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Influence of Strategic Planning on the Organizational Performance  
Among Commercial-Based Parastatals in Kenya



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## **Influence of Strategic Planning on the Organizational Performance Among Commercial-Based Parastatals in Kenya**

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### **Abstract**

**Purpose:** To examine the influence of strategic planning on the organizational performance among commercial-based parastatals in Kenya.

**Methodology:** The study used a descriptive research design to collect data on a target population of six (6) commercial based parastatals. The respondents were 45 departmental managers and 151 administrative staff. The study obtained the sample size of 40 departmental managers and 110 administrative staff using simple random method. They were issued with closed and open-ended. Further, pre-test study was conducted at Kenya Airways where 4 departmental managers and 11 administrative staff. Additionally, descriptive analysis, frequency tables and explanation were used to illustrate the results. Further, inferential statistics were examined using multiple regression and correlation analysis.

**Results:** The dependent variable results indicated that 75(69%) respondents strongly agreed on the highest mean of 4.37 (SD of 1.04), that the management motivated the staff to go and get a higher academic qualification. Additionally, on a mean of 3.67 (SD of 1.32), 51(48%) respondents strongly agreed that the number of clients has been increasing for the last few years. That notwithstanding, 85(79%) disagreed on a mean of 2.22 (SD of 0.73), that the parastatals had enough cash to meet their financial obligations effectively. The independent variable results indicated that 38(36%) and 19(18%) respondents strongly agreed and agreed respectively on a mean of 3.81(SD of 1.01), that strategic forecasting had significantly informed their strategic planning. This was closely followed by availability of resource allocation influenced employee motivation. This question had a mean of 3.55 (SD of 1.04) where 28(26%) respondents strongly agreed and 19 (18%) agreed on the sentiments. However, 39(36%) respondents strongly disagreed while 51(48%) disagreed that bench marking had always guided their strategic planning decisions on a mean score of 2.98 (SD of 1.04). The Pearson correlation coefficient was  $r=0.700^{**}$  at  $\alpha < 0.000$  and 99% significance level indicating a positive correlation between strategic planning and organization performance.

**Unique contribution to theory, policy and practice:** The basis of the parastatals' strategic planning was not supported by any bench marking but rather a specific individual's knowledge and experience. Therefore, when the individual at any capacity left the parastatal, the remaining

team did not have a clear way of formulating strategies or benchmarking them with other corporates. The study recommends that there should be developed processes of strategic planning which are well documented by the management and have a policy to guide on what should done, who should be consulted and when should that happen in case of eventualities. Further, the management should encourage work mentorship from senior management to junior employees to orient them on management issues. This would help the employees gather relevant skills and knowledge to make strategic decision, when need be, on behalf of the parastatal.

**Keywords:** *Strategic Planning, Organizational Performance, Commercial-Based Parastatals, Kenya*

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

The process where leaders are able to spell out the vision and pinpoint the various steps to be taken in form of goal attainment to achieve it is defined as strategic planning (Alosani et al., 2020). Organization leaders generate new justifications for the institutional to thrive in a chaotic business environment through leadership. Further, strategic planning aligns an institution with effective plan development that produces competitive returns and also influence creation of strategic intent and mission. When performing the task of laying out strategies, the leader ensures that they forecast and develop operational plans obtained by bench marking with what others have achieved and once satisfied, the resources are allocated (George et al., 2019).

Strategic planning is one of the structures that organizations have identified as impeding the efficient implementation of strategy. The idea of planning through leadership has now come to be seen as one of the most crucial fundamental drivers of strategy implementation in businesses. Among the activities associated with planning include determining the establishing institutional limits, successfully managing the institution's resource pool, maintaining a productive institutional tradition, and emphasis on ethical conduct.

Strategic leaders are responsible for guiding their organizations through a growth strategy and sense of direction. This is a result of their interactions with significant stakeholders like clients, vendors, unions, and government representatives. The leaders act as the organization's reflection hence expected to lead by example. Further, achieving strategic planning is only achievable in the four components such as desired strategic outcomes, strategic actions, and systems for monitoring development (Public Service Commission- Kenya [PSC], 2019).

