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## Literature Review of Strategy Implementation and Skilled Births in Public Health Facilities in Western Kenya

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### **Abstract:**

*Maternal healthcare is very important because it ensures the health and well-being of mother and child. Equally, a healthy pregnancy is essential for healthy fetal growth and development. Additionally, it has the benefit of reducing infant mortality and morbidity. Past studies have dwelt on family planning, focusing on women's reproductive health but not skilled births that incorporate the health of mother and child. Strategy implementation is a multifaceted, changeable, repetitive process in which managers and employees carry out a number of decisions and tasks, influenced by various organisational and environmental factors and designed to realise strategic goals. The purpose of this study is to review literature on strategy implementation and skilled births in public health facilities in Western Kenya. The central research question is: Does strategy implementation influence organisational performance in public health facilities? We used a narrative literature review by searching Google Scholar to find journal articles related to strategy implementation, service delivery charter, vision and mission, staff commitment, human and physical resources and performance from 2013 to 2021. We find a paucity of knowledge about strategy implementation with regard to skilled births in the public health facilities in western Kenya. Even though strategy implementation variables, such as organisational structure, organisational culture, leadership, and communication, support organisational performance, in the banking sector, leadership and communication variables do not support performance. This feedback can be grounded in systems theory, which stresses relations between parts, rather than reducing an entity into its parts or elements. We recommend that further studies be conducted to establish why strategy implementation does not support skilled births in public health facilities in Western Kenya.*

**Keywords:** Strategy implementation, performance, skilled births, balance scorecard

### **1. Introduction**

According to Li, Guohui and Eppler (2010), strategy implementation is a dynamic, iterative, and complex process that is comprised of various activities by managers and employees to turn strategic plans into reality in order to achieve strategic objectives. Ramadan (2015) argues that strategy implementation is the process that involves the execution of the necessary tasks or activities to obtain a result based on what has been planned. Lee and Puranam (2016) opine that strategy implementation effectiveness is the extent to which an organisation's implemented strategies correspond to its strategic intentions. The assumption is that the implementation of strategy follows strategy formulation, and its effectiveness depends on how closely outcomes match what was intended in the strategic plan (ibid). Strategy implementation is a very complex process because it depends on a lot of factors that directly or indirectly influence its course. In order to improve implementation efficiency and effectiveness, it is necessary to find a balance in managing these influences from inside and outside the enterprise (Ivancic, Jalenc & Mencer, 2017).

Fuertes *et al.* (2020) state that effective and efficient strategy implementation has been identified as a primary factor driven by strategic leadership. According to Mubarak and Yusoff (2019), the ability to successfully implement a strategy will depend greatly on the leadership abilities of organising, fostering a team culture, motivating others, establishing strategic controls, and bridging the gap between strategy and organisational performance. To translate developed plans into actions and results, strategy implementation is a crucial component of the strategic management process since it ensures that the organisation's strategic goals, purpose, and vision are attained as effectively as anticipated. Putting strategies and policies into effect while creating programs, budgets, and processes is known as strategy implementation (Mubarak & Yusoff, 2019).

Gebczynska (2016) posits that the major obstacle in the strategy implementation process is to transfer the strategy from the managerial level to lower organisational levels of employees. The lack of awareness of lower organisational levels of employees regarding company strategy may be the major issue that contributes to the inefficiency of strategy implementation (ibid). Strategy implementation requires efficient down-line information transfer (Gebczynska, 2016). The

strategy implementation procedure is one approach through which managerial objectives, methods and rules are implemented throughout the growth programs, financial plan and procedure (Rani, 2019). Rani (2019) posits that strategy implementation is a five-step approach that involves strategy evaluation and communication of the strategic plan, development of an implementation structure, development of implementation-support policies and programs, budgeting and allocation of resources and discharge of functions and activities. According to Anuja (n.d), strategy implementation puts an organisation's strategies into action through various procedures, plans and programs. This involves actions and tasks that need to be performed after the formulation of strategies. Strategy implementation is about designing appropriate organisational structure and control systems to put the organisation chosen strategy into action (Hill *et al.*, 2007).

