

## THE EFFECT OF INNOVATION STRATEGIC PRACTICES ON THE PERFORMANCE OF MULTIMEDIA UNIVERSITY OF KENYA

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### Abstract

*The modern business environment is day by day turning vibrant, stormy and very unpredictable. Strategic innovation is one of the Strategic management practices used to furnish any institution's available capital and competencies within the current and future opportunities in both the local and outward environments as mechanisms of developing institutional survival and persistent enhanced performance. The specific objectives of this study were to find out the influence of strategic innovation practices in Multimedia University of Kenya and to determine the relationship between strategic innovation and performance. The study adopted a quantitative research approach aided by case study research designs. The target population was 450 staff in the University. The sample size for the study was 82 respondents. This was achieved through stratified random sampling technique. Primary data was collected using structured questionnaires. The data generation instrument was administered to the respondents using drop and pick method. Descriptive statistical tools were used to summarize, organize, interpret and present data. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software was used to analyze data. Data was presented using graphs, pie charts and tables. The regression model was used to establish the relationship between the study dependent and independent variables. Out of the 82 respondents that the study targeted, 60 participants filled in and returned the questionnaires contributing to 73.2 % response rate. The study revealed that there is significant relationship between strategic innovations and the institution's performance through an overall mean of 4.21, 3.90, and 3.70 respectively presenting enhanced market position which signifies competitive advantage and improved performance. The researcher recommends that universities should incorporate innovation strategies to improve their current leadership skills, that is, they should strive and embark on the formulation and enactment of strategic management practices in all areas of their operations that they remain relevant and in a competitive advantageous position. Hence, participating in the principles of vision 2030.*

**Key Words:** Innovation, Innovation Strategy practices, Performance

## Introduction

Strategic innovation is one of the key elements in strategic management practices of an organization. Strategic management practice refers to the process of strategy formulation, implementation, evaluation and control on the basis of micro and macro environment factors (Thompson & Strickland, 2003). It entails identification of the organization purposes and it requires plans and actions set out to achieve the purpose.

Upon the wake of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, University education has become among the services widely sought i.e. the demand for university education has been at best fast growing (Johnstone, 2004). For public institutions to remain efficient and effective in the changing and competitive environment, it has become a basic requirement for them to adopt strategic management practices in their operations. For institutions of higher learning to remain competitive and achieve the ever-increasing expectations, they should be able to implement strategic management models.

Higher Education sector all over the world has in the past few years witnessed increased growth in terms of increased student enrollment, increased number of new institutions, and increase and expansion of programs offered (Altbach, 2007). The changes, environment and the challenges that higher education institutions are facing today are numerous and complex (Goedegebuure, 2003). According to Zaharia (2002), many of the universities in Europe are currently going through a period of turmoil caused by the need to reconcile the characteristics of traditional higher education and the new educational requirements that are being defined by the current society of the Third Millennium where innovation strategies are a key factor.

Failure to adopt and implement strategic management practices by Universities has resulted to lots of challenges including poor or no infrastructures, poor service delivery academic staffs, challenges of accreditation, unhealthy rivalry among management and staff, deteriorating quality of education among others (Owolabi & Makinde, 2012). In Africa, there is an increased expansion in universities which is accompanied by increasing enrolment of students and programs offered and changing modes of financing. This has resulted to a lot of management challenges and thus a need for reforms and institutional restructuring (Varghese, 2009).

Kenyan public universities are facing many challenges ranging from higher student enrolment beyond capacity, decline in the quality of education, financial problems beyond control and weak strategic management practices (Kamau, 2011). For instance, some studies have focused on sectoral – level constraints, attributing the poor performance to reduced funding and lack of innovation (Wangenge, 2008) and in – effective governance (Mwiria & Ng'ethe, 2006). Manyasi (2010) noted that public universities had only limited equipment and ineffective processes. Other challenges cited are lack of study materials, inadequate databases for educational management and customer dissatisfaction (Chacha, 2004; Mulili & Wong, 2011). In their study Calleb, Maureen and Ibrahim (2011), lecture rooms stood at 43% and university libraries at 47%; Kigotho (2001) noted that student strife at public universities is blamed on poor living conditions. In today's Higher Education sector, only those institutions that are prepared to face competitions are most likely to survive. To ensure that they survive and remain competitive, most public Universities in Kenya and all over the world are implementing strategic management practices which gives them the notches to pursue their vision and play an important role in an organization reconfiguring the resources within the changing environment (Johnson & Scholes, 2002).

