

Strategic Structural Alignment and Performance of County Government of Uasin Gishu, Kenya

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Abstract: The purpose of the study was to examine the effect of structural alignment on performance of County government of Uasin Gishu, Kenya. The study's theories was as follows; resource based theory, Institutional, and Dynamic capability theories. The study adopted a descriptive research design with a target population of 69 heads of departments in the county government of Uasin Gishu. Since the target population is small, the study worked with the entire population which is census. Data collection instrument was structured questionnaire. Both primary and secondary data was collected. The researcher self-dropped and pick the duly filled questionnaires. Piloting was done to test the validity and reliability of data collection instrument. Data was organised, coded, edited to bring a meaning. Both descriptive and inferential statistics was done. Multiple regression was done to test the significant levels of one variable over the other. Analysis of variance was also done. Based on the findings, the study concluded that structural alignment on performance of County government of TransNzoia in Kenya. The study came up with the following recommendations; the entire organisational workforce of the county government of TransNzoia should align their cultural values that help in the strategic decision making of the county. The county government should align its organizational structure with strategic priorities by streamlining departmental functions, improving inter-departmental coordination, and decentralizing service delivery. Strengthening role clarity, reducing bureaucratic delays, and investing in digital systems fostered a more responsive, accountable, and citizen-. They should align organisational resources to enable smooth and efficient running of the organisation adopting a results-oriented resource allocation framework.

Keywords: structural alignment, Dynamic capability, inferential statistics, digital systems.

1. INTRODUCTION

Organizational performances are a set of overall preferred results that it wants to accomplish and measure for different levels of hierarchy and can be assessed for individuals, groups, and the entire organization as a whole (Knies et al.,2016). Thus, performance is success that doesn't exist by itself, but it is a function of individual efforts and the result of action (Anwar & Abdullah, 2021). Change dynamism in modern business environment complicated the management system and challenging effectiveness in performance. Hence, to sustain performance improvement, organization of all structure and size searching for strategic fit that allow all parts of the system to be closely integrated and aligned toward actively achieving the desired results. Thus, integration of business resources and activities with organizational strategic priority is termed as strategic alignment as it is used in this study.

In recent decades, the concept of strategic alignment (SA) has attracted the attention of many researchers and practitioners (McAdam et al., 2019; Street et al., 2018; Sardana et al., 2016; Yousaf and Majid, 2016). It has become more difficult and complicated with an increase in change dynamics (Sharma and Behl, 2020). Organizations of all sizes and structures are searching for strategies to improve performance without sacrificing quality (Bhardwaj and Deshmukh, 2013). Skinner (1974) developed the first conceptualization of organizations' need for SA in industrial organizations (Sardana et al., 2016). Now, the SA is at the heart of the strategic management literature, because keeping this fit with the priorities of the organization enhances its response to environmental pressures and moves toward a higher level of performance by integrating the main thrusts of the organization's goals and objectives (Chi et al., 2020; Andrews and Beynon, 2011). On the other hand, the absence of such a fit is an indicator of the lack of strategy (Barth, 2003). In general, strategic objectives are the starting point for SA (McAdam et al., 2019). However, once strategic priorities are identified, disseminated and implemented, there is often no real measure to verify that actual work is carried out following those priorities (Thornley, 2012). Therefore, the concept of SA involves the idea of achieving a degree of compatibility and harmony among a range of organizational elements, which ensures the achievement of the strategic priorities of the organization.