The process of strategy implementation is more complicated than formulation (Andrews, Boyne, Law & Walker, 2011), and many managers and organisations struggle with the effective implementation of business strategies (Hrebiniak, 2006). As a result, strategy implementation effectiveness is a significant source of performance heterogeneity between firms (e.g., Greer, Lusch, & Hitt, 2017), reinforcing the need for a clear understanding of the strategy implementation process. According to Kihara, Bwisa and Kihoro (2016), the strategy implementation process determines whether an organisation excels, survives or dies depending on the manner in which it is undertaken by the stakeholders. The strategy implementation process involves placing objectives, strategies, and policies into action through the development of programs, budgets, and procedures.

Gachuma (2018) avers that strategy implementation, which is the third phase of the strategic management process, contains documented actions that guide the organisation towards the realisation of its targets. According to Ekom (2012) (as cited in Okwemba & Njuguna, 2021), strategy implementation enables an organisation to adopt new strategies that result in a sustainable competitive advantage, hence responding to the turbulent business environment in which they operate. The effective implementation of strategy implementation can thus be effective in improving the performance of an organisation (Gawankar, Kamble & Raut, 2015). Allio (2005) asserts that strategy implementation is the stage where the real action in an organisation is executed through the strategic management process. The research question of the study is: Does strategy implementation influence organisational performance?

## 2. Methodology

We review the literature on strategy implementation and its effect on organisational performance in public health facilities. We use skilled births as a proxy measure of performance in the public health facilities in Western Kenya. According to Sanz-Gomez *et al.* (2023), proxy-based measures are often used in health sciences research and clinical practice to gather additional information on the target population or address potential biases in data collection. Proxies may refer to variables or pieces of information that act similarly to another target variable (*ibid*). In the course of this study, we used Google Scholar solely to investigate the effect of strategy implementation on performance in public health facilities in Western Kenya from 2013 to 2021. Google Scholar represents an attractive resource for researchers since it is free to use, appears to catalogue vast numbers of academic articles, allows citations to be exported individually, and also provides citation tracking (Lopez-Cozar, Robinson-Garcia & Torres-Salinas, 2014). The search keywords were: strategy implementation, skilled births, performance and Balance Scorecard. In making use of the journal articles, we opted for current scholarly works on the relevant areas of the study.

## 3. Strategy Implementation Concept

The provision of maternal healthcare is very important because it enables mothers to have good health and bring forth healthy babies, much as it helps to stem maternal mortality and neonatal mortality. It is worrying that despite the government of Kenya declaring free maternal services in public health facilities, its implementation is fraught with challenges. Mothers still seek to be delivered by traditional birth attendants (TBAs). The government's strategy to have mothers deliver in the public health facilities seems not to have been fully embraced by the expectant mothers. Karanja *et al.* (2018) posit that challenges in accessing skilled delivery services persist, particularly in rural areas where health facilities may be limited, and cultural beliefs and practices may influence women's decision to seek skilled care during pregnancy and childbirth.

The development and implementation of a strategic plan is not an easy task (Candido & Santos, 2019). Yet, implementation is known to be more complex and challenging (Kalyal, Huey, Blaskovits & Bennell, 2020). Twum (2021) asserts there is a need to adopt peculiar guidelines to ensure the smooth transition from planning to implementation because a strategy is about making the right choices to enhance performance, whereas implementation is about taking the right actions to accomplish the expected results - a competitive edge. Burgelman *et al.* (2018) posit that strategy implementation, whether emergent or intended in approach, is designed to address the implementation dynamics of an organisation emerging from the everyday decisions that are taken at that time. Sanad & Anitha (2018) aver that the strategy implementation process is influenced by the following factors: strategy communication, organisational leadership, organisational culture, organisational structure, resource allocation, staff training and organisational rewards. Literature suggests that numerous studies agree that strategies frequently fail not because of the insufficient implementation of tactics but because tactical decisions are not implemented properly (Sanad & Anitha, 2018).

