

STRATEGIC DIRECTION SETTING AND ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE OF NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS IN KAJIADO COUNTY, KENYA

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Abstract: The aim of this study was to establish the effect of strategic direction setting on the performance of Non-Governmental Organizations in Kajiado County, Kenya. The study explored the performance of NGOs in Kajiado county through the lenses of the three perspectives of the strategic direction setting, that is, articulation and communication of organizational vision, participation and periodic review of organizational strategy, and alignment of organizational resources and key performance. A descriptive research design was used while the target population was 150 respondents in strategic leadership positions in seven selected NGOs in Kajiado County. A semi-structured questionnaire was used to collect the primary data for the study. The collected primary data was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics through SPSS. The findings revealed that strategic direction setting had a significant positive effect on organizational performance, particularly in goal achievement, efficiency in project completion, and financial accountability. NGOs with clear strategic direction demonstrated better adaptability, stronger stakeholder confidence, and improved operational efficiency. The study concludes that strategic direction setting is essential in enhancing NGO sustainability and effectiveness in resource-constrained environments. The study recommends that NGOs institutionalize strategic planning processes, strengthen environmental scanning mechanisms, and align organizational resources with long-term strategic goals.

Keywords: Strategic direction setting, organizational performance, strategic leadership.

I. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study

Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) continue to play an important role in promoting social and economic development globally, particularly in marginalized and underserved communities. In Kenya, NGOs complement government efforts in sectors such as education, health, environmental conservation, and gender empowerment. Kajiado County hosts several NGOs that focus on addressing social challenges affecting vulnerable populations, especially women and girls. Despite their importance, many NGOs continue to face performance challenges including declining project success rates, donor dependency, weak accountability systems, and reduced sustainability. According to the NGO Coordination Board (2023), NGOs in Kajiado County experienced a decline in successful project implementation and beneficiary outcomes between 2021 and 2024. These challenges have raised concerns regarding the effectiveness of strategic leadership practices within NGOs.

Strategic direction setting is an important dimension of strategic leadership that involves establishing a clear organizational vision, environmental scanning, aligning resources with organizational goals, and guiding long-term decision-making processes. According to Rowe (2001), organizations with strong strategic direction are more likely to adapt to environmental changes and achieve sustainable performance.

Studies conducted in Kenya and other African countries have shown that strategic direction setting positively influences organizational performance through improved adaptability, operational efficiency, and stakeholder confidence (Nthini & Mutia, 2015). However, limited studies have specifically examined the effect of strategic direction setting on NGO performance within marginalized counties such as Kajiado.

This study therefore sought to examine the effect of strategic direction setting on organizational performance of NGOs in Kajiado County, Kenya.

1.2 statement of the problem

Even though NGOs in Kajiado County have registered remarkable presence, performance indicators show a worrying decline, with successful projects dropping from 85% in 2021 to 60% in 2024 and girls' graduation rates falling from 70% to 50% over the same period (NGO Coordination Board, 2023). While strategic leadership is widely acknowledged as a solution, few studies have isolated the contribution of strategic direction setting to these outcomes. This study therefore sought to determine the effect of strategic direction setting on organizational performance of selected NGOs in Kajiado County.

1.3 Objectives of the study

1.3.1 General objectives

The main aim of this study was to establish the effect of strategic direction setting on performance of NGOs in Kajiado County.

1.3.2 Specific Objectives

- i. To determine the effect of clarity and communication of organizational vision on the performance of selected NGOs in Kajiado County.
- ii. To assess the influence of environmental scanning and analysis on the performance of selected NGOs in Kajiado County.
- iii. To evaluate the effect of strategic goal alignment with the organizational mission and external environment on the performance of selected NGOs in Kajiado County.

1.3.3 Research questions

- i. How does clarity and communication of organizational vision affect the performance of selected NGOs in Kajiado County?
- ii. To what extent does environmental scanning and analysis influence the performance of selected NGOs in Kajiado County?
- iii. what are the effects of strategic goal alignment with the organizational mission and external environment on performance of selected NGOs in Kajiado County?

