



ROLE OF FOCUS STRATEGY ON ORGANIZATION PERFORMANCE IN FOUR AND FIVE STAR HOTELS IN NAIROBI COUNTY, KENYA

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ABSTRACT

This work looked at the role of focus strategy on organization performance in four and five star hotels in Nairobi County, Kenya. The study was guided by McKinsey 7S Model. A descriptive research design was adopted with a target population of 66 general managers and assistant general managers of four and five star hotels in Nairobi County, Kenya. A census survey was used in the study. Data collection tool was questionnaires. Descriptive included mean and standard deviation, while inferential statistics included correlation and regression were used for analysis of quantitative data. Statistical Package for Social Sciences version 23.0 was used for data analysis. This study may be significant to the management in five star hotels in Nairobi County since it could complement efforts around formulation and deployment of appropriate plans to realize institutional goals, and secure relevance in the current dynamic business world. The study findings revealed that performance of four and five star hotels in Nairobi County, Kenya was significantly related with focus strategy. Focus strategy had positive influence on performance. The implication of these findings is that managers in four and five star hotels in Nairobi County, Kenya need to adopt focus strategy, which would positively contribute to performance. The study's recommendation was that, the level 4 and 5-star hotel leaderships ought to recognize and utilize generic plans towards the enhancement of organizational success. According to the study, the leadership of Nairobi's 4 and 5-star hotels plays a key contribution in the provision of advisory, knowledge and important data to the organization's processes thus placing the organization in a strategic position competitively.

Key Words: Four and Five Star Hotels in Nairobi, Focus Strategy

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INTRODUCTION

Most organizations presently function in a greatly competitive market setting (Cornett, et. al., 2014). Over the last 30 years, there has been a notable rise in competition across all industries, including arts and education. As a result, every organization must have a plan to expand its clientele and customer base. Firms must create performance plans that will allow them to take advantage of opportunities, solve problems, and outmaneuver their competitors due to the intense competition in the market (Doan, 2020).

Efficient implementation of competitive strategies can enhance a company's performance, according to (Gomes, et, al., 2018). Therefore, within an evolving and complex setting where competition is inevitable, adopting appropriate business strategies is crucial for a company to maintain its competitiveness and productivity (Hassan et al., 2017). In the last decade, the hotel industry has increasingly relied on competitive strategies as a critical aspect of achieving a market edge from effective hotel brand management as well as segmentation approaches.

Businesses use marketing plans like focus differentiation. These strategies can be differentiated based on two key factors: company size, target market and whether it is pursuing a competitive advantage based on cost savings or product differentiation (Nolega et al., 2014). The intention of cost leadership strategy is to have the lowest production cost in the industry (Ali & Anwar, 2021).

According to Akintokunbo (2018) Organizational performance refers to the evaluation of an organization's attainments with regards to predetermined objectives goals. This involves comparing the actual results or outcomes to the desired outcomes that are specified in the company's plans. Organizational performance is the assessment of how effectively an organization attains the objectives stated in its vision, mission, and goals. It can be divided into two performances: financial or non-financial. Financial performance involves using various metrics to gauge the extent to

which a company is successfully realizing its goals. Equally, non-financial indicators are measurements that do not solely rely on financial data. These indicators have a long-term perspective and assess a company's ability to generate long-term value and sustainable growth for its shareholders.

In the year 2007/08, the tourism industry was responsible for close to 600,000 employment opportunities (Siongok, 2021). The analysis further indicated an estimated 638,000 jobs by the year 2017. This dominant performance by the hospitality industry is responsible for its increased contribution to the nation's GDP. An important component of the tourism industry is the hotels, and takes into account every establishment from the 5th to the 1st rank. This diversity enables the hotels to offer an increased number of services suiting the consumers demand and taste. This star ranking of hotels is a practice transcending the Kenyan boundaries, to being an international tradition; and is a recognized platform for differentiating consumer preferences and demands.

