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Effect of Strategy Implementation on Performance of Hardware Business Enterprises in Nakuru City

Simon Makori[1*], Dr. John Muhoho[2], Mr. George Gachuru[3]
School of Business and Leadership Studies, St. Paul's University
Corresponding email: mbadist454223@spu.ac.ke

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Abstract

This study aimed to analyze the effect of strategy implementation on the performance of hardware business enterprises in Nakuru City. This study employed an explanatory research design to investigate the relationship between strategic intent, formulation, implementation, evaluation, and performance in hardware businesses. The target population consisted of 52 licensed hardware stores in Nakuru City, with managers or proprietors serving as the units of analysis. Since the population was small (N = 52), a census approach was used to include all respondents. Data was collected using structured questionnaires, and analysis involved descriptive statistics, Pearson's correlation, and regression with the aid of SPSS. The findings show that strategy implementation has t a strong influence on the performance of hardware businesses in Nakuru City. Firms with adequate resources, supportive cultures, clear structures, and reliable systems achieved more consistent execution, better coordination, and improved results. Strategy implementation, therefore, stands out as a critical pillar of performance, transforming plans into measurable outcomes. It was concluded that firms with adequate resources, inclusive cultures, clear structures, and reliable systems are better equipped to implement strategies effectively. Implementation was found to be the key link that transforms plans into outcomes, with strong alignment of people, processes, and structures enhancing speed, quality, and consistency. Well-coordinated execution mechanisms improve efficiency, goal achievement, competitiveness, and adaptability. It is recommended that managers of hardware businesses in Nakuru City strengthen strategy implementation. Clear action plans with measurable goals should be institutionalized, implementation processes consistently documented, and communication enhanced to ensure shared understanding of objectives. Management should also invest in staff training, align resources and systems with strategic priorities, and establish regular review mechanisms to improve efficiency, competitiveness, and overall performance.

Keywords: *Strategy Implementation, Performance, Hardware Business Enterprises, Nakuru City*

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1. Introduction

Organizational performance remains central to business survival and competitiveness because it reflects how effectively resources are mobilized to achieve desired results such as productivity, efficiency, and quality (Elena-Iuliana & Criveanu, 2019). While strategic management broadly enhances performance, strategy implementation is particularly vital as it transforms plans into tangible outcomes. It involves mobilizing resources, structuring

organizations, shaping supportive cultures, and establishing operational systems that ensure strategies are executed effectively (Tawse & Tabesh, 2021). Mattila (2024) argues that, without proper implementation, even well-formulated strategies remain theoretical and fail to produce measurable performance improvements.

Globally, research shows that firms that prioritize strategy implementation improve adaptability, efficiency, and innovation. In the United States and China, efficient implementation practices have allowed businesses to remain competitive by aligning operations with customer expectations and market changes (Aniebonam, 2024). In Africa, however, weak implementation often undermines performance due to institutional challenges and poor resource allocation. Nigeria's hardware sector faces inefficiencies linked to corruption and inadequate infrastructure, while Rwanda demonstrates how transparent implementation practices enhance competitiveness and growth (Mupenzi & Irechukwu, 2023).

In Kenya, hardware enterprises play a critical role in supporting construction and manufacturing. Yet, their performance is constrained by corruption in procurement, poor managerial capacity, and inefficiencies in supply chain operations (Kitonga et al., 2022). Strategy implementation offers a pathway to address these challenges by ensuring adequate and timely resource allocation, fostering cultures that support change, and streamlining systems to reduce wastage and delays (Asiaei et al., 2022). Effective implementation in hardware businesses improves productivity, efficiency, and customer happiness by bridging the gap between strategy and execution.

The performance of hardware enterprises can be assessed through financial and non-financial indicators such as profitability, sales growth, productivity, and efficiency (Bhatia & Kumar, 2024; Hamza et al., 2022). In this context, strategy implementation directly influences performance by ensuring resources are utilized optimally and systems function smoothly. Productivity reflects how effectively resources are turned into output, while effective delivery highlight's reliability and timeliness in serving customers (Aslam et al., 2023). Efficiency depends on how well organizational processes and workflows are aligned to reduce costs and maximize results (Arinze et al., 2024). Quality and reduced damages further determine customer satisfaction and profitability (Singh et al., 2023).

