



STRATEGIC DIRECTION AND ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE OF FOUR STAR HOTELS IN NAIROBI COUNTY, KENYA

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ABSTRACT

Globally, strategic leadership is recognized for its major contribution to a strategy implementation timetable that is successful and that is essential in directing and enhancing the context and mode of strategy implementation. The primary goal is to investigate the performance and strategic leadership of Kenya's four-star hotels. The study specifically examines how much organizational performance is influenced by strategic direction in Kenyan four-star hotels. Goal-setting theory served as a guiding principle for this investigation. Questionnaires were used in the collection of data. For this study, a descriptive research design was used. 148 general managers, assistant general managers, and supervisors employed by Kenya's four-star hotels were the study's target group. This study included a census. To obtain the respondents, a census will be used. Standard deviation and mean will be utilized to measure central tendency, and regression and correlation analysis are two examples of inferential statistics that will be employed in the study. Performance ($M=2.96$, $SD=1.08$) and strategic direction ($M=3.48$, $SD=1.26$) were deemed significant ($p < 0.5$; $r = 0.891$, $p = 0.000 < 0.5$). According to the study, to reveal additional empirical data on this crucial topic of strategic direction and how it interacts with other facets of organizational performance, particularly social performance, more literature reviews are required. Researchers are advised to conduct investigations into this relationship.

Key Words: Mission, Objectives, Core Values, Vision, Service Delivery, Completion of Projects, Efficiency, Return on Investment

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INTRODUCTION

Since making money is often the primary goal of corporations, organizational performance becomes central to these enterprises. Operational level strategies have a significant impact on the success or failure of most firms (Iravo, Ongori&Munene, 2018). Top management of a number of firms has determined what performance drivers are necessary for them to generate high returns. The core of daily operations management, which is focused on performance measurement, is performance management. Hotel managers have employed a variety of metrics to assess the hotels' performance (Sainaghi, 2020). To attain a long-term competitive edge, a firm must perform have been evaluated using metrics including productivity, employee morale, and effectiveness (Fwaya et al., 2016).

Establishing organizational goals and reaching predefined goals are the foundations of goal identification, is one of the methods and metrics that have been found to assess organizational success. The systems resource approach, which is the second method of assessing organizational performance, explains how an organization's performance is affected by its relationship with the environment and how to protect that relationship. The last strategy is predicated on how well organizations' procedures work, which is determined by the tactics used in an attempt to improve performance (Njuguna, 2019). Operational level plans are critical to long-term performance achievement of an organization (Njiru, 2017).

In the competitive global market, especially in the business sector, managers encounter a number of difficulties. Among the challenges include meeting stakeholder needs and the escalation of global pricing competition (Bolboli&Reiche, 2020). Since managers find it more difficult to create a healthy organizational culture at work, this is a crucial component that increases productivity (Kenny, 2019). Making a profit is the main objective of any

organization, and growing the company's scope is essential to its growth (Erdorf et al., 2019).

The COVID-19 epidemic has caused a significant economic downturn in Sub-Saharan Africa, both globally and regionally. In 2020, real GDP fell to 2.1, with the hotel and tourism industry being the most affected sector, and the Eastern Africa Community saw 2.9 (Radwan, 2020). The majority of the slowdown was attributed to oil exporting nations and other key resource-producing nations. Due to short-term delays in oil production, foreign exchange shortages brought on by lower oil receipts, decreased power output. In general, activity stayed strong in non-resource-intensive nations (those that import commodities and export agricultural products) (Radwan, 2020).

Radwan (2020), transactional leadership; nonetheless, it has a detrimental effect on employees' motivation. Again, it discovered a substantial correlation between employees' performance and innovation and transformative leadership. The service industry in Malaysia has demonstrated that transactional leadership improves organizational outcomes.

Odhuon,et.al., (2019) has voiced concerns about the underwhelming performance of Kenya's four star hotels, citing fierce rivalry as a primary cause of their continuous financial failure. Empirical studies on the effectiveness of these hotels are scarce, nevertheless. The objective of the study was to compare the performance of strategic leadership techniques with star-rated hotels. Odhuon,et.al., (2019) underlined that in order for the Kenyan hotel sector to thrive, it must adjust to the demands of historically high levels of competition.

