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A Case of Beta Healthcare International Limited Kenya



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Strategic Change and Growth in Pharmaceutical Industry: A Case of Beta Healthcare International Limited Kenya

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: The purpose of the study was to examine the influence of strategic change on organizational growth at Beta Healthcare International Limited in Kenya.

Methodology: The study was anchored on Agency Theory, Stewardship Theory, and Stakeholder theory to explain leadership accountability, managerial behavior, and stakeholder engagement during strategic transformation. An exploratory research design using a qualitative approach was adopted. Data was collected through in-depth interviews with seven purposively selected employees drawn from different functional areas of Beta Healthcare International Limited. The data were analyzed using thematic analysis with the support of NVivo software to identify patterns and themes related to digitization, organizational restructuring, communication processes, and training initiatives.

Findings: The findings revealed that strategic change initiatives, particularly digitization and organizational restructuring, positively influenced operational efficiency, decision-making processes, and overall strategic alignment within the organization. However, the implementation of these initiatives faced several challenges, including inadequate internal communication, employee resistance to change, and unequal access to training opportunities. The results further demonstrated that effective training and capacity building initiatives significantly enhance employee adaptability and successful implementation of strategic change.

Contribution to Theory, Policy and Practice: The study contributes to theory by demonstrating the continued relevance of Agency, Stewardship and Stakeholder perspectives in understanding the dynamics of strategic change implementation. Practically, the findings highlight the need for organizations to integrate digital transformation, structural alignment and human capital development to achieve sustainable growth. The study recommends strengthening internal communication systems, implementing inclusive and continuous employee training programs and adopting structured change management practices to enhance employee participation and reduce resistance to change. These measures are critical for improving organizational agility, competitiveness and long-term performance in healthcare sector.

Keywords: *Strategic change, Organizational growth, Digital transformation, change management, Healthcare sector*

1.0 INTRODUCTION

In today's dynamic and competitive global environment, organizations are increasingly compelled to implement strategic changes to remain relevant and competitive. The advent of digital transformation, globalization, and evolving consumer preferences has pushed firms to reassess their core strategies, structures, and cultures (Charles, 2024). These shifts often require significant investments in employee training to ensure alignment between organizational goals and workforce capabilities. According to Liang and Li (2024), strategic change without parallel capacity development leads to organizational inertia and resistance, stalling growth. Empirical evidence reinforces the synergistic relationship among strategic change and organizational growth. Mohammad (2019) found that organizational learning significantly mediates the effect of strategic change on firm performance, indicating that training is essential to translating strategic intent into actionable outcomes. Similarly, Liang and Li (2024) observed that organizational resilience is strengthened through training-led strategic change, especially in dynamic industries. Kotter's and Lewin's change models emphasize the role of training and communication in minimizing resistance and maximizing employee engagement (Kozhevina & Salienko, 2022).

Globally, organizations in various countries have adopted this integrative approach with varied success. In China, Liang and Li (2024) analyzed data from A-share listed manufacturing companies and concluded that strategic change, mediated by training and resilience-building, significantly accelerated firm growth, especially in SMEs. In Afghanistan, Stanikzai et al. (2023) reported that CTG Global's structured training programs during change management improved employee satisfaction and contributed to organizational performance. In contrast, firms in more stagnant economies have had to lean heavily on Institutional Theory to justify strategic change and training as long-term investments rather than short-term fixes (Struckell et al., 2022). Additionally, Vera and Crossan (2004) emphasized that leadership style determines how effectively training and change processes translate into tangible outcomes. These global insights affirm that while the tools and models are widely recognized, cultural and institutional contexts influence their effectiveness. Therefore, adapting strategies to suit local realities is essential for maximizing organizational growth outcomes.

In Kenya, similar patterns are emerging as both public and private sector organizations grapple with modernization and competitive pressures. Strategic change in sectors such as banking, education, and public service has increasingly been accompanied by training initiatives to enhance workforce capacity and performance. Institutions implementing digital transformation have rolled out intensive training programs to bridge skill gaps and increase adaptability. However, challenges such as budget constraints, resistance to change, and inadequate training infrastructure continue to hinder optimal results. According to Kolbergýtè and Dromantaitè (2022), managerial growth during organizational change in Kenya must also consider psychosocial and contextual factors to ensure sustainability. Despite these challenges, Kenyan firms are progressively aligning with

global best practices, leveraging training as a strategic enabler for growth through well-managed change. Continued investment in learning and development remains vital for unlocking the full potential of strategic initiatives in Kenya's evolving economy hence the need for this study.