Due to the dynamics in higher education in Kenya, Multimedia University of Kenya adopted a strategic plan. The MMU Strategic Plan 2011–2016 spelled out the vision, mission, and objectives as well as the core values of the University. The purpose of the Strategic Plan adopted by MMU was to help in the guidance of the implementation of the outlined activities to be able to achieve the set goals. The Multimedia University of Kenya vision is in sync with Kenya Vision 2030.

However, in Kenya due to the emergence of many universities, the performance and service delivery of these institutions have been adversely affected. Competition in the Kenyan Education sector has increased. Funding from government has dwindled and therefore posed challenges in outfitting university budgets, planning and management. As a consequence, the number of universities has tremendously increased and demands the adoption of strategic management practices and measures for assessing institution's performance. For instance, Magutu, Mbeche,

Nyamwange and Nyaoga (2011) in a study of a survey of benchmarking practices in higher education in Kenya revealed that participating in benchmarking would give Kenyan public universities a better understanding of performance. Miller and Swope (2007) outline seven areas of performance being used by colleges and universities. These are effectiveness, productivity, quality, customer and stakeholder satisfaction, efficiency and innovation. Low (2008) studied performance measures, the study aimed to declare the importance of performance measurement in the public sector in terms of efficiency, effectiveness, and impact. It is in this spirit therefore, this study sought to evaluate the impact of strategic management practices and performance of public universities in Kenya: a case of Multimedia University of Kenya.

The specific objectives of this study were to find out the influence of strategic innovation practices in Multimedia University of Kenya and to determine the relationship between strategic innovation and performance.

## **Theoretical Framework**

This paper is based on a number of models that have evolved persistently. Since strategic innovation is relatively new in the field of strategic management, it goes beyond the confines of outmoded parameters and methodologies to facilitate progress and modest advantages through innovative markets, novel value and fresh business models (Najmei 2010). The scholars view is premised on the notion that the traditional approach of strategic management is insufficient in enabling firms to craft a sustainable competitive advantage that warrants the essential realization and streams of revenue for survival and sustenance. This is in order of reinforcing the survival and future success of the institution. Innovation is one of the elements in strategic management, which is a requisite to some specific strategies. Innovation, to point is a medium in which new business with exceptional management mechanisms are made. Innovation is broadly perceived as a vital component of effectiveness which is rooted in the organizational structures, processes, products, and services within the firm (Powell, 2007). According to Jin et al. (2004), strategic innovation is a future-focused business development context that ascertains growth opportunities, accelerates business decisions and creates near-term, quantifiable influence within the context of a longer-term revelation for viable modest advantage. Blue Ocean Strategy was developed and published in 2005 by pre-eminent management thinkers Renee Mauborgne and Chan Kim. The Blue Ocean Strategy is based on the quest of differentiation and low cost. Value innovation is persistent especially where buyers are given priority and are valued by the organization. Another key theory used in this paper is Knowledge-Based theory. This theory builds on and extends the Resource-based theory of an organization which was initially promoted by Penrose (1959) and expanded by others (Barney 1991; Conner 1991; Wernerfelt 1984). The knowledge-based view assumes that the services condensed by tangible resources depend on how they are combined and applied, which in turn is a function of the organization's know-how or knowledge. Strategic innovation is so crucial in improved and sustained performance amongst several organizations.

According to Kaplan (2007) increased profit and the growth of market share results to improve performance. As a result of the study, organizations that want to remain competitive by enhancing their capacities and capitalizing on the available opportunities must be able to embrace strategic innovation. Walker (2004) concluded that strategic innovation has been empirically linked to superior performance.

