

**ASSESSMENT OF STRATEGIC PLAN IMPLEMENTATION AND ITS CHALLENGES:  
CASE OF WOLKITE UNIVERSITY**



**WOLKITE UNIVERSITY  
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#### Abstract

This study assesses the implementation of the strategic plan and identifies the challenges faced by Wolkite University in achieving its strategic objectives. Strategic planning is vital for higher education institutions to align their goals with national priorities, enhance performance, and ensure long-term sustainability. Using a mixed-methods approach, the research collected data from key stakeholders, including university administrators, academic staff, and planning experts, through surveys, interviews, and document analysis. The findings indicate that while Wolkite University has made commendable efforts in initiating strategic planning processes, the implementation phase faces several critical challenges. These include inadequate resource allocation, limited stakeholder engagement, weak monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, and institutional capacity constraints. The study concludes by recommending strategies to strengthen implementation, including improved leadership commitment, enhanced training, and development of robust evaluation frameworks. These findings contribute to the broader understanding of strategic planning effectiveness in public universities within developing contexts.

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of the Study

As per Hitt, Ireland, and Hoskisson (2007), strategy represents a cohesive and synchronized collection of promises and activities aimed at leveraging core strengths to achieve a competitive edge. Presently, strategic planning stands as the foremost blueprint for ensuring the enduring progress of any institution. Effective strategic planning and execution are crucial for a company's longevity, as numerous organizations now rely on strategy as a roadmap for accomplishing their corporate objectives successfully.

However, the challenge of putting strategy into action and implementing it across an organization is even more daunting. Denise Lindse Wells (2000) emphasizes that for effective strategy implementation, companies must address key execution issues such as the creation of lower-level plans, establishing oversight and accountability for implementation actions, aligning current processes with the strategic plan, reevaluating or eliminating processes that don't align, integrating the plan with the budget process, and defining metrics for measuring and evaluating progress. By addressing these critical questions, managers and implementers can better understand their roles in successfully enacting strategies.

Strategic management, as defined by Fred R. David (2011), involves the formulation, implementation, and evaluation of strategies to achieve corporate objectives. Another perspective, presented by Pearce and Robinson (2011), describes strategic management as a set of decisions and actions aimed at developing and implementing plans to achieve a company's goals.

In today's globalized world, where technology, economics, politics, and other environmental factors are evolving rapidly, the awareness and expectations of the public, particularly in developing countries like Ethiopia, are changing continuously, including in the realm of insurance services. Consequently, institutions such as insurance companies are compelled to formulate and implement strategic planning processes to maintain a competitive edge within the industry. Implementing strategies is paramount for leveraging both internal and external environments, analyzing operational frameworks, and efficiently utilizing scarce resources to achieve organizational objectives. Particularly for higher education institutions like universities,

having a well-defined strategy is essential for securing a leading position within their respective industries.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

The implementation of a strategy stands as a crucial element within the strategic management process. Across all organizational types, effectively executing a strategic plan demands optimal resource integration and unwavering commitment to achieve the intended outcomes. While successful strategy development does not inherently ensure successful strategy execution, it is notably more challenging to carry out a strategy (implementation) than it is to devise it (formulation). Although closely intertwined, strategy implementation fundamentally differs from strategy formulation (David, 2011).

Planning necessitates that managers take a proactive stance and initiate actions. They have the flexibility to adjust what, when, where, how, and to what extent they operate based on their set objectives. Planning enables managers to thoroughly assess the current state of the organization and the operational environment. Additionally, Forojalla (1993) highlighted that the primary task in educational planning lies in identifying existing deficiencies and the need for change. Educational planning plays a pivotal role in the policy formulation process by pinpointing critical areas and presenting various policy options to address issues. A well-crafted strategic plan is indispensable and serves as a prerequisite for enhancing performance across all facets of the education sector, encompassing accessibility, quality, and efficiency.

The implementation of strategic plan is key success of an organization in terms of its mission, goals and objectives. Therefore it is essential for the organization put in place mechanism to ensure that Strategic plans are in place and followed to guide daily actions. Strategic planning provides the big picture of where an institution is, where it is going and how it is get there. The point of Strategic plan implementation is to improve the institution by outlining the direction of an institution should take, identifying challenges and opportunities on the institution and deciding on the priorities for action.

A study by Ngware, Odebero and Wamukuru(2006) has shown that even the instructions with Strategic plans rarely implement them. Strategic planning is applied at the institutional level and one of its purposes is to adjust the organization to its environment. This is more successful if it is assumed that the institution already has a considerable measure of autonomy to manage its own affairs to determine both the ends and the means (Farrant and Lioudmilla,

2006). Given the importance of strategic implementation towards the realization of organizational education goals against challenges affecting their formulation and effective implementation, there is need for immediate attention to provide comprehensive and long-term solution.

Capacity in educational planning including budget planning :monitoring and evaluation is limited at all levels, but particularly at the woreda levels where the main responsibilities for general education planning as a basis for determining the optimal balance of inputs to best achieve results within a resource constrained environment. More specifically, the Educational report review(2012) found a lack of resource constrained planning uncoordinated response to resource constraints at all levels, and limited understanding of the linkages between inputs , outputs and outcomes which would better inform choices regarding prioritization and trade - offs( MoE,2008).

The researcher may have been persuaded by various factors to conduct his study “assessment of strategic plan implementation and its challenges in Wolkite University”. One of these factors is there is no research has been carried out in Wolkite University on strategic plan implementation and its challenges therefore, sought to investigate fill the gap on strategic plan implementation and its challenges.