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Review

2.1.1 Strategic Leadership Theory (Finkelstein and Upper Echelons Perspective)

Strategic direction setting is primarily anchored in Strategic Leadership Theory, which builds upon the Upper Echelons Perspective originally proposed by Hambrick and Mason (1984). This theory posits that organizational outcomes, particularly strategic choices and performance, are significantly shaped by the personal characteristics, experiences, values, and cognitive frameworks of top executives (Finkelstein & Hambrick, 1996). Rowe (2001) defines strategic leadership as the ability of leaders to anticipate, envision, maintain flexibility, think strategically, and work with others to initiate changes that create a viable future for the organization. In the NGO context, this theory emphasizes the role of leaders in formulating and communicating a clear organizational vision, conducting environmental scanning and analysis, and aligning long-term strategic goals with the mission to ensure adaptability in dynamic and resource-constrained environments (Boal & Hooijberg, 2001; Nthini & Mutia, 2015).

2.1.2 Balanced Scorecard Model

The Balanced Scorecard Model (Kaplan & Norton, 1992, 1996) provides a complementary framework for operationalizing strategic direction setting. This model advocates for a multidimensional performance measurement system that integrates financial and non-financial indicators, including financial outcomes, beneficiary perspectives, internal processes, and learning and growth. It stresses the importance of translating strategic vision and goals into aligned objectives and measurable outcomes. For NGOs, the model supports strategic direction setting by linking leadership vision and environmental scanning to practical performance indicators such as project efficiency, beneficiary graduation rates, and financial accountability (Kaplan & Norton, 2001).

2.1.3 Institutional Theory

Institutional Theory (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983) further informs strategic direction setting by explaining how external institutional pressures influence organizational strategies. Through coercive, mimetic, and normative isomorphism, NGOs adapt their strategic direction to gain legitimacy and secure resources. In the Kajiado County context, this theory highlights the need for leaders to conduct environmental scanning that accounts for donor requirements, government regulations (e.g., the Non-Governmental Organizations Co-ordination Act), and community expectations while aligning goals with external opportunities and threats (Brass, 2012).

2.1.4 Resource-Based View (RBV) Theory

The Resource-Based View Theory (Penrose, 1959; Barney, 1991), extended by the concept of dynamic capabilities (Teece et al., 1997), offers supporting insights into strategic direction setting. This theory emphasizes that sustainable performance arises from the effective identification, allocation, and reconfiguration of valuable, rare, inimitable, and non-substitutable resources. Strategic direction setting enables NGO leaders to use environmental scanning and vision formulation to align internal capabilities with strategic priorities, thereby enhancing organizational adaptability and performance in volatile environments.

These theories collectively provide a strong theoretical foundation for examining strategic direction setting as a key driver of organizational performance among selected NGOs in Kajiado County.

2.2 Empirical Review

Strategic direction setting, which encompasses vision formulation, environmental scanning, goal alignment, and adaptive strategic planning, is examined in various empirical studies as a vital component of strategic leadership that influences organizational performance in NGOs. The reviewed studies consistently show positive associations between effective strategic direction setting and improved adaptability, goal achievement, service delivery, and overall organizational outcomes in non-profit settings.

Nthini and Mutia (2015) conducted a study in Kenya on strategic leadership practices in general NGOs. The study highlighted environmental scanning and strategic planning as key elements of direction setting, with organizational performance measured through service delivery efficiency and community engagement. Using a mixed-methods approach with surveys of 150 respondents and interviews with 50 participants, followed by regression and thematic analysis, the findings revealed a positive and significant relationship. Strong strategic direction setting, particularly regular environmental scanning, contributed to improved service delivery ($R^2 \approx 0.60$). However, the study was limited by its broad national focus without specific attention to rural or marginalized counties.

Rowe (2022), in a study on development NGOs in Ethiopia, examined strategic direction through vision formulation and goal alignment. The research, which employed surveys with 180 respondents and regression analysis, found that effective direction setting enhanced organizational adaptability and performance ($\beta = 0.52$). The study, however, was cross-sectional and contextually limited to Ethiopian development NGOs.

Davies and Davies (2023) investigated strategic planning and direction in South African education-focused NGOs. Focusing on goal alignment and cultural aspects of direction setting, the qualitative case study approach involving 12 NGOs and thematic analysis showed that strong direction setting improved stakeholder engagement and program outcomes by approximately 35%. Limitations included a small sample size and heavy reliance on qualitative methods.