According to Johanna (2010), the agency mandated with the responsibility of rank star classification is also responsible for monitoring their accountability; and is stationed under the WTO wing. The evaluation is based on the infrastructural ability as well as delivery of service levels. In the year 2017, a government circular that was gazetted placed the number of 5-star hotels in the country at eight, all being based in the capital city (Nairobi). These hotels reported bed occupancies ranging between 46-716. Among these 5- star hotels include; Radisson Blu Hotel, Villa Rosa Kempinski, Sankara Nairobi, Hemming ways Nairobi, Fairmont the Norfolk, The Tribe hotel, Sarova Stanley, and Serena hotel. Later more establishments were accorded the 5&4-star rank and this comprised of; the Intercontinental hotel, Hilton hotel, Laico regency, Jacaranda hotel, Southern Sand, Crowne Plaza Upperhill, Ole Sereni, Eka Hotel, Panari Hotel, Safari Park, Lazizi Airport, and Hilton Garden Inn. The location of majority of these hotels suggests a strange desire for privacy, within an uptown preference and with proximity to

international firms and improved infrastructural network.

Statement of the Problem

Based on the 2018 economic survey publication From the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (KNBS), the hotel industry in Kenya has experienced a continuous decrease in growth rate, declining from 18 % in 2016 to 12% in 2017. This trend is attributed to the impact of globalization, with multinational businesses slowly replacing locally-based hospitality industries. To address this issue, a solution needs to be identified.

Additionally, Muli (2019) expressed concern about the unsatisfactory outcomes by star-rated hotels in Kenya, with intense competition being a contributing factor to their ongoing business failure. However, empirical research on the performance of these hotels has been limited. Thus, this publication study aimed to examine the effects of competing strategies on the performance of star-rated hotels. Muli (2019) emphasized the need for the Kenyan hospitality industry to adapt to the demands of competing at unprecedented levels if it is to survive.

Wawira (2016) determined that utilizing marketing strategies was beneficial to the operations of hotels. Hassan et al. (2017) conducted research which showed effective strategic management practices having some major outcomes on the performance of the hotel industry. Murimi and Wadongo (2021) argued that star-rated hotels could enhance their performance through improved revenue management, while Nolega et al. (2015) established a positive correlation amongst customer relations management methods and loyalty. Gitongu (2021) demonstrated the positive impact of workforce training on the hotels' outcomes. However, there is a lack of research on the association amongst competitive strategies and the institutional results of star-rated hotels in Kenya, particularly in the face of the unpredictable operating environment caused by the effects of Covid-19. This publication aimed to address this informational gap by examining how competing strategies affected the performance of 4 and 5-star hotels in Nairobi County, Kenya.

There are conflicting study outcomes in the past analyses undertaken in the past years. The previous studies reveal that the four and five star hotels have been using competitive strategies, however new entrants have managed to gain significant market share in Kenya. Based on this background, this analysis evaluate the role of focus strategy on organization performance in four and five star hotels in Nairobi County, Kenya.

General Objective of the Study

The study's intention was to access the role of focus strategy on organization performance in four and five star hotels in Nairobi County, Kenya. The study was guided by the following hypothesis;

- **H₀₁:** No major relationship exists amongst focus strategy and organization performance

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Framework

McKinsey 7S Model

The development of McKinsey 7S model was by Tom Peters and Robert Waterman of McKinsey Consulting in the early 1980s and it became a useful tool for evaluating and analyzing an organization's internal condition. The framework identifies seven components of a business practice that can be linked to increase a company's effectiveness. The 7S model categorizes elements into hard and soft components, where structures and channels are regarded physical, and common ethos, expertise and workforce are regarded soft aspects. According to the framework, the interdependence between elements is crucial, and changes to one element may have an impact on other elements. The Hilton McKinsey 7S framework places shared values at the center of the model as they influence employee behavior and performance, as illustrated below. According to this model, there are seven variables starting with 'S' making it easier for recognition in business. These seven variables are; shared values, skills, systems, structure, staff and strategy. The purpose of this framework is to determine features whose adoption leads to better institutional results.