Strategic innovations give organizations strategic advantage to outshine others in the market, whereas trying to make the organization take advantage of competitive advantage (Drucker, 2001). He outlined innovation because the method of armament in new, improved capabilities or enhanced utility. It is often formed because the transformation of information to industrial price. Innovation has pleasant industrial importance attributable to its potential for increasing the potency and therefore the profit of corporations. As per Fagerberg (2004), the main reason for originality is to ensure that the needs of corporations are used to get enhanced business performance and competitive edge.

The updated versions and extension of an organization's products and processes plus radical innovation is based upon development of application of modern ideas and novel technologies (Dewar & Dutton, 1986). Innovation faces lots of hurdles and uncertainties which has an effect on the structure orientation towards innovation. Strategic innovation results to differentiation in market top growth for different organizations by differentiating capabilities and providing coherence that allows organization to boost its revenue growth. Strategic innovation enhances overall firm productivity and value maximization on different organizations.

Locally, numerous studies on the subject of innovation are dispensed by a variety of researchers. Aswani (2010) dispensed a study on strategic innovations and performance of public universities. The study established that there exists a significant corelationship between strategic innovation and performance of public universities. Kemoli (2010) dispensed a study on strategic innovations and performance of economic banks listed in NSE. The study over that listed industrial banks had deviated from the prevailing business rules and engaged in creation of latest and important client price which strategic innovation was embedded in their company strategy. Karanja (2009) studied innovation methods adopted by insurance corporations in Kenya. The study resolved that companies with strong technology enabled and innovation strategies are more vulnerable to competitive advantage and create superior shareholder value.

According to Damanpour (2009) on his study on the effects of adoption of innovation in companies, he found out that firm performance is mostly contributed by adaptation of innovation types by organizations. He concluded that there is an optimistic correlation between innovation and organization performance. Bowen, Rostami and Steel (2010) was able to prove in his study that there is a constructive connection between future firm performances and innovativeness. All researches carried out on innovation and performance has shown a positive relationship between the two variables.

## Methodology

This study adopted quantitative research approach and employed a case study design to establish the effect of innovation strategic practices on performance of Multimedia University of Kenya. According to Creswell (2014), quantitative approach is one in which the investigator primarily uses post positivist claims for developing knowledge (i.e., cause and effect thinking, reduction to specific variables and assumptions and questions, use of measurement and observation, and the test of theories), employs strategies of inquiry such as experiments and surveys, and collects data on predetermined instruments that yield statistical data.

A research design is a plan of how the research is going to be conducted indicating who or what is involved and where and when the study will take place (Du Plooy, 2009). It is the arrangement of conditions for collection and analysis of data in a manner that aims to combine relevance to the research purpose with economy in procedure (Kothari, 2004). In a nutshell, it is the blueprint, or plan; it is the conceptual and logical structure within which a research is conducted. Therefore, this study adopted a case study research design. The choice of a case study research design helps in advancing understanding of a particular research phenomenon rather than generalization (Ghauri & Gronhaug, 2002). This study targeted both the staff and the management of Multimedia University of Kenya. The total population to be targeted was 450. The top management for this study included the deputy Vice Chancellors, Registrars, Head of Departments and Faculty Deans. Middle level management included Head of Sections, Deputy Registrars, Administrators and sectional Supervisors. The clerical officers and section officers were included under support staff. All the stakeholders and management were targeted to ensure that the sample will be a representative of the population. The objective of these respondents; for instance top management, middle level management and sectional superiors form the management structure which this study investigated. Further, the clerical officers are the supportive staff to the management (MMU Strategic Plan, 2017 – 2021).

The sample size for this study was 82 participants. This was determined by the Yamane formula. According to Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2012), Yamane formula provides a simplified method of calculating sample sizes and giving the sample size with known confidence and risk levels:

$$n = N / (1+Ne^2)$$

Where:

n = Sample size.