### **1.3 Research Questions**

- ✓ What policies are used to implement the corporate strategy?
- ✓ How does the stakeholder participate in corporate strategy implementation?
- ✓ What are the major challenges during corporate strategy implementation?

### **1.4 GENERAL OBJECTIVE**

The general objective of this was assessment of strategic plan implementation and its challenges in case of Wolkite University

#### **1.4.1 Specific Objective**

- ❖ To assess the policies for implementation of the strategy.
- ❖ To identify the participated stakeholder during strategic implementation.
- ❖ To assess the major challenges during implementation.

### **1.5 Significance of the Study**

The research findings will significant to Wolkite University, in addressing the challenges in the implementation of strategic plan. It also will help to create awareness about challenges in the implementation of strategic plan.

Moreover, the research may also provide information for different stakeholder of that Wolkite University participant of strategic plan and those implementers and different organizational affairs on the existing practice of strategic plan implementation.

The study also will adds to the body of knowledge on strategic planning and provokes research in this area by proposing future studies related to strategic planning in the institutional situation.

## **1.6 Scope of the Study**

This study is limited to geographical and thematically. Accordingly this paper was only study strategic implementation at strategic plan implementation and its challenges all and the study was tried to focus on strategy implementation issues and related practice and challenges in the study area.

# CHAPTER TWO LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Borg (1987), the literature in any field forms the foundation upon which all future work will be built. If we fail to build the foundation of knowledge provided by the review of literature our work is likely to be shallow and naive and will often duplicate work that has already been done better by someone. This section will review research works and written articles on the review of the over view of strategy, strategic management process, success of strategy implementation and faller of strategy implementation.

## 2.1 Over View of Strategy

Today Strategy is a road map for competitive advantage of the company with in the industry. As a result firms choose one or more strategy to achieve their mission and vision which means to use competitive advantage and to gain above average return. Different scholars also define strategy in different ways among them, Hitt et al., (2007) define that strategy is an integrated and coordinated set of commitments and actions designed to exploit core competencies and gain a competitive advantage. Linda Parker Gates, (2010) Said Strategy is a derived approach to achieving the mission, goal, and objectives of an organization. Glueck W., (1980) Strategy is a set of objectives, policies, and plans that, taken together, define the scope of the enterprise and its approach to survival and success.

Client buy only what they need or want rather than what the company produce. To fulfil the client need or want producers have to launch good strategic plan. In 2008 most USA firms were struggling, but McDonald increased its revenues from \$ 22.7 billion in 2007 to \$23.5 billion in

2008. The net income also increased from \$ 2.4 billion to \$4.3 billion. The reason behind these successes is McDonald has well planned strategy, Jim Skinner, CEO of McDonald"s says "We do so well because our strategies have been so well planned out." So well planned strategy is the best solution for making profit and competitive advantage of the firm, (Hitt et al., 2007).

## **2.2 Strategy Management**

Strategic management is the process of formulating, implementing and evaluation of strategy to achieve the company objectives. David, (2011) define Strategy Management is the art and science of formulating, implementing, and evaluating cross-functional decisions that enable an organization to achieve its objectives. Hitt et al., (2007) also define Strategy Management is a rational approach firms use to achieve strategic competitiveness and earn above-average returns.

According to Hitt et al., (2007) there are four Strategy Management Process

1. Environmental scanning
2. Strategy Formulation
3. Strategy implementation
4. Strategy evaluation and Control

### **2.2.1 ENVIRONMENTAL SCANNING**

Organizations that have long term objectives should be formulate a strategy to achieve the objectives. In order to launch the strategy organization must determine external opportunities and threats and internal strengths and weaknesses.

David, (2011) suggested External opportunities and external threats refer to economic, social, cultural, demographic, environmental, political, legal, governmental, technological, and competitive trends and events that could significantly benefit or harm an organization in the future. Opportunities and threats are largely beyond the control of a single organization. Global economic recession, a few opportunities and threats that face many firms are listed here:

- Availability of capital can no longer be taken for granted.
- Consumers expect green operations and products.
- Marketing has moving rapidly to the Internet.

- Consumers must see value in all that they consume.
- Global markets offer the highest growth in revenues.

David, (2011) internal strengths and weaknesses are an organization's controllable activities that are performed especially well or poorly. They arise in the management, marketing, finance/accounting, production/operations, research and development, and management information systems activities of a business. Identifying and evaluating organizational strengths and weaknesses in the functional areas of a business is an essential strategic management activity. Organizations strive to pursue strategies that capitalize on internal strengths and eliminate internal weaknesses.

Strengths and weaknesses are determined relative to competitors. Relative deficiency or superiority is important information (David, 2011). Also, strengths and weaknesses can be determined by elements of being rather than performance. For example, a strength may involve ownership of natural resources or a historic reputation for quality (Ibid). Strengths and weaknesses may be determined relative to a firm's own objectives. For example, high levels of inventory turnover may not be strength to a firm that seeks never to stock-out. Internal factors can be determined in a number of ways, including computing ratios, measuring performance, and comparing to past periods and industry averages (Ibid). Various types of surveys also can be developed and administered to examine internal factors such as employee morale, production efficiency, advertising effectiveness, and customer loyalty (Ibid).

## **2.3 STRATEGY FORMULATION**

David, (2011) Strategy formulation is deciding what new businesses to enter, what businesses to abandon, how to allocate resources, whether to expand operations or diversify, whether to enter international markets, whether to merge or form a joint venture, and how to avoid a hostile takeover. As Allio notes, good implementation naturally starts with good strategic input: the soup is only as good as the ingredients (Allio, 2005). Because no organization has unlimited resources, strategists must decide which alternative strategies will benefit the firm most. Strategy-formulation decisions commit an organization to specific products, markets, resources,

and technologies over an extended period of time. Strategies determine long-term competitive advantages. For better or worse, strategic decisions have major multifunctional consequences and enduring effects on an organization. Top managers have the best perspective to understand fully the consequences of strategy-formulation decisions; they have the authority to commit the resources necessary for implementation (Ibid).