The major obstacle in the strategy implementation process is the transfer of the strategy from the managerial level to the lower organisation level employees (Gebczynska, 2016). As strategy implementation consists of making resources and capabilities suitable to achieve objectives and targets set, managing such resources and capabilities requires not only the adaptation to the organisation's internal environment but also to its external environment (Fedato, Pires & Trez,

2017). Kihara, Bwisa and Kihoro (2016) posit that strategy implementation determines whether the organisation is productive and sustainable by using appropriate procedures to place objectives, strategies, and policies into achievable actions. Achieving effective strategy implementation requires both leaders and employees to demonstrate proactive as well as reactive abilities (Brozovic, 2018).

Belyh (2017) asserts that strategy implementation is all about "how" the activities will be carried out, "who" will perform them, "when" and "how" often they will be performed, and "where" will the activities be conducted and that this stage demands the participation of the entire organisation. Tawse, Patrick and Vera (2019) posit that one reason for the ineffective transition from strategy formulation to strategy implementation is that planning is associated with a different set of thought processes and emotional experiences than is required for strategy implementation. The gap between strategy formulation and implementation can be attributed to various factors, with communication, commitment, and consensus emerging as critical elements influencing the success or failure of implementation efforts (Tawse, Patrick & Vera, 2019).

From a decision-making perspective, the successful implementation of strategies depends on the particular style of implementation that an organisation decides to adopt, which, in turn, has important implications for organisational performance. In seeking to understand what works and when for strategy implementation, strategic decision-making theories focus on two key implementation styles:

- A rational or planned style of implementation and
- An incremental or ad-hoc style of implementation (Andrews, Beynon & Genc, 2017)

Andrews, Beynon and Genc (2017) posit that the incremental implementation style prioritises fluidity in managing change within organisations. It highlights the need to encourage and support strategic decision-makers to modify strategies in a way that works for all, while the rational implementation style emphasises the need to organise people to follow precise guidelines when introducing new policies and strategies and the use of systems to ensure that people follow a pre-planned sequence of steps during such changes within the organisation.

To understand the strategy implementation process and to promote its inclusion in strategy research, Tawse & Tabesh (2021) propose an integrative framework comprised of three components: actions through which managers influence the implementation process, conditions necessary for strategy implementation effectiveness, and the underlying dynamic managerial capabilities to create the best possible combination of conditions by enacting the most appropriate managerial actions. Researchers pointed out that strategy implementation is much more difficult than strategy formulation, and it requires serious attention from both academics and practitioners in the field (Greer *et al.*, 2017). According to Bahadori *et al.* (2018), empirical studies indicate that about 50 to 90 percent of business strategies fail to achieve their objectives, with poor strategy implementation accounting for the majority of the failures. Candido and Santos (2019) opine that strategy implementation is made more complex by the necessity of coordinating a large number of people on different hierarchical levels and with varying functions of business.

Crittenden & Crittenden (2008) (as cited in Cater and Pucko, 2015) aver that the low success rates of strategy implementation processes are problematic because poor strategy implementation weakens the subsequent planning cycle, as is evidenced by the deficient strategy implementation that inhibits future strategy formulation, thereby creating a deadly spiral of two mutually enforcing factors – poor planning and poor implementation. According to Twum (2021), strategy implementation requires the direct participation of stakeholders, where leaders create an enabling working environment to steer performance. Tabesh, Mousavidin and Hasani (2019) state that implementation requires diverse actions to motivate employees to execute formulated strategies successfully without any resentment. Thus, accomplishing successful implementation depends on aligning and reinforcing strategic choices to ascertain competitive advantage. Mafini (2016) refers to a strategy as a plan of action employed by an organisation to accomplish set targets to drive competitive advantage. Implementation of planned strategies depends on a multiplicity of factors such as availability of resources, leadership competence, communication, organisational culture, and operational process. Mafini (2016) adds that the lack of these factors could be a stumbling block that would impede strategy implementation and adversely affect the realisation of organisational goals.

Puutio's (2023) writing in the Forbes posits that the difference between success and failure often boils down to three magic words: Alignment, Engagement, and Commitment. Alignment is not just about getting everyone on the same page; it's about ensuring that the page is the right one. For a strategy to be successful, it is essential that all departments, teams, and individuals understand their role in the bigger picture and are aligned with the overarching goals. Engagement is about creating corporate cultures that go beyond buy-in. Engagement goes beyond mere agreement. It's about fostering a culture where every team member feels invested in the strategy and its outcomes. Commit people to the right kind of change by aligning the incentives. Aligning individual-level incentives with the corporation's strategic goals is paramount. When employees see a direct correlation between their efforts, the success of the strategy, and their personal and professional rewards, their commitment to the cause deepens.