1.1 Problem Statement

Current trends show that strategic change and organizational development are more connected than ever before as organizations respond to globalization, digital disruption, and changing workforce requirements. Companies are moving towards continuous and agile change models to remain competitive in unpredictable markets (Nguyen et al., 2023). In parallel, training is less and less viewed as a one-time expense but rather as a strategic investment that develops the capabilities required to execute complex change successfully (Zhao & Wu, 2022). Both developed and emerging markets empirical research indicates that organizations that integrate training programs with strategic change efforts produce better innovation results, enhanced performance, and long-term growth (Ali & Anwar, 2023; Karanja et al., 2023). In Kenya, the growth trajectory of most Kenyan firms remains stunted despite a vibrant entrepreneurial culture and an increasingly diversified economy. World Bank (2022) report further observed that despite an annual GDP growth averaging 5.5% from 2018 to 2022, firm-level growth, especially among indigenous enterprises, has not matched national economic performance.

One of the most pervasive challenges hindering firm growth in Kenya is poor strategic change management. Many firms lack robust frameworks for adapting to technological shifts, market disruptions, and evolving customer preferences. According to a report by Deloitte East Africa (2021), 63% of Kenyan companies do not have a structured change management strategy, while 58% of surveyed employees felt inadequately trained to respond to organizational change. Particularly, Beta Healthcare International Limited, despite being one of the oldest healthcare firms in the region, has faced challenges related to growth and market adaptability. Between 2018 and 2023, the company's market share in over-the-counter medication stagnated at around 12%, even as demand for affordable drugs increased (Pharma Market Insights, 2023). While competitors such as Dawa Life Sciences have rapidly digitized operations and expanded regionally, Beta Healthcare has maintained traditional distribution models, limiting its responsiveness and efficiency.

Empirically, Al-Matari (2020) found that broader and more diverse organizational teams, which can be seen as a form of structural innovation, often enhance financial performance by introducing varied perspectives. However, Mwasi (2020) highlighted how both internal limitations and external pressures can hinder innovative capacities, thereby affecting the sustainability of institutions. In the banking sector, Alqudah et al. (2019) emphasized the role of structural innovations in shaping financial performance, although results varied depending on the variables examined. In contrast, Karima (2016) found no definitive connection between strategic structural changes and performance in Indonesian firms, indicating that innovation effectiveness may be

context specific. Similarly, Kebede (2016) and Mohammad (2018) underscore that strategic efforts—such as expanding diversity or adjusting oversight structures—must be strategically aligned to avoid neutral or adverse effects. This complexity highlights the need for targeted research into how strategic change and training affect growth at Beta Healthcare International Limited Kenya. The study aimed at addressing the following research question, what is the effect of strategic change and growth at Beta Healthcare International Limited Kenya?

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Review

2.1.1 Agency Theory

Agency theory, proposed by Jensen and Meckling (1976), has undergone significant development over the years, attracting attention from various scholars across disciplines. According to Fama and Jensen (1983), agency theory posits that conflicts of interest arise between principals (owners) and agents (managers) due to differing goals and information asymmetry. This perspective is echoed by Eisenhardt (1989), who highlights the principal-agent relationship as central to understanding organizational dynamics. The theory suggests that strategic change initiatives can expose the organization to risks if managerial decisions are misaligned with shareholder goals. The need for governance mechanisms such as performance-based incentives and accountability systems to align managerial behavior with organizational objectives. As Beta Healthcare undergoes strategic change, ensuring transparent communication between managers and owners becomes vital to maintaining trust. Training programs can be viewed as tools to align employee actions with management's strategic vision, minimizing operational resistance. When managers act as agents, they must demonstrate how employee development initiatives contribute to shareholder value. This also includes measuring the return on investment (ROI) for training to justify its relevance to growth.