Regionally, strategic alignment is critical trend among contemporary strategic concepts helping organizations to cope up with challenges and altering old work system to productive one (Sharma & Behl, 2023). It is a long-term function that secures organizational survival and protect the continuity of performance improvement (Sha et al., 2020). Strategic alignment allow harmony relation and transparent communication between lower and higher level administrators and staff. This enables organizations to work together and achieve a unified goal through effective communications. It is a source of compatibility and harmony at the organization's internal level due to unified efforts (Abanumay & Mezghani, 2022); Ahmad & Adnan, 2017; Chtourou Ben Amar & Ben Romdhane, 2020). The basic foundation of strategic alignment is contingency theory that states the fit between certain contextual and organizational factors leads to higher performance (Hanisch & Wald, 2012). There is also configurational theory which suggests strategic alignment as the fit between a firm's strategy and its internal and external factors leads to superior firm performance (Herd et al., 2018). Strategic alignment has different dimensions representing organizational strategic fit with various contextual components (Younis et al., 2023). It includes harmony of business strategy, information technology strategy, organizational infrastructure and processes, and IT infrastructure and processes by Luftman et al. 1993). Moreover, it encompasses organizational strategic fit with strategies in other functional areas, such as procurement strategy (Knudsen, 2003), human resource management strategy (Shih et al., 2005) and advertising strategy (Boudreau & Watson, 2006). But, the focus of this study is investigation of strategic clarity dimensions like goal clarity, role clarity and process clarity effects on organizational performance.

Clarity in strategic statement provides valuable guidance to workers through specific identification of the performance dimensions that organization seeks to optimize (Smith & Thomas, 2020). It shapes workers' attention in the most effective way which in turn, results in the highest performance. Goal, role and process clarities are the strategic clarity statements used for this study and represents the degree to which employees understand why the task assigned is relevant or essential (Anderson & Stritch, 2016). It help employees to feel that their organization includes their contribution and also acts as an essential motivator for achievements and task performance (Bellamkonda et al., 2021).

Many scholars have attempted to explore implementation and theoretical implication of constructs at practical level given the importance of strategic alignment for the success of organizations performance. However, no common sense were reached about unified constructs and best dimension of strategic alignments (Herd et al., 2018; Reese, 2020; Wamba-Taguimdje et al., 2020). Moreover, the focus of many researchers in the area of strategic alignment is fit between organizational strategic priorities with information technology and/or with external environment. Therefore, the focus of current study is investigation of how clarity in organizational strategic objectives is communicated among the parts in organization and how it affects targeted performance. Though concepts of strategic alignment have been studied and insights into understanding of different dimension of strategic alignment and its impact on organizational performance were established (Al-Surmi, 2016; Ghonim et al., 2022; Sharma & Behl, 2023); those researches mainly focused on three issues as fit between information technology and business strategy, fit between business strategy and competitive environment and as fit between business and marketing strategy. But, alignments between important strategy components as goal, tasks (role) and procedure (process) through which assigned tasks performed was not yet investigated. Moreover, prior researchers have generalized strategic alignment as equally applicable concepts to all organization irrespective to size and nature without taking into account the specific strategies of firms and alignment dimensions. Therefore, this study focused on effects of strategic alignment dimensions as goal, role and process clarity in Ethiopian higher educational institutions assuming fit between clarity of these concepts improve performance.

The importance of aligning an organization IT strategy with business strategy has become a gainful goal to business managers in developed world has attracted increased attention as exposed by Ilmudeen, Bao and Alharbi (2019). However, the different dimensions that strategic alignment takes have introduced complexities among managers in the quest to achieve it. Further, the combination of different organization functions that range from infrastructure and processes IS infrastructure process, the need for collaboration among business strategies and external partners, has increased the uncertainties in the implementation of strategic alignment in organizations. Despite this, Lee, Kim, Paulson and Park (2008) aver that the alignment between organization strategies and IT brings about improved strategic direction from flexibility and alignment's strategic dimensions resulting from the social aspects of IT-strategy alignment. The multiplicity of different practices in an organization and how they need to work concurrently for optimal outcome, according to El-Masri, Orozco, Tarhini and Tarhini (2015) and that there are no one-size fits all the organizations' alignment strategy, but rather different skills are fused together to achieve improved performance. The strategic alignment should entail good communication with a view to understanding business from the IT perspective and sharing of knowledge that is repository in an organization, need to be supported by the values that have been implemented in an entity as well as the structures developed (Galliers, 2011). Ravasi and Phillips (2011) claim that more effective strategic priorities expected to influence the firm performance are focused on if an organizations strategic alignment is higher; but given a specific organizational environment strategic alignment is lower, decision makers will tend to focus on less effective strategic priorities. Rastogi (2000) indicates that organizational strategic alignment will involve changing people's perception and behaviour, changing bureaucratic culture and organizational structure; encouraging and rewarding collaboration and team learning in a sustained manner.

