Factors Affecting Strategy Implementation Among Small Business Organizations: A Case of Second-Hand Car Dealers in Selected Showrooms in Nairobi County

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Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to examine the factors that are affecting strategy implementation among small business organizations dealing with second-hand cars in selected showrooms in Nairobi County. The study adopted a case study design. The study specifically focused on five Nairobi-based second-hand car dealer companies: CarMax East Africa, A Plus Motors, Motor Hub Motors, Silverstone Motors, and Axis Motors. A census was used in this study whereby all the participants included in the target population had an equal chance to participate in the study. Data were collected using a quantitative structured questionnaire. Multiple regression analysis was used to determine whether a group of independent variables - organizational resources, employee involvement, management skills, and organizational culture - together predict a given dependent variable - strategy implementation. Correlation analysis was used to measure the strength of association between two variables and the direction of the relationship. The findings of the present study revealed that organizational factors such as organizational resources, p (0.000) which was less than 0.05, employee involvement p (0.003), management skills p (0.000), and organizational culture p (0.000) were affecting positively and significantly the effectiveness of the implementation of strategy among small business organizations dealing with second-hand cars in Nairobi.

Key Words: Strategy implementation, small business organization, Competitive Advantage, Second-hand car dealers

Introduction

The strategic management process does not end when the firm decides which strategy or strategies to pursue. There must be a translation of strategic thought into strategic action. This translation is much easier if managers and employees of the firm understand the business, feel a part of the company, and, through involvement in strategy-formulation activities, have become committed to helping the organization succeed. Without understanding and commitment, strategy-implementation efforts face major problems (David, 2012). That is why various sources revealed that the strategy implementation process fails 50-90% of companies while various factors that were affecting the effectiveness of the implementation process included poorly developed leadership skills among management staff, the improper allocation of decision-making powers, the incompetent communication of the strategy, the lack of ability to manage changes, and the lack of appropriate motivators associated with the strategy being implemented (Wołczek, 2018).

The findings of the study conducted by Watta (2013) indicated that radio/TV was rarely used for advertisement. The study also established that to a great extent, newspapers were used for advertisement. The study concluded that the strategies adopted by second-hand motor dealers affect their competitiveness in second-hand motor dealerships to a great extent. The study further concluded that the strategy of introducing new services in the market, carrying out regular surveys to determine customer needs are applied to a great extent by the dealers to gain a competitive advantage. The study further concluded that newspapers, outdoor posters, and the use of word of mouth have been applied to a great extent in the motor industry. Therefore, poor implementation of strategies tends to fail well-formulated strategies (Bhatti, 2011).

The study conducted by Wołczek (2018) suggested that employees in small companies resist changes associated with the strategy being implemented, their involvement in the strategy implementation process decreases over time and they are focused on the performance of operational activities.

The purpose of this study is to investigate the factors that are affecting strategy implementation among small business organizations dealing with second-hand cars in selected showrooms in Nairobi County. The findings of the present study revealed that organizational factors such as organizational resources, employee involvement, management skills, and organizational culture were affecting positively and significantly the effectiveness of the implementation of strategy among small business organizations dealing with second-hand cars in Nairobi.

Research Objectives:

1. To determine the effects of organizational resources on strategy implementation on second-hand car dealers in Nairobi.
2. To find out the effects of employee involvement on strategy implementation among small business organizations dealing with second-hand cars in Nairobi.
3. To determine the effects of management skills on strategy implementation among small business organizations dealing with second-hand cars in Nairobi.
4. To evaluate the effects of organizational culture on strategy implementation on second-hand car dealers in Nairobi.

Research Questions:

i. How do organizational resources affect strategy implementation in second-hand car dealers' companies in Nairobi?

ii. How does employee involvement affect strategy implementation among small business organizations dealing with second-hand cars in Nairobi?

iii. How do management skills affect strategy implementation among small business organizations dealing with second-hand cars in Nairobi?

iv. How does organizational culture affect strategy implementation among small business organizations dealing with second-hand cars in Nairobi?