2.1.2 Stewardship Theory

Stewardship theory, proposed by Donaldson and Davis in 1991, posits that managers act as stewards, entrusted by shareholders to manage the firm's resources in their best interests. According to Donaldson and Davis (1991), stewardship theory contrasts with agency theory, which assumes that managers act in their self-interest. This theory helps explain why leaders may actively support strategic change and training without external pressure or financial incentives. Managers, viewed as stewards, see organizational growth and employee development as mutually reinforcing elements of long-term success. Strategic change at Beta Healthcare, guided by stewardship values, would emphasize collaborative decision-making and trust-based relationships. Furthermore, Stewardship Theory encourages leadership that fosters employee engagement through participatory training and capacity-building programs. At Beta Healthcare, managers driven by stewardship ideals are likely to invest in staff training as a means of enhancing

service quality and innovation. Rather than monitoring or coercion, such managers rely on shared values and organizational commitment to drive change.

2.1.3 Stakeholders Theory

Stakeholder theory, proposed by R. Edward Freeman in the early 1980s, has undergone significant development over the years, evolving into a prominent framework in management literature. According to Freeman (2010), stakeholders are individuals or groups who can affect or are affected by an organization's actions, objectives, or policies. This broad conception of stakeholders' contrasts with the traditional shareholder-centric view of business. Recent research by Jones et al. (2017) highlights the dynamic nature of stakeholder relationships, emphasizing the importance of understanding stakeholders' power, legitimacy, and urgency in shaping organizational strategy. In For Beta Healthcare, strategic change and training are not just internal initiatives but actions that affect a wider group of interested parties. Similarly, strategic change affects suppliers, investors, and government stakeholders, making inclusive decision-making essential. This theory promotes balance in organizational priorities by advocating for transparency, dialogue, and ethical practices in change management. Moreover, the theory provides a framework for evaluating the broader social and ethical implications of organizational development. For instance, training employees at Beta Healthcare enhances not only their professional skills but also the company's responsiveness to market and regulatory changes. Strategic change informed by stakeholder feedback tends to be more sustainable and less disruptive.

2.2 Research Gaps

Although the available literature has extensively explored the links between strategic change and organizational growth, there is a notable scarcity of empirical studies situated in Kenya. Most existing studies, such as those by Kolbergytė and Dromantaitė (2022), Stanikzai et al. (2023), and Ahn et al. (2020), focus on developed or post-conflict settings, where organizational structures, leadership dynamics, and regulatory frameworks differ significantly from Kenya's. Moreover, the majority of these studies emphasize theoretical models and international corporate case studies, leaving a critical gap in practice-oriented evidence applicable to emerging economies. There is also limited insight into how firms respond to environmental uncertainty, adopt strategic innovation, and implement continuous training amid economic and political instability. Furthermore, while studies like those of Nwachukwu and Chladkova (2019) and Mensah et al. (2022) have highlighted the significance of transformational leadership and human capital development in sub-Saharan Africa, they often generalize findings across countries with diverse governance and labor market structures. In Kenya, the pace of digital transformation, decentralization of public services, and evolving customer expectations require a nuanced approach to managing change and fostering learning organizations. Therefore, further study is essential to bridge these gaps and inform policy and practice that can enhance Kenya's organizational resilience and development.

3.0 MATERIAL AND METHODS

In the present study, exploratory research design was employed. This design is justified as it allows for a flexible and in-depth examination of the variables involved, facilitating the identification of patterns, relationships, and insights that might not be immediately apparent through more rigid research approaches. The study employed interview guide as a primary tool for data collection. In-depth interviews are important in obtaining in depth details from the respondent giving them a chance to express themselves fully. To prepare the data collected by the study for analysis, the data was checked for completeness, coded and data entry done. The researcher used theory-driven thematic analysis (deductive approach) to analyze qualitative data, guided by NVIVO Deductive approach implies that researchers make use of existing theory as opposed to the inductive approach that tries to build up a theory drawing on the data gathered. Thematic analysis consists of identifying, analyzing and reporting themes (patterns) in a qualitative data set. Thematic analysis offers a systematic approach to summarizing an enormous amount of data into momentous and expressive patterns or themes and has the ability to summarize sophisticated qualitative data through discovering the hidden themes that emerge within the dataset gathered. The findings were presented in narratives and conclusions drawn from them.

