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Abstract

Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) face internal management problems in planning, staffing, leadership and governance and strategy implementation. They are required to think strategically as never before and translate their insight into effective strategies to cope with the changing environment they operate in. In addition, they need to develop rationales necessary to lay the groundwork for implementing strategies. Poor implementation of strategic plans impacts negatively on efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability of NGOs in Kenya. The study assessed the influence of customer alignment on strategy implementation in NGOs in Kenya. The study adopted a cross-sectional survey; this is appropriate where the overall objective is to establish whether significant association among variables exists at same time. A structured questionnaire was used to collect the data. To test the validity and reliability of questionnaire, a pilot study of 10% of the sample was conducted. A sample size of 125 respondents comprising of project officers and managers in charge of strategy implementation was selected using stratified random sampling and purposive sampling methods. Findings indicated that there was a positive and significant influence of customer alignment on strategy implementation. Based on the findings, the study concluded that customer alignment enables the NGOs to identify and explicitly measure the value propositions they deliver to the targeted beneficiaries of their services and donors. The study further concluded that customer complaints whether from donor or receivers of services should be shared with all the staff in the organization so that they can be addressed adequately and

professionally. Organizations should continuously review their strategies to ensure that they contribute to the attainment of customer satisfaction.

Keywords: *Customers alignment, Strategy implementation, Non-Governmental Organizations, HIV and AIDS*

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Background of the Study

Strategy formulation is regarded as the most important component of the strategic management process; more important than strategy implementation or strategic control. However, the effectiveness of whole process of planning diminishes if the formulated strategies are not implemented (Siddique & Shadbolt, 2016). Kaplan, Norton and Barrows (2011) identified that more than 90% of the strategic initiatives fail not due to formulation but implementation challenges.

For the organization to forge forward in unity there is need for alignment. Beer, Eisenstat, Norrgren and Fredberg (2011) posit that there is need in organizations to build a shared commitment to excel; meaning that top team alignment is critical for success within the organization. According to Labovitz and Rosansky (2012), alignment is that optimal state where the key elements of an organization; strategy, employees, customers and key processes work in concert together to propel growth and profits. The cause for alignment has never been felt in organizations more than now. Not only is the world more uncertain, but organizations increasingly are messy, complex, loosely structured, horizontal and globally dispersed systems. For many managers, operating in a matrix is the bane of their existence. There are so many stakeholders and competing interests that it is not always obvious who needs to be involved or what steps are required to gain agreement (Schoemaker & Krupp, 2015).

Customer alignment refers to a state where organizations are aligned with the underlying needs of their customers. Organizations must constantly monitor and anticipate changes in customer needs, with a deep understanding of customer “whys” (Kaplan & Norton, 2001). According to these authors, customers in the private and non-profit sector are different. In the private sector, the customer is both the receiver of goods and/or services and the provider of income. In the non-profit, this is frequently not so. For the non-profit, the receiver of goods and/or services is frequently not the provider of income that is, there are donors and there are receivers. Therefore, in this study the customer refers both to the donors of the Human Immunodeficiency Virus and Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (HIV/AIDS) NGOs and the recipients of their services. Strategy implementation entails converting the strategic plan into action and then into results. It is considered successful if the company achieves its strategic objectives and targeted level of financial performance (Njagi & Kombo, 2014). The test of successful strategy implementation is whether actual organization performance matches or exceeds the targets spelled out in the strategic plan. Shortfalls in performance signify weak strategy, weak implementation or both. The effectiveness with which a particular strategy is implemented should strongly affect performance on dimensions on which the strategy is expected to affect.

Non-Governmental Organizations face internal management problems in planning, staffing, leadership and governance, strategy implementation and limited resources (Dimelu, Salua & Igbokwe, 2013). Their performance is affected by political instability, government policies, and overdependence on donor partners. According to Bryson (2018), as the world of business is constantly changing, often at an accelerating pace, so too is the world of nonprofit management.

The environments in which they operate have become not only increasingly uncertain but also more tightly interconnected. This requires a threefold response from these organizations. They are required to think strategically as never before, need to translate their insight into effective strategies to cope with their changed circumstances and lastly, to develop rationales necessary to lay the groundwork for adopting and implementing strategies in this ever changing environment (Bryson, 2018).

Kenya has a vibrant civil society and acts as a regional hub for many international non-governmental organizations operating in the area (Arasa & Kioko, 2012). The roots of NGOs in Kenya may be traced to philanthropy mainly in the colonial time during which the activities of NGO's largely focused on welfare Mbote (2000 in Arasa & Kioko, 2012). According to a survey report by the NGO Coordination Board (2009), the highest concentration of NGOs in Kenya is in Nairobi at 35 per cent. This study focused on the HIV/AIDS sector which is considered to have the highest percentage of NGO's at 12 per cent as compared to other sectors (NGO Coordination Board, 2009). These NGOs offer variety of services which include strategic interventions related to HIV prevention, treatment and care services, interventions to prevent mother to child – transmission of HIV and AIDS, capacity building in HIV/AIDS initiatives, advocacy of rights and needs of persons living with HIV and AIDS and voluntary testing and counselling services among others interventions.

