Influence of Determining Strategic Direction on Organization Performance of Pharmaceutical Companies in Kenya

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Abstract

The chief executive's ability to determine strategic direction through a unifying vision and mission, as well as establishing social capital within the top management team, influences the organization's performance in different contexts. This study aimed at establishing the influence of determining strategic direction on the organisational performance of pharmaceutical companies in Kenya and was grounded on the strategic leadership theory. The study was anchored on positivism philosophy with a descriptive design approach. A stratified simple sampling was used to target a sample of 390 senior managers within the three strata, namely, local companies, generic companies, and research and development multinationals, proportionately to achieve a respondent rate of 82%. The strategic direction was operationalised through the leader's vision, mission, and strategic goals. Five key tests were carried out: correlation analysis, chi-square test, one-way ANOVA, ordinal logistic regression, and parameter estimates to test the hypothesis. Ordinal logistic regression (Nagelkerke Pseudo R-square) results established that 8.1% variance in organizational performance was explained by strategic direction, R^2 = .081. In addition, ordinal regression parameter estimates indicated that strategic direction significantly predicted organizational performance, β=0.473, $p \leq .05$. The study concluded a significant relationship between strategic direction and organizational performance. In particular, a leader's vision, mission and strategic goals were attributed to the positive influence on organizational performance at the pharmaceutical companies in Kenya. The study results indicate that when the leader's strategic direction is clear, communicated and aligned throughout the organization, this significantly and positively influenced organisational performance. Consequently, the study recommended that leaders embed their vision and mission within their strategic plans and ensure alignment throughout the organization.

Keywords: Strategic leadership, Strategic Direction, organizational performance, pharmaceutical companies.

Introduction

Determination of strategic direction involves identifying the image and character the organization seeks to develop over time. The strategic direction considers the opportunities and threats strategic leaders anticipate their firm to face in the next three to five years (Marcus & Fremeth, 2017). Hitt et al. (2016) identified that the proponents of strategic directions begin with the strategic leader specifying the vision, mission, and strategic goals to achieve this vision over time. The envisioned future guides many facets of a firm's strategy implementation process, including motivation, leadership, employee empowerment, and organizational design. The role of strategic leaders is to make strategic choices driven by the vision, mission, and core values.

The consistency of the strategic choices' role modelled by the strategic leader culminates in organizational performance. The output is a 3-5-year strategic plan, strategic implementation, and consequently, organizational performance (Britton & Callender, 2017).

Darbi (2019) opinions that vision must focus on the future and serve as a concrete foundation for the organization. Unlike goals and objectives, a vision does not oscillate from year to year but serves as an enduring promise that paints a vivid picture of the organization. Though a vision is future based, it is in the present tense as if it were being realized now. Adzeh (2017) asserted that the dimension of the vision is the picture of what the company could be once it accommodates the needs of all its stakeholders.

Globalization presents challenges for most pharmaceutical organizations, from marketing to regulatory perspectives. Further, one of the most crucial challenges facing the industry is what strategic leadership practices companies will need to navigate this complex and changing landscape (Parker et al., 2019). Locally, Olaka (2017) associated the high failure rate in strategy implementation and performance of banking industries with complexities in strategy implementation. Additionally, the study established that strategic leadership was a key performance driver. Furthermore, Kihara (2017) established a positive relationship between strategic leadership and the performance of pharmaceutical firms. The study found that firms that had leveraged strategic leadership practices could withstand the industry's economic challenges and align themselves to attain long-term strategic competitive advantage and, thus, organizational performance.

