

# INFLUENCE OF SHARED VALUES AS A KEY ELEMENT OF HIGGINS MODEL ON PERFORMANCE OF FOUR-STAR HOTELS IN NAIROBI COUNTY, KENYA

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**Abstract:** Four-star hotels in Kenya face stiff competition from five-star hotels, three-star hotels, guest houses and serviced apartments. This has resulted to reduced financial performance as indicated by reduced revenues per available room, reduced length of stay, declining average occupancy rate, reduced profitability and high closure rate. The main objective of this study was to establish the influence of shared values as one of the elements in Higgins's model on performance of four-star hotels in Nairobi City, Kenya. The theories informing the study included upper echelons theory, dynamic capabilities theory, resource-based theory and knowledge-based theory. The study used descriptive research design. The target population for this study was 67 four-star hotels in Nairobi County, Kenya. The study adopted census sampling technique since the population was small and manageable. A questionnaire was used to collect primary data. The questionnaire was administered to the operation managers of the hotels using the drop and pick method. The data for the study was analyzed using qualitative and quantitative means. The quantitative data collected was keyed in and analyzed through means, frequencies, percentages, correlation and regression statistics. The qualitative data was analyzed through thematic summary analysis. The presentation of the quantitative results was in form of tables and figures. The study established that shared values had a significant positive effect on four-star hotel's occupancy rate ( $\beta = 0.211$ ,  $p = 0.042$ ), average revenue per room ( $\beta = 0.318$ ,  $p = 0.012$ ) and profitability ( $\beta = 0.320$ ,  $p = 0.004$ ). Based on the findings of the study, the study recommended that, though most of the hotels had value and mission statements, they rarely followed them. This hence requires management of the hotels to apply various approaches to enable all the hotels' employees to internalize the mission and value statements.

**Keywords:** Shared Values, Performance, Higgins Model, and Four – Star Hotels.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Higgins eight "S" model emphasizes on the factors that support strategy implementation in an organization (Higgins, 2005). According to Higgins (2005), strategy implementation is as essential to the organization as strategy formulation. The eight 'S' include Strategic Performance, Shared values, Strategic leadership, resources, Systems and processes, Strategy and purposes, Staff and Structure. The 'S' for strategy indicate that organizations formulate strategies to achieve organizational purposes. On resources, the organization should have adequate resources to achieve its strategy (Mailu, Ntale, & Ngui, 2018). On structure, the Higgins model indicates that the structure must be well aligned with the strategy for effective implementation.

The organizational systems and processes must support the strategy while leaders must show strategic leadership (Johnson, Whittington, Scholes, Angwin, & Regner, 2017). Moreover, Staff must be involved and must have the required skills to effectively implement the strategy. On shared values, the culture and values of the organization must be aligned with the strategy for effective execution. The last 'S' for strategic performance is a result of the other seven Ss. When an organization satisfies all the other S's, its leads to strategic performance. Radomska (2014) supports the Higgins model by indicating that organizational leaders must align the following cross functional organizational factors with each new strategy that arises in order for that strategy to succeed, in order for strategic performance to occur.

According to Pournasir (2013) organizational performance relates to the results or output of a firm as measured against the intended objectives or goals. Performance in an organization can be financial or non-financial. Financial performance relates to the extent of attainment of financial objectives of the firm. This can be assessed through profitability, efficiency, liquidity, repayment capacity and solvency. Common measures include net profit, return on assets, return on capital employed, return on equity and current ratio among others (Sitienei & Ronoh, 2017). Non-financial performance focusses on other parts of the business that does not entail monetary values. These include measures such as customer satisfaction, conversion rate, employee satisfaction, capacity utilization and market share among others (Zaidi, Zawawi, Nordin, & Ahnuar, 2018). In this study, both the financial and financial measures of performance will be used. The balance score card will be used which will assess performance on four perspectives, including customer perspective, learning and growth, internal-business processes, and financials.