## **2.4 STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION**

Strategy Implementation defined by different researchers as follows:-

“The sum total of the activities and choices required for the execution of a strategic plan”. (Wheelen and Hunger, 2012)

“Designing appropriate organizational structures and control systems to put the organization’s chosen strategy into action”. (Hill et al., 2007)

David, (2011). Strategy implementation requires a firm to establish annual objectives, develop policies, motivate employees, and allocate resources so that formulated strategies can be executed. Strategy implementation includes preparing program, preparing budgets, preparing procedures, developing a strategy-supportive culture, creating an effective organizational structure, redirecting marketing efforts, developing and utilizing information systems, and linking employee compensation to organizational performance. Strategy implementation often is called the “action stage” of strategic management (Ibid).

David, (2011) Implementing strategy means mobilizing employees and managers to put formulated strategies into action. Often considered to be the most difficult stage in strategic management, strategy implementation requires personal discipline, commitment, and sacrifice. Successful strategy implementation hinges upon managers’ ability to motivate employees. Different researchers identified the problems behind that are misunderstanding of the strategy, poorly documented strategy, lack of commitment to the strategy, lack of communication, insufficient time allocation for strategy implementation, unaligned organizational systems and resources, poor coordination and sharing of responsibility, poor reward system, lack of strategic implementation skill, and other uncontrollable environmental variables (Beer and Eisenstat, 2000).

Strategy-implementation activities affect all employees and managers in an organization.

David, (2011) every division and department must decide on answers to questions, such as “What must we do to implement our part of the organization’s strategy?” and “How best can we get the job done?” The challenge of implementation is to stimulate managers and employees throughout an organization to work with pride and enthusiasm toward achieving stated objectives. During implementation there are three questions should be consider:-

## **2.5 Who Implement The Strategy?**

In order to implement the strategy all employee found within the organization have to implement. These staff included of top management, middle management, lower management and non-management. Effectiveness of strategy implementation is, at least in part, affected by the quality of people involved in the process (Govindarajan, 1989). Here, quality refers to skills, attitudes, capabilities, experiences and other characteristics of people required by a specific task or position. Viseras, Baines, and Sweeney (2005) findings indicate that strategy implementation success depends crucially on the human or people side of project management, and less on organization and systems related factors. Regarding the “who” of strategy implementation, we will now review the individual groups of strategy executors at different hierarchical levels.

### **Top Management**

Top management refers to senior-level leaders including presidents, owners, and other high ranking executives (CEO) and senior-level managers. Several researchers have emphasized the effect of top management on strategy implementation. Most of them point out the important figurehead role of top management in the process of strategy implementation. Hrebiniak and Snow (2006) find that the process of interaction and participation among the top management team typically leads to greater commitment to the firm’s goals and strategies. Smith and Kofron (1996) believe that top managers play a critical role in the implementation not just the formulation of strategy.

### ***Middle Management***

Guth and MacMillan (1986) find that the level of effort that an individual manager will apply to the implementation of a particular strategy depends on his perception of his and the organization's potential to perform, and his perception of the likelihood that successful performance will lead to an outcome that he desires. Managers who believe their self-interest is being compromised can redirect a strategy, delay its implementation, reduce the quality of its implementation, or sabotage. Passive intervention can take the form of giving a strategy a low priority or taking too much time implementing strategic decisions, both of which can result in unnecessary delays and inhibit the implementation effort.

Heracleous (2000) also finds that if middle management do not think the strategy is the right one, or do not feel that they have the requisite skills to implement it, then they are likely to sabotage its implementation. He refers to groups within the organization who will inevitably disagree with the strategy. These groups may sabotage strategy implementation by deliberate actions or inactions, if implementing the strategy may reduce their power and influence.

### ***Lower Management and Non-Management***

Alexander (1985) suggests that there are many problems which over half of the corporations experienced frequently, such as the involved employees have insufficient capabilities to perform their jobs, lower-level employees are inadequately trained, and departmental managers provide inadequate leadership and direction. These three are the most frequent strategy implementation problems in relation to human resource. Strategic decisions are nevertheless formulated by senior-level managers of the firm and then administratively imposed on lower-level management and non-management employees with little consideration of the resulting functional-level perceptions (Nutt, 1987). If lower-level management and non-management personnel are not aware of the same information, or if information must pass through several (management) layers in the organization, consensus regarding that information may never come about. Thus, the lack of shared knowledge with lower-level management and non-management employees creates a barrier to successful strategy implementation (Noble, 1999b).

### ***Communication***

The research in the relationship between communication and strategy implementation indicated that based on interviews with 21 presidents and 25 governmental agency heads, Alexander(1985) points out that communication is mentioned more frequently than any other single item promoting successful strategy implementation. The content of such communications includes clearly explaining what new responsibilities, tasks, and duties need to be performed by the affected employees. It also includes the why behind changed job activities, and more fundamentally the reasons why the new strategic decision was made firstly

## **2.6 What Must Be Done?**

To implement the strategy first develop the program, develop budget and develop procedures. Program and procedure development is a statement of the activities or steps needed to accomplish a single plan or to make a strategy action-oriented. Nutt (1986) identified four types of implementation tactics used by managers in making planned changes by profiling 91 case studies: *intervention, participation, persuasion, and edict*. Nutt (1987) explains the four tactics as follows: Intervention refers to strategy adjustments during the implementation stage by introducing new norms and practices. Participation consists of articulating strategic goals and nominating a task force that develops and proposes corresponding implementation options. Persuasion consists of the tactic of using the involved parties to convince employees about the decided course of actions.