N = Size of the population.

e = Error of 10%

Substituting for the values:

$$n = \{[450/ 1+ (450 \times 0.1^2)]\}$$

$$n = 82$$

A sampling fraction was based on the ratio of Top-level management: Middle level management: Support Staff, which is 1:3:5

The study adopted open and closed ended questionnaires as tools for data collection. Questionnaires offer elaborate answer to complicated issues (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2008). It co-jointly presents a fair stimulant doubtless to massive

numbers of individuals at the same time providing the investigation with a simple accumulation of information. The open ended questions to provided room for the respondents to give personal views regarding the intended objectives, while closed ended questions formed the basis for controlled response that gave rise for quantitative analysis. The closed ended questions had a list of probable alternatives from which participants were required to select their choices that best defined their situation. The rationale for closed-ended questions is that they are easy to analyze since they are in an immediate usable form and are easy to administer. The open-ended question usually facilitates in depth response and opinions beyond the researcher's scope.

Data for this study was analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). This allowed simple tabulation and arrangement of responses in frequency distribution Tables, graphs and charts.

## Findings and Discussion

Out of the 82 respondents that the study targeted, 60 participants filled in and returned the questionnaires contributing to 73.2 % response rate. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2008), a response rate of 70% and over is excellent for analysis and reporting, 60% is good while a response rate of 50% is adequate. Therefore, the response rate for this study was excellent for analysis and reporting. This is presented in Table 1.

**Table 1: Response Rate**

Response Rate	Frequency	Percentage
Filled in questionnaires	60	73.2
Unreturned questionnaires	22	26.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>100.0</b>

## Innovation Strategy

The study sought to establish the extent to which the respondents agreed on the statements relating to the Innovation Strategy at Multimedia University of Kenya. The results are tabulated in Table 2.

**Table 2: Statements relating to the Innovation Strategy**

Statements	Mean	Stand. dev
The University has adopted latest technology in its operations	4.21	0.74
The University is using new ways in reaching its target market.	3.90	0.62
The University has introduced new programs that matches the market demands	3.70	0.71

The Innovation Strategy currently practiced at Multimedia University received satisfactory approval from the participants' giving their perceptions and experiences. Nonetheless, the interest would be whether these three pillars of innovation at the university harmonize with past assertions of management experts and researchers. In line with Kaplan (2007) the author affirmed that organizations that seek to gain in competitive advantage in the long-term basis must invest more on strategic innovation. On this backdrop, the researcher opines that Multimedia has created avenues to drive sustainable competitive advantage through its innovation, the only gap in these findings is that it is not demonstrated in depth through appropriate tests how the same innovations influence competitive advantage of Multimedia. For instance, it would be of interest borrowing from Resource-Based Theory i.e. VRIO attributes (see Johnson, Scholes & Whittington, 2008) to see how Multimedia has succeeded in delivering value to the students, for instance, through its use of latest technology. In fact, the same gap is evident in the literature findings because none of the authors. However, Gary (2002) did argue that innovation serves as a channel to compete differently in a contemporary market. Similarly, the literature findings also asserted that innovation serves as a source of differentiation for organization. The notion of differentiation can be tracked in-depth under Porter's Generic Strategies (Porter, 2008) which was not covered in the theoretical framework.

### How has innovation contributed to the competitive advantage of Multimedia University of Kenya?

Respondents indicated that innovation activities being undertaken by the University have led to new services with superior quality, improved models of business management system and new and enriched administration of workforce. Overall The disquiet, however, was whether these perceptions had any supported relationship. The test results are as shown below upon performing a Pearson Product Moment Correlation.

**Table 3:** Correlation analysis on innovation strategy

**Correlations**

		The University is using new ways in reaching its target market.	The University is using new ways in reaching its target market.
The University is using new ways in reaching its target market.	Pearson Correlation	1	.528**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	60	60
The University has introduced new programs that matches the market demands	Pearson Correlation	.528**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	60	60

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

As it can be understood there are only two variables for innovation strategy considered for the linear relationship tests. Nonetheless, there is overwhelming affirmation that the use of new ways in reaching target market (.528\*\*, .000) and introduction of new programs that matches the market demand at Multimedia have continued to have significant relationship. It means an optimum performance one results to an optimum performance of the other and vice versa still holds. It is, therefore, incumbent upon the management at Multimedia to achieve these two parameters of innovation strategy closely to bring stability and growth in performance.