Problem Statement

Globalization presents challenges spanning multiple levels for most pharmaceutical organizations, from marketing to regulatory perspectives. Healthcare reforms and changes in technology, government policy, and consumer expectations are revolutionizing relationships with critical stakeholders and impacting operations in unforeseen ways (Ledle et al., 2020). Further, one of the most crucial challenges facing the industry is what strategic leadership practices companies will need to navigate this complex and changing landscape (Parker et al., 2019). Regionally, Uzman et al. (2020) found that numerous African pharmaceutical organizations, especially those on the verge of becoming multinational or international in scope, find their strategic leadership practices challenging and complex. Pharmaceutical companies in Kenya have been experiencing deteriorating performance due to challenges associated with a lack of strategic direction and inadequate strategy implementation (Olow et al., 2020). Operating at less-than-optimum capacity utilization naturally results in relatively higher production costs and makes it harder for local producers to compete with imports. Reports from the Kenya Pharmaceutical Board indicate that over the past three years (2017 - 2019), revenues reduced by 27%, reaching lows of 34% at the start of the year 2020. At the same time, pharmaceutical companies are facing stiff competition, employee incompetency, changing market demands, and industry regulation are problems experienced by pharmaceutical firms operating in Kenya **(**Kenya Pharmaceutical Association, 2020). Oluoch et al. (2021) established that one way of ensuring the financial and funding-related challenges faced by Kenyan Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) is by emphasizing the strategic direction. The contextual, conceptual and policy gaps informed the current study, which sought to answer the critical question, "To what

extent does strategic direction influence the organizational performance of Pharmaceutical Companies in Kenya?"

Objective

To establish to what extent determining strategic direction influences the organizational performance of pharmaceutical companies in Kenya.

Hypothesis

H_0: Determination of strategic direction has no significant influence on organizational performance at pharmaceutical companies in Kenya.

Literature Review

Strategic direction puts into context the opportunities and threats strategic leaders anticipate their firm which faces in the next three to five years (Marcus & Fremeth, 2017). Hitt et al. (2016) identified that the proponents of strategic directions begin with the strategic leader specifying the vision, mission, and strategic plan to achieve this vision over time. The envisioned future guides many facets of a firm's strategy implementation process, including motivation, leadership, employee empowerment, and organizational design. The role of strategic leaders is to make strategic choices driven by the vision, mission, and core values. 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, 2017).

Lakshman et al. (2017) examined the relationship between the vision and performance of higher education institutions, as measured by financial stability, client satisfaction and growth, process improvement, and learning and faculty satisfaction. They concluded that vision attributes of brevity, clarity, abstractness, challenge, future orientation, stability, desirability, and vision content relating to financial stability, client satisfaction and growth, process improvement, and learning and faculty satisfaction influence performance. Other studies, including those by Kariyawasam (2018), Izadi et al. (2017) and Gorda et al. (2018), similarly proposed that once effective vision components are known, higher education institution administrators can apply them to develop their visions to maximize their overall faculty performance via financial stability, client satisfaction and growth, process improvement, and learning and faculty member satisfaction.

Khan et al. (2019) studied the impact of an organization's mission as a performance-facilitating factor in Pakistan's banking, telecommunication, and pharmaceutical sector. Denison's organisational culture survey was used to ascertain the effect of mission on organization performance. Data was collected from various organizations; the Pearson correlation test was used to establish the relationship between mission and organizational performance. Results indicated a positive relationship between mission and performance. Regression analysis showed that organization performance increases by 74 - 79% due to employees' focus on the attainment of goals set through the organization's mission. This led to the conclusion that a clear definition of mission is essential to achieving high organisational performance. Arguably, this was attributed to employees being accorded the opportunity to discharge their functions under a broader framework.

Kohzadi and Hafezi (2017) studied the effect of strategic planning on organizational performance in industrial estate companies using a descriptive design approach with semi-structured questionnaires to collect data. The top leadership of the companies that were actively involved in the formulation of strategic planning of the organization formed the study population. The study measured the effect of strategic planning on the organization's performance and evaluated the concept model. To analyze the data, a structural equation model was used. The study's findings indicated no significant linear correlation between the intensity of strategic planning and environmental change. The findings showed that 70 percent of organizations surveyed have concrete plans, and no significant relationship was found between the intensity of strategic planning and the number of staff.

Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive correlational research design. This design allowed the researcher to identify the direction and degree of the associations among variables without manipulating the variable (Siedlecki, 2020). The target population for this study included the 3 top senior managers from each of the responding pharmaceutical companies in Kenya, who reported to their respective CEO (PPB, 2020). Specifically, the finance manager, the human resource manager, and the sales and marketing manager since they are involved in the development and implementation of strategic plans of their companies. Consequently, they can evaluate the strategic leadership of the CEO and the board (Cannella et al., 2019).

Additionally, the study used a descriptive research design with stratified sampling as this fit the context in which the phenomena was studied without any influence. A pilot study established the reliability and validity of the structured questionnaire to collect field data. The study applied closed-ended questionnaires using a 5-point Likert scale; (1 = Strongly Disagree (SD), 2 = Disagree (D), 3 = Neutral (N), 4 = Agree (A), 5 = Strongly Agree (SA)). The questionnaire contained seven sections, with the first section having general demographic information and the other 6 sections based on the six research questions. The Likert scale was preferred because it enabled the researcher to convert responses into a quantitative format for easy data analysis using computer-based software.

Results

Pilot Study

The pilot study to determine the reliability and validity of the study instrument was carried out at selected pharmaceutical companies that were later eliminated from the main study to avoid bias. Results in Table 1 show that the study instrument was reliable with a Cronbach Alpha coefficient of 0.817 which was above the required threshold of 0.7. This led to the conclusion that the study instrument was reliable and used in the main data collection exercise.

Table 1: Reliability Test for Strategic Direction

Study Variables	Variable Constructs	Cronbach Alpha Coefficient (α)	Number of Items
Strategic Direction	•Vision •Mission •Strategic Plan	0.817	3

Source: Author (2023)

The validity of the study instrument was also tested using the Average Variance Extracted Matrix (AVE) approach. As shown in Table 2, the AVE for the instrument in capturing data for strategic direction for both the composite value and AVE achieved the threshold for validity at 0.812 (CV>.7) and 0.719 (AVE>.5)

Table 2: Average Variance Extracted Matrix for Strategic Direction

Variables	Composite value	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Strategic Direction	0.812	0.719

Source: Author (2023)

Descriptive Statistics of the study constructs

The descriptive statistical tests conducted are presented in Table 3, showing that approximately fifty-five percent (55.0%) of the respondents indicated that sharing leaders' vision by the senior managers influenced organizational performance. Comparably, about fifty-eight percent (58.4%) indicated that leaders were inspiring and relevant in moving towards organizational performance. In comparison, about sixty percent (60.3%) indicated that all managers clearly defined and understood goals influenced organizational performance.

Table 3: Frequency and Percentage of Determining Strategic Direction

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
My leader's vision is clear and shared by all the senior managers	*f*	8	17	37	176	82	320
	%	2.5	5.3	11.6	55.0	25.6	100.0
My leader's mission is inspiring and relevant to all senior managers	*f*	8	12	41	187	72	320
	%	2.5	3.8	12.8	58.4	22.5	100.0
My leader's strategic goals are clearly defined and understood by all the senior managers	*f*	5	17	37	193	68	320
	%	1.6	5.3	11.6	60.3	21.3	100.0

Source: *Author (2023)*

Exploratory Factor Analysis for Strategic Direction

The study carried out factor analysis to obtain the values for KMO and Bartlett's test of sphericity for strategic direction. Results in Table 4 indicate that the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin of sampling adequacy was 0.6590. At the same time, Bartlett's test of Sphericity was significant at X^2 (3, N=320) = 544.845, p<.05. From the study indicates that the output for the independent variable factors was adequate for extraction.

Table 4: Testing the KMO/Bartlett's on Strategic Direction

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.659
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	544.845
	Df	3
	Sig.	.000

Source: Author (2023)

In the next sub-section, the study results for hypothesis testing are highlighted, including correlation analysis, chi-square test, regression ANOVA, ordinal logistic regression, and parameter estimates.