Statement of the Problem

The entire retail value of the hotel sector worldwide is \$493.76 billion (Siongok, 2021). High turnover in terms of profits and returns is a feature of some of the best hotels in the world. KNBS (2022), Kenyan hotel industry dropped from 24% in the last quarter of 2019 to 17% by the end of 2020. It is now difficult for hotel management to have an inclusive viewpoint

on quality since they have to focus on critical quality issues while making decisions with limited resources (Namkung & Jang, 2019).

In addition to the erratic and uncertain operating environment, internal issues brought on by low employee motivation, Kenyan hotel closures have been due to a lack of diversification and low employee retention rates (Kahongeh, 2023). The strategic leadership style is one of the factors that helps businesses fulfill performance goals and effectively employ organizational resources and talents, especially during times of crisis. (Elkhwesky, et al., 2022).

Effective strategic management techniques had a major impact on the hotel industry's success, according to research by Hassan et al. (2017). Murimi and Wadongo (2021) argued that hotels with star ratings might function better if they have better revenue management. Evidence of the positive impacts of employee training on hotel performance was shown by Gitongu (2021). Despite having comparable goals, the examined research show conflicting findings. There may be contextual, conceptual, and methodological gaps as a result of the many operationalizations of variables, data collection and analysis techniques, and data used for analysis. This study aims to fill this research vacuum by examining the association between strategic leadership, particularly strategic direction, and performance of 4 and 5-star hotels in Nairobi County, Kenya.

Objective of the Study

The objective of the study was to examine the influence of strategic direction on performance of four star hotels in Nairobi County, Kenya.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Goal Setting Theory

Kurt Lewin initially presented the goal-setting hypothesis in 1960. According to analyses done by Locker (1991), setting and achieving goals is related to better performance. According to Ferris (2007), goal-setting is a belief-based process that

influences choices about productivity and motivation. Kinick, et al., (2013) contends that perception is crucial in this situation because it highlights the cognitive ability to predict possible results from behavioral acts. The two main tenets of goal setting theory are that people see problems arising from their interactions and relationships among results, and that people have positive reactions to particular results with both positive and negative impacts. Establishing goals at work means that the management group has to make sure that workers' fundamental needs like getting paid fairly and having a secure workspace that supports their entire growth are satisfied. The theory's central tenet is to control human behavior (Locke & Latham, 2007).

The initial goal-setting process considers the possibility that any given intention will generally result in a desired result. Any chance that a desired outcome will lead to another desirable outcome is included in the second goal-setting process. The workforce won't be motivated to do any work, even if all efforts are reimbursed or not within the institution's framework. The research highlights the need of assurance, accountability, and maturity. Organizational goals are established through the process of managing by objectives, and staff members are empowered to set their own goals and understand what is expected of them. The theory was applied in this review to show how strategic leadership and good communication affect organizational success.

Empirical Review

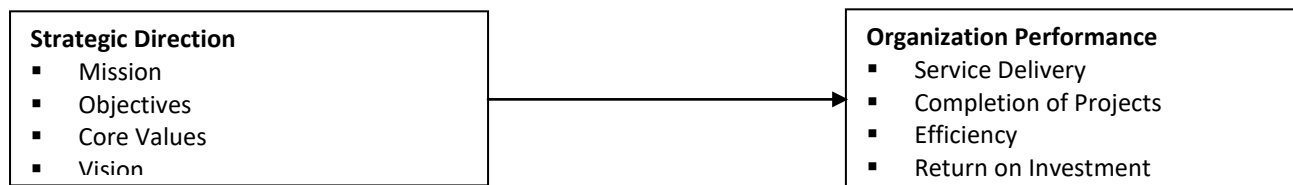
Strategic Direction and Organisation Performance

Strategic direction puts into context the threats and opportunities the challenges that strategic leaders foresee their company will experience over the next three to five years (Marcus & Fremeth, 2019). Hitt et al. (2010) identified that the proponents of strategic directions begin with the defining the objective, vision, and strategic plan to realize this vision over time as a strategic leader. The envisioned future guides many facets of a organization design, leadership, employee empowerment, and motivation

in the firm's plan execution process. The consistency of the strategic choices modelled by the strategic leader culminates organizational performance. The output is a 3-5-year strategic plan, strategic implementation, and organizational performance (Britton & Callender, 2019).