Akan, Allen, Helms and Spralls III (2006) discuss four generic strategies (differentiation strategies, cost leadership strategy, focus/cost strategy, focus/ differentiation strategy) and their respective key practices. A number of tactics are necessary to follow a given generic strategy:

- For a differentiation strategy, the tactics include: innovation in marketing technology and methods, fostering innovation and creativity and a focus on building high market share.
- The tactic that proved to be most critical for a cost leadership strategy is the minimization of distribution costs.
- Four tactics appear to be critical for organizations attempting a focus/low cost strategy: providing outstanding customer service; improving operational efficiency; controlling the quality of products or services; extensive training of front-line personnel.

- Focus/differentiation's tactics include: producing specialty products and services and producing products or services for high price market segments.

The other one is development of budget is a statement of a corporation's program in brief terms. It is the last real check a corporation has on the feasibility of its selected strategy. During budget preparation, trade-offs and prioritization among programs must be made to ensure that the budget fits corporate strategy.

To adopt evidence-based practices, the implementation process must also address the organizational supports which are necessary to initiate and sustain the practices with fidelity (Barbara Smith, Joicey Hurth, Lynda Pletcher, Evelyn Shaw, Kathy Whaley, Mary Peters and Glen Dunlap, 2014). So procedure is a system of sequential steps or techniques that describe how a particular task or job is to be done.

According to Barbara Smith et al., (2014) there are five stages that described the step of implementation strategy which include:

- 1) Exploration, the goals of the exploration stage are to identify the need for change, determine what innovation or set of practices are likely to meet that need, and to decide whether or not to move ahead with the implementation process.
- 2) Installation, the goal of the installation stage is to build system capacity which will support the implementation of the new practices at selected sites.
- 3) Initial implementation, the goal of initial implementation is to put the new practices in place at selected implementation sites.
- 4) Full implementation, the goals of full implementation are to assure practices are used with high fidelity, and are achieving expected outcomes at all initial sites
- and 5) expansion and scale-up, the goal of expansion or scale-up is to increase the number of sites using the practices with fidelity. During Expansion/scale-up the State Leadership Team plans and provides an expanded infrastructure. This could include providing appropriate policy and funding; increasing numbers of trainers and coaches; and expanding data systems to support the increased number of new sites.

## 2.7 How is Strategy to be implemented?

Before plans can lead to actual performance strategy implementer insure that the corporation is appropriately organized, programs are adequately staffed and activities are being directed toward the achievement of desired objectives.

Staffing is the selection and utilization of employees. David, 2011 the job of human resource manager is changing rapidly as companies continue to downsize and reorganize. Strategic responsibilities of the human resource manager include assessing the staffing needs and costs for alternative strategies proposed during strategy formulation and developing a staffing plan for effectively implementing strategies. The human resource department must develop performance incentives that clearly link performance and pay to strategies. The process of empowering managers and employees through their involvement in strategic-management activities yields the greatest benefits when all organizational members understand clearly how they will benefit personally if the firm does well. Linking company and personal benefits is a major new strategic responsibility of human resource manager"s (Ibid).

Strategy implementation poses a threat to many managers and employees in an organization. New power and status relationships are anticipated and realized. David, 2011 new formal and informal groups" values, beliefs, and priorities may be largely unknown. Managers and employees may become engaged in resistance behavior as their roles, prerogatives, and power in the firm change. Disruption of social and political structures that accompany strategy execution must be anticipated and considered during strategy formulation and managed during strategy implementation.

Other things when considering the strategy implementation is Organizational Structure .A proper strategy-structure alignment as a necessary precursor to the successful implementation of new business strategies (Noble, 1999b). They point out that changes in the competitive environment require adjustments to the organizational structure. If a firm lags in making this realignment, is may exhibit poor performance and be at a serious competitive disadvantage.

Different strategy types have different requirements regarding an adequate organizational structure (e.g., White, 1986; Olson & Slater & Hult, 2005). White (1986) points out that the fit between business unit strategy and the internal organization of multi-business companies does have an effect on business unit performance. Specifically, business units with pure cost strategies experience higher ROI when they have low autonomy. Pure differentiation strategies benefit, in terms of sales growth, from strong functional coordination (with responsibility for key functions unified under the business unit manager). Similarly, the ROI of cost strategies is, on average, higher when some functional responsibilities are shared. Olson, Slater and Hult (2005) identify a taxonomy comprised of four different combinations of structure/behavior types, which they label as: management dominant, customer-centric innovators, customer-centric cost controllers and middle ground. These alternative structure/behavior types are then matched with specific business strategies (i.e., Prospectors, Analyzers, Low Cost Defenders, Differentiated Defenders) in order to identify which combination (s) of structures and behaviors best serve to facilitate the process of implementing a specific strategy.

To implement a strategy properly good leadership is must. Yang Li<sup>1</sup>, Sun Guohui<sup>1</sup>, Martin J. Eppler<sup>2</sup> (2008) suggested that there are three key administrative mechanisms that firms can use to cope with uncertainty in this context: design of organizational structure (*decentralization*), design of control systems (*budget evaluative style*) and selection of managers (*locus of control*). Govindarajan (1988) identified the following constellations: High managerial internal locus of control and low emphasis on meeting a budget are associated with high performance in SBUs employing a strategy of differentiation. Bivariate results did not provide support for the interaction between SBU strategy, decentralization, and effectiveness.