Daily operations and plans undertaken with regard to institution management form the “system (Cox et al., 2019).

The labour pool of an institution forms the “staff”; the concept of institution capabilities forms the “skill”. The organization shown by the company leadership in their conduct forms the “style”. Principles defining crucial instructions common across the institutional membership form the “shared value”. The remaining variables; systems, strategy and structure are sophisticated and normally appear dominant as a result of their strong presence as well as being physical items like publications, strategy documents, reports and institutional tables. According to Cox, et. al., (2019) a rigid, hierarchy based institutional organization is normally viewed to lead to bureaucratic institutional structures, where authority is dominant in the top leadership levels.

The model depicts the interdependent processes and aspects within an organization, disregarding the influence of the external environment. It does not directly address institutional efficiency or performance. However, it continues to face criticism for the absence Of empirical data in supporting its positions. Additionally, it has been accused of overlooking the nuanced and sophisticated aspects where strategy conceptualization and execution gaps may actually exist.

In order to ensure smooth and conflict-free business operations, the hotel industry has implemented well-defined systems. These systems primarily focus on individual departments within the industry. The organizational structure within hotels is relatively flat, encouraging a culture of continuous learning and innovation. By minimizing the number of managerial levels, employees feel at ease and more empowered, enjoying increased access to information and closer interaction with senior management and leadership.

The hospitality sector utilizes a participatory leadership approach, allowing the hotel industry to actively involve its employees in managerial

decisions and decision-making processes. This leadership style promotes regular engagement between leadership, employees, and other managerial groups. It serves to identify potential conflicts and gather feedback on operational and strategic initiatives. Given the extensive international operations of the hotel industry, a significant workforce is employed. The recruitment process considers both internal and external candidates, based on need as well as desired qualification for varied positions. This demonstrates that the hotel business employs individuals who possess the necessary skills for their respective roles.

Focus Strategy and Organization Performance

An institution’s results do not only relate to the revenue from sales, but goes further to include how alterations in sales revenue translate to adjustments in market conditions (Cecily & Cooper, 2017). Indication of results of an institution compared to business rivals is indicated by the share of the economy the institution has shown capability to own. Revenue from sales is controlled by the value aspect and even as the institution’s sales numbers is easily accessible, the entire market revenues show increased difficulty to identify. Most organizations prefer to improve sales revenue compared to their business rivals. Robbins, et. al., (2019) additionally adds that an institution may decide to improve its market control in order to take advantage of economies of scale. Operations in increased capacity are critical towards establishing any edge on the cost advantage.

Akintokunbo (2018) undertook a study in Nigeria to examine the connection market focus strategy has towards institutional outcomes of TELCOs in Port Harcourt. The model of the study was that it utilized a cross sectional template comprising of the leadership workforce of four TELCOs in Port Harcourt. The population size was 134, with a sampling size of 100 that was reached at through the use of Yamane formula. After data entry, analysis and presentation, it was deduced that market focus strategy positively and in major way impact institution competitiveness. There was a proposal

from the review that institutions willing implement market focus plans ought to have their attention towards a smaller market and work towards realizing differentiation in that market.

Xuhua et al. (2018) investigated the use of entrepreneurial innovation tactics to fuel the growth of small hotels in Ghana. The study population was made up of 2,915 small-scale hotels, and random sampling was used to collect the data. The study employed regression and correlation analysis approaches. According to the research, the implementation of innovative business tactics improved the productivity and expansion of the hotels. The report suggests that promoting the growth of the hotel industry may depend on the integration of service, process, management, and marketing innovations. Moreover, incorporating innovative ideas into the strategic plans of hotels will have a direct impact on guest traffic and business expansion. However, the study did not take into account the Balanced Scorecard viewpoints while examining the performance of star-rated hotels.