Literature Review

Theoretical Literature Review

This study is primarily anchored on two theories considered relevant to this research study: Resource-Based Theory and Employee Involvement Theory.

Resource-Based Theory

This theory was first developed by Wernerfelt (1984) and states that competitive advantage is achieved through the internal organizational resources as compared to an organization's positioning in the external environment. It explains that a competitive advantage is likely to be achieved when the firm effectively and efficiently uses its resources. Organizational resources include all tangible and intangible assets that an organization possesses. These include technological resources such as machinery, buildings, human resources, and financial resources (Barney, 1991).

Employee Involvement Theory

This theory views employees as the main determinants of organizational success and opines that those fully involved in their organizations are likely to perform more effectively than those who are not. This implies that the more involved the personnel are, the more likely the organization will succeed and increase its profit maximization as employees will be motivated to undertake all the tasks required and ensure a successful strategy implementation process. (Coffman & Gonzalez-Molina, 2002)**.**

Review of Empirical Literature

Characteristics of Small Businesses

According to the EU Commission, small businesses are defined as businesses that employ up to 50 employees. Small businesses are often characterized by limited regional activity and relatively small market share, and they often operate in a niche and highly specific markets (European Commission (2003) cited in Harel, Schwartz, & Kaufmann, 2020). The OECD (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development) makes the following distinction: micro-companies (one to four employees), very small companies (five to 19 employees), small companies (20-99 employees), and medium-sized companies (100-500 employees). The EU defines SMEs as having fewer than 250 employees (drawn from The Scottish Office Statistical Bulletin Index 1998 by Lange et al., 2000, as cited in Godfrey, 2018).

Strategies Adopted by Second-hand Motor Vehicle Dealers

According to Wheelen and Hunger (2012), the strategy of a corporation creates a complete master plan that depicts how the corporation will bring its goals and objectives into reality by putting more emphasis on competitive advantage and minimizing competitive disadvantage. The functional strategy operates in the functional area when a company focuses on developing and nurturing the various distinctive competencies, for example, human resources to ensure competitive advantage (Wheelen & Hunger, 2012). The study conducted by Wacuka (2006) revealed that competent salespeople are an important competitive factor since they use their skills to convince customers about the benefits of various models of cars. Tight security is also very vital since it gives car suppliers confidence with the showroom therefore the showroom gets many varieties of cars for customers to choose from.

The results of a research study conducted by Wołczek (2018) showed the alarming incapacity of companies when it comes to the effective implementation of the strategies developed. Various sources say that the strategy implementation process fails 50-90% of companies. Various factors that affect the effectiveness of the implementation process were mentioned, including poorly developed leadership skills among management staff, the improper allocation of decision-making powers, the incompetent communication of the strategy, the lack of ability to manage changes, and the lack of appropriate motivators associated with the strategy being implemented (Wołczek, 2018).

The literature review conducted by Čater and Pučko (2010) identified 13 of the most commonly addressed obstacles to strategy implementation that can be classified into five broad groups: problems in strategy formulation, change management problems, organizational culture problems, problems related to the organizational power structure and leadership problems. Wołczek (2018) identified the following situations that are likely to cause far more problems to small businesses than to large companies: insufficient financial resources allocated for the strategy implementation, an excessive number of strategic objectives included in the strategy, and lack of clear guidelines on the strategy implementation (Wołczek, 2018).

Organizational Resources and Strategy Implementation

Sterling (2003) indicated that the reason some strategies fail is the shortage in resources allocated to implement these strategies, but he also mentioned that the availability of the required resources alone does not guarantee the successful implementation of a given strategic decision unless it is appropriately combined with other factors that affect that process. as cited in Obeidat et al. (2017). Resources are the key mediating variable between formal planning and implementation – firms with slack resources will typically implement their contextually influenced planned growth course, and firms with inadequate resources will typically implement through interactive learning, which causes them to downscale the growth plans or exit the market (DeMartino et al., 2015). The findings of Govindarajan & Trimble (2011) also revealed that human resource skills significantly inform the success of any strategy during its implementation stage. Lack of the right skills in the different job tasks is likely to lead to the failure of strategy implementation as the success of strategy implementation is greatly influenced by the quality of people involved in the process.

