



The role of strategic planning in the performance of public institutions in Tanzania case study of Tanzania national parks

Jesca A Ndosi¹, Dr. Samuel Obino Mokaya²

¹⁻² Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology, Kenya

Abstract

Strategic planning is not a very old practice in the public sector especially in the developing countries. In Tanzania specifically, the government introduced strategic management in the 1990s after a considerable period of socio-economic reforms (which started in 1986). The purpose of the study was to determine the role of strategic planning in the performance of the public institutions in Tanzania with reference to the Tanzania National Parks (TANAPA). The study covered three variables as constructs of strategic planning; vision, mission and strategic objectives and their relationship with organizational performance. The study involved a sample of 60 respondents drawn from a target population of 171 employees of Tanzania National Parks Head Quarters. However, only 42, equivalent to 70% respondents filled and returned the questionnaire out of which 25 were males and 17 females. The study adopted a descripto-explanatory research design which facilitated a detailed description of the variables under study and an explanation of the relationships that exist between the independent and dependent variables. Data was collected through a survey questionnaire which was self-administered by the respondents at TANAPA offices. The collected data was analyzed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Correlation analysis was conducted to determine the variable relationships. The study revealed that vision and mission had strong and positive correlation with performance at $r=0.509$, $P=0.047$ and $r=0.508$, $P=0.057$ respectively. Strategic objectives positively correlate with performance at ($r=0.819$, $p=0.09$). Mission and vision as important aspect of the organization have not been emphasized among the staff such that, others cannot state them fully however short the statements are. Strategic objectives are clearly set and go in line with the organization budgets to make sure nothing fails in its implementation. However, since these objectives play an important role in determining the level of performance in the organization, TANAPA reviews them whenever need arises to stay focused. Since government institutions are subjects of the central government, changes in the policies and laws of the country have a greater influence on their performance as such, the institutions must pay extra attention to what the government through the ministry of Tourism requires. The study recommends that, public institutions should involve more people in the preparation of the strategic plans, something which will improve engagement and hence, performance of individuals and finally corporate performance. Enough budgets to be assigned to public institutions so that they can carry out their purposes with ease and efficiency.

Keywords: strategic planning, vision, mission, strategic objectives, organizational performance

Introduction

Strategic planning helps the management to predict future limitations and ways to tackle them, for instance, identification of threats and opportunities; avoids the trap of historical based decisions and enhance the possibility of attaining organizational goals beyond expectations. A strategic plan of a public institution like TANAPA is a management and a budgetary planning. It refers to the public policies under the competence of the institution and it offers a clear image of policies, commitments and measures that will be promoted at the institution level, but it is not a public policy document itself. A strategic plan of a public institution supports the shift from a resources-oriented management to a results-based management (Dinu, 2007) ^[8].

The important thing for the organization to grow and perform well is to set its goals and objectives and implement as planned. The managers (top managers and middle managers) should make sure that activities are focusing on the set goals and objectives. Strategic planning is now routine part of businesses or organizations with an accompanying set of

believers and protocols that underpin the day-to-day practice. The conceptualization that best recognizes and appropriates all the possibilities of strategy may be termed strategic. Each of the three aspects is essential to the others: Strategic Thinking, Strategic Planning, and Strategic Action (Warren & Mbabazize, 2017).

Strategic planning has been combined by business enterprises, the public and private sectors as an important thing that can be utilized to lead effective organization performance. Strategic planning is the first phase in strategic management process and sets the basis for the other phases (Strategic implementation, evaluation and control). Steiner, (1979) argues that strategic planning system provides the framework for formulating and implementing strategies. However, it is argued that for the strategic planning to translate into results, a facilitative internal environment and culture must be presented. Ansoff (1991) ^[1] notes that environment is constantly changing, and so it makes it a must for organizations to continuously adapt their activities to succeed. To survive in this very dynamic environment, organizations

need strategies to focus on their customers and to deal with the emerging challenges. Strategic planning identifies changes that sometimes encounter organizations. Thompson and Strickland (1989) add that galvanizing organization-wide commitment to the strategic plan is critical for effective performance.

Purpose

The purpose of the study was to assess the role of strategic planning in the performance of public sector organizations using Tanzania National Parks Authority as a case. Specifically, the study examined the role of vision and mission, and the role of strategic objectives in organizational performance in public institutions in Tanzania, using Tanzania National Parks Authority as case.