Ng'ang'a, et.al.(2017) assert that strategic direction demonstrates the organization's desired future state. Some of the most notable markers that can be used to determine whether a certain leader is providing strategic direction include strategic intent, vision, mission, and objectives. Guiding objectives, would be gathered in order to

develop the strategic direction variable. According to Dugan (2017), it is evident that the conventional models and methods for performance measurement are no longer sufficient (Elbanna, Eid&Kamel, 2015). Additional research, such as that conducted by Kariyawasam (2019), Izadi et al. (2019), and Gorda et al. (2019), similarly suggested that administrators of higher education institutions can use the components of an effective vision to develop their visions in order to maximize the performance of their faculty as a whole through process improvement, financial stability, client satisfaction and growth, learning, and faculty member satisfaction.



Independent Variable

Dependent Variable

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Source: Author (2024)

METHODOLOGY

A descriptive research design was applied in this study to look at the relationship between two variables.

The general managers and assistant general managers of Nairobi County's 25 four-star hotels made up the study's population. The study used a census survey.

A questionnaire was used in the study to gather primary data. In order to find instances of incompleteness and inconsistency, the investigator reviewed the data. Version 26 of the SPSS was used to analyze the data.

To ensure the appropriateness and reliability of the research instruments, pilot study was carried out in two four star hotels. Cronbach's Alpha was used by the researcher to assess internal

consistency. This involved distributing 14 questionnaires to respondents in four star hotels

The researcher consulted with research specialists, seasoned graduates, and lecturers to get insightful recommendations on how to improve the face and content validity of the study instruments.

RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

Response Rate

This study's target population was all 148 general managers, assistant general managers and supervisors of Nairobi County's four-star hotels. 107 out of the 148 questionnaires administered were correctly completed and submitted, resulting in a favorable response rate of 72.29%.

Descriptive Analysis

The presentation of the findings from the descriptive analysis with reference to the independent (planning, human capital, strategic direction, strategic communication) and the criterionvariable (organizational performance).

Organization Performance

In response to the organizational performance question, participants had to indicate how much they agreed or disagreed. Table 1 following provides a complete breakdown of deductions.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics for Organization Performance

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
In our organization, efficiency is always satisfactory.	107	3.82	1.29
Return on investment has a constant impact on our organization's performance.	107	2.23	.68
Over the past five years, the organization's service delivery has improved.	107	3.82	1.29
Our firm has funds available for the payment of suppliers.	107	3.13	1.28
In our firm, the annual strategic plan is often carried out.	107	1.78	.90
	107	2.96	1.08

Source: Research Data (2024)

Findings from table 1 indicate that in our organization, efficiency is always satisfactory (M = 3.82, Sd = 1.29). Over the past five years, the organization's service delivery has improved (M = 3.82, Sd = 1.28). Our firm has funds available for the payment of suppliers (M = 3.13, Sd = 1.28). Further, they disagreed that return on investment has a constant impact on our organization's performance (M = 2.23, Sd = 0.68)

and that in our firm, the annual strategic plan is often carried out (M = 1.78, Sd = 0.90).

Influence of Strategic Direction on Performance of Four Star Hotels

In response to the question on how strategic direction affects the organizational performance of four-star hotels in Nairobi County, participants were to indicate how much they agreed with the statement. The results are shown in full in table 2 below.