Over the last decade, the County government has undertaken several restricting and operational alignment measures, supported through legal backing to try and increase its efficiency. According to the Annual report (2017) CA reports that it has invested close to Ksh 15.6 Billion towards upgrading its IT system with an aim of increasing its revenue base and brings more clients to the tax bracket. Further, the investment in IT was aimed at improving productivity and quality of services. Similarly, the organization has undertaken various restructuring initiatives by dividing its operations into several operational divisions. It is against this strategic alignment moves by the organization that it becomes imperative that a study is undertaken to try and ascertain if the strategic alignment moves have resulted in improved organizational performance. Strategic alignment is critical for enhancing organizational performance, particularly in public sector entities such as county governments. In many cases, county governments are tasked with delivering essential services, fostering socio-economic development, and ensuring efficient resource utilization. However, despite the existence of strategic plans and frameworks, many county governments struggle with poor performance, inefficiencies, and inability to meet public expectations. These challenges are often attributed to misalignment between their strategies, resources, operations, and the broader developmental goals.

In the context of county governments, the lack of strategic alignment may manifest in overlapping functions, uncoordinated resource allocation, and ineffective policy implementation. Additionally, external factors such as regulatory changes, political interference, and stakeholder dynamics further complicate efforts to align strategies with objectives. As a result, key performance metrics, such as service delivery, financial sustainability, and stakeholder satisfaction, are adversely impacted.

In Kenya, where the devolution of government was intended to bring services closer to the people, the performance of county governments remains a contentious issue. Misaligned strategies often result in stalled projects, resource wastage, and declining public trust. Despite the emphasis on strategic frameworks and performance contracts, the degree to which strategic alignment affects the overall performance of county governments remains unclear. There is limited empirical evidence to guide policymakers and administrators in identifying the critical factors that influence alignment and how they translate to improved performance outcomes. This study sought to determine the effect structural alignment on the performance of County government, Kenya.

2. STRUCTURAL ALIGNMENT AND PERFORMANCE

Organization structure is the way within which people, functions, departments and organizations associate and interact with one another in achieving a common business goal (Tolbert & Hall, 2015). An organization with a higher number of managerial controls and administrative personnel might be expensive to run and this requires therefore that unnecessary managerial structures within the organization are eliminated. In addition, due to the business environment's rapid changes that range from changes in product lifecycles, technologies and consumer services, organizations should respond in a speedy

manner to the changes. This requires a flexible organizational structure able to react to the changes quickly enough to increase the output required, reduce the cost of production, produce quality products and also increase in the rate of production (Teece, Peteraf & Leih, 2016).

Alignment of the organizations structure can play a key role in attainment of strong alignment by developing a formal business strategy with the top management being the ones forming the business strategy (Tan and Gallupe, 2006). In addition, there is a need to strategically link the top-level management decision with the middle level management who will be implementing the policy decisions. Similarly, there is need for the an organization structure to bridge the business-IT communication gap— due to business employees' inadequate IT knowledge, making them gain only a small IT benefits, as well as business managers and executives lacking IT belief hence neglecting position of IT and business decision-making (Golob, et al., 2013). For successful IT system development, business activities of an organization should be considered and the system requirement understood before starting its development phase. Before system implementation, business process modelling and goal modelling is required