Through adequate implementation, hardware firms can reduce losses, improve delivery timelines, and ensure consistent quality. For example, aligning organizational structures and cultivating cultures that value efficiency enables businesses to better meet customer needs. Similarly, systems that track inventory and logistics minimize wastage and damage, enhancing both financial and operational outcomes. Thus, performance indicators in hardware enterprises are closely tied to how effectively strategies are executed at the ground level.

Nakuru City hosts a growing hardware sector, with 52 licensed outlets ranging from small family-owned shops to larger wholesalers serving contractors and developers (Nakuru County Government, 2024). These enterprises are central to supplying cement, timber, plumbing, and electrical materials required by the city's expanding construction sector (Kinyua, 2022). Despite steady demand from urbanization and infrastructure projects, hardware businesses face challenges such as limited credit access, high interest rates, fluctuating import costs, and stiff competition from larger national chains (Rotich, 2022).

For these enterprises, effective strategy implementation is critical in navigating the volatile market environment. Timely mobilization of resources enables consistent supply to contractors, while efficient systems improve inventory control and reduce stock-outs or damages. Organizational structures that support workflow, combined with a culture of

customer focus, strengthen competitiveness. Small investments in digital ordering, logistics, and supplier relationship management, if well implemented, can also reduce costs and enhance service delivery (Nakuru County Government, 2024). Therefore, in Nakuru's hardware sector, strategy implementation stands out as the mechanism through which firms can convert plans into improved productivity, efficiency, and long-term performance.

1.1 Problem Statement

Hardware businesses are vital to Kenya's construction industry, yet many struggle to sustain profitability and efficiency. High closure rates among enterprises have been linked to poor management practices, weak competitiveness, and inability to adapt to market changes (UNDP, 2021). Even established players such as Builders Kenya and Toolcrafts Kenya exited the market after sustained inefficiencies and losses (Nduire, 2023). A major challenge lies in weak strategy implementation, where plans are not effectively translated into action due to inadequate resource mobilization, poor inventory control, delayed deliveries, and inefficient systems. These shortcomings limit productivity, efficiency, and customer satisfaction, ultimately undermining competitiveness in a sector already pressured by fluctuating import costs and strong competition from larger hardware chains (Rotich, 2022).

Despite its importance, the role of strategy implementation in driving business performance has received limited scholarly attention in Kenya's hardware sector. Most prior studies on strategic management have emphasized banking, manufacturing, and service industries, leaving a gap in understanding how the execution of strategies affects outcomes in hardware enterprises. This is particularly evident in Nakuru City, where construction demand continues to expand but hardware firms face persistent performance challenges. To address this gap, the present study sought to analyze the effect of strategy implementation on the performance of hardware business enterprises in Nakuru City.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Theoretical Review

The McKinsey 7S Framework, developed by Peters, Waterman, and Phillips in 1980, emphasizes that organizational effectiveness depends on the alignment of seven elements: strategy, structure, systems, shared values, skills, style, and staff. Strategy defines how a firm gains a competitive advantage, while structure refers to hierarchy and reporting lines. Systems represent operational processes, shared values capture organizational culture, skills denote employee competencies, style reflects leadership, and staff relates to workforce capacity. The model highlights that a change in one element requires adjustments in others to maintain balance and achieve superior performance (Waterman et al., 1980). Although widely applied in research and practice, the framework has faced criticism for being descriptive rather than predictive and for overlooking external environmental factors (Jain & Kansal, 2023; Chmielewska et al., 2022). Nonetheless, it remains valuable for its holistic and diagnostic approach, helping organizations systematically align internal elements during strategy execution (Collins, 2024).

This framework is relevant to the present study as it provides a structured lens for examining how strategy implementation influences the performance of hardware business enterprises in Nakuru City. The study can establish whether internal organizational dynamics support or impede effective execution by evaluating strategy alignment with structure, systems, skills, style, staff, and shared values. Understanding these interdependencies is crucial for detecting gaps that hinder efficiency, productivity, and competitiveness, and driving hardware firms to better performance results.