On the basis of above research, Govindarajan and Fisher (1990) believe that executive leadership characteristics, structural variables, and control systems contribute differentially to the effectiveness of SBUs practicing differentiation and low-cost strategies. The specific findings can be summarized as follows: (1) Strategic Business Units practicing a low-cost strategy tend to have a high level of resource sharing. (2) Output control combined with high resource sharing is associated with increased effectiveness for low-cost SBUs. (3) No conclusions can be drawn about the optimal control system for low-cost SBUs with low levels of resource sharing, since very few SBUs studied here had that combination. (4) SBUs practicing a differentiation strategy in general have lower levels of resource sharing than low-cost SBUs. (5) Differentiation SBUs

have a wider range of levels of resource sharing than low cost SBUs. (6) Behavior control is associated with increased effectiveness for differentiation SBUs with high resource sharing. (7) Output control is associated with increased effectiveness for differentiation SBUs with low resource sharing. (8) The highest effectiveness for differentiation SBUs occurs when behavior control is used in combination with high resource sharing (Govindnarajan& Fisher, 1990).

Roth, Schweiger& Morrison (1991) have different explanations regarding the content of administrative systems. Their study suggests that business units utilize three administrative mechanisms – formalization, integrating mechanisms, and centralization – to create operational capabilities of configuration, coordination, and managerial philosophy – to support the international strategy choice.

## **2.8 STRATEGY EVALUATION**

Strategy evaluation is the final stage in strategic management process. Managers desperately need to know when particular strategies are not working well; strategy evaluation is the primary means for obtaining this information. According to David, (2011) all strategies are subject to future modification because external and internal factors are constantly changing. Fred R. David, (2011) stated three fundamental strategy-evaluation activities (1) reviewing external and internal factors that are the bases for current strategies, (2) measuring performance, and (3) taking corrective actions. Strategy evaluation is needed because success today is no guarantee of success tomorrow (Ibid).

Glueck W., (1980) suggested that business strategy will fit the following four criteria: (1) *Consistency*: The strategy must not present mutually inconsistent goals and policies. (2) *Consonance*: The strategy must represent an adaptive response to the external environment and to the critical changes occurring within it. (3) *Advantage*: The strategy must provide for the creation and/or maintenance of a competitive advantage in the selected area of activity. (4) *Feasibility*: The strategy must neither overtax available resources nor create unsolvable sub problems. A strategy that fails to meet one or more of these criteria is strongly suspect.

## 2.9 Successful Strategy Implementation

Successful strategy implementation is a key for any organization's survival. Many organizations could not sustain their competitive advantages, even though having a strong strategy formulation process, because they lack the processes in implementing the strategies. Cater and Pucko (2010) concluded that while 80% of firms have the right strategies, only 14% have managed to implement them well. Strategy formulation is the difficult process, strategy implementation is the more difficult one. Strategy formulation is usually assignment of CEO and top management, but its implementation is the responsibility of all staff. Hence, the role of top management is vital in preparing a workable strategy and communicating it clearly so that middle and lower level staff can easily implement it. James Rajasekar, (2014). Strategy formulation is basically entrepreneurial in nature and requires a great deal of analysis, judgment, and innovation. However, implementation requires administrative and managerial talent and an ability to foresee obstacles that might arise in strategy implementation.

Some of the research results prove, it is a factor leading to a reduction in risk accompanying the strategy realization. It results not only in a change in perspective and perception of organizing the strategy implementation process, but also indicates the need for an integration of its aspect Joanna Radomska, (2015). Joanna described in Figure 1

## **2.10 Faller of Strategy Implementation**

The real reason that strategies fail are varied, John Sterling, (2003) stated some variable which affects the success of the strategies implementation.

### **Unanticipated market changes**

Strategies often fail because the market conditions they were intended to exploit change before the strategy takes hold. Products life cycles are shorter, disruptive technologies emerge with greater frequency, and financial markets can be changeable. And, many markets are experiencing rapid, discontinuous change.

### **Lack of senior management (CEO) support**

The notion that strategy often fails due to a lack of senior management support gains credibility for a number of reasons:

First, many ideas (some good, some bad) that are recommended to senior management are not integrated into an organization's strategy. Second, some strategic initiatives – particularly in information technology – are embraced when initially proposed (sometimes enthusiastically). However, once the true costs of those initiatives are fully understood – in time, capital, and other resources – the support for the initiative evaporates. Finally, senior management often does – and probably should – pull back from strategies for a variety of reasons (e.g. competitor response, changing market conditions, disruptive technologies, etc.). However, while the original strategy may have been announced with great fanfare, the pullback may not be communicated at all. Thus, it appears that the strategy lacks senior management support. For these and other reasons, middle management often reaches the conclusion, senior management did not support the

Strategy – this despite the fact that senior management was responsible for the conception, communication, and support of that vision and strategy.

### **Application of insufficient resources**

Some strategies fail because not enough resources were allocated to successfully implement them. Lack of resources is generally a bigger threat to capital intensive strategies. However, the problem can emerge just as readily in a middle market company or a service company that is simply short of people and time.

### **Failures of buy-in, understanding, and/or communication**

Some strategies fail because there is insufficient buy-in to or understanding of the strategy among those who need to implement it.

### **Timeliness and distinctiveness**

Some strategies fail because someone beats the company to market with a similar idea or strategy. Similarly, some strategies fail because they leave the company undistinguished in the market (i.e. others are pursuing the same strategy and/or market position).