Mailu and Kariuki (2022) explored strategic leadership in NGOs in Nairobi County, Kenya, with specific attention to direction setting through vision clarity and decision-making involvement. Their quantitative survey and regression analysis confirmed a positive and significant influence of strategic direction on overall organizational performance, including efficiency and impact. The study was however restricted to urban Nairobi settings.

Kigenza (2023) examined strategic planning, including direction setting elements such as stakeholder-aligned goal formulation, in non-profit organizations in Rwanda using a case focus on World Vision. Through quantitative surveys, correlation, and regression analysis, the study reported strong positive relationships between aligned planning elements and performance (correlations up to 0.893). While insightful, the study remained organization-specific and emphasized broader planning aspects.

Summary of Findings and Research Gaps

The empirical studies reviewed demonstrate that strategic direction setting positively influences NGO performance by promoting alignment, adaptability, and mission relevance. Rowe (2001) and Daritsu et al. (2025) further reinforce that clear vision communication and strategic goal alignment are critical drivers of performance. Boal and Hooijberg (2001) also support the role of strategic direction in building adaptive capacity.

Despite these positive findings, several gaps are evident. Contextually, the studies largely focus on urban areas or other African countries, with limited attention to rural and pastoralist settings such as Kajiado County. Conceptually, many studies adopt a narrow focus on vision and planning without fully integrating environmental scanning or linking direction setting to other leadership dimensions. Methodologically, most rely on cross-sectional designs or small qualitative samples, limiting the establishment of robust causal relationships over time.

These gaps highlight the need for targeted research in Kajiado County that empirically examines strategic direction setting within the specific challenges faced by local NGOs.