Bromideh (2011) noted that strategy execution in NGOs in developing countries is often hindered by a number of challenges. These challenges were classified into two categories, internal and external. Evidence from recent studies indicates that there are gaps in the implementation of strategic plans in many Kenyan firms including the NGOs (Abok & Gakure, 2012). UNAIDS (2017) estimates the number of people living with HIV (all ages) in Kenya has been on the increase from 1.4 million in 2010 to 1.5 million in 2016 indicating challenges in implementation of strategies to reduce new infections.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Besides the Government of Kenya, NGOs play a very critical role in the fight against HIV/AIDS. However, UNAIDS (2017) estimates that the number of people living with HIV (all ages) in Kenya has been on the increase from 1.4 million in 2010 to 1.5 million in 2016. A report by National AIDS Control Council (NACC, 2016) recorded that Nairobi posted an increase in new HIV infections among adults by more than 50%. It was further noted that Kenya is ranked fourth globally in terms of HIV infections (KELIN, 2014 – 2019 Strategic Plan). Though key strides have been made in the fight against HIV/AIDS, the statistics above indicate a failure in achieving the objective to reduce HIV infections in Kenya by key players, which include NGOs in the sector. Similarly, Kaplan, Norton and Barrows (2011) identified that more than 90% of the strategic initiatives fail not due to formulation but implementation challenges. Strategy execution failure is very costly to the organization as it wastes time and resources. Besides that, it leads to lower employee morale, a sense of loss of trust and faith in senior management and ultimately decline in performance (Sorooshian, Norzima, Yusof & Rosnah, 2010). Nonetheless, most of the studies on alignment and strategy implementation have concentrated on the corporate sector and fewer studies on the NGO sector. Moreover, limited research has been done on the influence of strategic alignment (customer alignment) on strategy implementation in HIV/AIDS NGO's in Kenya, despite Kenya being ranked fourth globally in terms of HIV infections (KELIN, 2014 – 2019 Strategic Plan). This study determined the influence of customer alignment on strategy implementation in HIV/AIDS NGOs in Kenya.

1.3 Specific Objective

To assess the influence of customer alignment on strategy implementation in NGOs in Kenya.

1.4 Research Hypothesis

H₀: There is no significant influence of customer alignment on strategy implementation in NGOs in Kenya

2.0 Literature Review

2.1 Theoretical Review

2.1.1 Stakeholder Theory

According to Freeman (1999), stakeholders are any group or individuals who can be affected by the achievement of the objectives of the firm and suggests that firms should identify their direct and indirect persons or groups that are affected. The stakeholder theory addresses two core questions; first, “what is the purpose of firm?” Secondly, “what responsibility does management have to stakeholders?” These are the two critical questions in the stakeholder theory.

Stakeholder theory posits that every legitimate person or group active in the activities of a firm or organization, are driven to do so to obtain benefits, and that the priority of the interests of all legitimate stakeholders is not self-evident (Donaldson & Preston, 1995). They further contend that, while Stakeholder Theory is descriptive and instrumental, it is more essentially normative. Stakeholders are described by their interests and all stakeholder interests are considered to be inherently valuable. Stakeholder Theory is managerial in that it recommends attitudes, structures, and practices and demands that synchronized consideration be given to the interests of all legitimate stakeholders.

Brenner and Cochran, (1991) postulate that stakeholders of the firm have two purposes i.e. to describe how organizations operate and secondly, to help predict organizational behavior. They contrasted this theory with other theories but they did not ask whether the various theories have comparable purposes. The HIV/AIDS NGOs have different stakeholders with different interests in them. According to Kaplan and Norton (2001), the customer perspective of their model the balanced score card when applied to NGOs addresses both the donors and the receiver of services in the organization. Stakeholders’ theory helps to understand how alignment of the “customers” in these NGOs influences strategy execution. This is by providing an understanding on the operation of NGOs and help in prediction of the organizations behavior.

2.1.2 Open System Theory

Open Systems theory was developed in 1928 by Ludwig Von Bertalanffy (Amrule, 2013) in reaction to earlier theories of organization. An open system is a system that regularly interacts with its external environment (Emery, 2013). Strategy implementation can be analysed from system perspective. System theory views the organization as open system in active exchange with environment. It indicates an interdependency, interconnectedness, and interrelatedness among elements in a set that form a whole (Wendell & Cecil, 1999). Cole (2004) defines a system as collection of parts which form some whole.

The environment in which the organization exists affects the execution of its strategy. Strategy implementation involves the process of transforming raw material to achieve the desired performance, therefore understanding the ingredient that goes to transformation process is key to its success. Various factors within the organization shape the way strategy is implemented. These

factors include Resource availability, stakeholders, capital, people, technology and history of past performances. A business is a man-made system which has dynamic interplay with various elements which include the environment, competitors, customers, suppliers, labor organizations, the government and other agencies (Johnson, Scholes & Whittingham, 2008).

The open systems theory has significantly adjusted the way we understand organizations and the demands placed on its leadership and or managers (Mwanje, 2016). Managers within the HIV/AIDS organizations should focus on the role played by each part of the organization, rather than dealing separately with the parts. While implementing their strategies they should ensure that their customer needs, which include the donors and recipients of their services, are met. This is important because they inform the scope of a project as well as influence project implementation and test a project's result (Lechler & Gao, 2012). Customers do affect strategy implementation and therefore the NGOs can benefit from a strong open systems approach to understand environmental demands on the organization.

2.1.3 Strategic Alignment Model

Different equivalents have been used within the literature for explaining the concept of strategic alignment. In 1974, Skinner presented the concept of alignment using the practical term strategic consensus, Porter (1996) referred to it as fit, Henderson and Venkatraman (1993) as alignment, and Venkatraman (1989) as fit. Each of these theories presents a concept of alignment. According to Porter (1996), strategy means making the activities of an organization fit each other. In other words, activities must cooperate and support and strengthen each other.

According to Labovitz and Rosansky (1997) alignment is the optimal state where the key elements of an organization - people, strategy, customers and processes - are aligned and integrated to work in concert with each other. People in aligned organizations have a clear line of sight to customer requirements and organizational goals. Hence strategic alignment is strategy and people, and integrating them with customers and process improvement (Figure 1).

The strategic alignment model presented by Labovitz and Rosansky (1997) provides a tool for measuring effectiveness in organizations. Alignment is the other half of the high performance story. According these authors, alignment affords organizations a way of linking strategy and people and integrating them with customers and process improvements all at the same time! In aligned organizations, People recognize and appreciate customer needs and design their work processes to meet those needs. They work together across departments to give customers what they want and how they want it.