Table 2: Influence of Strategic Direction on Organization Performance

	N	Mean	Standard deviation
Evaluation of the internal and external environments serves as a reference for project definition.	107	3.21	1.15
We create top-notch project environmental data to help identify strategic risks and their possible effects early on.	99	3.31	1.26
Work plans cover the organization's goals, targets, metrics, tactics, schedules, oversight, and financial constraints.	100	3.81	1.26
We provide a set of steps to control risks and problems in the project or company.	103	3.64	1.26
The leadership ensure that control processes and procedures are carried out on the implemented strategies to mitigate risk and ensure compliance.	107	3.46	1.34
		3.48	1.00

Source: Research Data (2024)

Work plans cover the organization's goals, targets, indicators, strategies, timeframes, monitoring, and budget, according to Table 2 (M = 3.81, Sd = 1.26). To control risks and problems in the project or organization, we create a set of steps (M = 3.64, Sd = 1.26). The leadership ensure that control processes and procedures are carried out on the implemented strategies to mitigate risk and ensure compliance (M = 3.46, Sd = 1.34). For the early detection of strategic risks and their possible effects, we create high-quality project environmental data (M = 3.31, Sd = 1.26). Evaluation of the internal and external environments (M = 3.21, Sd = 1.15) informs the definition of the project.

In order to build future direction and guide the firm's values, strategic direction is essential. It involves strategic planning and formulation within the organization. Organizations can build their visions, missions, goals, and values with the help planning process. Ng'ang'a (2019) states that top management is in charge of creating and disseminating the strategic direction. Kitonga, Bichanga, and Muema (2019) conclusion was that organizational performance and strategic direction were positively correlated. Ng'ang'a (2019) studied the performance and strategic direction of Kenyan tourist industry groups. The investigation also established although subordinate staff members carry out the plan, they were not involved in its creation.

By offering a clear path for decision-making, directing staff efforts toward shared objectives, facilitating better resource allocation, encouraging innovation, increasing flexibility in response to market shifts, creating a strong corporate culture, and enhancing communication at all levels, a strategic direction affects organizational performance and, in the end, improves overall performance and competitive advantage.

In order to prevent distractions and resource misallocation, a clear strategic direction aids in identifying important goals and concentrating

organizational energy on the most significant projects. Employee engagement and team cohesion are increased when the strategic vision is communicated to them because it gives them a feeling of purpose and inspires them to strive toward common objectives. All levels of decision-making are guided by a clear strategic direction. By pinpointing areas where novel concepts and methods can provide a competitive edge, strategic direction can promote an innovative culture. Among stakeholders, including as partners, investors, and consumers, a clear strategic direction may foster confidence and trust.

Understanding the importance of a strategic direction is essential before delving into the specifics of developing strategic thinking skills. Fundamentally, a strategic direction gives everyone in an organization a common goal and vision. It serves as a North Star, directing decision-making procedures and guaranteeing that individual endeavors support the overall objectives of the company. Even the most adept strategic strategists may become lost without this guidance. They might create programs and plans that, although remarkable on their own, don't help the organization achieve its long-term goals. Even worse, these misdirected endeavors may drive the company in several directions, resulting in inefficiency and internal conflict.

Strategic direction puts into context the threats and opportunities the challenges that strategic leaders foresee their company will experience over the next three to five years (Marcus & Fremeth, 2019). Hitt et al. (2010) identified that the proponents of strategic directions begin with the defining the objective, vision, and strategic plan to realize this vision over time as a strategic leader. The envisioned future guides many facets of a organization design, leadership, employee empowerment, and motivation in the firm's plan execution process. The consistency of the strategic choices modelled by the strategic leader culminates organizational performance. The output is a 3-5-year strategic plan, strategic implementation, and organizational performance (Britton & Callender, 2019).

Ng'ang'a, et.al.(2017) assert that strategic direction demonstrates the organization's desired future state. Some of the most notable markers that can be used to determine whether a certain leader is providing strategic direction include strategic intent, vision, mission, and objectives. Guiding objectives, would be gathered in order to develop the strategic direction variable. According to Dugan (2017), it is evident that the conventional models and methods for performance measurement are no longer sufficient (Elbanna, Eid&Kamel, 2015). Additional research, such as that conducted by Kariyawasam (2019), Izadi et al. (2019), and Gorda et al. (2019), similarly suggested that administrators of higher education institutions can use the components of an effective vision to develop their visions in order to maximize the performance of their faculty as a whole through process improvement, financial stability, client satisfaction and growth, learning, and faculty member satisfaction.