Cynthia (2020) posits that managerial skills, particularly human and technical skills, enable managers to become more supportive of their employees and, hence, attain better strategy implementation performance through effective organisation and motivation of people as well as efficient and effective decision-making. Strategy implementation is about designing appropriate organisational structure and control systems to put the organisation's chosen strategy into action (Hill, Jones, Galvin & Haidar, 2007). Because strategy is derived from the organisation's mission and vision and in line with the organisational values, the implementation must follow the direction set out in the organisation's strategic documents and prioritise those things that are seen to be most important for the success of the organisation (Chartered Management Institute, 2014).

The problems identified in strategy implementation are: misunderstanding of the strategy, poorly documented strategy, lack of commitment to the strategy, lack of communication, insufficient time allocation for strategy implementation, unaligned organisational systems and resources, poor coordination and sharing of responsibilities, weak management role in strategy implementation, inadequate capabilities (of both managers and employees), poor reward system, competing activities, a lack of strategic thinking and implementation skills in middle management, poor cultural and structural alignment and other uncontrollable environmental variables (Aaltonen & Ikavalko, 2002; Alexander, 1991; Beer & Eisenstat, 2000; Higgins, 2005; Pellegrinelli & Brown, 1994). According to Beer and Eisenstat (2000), poor coordination across functions and inadequate down-the-line leadership skills and development are killers of strategy implementation.

According to Asmuss (2018), strategy is no longer positioned within a limited group consisting of the top management team. Instead, it can potentially involve any internal and external organisational actor whose actions can be identified to be of relevance for strategic outcomes. Miller (2020) opines that successfully implementing and executing strategy involves delivering what is planned or promised on time, on budget, at quality, and with minimum variability – even in the face of unexpected events and contingencies. Merkus, Willems and Veenswijk (2019) posit that strategy is something that is to be inserted, infused or incorporated into an existing organisation and that scholars assume that a strategy developed by management will spontaneously permeate the organisation if the right conditions are created. Implementation is, thus, regarded as a dependent variable influenced by various independent variables, and not as a process with its own dynamics. Ivancic, Jalenc and Mencer (2020) state that strategy implementation assumes implementing a strategic plan according to the predefined elements and scheduled timeframe and that those elements are the essence of implementation and, during the process, should be carefully monitored.

Alharthy, Rashid, Pagliari and Khan (2017) aver that the basic themes that play an influential role in the successful implementation of the strategy are: management options available to the organisation now and in the future, teams of people that internally and externally relate to the organisation and their knowledge with the rest of the team, tactics of short term nature that encompass the organisations daily operational nature and finally, the necessary tools that better facilitate the corporate strategy implementation. Ocak *et al.* (2021) opine that strategy implementation is a critical component in healthcare institutions and other service organisations. Strategy implementation in healthcare organisations has an impact on public health, thereby underlining its importance. The primary aim of healthcare organisations is to improve public health and thereby provide a public benefit. The achievement of this goal depends on effective strategy implementation (*ibid*). According to Odhiambo (2016), the critical drivers in the implementation of quality healthcare strategies are strategic planning, service delivery charter, vision and mission. Other implementation drivers are effective quality improvement teams, staff commitment, availability of human and physical resources, and specific programmatic interventions at the functional units (*ibid*). According to Waltz *et al.* (2015), implementation strategies constitute the how-to component of changing healthcare practice.

Strategy implementation is an essential component of the strategic management process and is crucial to an organisation's success (Elbanna & Fadol, 2016). Rajasekar (2014) posits that, unlike strategy formulation, strategy implementation cannot be achieved by top management alone; it requires the collaboration of everyone inside the organisation and, on many occasions, parties outside the organisation. Strategy implementation involves the introduction and activation of the formulated strategy in an organisation (Waribugo & Etim, 2016). Hrebiniak and Joyce (1984); Sproull and Hofmeister (1986); Schilit (1987); Noble (1999); Choo *et al.* (2014) (as cited in Alhilou, 2015) found that strategy implementation has a significant impact on the functioning, performance and effectiveness of an organisation, and is essential for its success. Effective strategy implementation is a critical component of organisational success and a potential source of competitive advantage (Tawse & Tabesh, 2021). Successful strategy implementation helps to improve the company's overall performance and gains its competitive advantages (Wibowo, Astana & Rusdi, 2015). Strategy implementation is a dynamic process that takes place against changing economic, social and competitive circumstances (Chartered Management Institute, 2014).