Wawira (2016) conducted a study on the effectiveness of marketing strategies for large hotels in Nairobi County. The population for this descriptive research included 30 four- and five-star hotels across the county. The study found that while specialty marketing, product development, and promotional techniques were used, penetration pricing emerged as the most popular marketing strategy. The study revealed that the hotels' performance was positively influenced by their product development strategy, market expansion, and penetration. However, the study indicated that pricing policies did not significantly predict hotel performance. The study broadened the previous research's narrow focus on marketing methods to include novel and differentiating tactics employed by star-rated hotels.

An analysis conducted by Munyoki and K'Obonyo (2015) seeking to establish the contribution of institutional independence and strategic placement in the association among competitive plans and the results of state parastatals in Kenya. The positivist philosophy anchored the research. Questionnaires

were adopted in collecting data from the managing director of the state parastatals. Findings from data analysis showed a moderate value for market focus, a translation that market focus according to the participants was not sufficient the state parastatals. State parastatals emphasizing on efficiency recorded top mean score values, with institutions focusing on time management following closely. Conclusions from the analysis were that, competitive plans significantly impacted results.

Kamau (2013) conducted research on the impact of product differentiation on sales performance in supermarkets located in the central business area of Nakuru, Kenya. The study employed both purposive sampling and simple random sampling techniques to determine the sample size of respondents for its non-experimental survey approach. The study collected data through questionnaires and interview schedules and analyzed it using descriptive and inferential statistics. The findings of the study revealed that physical and product differentiation has a significant influence on enhancing the annual sales performance of supermarkets, whereas service differentiation demonstrated a poor association. The study suggested that supermarkets should focus on physical differentiating methods and product qualities to compete effectively in the expanding market. Although the study had gaps in the background due to its concentration on supermarkets rather than the telecommunications sector, it provided valuable insights into product differentiation's impact on sales performance. The current study differs from Kamau's research in that it will employ a descriptive research design instead of an experimental research strategy, which creates a methodological gap between the two studies. A differentiation approach can often result in a reduced emphasis on price, but not always, as per the literature. However, the current study examines other constructs in addition to product differentiation, which was the only construct examined in the previous study, leading to a gap in the literature.

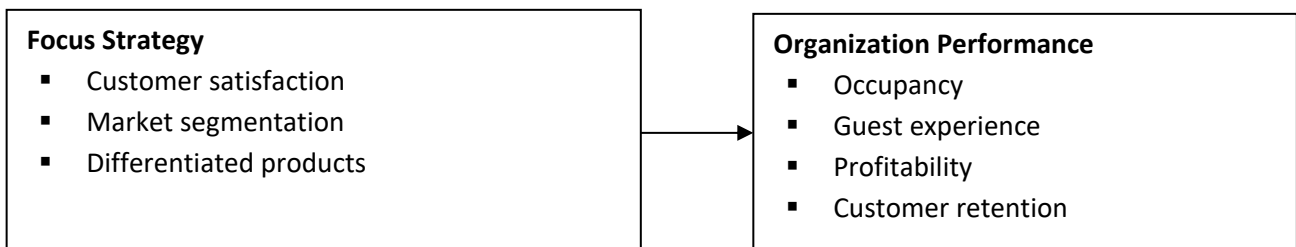
Business is a high-stakes game, where the success and survival of an organization depend on well-crafted plans and actions to tackle present and future challenges and adapt to changing circumstances. A poorly executed or miscalculated strategic decision could result in massive financial losses, jeopardize thousands of jobs, or even lead to the collapse of an entire company. To formulate a successful strategy, managers must involve all members of the organization and view it as a unified entity rather than a collection of independent business units. A strategy is a comprehensive plan that enables a company to thrive (Ali & Anwar, 2021).

Onditi (2018) conducted a study on the impact of generic banking strategies on performance. The analysis identified five clusters of banks based on their strategies: general differentiation, focus, stuck in the middle, cost leadership, and customer service differentiation. The study found that enterprises using a clear strategy outperformed those that were stuck in the middle in terms of return on assets. Cost leadership followers performed significantly better

than those caught in the middle. However, other strategy adherents did not show a significant difference in performance compared to the stuck in the middle group.