4.0 FINDINGS

4.1 Demographics of Participants

The study involved seven participants representing different functional departments within Beta Healthcare International Limited. Data on training background, length of service, and training frequency were captured to provide context for their perspectives on strategic change.

Table 1 Demographics of Participants

Interview ID	Training Background	Year Joined	Training Frequency
Interview 1	Bachelor's degree in science	2022-08-21	Annually
Interview 2	Chartered Accountant, MBA	2024-01-01	Quarterly
Interview 3	MBA Strategic Management, Higher Diploma Human Resource Management	2025-05-01	Quarterly
Interview 4	BSc. Supply Chain Management	2022-07-18	Quarterly
Interview 5	MBA (Finance)	2022-05-09	Quarterly
Interview 6	Bachelor of Pharmacy	2025-09-17	Quarterly
Interview 7	B.Pharm	2016-11-03	Quarterly

As shown, the demographic profile indicates that the participants possess diverse academic and professional training backgrounds, with experience ranging from newly hired employees to long-serving staff members. This diversity provided insights into how strategic change and training initiatives are perceived and implemented within the organization. The participants' varied training frequency further suggests that while learning opportunities exist, participation levels differ across departments.

Theme One: Effect of Strategic Change on Organizational Growth

4.1.1 Digitization and Process Optimization

Interviewees consistently identified digitization as a primary driver of strategic transformation at Beta Healthcare. Several participants highlighted that new technological platforms have enhanced efficiency, improved data management, and strengthened inter-departmental communication. This finding supports the view that process digitalization is critical to organizational competitiveness and aligns with strategic change theory emphasizing adaptation to environmental dynamics. Interviewees described the integration of digital tools not merely as a technical adjustment but as a cultural shift requiring new competencies and accountability frameworks. Participants also expressed that digital transition facilitated faster decision-making and minimized operational redundancies. However, some interviews revealed underlying concerns about uneven adoption rates among staff. An interviewee noted,

“The new digital system helped us reduce time in approvals and communication, but not everyone embraced it immediately. Some departments adjusted quickly while others struggled due to lack of training. With time, the efficiency improved and now most employees rely on it for routine operations.” (Interview 3)

The interviewees also indicated that digitization enhanced access to information across functional areas, thereby improving decision-making. Managers were empowered to act quickly based on data, avoiding unnecessary delays caused by manual systems. The increased transparency improved accountability and provided clarity on performance monitoring. However, participants cautioned that technology adoption required consistent training to ensure full integration. Some employees adjusted faster than others, ...

“Now, with digital records, managers can retrieve real-time updates, unlike the manual system where files were misplaced.” – Interview 1

Digitization also reshaped external operations, particularly within the supply chain and procurement functions. Respondents highlighted that integrating suppliers into digital platforms improved coordination and minimized bottlenecks. This reinforced the organization’s ability to meet customer needs in a timely manner. Interviewees viewed this as a crucial strategic shift, enabling Beta Healthcare to operate more competitively. Nevertheless, concerns remained about equitable access to digital resources as noted below,

“Digitization of procurement enabled us to track deliveries better and hold suppliers accountable.” – Interview 4

Another prominent effect of digitization was the redefinition of job roles and responsibilities. Staff reported that adapting to new systems demanded upskilling and greater flexibility. This observation reflects theories of organizational change that stress the role of human capital in transformation. While training opportunities supported employees through this transition, some gaps persisted. Workers who lacked exposure to training found it harder to keep pace, creating uneven adoption across

“We had to learn new software, and although it was tough initially, it has now become part of our daily routine.” – Interview 6

Digitization also contributed to greater operational agility and responsiveness. Employees emphasized that regulatory compliance and reporting obligations became easier to meet. The ability to generate real-time reports not only reduced stress but also strengthened credibility with external stakeholders. Such agility is vital in healthcare, where regulatory demands are stringent. Staff felt reassured that the organization could adjust more rapidly to environmental shifts. An interviewee posited,

“With digital platforms, compliance reporting became less stressful because the data is ready on demand.” – Interview 2