The difficulty of successfully implementing new business strategies has long been recognized in the literature globally. A study by Cândido and Santos (2018) on firms in developed and emerging economies established around 50 to 90 percent of strategies is not successfully implemented. This is due to failure to align the firm resources and capabilities. The result to the affected firms is failure to experience the performance and competitive advantage that their firms had planned for. In Australia, Ogunmokun, Hopper, and McClymont (2015) established that through there are many studies on strategy formulation; there is very little research to examine whether the extent to which strategies are implemented in organizations could explain variations in their organizational performance.

Walt (2016) observes that in South Africa, multinational corporations are challenged in adhering to the Higgins model of strategy implementation and they rarely align their resources, processes and systems to their strategies. This is because of challenges such as poor country infrastructure, community expectations, resource nationalism, regulatory challenges and low skill levels of nationals. However, those firms that succeed in aligning their processes, resources and systems to their strategies are able to effectively implement their strategies and gain competitive advantage. In Nigeria, Monday, Akinola, Ologbenla, and Aladeraji (2015) decried the dearth of empirical studies conducted to investigate the relationship between strategic implementation and firm performance. The study established that the extent to which manufacturing companies in Nigeria adhered to the Higgins model of strategy implementation influenced their strategic success and organizational performance.

In Kenya, Njeru, Awino and Adwet (2017) indicate that various private and public organizations are challenged when it comes to implementing their strategies. Most organizations fail to adhere to the best practices of strategy execution as indicated by the Higgins model. Specifically, organizations fail to effectively management the soft factors which include providing strategic leadership, enhancing employee skills, having a culture that supports strategy and failure to involve employees. In a study on organizations in the ministry of tourism in Kenya, Kilile, Munga and Were (2018) indicated that having strategic leadership, supportive shared values in the organizational culture and involving employees in strategy implementation positively influenced performance.

According to Higgins (2005), the Higgins eight “S” considers the key aspects in an organization that support strategy implementation. Higgins (2005) notes that executing strategy is just as important, if not more important, than formulating the strategy. The eight ‘S’ are resources, Strategy and purposes, Structure, Systems and processes, Strategic leadership, Staff, Shared values and Strategic Performance. On resources, the organization should have adequate resources to achieve its strategy (Mailu, Ntale, & Nguai, 2018). The ‘S’ for strategy indicate that organizations formulate strategies to achieve organizational purposes. On Structure, the Higgins model indicates that the structure must be well aligned with the strategy for effective implementation. The organizational Systems and processes must support the strategy while leaders must show Strategic leadership (Johnson, Whittington, Scholes, Angwin, & Regner, 2017). Moreover, Staff must be involved and must have the required skills to effectively implement the strategy. On Shared values, the culture and values of the organization must be aligned with the strategy for effective execution. The last ‘S’ for Strategic performance is a result of the other seven Ss.

In Kenya, four-star hotels are those properties which achieve a deluxe guest experience. A wide range of facilities and superior design qualities are typically complemented by service standards that reflect the varied and discerning needs of the guests. Moreover, some of the four-star hotels in Nairobi County provide up-scale services in all areas and accommodation is stylish and refined. Vine (2017) notes that four-star hotels are cheaper than five-star hotels but their service is deemed responsive, and has an extensive array of facilities.

In Nairobi County, four-star hotels target a clientele that requires comfort and good service but is wary of price. The budget clientele served by the four-star hotels include local and budget foreign tourists. Moreover, these four-star hotels also compete for local and foreign business customers or transit travelers. The main competitor for the four-star hotels are the five star and three-star hotels. Moreover, the four-star hotels face competition from guest houses and service apartments (Makori, 2018). This has led to reduced financial performance indicated by reduced patronage, reduce profit per room and even closure. To be able to effectively compete in the sector, these four-star hotels must devise and implement strategies that provide them with enhanced performance and a competitive advantage. This comes due to globalization and the dynamic and complex nature of the operating environment (Johnson et al., 2017).

