

# Influence of Sensitization in Strategic Plans Implementation on Performance of Kiberu Coffee Factory, Muranga, Kenya

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## ABSTRACT

The environment in which factory currently function is never predictable in this age of globalization, when the world is continually undergoing countless rapid changes in a variety of industries. Strategic planning, which offers an operational framework for businesses to deal with change and create a competitive advantage, has come about as a result of this. The goal of this study was to ascertain how the performance of the Kiberu coffee factory in Muranga was influenced by sensitization during the implementation of strategic plans. To determine the influence of sensitization in the implementation of strategic plans on the performance of Kiberu coffee factory in Muranga was the study's only goal. Both qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection and analysis was applied as part of the mixed research approach of the investigation. For primary data, the researcher relied on the interview guide which was administered to the top management, while questionnaire was given to other staff. Targeted population was 45 members of staff employed on permanent basis and 5 farmers' representatives. Census method of sampling was applied as the entire population is very small or it was reasonable to include all. Qualitative data was evaluated using content analysis, while quantitative data was done using SPSS version 23. The findings from correlational analysis indicated that sensitization had a strong and significant relationship with factory performance. The study concluded that sensitization and factory performance are positively and significantly related. The study recommended that sensitization should be done to the management and also to other staff members to create awareness on what to do and how to do at the right manner and time. The research will be of great help to the factory management, government, other academia and coffee farmers.

**Keywords:** Implementation, Strategy, Strategic Plan, communication, sensitization

## INTRODUCTION

### Background of the Study

According to David (2017), organizational performance is an achievement that is often used to demonstrate talent. Performance (also known as aims and objectives) is the difference between an organization's actual outputs or results and those anticipated by that organization. Bernard (2019) defines organizational performance as a record of the outcome that results from the performance of a particular task or series of activities over time. Since performance is a typical indicator of an organization's progress and growth, consistent performance is one of the main goals of many businesses around the world. The environment in which firms today function is never predictable or stable in this era of globalization, when the world is continually undergoing multiple rapid changes in various industries. The operational framework provided by strategic planning can then help firms adapt to change and acquire a competitive edge (Nickols, 2016).

Globally, although the industry faces challenges, the performance of Asian countries' agricultural sector is crucial since it has supported more than 30% of the state's overall employment. (John 2018). Schmidt, et al (2018) observed that training, workplace conditions, technology, and value creation were all major motivators towards sustainability of Southern Brazil's small and medium-sized coffee farming operations. Furthermore, Cremaschi, et al (2018) revealed that the performance of coffee farms in Vietnam was highly

determined by leadership and the adoption of modern technology.

Regionally, Tefera, et al (2017) said that inadequate leadership and lack of resources that could be employed when a different approach needed to be implemented were to blame for the poor performance of the majority of agricultural cooperatives in Ethiopia. Mkonda (2016) also showed how important it is to prepare for potential dangers, and it contained strong policies, strategic plans, and initiatives carried out by commercial agriculture. Furthermore, Andrade, et al (2017) established that the performance of sweet potato vines in Mozambique was favorably and significantly influenced by funding allocation, farmer competency, and types of fertilizers.

The performance of the coffee factories in Kenya has been falling over the past few years, despite the sector's importance for sustaining economic growth and development, as well as for creating jobs and reducing poverty (Mailu, 2018). Yet, factories often develop at a slower rate than the economy, and as time passes, their performance continues to deteriorate (KAM, 2019). Strategic planning has been linked to numerous improvements in both an organization's performance and its workforce. But, research and practical experience have demonstrated that it is possible to have a solid strategic plan document that, when put into action, fails to be completed. For a factory, creating a strategic plan is a costly process, and improper implementation of that plan could have severe financial consequences. According to published research, just 25% of strategic plans are implemented successfully (Julia 2016). Li et al. (2018) argue that communication and sensitization are key to learning, information sharing and teaching during the implementation of strategic plans. Perfect and correct communication about the need for a change in strategy, the process of logical changes and their impact on the status quo of employees are essential components of an effective strategic plan implementation process. In terms of ownership, top management should ensure that sensitization to other employees is done in a clear manner. Sensitization leads to engagement and agreement on ideas and helps to establish relationships between different departments/offices, different levels of ideas, doing things differently and having a management process. Because successful design and implementation of a strategic plan requires collaboration.

