ISSN 2348-3156 (Print)
International Journal of Social Science and Humanities Research ISSN 2348-3164 (online)
Vol. 11, Issue 4, pp: (236-244), Month: October - December 2023, Available at: www.researchpublish.com

INFLUENCE OF STRATEGIC SENSITIVITY ON ORGANIZATION PERFORMANCE OF PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS IN KENYA: A CASE OF NAIROBI WATER COMPANY

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DOI: https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.10068591

Published Date: 03-November-2023

Abstract: **This study sought to establish the influence of strategic sensitivity on organization performance of public institutions in Kenya: a case of Nairobi Water Company. The study adopted a case study research design. The target population was the employees at Nairobi Water Company. This study adopted stratified sampling technique to choose a representative sample of eighteen respondents (8 directors, and 10 managers from crucial departments. A semi structured questionnaire as the main instrument of collecting primary data from directors and managers at the Nairobi Water Company. The researcher used descriptive statistics such as the mean and standard deviation to also present the data, while analyzed the data and presented the results in form of percentages, frequencies, graphs and tables. The study also utilized multiple regressions analysis to find out the relationship between business level strategy and performance. Correlation analysis was also used to scale and analyze how independent variables and dependent variable correlate and whose data was put in interval and ratio scales. From the study findings, it revealed that strategic sensitivity had a significant relationship to organization performance by identifying opportunities and threats for competitive advantage. The study comes to the conclusion that leaders in the institution were focused on getting the job done by anticipating, structuring, managing, and assessing organization's performance, and that strategic agility was seen as their role and obligation. The study recommended that top managers' capacity to cope with resource management and service delivery will be facilitated by their awareness of the many strategic views. Therefore, a comparative study can be conducted in private institutions to compare the findings for effective generalization of the findings on both categories of organizations' performance.**

Keywords: **Strategic Sensitivity, Organizational Performance, Public Institutions.**

1. INTRODUCTION

The setting in which businesses operate is one that is always changing and becoming more unstable, unpredictable, and complex (Uhl-Bien & Arena, 2017). Businesses should embrace management strategies that are focused on agility and be dynamic. Businesses must act quickly to address unexpected situations by implementing strategies that equip their staff, invest in technology, and do research. Agile businesses can adapt to market changes and potential disruptions by turning them into competitive advantages thanks to their organizational structures, information technologies, and human resources. According to Garcia-Alcaraz et al. (2020), agility is essential to ensure that the company thrives and grows with customer satisfaction as the main pillar. No of the size, sector, or age of a company, organizational agility is a critical notion. These companies operate in open networks where interactions with other companies and stakeholders create a variety of difficulties and uncertainties that need to be handled to ensure company survival (Arokodare, Asikhia & Makinde, 2019).

The performance of a firm is based on its strategic agility approaches toward its competitors, clients, suppliers, partners, and government policies, according to Aminattalab and Ansari (2016). Agile-practices-adopted organizations offer skills and experience; over time, their diversified labor force enables them to create distinctive competencies and technical capabilities. In response to changing customer needs, an agile organization is able to utilize its core skills effectively and efficiently. All organizations view agility as a competitive advantage, and in order to be competitive, all businesses must be adaptable in how they conduct their business. The four characteristics of agility are proficiency, reactivity, flexibility, and speed (Denning, 2017)

According to Reed and Blunsdon (2012) change is one of the great certainties in the industrialized countries around the worldof public institution life, and how well an organization responds are a measure of its agility. Managing erratic and constantly shifting consumer possibilities poses an increasing challenge to organizations today. Forecasts become useless, and success depends on the ability to adapt quickly and adaptably to consumer needs, to shift gears and continually immerse the firm in these new prospects. The capacity to adapt to changes in a timely and appropriate manner in the face of unpredictable and rapidly changing competitive factors in the marketplace is referred to as agility. Agility is a unifying term that encompasses speed of reaction and sharpness in reading environmental dynamics. Adegbite, Simintiras, Dwivedi, and Ifie (2018) further noted that since modern businesses confront severe competition, globalization, and time-to-market challenges, there is a growing understanding that agility is essential to success. Organizational agility enables the company to operate quickly and unexpectedly without compromising improved operational effectiveness.