## 2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

When an organization formulates a strategy, it should align its processes, resources and systems to ensure effective implementation of that strategy (Johnson et al., 2017). When a strategy is effectively executed, it enables the organization to achieve enhanced financial performance and attain competitive advantage over its rivals (Zaidi et al., 2018). However, 50 to 90 percent of strategies in organizations are not successfully implemented (Cândido & Santos, 2018). This denies the companies that fail to effectively implement their strategies the performance and competitive advantage benefits that could accrue if they effectively executed their strategies. According to Genc (2017), organizations that fail to align their processes, systems and resources in strategy implementation using the Higgins eight 'S' model could face reduced performance and lose their positions in the market. According to Njeru & Kariuki (2019) strategy and staff have a positive and significant influence on competitive advantage.

According to Makori (2018) four-star hotels in Kenya face stiff competition from five-star hotels, three-star hotels, guest houses and serviced apartments. This has resulted to reduced financial performance as indicated by reduced revenues per available room, reduced length of stay, declining average occupancy rate, reduced profitability and high closure rate. According to Cytonn (2019), four-star hotel occupancy rate reduced from 53.2 per cent in 2018 to 46.8 percent in 2019. Moreover, average daily rate reduced from KES 13,100 in 2018 to KES 12,980 in 2019. Further, annual hotel room revenue reduced from KES 500,000 in 2018 to KES 487,500 in 2019. Besides, Profitability per room reduced from 24% to 16.7% from 2018 to 2019. If the reduced performance of the four-star hotels is not addressed, it can lead to poor performance of the hospitality sector which is a key contributor to the gross domestic product of the country. This study sought to establish how use of Higgins eight 'S' model in strategy implementation could enable these four-star hotels to enhance their performance.

Various studies conducted on the influence of Higgins model on performance have left various methodological, conceptual and contextual gaps. For instance, the study by Ogunmokun et al. (2015) in Australia established that aligning culture, resources, employees' skills and organization structure to the strategy enhances strategy execution and performance of the firms. Cândido and Santos (2018) conducted a study that indicated that failure to align the processes, systems and resources of the organization during strategy execution adversely affects strategy performance and organizational performance. Further, Katuse et al. (2018) established that most companies listed in the NSE adhered to the Higgins model to a large extent in their strategy implementation and hence significantly influencing their performance. These studies had been conducted in different contexts from the four-star hotels and hence left some knowledge gaps. The current study sought to address these gaps by establishing the influence of shared values on performance of four-star hotels in Nairobi County, Kenya.

## 3. LITERATURE REVIEW

Shared values are the ideals that members of the organization share that differentiate it from other organizations (Genc, 2017). These shared values are ingrained into the culture of the organization. These shared values include the underlying ways of interaction, assumptions, beliefs and principles that members of the organization share that contribute to the unique psychological and social environment of the organization. When the shared values embedded into the organization has internal perspective, lacks ideas and insights and the members are stuck in routines that are not beneficial, it becomes a hindrance to strategy implementation and organizational performance (Kibicho, 2015). Moreover, if the shared values do not support change, communication or innovation, this hinders strategy implementation to a large extent. However, when the organizational values are open to external opportunities and threats and can absorb them, this supports strategy implementation and organization performance. A further, change-oriented and innovative value that stresses on supportive

management facilitates strategy implementation to a large extent (Muendo, 2015). In this study, shared values were indicated by the extent of employee satisfaction, commitment and motivation.

Performance according to Pournasir (2013) relates to the results or output of a firm as measured against the intended objectives or goals. Performance in an organization can be financial or non-financial. Financial performance relates to the extent of attainment of financial objectives of the firm. This can be assessed through profitability, efficiency, liquidity, repayment capacity and solvency. Common measures include net profit, return on assets, return on capital employed, return on equity and current ratio among others (Sitienei & Ronoh, 2017). Non-financial performance focusses on other parts of the business that does not entail monetary values. These include measures such as customer satisfaction, conversion rate, employee satisfaction, capacity utilization and market share among others (Zaidi, Zawawi, Nordin, & Ahnuar, 2018). In this study, both the financial and non-financial measures of performance will be used. The balance score card will be used which will assess performance on four perspectives, including customer perspective, learning and growth, internal-business processes, and financials. The indicators used in this study included hotel occupancy rate, profit per room, customer satisfaction and repeat patronage.