2.2 Empirical Review

Zaidi et al. (2019) conducted an empirical study on the strategy implementation process in G7 construction companies in Klang Valley, Selangor. Using a quantitative method with survey questionnaires and Pearson correlation analysis, the study established a strong positive relationship between strategy implementation and quality performance. It found that staff training during implementation directly improved organizational performance. However, the study presents a contextual gap, as it focused on large construction firms in Malaysia, whose dynamics may not apply to small hardware business enterprises.

Abdullahi (2022) assessed the implementation of proactive strategies in Nigerian SMEs through an exploratory design using face-to-face interviews with 14 CEOs and managers. The study revealed that enterprises enhance performance through stakeholder networking, advertising, and diversification. Despite these insights, the reliance on a small sample and qualitative interviews limits the generalizability of the findings, highlighting a methodological gap for broader application in hardware business enterprises.

Calitz and Wium (2022) explored the implementation of building information modelling (BIM) in the South African construction industry through a qualitative explanatory design. Data was gathered from interviews, questionnaires, and secondary sources, with thematic analysis used to evaluate findings. The study identified challenges such as financial, societal, and governmental barriers, and recommended updating procurement systems, training staff, and raising awareness. However, the inclusion of only a few participants, with two from outside South Africa, undermines the reliability and applicability of the findings, pointing to a methodological gap.

Kundu (2022) investigated how strategy implementation affects the performance of the Kenya Rural Roads Authority (KeRRA), focusing on organizational structure and resource allocation. Using a correlation research design and a sample of 37 engineers, the study found that these factors explained 77% of KeRRA's performance and had a positive influence on output. Nonetheless, since the study was limited to a government agency, its findings present a contextual gap when applied to private hardware business enterprises.

Mwaura (2020) studied the impact of organizational culture on strategy implementation in Nairobi's construction sector. Using explanatory design and a sample of 196 respondents, the study revealed that organizational culture shapes behavior, influences stability, and affects the effectiveness of implementation. It concluded that top managers must actively support implementation by fostering enabling environments. However, the study's focus on construction companies creates a contextual gap, as it overlooks the unique strategy implementation challenges of hardware enterprises.

3. Methodology

This study adopted an explanatory research design. The design was chosen for its ability to test cause-and-effect relationships between strategic intent, formulation, implementation, evaluation, and performance of hardware businesses. The target population comprised all 52 licensed hardware stores in Nakuru City, with managers or proprietors as the units of observation and analysis. Since the population was small ($N = 52 < 100$), a census approach was employed, ensuring that all stores were included, thereby enhancing the reliability and accuracy of the findings.

Primary data was collected using a structured questionnaire aligned with the study variables. The instrument was chosen for its effectiveness in gathering standardized data on perceptions,

practices, and performance from multiple respondents. Before the main survey, a pilot study was conducted on 5 hardware stores in Naivasha (10% of the population) to test validity and reliability. Content validity was established through expert review, while reliability was measured using Cronbach's Alpha, with a threshold of 0.7 adopted as acceptable. Data analysis involved descriptive statistics (means, frequencies, and standard deviations) and inferential statistics (Pearson's correlation and regression analysis) using SPSS. Regression analysis tested the predictive power of the independent variables on performance, with findings presented in frequency tables. Ethical considerations such as informed consent, anonymity, and confidentiality were strictly observed throughout the study.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Response Rate

The response rate was 87% because 45 of the total 52 questionnaires were returned duly filled. This response rate is considered acceptable for social science research and is above the minimum threshold of 50% suggested by Wu et al. (2022) for generalizable results. High response rate helped in making credible and reliable statements about findings of the study when non-response bias is minimized, as well as making the sampled population more representative.

4.2 Descriptive Results

4.2.1 Descriptive Results for Strategy Implementation and Performance

The objective of the study was to analyze the effect of strategy implementation on the performance of hardware business enterprises in Nakuru City. The respondents were supposed to indicate their level of agreement with statements provided concerning their strategy implementation in their enterprises. Table 1 shows the results.