### 1.2 Statement of the Problem

The commercial parastatals are allowed by the constitution to charge for various services and goods provided to the public but at a reasonable price. The income generated enables the government to fund its operations further and hence able to solve daily life problems of its citizen.

Therefore, the performance of the commercial parastatals is of great concern not only to the government but also the citizens.

That notwithstanding, the performance of Kenyan commercial-based parastatals has consistently been low to a point that in the financial year 2019/2020, the cumulative operational performance was negative (World Bank, 2021). Kenyan state corporations like Kenya Railways net profit declined by Kshs 9,484,000 million in 2020 as compared to Kshs 18,213,000 million profits in the year 2019 (World Bank, 2021). Further, Kenya Airport Authority, KPLC, and Kenya Ports Authority made losses of Kshs -2,764,000, Kshs -3,245,000 and Kshs -5,708,000 respectively in 2019.

The low performance was attributed by increase in expenditure that some of the parastatals were incurring. An increase in expenditure was mainly attributed to poor strategies established by the management on planning and control of income. Failure to find a solution on the problem of low performance of parastatals will lead to complete paralysis of their operations hence closing down. As a result, basic amenities such as power, shipment, air travel, and availability of products among others will decline leading to illegal supplies of similar goods and services which poses danger to Kenyan citizens at large. The danger could be in form of health issues, loss of property, loss of life, loss of businesses opportunities and employment.

### **1.3 Purpose of the Study**

To examine the influence of strategic planning on the organizational performance among commercial-based parastatals in Kenya.

### **1.4 Hypothesis of the Study**

Ho1: Strategic planning had no significant influence on the organizational performance among commercial-based parastatals in Kenya.

## **2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 Theoretical Review**

Strategic Leadership Theory [SLT] was coined by Hambrick and Mason (1984) who revealed that the upper echelons strategic leadership concept was outshined by studies around the primary influences of the major engagement on institutional results and the social makeup and profile of the senior leadership (Hambrick & Pettigrew, 2001). Two differences between the words "leadership theory" and "strategic leadership theory" were also highlighted by Hambrick and Pettigrew. On the one hand, they contended that even as the strategic leadership concept dealt with studies on senior leadership, the theory dealt with leadership across all levels. On the other hand, leadership research was looked at from a variety of angles and focuses mainly on the interaction between leaders and followers. Strategic leadership focused on the way the dominant coalition of the firm influenced

the strategic process of organizational learning rather than the qualities of the relationship amongst the leadership and the subject (Yukli 2006).

Effective top managers had very different roles and actions than middle managers. The majority of earlier studies solely focused on smaller unit management and used it to other managerial levels (middle or lower) (Yukli, 2006). Basing on Davies and Davies (2004), short-term and prolonged goals conflict, dynamism and bureaucratic tendencies remained key towards successful strategic leadership. The ability in persuading individuals to openly undertake determinations with the ability of improving an institution's prolonged existence and at the same time realizing set short-term economic goals was desirable.

## **2.2 Empirical Review**

In Brazil, Drago et al. (2023) investigated how institutional performance was affected by dynamic capabilities strategic planners. Systematic Literature Review [SLR] was adopted which covered planning conduct and development of knowledge. In relation to this, Drago et al. (2023) used hundred and eighteen articles whose content ranged from 2006-2021. The results revealed that the dynamic capabilities of strategic planners influenced positively and increased the competitive intensity of the organization with other institutions. However, Drago et al. (2023) relied on secondary data which is often prone to biases on authors' opinions rather than the reality. Additionally, the study admitted that the dynamic capabilities of planners did not cover marketing, IT, supply chain and research departments.