2.3 Conceptual Framework

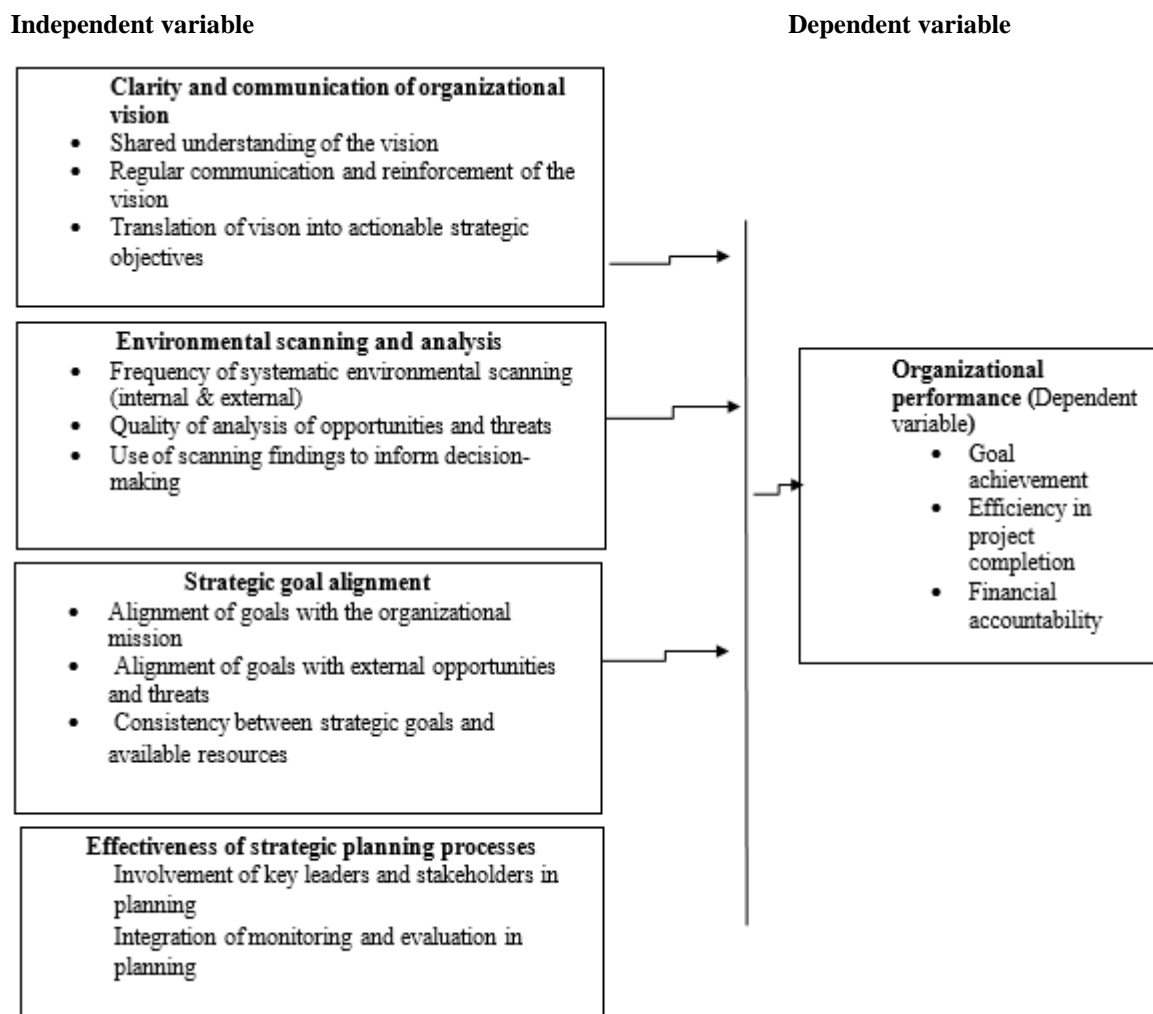


Fig 1: Conceptual framework

III. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the methodological approach used to investigate the effect of strategic direction setting on the performance of selected Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in Kajiado County, Kenya. It describes the research design, target population, sampling technique, data collection instruments, validity and reliability of the instrument, data collection procedures, data analysis techniques, and ethical considerations. The methodology was designed to ensure a systematic, credible, and contextually relevant examination of strategic direction setting as a key leadership practice.

3.2 Research Design

The study adopted a descriptive research design. This design is appropriate for systematically describing the characteristics of strategic direction setting practices and their relationship with organizational performance in a natural setting without manipulating variables. Descriptive designs effectively answer “what,” “how,” and “to what extent” questions, making them suitable for assessing perceptions of strategic leaders regarding vision formulation, environmental scanning, goal alignment, and strategic planning processes, and how these influence performance outcomes such as goal achievement, project efficiency, and financial accountability. The design facilitated both quantitative measurement of the variables and qualitative insights into contextual nuances within the NGO sector in Kajiado County.

3.3 Target Population

The target population consisted of 105 strategic leaders and managers (at corporate and business unit levels) from seven purposively selected NGOs operating in Kajiado County: Beads for Education, The Action Foundation (DPRP-Kajiado), Maasai Girls Education Fund, ActionAid International Kenya, Dupoto-e-Maa, Feed the Children, and Amboseli Trust for Elephants. These NGOs were selected due to their active presence, thematic diversity (education, gender equity, community development, and environmental conservation), and documented performance challenges, making them suitable for studying strategic leadership practices. The respondents included Executive Directors/CEOs, Program Managers/Heads, Senior Strategic/Policy Officers, and Project Coordinators — individuals directly involved in strategic direction setting and performance oversight.

3.4 Sample Size and Sampling Technique

Given the small and manageable size of the target population (105 respondents), the study employed a census sampling technique. All 105 strategic leaders and managers were included in the study. This approach eliminated sampling error, ensured comprehensive coverage of strategic decision-makers across corporate and business unit levels, and provided rich, reliable data on strategic direction setting practices. The census method was particularly suitable because the population comprised specialized senior personnel whose insights are critical for understanding how strategic direction setting influences organizational performance in resource-constrained NGO environments.

3.5 Data Collection Instrument

A semi-structured questionnaire served as the primary data collection instrument for the study. It contained both closed-ended questions using a five-point Likert scale and open-ended questions to allow for comprehensive data gathering from strategic leaders and managers. The questionnaire was structured into distinct sections, with Section A capturing demographic information such as gender, age bracket, position held, and years of experience in the NGO sector. Section B focused specifically on strategic direction setting as the independent variable, while Section C addressed organizational performance as the dependent variable. Strategic direction setting was measured through key indicators including the clarity and communication of the organizational vision and long-term goals, the frequency and quality of environmental scanning and analysis of opportunities and threats, the alignment of strategic goals with the organizational mission and external changes, and the effectiveness of strategic planning processes involving key leaders. Respondents rated their level of agreement on these aspects using a Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). Open-ended questions were included to capture additional qualitative insights on challenges, best practices, and recommendations concerning strategic direction setting and its impact on performance. This mixed-format instrument enabled both quantitative measurement and deeper contextual understanding of how strategic direction setting influences NGO outcomes in Kajiado County.