Organizational structure is the manner in which a firm organises human capital to work for its objectives (Elsaid, Okasha, & Abdelghaly 2013). This means that decision-making process, authority, checks, procedure and reporting relations are specified by an organizational structure. As a result, “decision making responsibilities are placed within the company, the organization is formally divided into sub-units and mechanisms are established to coordinate sub company activities,” (Kownatzki, Walter, Floyd & Lechner, 2013). They explained further that the organizational framework affects the measurement and management of performance in a company. In achieving successful results in change management, employees ought to empower young employees and engage them in the process of making decisions, hence permitting the correct process of change management. “Delegation has been claimed to influence and enable utilization of employee talent hence to benefit the organization change process,” (Kombo, Obonyo, & Oloko, 2014). According to Namoso (2013), it is difficult to get change communication to the rightful recipient in the right form and time without distorting because of the organizational hierarchy with many management levels hence change management is enabled.

Hao (2012), note that the organizational structure has more pronounced impact on performance of a company than other factors for example innovation and organizational learning. This study in Austria differs from a similar one in China that shows that Innovation has more performance on organization structure than structure. Ogbo (2015) point out that decentralization of organization structure improves better and enables faster decision making. The study condensed and suggested that managers of organisations, to improve decisionmaking in an organization, should take more decentrated forms of structure. Organizational performances are a set of overall preferred results that it wants to accomplish and measure for different levels of hierarchy and can be assessed for individuals, groups, and the entire organization as a whole (Knies et al., 2016). Thus, performance is success that doesn't exist by itself, but it is a function of individual efforts and the result of action (Anwar & Abdullah, 2021).

Change dynamism in modern business environment complicated the management system and challenging effectiveness in performance. Hence, to sustain performance improvement, organization of all structure and size searching for strategic fit that allow all parts of the system to be closely integrated and aligned toward actively achieving the desired results. Thus, integration of business resources and activities with organizational strategic priority is termed as strategic alignment as it is used in this study. Strategic alignment is critical trend among contemporary strategic concepts helping organizations to cope up with challenges and altering old work system to productive one (Sharma & Behl, 2023). It is a long-term function that secures organizational survival and protect the continuity of performance improvement (Sha et al., 2020). Strategic alignment allow harmony relation and transparent communication between lower and higher level administrators and staff. This enables organizations to work together and achieve a unified goal through effective communications. It is a source of compatibility and harmony at the organization's internal level due to unified efforts (Abanumay & Mezghani, 2022; Ahmad & Adnan, 2017; Chtourou Ben Amar & Ben Romdhane, 2020).

3. METHOD

A descriptive research design will be employed. The unit of analysis was the municipal council while the study population will be all top management, and supervisory management who will be drawn from all the cadres; technical staff, senior management and policy makers. Since the study population is small, the study worked with entire population which is census. Data collection instrument was questionnaire and other information relevant to the study. A structured questionnaire

was administered to the respondents. Piloting was done to test validity and reliability of the data collection instrument. Data analysis involves reduction of obtained data to a convenient size, seeking for patterns, creating summaries and utilizing statistical techniques in reproducing data to be used by the researcher in answering the questions and presenting consistent and reliable results in a way that is understandable and convincing. In analysing closed ended questions, descriptive statistics will be applied. Data analysis will be done using SPSS V.26. Central tendency descriptive measures (mean) will be used for the closed ended questions in finding out agrees with each other, application of dispersion/variability measures (standard deviation and variance) will be done to determine the extent to which data diverse from a central point. Pie charts, bar graphs frequency tables and percentages will be used in data presentation. Regression analysis will be done to establish the relationship

4. DISCUSSIONS

4.1. Effect of Structural Alignment on the Performance of County government, Kenya

The second specific objective of the study was to examine the effect of structural alignment on the performance of County government, Kenya. The respondents were requested to indicate their level of agreement on the statements relating to the structural alignment on the performance of County government, Kenya. The results were as shown in Table 4.1. From the results, the respondents agreed that the organization has rationalized its management controls to hasten decision making process. This is supported by a mean of 4.673 (std. dv = 0.713).

