6	5	9.3	13	24.1	26	48.1	7	13	3.5	1.0
7.The water service provider have well formulated organization policies	3	5.6	5	9.3	13	24.1	26	48.1	7	13	3.5	1.0
8.The water service provider base its decisions and actions on formulated organization policies	3	5.6	5	9.3	23	42.6	19	35.2	4	7.4	3.3	0.9
9.The water service provider adheres to its formulated organization policies	3	5.6	9	16.7	24	44.4	13	24.1	5	9.3	3.2	1.0
10.The organization has constituted resource control teams	2	3.7	6	11.1	5	9.3	19	35.2	22	40.7	4.0	1.1
11.The resource control teams has representation from all the departments	2	3.7	5	9.3	13	24.1	17	31.5	17	31.5	3.8	1.1
12.All the members of the resource control teams give suggestions on resource allocation	0	0	3	5.6	0	0	21	38.9	30	55.6	4.4	0.8
Mean of Means											3.5	1.0

Item one assessed the extent to which the water service providers have a well written mission and vision. The results recorded a mean score of 3.4 and a standard deviation of 1.1. The study found out that the respondents were neutral with the fact that the water service providers have a well written mission and vision. Item two assessed whether the all the stakeholders of the water service provider understood the organization's mission and vision. The results recorded a mean score of 3.2 and a standard deviation of 1.1. The study found out that the respondents were neutral with the fact that all the stakeholders of the water service provider understand the organizations mission and vision. Item three assessed the extent to which the water service provider mission and vision were well displayed in strategic places in the organization .The results recorded a mean score of 3.2 and a standard deviation of 1.0. The study found out that the respondents were neutral with the fact that the water service provider mission and vision are well displayed in strategic places in the organization.

Item four assessed the extent to which the organization has well developed plans of activities. The results recorded a mean score of 3.2 and a standard deviation of 1.1. The study found out that the respondents were neutral with the fact that the organizations have well developed plans of activities. Item five assessed whether the organization uses well-structured planning mechanism .The results recorded a mean score of 2.8 and a standard deviation of 1.2. The study found out that the respondents were neutral with the fact the organization uses well-structured planning mechanism. Item six assessed the extent to which the water service providers adhere to its plan of activities. The results recorded a mean score of 3.5 and a standard deviation of 1.1. The study found out that the respondents agreed with the fact that the water service providers adhere to their plans of activities.

Item seven assessed the extent to which the water service providers have well formulated organization policies. The results recorded a mean score of 3.5 and a standard deviation of 1.0. The study found out that the respondents agreed with the fact that the water service providers have well formulated organization policies. Item eight assessed whether the water service providers base their decisions and actions on formulated organization policies. The results recorded a mean score of 3.3 and a standard deviation of 0.9. The study found out that the respondents were neutral with the fact that the water service providers base their decisions on well formulated organization policies Item nine assessed whether the water service providers adhere to formulated organization policies. The results recorded a mean score of 3.2 and a standard deviation of 1.0. The study found out that the respondents were neutral with the fact that the water service providers base their decisions and actions on formulated organization policies.

Item ten assessed whether the water service providers have constituted resource control teams. The results recorded a mean score of 4.0 and a standard deviation of 1.1. The study found out that the respondents agreed with the fact that the water service providers have constituted resource control teams. Item eleven assessed whether the resource control teams have representation from all the departments. The results recorded a mean score of 3.8 and a standard deviation of 1.1. The study found out that the respondents agreed with the fact that the resource control teams have representation from all the departments. Item twelve assessed the extent to which the members of the resource control teams give suggestions on resource allocation. The results recorded a mean score of 4.4 and a standard deviation of 0.8. The study found out that the respondents strongly agreed with the fact that the members of the resource control teams give suggestions on resource allocation.

The study commuted the mean of means of the eleven items that extricated the level of application of strategic management practices. The mean of means was 3.5 and a standard deviation of 1.0. The results indicated that the level of application of strategic management practices was high. This implied that the organization was committed in the application of strategic management practices.