Table 1: Descriptive Results for Strategy Implementation and Performance

Statement	SD	D	N	A	SA	Mean	SD
Our store has the resources needed to implement strategies	6.7%	11.1%	13.3%	51.1%	17.8%	3.61	1.11
The available resources are sufficient	6.7%	13.3%	17.8%	48.9%	13.3%	3.48	1.15
The organizational culture unifies strategy implementation	2.2%	6.7%	17.8%	64.4%	8.9%	3.71	0.89
The culture is inclusive and non-discriminatory	0.0%	0.0%	4.4%	73.3%	22.2%	4.18	0.48
We have a well-outlined organizational structure	2.2%	6.7%	4.4%	64.4%	22.2%	3.98	0.83
The structure facilitates strategy implementation	2.2%	4.4%	8.9%	66.7%	17.8%	3.93	0.81
Our store has strong and reliable systems for implementation	2.2%	8.9%	11.1%	48.9%	28.9%	3.93	1.03
Average						**3.83**	**0.90**

From the results, 68.9% of the respondents agreed that their hardware stores had the resources needed to implement strategies, while 17.8% disagreed and 13.3% were neutral. The mean score was 3.61 with a standard deviation of 1.11. The findings confirm that most businesses had the necessary inputs to support strategy execution. Access to resources was not a major barrier for the majority. Results also showed that 62.2% agreed that the available resources were sufficient, while 20% disagreed and 17.8% were neutral. The mean score was 3.48 with a standard deviation of 1.15. The results show that resource sufficiency was established in many firms. Most respondents did not report major resource gaps.

Similarly, 73.3% agreed that the organizational culture supported strategy implementation, while 8.9% disagreed and 17.8% were neutral. The mean score was 3.71 with a standard deviation of 0.89. This reflects a culture that reinforces strategic alignment and promotes internal cohesion. Most firms had a culture that directly supported the execution of strategies. In addition, 95.5% agreed that the culture was inclusive and non-discriminatory, and only 4.4% were neutral. The mean score was 4.18 with a standard deviation of 0.48. This confirms that inclusivity was strongly embedded across the participating businesses. There was a clear consensus on the presence of a non-discriminatory environment.

Furthermore, 86.6% agreed that their businesses had a well-outlined organizational structure, while 8.9% disagreed and 4.4% were neutral. The mean score was 3.98 with a standard deviation of 0.83. The data affirms the presence of clearly defined structures in most firms. Structural clarity was widely practiced. Moreover, 84.5% agreed that the structure facilitated strategy implementation, while 6.6% disagreed and 8.9% were neutral. The mean score was 3.93 with a standard deviation of 0.81. These results show that organizational design was directly supporting strategic activities. Firms were structurally prepared to implement their plans.

Additionally, 77.8% agreed that their stores had strong and reliable systems for implementation, while 11.1% disagreed and 11.1% were neutral. The mean score was 3.93 with a standard deviation of 1.03. The responses confirm that most firms had dependable systems in place to support strategy rollout. The level of system reliability was consistently high across the group. The average mean score was 3.83 with a standard deviation of 0.90. The findings confirm that most of the hardware businesses in Nakuru County had adequate capacity to implement their strategies. Their resource base, cultural foundation, structural setup, and systems were aligned with strategy execution.

4.2.2 Performance

The study further sought respondents' perspectives on the performance of their hardware businesses. Similarly, a Likert scale of 1-5 was applied. The analysis in percentages, means, and SD was as indicated in Table 2.