Research Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive research design. The design facilitated detailed description and analysis of the variables under study; describing and presenting their characteristics and explaining the relationships without manipulation as supported by Saunders *et al.* (2009). It also allowed inductive and deductive reasoning to arrive at generalizations. The design was deemed appropriate for this study because the topic under study required the researcher to describe the effects IVs have on the DV without controlling any variable. It was used to obtain information concerning the current status of the phenomena to describe "what exists" with respect to variables or conditions in a situation. The study covered a simple random sample of 60 respondents drawn from total population of 171 employees of Tanzania National Parks. The study employed simple random sampling where a given

number of respondents was selected from each category of TANAPA staff. Data was collected using structured questionnaires to collect data. Data collected was analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. Whereas descriptive statistics were used in determining variable significance, inferential statistics was used to establish the relationships between the variables under study.

Results and discussion

i) The role of Vision statement in Organizational Performance

The first objective sought to assess the role of vision and Mission on organizational performance at TANAPA. This interpretation will separate the two variables to get a detailed view of the respondents on each variable. Employees responses indicated that, the organization’s vision reflected the core business of the organization (M=4.64, S. D=.821) and it also describes the clear and inspirational long-term desired change (M=4.86 S. D= .647). However, they said that, vision statement is clear, concise and memorable (M=4.74, S. D= .587). Employees also indicated that, vision statement works as leadership tool towards its performance (M=4.71, S. D=.596) and finally they said that management associates its vision statement to employee performance to increase the performance of the organization (M=4.76, S. D=.484) as shown in Table 1. According to Taiwo *et al.* (2016) vision and Mission statement play a strategic role in the life of organizations and their significance cannot be over emphasized in helping organizations achieve their goals. These Authors support the findings of this study that vision statement has a significant correlation with the performance of any organization.

Table 1: Role of Vision in the performance of TANAPA

Statements	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
TANAPA vision statement reflects our core business and motivate employees towards good performance	42	1	5	4.64	.821
TANAPA vision statement describes the clear and inspirational long-term desired change resulting from our activities as an organization	42	2	5	4.86	.647
TANAPA vision statement is clear, concise and memorable to all staff of each position	42	3	5	4.74	.587
TANAPA vision statement works as leadership tool towards its performance	42	2	5	4.71	.596
TANAPA management associates its vision statement to employee performance to increase the performance of the organization	42	3	5	4.76	.484

From the responses it shows that, employees at TANAPA think that vision of the organization are important aspects of organizational performance and an important management equipment that can impact employee behavior and attitude. Vision statements play a strategic role in the life of organizations and its significance cannot be over-emphasized in helping organizations to achieve their goals. For strategic plan to succeed, it depends typically on the correct formulation of mission and vision statements and wide participation in their formulation (Taiwo *et al.*, 2017) ^[10].

Testing of hypothesis one

The study tested the hypothesis which stated that “Vision does not significantly influence performance in public institutions”. As shown in Tables 2, correlation analysis revealed a strong positive correlation between the two variables shown by the Pearson’s coefficient of correlation of 0.509. The findings agrees with that of Bart *et al.* (2001) who found out that, firms with clearly communicated, widely understood, and collectively shared, a vision has been shown to perform better than those without them, with the caveat that they relate to effectiveness only when strategy, goals and objectives are aligned with them as well.

Table 2: Correlation between the vision and level of performance

Correlation Analysis			
		Vision statements as leadership tool	Level of performance
Vision statement as a leadership tool	Pearson correlation	1	.509*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.047
	N	42	42
Level of performance	Pearson correlation	.509*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.047	
	N	42	42

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

ii) The role of mission statement in organizational performance

In relation to objective two, the results indicate that mission is a very important ingredient in setting an organization in the right path for a better performance because it gives the organization a sense of focus on the core purpose of its existence. A study by Rigby (1994) rated mission statements second of all used tools particularly because they believe it is a useful ingredient in organizational integration which gets everyone focused on objectives and working together to pull in the same direction. The results in the Table 2 show that, the

mean of every response indicates that, employees agree that the mission statement is an important tool in ensuring organizational performance. They felt that, mission statement describes an organization's purpose that identifies the scope of its operation and service offered for better performance (M=4.79 S. D=.415) and it reflects the reality of what TANAPA does and guides each employee for better performance (M=4.88, S. D=.504). They also said that, the mission statement helps the organization develop measurable goals and objectives (M=4.86, S. D=.354) and describes the purpose of the organization's existence (M=4.93, S. D=.261).