3.6 Validity and Reliability of the Research Instrument

Content, construct, face, and criterion validity were ensured through expert review by the supervisor and subject matter experts in strategic management and NGO operations. Items were aligned with established literature and the study's conceptual framework. The instrument was pilot-tested and revised for clarity and relevance.

Reliability was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha during a pilot study involving 10 respondents (approximately 10% of the target population). The alpha coefficient for strategic direction setting and performance scales exceeded 0.80, indicating strong internal consistency. The pilot also helped identify and correct ambiguities in the questionnaire.

3.7 Data Collection Procedure

Data collection followed ethical protocols. An introduction letter from Kenyatta University and a NACOSTI research permit were obtained. The drop-and-pick method, supplemented by electronic distribution (Google Forms) and follow-up reminders, was used to administer the questionnaires. Respondents were assured of confidentiality and voluntary participation. Data collection occurred between late 2025 and early 2026, targeting a four-year performance reference period (2021–2024).

3.8 Data Analysis and Presentation

Quantitative data collected from the questionnaires were analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 26. Descriptive statistics including means, standard deviations, frequencies, and percentages were computed to summarize respondents' perceptions regarding the practice of strategic direction setting and levels of organizational performance. Inferential statistics were also applied, beginning with diagnostic tests to confirm that regression assumptions of normality, linearity, and multicollinearity were satisfied. Simple linear regression analysis was then conducted to determine the nature, strength, and significance of the effect of strategic direction setting on organizational performance. The regression model took the form $Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \epsilon$, where Y represents organizational performance, X_1 denotes strategic direction setting, β_0 is the constant term, β_1 is the coefficient, and ϵ is the error term. Qualitative data obtained from open-ended questions were analyzed thematically by identifying recurring patterns and categorizing responses into key themes related to strategic direction setting practices, challenges, and recommendations. The research findings were presented using tables for statistical summaries, charts where appropriate for visual representation of trends, and detailed narrative descriptions to provide comprehensive interpretation of both quantitative and qualitative results.

3.9 Ethical Considerations

The study adhered to strict ethical standards. Participation was voluntary, with informed consent obtained from all respondents. Confidentiality and anonymity were guaranteed — no individual or organization was identified in the reporting. Respondents could withdraw at any time without repercussions. The research was approved by Kenyatta University Graduate School and NACOSTI, ensuring compliance with national and institutional research guidelines.

IV. RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the research findings and discussion based on data collected from the respondents regarding the effect of strategic direction setting on organizational performance. The chapter is structured to include the response rate, demographic characteristics of the respondents, descriptive analysis of the study variables, inferential analysis, and simple linear regression analysis.

4.2 Response Rate

A total of 105 questionnaires were administered to the target respondents. Out of these, 99 were duly completed and returned, representing a response rate of 94.7%. This high response rate is attributed to the census sampling technique, use of the drop-and-pick method, follow-up reminders via email and phone calls, and the assurance of confidentiality. The response rate is adequate for reliable analysis and generalization within the selected NGOs.

Table 1: Response Rate

Questionnaires Administered	Questionnaires Returned	Response Rate (%)
105	99	94.7

Source: Field data (2026)

4.3 Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

The demographic profile of the 99 respondents provides important context for interpreting the findings. The characteristics analysed include gender, age bracket, position held, and years of experience in the NGO sector.

4.3.1 Gender Composition

The majority of respondents were female (59.6%), while males accounted for 40.4%. This distribution reflects the gender dynamics in the NGO sector in Kajiado County and ensures diverse perspectives on strategic direction setting practices.

Table 2: Gender Composition

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	40	40.4
Female	59	59.6
Total	99	100

Source: Field data (2026)

4.3.2 Age Bracket of Respondents

Most respondents (48.5%) were in the 36–45 age bracket, followed by 26–35 years (32.3%). This indicates that strategic leadership positions in the selected NGOs are held by mid-career professionals well-positioned to provide informed insights on strategic direction setting.