According to Li, Guohui and Eppler (2008), strategy implementation is a multifaceted, changeable, repetitive process in which managers and employees carry out a number of decisions and tasks, which are influenced by various organisational and environmental factors and are designed to realise strategic goals. Factors that affect the effectiveness of the strategy implementation process include 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 (Wolczek, 2018). The analysis of strategy implementation should start with people, their perspective, their character, and their drive (Zafar, Butt & Afzal, 2014). The people are critical for successful strategy implementation, and they are the starting point when things go wrong. The research should focus on their thoughts, experiences and capabilities (Asmuss, 2018).

### 3.1. Service Delivery Charter

According to the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (2024), a service delivery charter is a formal agreement between a service provider and its clients, defining service terms and expectations. It outlines services offered, including scope and standards, alongside specific performance metrics like response times and uptime percentages. Financial aspects such as pricing and billing details are also covered. It delineates customer rights and responsibilities, offering guidelines for service requests, issue reporting, and feedback provision. A service charter makes known what to expect from the service provider (Wambua, Ngao & Wafula, 2015). The government's main intention in developing the service charter was to communicate in a clear way to both the service providers and the service consumers the services available

and how to deliver or access them (Otteng & Jagero, 2014). In healthcare, a charter should transform an intangible health product into a measurable expectation for the patient prior to receiving the healthcare service (Thomassen, Ahaus & Van de Walle, 2014).

### 3.2. Vision and Mission

A vision statement outlines an organisation's aspirations and future goals, vividly depicting what the organisation aims to become. It provides a sense of direction and inspires employees, customers, and other stakeholders by articulating a compelling vision of the future, while a mission statement defines the organisation's purpose, clarifying its reason for existence and the core activities it undertakes to fulfill its vision. It communicates the fundamental values, principles, and goals that drive the organisation's day-to-day operations (Mohammed & Frank, 2024). The mission typically will answer why an organisation exists, clarifying the identity, purpose, and direction (Henry, 2008). Alshameri and Green (2020) state that the combination of the vision and mission can drive the organisation's culture, impacting the attitudes, work ethic and values that are reflected in the actions and inactions of the employees.

### 3.3. Staff Commitment

Employee commitment is the psychological attachment and the resulting loyalty of an employee to an organisation (Anwar, 2016). According to Anwar and Louis (2017), employee commitment is with respect to the labourers' connection to or support of the organisations in which they are employed. Demovsek (2008) posits that committed employees develop a bond with an organisation, creating better organisational performance. If that emotional connection to their career and relationships with other employees and the organisation is present, they perform better and serve the organisation better. According to Baritule & Enwin (2021), where commitment is absent, the organisation will experience employee absenteeism, poor performance at work and a high rate of turnover, among other negative factors that may affect the organisation, its high performance and productivity.

### 3.4. Human and Physical Resources

Managers must ensure that the company or an organisation has the right workforce at the right place and time to complete tasks that will help the company achieve its overall goals effectively and efficiently (Bandonno, 2021). Kapur (2022) argues that the availability of physical resources contributes significantly to creating an amiable and pleasant environment within the workplace and that with the availability of physical resources, all the members will be able to concentrate on their job duties.

Njagi and Kombo (2014) report the effect of strategy implementation on the performance of registered commercial banks in Kenya measured strategy implementation by operationalisation and institutionalisation. Performance is measured by a balance scorecard (BSC) in terms of financial perspectives, customer satisfaction, internal business processes, innovation, and learning. The study found a strong and positive relationship between strategy implementation and organisational performance. All the strategy implementation variables in this particular study were significant, indicating that the managers of the commercial banks leveraged the strengths inherent in the bank.