Employee Involvement in Strategy Implementation

Participation means that both managers and employees are willing to share things like the decision-making process and responsibilities for these decisions. Allowing people to participate in the early diagnosis of problems, the design of the solution, planning the implementation, or the actual execution helps motivate constructive behavior during the transition phase (Zafar & Naveed, 2014). For small companies, involving employees in the strategy process seems to be easy. A small company with 10 employees can have a general meeting and discuss strategy. However, bigger companies struggle to involve all employees in their strategy process. (Foudraine, 2015). Sa and Sharavan (2015) define employee involvement as the level of obligation and involvement employees have towards their organization. For employee involvement to be successful, employees should undoubtedly understand what their job descriptions are and how they affect the goals and objectives of the company.

Management Skills and Strategy Implementation

According to Certo and Certo (2016), management skill is the ability to carry out the process of reaching organizational goals by working with and through people and other organizational resources. William (2015) affirms that the lack of managers' commitment in performing their roles leads to the failure of strategy implementation. If firms are to achieve higher levels of performance, participative strategic planning should increase the personnel's understanding of the company strategy and commit personnel to strategy implementation (Kohtamäki et al. 2012). The studies carried out by Salih and Doll (2013) showed that a participative management style promotes the involvement of employees and thus affects the strategy implementation process. Also, it is important to skillfully manage the changes, in particular, to properly translate the strategic objectives into operational activities and adjust the employee activities to them. The results of the study conducted by Čater and Pučko, (2010) showed that managers mostly rely on planning and organizing activities when implementing strategies, while the biggest obstacle to strategy execution is poor leadership.

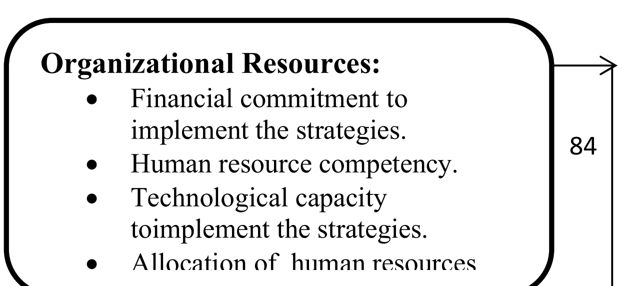
The current thought on managerial skills expands upon the classical view by taking a look at defining the major activities managers typically perform and then listing the skills necessary to carry out those activities successfully. Firstly, in terms of task-related: efforts aimed at carrying out the critical management-related duties in organizations. Short-term planning, clarifying objectives of jobs in the organization, monitoring operations and performance. Secondly, in terms of people-related: efforts aimed at managing the people in the organization, providing support and encouragement to others, providing recognition for achievements and contributions, developing skills, consulting in decision making, empowering others to solve problems. Thirdly, in terms of change-related: efforts aimed at modifying organizational components, monitoring the organization's external environment, proposing new strategies and visions, encouraging innovative thinking, taking risks to promote change (Certo & Certo, 2016).