According to Chen, Huang and Fang (2017) alignment concerns the integration of strategies relating to the business and its related contingency variables. Labovitz and Rosansky (1997; 2012) maintain that alignment gives managers at every level of the organization the ability to rapidly deploy a coherent business strategy, be totally customer focused, develop world-class people and continuously improve business processes all at the same time. They further note that their research and experience convinced them that growth and profit are ultimately the result of alignment between people, customers, strategy and processes. They found that organizations that consistently land on their feet during turbulent times are managed by people who keep everyone focused on the key business objectives and, in the midst of change, have generated sustained business results.

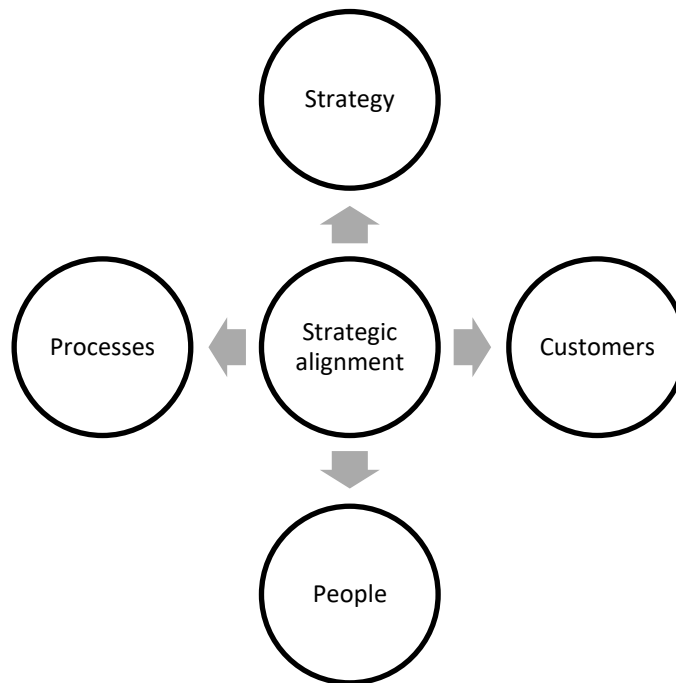


Figure 1 .Concept of full Strategic Alignment
Source: Adapted from Labovitz and Rosansky (1997)

Sustained excellence emerges when all the key elements of a business are connected and simultaneously linked to the marketplace. There is increasing evidence that strategic alignment is a vital factor in achieving business success (Lear, 2000). The hallmark of aligned organisations is that they consistently deliver measurable improvements in customer loyalty, customer satisfaction, employee retention and return to shareholders, all at the same time (Labovitz, 2004).

General theory of alignment presents a vertical and horizontal alignment. Vertical alignment is about spreading the strategy to the people within an organization. The purpose is to provide direction and gets people involved. Horizontal alignment is about aligning processes to the customers. The purpose is to make the whole organization strive to fulfil their customer's requirements. When alignment is achieved in both these dimensions a dynamic relationship exists between all four elements, this is called full alignment as shown in figure 1 above. With full alignment the organization will be get adaptability, resilience and agility (Labovitz & Rosansky, 1997)

2.2 Empirical Review

Clients play a critical role in projects as they are the ones for whom a project is usually intended and made use of. Clients inform the scope of a project as well as influence project implementation and test a project's result (Lechler & Gao, 2012). Customers in the private and non-profit sector are different. In the private sector, the customer is both the receiver of goods and/or services and the provider of income. In the non-profit, this is frequently not so. For the non-profit, the receiver of goods and/or services is frequently not the provider of income, i.e. there are donors and there are receivers. Therefore, it is suggested that the Customer Perspective be split into two perspectives: the Donor Perspective and the Receiver Perspective (Kaplan & Norton, 2001).

According to Werker and Ahmed (2008), Nongovernmental organizations deliver goods and services to a population that provides little feedback on the range or quality of product delivered. Compared to the corporate sector, beneficiaries of NGOs have a weakened ability to use market forces to penalize and reward NGOs. While consumers can prefer not to buy a product from a for-profit provider, beneficiaries of NGOs may continue to receive poor services that are provided by an NGO without much say.

A small critical literature has emerged questioning the effectiveness of non-governmental organizations in improving the lives of their intended beneficiaries. For example, Mendelson and Glenn (2002) examine democracy-building NGOs in Eastern Europe and contend that foreign NGOs may have created domestic branches that were well-funded but weak in grassroots support. NGOs in both Bangladesh and Uganda do not appear to locate the neediest communities (Fruttero & Guari, 2005). The data from their show that the net change in NGO programmes in a community was not related to indicators of community need, that NGOs established new programmes where they themselves had no programmes previously, and that they did not avoid duplicating the efforts of other NGOs. This means service delivery in NGOs may not be driven by the needs of the community or beneficiaries.

Lechler and Gao (2012) carried out a study titled explaining project success with customer expectations. The study used structural equation modelling and collected data from 206 project to analyze the relationships between client expectation alignment, goal changes, client support, and project success. The study established that taking into account the needs of clients is an essential element of project success. In addition, the study suggested that the dynamics of client expectations drives the need for managing client expectations and that the instability of client expectations may cause a project to lose its relevance and client support or it may lead to frequent goal changes, both of which are harmful to project performance. The findings of the study showed a significant and highly positive relationship between client expectation alignment and all project success criteria including efficiency, effectiveness, customer satisfaction, and economic success.

Anderson and Liedman (2013) carried a study to examine how customer expectations are formed and managed during a project delivery in Sweden. The study adopted a case study design and semi-structured questionnaires to collect data. The study identified that customer expectations constantly reform along three dimensions namely the level of fuzziness, implicitness and realism. The study further established that the customers' expectations were largely informed by their previous experiences and that the less a customer was knowledgeable, the more fuzzy, implicit and unrealistic and their expectations are likely to be. It was recommended that there was a need for project managers to have a continuous identification of customer expectations at the same time take them on an educational journey. This is to influence the customers' expectations or adapt the project and its outcome to match the expectations and achieve customer satisfaction. This study

differs from the current study in context and focus as the current study focus was to establish the influence of strategy alignment on strategy implementation in HIV/AIDS NGOs in Kenya.