Chelanga et al., (2017) undertook an analysis examining the manner performance of SMEs in Nairobi County, Kenya was affected by differentiation and focus strategies. It adopted an explanatory research design and involved a target population of 7384 SMEs, from which a sample of 95 SMEs was selected by systematic random sampling. Data collection was by employing collected through structured questionnaires, and analysis done using descriptive and inferential statistics. The study revealed a major link amongst differentiation strategy, market focus strategy, and financial success. The findings indicated that the use of differentiation strategy and market focus strategy had a significant and positive impact on the financial performance of SMEs. The study proposed that management consider implementing strategic management to fulfill the objectives of SMEs while prioritizing development and profitability.

Conceptual Framework



Independent Variables

Source: Author (2022)

Dependent Variable

METHODOLOGY

Descriptive survey was utilized in this study to examine features impacting positive adoption of strategies. The study’s population was 4 & 5- star hotels within Nairobi County. A census survey was used in the study. The study utilized questionnaire in collection of primary data. Towards testing for internal consistency, Cronbach’s Alpha was the preferred approach. After collection of data, there was standardization done by varied control

indicators like monitoring for completion and inconsistencies as data entry awaits. There was then the questionnaires’ coding, with the assignment of specific numbers as data entry awaits. After the entry of the numbers, there was a check for ant inconsistency in the collected data. The investigator checked the data for the identification of inconsistencies and completion. This was then followed by data analysis using SPSS (Statistical package for social scientist) version 23. Inferential

statistics (correlation and regression) and descriptive statistics (mean, frequencies and standard deviation) was done and data presentation was done using of frequency tables as the next phase.

Below is the formula used for Multi regression analysis.

$$Y = C + \beta X_1 + \beta X_2 + \beta X_3 + \varepsilon$$

Where;

$$Y = C + \beta X_1 + \beta X_2 + \beta X_3 + \varepsilon$$

Y= Organisation Performance

C =is a constant term

X₁ = Differentiation Strategy

X₂ = Cost leadership Strategy

X₃ = Focus Strategy

ε =is the error term

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Descriptive Analysis

Focus here will be a presentation of descriptive analysis determinations with regard to the independent (Differentiation Strategy, Cost Leadership Strategy, Focus Strategy) and the dependent variables (Organizational performance).

Organization Performance

Here participants were called give personal affirmation to certain statements in relation to organizational performance. Below is table 1 showing the findings.

Table 1

Organizational Performance Descriptive Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Through a differentiation strategy, there has been the retention of clients	60	4.08	.69
Performance management and employee feedback are key performance drivers in the hotel	60	3.76	1.01
Key performance indicators are used in evaluating performance	60	4.21	.82
The relationship between hotel and team objectives is clearly defined	60	3.81	.89
Departmental KPI's are always linked to organizational objectives	57	3.59	1.03
The link between individual and team objectives is clearly explained	60	4.06	.60
Aggregate mean and standard deviation		3.91	0.84

Source: Research Data (2021)

Findings from table 1 indicate that the significant group that had the highest (M= 4.21, SD=0.82) affirmed that Key performance indicators are used in evaluating performance. This was closely followed by through a differentiation strategy, there has been the retention of clients (M=4.08, SD=0.69). Furthermore, respondents that the link between individual and team objectives is clearly explained (M=4.06, SD=0.60). The relationship between hotel and team objectives is clearly defined (M=3.81, SD=0.89), and performance management and

employee feedback are key performance drivers in the hotel (M=3.76, SD=1.01). Departmental KPI's are always linked to organizational objectives (M=3.59, SD=1.03).

Influence of Focus Strategy on Organization Performance

Here participants were called give personal affirmation to certain statements in relation to the influence of focus strategy on organization performance. Below is table 2 showing the findings.