Table 2: Descriptive Results for Performance

Statement	SD	D	N	A	SA	Mean	SD
All departments are highly productive	2.2%	15.6%	4.4%	64.4%	13.3%	3.71	1.00
The firm is effective in ordering from suppliers	0.0%	2.2%	0.0%	57.8%	40.0%	4.38	0.55
The firm is effective in processing customer orders	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	48.9%	51.1%	4.51	0.50
The firm is efficient in-service delivery	0.0%	0.0%	2.2%	55.6%	42.2%	4.40	0.55
Order processing time is short (less than 1 hour)	0.0%	2.2%	6.7%	46.7%	44.4%	4.33	0.69
Supplies are sourced from reputable suppliers	0.0%	2.2%	0.0%	44.4%	53.3%	4.49	0.60
Products meet Kenya Bureau of Standards specifications	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	40.0%	60.0%	4.60	0.49
The firm records minimal damages, breakages, or losses	0.0%	0.0%	2.2%	60.0%	37.8%	4.36	0.56
Average						**4.35**	**0.62**

Results showed that 77.7% of the respondents agreed that all departments in their hardware businesses were highly productive, while 17.8% disagreed and 4.4% were neutral. The mean score was 3.71 with a standard deviation of 1.00. This shows that most firms experienced high productivity levels across their departments. Productivity was generally strong, though a few businesses noted inconsistencies.

Moving forward, 97.8% agreed that their firms were effective in ordering from suppliers, with only 2.2% disagreeing. The mean score was 4.38, and the standard deviation was 0.55. The findings confirm a high level of efficiency in managing supplier relationships. Firms had solid systems that ensured timely and accurate ordering.

In addition, all of the respondents agreed that their firms were effective in processing customer orders. The mean score was 4.51 with a standard deviation of 0.50. This indicates satisfaction with the order processing function. The data points to a seamless and well-structured customer service process. A similar pattern emerged in service delivery, where 97.8% of the respondent's expressed agreement and 2.2% were neutral. The mean score stood at 4.40, and the standard deviation was 0.55. This shows that hardware businesses delivered services efficiently. Delays and service-related issues were minimal.

Also, 91.1% agreed that customer orders were processed in less than one hour, while 6.7% were neutral and 2.2% disagreed. The mean score was 4.33, and the standard deviation was 0.69. These figures indicate a fast turnaround time in fulfilling customer needs. Order processing was both quick and reliable. Furthermore, 97.7% agreed that supplies were sourced from reputable suppliers, while 2.2% disagreed. The mean score was 4.49 with a standard

deviation of 0.60. This suggests that firms maintained high standards in supplier selection. Product credibility and supplier reliability were strong.

Similarly, all of the respondents agreed that their products met Kenya Bureau of Standards specifications. The mean score was 4.60, and the standard deviation was 0.49. These results confirm that quality compliance was fully achieved. There were no reported cases of substandard products. Lastly, 97.8% agreed that their firms recorded minimal damages, breakages, or losses, while 2.2% were neutral. The mean score was 4.36, and the standard deviation was 0.56. This shows strong control over inventory and handling processes. The majority of businesses minimized waste and physical loss effectively. The average mean score was 4.35, demonstrating that most of the hardware businesses in Nakuru City performed well. However, the variation of the response, as shown by an SD of 0.62, implies that there were some firms that were experiencing poor performance. They could benefit from the recommendations of this study.

4.3 Correlation Analysis

Pearson's correlation coefficient (r) ranges from -1 to +1. A positive value indicates a direct relationship, while a negative value implies an inverse relationship. A value closer to ±1 signifies a stronger correlation. The significance level (p-value) was tested at a 0.05 confidence level. Table 3 shows the correlation results for the variables involved in this research.

Table 3: Correlation Analysis

		Performance	Strategy Implementation
Performance	Pearson Correlation	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)		
Strategy Implementation	Pearson Correlation	.869**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	

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

The relationship between strategy implementation and performance was the strongest among all variables, showing a very strong, positive, and significant association ($r = 0.869$, $p = 0.000 < 0.05$). This indicates that businesses that successfully implement their strategies tend to perform better. The result confirms the findings of Zaidi et al. (2019), who concluded that the success of strategic management largely depends on implementation efficiency.

4.4 Regression Analysis

A linear regression was done to find out the effect of strategy implementation on the performance of the business. The regression model attempted to measure the relationship on the part of the performance variation that would be explained by strategy implementation.