The ability to adapt to change, internal readiness to adopt environmental changes, the presence of both physical and virtual information exchange channels, and the capacity to recognize changes in the marketplace are the most crucial factors in achieving strategic agility in developing nations. In times of environmental change, agility is more valuable because it helps businesses match their capabilities with market demand (Fartashand, 2012). Most banks in the Nigerian telecommunications sector are currently focused on expanding their regional and maybe global presence, thus it is crucial for them to acquire the capacity and capability to compete in a regional or global telecommunications market.

According to Okoth (2015), in order to sustain and enhance their operational performance, public institutions in Kenya must be flexible and able to recognize and promptly address operational changes. Because of a lapse in their operational performances, companies who are not agile may see their client base and competitive advantage decline in the market. Organizations acknowledge that market turbulence is unpredictable and uncontrollable, which limits their capacity to move quickly and according to plan. Businesses must be flexible because only by doing so will they be able to grasp not just their present markets, product lines, competences, and consumers, but also the potential for future markets and the need to adapt to new opportunities. A company's agility enables it to respond more swiftly than it.

Nairobi City Water and Sewerage Company (NCWSC) was established in December 2003 under the provisions of Companies Act cap. 486. It is a fully owned subsidiary of the county of Nairobi. Its area of jurisdiction is divided into six administrative areas, namely the Northern, Eastern, North Eastern, Central, Southern, and Western, which are further subdivided into 25 zones. Its offices are located in Nairobi's Kampala Road Industrial Area. The Company is responsible for supplying Nairobi with water and sewage services. The Nairobi City Council's Water and Sewage Department historically provided those services. The Water Act of 2002, which established a new institution to manage the nation's water resources, was the catalyst for the creation of the Nairobi Water Company.

The Athi Water Services Board (AWSB) has appointed the Nairobi Water Company to provide water and sewerage services to its residents within the parameters specified in the Service Provision Agreement (SPA), which guarantees an adequate and high-quality water supply, reasonable rates, and the maintenance and development of water and sewer infrastructure. The NCC, AWSB, and NCWSC have a tripartite agreement as well. Other agreements include those between the NCC and NCWSC for Agency and Operational assets (Strategic Plan 2014/2015-2018/2019). Only 50% of Nairobi's three million citizens currently have direct access to piped water. The remainder get their water from stands, sellers, and unauthorized connections. About 40% of the current consumers receive water on a 24-hour basis.

2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

According to Tseng and Lin (2016), a large number of firms are working in more complicated business settings that are unstable, turbulent, and uncertain. Both professionals in the industry and academics have invested a significant amount of effort and money into addressing the ongoing instability in the business environment. Organizations are putting measures in place that will increase their adaptability to the constantly changing business environment as it becomes harder and harder to anticipate the future. The solution to the business environment's growing complexity is strategic agility. Existing literature shows that agility has been used in several organizational departments, including agile supply chain and agile project management. Agile organizations are those that have incorporated agility into their entire structure.

Organization performance is an issue in the modern and globalized world since employee performance and productivity is part of the organization performance. During the financial year ended 30 June 2020, the Company recorded a net operating loss of Kshs. 634,895,405 (2019: a net operating loss of Kshs. 295,911,7498), which depleted further the revenue reserve from negative Kshs. 3,005,132,991 as at 30 June 2019 to negative Kshs. 4,524,091,163 as at 30 June 2020. The current liabilities balance of Kshs. 4,536,415,303 exceeded the current assets balance of Kshs. 3,167,964,349 and thus, resulting in a negative working capital of Kshs. 1,368,450,954 as at 30 June 2020. In preparing the financial statements, the directors are responsible for assessing the ability of Nairobi City Water and Sewerage Company Ltd to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting. This has been a concern that has informed the current study.