Correlation between Strategic Direction and Organizational Performance

Pearson's correlation analysis test was performed to determine the relationship between strategic direction and organisational performance. As indicated in Table 5, a positive and statistically significant correlation was established between strategic direction and organizational performance r (320) =.144, p<.05.

Table 5: Correlation Analysis Between Strategic Direction and Performance

		Strategic Direction	**Performance**
Strategic Direction	Pearson Correlation	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.002	
	N	320	
Organizational Performance	Pearson Correlation	.144*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.024	.001
	N	320	320

Source: Author (2023)

Chi-Square Test on Strategic Direction and Performance

Additionally, the Chi-square test (χ^2) was conducted to establish whether there was an association between strategic direction and organizational performance. The results in Table 6 indicate a statistically significant association between strategic direction and organizational performance, χ^2 (322, N = 320) = 542.024, p<.05.

Table 6: Chi-square Test on Strategic Direction and Performance

	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	542.024[a]	322	.000
Likelihood Ratio	345.474	322	.998
Linear-by-Linear Association	42.332	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	320		

a. 390 cells (100.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 01.
*Chi-square is significant at p <. 05 level

b.

Regression ANOVA

One-way ANOVA was carried out to determine whether there were any significant differences between the means of strategic direction and demographic variables of gender, age bracket, position in the organization, work experience in the pharmaceutical company and the highest level of education. Results displayed in Table 7 indicate that significant differences between the means of strategic direction and demographic variables occurred for age bracket, $F(4, 316) = 2.389$, $p \leq .05$ and Work Experience in the pharmaceutical company, $F(4, 316) = 1.902$, $p \leq .05$.

Table 7: One-Way ANOVA for Strategic Direction and Demographic Variables

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Gender	Between Groups	3.28	4	0.820	1.713	0.234
	Within Groups	73.204	316	0.231		
	Total	76.484	320			
Age Bracket	Between Groups	8.128	4	2.032	2.389	0.001
	Within Groups	144.814	316	0.458		
	Total	152.942	320			
Position in Organization	Between Groups	11.624	4	2.906	2.842	0.071
	Within Groups	36.904	316	0.116		
	Total	48.528	320			
Work Experience	Between Groups	7.895	4	1.973	1.902	0.001
	Within Groups	342.834	316	1.084		
	Total	350.729	320			
Highest Academics	Between Groups	4.342	4	1.085	0.789	0.065
	Within Groups	64.234	316	0.203		
	Total	68.576	320			

Source: *Author (2023)*

Pseudo R-Square of Strategic Direction and Performance

Pseudo R-square specified the coefficient of determination based on the regression model's log-likelihood, which is usually compared to the log-likelihood of the baseline model. Results presented in Table 8 indicate the Pseudo R-square results for strategic direction, which, based on the Nagelkerke R-Square, R^2 =.081, implying that strategic direction explained a variance of 8.1% in organizational performance.

Table 8: Pseudo R-Square for Strategic Direction on Performance

Link Function	**Logit**
Cox and Snell	.087
Nagelkerke	.081
McFadden	.072

*Link function: Logit
Source: *Author (2023)*

Parameter Estimates of Strategic Direction on Performance

The model for the influence of strategic direction, X, on Organizational Performance, Y, is given below:

Logit [P(Y ≤ j)] = α_j – βX

Results presented in Table 9 indicate a Log Likelihood[b] of 3.728, showing that the model was fit and predicted the influence of the independent variable (Strategic direction) on the dependent variable (organizational performance). The beta value β1=0.473 for Strategic Direction and a significance level of 0.001 (p<0.05) prove that the independent variable influences organizational performance. Similarly, Bayesian Information Criterion (BIC) means that other factors held constant, strategic direction constructs are responsible for 8.348 positive changes in the organizational performance of the various pharmaceutical firms in Kenya.