Galway, Korbett and Zeng (2012) carried out a study on the distribution of health and development NGOs in Bolivia. The study used count data of the total number of NGO projects across Bolivian municipalities. The study established that NGO activity in Bolivia both in general and health-sector specific is distributed unevenly across the country in relation to population size, extent of urbanization, size of the indigenous population, and health system coverage. The uneven distribution of NGO activity may suggest a lack of co-ordination among NGOs working in Bolivia as well as a lack of co-ordination among NGO funders. The findings also indicate that neither general nor health specific NGO activity is related to population need, when defined as population health status or education level or poverty levels. This means the “customer” needs are not addressed effectively by the NGOs.

Jammulamadaka and Varman (2010) carried out a study in India to determine whether NGO development assistance is misdirected. The study used epistemological approach and determined that the formation of NGOs appears to be a response to perceptions of need that are so far removed from the local level that they fail to prioritize amongst levels and locations of poverty. The study further established that the absence of objective feedback mechanisms may help explain the lack of correspondence between donor funding and needs on the ground as well as NGO location. Most donors have inevitably limited and blinkered knowledge of regional disparities that can be obtained through local NGOs.

Brass (2012) carried out a study in Kenya to establish why the NGOs chose to go where they are located. The study evaluated 4,210 organizations in 70 districts, and drawing on in-country interviews with NGO leaders and workers, government officials, and politicians, it finds that sub-national NGO location corresponds to an area’s objective level of need, as well as the convenience of the location for accessing beneficiaries, donors, and elite goods. Contrary to dominant theories of African political economy, political factors like patronage appear to have little or no significant influence. The studies above differ from the current study in context and focus as the current study focus was to establish the influence of strategy alignment on strategy implementation in HIV/AIDS NGOs in Kenya.

2.3 Conceptual Framework

Figure 2 depicts the relationship between different customer alignment constructs that are of paramount importance for effective strategy implementation.

Independent Variables

Dependent Variable

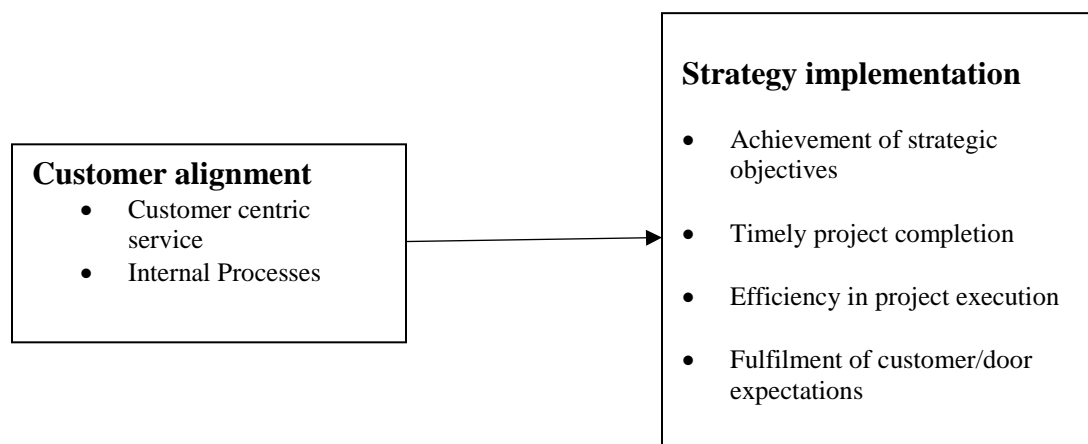


Figure 2: Conceptual Framework

2.3.1 Customer alignment

Customer alignment was measured in terms of customer centric services and internal process orientation. Kaplan and Norton (2006) asserted that if business units are to achieve long run superior performance, they must create and deliver products and services that are valued by customers. Organizations must also address the issue of internal processes to ensure that they focus on those processes and activities that create value for their customers and shareholders. They further noted that beyond aspiring to satisfying and delighting their customers, business unit managers must translate their mission and strategy statements into specific market and customer based objectives. They further argue that identifying the value propositions that will be delivered to targeted segments becomes the key to developing objectives and measures for the customer perspective. Customer alignment therefore will translate an organization mission and strategy into specific objectives about targeted customers and market segments that can be communicated throughout the organization.

2.3.2. Strategy Implementation

Strategy implementation was measured in terms of achievement of strategic objectives, timely completion of projects, efficiency in strategy execution and fulfilment of customer/stakeholder expectations. Strategy implementation entails converting the strategic plan into action and then into results. It is considered successful if the company achieves its strategic objectives and targeted level of financial performance (Njagi & Kombo, 2014). The test of successful strategy implementation is whether actual organization performance matches or exceeds the targets spelled out in the strategic plan. Shortfalls in performance signify weak strategy, weak implementation or both. The effectiveness with which a particular strategy is implemented should strongly affect performance on dimensions on which the strategy is expected to affect. In the NGO sector, work

is usually executed in the form of projects and therefore projects are considered successful if implemented within the set budgetary allocations and within set timelines.

3.0 Research Methodology

The study was guided by the positivism philosophy because the study depended on quantifiable observations that lead to statistical analysis. The research problem of the study was studied through use of cross sectional survey. There were approximately 8,569 NGOs registered and operating in various sectors of the economy and in every corner of the country. The target population comprised of NGO's operating in Nairobi under the HIV/AIDS sector. Nairobi was the area of focus for this study as it has the highest concentration of NGOs in Kenya at 35 per cent, as per a survey report by the NGO Coordination Board (2009). The target population was 313 active NGO's operating in Nairobi under the HIV/AIDS sector. Programme managers, programme officers or equivalent were respondents due to their involvement in strategy implementation in the organization. Stratified random sampling technique was used because it allows for generalization to a larger population with determinable margins of error and allows for use of inferential statistics. Since the target population in the study was less than 10,000, the sample of 384 was adjusted using the formula $n_f = n / (1+n/N)$ where n_f is the desired sample size when sample size is less than 10,000 and n is the sample size when the target population is more than 10,000 while N is the target population from sampled size (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003). Accordingly,