Waititu (2016) reports the relationship between strategy implementation and performance in commercial banks in Nairobi County, Kenya. The target population is the top management of 11 commercial banks listed on the Nairobi Securities Exchange, Kenya, with a target population of 91 respondents. The study is a descriptive cross-sectional design. Performance is measured by: achieved objectives, increased productivity and efficiency and efficacy of operations. The strategy implementation drivers are: communication, leadership, organisation structure and organisation culture. The study finds that organisational structure and organisational culture are significant when communication systems and leadership are insignificant. The fact that communication and leadership are not significant mirrors weakness in the workings of the bank.

Ramadan (2015), on the other hand, reports the impact of Strategy implementation drivers on projects' effectiveness in Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) in Warsaw-Poland. The sample for the study is 25 NGOs from which 51 employees responded to the questionnaires. The study adopts a descriptive research design. Performance is measured by the effectiveness of NGO projects. The strategy implementation factors, namely leadership, culture, structure and resource allocation, are all significant, thereby supporting performance. The NGOs are able to show that they are managed well and that the strategy implementation variables are strengths within.

Al-Kandi, Asutay and Dixon (2013) report factors influencing the strategy implementation process and its outcome from three Saudi Arabian Banks. Data are collected via questionnaires directed at the middle managers of three Saudi banks. The study uses a quantitative research design. Performance is measured by process and personnel factors, organisational factors, external factors and project factors. Strategy implementation is measured by time, priority of decision, top management support, religion, organisational structure, involvement and communication. The finding of the study indicates that all the strategy implementation factors, such as time, priority of decision, top management support, religion, organisational structure, involvement and communication, are all significant and, therefore, support performance. It is evident that the management is in control of the processes - the internal strengths of the organisation.

Katamei, Omwono, and Wanza (2015) report on the challenges of strategy implementation on the performance of Constituency Development Fund (CDF) projects in Kenya. The descriptive study targeted a population of 263 management committee members, whereupon 30 percent of the target population responded. Closed-ended structured questionnaires are used. Strategy implementation drivers in the study are: leadership, cultural receptivity, organisation structure and communication, while performance is measured by completed community projects that are aimed at poverty reduction

and socio-economic development of the people. The finding of the study is that strategy implementation drivers are central to the performance of CDF projects. CDF projects are political in nature, and their implementation variables take a pattern that bears on the political manoeuvres - to excite the constituents.

According to Chikere and Nwoka (2015), systems theory focuses on the relations between the parts rather than reducing an entity into its parts or elements. The organisation is considered a system having integrated parts that must be coordinated for efficiency and effectiveness. Strategy implementation variables and how well they are matched easily depict organisational performance. The relationship that subsists between the strategy implementation variables evokes interplay within the system.

It is evident that not all the strategy implementation variables in a study are significant. Leadership, organisational culture, organisational structure and resource allocation are significant. The other variables found to be significant were time, priority of decision, top management support, religion, institutionalisation and operationalisation. On the contrary, in the banking sector, communication and leadership were not significant, revealing a weakness in the organisation. A situation of this nature points to a dysfunctional relationship between the top-level managers and the lower-level managers whose actions appear not to be in sync.

#### 4. Effects of Strategy Implementation on Performance

A good strategy implementation has a substantial impact on organisational performance and is essential for achieving operational efficiency, which leads to the realisation of organisational effectiveness Ntoiti & Makau, (2022). Shrestha (2019) posits that organisational performance represents the overall effectiveness, productivity, and success of the organisation and that organisational performance measures the extent to which an organisation successfully attains its intended goals and desired outcomes. Organisational performance is influenced by various factors, both internal, which the company can influence, and external, which are beyond the company's influence Bakotic (2016).