Mise, Obura and Indiya (2017) did an investigation on impact of organization's shared values on public universities performance. The study had a population size of 215 people randomly chosen from certified eleven Kenyan universities. Data collection was done through questionnaires in a census survey. Statistical package for social sciences software was used to analyze the data. The findings revealed that a positive relationship exists between shared values and the performance of public universities. It is therefore, important to encourage positive beliefs responsible for enhancing and maintaining management systems related to strategy implementation.

Wambugu (2014) analyzed the impact of shared values on employee performance in Wärtsilä Ltd in Kenya in his research. The target population consisted of 63 staff members of varied levels. SPSS software was used to analyze data and representation was done on tables, charts, and graphs. The analysis showed that there were company values that had a positive and a great impact on employee performance. The study further revealed that the effects differed depending on the work processes and systems.

Kamaamia (2017) carried out a research on Kenya school of monetary studies (KSMS) to explore on the influence of culture and shared values on performance. He used a population size of 110 Kenya School of Monetary Studies employees. SPSS was used to analyze collected information. From the analysis, Kamaamia deduced that there is a statistically significant correlation between organizational culture and shared values and its performance. The shared values investigated were professionalism, work, and mean oriented measures, open system culture and pragmatic approach. All the values were found to significantly affect the performance of KSMS.

Another research by Chilla, Kibet and Douglas (2014) was conducted on the influence of shared values on performance in the hospitality industry. Data collection was done in two hotels in Kakamega, Golf and Friends Hotel. The target population comprised management staff, junior staff and supervisors selected randomly. Data analysis was carried out using SPSS tool. The results showed that organizational performance was affected by organizational culture by 88.3%. Organizational performance in the two hotels was attributed to values such as control systems, power structures, routines, rituals, and symbols. The study revealed that any effort on improving shared values could significantly affect organizational performance.

Aktaúa, Çiçekb and Kiyak (2011) did a research on the influence of culture and shared values in strategy implementation on performance in the health sector. They carried out their research on 40 managers and founders of organizations that were randomly selected. Data analysis was done using SPSS tool. From the data, analysis revealed that organizational traditions, can be related to some of the dimensions of organizational performance. They also deduced that the constancy or inconsistency of organizational environment (both internal and external), are largely dependent on the values of top managers.

#### 4. METHODOLOGY

The main objective of this study was to establish the influence of shared values as one of the elements of Higgins's model on performance of four-star hotels in Nairobi City, Kenya. The theories informing the study included upper echelons theory, dynamic capabilities theory, resource-based theory and knowledge-based theory. The study used descriptive research design. The target population for this study was 67 four-star hotels in Nairobi County, Kenya. The study adopted

census sampling technique since the population was small and manageable. A questionnaire was used to collect primary data. The questionnaire was administered to the operation managers of the hotels using the drop and pick method. The data for the study was analyzed using qualitative and quantitative means. The quantitative data collected was keyed in and analyzed through means, frequencies, percentages, correlation and regression statistics. The qualitative data was analyzed through thematic summary analysis. The presentation of the quantitative results was in form of tables and figures.

## 5. FINDINGS

The study investigated the extent that shared values are observed in the four star hotels when it comes to strategy implementation. This was assessed on a five-point Likert scale that ranged from 1 to 5 (strongly disagree - Strongly agree) respectively. The responses were analyzed using means and standard deviations. The results are presented in Table 1.