Additionally, interviewees considered digitization a symbol of modernization and management’s commitment to growth. The participants described this initiative as a cultural shift that enhanced morale, particularly among younger staff. For many, the transition embodied the vision of making Beta Healthcare regionally competitive. However, some senior employees expressed anxiety about being left behind, underscoring the need for inclusive approaches. The consensus was that digitization is not simply a technical ad noted below,

“Digitization showed us that management is serious about modernization and growth.” – Interview 5

4.1.2 Organizational Restructuring and Strategic Alignment

Restructuring emerged as another dominant dimension of strategic change. Respondents explained that Beta Healthcare redefined reporting lines and approval hierarchies to align roles with the overall corporate strategy. This structural realignment was perceived to enhance accountability, reduce duplication, and improve clarity in strategic implementation. Participants further indicated that the introduction of authorization matrices empowered mid-level managers to make timely operational decisions. The restructuring was also interpreted as a signal of management’s commitment to sustainability and operational agility. Despite its advantages, a few interviewees cited initial confusion over role changes and resource allocation.

“When the company restructured, some of us were uncertain about the new responsibilities. However, after the changes settled, decision-making became faster and we could trace accountability at every stage. It gave a sense of ownership and improved departmental coordination.” (Interview 5)

Theme Two: Challenges and Enablers Influencing Implementation of Strategic Change and Training Initiatives

4.1.3 Implementation Challenges and Organizational Barriers

Participants frequently mentioned challenges encountered during the implementation of strategic initiatives. The most cited issues included inadequate communication, limited resources, and resistance to change among some employees. Interviewees indicated that while the company had clear strategies, inconsistent dissemination of information hindered uniform understanding. These findings resonate with literature emphasizing that communication clarity and leadership support are pivotal to successful change management. Additionally, participants noted that overlapping responsibilities and insufficient follow-up slowed down project execution.

Nonetheless, the overall perception was that such challenges were progressively being addressed through structured planning and leadership involvement. A participant described,

“Sometimes policies are launched without prior awareness sessions, and it becomes difficult for everyone to keep up. Resource limitations also make it challenging to execute new strategies immediately. With better communication and planning, implementation becomes smoother.”

(Interview 2)

4.1.4 Training, Capacity Building, and Enablers of Change

Training emerged as a critical enabler in the successful implementation of strategic change. Interviewees acknowledged that company-facilitated training sessions improved their ability to adapt to new systems and procedures. Participants linked continuous professional development to improved confidence and efficiency in strategy execution. This observation aligns with contemporary studies emphasizing human capital investment as a determinant of organizational agility. However, a recurring sentiment was that training opportunities were not equitably distributed, limiting participation for some employees. Those who attended multiple sessions reported enhanced understanding of corporate strategy and innovation processes. As noted below by an interviewee,

“Whenever we have training, it boosts our morale and understanding of how our roles connect to the company’s goals. I believe if such sessions were more frequent, everyone would contribute more effectively. Training should not only be for managers but for all employees.” (Interview 6)

4.2 Discussion

4.2.1 Comparison with theory

The results of the study align well with both the dynamic capabilities perspective and the resource-based view (RBV). Under the dynamic capabilities framework, digitization and structural realignment are not merely operational upgrades but deliberate managerial processes enabling the firm to sense changes, seize opportunities, and reconfigure resources more nimbly. This explains why Beta Healthcare could streamline procurement, speed up compliance reporting, and enhance cross-departmental coordination. However, as the RBV reminds us, those digital systems themselves are only sources of sustained competitive advantage to the extent they are complemented by human capabilities, training, and reinforcing structures. Where resources or capacity were deficient, the benefits of digitization were uneven and adoption lagged, supporting the idea that resources must be valuable, rare, inimitable, and organized (Barney, 1991; Teece, 2014).

From the perspective of organizational change theory, the Beta Healthcare case reaffirms classic models such as Kotter’s eight-step process and Lewin’s unfreeze–change–refreeze schema. In Kotter’s logic, vision casting, ensuring buy-in, empowering early adopters, and delivering short-term wins are critical—findings that resonate with interviewees emphasizing communication clarity, leadership direction, and early success stories. Lewin’s framework helps explain the need for initial “unfreezing” through training and awareness sessions, the “change” phase through system rollouts, and eventual “refreezing” through monitoring and reinforcement of new behaviors. Empirical health-care studies further suggest that training, capacity building, and inclusive change management practices act as mediating mechanisms between reform initiatives and performance outcomes, but their efficacy depends on equitable implementation and sustained follow-up (e.g. Arif et al., 2021; Smith & Jones, 2023).