Coffee has been counted as vital beverage around the world. It has been used for customer's pressure and also for the economic value of coffee bean of producing and exporting. Until 1990s, coffee was second from oil most appreciated product. It is a sample of a worldwide product grown in developing countries (Rahmatulloh 2016). The central Kenya has a growth rate of around 65% of coffee production in Kenya. The main areas in central that grow coffee are Murang'a, Nyeri, Kiambu, Kirinyaga and Thika (Sarada 2017). The area enjoys fertile soils, enough amount of sunlight and rainfall that contribute to production of favourable Arabica coffee of high quality. Unfortunately, factories have been experiencing problems caused by decline of global need putting pressure on internal production, leading to farmers moving to macadamia and avocado farming (Gakii 2021).

### **Statement of the Problem**

Strategic planning has been linked to numerous improvements in both an organization performance and its workforce. But, research and practical experience have demonstrated that it is possible to have a solid strategic plan document that, when put into action, fails to be completed. Much research have been done on strategic planning and strategic management as a whole, for example, Rajasekar (2017) focused on the factors influencing the effective implementation of strategic plans in the service industry. Speculand (2016) looked at bridging the strategic plan implementation skills gap and his findings reflected that leaders need both the information to create sound strategic plans and the skills to execute them. Other studies, like Teressa, Kenneth, and Mwamisha (2019), have concentrated on the variables that affect how effectively strategic plans are implemented in NGOs in Kenya. Maxwell, Kepha, and Joseph (2018) concentrated on the elements affecting the successful execution of strategic plans by international reproductive health NGOs in Kenya to meet Millennium Development Goal 5. Buzzell (2015) argues that each sector, organization or

industry is unique in its own way and therefore research is needed for each sector. Although all of these researches have addressed implementation issues, they have mainly focused on other sectors whose settings are very different from coffee factories. This creates a gap in conducting a study on sensitization in implementation of strategic plans on factory performance, particularly Kiburu Coffee Factory in Mathioya.

Coffee factories have not been performing well due to decrease in coffee production as it has fallen compared to 130,000 MT tones in 1987-1988 to recent 55,000 MT and a current 3.2% contribution to national GDP, down from 40% leading to loss of jobs in Kenya (Mutua 2022). In 2021, the output was 18% on lower crop yield which was recorded at 37,900 tonnes in the year 2019/2021, down from 45,000 tonnes in the earlier year. In this period the production of coffee reduced by 22 percent in 2020. It has been noted that 710 acres of coffee production have been lost to various industries in Murang'a County (Mugwe 2021). This also form a need for a study on influence of sensitization in strategic plans implementation on performance of coffee factory to revive the sector.

### **Research objective**

The investigation's objective was to establish the influence of sensitization in execution of strategic plans on the performance of Kiburu coffee factory in Mathioya Constituency Muranga, Kenya.

### **Research question**

1. To what extent does sensitization in implementation of strategic plan influence factory performance?

### **Scope of the Study**

The study investigated the influence of sensitization in implementation of strategic plans on performance of Kiburu coffee factory in Mathioya, Muranga, The targeted population included 45 employees from Kiburu coffee factory employed on permanent basis and 5 farmers representatives. The study used a mixed-methods approach to its investigation. Finally, the research was conducted between June 2022 and February 2023.