**Table 1: Shared Values in the Four-Star Hotels**

Statements	Mean	Std. Deviation
Every employee in this hotel understands the hotel's values, mission and vision	3.62	1.004
Employees in this hotel has a strong sense of teamwork	4.43	.721
Employees in this hotel believe that management is concerned about them as people	4.11	.891
The hotel engages in team building activities regularly	4.32	.850
The hotel has a code of behaviour that each employee adheres to strictly	3.75	1.191
The hotel management encourages employees to be creative and innovative in dealing with hotel guests	3.91	1.024
The vision, mission and value of the hotel are clearly communicated to each employee	3.80	0.875
Management encourages employees to engage in creative problem solving	3.72	0.972

The results presented in Table 1 show that the study participants agreed that employees in the hotels have a strong sense of teamwork (mean = 4.43, Std. deviation = 0.721). Besides, results showed that the study participants agreed that the hotel engages in team building activities regularly (mean = 4.32, Std. deviation = 0.850). The results further show that the study participants agreed that employees in the hotels believe that management is concerned about them as people (mean = 4.11, Std. deviation = 0.891). Moreover, results showed that the respondents agreed that the hotel management encourages employees to be creative and innovative in dealing with hotel guests (mean = 3.91, Std. deviation = 1.024). The respondents also agreed that the hotels have a code of behaviour that each employee adheres to strictly (mean = 3.75, Std. deviation = 1.191). Additionally, results indicated that the respondents agreed that every employee in the hotels understand the hotel's values, mission and vision (mean = 3.62, Std. deviation = 1.004).

Relating to the shared values in this hotel, the study provided an open question that asked respondents to indicate what improvements they recommended to enable the hotel improve on its performance. Some participants indicated that though most of the hotels had value and mission statements, they rarely followed them. This hence required application of various approaches to enable the hotels to internalize the mission and value statements. The approaches mentioned by the participants included socializing events, seminars, trainings, and visual representations. Other respondents indicated that the hotels should create simple, clear and reality-based vision, and then communicate them clearly to all staff. Other respondents indicated that hotel managers should have enormous energy and also the capacity to energize others. Besides, some respondents indicated that the hotels should have global teams, global brains and diverse teams. The study established that shared values had a significant positive effect on four-star hotel's occupancy rate ( $\beta = 0.211$ ,  $p = 0.042$ ), average revenue per room ( $\beta = 0.318$ ,  $p = 0.012$ ) and also on profitability, measured using ROA ( $\beta = 0.320$ ,  $p = 0.004$ ). The results further established that employees in the hotels had a strong sense of teamwork (mean = 4.43, Std. deviation = 0.721) and the hotels engaged in team building activities regularly (mean = 4.32, Std. deviation = 0.850). Besides, results showed that employees in the hotels believed that management were concerned about them as people (mean = 4.11, Std. deviation = 0.891) and that the hotel management encouraged employees to be creative and innovative in dealing with hotel guests (mean = 3.91, Std. deviation = 1.024). Besides, study findings determined that the hotels had a code of behaviour that each employee adheres to strictly (mean = 3.75, Std. deviation = 1.191). Additionally, results showed that all employee in the hotels understood their hotel's values, mission and vision (mean = 3.62, Std. deviation = 1.004). These findings showed that most of the four-star hotels had shared values that were well understood by their employees. These findings support the dynamic capabilities theory by Teece et al. (1997) which conceptualize the role played by shared values as a dynamic capability that enables a firm to successfully formulate and implement winning strategies, which enable it to improve its performance. This enables the firm to succeed where rivals fail and hence attain and sustain superior performance.



## 6. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The study concludes that shared values in the four-star hotels in Nairobi County were instrumental towards performance of four-star hotels, specifically towards hotel's occupancy rate, average revenue per room and also on profitability. The shared values mostly espoused amongst the four star hotels included teamwork, engaging in team building activities, and management concern towards employees as a critical resource. Besides, the hotels encouraged creativity and innovation, whereas observing ethical codes that every employee was supposed to observe. Additionally, the values, mission and vision of the hotels were well articulated and communicated to all employees.

Though most of the hotels had value and mission statements, they rarely followed them. This hence requires management of the hotels to apply various approaches to enable all the hotels' employees to internalize the mission and value statements. This could be by having socializing events, seminars, trainings, and visual representations. Other respondents indicated that the hotels should create simple, clear and reality-based vision, and then communicate them clearly to all staff. Other respondents indicated that hotel managers should have enormous energy and also the capacity to energize others. Besides, some respondents indicated that the hotels should have global teams, global brains and diverse teams.

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