In Nigeria, Oludele (2021) assessed how healthcare institutions' performance was impacted by strategic planning. The study was descriptive in nature and it targeted 50 staff in Nigeria's health institutions where 30 returned the questionnaires. According to Oludele (2021), planning involved frequent appraisals of vision, mission, values, and organizational environment to determine the various cropping issues that could lead to improvement or complete changes in strategies. Therefore, strategic planning had positive influence on performance. That notwithstanding, Oludele (2021) did not reveal how the 50-health staff that were targeted were sampled nor provided any pre-test study results to determine the reliability of the data collection questionnaires.

In Kenya's private universities, Odera and Jonyo (2020) examined the impact of strategic leadership on organizational performance. This correlational study used a positivist approach to methodology. The 17 private universities in Kenya that are approved by the Commission of University Education made up the study population. All of the population's members participated in a census procedure. The responses to a structured questionnaire were used to analyzed data. Therefore, Odera and Jonyo (2020) findings on the first research question revealed that organizational performance was significantly predicted by organizational mission and vision human capital development. Therefore, since the study was done on private universities, there is need to explore the influence that strategic leadership act such as planning has on performance of commercial based parastatals

### 3.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study used a descriptive research design to collect data on a target population of six (6) commercial based parastatals. The respondents were 45 departmental managers and 151 administrative staff. The study obtained the sample size of 40 departmental managers and 110 administrative staff using simple random method. They were issued with closed and open-ended. Further, pre-test study was conducted at Kenya Airways where 4 departmental managers and 11 administrative staff. Additionally, descriptive analysis, frequency tables and explanation were used to illustrate the results. Further, inferential statistics were examined using multiple regression and correlation analysis.

### 4.0 RESULTS

#### 4.1 Response Rate

The sampled population of this study was 6 commercial based parastatals in Kenya. The targeted respondents were 40 departmental managers and 110 administrative staff in the commercial based parastatals in Kenya. One hundred and seven (107) out of the 150 questionnaires administered were properly answered and submitted, giving it a desirable score of 71.3% as the response rate. These were 28 managers and 79 administrative staff and notably, Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) advised that as long as the response rate was above 70% it was deemed to be excellent results.

#### 4.2 Reliability Test Results

In determining reliability, Cronbach's Alpha was applied since it accesses internal consistency by ascertaining if specific instruments in a scale indicate a similar construct validity. An ideal Alpha score ought to be 0.7, (Kothari, 2012). The reliability results are provided in Table 1.

**Table 1:** *Reliability Test Results*

Variable	Cronbach Alpha	No of Item
Strategic planning	0.909	15

From the detailed Table 1 on Cronbach Alpha Coefficient values, strategic planning had 0.909; on all of the 15 returned pre-test questionnaires. Therefore, it was evident that there was consistency in reliability of the data collection tool since the figures exceeded the ideal score of 0.7 and above. This is because according to Taber (2018), when an instrument's result ranged from 0.7 to 1, it was reliable.

#### 4.3 Descriptive Statistics of Organization Performance

Organization performance was the dependent variable and had indicators such as sales, customer numbers, internal business process, learning and development. The study measured the variable

using both closed and open-ended questionnaires. The questionnaires had five-point Ordinal Likert Scale where; strongly agree was represented by 5; agreed was represented by 4; neutral was represented by 3; disagreed was represented by 2; and strongly disagree was represented by 1. Participants were required to state their affirmation levels based on the question with regards to organizational performance. The findings are detailed in Table 2.

**Table 2:** *Descriptive Statistics of Organization Performance*

Statements	1	2	3	4	5	Mean	SD
N=107							
There has been an increase in sales in the parastatal	0 (0%)	33 (31%)	23 (21%)	3 (3%)	48 (45%)	3.62	1.32
Our organization has enough cash to meet its obligations effectively	4 (4%)	85 (79%)	13 (12%)	0 (0%)	5 (5%)	2.22	0.73
The number of clients has been increasing for the last few years	0 (0%)	30 (28%)	26 (24%)	0 (0%)	51 (48%)	3.67	1.32
The income earned by our organization is appropriate to cover the costs of running the business	7 (7%)	44 (41%)	13 (12%)	22 (20%)	21 (20%)	3.05	1.29
Outstanding loans and fees are dully paid on time	4 (4%)	46 (43%)	16 (15%)	27 (25%)	14 (13%)	3.00	1.17