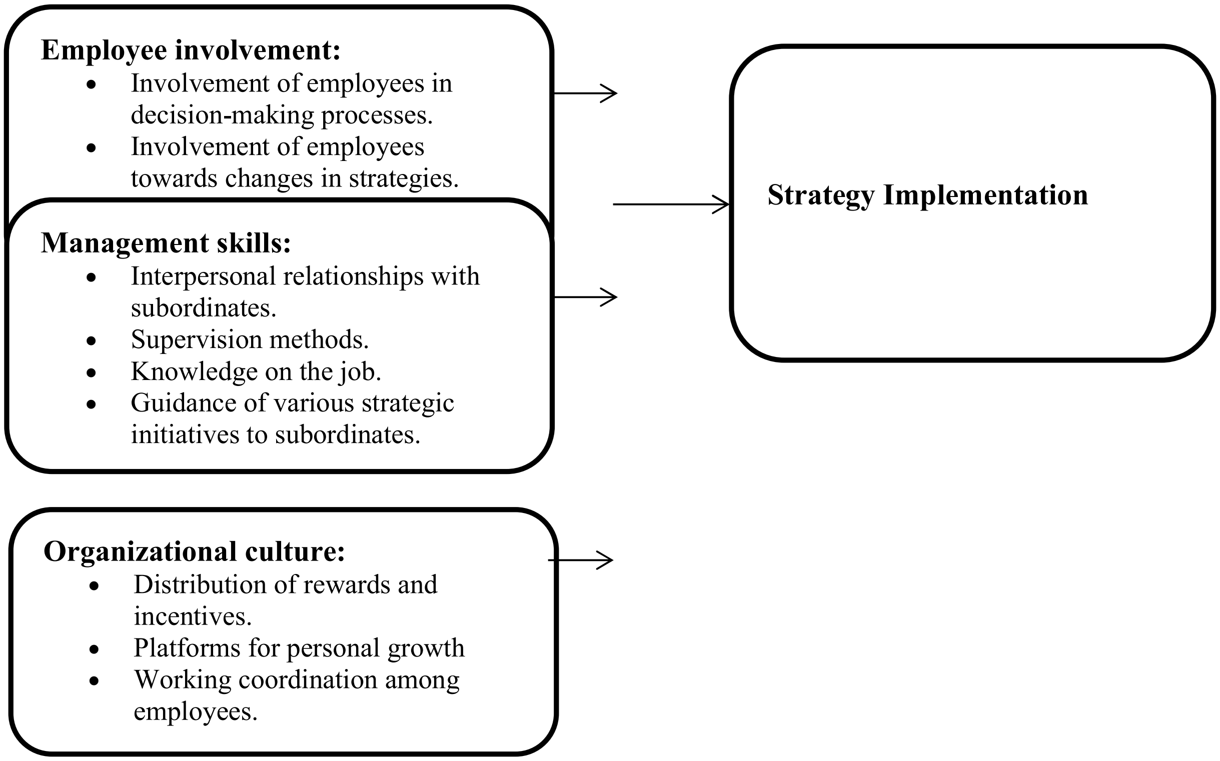
Organizational Culture and Strategy Implementation

Organizational culture is a set of shared values that provide members with a common understanding of how they should act in a situation. Ideally, organizational culture affects organizational effectiveness because it can: (a) provide an organization with a competitive advantage, (b) improve the way an organizational structure works, and (c) increase the motivation of employees to pursue organizational interests (Jones, 2013).
Organizational culture influences strategy in both the process of its formulation, as well as in the process of its implementation. Organizational culture influences strategy formulation by shaping the interpretative schemes and meanings which strategic decision-makers assign to the occurrences within and outside of the company (Janicijevic, 2012). Culture determines how top management gathers information, how they perceive and interpret the environment and the company resources, but it also influences how they make strategic decisions, i.e. makes the strategy selection. Organizational culture influences strategy implementation by legitimizing or delegitimizing the strategy, depending on the consistency between cultural values and the selected strategy. When culture legitimizes strategy, it significantly facilitates strategy implementation, and when culture delegitimizes strategy in the view of employees and managers, it implements the selected strategy almost impossible (Janicijevic, 2012).

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework comprises all the study's independent and dependent variables which address the research objectives. In this case, the independent variables include organizational resources, employee involvement, management skills, and organizational culture against the dependent variable which is strategy implementation as shown below.





Research Methodology

The study adopted a case study design that allows for in-depth investigation of a single person, group of persons, or community. The case study design often involves observations of what happens with the participants or organization under focus (Kothari, 2006). The study specifically focused on five Nairobi-based second-hand car dealer companies: CarMax East Africa, A Plus Motors, Motor Hub, Silverstone Motors, and Axis Motors.

According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003), the target population is the whole group of people, events, or objects that have common features and will be used by the researcher in carrying out a specific research study. In this case, the target population comprised the five second-hand car dealers based in Nairobi County, as mentioned above. The researcher has interviewed these companies' employees who included top-level management, middle-level management, and lower-level personnel.