Table 3: Age Brackets of Respondents

Age Bracket	Frequency	Percentage (%)
26–35	32	32.3
36–45	48	48.5
46 and above	19	19.2
Total	99	100

Source: Field data (2026)

4.3.3 Position Held by Respondents

Program Managers/Program Heads constituted the largest group (37.4%), followed by Senior Strategic/Policy Officers (29.3%) and Project Coordinators (25.3%).

Table 4: Position Held by Respondents

Position	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Executive Directors (CEOs)	8	8.1
Program Managers/Heads	37	37.4
Senior Strategic/Policy Officers	29	29.3
Project Coordinators	25	25.3
Total	99	100

Source: Field data (2026)

4.3.4 Years of Experience in the Selected NGO

A significant proportion (45.1%) had 6–10 years of experience, indicating that respondents were well-positioned to provide reliable insights on strategic direction setting practices.

Table 5: Years of Experience

Years of Experiences	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Less than 2 years	6	6.1
2–5 years	24	24.2
6–10 years	45	45.1
Over 10 years	24	24.2
Total	99	100

Source: Field data (2026)

4.4 Descriptive Analysis

Descriptive analysis involves the use of statistical techniques to summarize and organize the characteristics of the collected data. It helps to describe the basic features of the study variables, present the data in a meaningful way, and provide a clear understanding of the patterns and trends in respondents' opinions. In this study, descriptive statistics including frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations were computed for all variables using a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree, 2=disagree, 3=Neither disagree nor Agree, 4=Agree 5 = Strongly Agree). This section presents the findings for each variable.

4.4.1 Strategic Direction Setting

The study sought to examine the practice of strategic direction setting in the selected NGOs. Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with statements regarding vision communication, environmental scanning, goal alignment, and strategic planning processes. The overall mean for strategic direction setting was 4.26 (SD = 0.80), indicating strong agreement.

Table 6: Strategic Direction Setting

Statement	SA (%)	A (%)	N (%)	D (%)	SD (%)	Mean	Std. Deviation
The NGO has a clear, well-communicated vision	50.5	41.4	5.1	2.0	1.0	4.38	0.76
Regular environmental scanning is conducted	40.4	44.4	10.1	3.0	2.0	4.18	0.83
Strategic goals are aligned with the mission	43.4	43.4	8.1	3.0	2.0	4.23	0.79
Strategic planning processes are effective and involve key leaders	44.4	42.4	9.1	3.0	1.0	4.26	0.80
Overall Mean						4.26	0.80

Source: Field data (2026)

According to the table 4.8, respondents showed strongest agreement on the existence of a clear, well-communicated vision (mean = 4.38). However, environmental scanning had a relatively lower score, indicating a possible area for improvement.

The findings are consistent with Rowe (2001) and Daritsu et al. (2025), who established that clear vision communication and strategic goal alignment are critical drivers of organizational performance. Boal and Hooijberg (2001) also supported this by highlighting the role of strategic direction in building adaptive capacity. In contrast, Carter and Greer (2013) offered a contrary opinion, arguing that in volatile environments like those faced by NGOs, over-emphasis on formal strategic direction setting may limit flexibility and innovation

4.4.2 Organizational Performance

The overall mean for organizational performance was 4.29 (SD = 0.79). Respondents reported strong financial accountability (mean = 4.35) and effective achievement of strategic objectives (mean = 4.22).

Table 7: Organizational Performance

Statement	SA (%)	A (%)	N (%)	D (%)	SD (%)	Mean	Std. Deviation
High financial accountability maintained	48.5	42.4	6.1	2.0	1.0	4.35	0.72
NGO achieves strategic objectives effectively	42.4	44.4	8.1	3.0	2.0	4.22	0.80
Overall Mean						4.29	0.79

Source: Field data (2026)

4.5 Inferential Analysis

Inferential analysis involves using statistical procedures to make conclusions about the population based on sample data. Before running the multiple regression analysis, it was necessary to test the key assumptions underlying the Classical Linear Regression Model. This ensures that the regression results are valid, reliable, and not biased. The assumptions tested in this

study include normality of residuals, linearity, multicollinearity, homoscedasticity, and independence of residuals (autocorrelation). These diagnostic tests were conducted using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 26. The results are presented and interpreted below.