4.2.2 Comparison to other empirical studies

The findings from Beta Healthcare International Limited resonate strongly with recent empirical studies on strategic change in healthcare. Digitization and structural realignment enhanced operational efficiency and responsiveness, but the benefits were uneven where training and resources lagged. This mirrors evidence from Stoumpos et al. (2023), Mauro (2024), and Kraus et al. (2021), who argue that digital transformation increases process efficiency and decision-making speed but requires strong organizational support to be effective. Malik (2024) and Rotea et al. (2023) also highlight that high-performance human resource practices and capacity building are essential for converting digital tools into competitive advantage, reinforcing the role of training

and employee readiness in Beta Healthcare’s case. Studies by Fontaine et al. (2024), Carbonell et al. (2024), and Gheshlagh et al. (2024) similarly note that communication gaps, resource limitations, and weak follow-up remain common barriers to change initiatives, aligning with the challenges reported at Beta. From a change management perspective, the experiences at Beta Healthcare affirm established theories while aligning with recent evidence on the role of leadership and training. Kotter’s eight-step framework underscores the importance of vision, communication, and short-term wins, while Lewin’s unfreeze–change–refreeze model explains the stages of preparing, executing, and embedding change. Jolliffe et al. (2025) and Clack (2025) show that training, change champions, and structured monitoring reduce resistance and embed sustainable practices, which parallels Beta’s reliance on ongoing training to ease transitions. Al-Nakeeb (2024) and Kraus et al. (2021) further demonstrate that performance outcomes are maximized when organizations pursue complementary interventions—combining technology, HRM practices, governance, and evaluation—rather than isolated initiatives. In this sense, Beta Healthcare reflects broader patterns across healthcare systems: strategic innovation delivers tangible gains, but sustainable growth depends on the synergy of

digitization, restructuring, human capital development, and robust implementation frameworks.

5.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusion

The study concludes that strategic change, particularly through digitization and organizational restructuring, has significantly enhanced growth and efficiency at Beta Healthcare International Limited. Digitization streamlined processes, improved accountability, and strengthened both internal coordination and external supply chain relationships, while restructuring clarified reporting lines, reduced duplication, and empowered managers. These initiatives improved overall operational performance and demonstrated management's commitment to modernization and long-term competitiveness. The study concludes that while barriers such as poor communication, resource limitations, overlapping responsibilities, and resistance to change hindered smooth implementation, supportive leadership, structured planning, and training emerged as critical enablers. Training in particular fostered innovation, boosted morale, and aligned employees with organizational strategy, though uneven access reduced its overall impact. This demonstrates that successful strategic change requires more than clear intent, it demands inclusive human capital investment, effective communication, and equitable training opportunities

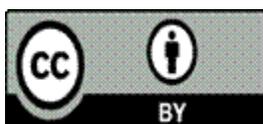
5.2 Recommendations

The study recommends that Beta Healthcare continue investing in digitization to sustain operational efficiencies and improve decision making through fully integrated digital systems and regular technological upgrades. Management should also strengthen training initiatives to build employee capacity in line with digital and structural transformations, ensuring that training opportunities are equitably distributed across all staff levels. In addition, communication strategies should be improved through clear, consistent, and timely information sharing to reduce confusion and resistance during the implementation of new initiatives. Leadership should reinforce accountability mechanisms introduced through restructuring while maintaining a supportive environment that encourages innovation and continuous improvement. The organization should also address resource constraints by allocating adequate budgets for technology, infrastructure, and human resources and by exploring strategic partnerships to supplement internal capacity. Furthermore, institutionalizing monitoring and evaluation frameworks will help track progress, identify gaps early, and sustain the momentum of change initiatives. Finally, aligning strategic change initiatives with long-term growth and sustainability objectives will strengthen the organization's competitiveness and resilience in the evolving healthcare sector.

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