Table 2

Influence of Focus Strategy on Organization Performance

	N	Mean	Standard deviation
Our hotel Focuses on specific markets where it provides the best service	60	4.13	1.11
Our hotel occupancy levels are better than our competitors	60	3.71	1.02
The hotel have highly differentiated products for our clientele with regard to variety of menus offered	60	3.95	.87
Customer satisfaction surveys inform our decision making process	60	4.15	1.16
Competitor surveys inform our performance improvement plans	60	2.50	1.37
Aggregate mean and standard deviation		3.68	1.10

Source: Research Data (2021)

Focus strategy is one of the factors considered to influence organizational performance in the four and five hotels. The study sought to prove this claim. Findings from the table 4.9 indicate a significant group shows that the majority who scoring the highest mean score (M=4.15, SD=1.16) affirmed that the customer satisfaction surveys inform our decision making process. This was closely followed by our hotel Focuses on specific markets where it provides the best service (M=4.13, SD=1.11). Additionally, respondents affirmed that the hotel have highly differentiated products for our clientele with regard to variety of menus offered (M=3.95, SD.=0.87), and our hotel occupancy levels are better than our competitors (M=3.71, SD =1.02).

The deductions concur with Akintokunbo (2018) undertook a study in Nigeria to examine the connection market focus strategy has towards institutional outcomes of TELCOs in Port Harcourt. The model of the study was that it utilized a cross sectional template comprising of the leadership workforce of four TELCOs in Port Harcourt. The population size was 134, with a sampling size of 100 that was reached at through the use of Yamane formula. After data entry, analysis and presentation, it was deduced that market focus strategy positively and in major way impact institution competitiveness. There was a proposal from the review that institutions willing implement market focus plans ought to have their attention towards a smaller market and work towards realizing differentiation in that market.

An analysis conducted by Munyoki and K’Obonyo (2015) seeking to establish the contribution of institutional independence and strategic placement in the association among competitive plans and the results of state parastatals in Kenya. The positivist philosophy anchored the research. primary data was obtained by the use of questionnaires administered to the managing director of the state parastatals. Findings from data analysis showed a moderate value for market focus, a translation that market focus according to the participants was not sufficient the state parastatals. State parastatals emphasizing on efficiency recorded top mean score values, with institutions focusing on time management following closely. Conclusion from the analysis was that, competitive plans significantly impacted results.

An analysis conducted by Munyoki and K’Obonyo (2015) seeking to establish the contribution of institutional independence and strategic placement in the association among competitive plans and the results of state parastatals in Kenya. The positivist philosophy anchored the research. Collecting information from primary sources was by using questionnaires issued to the managing director of the state parastatals. Findings from data analysis showed a moderate value for market focus, a translation that market focus according to the participants was not sufficient the state parastatals. State parastatals emphasizing on efficiency recorded top mean score values, with institutions focusing on time management following closely. Conclusion

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CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The objective of this study was to look at the role of focus strategy towards organizational performance in four and five star hotels in Nairobi County, Kenya. It was found that the focus strategy have a positive but significant relation with performance at 5% level of significance. Further, focus strategy had a strong significant positive influence on performance.

Findings from data analysis showed a moderate value for market focus, a translation that market focus according to the participants was not sufficient the state parastatals. State parastatals emphasizing on efficiency recorded top mean score values, with institutions focusing on time management following closely. Conclusion from the analysis was that, competitive plans significantly impacted results.

Focus strategy continues to be a key determinant of success in organizations. The responses showed that organization performance at four and five star hotels in Nairobi County is significantly influenced by focus

strategy. The study concludes that there is a strong positive correlation between the study variable as factors that influence organization performance.

The final recommendation by the study is that there ought to be increased effort on supervision and monitoring for the purposes of realizing reduced costs. A reduction of costs calls for the establishment of cost-limiting instruments and a comprehensive adoption of cost cutting measures in departments like innovation and research, marketing among others. These cost cutting interventions ought to be aligned with the development of cheaper products and eventually reaching an expanded reach.

Suggestion for Further Studies

Based on outcomes from the analysis, the determinations and advanced recommendations, it is important to conduct more research on others variables that are not covered in this study to validate the actual factors that affects generic strategies on performance of four and five star hotels where the intention is to shed more on the present study findings and finally a validation of the outcomes.

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