Table 9: Parameter Estimates for Strategic Direction on Performance

(a) Goodness of Fit[a]

	Value
Log Likelihood[b]	3.728
Akaike's Information Criterion (AIC)	11.455
Finite Sample Corrected AIC (AICC)	11.507
Bayesian Information Criterion (BIC)	8.348
Consistent AIC (CAIC)	20.348

(b) Hypothesis Testing (Wald Chi-square)

	Wald Chi-Square	df	Sig.	B	Std. Error	95 Percent Wald Confidence Interval		Wald Chi-Square
						Lower	Upper	
(Intercept)	13.128	1	.000	2.89	.7982	4.457	1.328	13.12
Strategic Direction	5.031	1	.001	.473	.6671	.834	1.781	5.031

Discussion

The study's objective was to establish to what extent determining strategic direction influences the organizational performance of pharmaceutical companies in Kenya. This was guided by the hypothesis:

H_0: Determination of strategic direction has no significant influence on organizational performance at pharmaceutical companies in Kenya.

Correlation analysis results indicated that strategic direction had a positive and significant relationship with organizational performance, r (320) =.144, p<.05. These results were congruent to the results of Wang (2018), who established that there was a direct influence of strategic direction on the performance of organizations, more so when the strategic direction was based on the leader's visions. Additionally, Aroyeun et al. (2019), in their study of small Nigerian enterprises, established a strong correlation between the variables of strategic direction and performance, r (178) =.639, p≤.05. This meant that the enterprises stood to gain in the pursuit of customer perspectives and profit making when they invested heavily in their vision and mission statements. The study thus concluded that strategic direction in an organization is critical in reawakening the organisation's performance, more so in entrepreneurial ventures.

On the contrary, Birasnav and Bienstock (2019), in a study on company strategy, concluded that almost 40 per cent of employees did not know or understand their company's mission and vision and, therefore, insignificantly played no role in strategic direction and consequently didn't contribute to the organizational performance. From the correlation analysis results, r (227) =.312, p>.05. Additionally, this study concluded non-significance between strategic direction and organizational performance.

Additionally, the Chi-square test indicated a statistically significant association between strategic direction and organizational performance, χ^2 (322, N = 320) = 542.024, p<.05. The findings are in line with those from previous studies as posited by Kantabutra (2020) in the survey of 824 small scale firms in Thailand. This study's chi-square test results determined the significance between independent variables and firm performance χ^2 (601, N = 824) = 702.173, p≤. 05. This implied that vision created cohesion among members of small-scale organizations, thus gravitating towards a common visionary goal. Similarly, Golensky and Hager (2020), in their survey of 127 organizations across Poland, demonstrated through chi-square test results of χ^2 (83, N = 127) = 308.214, p≤.05 and concluded that, once the vision has been set, the organizational members can take up their respective roles and responsibilities and, design as well as execute strategies to accomplish that vision. As feedback goes back to the top management, they gain the insight necessary to review and revise the organisational vision for legitimacy and authenticity for sustainable growth. On the contrary, Fontanella and Chandra (2017), in their study of vision and mission statements of organizations in 45 polytechnics in Indonesia, determined a Chi-square test result indicating a non-significant association between strategic direction and organizational performance, χ^2 (67, N = 45) = 140.017, p>.05.

Regarding One-way ANOVA, results determined that there were significant differences between the means for the strategic direction and demographic variables for age, F (4, 316) = 2.389, p ≤ .05, and work experience in the pharmaceutical companies, F (4, 316) = 1.902, p ≤ .05. Kabetu

and Iravo (2018) studying humanitarian organizations in Kenya, determined through one-way ANOVA, a significant means for demographic variables and highest education level as well as the length of work experience $F(6, 27) = 4.634$, $p \leq .05$. This led to the scholars conclusively attributing good strategic direction to the success of organizations in terms of performance to work experience and high education levels due to the knowledge and skills that come with tenure. They further poised the significant relationship between all constructs of strategic direction, more specifically, the vision and organizational performance. Elsewhere, Bakker (2017), in a survey of 70 small-scale industries across the UK, established ANOVA results $F(3, 67) = 1.217$, $p \leq .05$, concluding that, indeed, the successful engagement of employees in planning had a significant influence on performance.