According to Asgari et al. (2017), agility in public institutions entails new innovations, quick service delivery in response to shifting client expectations, and flexibility guided by service sector information. In Nairobi Water Company, agility is defined as the ability of the organization's staff to use their core skills to quickly anticipate and meet client needs. It also refers to the ability to continuously innovate and enhance products. Public institutions now need to provide agile services because of developing, quick-changing water service technology, more affluent and demanding customers, their increased need for value from services, and lower costs associated with customer onboarding. The expansion of agile service delivery in public institutions has also been greatly aided by the liberalization of the public service sector and tight regulatory oversight.

Globally, a number of research on strategic agility have been done. While Govuzela and Mafini (2019) examined organizational agility and SMEs' performance in South Africa, Krotov and Junglas (2015) studied mobile technology as an enabler of organizational agility. Murungi (2015) conducted research on the impact of strategic agility on competitive capability of private universities. Kitur (2020) looked into the relationship between the performance of tours and organizational agility and tourism companies in Nairobi, and Waweru (2016) did a study on strategic agility enablers and the performance of insurance brokerage firms in Kenya.

To the best of the authors' knowledge, there is hardly any study on how Kenya's public institutions function when it comes to strategic sensitivity. There is currently little empirical data in the literature that links strategic sensitivity to the effectiveness of governmental institutions in Kenya. Being motivated by the complexity of strategic sensitivity and the lack of conceptual and theoretical support in the literature that is currently available, this study sought to establish the relationship between sensitivity strategies and organization performance of public institutions in Kenya: a case of Nairobi Water Company.

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

Strategic sensitivity is defined as the sharpness of perception of, and the intensity of awareness and attention to, strategic developments (Doz & Kosonen, 2018). Strategic sensitivity means being open to as much information, intelligence and innovations as possible by creating and maintaining relationships with a variety of different people and organizations. Strategic sensitivity is a combination of foresight, insight and simple probing, with the most importance on insight. According Sull (2019) defines the same phenomenon as consistently identifying and seizing opportunities more quickly than the competitors. According to him, companies need to have shared real time market data that is detailed and reliable; small number of corporate priorities in order to focus efforts; clear performance goals for teams and individuals; and mechanisms to hold people accountable and to reward them (Sull, 2019). What it takes from the management is following the flow of information, sustaining a sense of urgency, maintaining focus on critical objectives, and recruiting entrepreneurial employees.

Strategic sensitivity relies on foresight, exploration, gaining perspective and generality. It thus requires the ability to stay apart and detached from daily operations, which means having free time for sensing (Junni, Sarala, Tarba & Weber, 2015). While strategic sensitivity is about gathering and integrating knowledge to fuel continuous strategy development and innovation at its core, it is about organizational sense-making. Doz and Kosonen (2018) depict strategically sensitive organizations as those with a 'sharpness of perception and intensity of awareness and attention to incipient trends and converging forces with intense real-time sense-making. As such, it is not just about having knowledge, but being able to make judgments with that knowledge.

This is achieved through deep involvement in the ecosystem and preferential relationships with providers of such knowledge (Brueller, Carmeli & Drori, 2019). Strategic sensitivity is fostered by the combination of a strong externally oriented and internally participative strategy process, a high level of tension and attentiveness, and a rich, intense, and open internal dialogue. However, more than this, organizations attempting to achieve strategic sensitivity must both learn from and let go of experience, look forward and backward, and engage ideas from the top down and bottom up (Lewis, Andriopoulos & Smith, 2019). Onyema and Akanbi (2012) examined the influence of strategic agility on the perceived performance of manufacturing firms in Nigeria. A company's performance is influenced by its own activities as well as those of its rivals, clients, suppliers, partners, and governments. All of these actions could have been considered to be part of the corporate environment. Business pressures force organizations to react to opportunities and difficulties if they are to survive or develop long-term competitive advantages. The study found that the performance of manufacturing organizations can be significantly impacted by strategic agility as indicated by strategic sensitivity, collective commitment or leadership unity, and source fluidity. In order to deal with changes in the complicated business environment successfully and boost their performance, it was advised that businesses should be proactive rather than reactive.