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Gaturu, et.al., (2019) looked into how mission hospitals in Kenya performed organizationally as a result of strategic control, one of the tactics used in strategic management. Foreign churches used to donate to mission hospitals and the government would provide them money, but these hospitals now receive very little funding. The organizational performance of mission hospitals has been adversely impacted by the increase in healthcare costs and the substantial workforce outflow to other nations. The study's findings indicated a marginally beneficial relationship between ambulance service businesses' performance and strategic direction.

Simple Regression of Strategic Direction

The goal of the study was to determine how four-star hotels' performance and strategic orientation relate to one another. To ascertain the predictive power of strategic direction on the performance of four-star hotels, a simple linear regression test was conducted, as indicated in Table 3.

Table 3: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.891 ^a	.794	.792	.32357

a. Predictors: (Constant), Strategic Direction

Source: Research Data (2024)

Table 3's R Square of 0.794 indicates that 79.4% of the difference in the performance of four-star hotels in Nairobi County, Kenya, can be attributed to strategic direction. The model is suitable for

forecasting the performance of four-star hotels in Nairobi County, Kenya, according to additional analysis, which showed an ANOVA result with a P-value of $0.00 < 0.05$.

Table 4: Relationship between Strategic Direction and Performance

ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
	Regression	36.300	1	36.300	346.710	.000 ^b
1	Residual	9.423	90	.105		
	Total	45.723	91			

a. Dependent Variable: Performance**b. Predictor: Strategic Direction****Source: Research Data (2024)**

The regression connection was significant in predicting how strategic direction influences the performance of four-star hotels in Nairobi County, Kenya, according to the probability value of $p < 0.05$.

The study also aimed to determine how much the performance of four-star hotels in Nairobi County, Kenya, is impacted by the implementation of strategic direction. Table 5 presents the findings.

Table 5: Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
		B	Std. Error	Beta	T	Sig.
	(Constant)	1.005	.109		9.191	.000
1	Strategic Direction	.564	.030	.891	18.620	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Performance**Source: Research Data (2023)**

The performance of four-star hotels in Nairobi County, Kenya, would be at 1.005 if strategic direction were held at a constant zero, according to Table 5 findings. Performance would therefore rise by .564 units for every unit increase in strategic direction.

$$Y = 1.005 + .564X_1$$

Where;

Y= Performance 1.005= Constant term, X_3 = Strategic Direction

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Evaluating the impact of strategic direction on the performance of Kenya's four-star hotels was the study's goal. The study comes to the conclusion that the performance of Kenya's four-star hotels is positively and significantly correlated with strategic direction. The findings are in tandem with strategic direction which continues to be a main player in impacting institutional activities, business setting, and final business results when

examining planning in enterprises (Ng'ang'a, 2019). It is regarded as one of the most critical actions taken by strategic leaders to ensure that strategies are successfully implemented (Kitonga, et. al., 2019). The upper echelons of an organization provide strategic guidance to various departments and divisions through strategic direction, communication with their employees, and then give them authority over the strategic processes to implement strategic plans. Strategic leaders must establish procedures and actions that must be followed at all levels to drive and regulate the organization towards goal attainment that could include varying degrees of changes (Serfontein, 2019).

There is opposition to strategic direction because some businesses were unwilling to adapt when strategies called for it. Therefore, it was advised that lower-level employees participate in the strategic planning process. This can be achieved by asking employees for their thoughts and opinions on potential strategies to enhance organizational planning, encourage implementation, and involve

them in the organization's development. The ability of leaders to take a strategic stance when overseeing other operations must be developed.

There is insufficient and vague empirical data regarding the connection between control and the social performance of an organization. To reveal additional empirical data on this crucial topic of strategic direction and how it interacts with other facets of organizational performance, particularly social performance, more literature reviews are required. Researchers are advised to conduct investigations into this relationship.

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Suggestion for Further Studies

The impact of strategic direction as a strategic leadership technique on the operations of four-star hotels in Nairobi County, Kenya, has been the main focus of this study. In order to provide a better understanding of these characteristics, it suggests future analyses on additional external factors including the organizational context and industry type. This is due to the fact that both internal and external environments have an impact on how an organization operates.

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