Model Summary

The model summary provides information on how well the independent variables explain the variation in organizational performance. The model explains 61.8% of the variation in organizational performance (Adjusted R² = 0.602) as shown in table 4.14.

Table 8: Model Summary

Model	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	Std. Error of the estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	0.786	0.618	0.602	0.412	1.85

Source: Field data (2026)

Analysis of Variance

The Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) test was performed to determine whether the overall multiple regression model is statistically significant. ANOVA assesses whether the set of independent variables (the four strategic leadership dimensions) collectively explain a significant portion of the variation in the dependent variable (organizational performance) beyond what would be expected by chance (Field, 2018; Hair et al., 2019). The model is statistically significant (F = 42.36, p = 0.000) as shown in table 4.14.

Table 9: Analysis of Variance

Model	Sum of Square	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	28.45	4	7.113	42.36	0.000
Residual	23.12	94	0.246		
Total	51.57	98			

Source: Field data (2026)

The F-statistic of 42.36 with a p-value of 0.000 (less than 0.05) from table 4.14 indicates that the overall regression model is statistically significant. This means that the four strategic leadership dimensions, taken together, reliably predict organizational performance. This finding is consistent with previous studies on strategic leadership in NGOs (Nthini & Mutia, 2015; Phipps & Burbach, 2010; Daritsu et al., 2025), which found that bundles of leadership practices significantly influence performance outcomes.

Strategic Direction Setting emerged as the strongest predictor of organizational performance ($\beta = 0.35$, $p = 0.000$). This finding confirms that the ability of NGO leaders to formulate and communicate a clear vision, conduct environmental scanning, and align goals with the organizational mission is the most critical driver of performance. The result supports Rowe (2001) and Daritsu et al. (2025), who emphasized that clear strategic direction and alignment form the foundation of effective leadership and organizational success, especially in dynamic and resource-constrained environments.

V. CONCLUSION

This chapter summarizes the key findings, draws conclusions, and offers recommendations on the effect of strategic direction setting on the performance of selected Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in Kajiado County, Kenya.

The study achieved a high response rate of 94.7% from 99 strategic leaders and managers across seven selected NGOs. Descriptive findings indicated strong practice of strategic direction setting, with an overall mean of 4.26 (SD = 0.80). Respondents particularly affirmed the existence of a clear and well-communicated organizational vision (mean = 4.38) and effective strategic planning processes (mean = 4.26). However, environmental scanning and analysis received a relatively lower rating (mean = 4.18), highlighting an area for improvement.

Inferential analysis confirmed that the regression model was statistically significant (F = 42.36, p = 0.000), explaining 61.8% of the variation in organizational performance (R² = 0.618). Strategic direction setting emerged as the strongest predictor of performance with a standardized beta coefficient of $\beta = 0.352$ (p = 0.000). Overall organizational performance was rated highly (mean = 4.29), characterized by strong financial accountability (mean = 4.35) and effective achievement of strategic objectives (mean = 4.22).

The study concludes that strategic direction setting has a strong, positive, and statistically significant influence on NGO performance in Kajiado County. It is the most influential dimension of strategic leadership, enabling NGOs to provide clear direction, adapt to environmental changes, align goals with mission, and execute plans effectively. A well-communicated vision creates unity of purpose, while robust planning translates strategic intent into tangible results such as improved beneficiary outcomes, project efficiency, and financial accountability. Although practiced, more systematic environmental scanning is needed to enhance adaptability in this dynamic and resource-constrained context.

The chapter recommends that NGO leaders institutionalize strategic direction setting through regular environmental scanning, clear vision communication, goal alignment, and inclusive planning processes. Capacity-building programs for leaders, integration of strategic direction indicators into NGO monitoring frameworks by the NGO Coordination Board, and targeted donor support are strongly encouraged.

Suggestions for further research include longitudinal studies, comparative analyses across regions, and exploration of mediating or moderating variables such as donor dependency and technology adoption. Overall, the findings underscore strategic direction setting as a critical lever for enhancing the effectiveness and sustainability of NGOs in Kajiado County and similar contexts

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