The total target population has been summarized in the following table:

Table 3.1

Category	Target Population	Percentage
Car Max East Africa	10	22.2%
A Plus Motors	9	20.0%
MotorHub Motors	12	26.7%
Silver Stone Motors	6	13.3%
Axis Motors	8	17.8%
Total	**45**	**100%**

Sampling is the process of selecting a sub-group from a population to participate in a particular study (Ogula, 2005). It is usually achieved by selecting some people for a study in such a way that those people were selected to represent the large group from which they were selected. A census was used in this study whereby all the participants included in the target population had an equal chance to participate in the study. The researcher interviewed all the employees in the respective second-hand car dealerships.

The researcher collected quantitative data using a structured questionnaire. According to Kothari (2006), a questionnaire is a research instrument consisting of a set of questions and is used to address the specific objectives of the study. The data was collected using both open-ended and close-ended questions. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003), the correlation coefficient explains the strength and direction of relationships between two variables. Multiple regression analysis was used to determine whether a group of independent variables - organizational resources, employee involvement, management skills, and organizational culture - together predict a given dependent variable - strategy implementation. The variance was tested through the ANOVA (Analysis of variance) method to examine the differences in variation among the variables which significantly affects the dependent variable. The multiple regression analysis equations used to analyze the data is summarized as follows:

$$SI = a + ß_1OR + ß_2EI + ß_3MS + ß_4OC + \mathcal{E}_i$$

where SI = Strategy Implementation; OR = Organizational Resources; EI = Employee Involvement; MS = Management Skills and OC = Organizational Culture and a = intercept; ß = regression co-efficient; Ɛ = margin of error.

According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003), a reliability test is used to measure the degree to which the research instrument yields consistent results after repeated trials. To ensure that the right information was collected by asking the right questions, a reliability test was used to measure how the research instrument, in this case, the structured questionnaire, addressed the different factors affecting strategy implementation brought about in this study. This was achieved through the test-retest method when analyzing the data which is a method that ensured the closeness of the results after repeated trials were done through the correlation coefficient to see if there was consistency in the results.

Table 3.2: Reliability test

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.892	.894	5

Ayo and Victor (2017) provide the following rules of thumb: "_ >.9 – Excellent, _ >.8 – Good, _ >.7 – Acceptable, _ >.6 – Questionable, _ >.5–Poor and _ <.5–Unacceptable" and above indicates the reliable result. Therefore, the study according to Table 3.2 gave .892 which is 89.4% depicting good results.

According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003), validity was used to show the accuracy of the data collected and how effectively it relates to the study variables. Experts in the field of study ensured that the questions items in the questionnaire were relevant to the study (Mugenda & Mugenda 2003).

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Data Analysis and Presentation

Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics is an approach used to quantitatively describe and present data that has been collected.

Response Rate.

From the target population of 45 employees in the five second-hand car dealerships, there was a response of 43 respondents. This gave a response rate of 95.5%.

Response Rate Category

The response rate was as follows, Car Max East Africa was 22.2%, A Plus Motors was 20.0%, Motor Hub was 26.7%, Silver Stone Motors was 13.3% and Axis Motors was 17.8%.

Table 4.1: Respondent's Category

Category	Target Population	Percentage
Car Max East Africa	10	23.3%
A Plus Motors	9	20.9%
Motor Hub Motors	11	25.6%
Silver Stone Motors	6	14%
Axis Motors	7	16.2%
Total	**43**	**100%**

Years Worked at the second-hand car dealership

Years worked by staff in the five selected second-hand car dealerships give various staffs experience and the duration of years worked.

Table 4.2: Years worked

Years worked	Frequency	Percentage

Less than 5 years	25	58.2%
5-10 Years	5	11.6%
10-15 Years	5	11.6%
15-20 Years	8	18.6%
Total	**43**	**100%**

Knowledge of the existing strategy implementation

Knowledge of existing strategy implementation was to determine if the respondents were aware of the existence of the strategies implemented.