Mishra (2013) examined certain aspects of evaluating agility from an Indian viewpoint using case studies and empirical research. In the thesis, decision-making issues related to agility evaluation and enterprise assessment are highlighted, with supplier selection in an agile supply chain coming next. The study offers a thorough understanding of the hierarchical relationships between the several agility variables needed to evaluate organizational and supply chain agility. It has been suggested that agility appraisal modules function effectively in both fuzzy and gray environments. Agility barriers have been identified as well. The outcome of the empirical research as well as case study conducted in two Indian industries (automotive and railway construction at eastern India) have been critically analyzed.

Ogema (2017) conducted a study on lean and agile procurement strategies and performance at East Africa Breweries Limited. The study was a case study. The target population of this study comprised the staff working in East African Breweries headquarters. The study adopted stratified random sampling to select 20% of the staff in different departments at EABL. The study sample size was 38 team leaders. Descriptive statistics for the quantitative data included frequencies, percentages, mean scores and standard deviation. The relationship between independent variables and dependent variable was established using a multiple regression analysis. The study results were presented using charts and tables. According to the report, East African Breweries have a significant implementation of supplier relationships, lean supplier practices, lean product management practices, "Just in Time," lean thinking, lean warehouse practices, and Kanban Systems, with a moderate implementation of e-procurement. The study found that standardization standards had the least impact on the performance at East Africa Breweries Limited Kenya, and that waste management methods were significantly related to that performance, followed by demand management techniques and behavioral practices.

4. METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a case study research design. The target population was the employees at Nairobi Water Company. This study adopted stratified sampling technique to choose a representative sample of eighteen respondents (8 directors, and 10 managers from crucial departments. A semi structured questionnaire as the main instrument of collecting primary data from directors and managers at the Nairobi Water Company. The researcher used descriptive statistics such as the mean and standard deviation to also present the data, while analyzed the data and presented the results in form of percentages, frequencies, graphs and tables. The study also utilized multiple regressions analysis to find out the relationship between business level strategy and performance. Correlation analysis was also used to scale and analyze how independent variables and dependent variable correlate and whose data was put in interval and ratio scales.

5. FINDINGS

The study sought to establish the management agreement with statements regarding influence of strategic sensitivity on organizational performance. Table 1 presents the data findings. From the results, majority of the respondents strongly agreed that the organization has a clear mission with a clear line of insight throughout the organization that enhances its performance as shown by a mean of 4.9333, that the organization vision and mission are matched with the objectives to propel the organization forward as shown by a mean of 4.9333 and that the organization policies and practices have a clear mission throughout to frequently help in taking effective action in complex rapidly changing conditions in the organization as shown by a mean of 4.8000. Further, the results show that the respondents were in agreement that the organization structure encourages co-strategizing with multiple stakeholders as shown by a mean of 4.2667 and that the organization management frame opportunities and threats in new insightful ways as they emerge as shown by a mean of 4.1333.

Other analysis findings showed the skewness and kurtosis to demonstrate the asymmetric and symmetric of the probability distribution of the real valued random variables. Firstly, Skewness measures the asymmetric of the probability distribution of a real-valued random variable showing negative or positive skewness. The study results from all responses regarding the strategic sensitivity were negatively skewed. In this sense, a negative skew indicates that the tail on the left side of the probability density function is longer than the right side and the bulk of the values lies on the right of the mean.