$$n_f = n / (1+n/N) = 384 / (1+384/185) = 125$$

Using the adjusted formula above, the number of project managers' sample was reduced to one hundred and twenty five (125). Apportioning these respondents to every stratum proportionately yielded the following sample sizes for every stratum, which together totaled to a sample size of 125;

$$\text{National} \quad 434/616 \times 125 = 88$$

$$\text{International} \quad 182/616 \times 125 = 37$$

A total of 125 questionnaires were administered to programme managers and programme officers or equivalent in NGOs in HIV/AIDS sector. This is because they are involved in strategy implementation. The pilot study was carried on in order to enable the researcher to be familiar with the research and its administration procedure. After the pilot study was completed the data from the survey was adjusted or modified in order to improve levels of clarity in the questionnaire before the final large scale study was conducted. The data obtained was analyzed using descriptive statistics (frequencies and percentages) and inferential statistics. In order to quantify the strength of the relationship between the variables, the researcher used Karl Pearson's coefficient of correlation. This was to indicate the strength and direction of association between the variables. The Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to test the goodness of fit of the models and the significance of the relationship between customer alignment and strategy implementation based on 5% level of significance.

A linear regression model was used to test the significance of the influence of the customer alignment on strategy implementation.

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X + \epsilon$$

Y= Strategy Implementation

X= Customer Alignment

ϵ =Error term

4.0 Research Findings and Discussion

4.1 Response Rate

One hundred and twenty five (125) questionnaires were distributed to the sampled respondents. Out of this, eighty four (84) questionnaires were correctly filled and returned. This translated to a response rate of 67.2%. This response rate was way above the conventionally acceptable rate for surveys. In earlier local doctoral studies, Awino (2007) cited earlier scholars and stated that the average response rate for empirical studies was 65% of the sample. Similarly, this was in line with Orodho (2009) who observed that a response rate above 50% contributes towards gathering of sufficient data that could be generalized to represent the opinions of respondents about the study problem in the target population. The results can therefore be generalized and considered representative of the population. Table 1 shows of the percentage response rate and frequency of responses.

Table 1: Response Rate

Category	Total Sample size	No. of Questionnaires Returned	No. of Questionnaires Not Returned	Percentage
Local NGOs	88	58	30	46.4
International NGOs	37	26	11	20.8
Total	125	84	41	67.2

4.2 Pilot Test

4.2.1 Validity Test

The study used construct and content validity to ascertain the validity of the questionnaire that was administered to the respondents. This is because it ensures that the information being assessed closely ties to the conceptual framework for this study. Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) was used to determine whether the responses generated were valid based on their values. For a data set to be regarded as valid and appropriate for statistical analysis, the value of KMO should be greater than 0.5 (Field, 2013). Findings in Table 2 showed that the KMO statistic for customer alignment and strategy implementation were greater than 0.5 which was significantly high; that is greater than the critical level of significance of the test which was set at 0.5 (Field, 2013). In addition to the KMO test, the Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was also significant (0.000, at $p < 0.05$) for all the study variable. These results provide an outstanding validation for further statistical analysis to be conducted.

Table 2: Validity Test

Variable	KMO	Significance
Customer Alignment	0.767	0.000
Strategy Implementation	0.781	0.000

4.2.2 Reliability Test

Cronbach alpha was calculated for all statements in the questionnaire. For this study, reliability was calculated using Cronbach’s alpha formula and results generated with the aid of SPSS. The findings in Table 3 show that Cronbach’s alpha for all the items were all above 0.7 indicating that the instrument was adequately reliable for measurement. Since all the variables measured had a Cronbach’s alpha above 0.7, they were all reliable and thus accepted.

Table 3: Reliability Analysis

Variable	Number of items	Cronbach alpha	Comments
Customer Alignment	9	0.802	Reliable
Strategy Implementation	6	0.812	Reliable

4.3 Factor Analysis

4.3.1 Factor Loading for Customer Alignment

Factor analysis was carried out on the statements of customer alignment. Variables with factor loading with Eigen values greater than 0.4 are adequate for measuring data (Rahim & Magner, 1995). Results on Table 4 show that all the statements on customer alignment had factor loading values greater than 0.5 and therefore they were accepted and thus no sub variable was dropped. The highest item “All departments in the organizations work harmoniously towards meeting customer expectations; teams don’t work in silos..” had factor loading of 0.915 and the lowest item “The organization takes into consideration customer feedback and puts measures in place to address customer feedback” had a measure of 0.513. All the ten items were therefore retained for further analysis.

Table 4: Factor Loading for Customer Alignment

Statements	Factor Loading
Our services are customer oriented; there is an agreed upon prioritized list of what the customer cares about (customer expectations)	0.528
Strategies are periodically reviewed to ensure that the expectations of customers are met	0.67
All departments in the organizations work harmoniously towards meeting customer expectations; teams don't work in silos.	0.915
The organization regularly meets donor expectations in execution of funded projects	0.783
Our organization has regularly experienced repeat donor partnerships because of efficient and effective execution of previous projects	0.756
Processes are reviewed to ensure that they are not inward facing but contribute to meeting customer's expectation.	0.671
The organization has put measures in place to receive and document customer complaints	0.617
Customer complaints (both from donor and receivers of services) are shared with all the staff in the organization so as to align themselves to address them	0.746
The organization takes into consideration customer feedback and puts measures in place to address customer feedback	0.513

4.3.2 Factor Loading for Strategic Implementation

Factor analysis was conducted on the statements of strategic implementation. Variables with factor loading with Eigen values greater than 0.5 should be extracted (Tabachinick & Fidell, 2007) Results on Table 5 show that all the statements on strategic implementation had factor loading values greater than 0.5 and therefore they were accepted and thus no sub variable was dropped. The highest item “Our organization achieves timely completion of projects for its various programmes.” had factor loading of 0.804 and the lowest item “Our organization effectively achieves the set annual objectives” had a measure of 0.58. All the ten items were therefore retained for further analysis.