The management motivates the staff to go and get a higher academic qualification	0 (0%)	10 (10%)	15 (14%)	7 (7%)	75 (69%)	4.37	1.04
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Findings from Table 2, 75(69%) respondents strongly agreed on the highest mean of 4.37 (SD of 1.04), that the management motivated the staff to go and get a higher academic qualification. Additionally, on a mean of 3.67 (SD of 1.32), 51(48%) respondents strongly agreed that the number of clients has been increasing for the last few years. That notwithstanding, 85(79%) disagreed on a mean of 2.22 (SD of 0.73), that the parastatals had enough cash to meet their financial obligations effectively. The results meant that the management of the parastatals had played a huge role in encouraging the staff to improve their education and hence became more efficient in their assigned tasks. This brought about productivity in the organization which attracted more number of clients seeking services from them. Nevertheless, the parastatals complained that the work demands were hardly met due to limited cash flows. The main reason of why government organization could be facing is partly due to offering their products and services at standard prices instead of hiking based on inflation like other corporates. Notably, the most outstanding problem was that the available cash from business operations and annual budgetary allocation was not enough to cater for their massive operations within the ever growing nation. The findings are similar to Kibos (2019) who also revealed that cash trapped Kenyan state corporations were significantly paralyzing the implementation of strategies related to operations activities.

The study further inquired in an open question on ways that were used to assess performance in the parastatals. The respondents such as managers indicated that under financial performance, the suggested methods by regulators included liquidity, return on assets and return on equity. Further under service delivery, performance was measured through number of clients served, use of ICT to solve an issue, and timelines used when serving clients. Additionally, the administrative officers indicated that performance was measured using total sales, gross profit and return on capital employed. The same methods of assessing performance were mentioned by studies such as Mabai and Hove (2020) in South Africa who revealed that number of clients served and total sales were major ways. Other studies like Mailu and Kariuki (2022) in Kenya pointed that timeline used when serving clients was a major aspect in measuring performance.

The second question required the respondents to highlight various rewards given to the outstanding staff in terms of superseding their targets. The managers named salary bonuses, vacations, retreats, shopping vouchers, and cash. The administrative staff indicated that they receive work recognition and job promotions mostly. According to Orito (2021) the main rewards that department staff in transport ministry were mainly job promotions and salary bonuses. Further Vedel and Kokshagina (2021) indicated that recognition at work placed and vacation stood out as rewards for institution that wished to incorporate exploratory strategies in their operations.

#### 4.4 Descriptive Statistics of Strategic Planning and Organization Performance

Strategic planning was an independent variable and had indicators such as strategic forecasting, operational plans, bench marking and resource allocation. The study measured the variable using both closed and open-ended questionnaires. The questionnaires had five-point Ordinal Likert Scale where; strongly agree was represented by 5; agreed was represented by 4; neutral was represented by 3; agreed was represented by 2; and strongly disagree was represented by 1. Participants were required to state their affirmation levels based on the question with regards to the impact of strategic planning on organization performance. The findings are detailed in Table 3.

**Table 3:** *Descriptive Statistics of Strategic Planning*

Statements	1	2	3	4	5	Mean	SD
N=107							
Our operational plans are informed by strategic plans.	0 (0%)	53 (50%)	18 (17%)	11 (10%)	25 (23%)	3.07	1.24
Bench marking has always guided our strategic planning decisions	39 (36%)	51 (48%)	0 (0%)	17 (16%)	0 (0%)	2.98	1.04
Availability of resource allocation influence employee motivation	0 (0%)	16 (15%)	44 (41%)	19 (18%)	28 (26%)	3.55	1.04
Strategic forecasting has significantly informed our strategic planning	0 (0%)	8 (8%)	42 (39%)	19 (18%)	38 (36%)	3.81	1.01
The strategic plans formulated by the management are often	0 (0%)	45 (42%)	9 (8%)	18 (17%)	35 (33%)	3.40	1.32

explained to the operational staff before implementation							
The operations staff are allowed to give their opinions on suggested strategic plans	3 (3%)	34 (32%)	27 (25%)	6 (5%)	37 (35%)	3.37	1.32