### **Limitations of the Study**

Some respondents were unwilling to give information on internal operations of their factory. Also, top management were very busy within the day; thus, getting them for an interview was a challenge to some extent. Similarly, the researcher also encountered the challenge of infrastructure in terms of roads making it tiresome to reach where the factory is located.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Theoretical Review: Interactional View Theory**

Sensitization is understood as the exchange of people acting with communication, interpreting their actual situation, and shaping the situation and the self through interaction. The interactional perspective is an interpretive theory developed by Paul Watzlawick (Savaneviciene & Stankeviciute, 2011). According to this theory, interpersonal communication is based on five axioms. First, all behavior is a form of communication, and since behavior has no counterpart (there is no anti-behavior), it is impossible not to communicate. Second, every communication has a content and relational aspect based on how the speaker wants to be understood and how he himself sees his relationship to the recipient of the information. Third, the nature of the relationship depends on how both parties interrupt the communication sequence and therefore interpret their own behavior during communication as a mere reaction to the behavior of the other. Fourth, human beings communicate both digitally and analogically, and finally, communication is

simultaneously based on equal power and power differences.

Fruitful strategy formulation and effective strategy implementation require the coordination of multiple actors and their activities (Heide, Grønhaug, & Johannessen, 2002). While top management is responsible for strategic and organizational decisions that affect the organization as a whole, and line managers act as intermediaries between strategic and operational organizational activities (Helfat, Harris, & Wolfson, 2006; McCarthy, et al., 2010). The interaction between these two key actors in order to minimize the gap between strategies is necessary to coordinate their actions and cooperate in order to achieve the main goals of the organization (Savaneviciene & Stankeviciute, 2011). In this case, it is very important that people charged with formulating strategic plans in the coffee sector disseminate information to sensitize top management on how well to implement them successfully.

### Empirical Review

Sammy (2016) worked on establishing the influence of communication on strategic plan implementation at pharmaceutical companies in Nairobi. He counted on 64 managers from different companies. He used descriptive survey research design and targeted all the pharmaceutical companies in Nairobi. The study used questionnaires. Conclusion of the research indicates, communication media effects the implementation process positively in that oral presentations, stakeholder meetings, emails, text messages, short messaging services, and periodic reports are commonly used.

Sammy (2016) commends adoption of communication media as it train and disseminate knowledge during execution of strategy and relationships between employees and employers need to be developed harmoniously in an effective operating organization. He concluded by stating that communication create awareness which in turns motivate staff as they will know what they are supposed to do and therefore use less time in implementation process.

Gerard (2015) investigated the role of communication in strategic plan implementation where he used questionnaires. He stated that effective execution of strategy, might be hindered by issues linking to cognition, communication and trust. Shared understanding and shared meaning are important for a team to interpret goals and objectives. Failure to have these can lead to a team not tied towards a targeted objective. This might be as a result to choices made each day are not matching with factory objectives. He continued to state that communication should be personal (face-to-face or in small groups) and interactive.