Table 3: The role of mission in organizational performance

Statement	N	Min.	Max.	Mean	Std. Deviation
At TANAPA the mission statement describes an organization's purpose that identifies the scope of its operation and service offered for better performance	42	4	5	4.79	.415
The mission statement reflects the reality of what TANAPA does and guides each employee for better performance	42	2	5	4.88	.504
TANAPA mission statement directs the organization in the right direction and plays a part in helping it make sound decision for effective performance	42	4	5	4.86	.354
TANAPA mission statement helps the organization develop measurable goals and objectives which eventually lead to the success of the organization's strategy.	42	4	5	4.60	.497
A TANAPA mission statement describes the purpose of our existence and identifies the scope of what we are doing hence affects our performance as an organization	42	4	5	4.93	.261

The study tested the hypothesis which stated that “mission has no significant relationship with organizational performance in public institutions”. As shown in Tables 3, correlation analysis revealed a strong positive correlation between the two variables shown by the Pearson's coefficient of correlation of 0.509. This finding agrees with that of Bart *et al.* (2001) who found out that, firms with clearly communicated, widely understood, and collectively shared, a vision has been shown

to perform better than those without them, with the caveat that they relate to effectiveness only when strategy, goals and objectives are aligned with them as well. According to Satyendra (2014), the mission and vision statements play three critical roles; (1) communicate the purpose of the organization to stakeholders, (2) inform strategy development, and (3) develop the measurable goals and objectives by which to gauge the success of the organization's strategy.

Table 4

Correlation Analysis			
		TANAPA Mission statement helps the organization develop measurable goals and objectives.	Level of performance at TANAPA
TANAPA Mission statement helps the organization develop measurable goals and objectives.	Pearson Correlation	1	.507*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.045
	N	42	42
Level of performance at TANAPA	Pearson Correlation	.507*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.045	
	N	42	42

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

iii) Strategic objectives and organizational performance

The second objective sought to establish the relationship between strategic objectives and organizational performance.

The respondents indicated that, the strategic objectives developed reflect business direction for TANAPA performance and creates value for customers (M=4.55,

S.D=.550) and that, not all departments at TANAPA are involved in creating the corporate strategic objectives (M=3.69, S.D=.780) because according to TANAPA, only people managers are involved in the whole process of strategic planning and that low cadre staff do not take part in planning.

They also pointed out that, objectives set in the strategic plan are smart (M=4.21, S. D=750) and that management directs organization resources towards achieving the strategic objectives (M=4.67, S. D=570) as shown in Table 5.

Table 5: The role of strategic objectives in the performance of TANAPA

Statements	N	Min.	Max.	Mean	Std. Deviation
The strategic objectives developed reflect business direction for TANAPA performance and creates value for customers	42	3	5	4.55	.550
All departments at TANAPA are involved in creating the corporate strategic objectives for better performance	42	3	5	3.69	.780
All objectives set in the strategic plan are smart, hence contribute to a better performance	42	3	5	4.21	.750
At TANAPA, management directs organization resources towards achieving the strategic objectives to enhance better performance	42	3	5	4.67	.570

The study revealed that strategic objectives are set to direct the organization into performing its core mandate which is sustainable conservation for development. This means, absence of strategic objectives would mean working blindly and ultimately failure to meet the legal mandate for which it was established. The study of Hin, Kadir and Bohari (2013) [6] concluded that there is a significant relationship between having objectives and formulating strategies and the performance of an organization.

Hypothesis Testing

The study tested the hypothesis which stated that Strategic objectives do not significantly affect the performance of public institutions. Correlation analysis revealed a strong and positive correlation between strategic objectives and the level of performance at TANAPA with a correlation coefficient of $r=.819, p=.009$), hence the hypothesis was rejected.

Table 6: Correlation analysis between strategic objectives and organizational performance

		The level of performance at TANAPA	Strategic objectives
Opinion on the level of performance at TANAPA	Pearson correlation	1	.819
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.009
	N	42	42
TANAPA has been successful in tackling some strategic issues affecting it operations to improve its performance	Pearson correlation	.819	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.009	
	N	42	42

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Conclusions

The study concludes that, strategic planning has a positive relationship with organizational performance by considering the four variables presented in the previous chapter. Vision and mission, and strategic objectives play significant roles in the performance of the public sector. However, there is still a need to make the process of planning more engaging within the organization to keep every person within the organization connected to the core purpose of the institution. Mission and vision as important aspects of the organization have not been emphasized among the staff such that, others cannot state them fully however short the statements are. Public institutions could have very meaningful mission and vision but may just be in files and shelves and the people working in side there are not connected to what is happening except for the top management which may lead to difficult or partially attaining them. This study found a significant correlation between vision and mission, and organizational performance. Strategic objectives are clearly set and go in line with the organization budgets to make sure nothing fails during implementation. However, since these objectives play an important role in determining the level of performance in the

organization, TANAPA reviews them whenever need arises to stay focused. Therefore, there is a positive relationship between the strategic objectives and organizational performance.

Recommendations

The study recommends that, public institutions should involve more people in the preparation of the strategic plans something which will improve engagement and hence, performance of individuals and finally corporate performance. Engaging staff in planning just from their levels within the organization will generate a sense of ownership of the plan and enhance organization performance in general. It is also important to capacity build the employees on the essence of strategic planning at every level so that during implementation people know exactly what is expected of them.

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