Findings from Table 3, 38(36%) and 19(18%) respondents strongly agreed and agreed respectively on a mean of 3.81(SD of 1.01), that strategic forecasting had significantly informed their strategic planning. This was closely followed by availability of resource allocation influenced employee motivation. This question had a mean of 3.55 (SD of 1.04) where 28(26%) respondents strongly agreed and 19 (18%) agreed on the sentiments. However, 39(36%) respondents strongly disagreed while 51(48%) disagreed that bench marking had always guided their strategic planning decisions on a mean score of 2.98 (SD of 1.04). The results indicated that they were practising strategic forecast in planning which made resources available hence motivating the staff. Nevertheless, the basis of their strategic planning was not supported by any bench marking but rather a specific individual’s knowledge and experience. Therefore, when the individual at any capacity left the parastatal, the remaining team did not have a clear way of formulating strategies or benchmarking them with other corporates. The deductions concur with Njoroge (2018) who revealed that having a clear strategic plan that can be benchmarked and tested over time was key towards improving institutional processes in a way that reduced internal expenditure due to poor strategic implementation.

**4.5 Hypothesis Testing Using Pearson Correlation Analysis**

The study had a research hypothesis which indicated that strategic planning had no significant influence on the organizational performance among commercial-based parastatals in Kenya. To determine whether to accept or reject the null hypothesis, the study tested them using Pearson Correlation analysis. The findings are described in Table 4.

**Table 4:** *Pearson Correlation Analysis of Strategic Planning*

		Strategic planning	Organization performance
Strategic	Pearson Correlation	1	.700**

planning	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	107	107
	Pearson Correlation	.700**	1
Organization performance	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	107	107

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

Table 4 indicates that the Pearson correlation coefficient was  $r=0.700^{**}$  at  $\alpha < 0.000$  and 99% significance level for strategic planning. These findings reveal that there was a positive correlation between strategic planning and organizational performance because the p-value were above 0.05.

## 5.0 SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The dependent variable results indicated that 75(69%) respondents strongly agreed on the highest mean of 4.37 (SD of 1.04), that the management motivated the staff to go and get a higher academic qualification. Additionally, on a mean of 3.67 (SD of 1.32), 51(48%) respondents strongly agreed that the number of clients has been increasing for the last few years. That notwithstanding, 85(79%) disagreed on a mean of 2.22 (SD of 0.73), that the parastatals had enough cash to meet their financial obligations effectively. The independent variable results indicated that 38(36%) and 19(18%) respondents strongly agreed and agreed respectively on a mean of 3.81(SD of 1.01), that strategic forecasting had significantly informed their strategic planning. This was closely followed by availability of resource allocation influenced employee motivation. This question had a mean of 3.55 (SD of 1.04) where 28(26%) respondents strongly agreed and 19 (18%) agreed on the sentiments. However, 39(36%) respondents strongly disagreed while 51(48%) disagreed that bench marking had always guided their strategic planning decisions on a mean score of 2.98 (SD of 1.04). The Pearson correlation coefficient was  $r=0.700^{**}$  at  $\alpha < 0.000$  and 99% significance level indicating a positive correlation between strategic planning and organization performance.

### 5.2 Conclusion

The basis of the parastatals' strategic planning was not supported by any bench marking but rather a specific individual's knowledge and experience. Therefore, when the individual at any capacity left the parastatal, the remaining team did not have a clear way of formulating strategies or benchmarking them with other corporates.

### 5.3 Recommendations and Contributions of the Study

There should be developed processes of strategic planning which are well documented by the management and have a policy to guide on what should be done, who should be consulted and when should that happen in case of eventualities. Further, the management should encourage work mentorship from senior management to junior employees to orient them on management issues. This would help the employees gather relevant skills and knowledge to make strategic decision, when need be, on behalf of the parastatal.

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