### Conceptual Framework

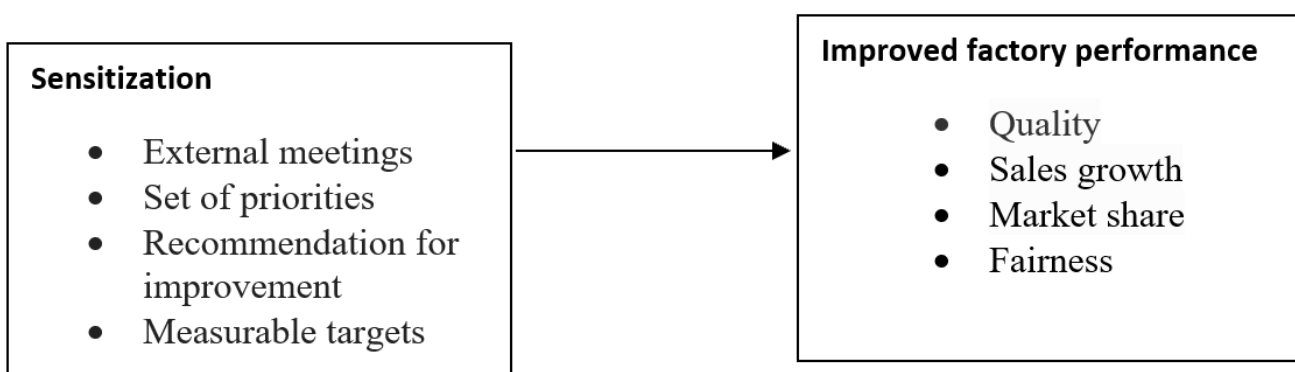


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The investigation was conducted utilizing both qualitative and quantitative methods of data collecting and analysis as part of the investigation's mixed research approach. This approach yielded substantial and thorough data that was more productive. Similarly, the researcher was in a position to carry out analysis and come out with detailed findings. The examination entailed information that was obtained from the primary sources, such as questionnaires and interviews.

This investigation relied on the descriptive research design. Since the researcher gathered data based on the opinions of the respondents, the descriptive study design was considered as appropriate. The goal of descriptive research was to describe a phenomenon and its characteristics without any form of manipulation. The researcher was much interested in assessing the extent to which leadership, resources allocation and sensitization influence the performance of Kiberu coffee factory in Muranga. Thus, the descriptive research design was considered to be the most appropriate. When the goal of the research is to discover traits, frequencies, trends, and classifications, descriptive research is the best option (Gitau 2018). Further, Karugu (2016) established that the importance of descriptive design gains a broader understanding of the research context and ongoing processes. In addition, Njeru (2015) argued that the design has a remarkable ability to generate answers to 'why?' 'when?' 'What?' and 'how?' questions

The location of the investigation was at Mathioya constituency. Reason for selecting this factory is that the researcher is coffee farmer in the area and a member of the factory therefore, the basic knowledge the researcher has about the factory was of great help in conducting a successful study. The target population comprised 50 permanent Kiberu coffee factory both among the senior leadership and among junior. A census method that is a process of the statistical list where all member of a population are analyzed was applied. Primary data was obtained from the staff, supervisors and farmers representatives using structured questionnaire. A Likert scale of 1 to 5 (1= Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 =Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree) was were presented for answering by respondents. Interview was conducted to top management comprising of CEO and 4 managers.

Cronbach's alpha was used to test the reliability of the measures in the questionnaire (Cronbach, 1995). Data analysis was done using SPSS. Quantitative data was examined using descriptive and inferential statistics, while qualitative data was assessed using content analysis. To create a quantitative report for the examination, the researcher used SPSS. In the same way, mean and standard deviation were included in the descriptive statistics. The Pearson correlation and multiple regression analysis were among the inferential statistics. ANOVA also determined the entire model's statistical significance.

The regression model that was used is;

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X + \varepsilon$$

Where:

Y = Factory performance

X = sensitization

$\beta_1$  = Coefficient of the variable

$\varepsilon$  = Error term

The researcher got authorization from NACOSTI and the university to conduct the research. Identity of participants should be treated secretly and privacy should be well maintained (Spencer, et al 2015). The materials gathered will only be meant for this investigation and access to it will not be allowed to any other party apart from those involved upon their request. The information gathered will also not be sold to anybody without the express permission of the participants.

## RESULTS AND FINDINGS

### Descriptive Statistics

The aim of the study was to determine the effect of sensitization in the implementation of strategic plans on the performance of coffee factories in Muranga, Kenya. To achieve the objective, participants were asked to indicate their level of agreement on a five-point Likert scale. (1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree) and the average response rate from the participants was calculated. For interpretation purposes, 4 and 5 (agree and strongly agree) were grouped as agree, 1 and 2 (strongly disagree and disagree) were grouped as disagree, while 3 was neutral. The results of this investigation are shown in Table 1.