Table 5: Factor Loading for Strategy Implementation

Statements	Factor Loading
Our organization effectively achieves the set annual objectives	0.640
Our organization achieves timely completion of projects for its various programmes	0.739
Our organization efficiently completes projects for its various programmes (within cost estimates)	0.610
The clients (customers) our organizations are satisfied with services offered	0.579
The organization does meet the expectation of its donors within each performance period	0.561
The Organization effectively has met the set expectations in impacting the communities it serves	0.730

4.4 Descriptive Statistics

4.4.1 Customer Alignment

The study sought to investigate whether the organizations services are customer oriented and there is an agreed upon prioritized list of what the customer cares about (customer expectations); all departments in the organizations work harmoniously towards meeting customer expectations; the organization regularly meets donor expectations in execution of funded projects; our organization

strategies are centered around the needs of the customer (those who receive our services) among others. The results of this study are as presented in Table 6.

Table 6: Customer Alignment

Statements	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean	Std. Dev
Our services are customer oriented, there is an agreed upon prioritized list of what the customer cares about (customer expectations)	1.20%	3.70%	9.80%	41.50%	43.90%	4.22	0.917
All departments in the organization work harmoniously towards meeting customer expectations. The organization regularly meets donor expectations in execution of funded projects.	1.20%	2.40%	1.20%	38.10%	57.10%	4.48	0.752
Our organization reviews strategies to ensure that they contribute to the attainment of customer satisfaction.	0.00%	0.00%	4.80%	39.30%	56.00%	4.51	0.591
Our organization has put in place strategies to address the needs of both our donors as well as our customers (receivers of our services)	0.00%	0.00%	3.60%	41.70%	54.80%	4.51	0.57
Processes are reviewed to ensure that they are not inward facing but contribute to meeting customers' expectations.	0.00%	0.00%	13.10%	51.20%	35.70%	4.23	0.665
Our organization has regularly experienced repeat donor partnerships because of efficient and effective execution of previous projects	1.20%	3.60%	17.90%	44.00%	33.30%	4.05	0.877
Customer complaints (both from donor and receivers of services are shared with all the staff in the organization so as to align themselves to address them	0.00%	3.60%	28.60%	44.00%	23.80%	3.88	0.813
The organization takes into consideration customer feedback and puts measures in place to address customer feedback.	0.00%	1.20%	9.50%	42.90%	46.40%	4.35	0.703
Average						4.28	0.726

Results in Table 6 show that 85.4% (41.5%+43.9%) of the respondents agreed their services were customer oriented and there was an agreed upon prioritized list of what the customer cares about (customer expectations). This is consistent with the strategic alignment model by Labovitz and Rosansky (1997; 2012) which posits that alignment gives managers at every level of the organization the ability to rapidly deploy a coherent business strategy and be totally customer focused. This concurs with Brass (2012) that sub-national NGO location corresponds to an area's objective level of need; contrary to dominant theories of African political economy, political factors like patronage appear to have little or no significant influence. These findings as well agree with Niven (2006) that for organizations to achieve good performance, they must create products and services which customers perceive as adding value to their lives. Kaplan and Norton (2006) argued that if organizations are to achieve long run superior performance; they must create and deliver products and services that are valued by customers. Peel (2012) notes that one of the reasons organizations fail in the strategic management process is failure to understand the customer.

The study found out that 95.2% of the respondents agreed that all departments in their organization work harmoniously towards meeting customer expectations. This concurs Lechler and Gao (2012) that clients play a critical role in projects because they are the ones for whom a project is usually intended and made use of. According to these authors, Clients inform the scope of a project as well as influence project implementation and test a project's result. Ultimately all parts of the organization should work towards a common goal, to satisfy the customer. These findings are consistent with the stakeholder's theory which contends that attitudes, structures, and practices of the organization are synchronized to address the interests of all legitimate stakeholders (Donaldson & Preston, 1995). Khadem (2008) noted that aligned organizations enjoy greater customer produce and superior returns for shareholders.

According to the study 95.3% of the respondents agreed that organizations regularly met donor expectations in execution of funded projects. These findings concur with Werker and Ahmed (2008) that nongovernmental organizations face more direct incentives to manage donor welfare than that of the beneficiary because donor funding is the only "market force" in NGO-sector industry, where donors can be viewed as desiring to improve the quantity and quality of the product of the NGO without having their donation expropriated. According to Kaplan and Norton (2001) in the NGO sector, the donor is viewed as a customer who seeks some value proposition from the NGO they associate with through funding. Therefore the findings are also consistent with Lechler and Gao (2012) that clients play a critical role in projects because they are the ones for whom a project is usually intended and made use of. Clients inform the scope of a project as well as influence project implementation and test a project's result. According to Freeman (1999), stakeholders are any group or individuals who can be affected by the achievement of the objectives of the firm and suggests that firms should identify their direct and indirect persons or groups that are affected. Therefore these findings also concur with the stakeholder theory which posits that every legitimate person or group active in the activities of a firm or organization, are driven to do so to obtain benefits, and that the priority of the interests of all legitimate stakeholders is not self-evident (Donaldson & Preston, 1995).

Similarly, 90.5% of the respondents agreed that their organization reviews strategies to ensure that they contribute to the attainment of customer satisfaction. This concurs with Anderson and Liedman (2013) that project managers need to have a continuous identification of customer expectations at the same time take them on an educational journey during implementation of

projects. This is to influence the customers' expectations or adapt the project and its outcome to match their expectations and achieve customer satisfaction. The results are also consistent Labovitz (2004) that organizations aligned to their customers enjoy greater customer and employee satisfaction and produce superior returns for shareholders.