On the contrary, the One-way ANOVA results by Fontanella and Chandra (2017) indicated no positive significance between means of groups of independent variables and the dependent variable with findings for the strategic direction and demographic variables for gender, $F(7, 231) = 0.122$, $p \geq .05$, and level of management in the pharmaceutical companies, $F(7, 231) = 0.412$, $p \geq .05$ both showing no significance ($p \geq .05$). In the study, the two scholars established that strategic direction alone does not inspire the kind of efficiency required to improve the organizational performance of learning institutions arguing that at times, the leaders' strategic direction had a negative influence on their organization's performance due to poor vision and mission formulation. Moreover, the scholars failed to establish a relationship between vision and mission statement with performance.

The ordinal logistic regression (Nagelkerke Pseudo R-square) results showed that strategic direction explained a variance of 8.1% in organizational performance, $R^2 = .081$. Furthermore, ordinal logistic regression parameter estimates showed that strategic direction positively and significantly predicted organizational performance ($\beta = 0.473$, $p \leq .05$). This led to the null hypothesis being rejected, suggesting that strategic direction significantly influenced the organizational performance of pharmaceutical firms in Kenya. Similarly, a study by Carmeli et al. (2019) had results in line with the current study. The study explored the impact of mission and vision statements on the impact on employee performance in which ordinal logistic regression (Nagelkerke Pseudo R-square) results showed that strategic direction explained a variance of 9.6% in organizational performance, $R^2 = .096$ concluded that strategic direction influenced employees to excel thus extending the same success to the organizational performance.

On the contrary, Ordinal logistic regression results by Darbi (2019) determined non-significant (Nagelkerke Pseudo R-square) results showing that strategic direction explained a minor variance of 0.4% in organizational performance, $R^2 = .004$, an indication that most employees did not frequently engage with the mission and vision statements. This implied that their knowledge of the components/contents and perceptions about ownership needed to be higher. This further proved that strategic direction had little significant influence on organizational performance, contrary to what the current study established.

Conclusion

Correlation results revealed that strategic direction had a positive and significant relationship with organizational performance, $r(320) = .144$, $p < .05$. The Chi-square test indicated existence of a statistically significant association between strategic direction and organizational performance, $\chi^2 (322, N = 320) = 542.024$, $p < .05$. The one-way ANOVA results revealed that there were

significant differences between the means for strategic direction and demographic variables Demographic variables occurred for age bracket, F (4, 316) = 2.389, $p \leq .05$ and Work Experience in the pharmaceutical company, F (4, 316) = 1.902, $p \leq .05$. Ordinal logistic regression results revealed that regression model for strategic direction fitted the data well $\chi 2$ (322, N = 320) = 542.024, $p<.05$, and goodness-of-fit showed non-significant results for Pearson Chi-square statistic test, χ^2 (4, N = 320) = 7.421, p=.813, $p>.05$. The ordinal logistic regression (Nagelkerke Pseudo R-square) results indicated that strategic direction explained a variance of 8.1% in organizational performance, R2 =.081 In addition, ordinal logistic regression parameter estimates showed that strategic direction positively and significantly predicted organizational performance (β=0.473, $p \leq .05$). This led to the null hypothesis being rejected, suggesting that strategic direction has a significant influence on the organizational performance of pharmaceutical firms in Kenya.

Recommendations

The study recommends that the top leadership team of pharmaceutical companies should articulate the vision and mission statements ensuring alignment across the organization. The vision and mission statements should be documented in the company's strategic plans for proper implementation in all firm activities throughout pharmaceutical companies in Kenya.

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