### **Lack of focus**

A corollary to the need for timeliness and distinctiveness is the need for strategic focus. Some companies try to be all things to all people. As a result, they lack distinctiveness, but importantly, they also lack focus. As a result, resources are dissipated and priorities are never clearly articulated. With little sense of prioritization, employees are a bit like carnival plate spinners – always frantically working to keep things from collapsing, but never really making progress.

### **Bad strategy – poorly conceived business models**

Sometimes strategies fail because they are simply ill conceived. Returning once more to the telecommunications start-ups – some of their business models were flawed because of a misunderstanding of how demand would be met in the market. That is, their strategies did not include some means of connecting customers at the local level

## **Checklist for successful implementation**

Our experience and the experiences of CEOs interviewed for this column have highlighted a number of approaches that can greatly enhance the effectiveness of strategy implementation – as well as improving the likelihood of success of the underlying strategy.

### **Align organizational design and capabilities with the strategy**

A critical step – often overlooked – is ensuring that organizational capabilities align with the strategy.

### **Consider potential competitor reactions to the strategy**

Your strategy development process should directly consider potential competitor reactions to a strategy and how your company will respond in turn. Likewise, your company should maintain a basic competitive intelligence capability as a matter of day-to-day strategic management.

### **Involve managers in the strategy development process**

Involving people directly in the strategy development process has paid off for a number of the CEOs we interviewed.

### **Consistent and persistent communication**

Because so many strategies fail for a lack of buy-in, understanding, or poor communication, ensure that resources are dedicated to continuing, persistent communication.

### **Action planning and budgeting**

Action planning and budgeting are among the oldest management tools and yet they remain effective for ensuring that implementation occurs and that tactics align with strategy. Plan the initiatives you will undertake and budget for implementation and capability development.

### **Monitoring and accountability**

Effective implementation requires continual monitoring – of progress in implementing the plan, of the competitive environment, of customers’ satisfaction, and of the financial returns generated by the strategy. And, monitoring is meaningless if it is not accompanied by accountability – and change when change is warranted.

### **Alignment of information resources with the strategy**

Finally, aligning information technology with strategy is a critical process. This includes applications of information technology as varied as enterprise systems, customer relationship management, Web-based technologies, and manufacturing technologies. Aligning information technology is a double-edged sword – companies often cannot execute strategies in the new millennium without technology and they should not implement new technology without a strategy behind it.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

This section was discussing the research methodology which may be applied in the study. It consists: the research design, source of data, methods of data collections, sampling techniques, and data analysis techniques.

#### **3.1 Research Design**

In this study the researcher was applied descriptive research methods. The research used descriptive research design to get consistent data and to obtained general picture about the topic. In addition, mixed those research methodologies was helped the researcher to made triangulated analysis of the findings.

#### **3.2 Sources of Data**

This study was used both primary and secondary sources of data. First-hand information about the strategic plan implementation issues was collected through primary sources. The use of these sources supported the researcher to produce accurate data, and to gather first-hand information which could lead the researcher to made valid investigation. The primary source of data was collected through observation, interview and survey methods as discuss below. Secondary source of data was review university strategic plan documents, annual reports, books, journals and magazine will be searched to make the finding.

#### **3.3 Data Collection Methods**

The study was employed various types of data collection methods such as experience observation, in depth interview and survey as discussed below in detail.

#### **3.4 Target population and Sampling size**

The target population of the study was included academic staff of Wolkite University. According to human resource director of Wolkite University the total academic staffs currently working are 850. The researcher used the Yamane sampling method to determine the appropriate sample size from the respondent is:

$$\begin{aligned}n &= N / (1 + N(e)^2) \\n &= 850 / (1 + 850(0.05)^2) \\n &= 850 / (1 + 850(0.05)^2) \\n &= 850 / 3.125 \\n &= 272\end{aligned}$$

Where n=sample size

$N =$  Total population

$e =$  standard error (5%)

$n=272$  by using this formula the research was identify 272 sample among the employees of the university.

### **3.4 Sampling Techniques**

For the accessible primary data source the researcher was used simple random sampling to gather data from the all respondents.

### **3.5 Data Analysis Method**

After the data is was collected, it is carefully edited, arranged, coded and tabulated depending on the type of question. Then it was analyzed using both descriptive and analytical tools like frequency and percentage. The study was used data presentation tools such as tables and percentages.

# CHAPTER FOUR

## 4 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter deals with the analysis and interpretation of the primary and secondary data collected in Wolkite University. Respondents were mainly few management staff, branch managers, service manager, senior staff and officers. Data collection instrument was questionnaire and interview corporate strategy module for secondary data. Descriptive statistics such as frequency tables, charts, and percentages. The chapter is divided into four sections. First, Demographic characteristics of the respondents. Second, Strategy Polices for Implementation. Third, Strategy Implementation Process. Fourth, Capability of Organization in Implementation of Strategy. Finally, Strategy Implementation Challenges.

### 4.1 Demographic characteristics of the respondents

All the data were examined for missing and outlier, as a result out of the 272 surveys, 250 were found valid and used in the study. The valid response rate is 92% and 22 responses (which are 8%) were canceled from the study because they were not completed and/or shows certain unrealistic systematic response patterns.

**Table 4.1 Demographics of respondents**

Characteristics	Classification	Frequency	Percentage
Age	Below30	90	36
	31-40	90	36
	Above 41	70	28
Gender	Female	80	32
	Male	170	68
Work xperience	1-5	64	25
	5-10	95	38
	11-15	50	20
	Above16	41	16
Educational Level	Degree	20	8
	Masters	150	60
	PhD ad above	80	32

Source own survey 2025

## **Age**

All participants in the study were older than 18 years of age. Out of total valid 250 respondents the largest age group was below 30, and age between 31 and 40 years which is 36%. The rest age range of 41 and above which is 28%. This indicates that most of academic work forces are adults.