Wheelen and Hunger (2015) state that organisational performance reflects the way an organisation takes advantage of tangible and intangible resources to achieve its goals. Performance is referred to as being about doing the work, as well as being about the results achieved. It can be defined as the outcomes of work because they provide the strongest linkage to the strategic goals of an organisation, customer satisfaction and economic contributions (Salem, 2003). This study uses skilled births as a measure of performance in public health facilities. Performance measurement in health care seeks to monitor, evaluate and communicate the extent to which various aspects of the health system meet their key objectives: health conferred on people by the health system, its responsiveness to public preferences, the financial protection it offers and its productivity (Smith, Mossialos & Papanicolas, 2008). The potential success of a business depends on its organisational performance, which means its ability to effectively implement strategies to achieve institutional objectives (Randeree & Al-Youha, 2009). The performance of any organisation depends largely on the level of expertise that its leaders have when it comes to implementing strategies; that performance of the organisation also depends on its employees, who are an integral part of the organisation and form a team that works towards achieving the goals of the organisations and perform various activities to achieve their organisational goals (Almatrooshi, Singh & Farouk, 2016).

A skilled birth indicates the percentage of live births attended by skilled health personnel in a given period. A skilled birth attendant is an accredited health professional - such as a midwife, doctor or nurse - who has been educated and trained to proficiency in the skills needed to manage normal (i.e. uncomplicated) pregnancies, childbirth and the immediate postnatal period, and in the identification, management and referral of women and neonates for complications (World Health Organisation, 2024). Skilled delivery services, which involve care provided by trained healthcare professionals during pregnancy, childbirth, and the postpartum period, are recognised as key interventions to reduce maternal and neonatal mortality and morbidity worldwide (World Health Organization, 2018). According to Leung (2024), maternal health plays a vital role in ensuring the health and well-being of both the mother and the child. A healthy pregnancy is essential for the healthy growth and development of the fetus, and it can reduce the risk of infant mortality and morbidity. A healthy pregnancy also helps to reduce the risk of complications during childbirth, such as hemorrhage, infection and obstructed labor, which can be life-threatening for the mother. In addition to the health benefits, ensuring maternal health can also have economic and social benefits. According to Kungu (2022), reproductive health is about the use of effective contraception and quality maternal and child health care and is a key pillar of human capital.

Healthcare performance measurement takes a different trajectory. The primary purpose of performance measurement should be to identify opportunities to improve patient care. Performance measures address high-level patterns and outcomes of care, comparing various dimensions of quality and cost across organisations and geographic areas. Performance measurement offers policy-makers a major opportunity to secure health system improvement and accountability. Performance measurement aims to improve the quality of decisions made by all actors within the health system. Securing improved performance measurement often requires the active leadership of the government World Health Organisation (2021). World Health Organisation (2021) states that an important use of performance measurement is to provide feedback to clinical practitioners on their actions and how these compare to those of their peers. Performance measurement systems should be monitored frequently to ensure alignment with other health system mechanisms and to identify areas for improvement (ibid).

Butler (n.d.) posits that performance measurement has considerable potential in health service management in enabling national priorities for health reform to be translated into organisational and individual objectives, to provide a focus on results, and to enhance accountability. Performance measurement has to focus services on achieving results and operationalising strategic and national/ regional priorities. Butler (n.d.) points out that performance measurement also has a vital role in enhancing accountability and supporting reform by enabling devolution of responsibility from the centre

to create more responsive services, providing good-quality and accurate data required for effective decision-making and enabling the impact of policy to be monitored and evaluated. According to Kaplan and Norton (1996) (as cited in Gomes & Liddle, 2009), the Balance Scorecard translates mission and strategy into objectives and measures, organised into four different perspectives: financial, customer, internal business process, and learning and growth. However, Catuogno, Arena, Saggese and Sarto (2017) opine that in a number of studies, it has been found useful to make modifications to Kaplan and Norton's original formulation of the Balance Scorecard. Performance can be measured using an adjusted, balance scorecard method involving five perspectives: financial, internal processes, learning and growth, customer and quality of care and its outcomes.

Financial perspectives on free maternal services take into consideration the adequacy of financial allocation, budget accountability, reimbursement from the National Hospital Insurance Fund (NHIF), Frequency of refunds from the NHIF and NHIF reimbursements attributable to free maternal services (FMS). Customer perspectives focus on issues like mothers feeling respected, mothers being kept informed of their status, the highest levels of care available and privacy during delivery. Learning and growth perspectives focus on the acquisition and integration of modern techniques in delivering mothers, Continuing Medical Education (CME) in the facility, and sponsored management training.