Secondly, establishing the kurtosis of the responses measures the peakedness of the probability distribution of a real-valued random variable. For this study the kurtosis on the responses on strategic sensitivity all the statements assumed a positive kurtosis value. Furthermore, the ideal measurements that attempt to convey information about the degree of departure from a normal distribution include skewness and kurtosis. Since the values are modest in this situation, we may infer that the deviation from normalcy was minor and hence not substantial. The results agree with Doz and Kosonen (2018) that strategically sensitive companies are those that have a "sharpness of perception and intensity of awareness and attention to incipient trends and converging forces with intensive real-time sense-making." From the study findings as showcased in Table 2, the study validates the Doz and Kosonen theory on strategic sensitivity in companies. Strategic agility may have effect on organizational performance within public institutions.

Table 1: Strategic Sensitivity

Statements	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
The organization policies and practices have a clear mission throughout to frequently help in taking effective action in complex rapidly changing conditions in the organization	4.8000	.41404	-1.672	.897
The organization management frame opportunities and threats in new insightful ways as they emerge	4.1333	.99043	-2.335	7.561
The organization structure encourages co-strategizing with multiple stakeholders	4.2667	1.03280	-1.514	1.556
The organization has a clear mission with a clear line of insight throughout the organization that enhances its performance.	4.9333	.25820	-3.873	15.000
The organization vision and mission are matched with the objectives to propel the organization forward	4.9333	.25820	-3.873	15.000

(N = 15)

The study sought to establish the management agreement with statements regarding the achievement of organization performance in the Nairobi Water Company. The results are as presented in Table 2. Therefore, the results showed that the respondents were in strong agreement with the statements that stated that the organization has put in place strategies to ensure that the staff upholds respect among them and towards the clients as shown by a mean of 4.8000, and that the organization has made its values known through creed and has also made the employees follow those values as shown by a mean of 4.7333, whereas most of the respondents also strongly agreed that the employees in the firm commonly speak of their company's beliefs to boost their culture of doing things as shown by a mean of 4.6000. furthermore, some of the managers strongly agreed that it is the policy of the management of the organization to empower its employees through structured frameworks as shown by a mean of 4.4000, and that the organization has laid down responsibilities for each position held as shown by a mean of 4.3333.

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International Journal of Social Science and Humanities Research ISSN 2348-3164 (online)
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Other analysis findings showed the skewness and kurtosis to demonstrate the asymmetric and symmetric of the probability distribution of the real valued random variables. Firstly, Skewness measures the asymmetric of the probability distribution of a real-valued random variable showing negative or positive skewness. The study results from all responses regarding the organization performance were negatively skewed. In this sense, a negative skew indicates that the tail on the left side of the probability density function is longer than the right side and the bulk of the values lies on the right of the mean.

Secondly, establishing the kurtosis of the responses measures the peakedness of the probability distribution of a real-valued random variable. For this study the kurtosis on the responses on organization performance three statements assumed a negative kurtosis value, while the other two statements scored a positive kurtosis value. Furthermore, the ideal measurements that attempt to convey information about the degree of departure from a normal distribution include skewness and kurtosis. Since the values are modest in this situation, we may infer that the deviation from normalcy was minor and hence not substantial.

Table 2: Organization Performance

Statements	**Mean**	**Std. Deviation**	**Skewness**	**Kurtosis**
The firm predicts future trends and identifies opportunities effectively	4.600	0.82808	-2.543	7.067
The firm has a high percentage of return customers	4.733	3.45774	-1.176	-.734
The firm's customer base has been growing steadily	4.733	3.45774	-1.176	-.734
The firm's sales have been growing steadily	4.733	3.45774	-1.176	-.734
The firm has been in a profitable position	4.933	3.25820	-3.873	15.000

(N = 15)

According to table 3, the correlation coefficient between organizational performance of public institutions in Kenya and strategic sensitivity is 0.493; this factor implies that there is a positive association between strategic sensitivity (X1) and organizational performance of public institutions in Kenya. This positive relationship was statistically significant since the significant value of 0.009 as shown is less thus $p < 0.05$.These findings support the research deductions by Mishra (2013) that understanding the strategies, strengths and weaknesses of competitors is vital in strategic planning.