The study established that 96.5% of the respondents agreed that their organization had put in place strategies to address the needs of both their donors as well as their customers (receivers of our services). These findings differ with Galway, Korbett and Zeng (2012) who in their study on the distribution of health and development NGOs in Bolivia established that neither general nor health specific NGO activity is related to population need, when defined as population health status or education level or poverty levels; meaning the "customer" needs are not addressed effectively by the NGOs. These study findings also differ with those of Fruttero and Guari, (2005) that NGOs in both Bangladesh and Uganda do not appear to locate the neediest communities as the net change in NGO programmes in a community was not related to indicators of community need. Brass (2012) in Kenya however established that NGOs in Kenya were driven to their choice locations by the needs of the communities' they were to serve.

Eighty six point nine percent (86.9%) of the respondents agreed processes were reviewed to ensure that they were not inward facing but contributed to meeting customers' expectations. s. These results are consistent with Labovitz and Rosansky (1997; 2012) strategic alignment model that maintains that alignment gives managers at every level of the organization the ability to rapidly deploy a coherent business strategy, be totally customer focused, develop world-class people and continuously improve business processes all at the same time. This is in line with Lear (2012) that people in aligned organizations have a clear line of sight to customer requirements and organizational goals. Lear noted that Sustained excellence emerges when all the key elements of a business are connected and simultaneously linked to the marketplace. Don (2015) in a study dealing with the alignment problem notes that a when a company focuses on becoming more customer-centric, one of the biggest challenges that company has to overcome is aligning their internal systems, accountabilities and responsibilities with individual needs and interests. The results above indicate that the organizations had aligned their processes to address the needs of their customers.

From the study it was established that 77.3% of the respondents agreed that their organization had regularly experienced repeat donor partnerships because of efficient and effective execution of previous projects. This concurs with Labovitz (2004) that the hallmark of aligned organizations is that they consistently deliver measurable improvements in customer loyalty, customer satisfaction, employee retention and return to shareholders, all at the same time.

From the study 67.8% of the respondents agreed that customer complaints (both from donor and receivers of services were shared with all the staff in the organization so as to align themselves to address them. This is supported by Eskerod and Jepson (2016) who posit projects can only be successful through contributions from stakeholders. They further note that projects may fail because project management does not take the requirements, wishes and concerns of stakeholders sufficiently into account. These findings differ with Jammulamadaka and Varman (2010) who in their study in India to determine whether NGO development assistance is misdirected established that the absence of objective feedback mechanisms may help explain the lack of correspondence between donor funding and needs on the ground as well as NGO location. From their study it was evident that most donors have inevitably limited and blinkered knowledge of regional disparities

that can be obtained through local NGOs. Brass (2012) however noted coordination between NGOs presence and community needs in Kenya.

Eighty nine point three percent (89.3%) of the respondents agreed that their organization takes into consideration customer feedback and puts measures in place to address customer feedback. The results agree with Eskerod and Jepson (2016) that in projects it is the stakeholders that assess whether they find the project successful - an assessment based on criteria that goes further than receiving the project deliverables. In most cases, the criteria are implicit and change during the project course. This is a major challenge for project managers. They further note that the route to better projects lies in finding ways to improve project stakeholder management. The results further with Kaplan and Norton (2001) that companies that do not understand their customers' needs eventually find out that competitors can make inroads by offering products or services that are better aligned to their customer's preferences.

Generally, the average mean of the responses was 4.28 which means that majority of the respondents were agreeing to the statements in the questionnaire. The standard deviation was 0.726 meaning that the responses were clustered around the mean response.

4.4.2 Strategy Implementation

The independent variable of the study was strategy implementation. The study sought to establish whether organizations effectively achieve the set annual financial and strategic objectives; the organization has consistently achieved its long term objectives (1 to 5 years) as set out in the strategic plan; our organization achieves timely completion of projects on its various programmes among others. Results are as presented in Table 7.

Table 7: Strategy Implementation

Statements	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean	Std. Dev.
Our organization effectively achieves the set annual objectives	9.50%	6.00%	14.30%	47.60%	22.60%	3.68	1.174
Organization effectively has met the set expectations in impacting the communities it serves	11.90%	10.70%	16.70%	33.30%	27.40%	3.54	1.321
Our organization achieves timely completion of projects for its various programmes	10.70%	10.70%	20.20%	35.70%	22.60%	3.49	1.256
Our organization efficiently completes projects for its various programmes (within cost estimates)	9.50%	13.10%	17.90%	28.60%	31.00%	3.58	1.31
The clients (customers) of our organizations are satisfied with services offered	12.00%	10.80%	20.50%	42.20%	14.50%	3.36	1.216
The organization does meet the expectation of its donors within each performance period	15.50%	9.50%	4.80%	23.80%	46.40%	3.76	1.502
Average						3.56	1.29

Results in Table 7 show that 70.2 % of the respondents agreed that their organization effectively achieved the set annual objectives, 60.7% of the respondents agreed that their organization effectively met the set expectations in impacting the communities it serves. These results differ with the finding of Baroto, Arvand and Ahmad (2014) that strategy may not succeed in 75% of the cases and according to Kaplan and Norton (2006) consequences show that 70% to 90% of organizations fail to realize the success of implementing their strategies.

Similarly, 58.3% of the respondents agreed that their organization achieves timely completion of projects for its various programmes. The results implied that annual objectives, set expectations in impacting the communities it serves and timely completion of projects was achieved by the organization. Again these results differ with the finding of Barrows (2011) that more than 90% of the strategic initiatives fail not due to formulation but implementation challenges.

Similarly, 59.6% of the respondents agreed that their organization efficiently completes projects for its various programmes (within cost estimates) differing Bolboli and Reiche (2013) who noted that one of the key reasons that organizations do not achieve their strategy goals is because leaders do not invest the same amount of time, energy and resources in managing the execution of the strategy as they do in strategy formulation.

Fifty six point seven percent (56.7%) of the respondents agreed that their clients (customers) were satisfied with services offered while 70.2% of the respondents agreed that their organization does meet the expectation of its donors within each performance period. The result implies that cost estimates of their projects were adequate and realistic, their clients were satisfied and donor’s expectation met. This means a success to strategy implementation. Generally, the average mean of the responses was 3.56 which means that majority of the respondents were agreeing to the statements in the questionnaire. The standard deviation was 1.29 meaning that the responses were clustered around the mean response.