Table 4.3: Knowledge of the existing strategy implementation

Answer	**Frequency**	**Percentages**
Yes	16	37.2%
No	27	62.8%
Total	**43**	**100%**

Strategy implementation was the dependent variable to the study and the responses were as follows: The Company has formulated policies and programs when implementing the strategies 34.9% strongly agreed, 30.2% agreed, 4.7% were neutral, 14.0% disagreed, and lastly 16.3% strongly disagreed. The organization's interest is relevant to the activities conducted towards implementation of strategies, 34.9 % strongly agreed, 23.3% agreed, 11.6 % were neutral, 20.9 % disagreed, 9.3% strongly disagreed. The company has set up monitoring techniques to check the performance of key initiatives when implementing strategies. 25.6% strongly agreed, 32.6% agreed, 7.0% were neutral, 20.9% disagreed, 14.0% strongly disagreed. The top management is supportive in the implementation of the company's core activities. 20.9% strongly agreed, 16.3% agreed, 11.6% were neutral, 30.2% disagreed, and lastly 20.9% strongly disagreed.

Inferential Statistics
Inferential statistics enables the researcher to address the research questions and to generalize the findings resulted from the target population.

Correlational Matrix
Table 4.4: Correlation Matrix

		Organization resources	Employee involvement	Management skills	Organization culture	Strategy Implementation
Organization resources	Pearson Correlation	1				
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000				
	N	43				
Employee involvement	Pearson Correlation	.467**	1			
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.002	0.000			
	N	43	43			
Management Skills	Pearson Correlation	.362*	.535**	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.017	0.000	0.000		
	N	43	43	43		
Organization Culture	Pearson Correlation	.702**	.653**	.568**	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	
	N	43	43	43	43	
Strategy Implementation	Pearson Correlation	.552**	.443**	.659**	.723**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.003	0.000	0.000	0.000
	N	43	43	43	43	43

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Correlation analysis measures the strength of association between two variables and the direction of the relationship. The relationship from the table above indicates that there is a significant and positive relationship between organizational resources and strategy implementation since p (0.000) which is less than 0.05 and r (0.552) with a significant level of 0.001. This result means that an increase in organizational resources leads to good strategy implementation. Also, there is a significant and positive relationship between strategy implementation and employee involvement as p (0.003) and r (0.443). This implies that improvement in employee involvement will result in good strategy implementation.

Further, the results indicate that there is a significant and positive relationship between strategy implementation and management skills as p (0.000) and r (0.659). This was significant at a 0.01 significance level. It implies that improvement in management skills will translate into effective strategy implementation. Additionally, the results show a positive and significant relationship between the organization culture and strategy implementation as p

(0.000) and r (0.723). This means that good organizational culture leads to success in strategy implementation.

Multiple Regression Analysis

Regression analysis is a set of statistical processes for estimating the relationships among variables. It includes many techniques for modeling and analyzing several variables when the focus is on the relationship between a dependent variable and one or more independent variables. Regression analysis helps to understand how the typical value of the dependent variable changes when any one of the independent variables is varied while the other independent variables are held fixed. The table below contains the regression coefficient results for the study.

Table 4.5: Regression Coefficient

		B	Std. Error	Beta	T	Sig.
1	(Constant)	0.686	0.403		1.701	0.097
	Organization resources	0.117	0.17	0.099	0.686	0.497
	Employee involvement	0.024	0.109	0.03	0.222	0.826
	Management skills	0.377	0.113	0.415	3.336	0.002
	Organization culture	0.55	0.185	0.525	2.975	0.005

a Dependent Variable: Strategy Implementation

The regression equation is as follow.

$Y = \alpha + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta_4 X_4 + e$

Where:

$Y =$ Strategy Implementation (dependent variable)

$X_1 =$ Organization Resources

$X_2 =$ Employee involvement

$X_3 =$ Management Skills

$X_4 =$ Organization Culture

e=Error term and α= constant β=coefficient of the independent variable

Strategy Implementation = 0.686 + 0.117 + 0.024 + 0.377 + 0.550 + e

The multivariate regression model in the table above shows that when all the factors are held constant, strategy implementation is at 0.686. When there is an increase in organizational resources while the other factors remain constant, this would lead to an increase in strategy implementation by factor 0.117. Consideration of employee involvement, while the other factors remain constant, would contribute to the successful implementation of strategy at 0.024. Also, good management skills with other factors remaining constant would lead to successful strategy implementation at 0.377. On the other hand, consideration of organizational culture with other factors remaining constant would lead to an increase in strategy implementation at the five selected second-hand car dealers in Nairobi by 0.550.