### Descriptive Statistics of sensitization

The only objective was to examine the influence of sensitization in the implementation of strategic plans on factory performance. Table 1 demonstrates the outcomes.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of sensitization

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean	SD
There are external meetings (with KPCU management) to sensitize factory management on how to successfully implement strategic plans since factories are under the umbrella of K.P.C.U.	4.65%	2.33%	2.33%	32.56%	58.14%	4.37	1.00
There are laid down procedures on how to successfully implement strategic plans in the factory	2.33%	4.65%	9.30%	30.23%	53.49%	4.28	0.98
There are measurable targets in the factory for successful implementation of strategic plans	4.65%	6.98%	13.95%	39.53%	34.88%	3.93	1.10
There are recommendations for improvement during implementation of strategic plans in the factory	2.33%	4.65%	16.28%	32.56%	44.19%	4.12	1.00
There are set of priorities on implementation of strategic plans in the factory	4.65%	2.33%	13.95%	30.23%	48.84%	4.16	1.07
<b>Average</b>						<b>4.17</b>	<b>1.03</b>

The outcomes from the field (descriptive statistics) portrayed above indicates that 90.7% of the respondents disagreed there are external meetings (with KPCU management) to sensitize factory management on how to successfully implement strategic plans since factories are under the umbrella of K.P.C.U. while 6.98% agreed that there are external meetings (with KPCU management) to sensitize factory management on how to successfully implement strategic plans while 2.33% were neutral. This explained that the majority of the participants disagreed there are external meetings (with KPCU management) to sensitize factory management on how to successfully implement strategic plans since factories are under the umbrella of K.P.C.U. The mean score of the survey question was 4.37 and a standard deviation of 1.00

It was found that 83.72% of the respondents disagreed there are laid down procedures on how to successfully implement strategic plans in the factory, while 6.98% agreed there are laid down procedures on how to successfully implement strategic plans in the factory and 9.30% were neutral. The mean score of the survey question was 4.28 with a standard deviation of 0.98 and this signified that the majority of the respondents disagreed there is team member's growth. The investigation further found that 74.41% of the respondents disagreed there are measurable targets in the factory for successful implementation of strategic plans and 11.63% agreed there are measurable targets in the factory for successful implementation of strategic plans while 13.95% were neutral. This displayed that majority of the respondents disagreed there are measurable targets in the factory for successful implementation of strategic plans with a mean score of 3.9 and a standard deviation of 1.10.

The study also found that 76.75% of the respondents disagreed there are recommendations for improvement during implementation of strategic plans in the factory while 6.98% agreed there are recommendations for improvement during implementation of strategic plans in the factory and 16.28% were neutral. This revealed that majority of the respondents disagreed there are recommendations for improvement with a mean score of 4.12, and a standard deviation of 1.00. In addition, the study found that 79.07% of the respondents disagreed there are set of priorities on implementation of strategic plans in the factory, while 6.98% agreed with the survey question and 13.95% remained neutral. The mean score was 4.16, with a standard deviation of 1.07. It was found that majority of the respondents disagreed there are set of priorities on implementation of strategic plans in the factory. Lastly, the average mean score of the survey questions of Sensitization was 4.17 and an average standard deviation of 1.03. This showed that majority of respondents disagreed with the majority of the survey questions.

The researcher conducted interview to the top management the CEO and four managers of the factory to find out if sensitization is done by K.P.C.U management who formulate coffee strategic plans at national level to be implemented at factory level and the findings were as follows; CEO explained that sensitization is done on other duties but implementation part is left to the factory management to do it on their own and mostly each factory use their own procedures best fit to them. Manager F said, "Top national management at K.P.C.U hold meetings with factories management often. On the issues of strategic plans factories management are only involved during launching and after that they each get a copy to be implemented at factory level. Manager M said there is no sensitization done on implementation of strategic plans by national top management". Manager P said, "National top management only involve factories management during launching of strategic plans but the targeted goals are not explained in details especially on how well it can be done to ensure successful implementation of strategic plans at factory level. In addition, Manager I said, "When factory management get a copy of formulated strategic plan, everything is left on their hand to implement within stipulated period and sometimes factory management take time to come up with procedure for implementation of the plans".