## **Gender**

According to Table 4.2 out of the 250 valid respondents, from gender perspective 68% or 170 respondents were males and the remaining 32% or 80 respondents were females. This implies that the number of male respondents were greater than the female.

## **Education Level**

From 250 valid respondents, most of them were second degree holders they were 60% or 150 in number; 80 of them were PhD holders which is about 32%. The rest 8% or 20 respondents were having second degree.

## **Work Experience**

About 25% or 64 were below five years" work experience, 38% or 95 had 6-10 work experience and 20% or 50 respondents work about 11-15 years. The rest 16% or 41 respondents were above 16 years work experience. This implies that the researcher try to address all group of employee that had different work experience in wolkite university academic staff.

### **4.2 Strategy Polices for Implementation**

During face to face interview with strategy and top management with more than 10 years" works experience in academic sectors, and different points were raised from that polices for implementing the strategy was the first. Strategy implementation policy is the breakdown of the corporate strategy that helps the company to precede the strategy plan to action or execution. From interview with top management, the researcher found that Wolkite University had policies and procedures for implementation of the strategy in different departments.

The researcher also observed from secondary data that the company had approved a draft policy which is applicable. This is therefore, different departments and college have strategy policies that they follow up during implementing the strategy.

### **4.3 PARTICIPATION OF STOCKHOLDERS IN STRATEGYIMPLEMENTATION**

In this table below the researcher summarized both participation of stakeholders and participation mechanism. The data analyze using frequency table and percentage.

**Table 4.2 Participation of stakeholder**

Action		Frequency	Percent/%
Strategy Participation	Yes	50	20
	No	200	80
Knowing Strategy Implementation Policy	Yes	155	62
	No	95	38
Appropriate Strategy Implementation	Yes	90	36
	No	160	64

Source own survey 2025

Different researcher wrote about strategy implementation. Among them one of the theories is during strategy implementation all staff should be participated. According to the above table 4.4 from 250 samples only 20% or 50 respondents participate in the strategy. The remaining 80% or 200 respondents were not participating in the strategy implementation process. This sows that there is gap of strategy implementation in Wolkite University specifically in academic staff.

From 272 respondent 62% or 155 respondents were know the strategy implementation polices; the rest 38 % or 95 respondents were not know the strategy implementation polices. As the researcher observed still wolkite university had clear strategy implementation policy.

Table 4.4 shows that from 272 respondents 36% or 90 academic staffs were believe that wolkite university appropriately implement the strategy; the rest 64% or 160 respondents were not believe that implement the strategy appropriately. Respondents were stated how they said inappropriately implemented, due to lack of focus, lack of consistent communication, and budgeting, poor controlling system, organizational politics.

### **Strategy Implementation Challenges**

In this sub topic the researcher intends to identify major strategy implementation challenges faced by Wolkite University. According to Abdifatah Mohamed (2013) scale problems having mean score of more than 3.00 were major problems while those having mean score between 2.50 – 2.99 were moderate problems, and obstacles with mean score of 2.00 – 2.49 were minor problems. Problems having mean score of less than 2.00 were grouped as the least implementation challenges. The data was analyzed using percentages, mean scores and standard deviation. The higher the mean score interprets the more severity of the problem in

strategy implementation and the lower the mean score the less severity of the problem in strategy implementation.

**Table 8 Challenges of strategy implementation**

<b>Challenges</b>	<b>Yes/No</b>	<b>Freqnucey</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Unanticipated market changes	Yes	100	40
	No	150	60
Lack of senior management (CEO)support	Yes	20	8
	No	230	92
Application of insufficient resources	Yes	120	48
	No	130	52
Failures of buy-in,understanding, and/or communication	Yes	200	80
	No	50	20
Lack of focus	Yes	190	76
	No	60	24
Bad strategy – poorlyconceive business Models	Yes	50	20
	No	200	80
Checklist for successful implementation	Yes	120	48
	No	130	52
Align organizationaldesign and capabilities with thestrategy	Yes	50	20
	No	200	80
Involve top managers inthe strategy development process	Yes	20	8
	No	230	92
Consistent and persistent Communication	Yes	120	48
	No	130	52
Action planning and Budgeting	Yes	200	80
	No	50	20
Monitoring and accountability	Yes	200	80
	No	50	20

Source own survey 2025

From the above table 8 60% respondents found unanticipated market change was strategy implementation problem and 40% of the respondent positive response. Lack of senior management (CEO) support was the major problem with 92% respondents were approved, only 8% of respondents did not found that lack of senior management (CEO) support was a problem. In Application of insufficient resources 52% respondents were negative response and 48% of the response were positive response. Fallers of buy-in, understanding, communication and alignment of information resources with the strategy also the major the respondent 80% have no problem for implementation; only 20% of the respondent has problems in communication. In Timeliness and distinctiveness, lack of focus, checklist for successful implementation, align organizational design and capabilities with the strategy and

involve managers in the strategy development process also the major problems. Hence, the challenges have major problem for successful strategy implementation.

The researcher found data from the top management and strategy and change management staff. The challenges in strategic implementation are making appropriate team formulated and managed formulated team, knowledge gap within the formulated team, time challenge, change management resistance, automation, lack of management staff/professionals and many more are challenges on the implementation of the strategy.