Table 3: Pearson Correlations

		Performance of public institutions	Strategic Sensitivity (X1)
Performance Of Public Institutions	Pearson Correlation	1	.493
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.009
	N	15	15
Strategic Sensitivity (X1)	Pearson Correlation	. 293	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.009	
	N	15	15

In this study, a simple regression analysis was conducted to test the influence among predictor variables. The model summary is presented in the table below. Since there already exist a relationship between the two variables, there is therefore need to investigate the effect of the relationship. To achieve this goal, we fitted the data to a relevant linear regression model as discussed below.

From table 4 the R Squared, or coefficient of determination (R^2), is 0.243 indicating that on strategic sensitivity accounts for 24.3% changes in organization performance of public institutions in Kenya

Table 4: Model Summary

Model	**R**	**R Square**	**Adjusted R Square**	**Std. Error of the Estimate**
	.493[a]	.243	.227	.42334

The study further tested the significance of the model by use of ANOVA technique, The findings are tabulated in table 4. Based on ANOVA statistics from table 5, the study found that the regression model had a 0.020 level of significance, implying that the data was appropriate for drawing conclusions about the population's characteristics because the significance value (p-value) was less than 5%, this is because the p value (0.009) is significant at 5% level of significance. the F-critical value was 4.60, indicating that the calculated value of F was more than the critical value, indicating that strategic sensitivity had a considerable influence on organization performance of public institutions in Kenya

Table 5: ANOVA

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
	Regression	.684	1	.684	7.516	.009[b]
	Residual	1.183	13	.091		
	Total	1.867	14			

The model of the study was also determined by use of the coefficient as presented in the table 6.

According to the regression model coefficients in table 6, further enhancement on strategic sensitivity and selection procedures while keeping the other variables constant will change organization performance of public institutions in Kenya (Y) by a factor of 0.333. The strategic sensitivity variable is a significant variable for investigate the change on organization performance of public institutions in Kenya since the p value (0.009) is less than 0.05. These findings concur with the research conclusion Ogema (2017) sensitivity to competitive dynamics enables organizations to make informed decisions and gain a competitive edge.

Table 6: Regression Coefficient

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
Model	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	4.769	.366		13.018	.000
Strategic Sensitivity (X1)	.333	.172	.302	1.935	.009

6. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

This study draws the conclusion that agile techniques are crucial to the success of organizations in Kenya's public institutions based on research data. For the Nairobi Water Company to execute well, it must show that it has a strong organizational culture and the capacity to develop and implement policies quickly. The study comes to the conclusion that leaders in the company were focused on getting the job done by anticipating, structuring, managing, and assessing employees' performance, and that strategic planning and thinking were seen as their role and obligation. While leaders concentrated on systematically improving the quality of services with a focus on the personnel participating in the processes and the quality of services delivered, managers set priorities and created operational strategies by managing both internal and external constituents.

The research advises Nairobi City Water Company management to concentrate on both quantitative and qualitative measurements that are part of the organization's sense of values, purpose, meaning, and vision. The managers' capacity to cope with resource management and service delivery will be facilitated by their awareness of the many strategic views. When tackling the issue of resource management strategies inside the business, the research advises Nairobi City Water Company's top managers to make sure they comprehend and examine all the leaders' aspects with reference to the organization, people, processes, and systems. Management must be aware of important external forces that are reshaping businesses' operational models and influencing their strategic framework for managing people both now and in the future. According to the report, Nairobi City Water Company management should put in place an organizational structure that guarantees each employee has a specified job function and manages a certain number of transactions. This will guarantee that workers are skilled and knowledgeable for their positions, resulting in organizational success and efficiency.

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