In addition, as shown by a mean of 4.431 (std. dv = 0.621), the respondents agreed that Employees consider SA organization structure to be flexible enough to adjust to the market demands quickly. The respondents also agreed that the top management decisions is seamlessly adopted by the middle level managers for onward implementation. This is shown by a mean of 4.641 (std. dv = 0.614). The respondents also respondent that The SA organization structure is used to bridge communication gap between business units and IT department. This is shown by a mean of 3.747 (std. dv = 0.715).

With a mean of 3.268 (std. dv = 0.719), the respondents agreed that the organization has decentralized decision making process to different divisions. In addition, the respondents agreed that the organization structure specifies clear reporting line which helps in implementation of strategies to be efficient. This is shown by a mean of 4.032 (std. dv = 0.825).

Table 4.1: Effect of Structural Alignment on the Performance of County government,

	Mean	Std. Deviation
The organization has rationalized its management controls to hasten decision making process	4.673	0.713
Employees consider SA organization structure to be flexible enough to adjust to the market demands quickly.	4.431	0.621
The top management decisions is seamlessly adopted by the middle level managers for onward implementation	4.641	0.614
The SA organization structure is used to bridge communication gap between business units and IT department	3.747	0.715
The organization has decentralized decision making process to different divisions	3.268	0.719
The organization structure specifies clear reporting line which helps in implementation of strategies to be efficient	4.032	0.825
Aggregate	4.134	0.701

4.2. Effect of Performance of County Government of TransNzoia in Kenya.

The objective was to assess the effect of on performance of County government of TransNzoia in Kenya. The reliability for performance of County government of TransNzoia in Kenya. The respondents were requested to indicate their level of agreement on various statements relating to the effect of on performance of County government of TransNzoia in Kenya. The reliability for performance of County government of TransNzoia in Kenya. A 5 point Likert scale was used where 1 symbolized strongly disagree, 2 symbolized disagree, 3 symbolized neutral, 4 symbolized agree and 5 symbolized strongly agree. The results were as presented in table 4.2.

From the results, the respondents agreed that the organization has over the years met its financial targets. This is supported by a mean of 4.113 (std. dv = 0.823). In addition, as shown by a mean of 3.425 (std. dv = 0.789), the respondents agreed that the organization completes its projects as per schedule and within set budget limits. The respondents further agreed that the organization has improved the quality of its services offered since attained ISO certification and improved its operational efficiency by embracing technology. This is shown by a mean of 3.371 (std. dv = 0.862). The respondents also agreed that the cost of running operations/organizations has reduced. This is shown by a mean of 3.264 (std. dv = 0.767). With a mean of 3.701 (std. dv = 0.728), the respondents agreed that Staff capacity/skills have been enhanced over time through structured trainings stakeholders, leading to continued support and engagement with the institution. The respondent also agreed that the organization's integrity index has improved over time. This is shown by a mean of 3.593 (std. dv = 0.864).

Table 4.2: Performance of County Government of TransNzoia in Kenya.

	Mean	Std. Deviation
The organization has over the years met its financial targets	4.113	0.823
The organization completes its projects as per schedule and within set budget limits	3.425	0.789
The organization has improved the quality of its services offered since attained ISO certification and improved its operational efficiency by embracing technology	3.371	0.862
The cost of running operations/organizations has reduced.	3.264	0.767
Staff capacity/skills have been enhanced over time through structured trainings stakeholders, leading to continued support and engagement with the institution	3.701	0.728
The organization's integrity index has improved over time	3.593	0.864
Aggregate	3.578	0.805

4.3 Inferential Statistics

Inferential statistics in the current study focused on correlation and regression analysis. Correlation analysis was used to determine the strength of the relationship while regression analysis was used to determine the relationship between dependent variable (performance of County government of TransNzoia in Kenya) and the independent variable (structural alignment).