### **Inferential analysis**

Pearson's product moment correlation was used to test the strength of the relationship between sensitization

and performance. The level of significance was tested using multiple regressions. Results were interpreted as results from multiple linear regression analysis

**Correlations Analysis**

Results in Table 2 indicated that there was a strong positive association between sensitization and factory performance (r=.884). The results showed sensitization was significant with factory performance since the p-value is less than 0.05 (p=0.000).

Table 2: Correlation Matrix

		Performance	Sensitization
Factory Performance	Pearson Correlation	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)		
Sensitization	Pearson Correlation	.884**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	

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

**Regression Analysis**

A simple regression analysis was conducted between the independent variable (sensitization) and factory performance. The results presented in Table 3 present the fitness of model used of the regression model in explaining the study phenomena. Sensitization was found to be satisfactory in explaining factory performance. This is supported by coefficient of determination also known as the R square of 0.974 which is greater than 0.5 showing that the model is effective enough to determine the relationship. The R-value in the study was .987 which is good because it is greater than 0.4. Adjusted R Square was .972 which is not far off from R. Square value of .974 therefore good.

Table 3: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.987 a	.974	.972	.18981

Predictors: (Constant), sensitization

Dependent Variable: performance

Table 4 Analysis of Variance

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	42.560	1	42.560	146.567	.000 b
	Residual	11.905	41	.290		
	Total	54.465	42			
a. Dependent Variable: performance						
b. Predictors: (Constant), sensitization						



Whole model was statistically significant as per the outcomes. The outcomes establish that sensitization is worthy predictors in clarifying the factory performance. This is supported by an F statistic of 146.567 and the reported p-value of 0.000, which is less than the conventional probability significance level of 0.05, implying that the independent variables (sensitization) is significant in predicting the performance of the factory.

Table 5 Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			
1	(Constant)	1.744	.847		2.057	.046
	sensitization	.789	.076	.791	10.428	.000

1. Dependent Variable: performance

Table 5 displays the outcomes of the regression analysis with sensitization in implementation and factory performance as the dependent variable. The coefficient of sensitization was .789 which was significant at  $p = 0.000$ , and was supported by a calculated t-statistic of 10.428 that is larger than the critical t-statistic of 1.96.

## CONCLUSIONS

Sensitization involves communication to all that describes how the factory will carry out the implementation process. Sensitization also involves creating a communication system for the implementation process in the factory. The research concluded that sensitization and factory performance are positively and significantly related. A unit improvement in sensitization was found to increase plant performance by 0.789 units when other factors are held constant. In addition, the study concluded that, sensitization on how well implementation process is all about and how well it can be successfully accomplished, is not well done to the factory management despite being very vital to all stages of implementation as indicated by the majority of the participants. The conclusion from interview guide was, CEO explained that sensitization is done on other duties but implementation part is left to the factory management to do it on their own and mostly each factory use their own procedures best fit to them. Manager F said, “Top national management at K.P.C.U. hold meetings with factories management often. On the issues of strategic plans factories management are only involved during launching and after that they each get a copy to be implemented at factory level. Manager M depicted “no sensitization done on implementation of strategic plans by national top management”. Manager P said, “National top management only involve factories management during launching of strategic plans but the targeted goals are not explained in details especially on how well it can be done to ensure successful implementation of strategic plans at factory level. In addition, Manager I said, “When factory management get a copy of formulated strategic plan, everything is left on their hand to implement within stipulated period and sometimes factory management take time to come up with procedure for implementation of the plans”.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The study recommended that sensitization should be done to the management and also to other staff members as it create awareness on what to do and how to do at the right manner and time. To enable efficient information sharing, the factory’s implementation process communication system must be effective. Furthermore, it is recommended that the government policies to be conducive and the

prices depend on the market forces (demand and supply) rather than putting a price ceiling. The government should not impose a heavy tax on firms without considering the profitability level. It is also recommended that the government regularly inspects the factories operations and premises to ensure they abide by the law. The government should also offer some subsidies to the firm in times of crisis.

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