Strategic Management Practices and its Relationship with Access to Water and Sanitation Services in Kenya
 The hypothesis of the study was that there is no significant relationship between the application of strategic management practices and access to water and sanitation services in Kenya. Pearson product moment correlation coefficients were used to establish whether a relationship existed between the application of strategic management practices and access to water and sanitation services. The correlation were deemed significant at a set value of 0.05 the results are presented in table below

Table III: Correlation Analysis of Strategic Management Practices and Access to Water and Sanitation Services

	Access to Water & Sanitation (AWS)	Strategic Management (SM)
	1	
Access to Water & Sanitation (AWS)	0.00	.727**
	.727**	
Strategic Management (SM)	0.00	1

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

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

Application of strategic management had a high positive relationship with access to water and sanitation services ($r=0.727$, $p=0.00$). This implied that an increase in the application of strategic management practices leads to an increase in access to water and sanitation services. The hypothesis was further tested using the simple regression model.

Application of Strategic Management Practices and Access to Water and Sanitation Service

The study tested the Hypothesis that there is no significant influence of the application of strategic management on the access to water and sanitation services in Kenya. This was tested using the model

Equation 1; $Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X + \epsilon$ Where

Y- Access to water and sanitation services

β_0 = The intercept

β_1 = Regression coefficients shows the change in the value of Y for a unit change in X

X1- Application of strategic management practices

ϵ = random error

The model represented a value of R² which show the proportion of variation in dependent variable explained by the regression model. Table 4.18 show that the application of strategic management practices had a coefficient adjusted R²=0.59 this indicates that 59% of the variation in access to water and sanitation service can be accounted for by the application of strategic management practices.

Table IV: Application of Strategic Management Practices and Access to Water and Sanitation Services

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	R Square Change	F Change	Change Statistics		
							df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.727a	0.529	0.59	0.69	5.29	58.29	1	52	0.00

Table V: Coefficients of Influence strategic management practices and access to water and sanitation services

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	5.15E-17	0.094		0.00	1.00
	SMP	0.727	0.11	0.727	7.6	0.00

The results in above table show that application of strategic management practices accounts for 72.7 % of the variation of access to water and sanitation services (Adjusted R²=0.727). The results show a statistical significance for the effect of strategic management practices on access to water and sanitation services (t= 7.6, p<0.05). The study there for rejected the hypothesis that there is no significant influence of strategic management practices on access to water and sanitation services in Kenya. Therefore the hypothesis was rejected. This was in agreement with Ujunwa and Modebe (2012) who carried out a study on the adoption of strategic management approach in the capital market development in Nigeria. The study found out that strategic management approach ensured capital market efficiency following its perceived pivotal role in economic development. The study noted that strategic management practices will not only promote the efficiency of the capital market, but will leverage its role in promoting economic growth. This was also in agreement with Muogbo (2013) who carried out a study on the effect of formal strategic management on organizational growth and development in 21 selected firms in Nigeria. The study found out that application of formal strategic management had a significant effect on the firms' competitiveness. Askarany and Yazdifar (2012) investigated the application of strategic management tools. The study found out that there is a significant association between the application of strategic management tools and organizational performance. The study therefore contributed to the body of knowledge by ascertaining that strategic management practices enhance the access to water and sanitation services which had not been assessed earlier.

V. CONCLUSION

The research objective of this study was to establish the influence of strategic management practices on access to water and sanitation services in Kenya. The study concluded that the level of application of strategic management practices in the water service providers was high. The study also concluded that the application of strategic management practices had a strong positive relationship with access to water and sanitation services. Lastly the study concluded that the influence of level of application of strategic management practices on access to water and sanitation services was statistically significant .

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

It's clear from the study findings that decisions on how water resources are protected, managed, used and conserved are strategic management issues. The study noted that water crises in Kenya are largely strategic management outcomes. The study therefore recommends that the water service providers should be guided by central water service strategic management standards. There is also need for developing sustainable strategic plan for all water service providers to improve the practical competence of water service providers. The water service providers should also use of well-structured planning mechanism, have well written mission and vision, base decisions and actions on formulated organization policies and use resource control teams to ensure the access to water and sanitation services to its customers is enhanced .

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