Table 4: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.869	0.755	0.749	0.432

a. Predictors: (Constant), Implementation

b. Dependent Variable: Performance

As shown in Table 4, the R value of the model was 0.869, indicating a strong correlation between strategy implementation and the performance of hardware businesses. The coefficient of determination (R^2) was 0.755, suggesting that 75.5% of the variation in performance can be explained by the effect of strategy implementation. This reflects a high explanatory power, confirming the central role of strategy implementation in influencing firm performance. The adjusted R^2 was 0.749, affirming the model's stability after accounting for the number of predictors.

Table 5: ANOVA

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	28.605	1	28.605	153.29	0.000
Residual	9.315	43	0.217		
Total	37.920	44			

a. Dependent Variable: Performance

b. Predictors: (Constant), Implementation

The ANOVA results in Table 5 shows that the regression model used to examine the relationship between strategy implementation and performance of hardware businesses is statistically valid. The computed F-value of 153.29 is significantly greater than the critical value at the 5% significance level, confirming that the model is effective in explaining variations in performance. The p-value of 0.000 is well below the 0.05 threshold, further validating the significance of the model. These results suggest that strategy implementation has a statistically meaningful influence on performance.

Table 6: Regression coefficients for Supplier Diversification and Performance

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients	Standardized Coefficients		t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	1.225	0.221		5.545	0.004
Strategy Implementation	0.752	0.061	0.869	12.382	0.000

a Dependent Variable: performance

The regression coefficients presented in Table 6 provide a detailed examination of how strategy implementation influences the performance of hardware businesses in Nakuru County. The constant value of 1.225 ($p = 0.004$) represents the baseline level of performance when strategy implementation is not applied.

Strategy implementation had the highest coefficient at 0.752 with a p-value of 0.000 ($\beta = 0.752$, $p = 0.000$), making it the strongest predictor in the model. This indicates that businesses that effectively translate plans into action, assign responsibilities clearly, and monitor progress consistently are more likely to achieve better performance outcomes. This finding is consistent with Abdullahi (2022), who emphasized that implementation quality directly determines whether strategic goals are realized.

The regression model output was formulated as:

Performance = 1.225+ 0.752 (strategy implementation) + ε

4.5 Discussion of Findings

The findings show that strategy implementation had a positive and most significant influence on the performance of hardware businesses in Nakuru City. Most firms reported adequate resources, supportive cultures, clear structures, and reliable systems, all of which contribute directly to the successful execution of strategic plans. This confirms that businesses with well-established implementation capacity experience better coordination, operational consistency, and results. The findings align with Kamande and Gakobo (2025), who observed that strategy implementation is the most decisive phase in achieving intended outcomes. They also agree with Attah et al. (2024), who emphasized that without effective implementation, even the best-formulated strategies fail to deliver performance. In addition, the results are supported by Zaidi et al. (2021), who noted that the alignment of organizational structure, systems, and culture with strategy significantly enhances execution effectiveness. Strategy implementation, therefore, stands out as a critical pillar of performance, connecting plans to measurable results in practical business environments.

5. Conclusion

It was concluded that firms with adequate resources, inclusive cultures, and clear structures are better equipped to implement strategies effectively. Additionally, it was concluded that reliable systems play a key role in supporting consistent execution across all levels of the business. The study concluded that implementation transforms strategic plans into visible outcomes, making it essential for performance success. It was further concluded that strong internal alignment between people, processes, and structures enhances the speed and quality of execution. The study also concluded that firms with well-coordinated implementation mechanisms experience improved efficiency and goal achievement. Moreover, it was concluded that the ability to execute a strategy with discipline and consistency strengthens competitiveness and adaptability.

6. Recommendations

It is recommended that managers of hardware businesses in Nakuru City place greater emphasis on strengthening strategy implementation, as it was found to have the strongest effect on performance. Businesses should institutionalize clear action plans linked to measurable goals, ensure consistent documentation of implementation processes, and enhance communication across operational levels to promote shared understanding of strategic objectives. In addition, management should invest in staff training and capacity building to improve execution, while aligning resources, systems, and structures to support the smooth translation of strategies into day-to-day operations. Hardware businesses can improve their efficiency, competitiveness, and overall performance by standardizing implementation procedures and incorporating regular review systems.

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