The internal processes perspective in the facility focuses on the linkage of mothers after delivery to other programmes on maternal health care, the preparedness of midwives at delivery rooms, and the frequency of taking vital signs to monitor the progress of labour. Quality of care and its outcomes focuses on the number of skilled midwives available, the number of obstetrics and gynecology specialists available, delivery beds available and successful caesarean sections conducted.

Abong'o, Ojera, Ochieng and Aila (2015) posit that because of the distinction between the nature of industry and the mode of profit, it is difficult to set a general indicator to measure organisational performance. Measurement of performance should be based on different purposes and use different performance indicators. Wambura (2016) found that the measurement of performance in healthcare considers the following indicators: staff, money, supplies, and premises, which are very important and must be evaluated concurrently. The literature indicates that the BSC primarily serves as a system to improve healthcare quality (Funk, 2009) and support long-term survival (Zelman, Pink & Matthias, 2003). However, it also seems to be used as a system to reduce goal uncertainty in the organisation (Aidemark, 2001), enhance customer focus (Rahm, Henricks & Skreding, 2002), create a common language on how to improve health care (Hallin & Kastberg, 2002) and support strategy implementation (Atkinson, 2006). Kollberg and Elg (2011) aver that BSC may be of interest to different stakeholders in the healthcare organisation. Physicians may focus on medical performance from the process perspective to improve healthcare quality; administrators, such as clinic management, may focus their attention on economic measures and customer satisfaction indexes to control the clinic in the most efficient way. The management, on the other hand, uses the BSC to increase their understanding of the organisation by not merely focusing on the financial measures.

A Balance Scorecard helps managers investigate activities and trends of growth or drop from different perspectives and provides them with a framework to interpret a company's perspectives and strategies in the form of performance measures (Alirezai, Mir-Hosseini, Khalili & Keshvari, 2005; Nawangwulan, Anantadjaya & Finardi, 2014). Issack and Muathe (2017) found that in the public health facilities in Manderu County of Kenya, strategy implementation was significantly and positively related to the performance of public health institutions.

## 5. Conclusions and Recommendations

The empirical studies showed that strategy implementation influenced performance. The varied strategy implementation factors used in the studies proved their ability to enable organisations to attain the desired results, and strategy implementation influenced organisational performance. The commercial ventures tailored the strategy implementation variables to suit the attainment of organisational performance. The variables, such as organisational culture, organisational structure, leadership, and communication, together with other variables like time, involvement, top management support, priority of decision, supported organisational performance, except in the banking sector where communication and leadership were not significant. All these variables are strengths within an organisation, and the management is in a position to direct the processes. As for the banking sector, a weakness attributed to communication and leadership variables not being significant has been revealed. The senior-level managers and the middle-level management in the banking sector, by putting their act together, are capable of addressing these issues, thereby improving organisational performance.

From the literature, not much is known about how effective the strategy implementation variables, service delivery charter, vision and mission, staff commitment, and human and physical resources are in improving skilled births in public health facilities. Healthcare providers are expected to follow the stringent measures aimed at meeting the satisfaction of those seeking healthcare. Implementation strategies used in healthcare undergo stringent measures before they are accepted and implemented. The implementation strategies are not crafted for short-term gains. There is a need for the government to take a step back and think through the strategy implementation mechanisms to establish why free maternity services in public health facilities have not received the full support of all shades of mothers - uneducated and educated.

The fact that free maternal services still face challenges calls for the government to re-look at the strategy behind the less impactful implementation bordering on free maternal care in public health facilities. Free maternal services are struggling, and as a result, skilled births in public health facilities are dwindling. To this extent, as to implications to theory, practice and policy, the study recommends that free maternal services in public health facilities should be looked at

through a lens that incorporates both strategy implementation and implementation strategies to create a common ground against which skilled births can be addressed. The study recommends that further studies be conducted to help demystify practices inherent in the provision of health care which hinder skilled births in public health facilities. As to policy, there is a need to find a middle-ground between strategy implementation and implementation strategies such that skilled births as a measure of performance in public health facilities get its space. Scholars stand to benefit from the study as they get to see the need for harmonising the relationship between strategy implementation and implementation strategies in healthcare. This finding is important because it introduces new dimensions in the theoretical analysis of healthcare as a business.

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