Having said that, the question the researcher had in mind was whether the two aspects of innovation strategy at Multimedia University had any predictive influence towards performance as had perceived by the participants. The results are as depicted below.

**Table 4:** Test Results on innovation strategy and profitability performance in five years

**Model Summary**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.045 <sup>a</sup>	.002	-.033	.722

a. Predictors: (Constant),

The study denotes that the university staff have the requisite skills, knowledge and competencies to deploy the technology used in the institution's operations, there is increased access to technology in the University, The University continuously and timely respond to changes in technology in the business environment by adopting contemporary technology, The University has integrated Technology in its operations, marketing, teaching and research

**ANOVA<sup>a</sup>**

	Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	.05929	2	.030	.057	.945 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	.67429	57	.521		
	<b>Total</b>	<b>.733</b>	<b>59</b>			

a. Dependent Variable:

b. Predictors: (Constant),

**Coefficients**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.748	.868		2.014	.049
	The University is using new ways in reaching its target market.	-.024	.209	-.018	-.116	.908
	The University has introduced new programs that match the market demands	.069	.208	.051	.330	.743

a. Dependent Variable

The adjusted R Square shows that -3.3% are the cases for innovation strategy that explain the rated Multimedia University financial performance in terms of profitability for the last five years. Also, the Anova at .945 is indication that the model relationship between innovation strategy at Multimedia University and financial performance for the last five years is by chance. It means financial performance at Multimedia cannot be attributed to the existing innovation strategy the organisation has undertaken over the years. More refute claims on predictive significance of innovation strategy at Multimedia University can be confirmed by the p-values at .908 and .743 rendering the entire model nonsense. The implications to management would be that currently the innovation strategy in the University do not have any significant effects to the financial performance of the company and it would be either advisable to denounce them by not investing further in them; or seek new alternatives for innovation strategy.

**Table 5: Test Results on innovation strategy and rated net profit growth performance**

*Model Summary*

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.276 <sup>a</sup>	.076	.044	.631

a. Predictors: (Constant),

**ANOVA<sup>a</sup>**

	Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	1.869	2	.934	2.345	.105 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	22.715	57	.399		
	<b>Total</b>	<b>24.583</b>	<b>59</b>			

a. Dependent Variable:

b. Predictors: (Constant),

### Coefficients<sup>a</sup>

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.11	.759		2.783	.007
	The University is using new ways in reaching its target market.	3.364	.182	.299	1.996	.051
	The University has introduced new programs that matches the market demands	-.62	.182	-.051	-.342	.734

a. Dependent Variable: Please indicate in the table below the extent in which your institution has grown for the last five years in terms of Net Profit. In terms of net profit growth performance, the adjusted R Square indicated that only 4.4% of the cases for innovation strategy as depicted did explain the rated growth performance on net profit at Multimedia University. But the Anova at .105 was indication that further put a claim that a modelling of the relationship between innovation strategy and net growth performance at Multimedia is a mere chance; this relationship is not tenable and such modelling is null and void. Lastly, the regression output shows no instance where the p values are below 5% margin of error; it means there is no predictive significance over innovation strategy adopted at Multimedia University and rated net profit growth performance.

### Conclusion

This paper examined the one of the most scorching issues in the strategic management practices in the multimedia university of Kenya. The study argues that Multimedia University of Kenya has continually introduced and implemented Operations innovation, Market innovation and Product innovation. This has been through the introduction of new programmes and providing adequate and modern ICT. The University is also in the process of rolling out open distance learning. The students can also access their results, book hostel and register units online. This study results provides a great support to the study done by Kim and Mauborgne (2005) that indicated that an organization strategic innovation depends on its ability to remain competitive by differentiating business and generating more value over the long run. Strategic innovation influences an organization performance by producing improved market position which signifies competitive advantage and improved performance (Walker, 2004).

The paper also reveals that innovation strategy adoption resulted to the improved performance of Multimedia University of Kenya hence a strong relationship between strategic innovation and University performance. It also concluded that the University has adopted latest technology in its operations and that it has introduced new programs that match the market demands. The study also recommends that some of the innovation activities that should be undertaken by the University should lead to new services with superior quality, improved models of business management system and new and improved management of workforce.

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