## CHAPTER FIVE CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENATIONS

### INTRODUCTION

The chapter deals about gave conclusion and recommendation to the objective of the research. And proposed further studies related to the title. Finally, limitations of the study were discussed.

#### 5.1 Conclusion

The objective of the study was to assess the strategy implementation at wolkite university. The study concluded that the university had strategy policies. But the lower level staffs are not understand the strategy rather some position holder and all top management fully understand the strategy. Also, the study found that non-management staff did not participate in strategy implementation process. The university did have strategy implementation policy up to date but, now the strategy is the end of five year old. Furthermore, due to lack of focus, lack of consistent communication, lack action plan and budgeting, poor controlling system and organizational politics, etc. Wolkite University did not implement the strategy appropriately. In addition, large number of employee did not taken training before implementing the strategy.

#### 5.2 Recommendations

The researcher recommends Wolkite University have to approve the draft policy as match as possible time. By using the corporate strategy they have to break down each works in terms of different department and positions, prepare job description for each job grade.

University have to give continues tanning like how to manage implementation problem. Especially, for non-management staff. Because if lower level staffs may fully understand the strategy, they help the company to implement the strategy successfully. Since the ~~as~~ fully understand the strategy they fill sense of ownership.

The researcher recommend wolkite university better be participate all stakeholders (non-management staff) in the strategy implementation process. Even if implementation process left half year, it is better participating the whole stakeholders. If all staffs participated, their willingness to accept the change is high.

The researchers also recommend Wolkite University have to increase the capacity of translating strategic plan to action, coordinate departments and adopting information technology infrastructure. This all develop by using expertise, check list, discussion with staff and buying ICT. Otherwise the company will not achieve the five year objective.

The company is not still have program, procedure and budget to implement the corporate strategy. According to John Sterling, (2003) one of the reason that strategies fail are allocation of budget. So they have to allocate a budget to achieve the strategy effectively. And they have to prepare programs and procedures that help them how to run the strategy.

It is supportive that the university has properly organized the structure but, still there is a gap on staffing and leading. Since staffing and leading is the base for strategy implementation wolkite university better consider the two variables. By giving attention to the staff, giving a reward and growth for staffs. Using employee friendly communication ways, build sense of ownership among the staff, participate the staff in different implementation process, and preparing get together.

Lastly the researcher recommends that the university have to find solutions for identified major implementation obstacles. Like preparing budget, develop communication ways

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**APPENDIX**  
**WOLKITE UNIVERSITY**  
**COLLEGE OF BUSINESS ANDE CONOMICS**  
**DEPARTMENT OF MANAGEMENT**

**Research Questionnaires to be filled By Employees**

Dear respondents, first of all I would like to introduce you, I am fifth year management students at Wolkite University. The purpose of this questionnaire is to collect data for the purpose of conducting research entitled “**Assessment of Strategic Plan Implementation and its Challenges: case of wolkite university**”. It will be used as a partial fulfillment of the requirement for BA degree in management. Your response for the question will be kept confidential.

Thanks in advance for your cooperation!

**General Instruction:**

Please make tick mark ( ✓ ) on the appropriate box that represents your level of agreement or disagreement with a given statement.

Writing your and enterprise name is not necessary

**Thank you in advance!!**

**Part I.**

**Personal Information of the Respondent**

Sex: Male  Female

Age Range in Year: Below 30

From 31-40

From 41-50

Above 41-50

Work Experience in wolkite university

1-5 years

5-10 Years

11-15years

Above 16 Years

Academic status: Diploma  Degree  Masters  PhD

Position in : Dean/Director  Vice Dean/coordinator

Department Head/Supervisor  Lecturer/officer

## **Part II.**

### **Strategy Implementation Proses.**

How do you understand a university's Strategy?

Fully understand  Moderately Understand  Neutral  Not Understand

Do you participate in a university's strategy implementation? Yes  No

If your answer is "Yes" in question No.2 How?

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Do you know strategy implementation policy? Yes  No

Does the organization implement the strategy appropriately? Yes  No

If your answer is "No" in question No.6 explains?

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How does Wolkite University communicate you about the strategy?

By meeting  By training  By internal memo  All  No communication

Do you take training before implementing the strategy? Yes  No

### **Participation of Stakeholders**

Would you please rate on scale of 1 to 5 where 1 is the lowest and 5 is the highest.

Action	Verylow	Low	Medium	High	Veryhigh
Change of organizational structure					
Changing organizational culture					
Leading of the Executive Director/top management					
Develop management Skills					
Staff hiring/firing					
Employee development and reward system					

How do you rate the capability of the organization in the implementation of the strategy?

Action	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Translating the strategic plan to program plan or action plan					
Helping financial resources for the plan (have enough budget)					
Enhancing capacity of the expertise					
In placing the required organizational systems and procedures					
Establishing coordination with different departments					
In placing the required Information Technology infrastructure.					

### Strategy Implementation Challenges

Please evaluate the extent to which the following problems influenced the implementation of the strategy decision. Please use the five-point scale as shown.

<b>Action</b>	<b>Strongly agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly disagree</b>
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Unanticipated market changes					
Lack of senior top management support					
Application of insufficient resources					
Failures of buy-in, understanding, and/or communication					
Timeliness and distinctiveness					
Lack of focus					
Bad strategy – poorly conceived business models					
Checklist for successful implementation					
Align organizational design and capabilities with the strategy					
Consider potential competitor reactions to the strategy					
Involve managers in the strategy development process					
Consistent and persistent communication					
Action planning and budgeting					
Monitoring and accountability					
Alignment of information resources with the strategy					

15. Comment/ Remark on the overall practice of strategy implementation process in the university.

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