4.3.1 Correlation Analysis

The present study used Pearson correlation analysis to determine the strength of association between independent variables (structural alignment) and the dependent variable (performance of County government of TransNzoia in Kenya) dependent variable. Pearson correlation coefficient range between zero and one, where by the strength of association increase with increase in the value of the correlation coefficients. The current study employed Taylor (2018) correlation coefficient ratings where by 0.80 to 1.00 depicts a very strong relationship, 0.60 to 0.79 depicts strong, 0.40 to 0.59 depicts moderate, 0.20 to 0.39 depicts weak.

Table 4.3: Correlation Coefficients

		Performance of County government of TransNzoia	Structural alignment
Performance of County government	Pearson Correlation	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)		
	N	75	
Structural alignment	Pearson Correlation	.614**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.002	
	N	75	75

From the results, there was a very strong relationship between structural alignment and performance of County government of TransNzoia in Kenya. ($r = .614$, $p \text{ value} = 0.002$). The relationship was significant since the $p \text{ value}$ 0.002 was less than 0.05 (significant level).

4.3.2 Regression Analysis

Multivariate regression analysis was used to assess the relationship between independent variables (structural alignment) and the dependent variable (performance of County government of TransNzoia in Kenya).

Table 4.4: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.938	.764	.732	1.0137

a. Predictors: (Constant), Structural Alignment.

The model summary was used to explain the variation in the dependent variable that could be explained by the independent variables. The r -squared for the relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable was 0.764. This implied that 76.4% of the variation in the dependent variable (performance of County government of TransNzoia in Kenya) could be explained by independent variables (structural alignment).

Table 4.5: Analysis of Variance

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	19.354	1	46.238	69.112	.001 ^b
Residual	10.001	74	.059		
Total	29.355	75			

a. Dependent Variable: Performance of County government of TransNzoia in Kenya

b. Predictors: (Constant), Structural Alignment

The ANOVA was used to determine whether the model was a good fit for the data. F calculated was 69.112 while the F critical was 2.941. The $p \text{ value}$ was 0.000. Since the F -calculated was greater than the F -critical and the $p \text{ value}$ 0.000 was less than 0.05, the model was considered as a good fit for the data. Therefore, the model can be used to predict the effect of structural alignment on performance of County government of TransNzoia in Kenya.

Table 4.6: Regression Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	
1	(Constant)	.711	.112		3.491	.000
	Structural alignment	.803	.373	2.331	2.786	.000

a Dependent Variable: Performance of County government of TransNzoia in Kenya

Table 4.6 showed that if structural alignment, is all held constant, performance of County government of TransNzoia in Kenya would be at 0.711.

Performance of County government of TransNzoia in Kenya = $0.711 + .803$ (structural alignment).

The regression model was as follows:

$$Y = 0.711 + 0.803X_1 + \epsilon$$

According to the results, structural alignment has a significant effect on performance of County government of TransNzoia in Kenya. $\beta_1 = 0.803$, $p \text{ value} = 0.000$. The relationship was considered significant since the $p \text{ value}$ 0.004 was less than the significant level of 0.05.

5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The objective of the study was to examine the effect of structural alignment on the performance of County government, Kenya. The findings indicated that the organization has rationalized its management controls to hasten decision making process and that employees consider SA organization structure to be flexible enough to adjust to the market demands quickly. The findings also implied that the top management decisions is seamlessly adopted by the middle level managers for onward implementation and that the SA organization structure is used to bridge communication gap between business units and IT department. Further the findings showed that the organization has decentralized decision making process to different divisions and that the organization structure specifies clear reporting line which helps in implementation of strategies to be efficient. Based on the findings, the study concluded that structural alignment has a significant effect on performance of County government of TransNzoia in Kenya. $\beta_1=0.803$, p value= 0.000). The relationship was considered significant since the p value 0.004 was less than the significant level of 0.05. The study came up with the following recommendations; the county government should align its organizational structure with strategic priorities by streamlining departmental functions, improving inter-departmental coordination, and decentralizing service delivery. Strengthening role clarity, reducing bureaucratic delays, and investing in digital systems will foster a more responsive, accountable, and citizen-

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