Further the results show that the organization resources ($\beta1 = 0.117$, $p=0.497$) were found to have a positive and insignificant relationship with strategy implementation, this is because the p-value was greater than 0.05. Similarly, the employee involvement ($\beta1 = 0.024$, $p=0.826$) has a positive and insignificant relationship with strategy implementation since the p-value was greater than 0.05. This implies that both organization resources and employee involvement have an insignificant impact on the strategy implementation despite their positive correlation and therefore, an improvement on organization resources and employee involvement will result in positive strategy implementation. However, the regression results for management skills ($\beta 1 = 0.377$, $p=0.002$) and organization culture ($\beta 1 = 0.550$, $p=0.005$) have positive and significant relationship with the strategy implementation since the p-value was less than 0.05. This implies that both management skills and organizational culture have a significant impact on strategy implementation.

Discussion of Results

The analysis of the data showed that organizational resources affect strategy implementation among second-hand car dealers in Nairobi as small business organizations in such a way that an increase in organizational resources leads to effective strategy implementation. The findings of the present study are in agreement with previous studies conducted by Miller (1990, 1997), Miller et al. (2004), and Hickson et al. (2003) which considered resource availability in terms of personnel, finance, and time as one of the most important factors affecting the success in the implementation of strategies as cited in Obeidat et al. (2017).

Employee involvement affects strategy implementation among second-hand car dealers in Nairobi in such a way that an improvement in employee involvement will result in effective strategy implementation**.** The findings of our study are in agreement with the previous research work conducted by Wołczek (2018), which suggested that the company that wants to increase its chances for the successful implementation of the strategy should make the management staff adopt a proper management style that will promote the involvement of the employees implementing the strategy.

An improvement in management skills will translate into effective strategy implementation among small business organizations dealing with second-hand cars in Nairobi. The results are very much in line with previous research studies conducted by William (2015), which affirms that the lack of managers' commitment in performing their roles leads to failure of strategy implementation organizational culture leads to success in strategy implementation among small business organizations dealing with second-hand cars in Nairobi. This is in agreement with the research work conducted by Nabwire (2014), who opined that proper mechanisms for measuring and rewarding the staff ensure the success of strategy implementation.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to find out the factors that are affecting strategy implementation among small business organizations dealing with second-hand cars in selected showrooms in Nairobi County. The present study concludes that organizational resources affect strategy implementation among second-hand car dealers in Nairobi in such a way that an increase in organizational resources leads to effective strategy implementation. Employee involvement affects strategy implementation among second-hand car dealers in Nairobi in such a way that an improvement in employee involvement will result in effective strategy implementation**.** An improvement in management skills will translate into effective strategy implementation among small business organizations dealing with second-hand cars in Nairobi. Good organizational culture leads to success in strategy implementation among small business organizations dealing with second-hand cars in Nairobi.

Recommendations

In terms of organizational resources, small business organizations dealing with second-hand cars in selected showrooms in Nairobi County will need to effectively allocate financial and human resources to all departments to ensure success in the implementation process as well as give tasks based on the employees' skills to enable them to specialize in the work. In terms of employee involvement, small business organizations should effectively communicate when there is a change in strategy to keep the employees well-informed which will later lead to their trust and commitment to the company and ensure the success of the implementation process and use a participative management style that promotes the involvement of employees and thus affects the strategy implementation process.

In terms of management skills, the management in the five selected second-hand car dealers should improve the communication of the strategy, develop the ability to manage changes, and provide appropriate motivators associated with the strategy being implemented, learn how to translate the strategic objectives into operational activities, and adjust the employee activities to them. In terms of organizational culture, small business organizations should motivate employees through rewards and incentives as well as create platforms for personal growth that will ensure the wellbeing of employees.

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