4.5 Correlation Analysis

Correlation analysis was conducted to ascertain the association between customer alignment and strategy implementation. Correlation Coefficient was computed and used to test whether there existed interdependency between independent variables and also whether the independent variables were related to the dependent variable, strategy implementation. Results for the correlation are as presented on Table 8.

Table 8: Correlation Analysis between Strategic Alignment and Strategy Implementation

Correlations		Customer Alignment	Strategy Implementation
Customer Alignment	Pearson Correlation	1.000	
	Sig. (2-tailed)		
Strategy Implementation	Pearson Correlation	.617**	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Customer alignment was positively and significantly associated to strategy implementation ($r=0.617$, $p=0.000<0.05$). This concurs with Kaplan and Norton (2006) that successful companies are aligned to meet their customers’ needs. The hallmark of aligned organizations is that they

consistently deliver measurable improvements in customer loyalty, customer satisfaction, employee retention and return to shareholders, all at the same time (Labovitz, 2004). The findings are also consistent with Anderson and Liedman (2013) who recommend the need for project managers to have a continuous identification of customer expectations at the same time take them on an educational journey. This is to influence the customers’ expectations or adapt the project and its outcome to match the expectations and achieve customer satisfaction.

4.6 Regression Analysis for Customers Alignment

a) Goodness of fit – Customer alignment on Strategy Implementation

Regression analysis was conducted to assess the influence of customers’ alignment on strategy implementation. Table 9 presents the regression model on customers’ alignment versus strategy implementation. As presented in the table, the coefficient of determination R Square is 0.380 and R is 0.617 at 0.000 significance level. The model indicates that customers’ alignment explains 38.0% of the variation in strategy implementation (R-squared=0.380). This means 38.0% of the strategy implementation is influenced by customers’ alignment.

Table 9: Model Fitness for Customers Alignment

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.617a	0.380	0.373	0.48609

a Predictors: (Constant), Customer Alignment

b) ANOVA Analysis – Customer alignment on Strategy Implementation

Table 10 presents the Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) results. The findings confirm that the regression model of customer alignment and strategy implementation index is significant and supported by F=50.341, p<0.000, since p-values was 0.000 which is less than 0.05.

Table 10: Analysis of Variance for Customers Alignment

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	11.895	1	11.895	50.341	.000b
	Residual	19.375	82	0.236		
	Total	31.269	83			

c) Model coefficients – Customer Alignment and Strategy Implementation

Table 11 shows the coefficient for customers’ alignment. Results revealed that customer alignment does influence strategic implementation positively and significantly. ($\beta=0.532$, $p=0.000$). The gradient coefficient shows the extent to which a unit change in the independent variable causes a change in the strategy implementation which is the change in customer alignment due to a unit change in process alignment. This implies that a unit change in customers’ alignment will lead to an improvement in strategy implementation by 0.532 units.

Table 11: Customers Alignment and Strategy Implementation

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	1.530	0.297		5.158	0.000
Customer Alignment	0.532	0.075	0.617	7.095	0.000

With a constant of 1.530, the model estimate for customer alignment on strategy implementation is as follows:

$$Y = 1.530 + 0.532X$$

Where;

Y= Customer Alignment.

X= Strategy Implementation.

The influence of customers’ alignments on strategic implementation with regard to the entire tested sample was determined and concluded that the null hypothesis “There is no significant influence of customers alignment on strategy implementation in NGOs in Kenya” is rejected, thus customers alignment does have a significant influence on strategy implementation in HIV/AIDS NGOs in Kenya. These results are consistent with Lechler and Gao (2012) who established that taking into account the needs of clients is an essential element of project success. The findings of the study showed a significant and highly positive relationship between client expectation alignment and all project success criteria including efficiency, effectiveness, customer satisfaction, and economic success. The results are concur with Kaplan and Norton (2001) who noted that if organizations are to achieve long run success in achieving their objectives, they must create and deliver products and services that are valued by customers.

4.7 Hypothesis Testing

H₀: There is no Significant Influence of Customer’s Alignment on Strategy Implementation in NGOs in Kenya.

The hypothesis was tested by using linear regression and determined using p-value. The acceptance/rejection criteria was that, if the p value is less than 0.05, we reject the H₀ but if it is more than 0.05, then H₀ is not rejected. Therefore, the null hypothesis is that there is no significant influence of customer’s alignment on strategy implementation in NGOs in Kenya. Results in Table 11 shows that the p-value was 0.000. This was supported by a calculated t-statistic of 7.095 that is larger than the critical t-statistic of 1.96. The null hypothesis was therefore rejected. The study adopted the alternative hypothesis that there is positive and significant influence of customers’ alignment on strategy implementation in NGOs in Kenya.

5.0 Conclusion

Customer's alignment (in this case alignment to both donor and beneficiaries needs) has a positive and significant influence on strategic implementation in HIV/AIDS NGOs. Customer alignment translates an organization mission and strategy into specific objectives about targeted customers and market segments that can be communicated throughout the organization. Similarly, HIV/AIDS NGOs need to ensure that all departments (projects) in the organizations work harmoniously towards meeting customer expectations, in this case the recipients of their services be they strategic interventions related to HIV prevention, treatment and care services, interventions to prevent mother to child – transmission of HIV and AIDS, capacity building in HIV/AIDS initiatives, advocacy of rights and needs of persons living with HIV and AIDS and voluntary testing and counselling services among others interventions.

Customer alignment will further enable the NGOs to identify and explicitly measure the value propositions they will deliver to donors. The donors are interested in effective execution of projects they have funded. In summary, HIV/AIDS NGOs need to be customer oriented (to donor perspective as well as the beneficiaries) and their strategies reviewed periodically to ensure that the expectations are met. HIV/AIDS NGOs need also to ensure processes within the organizations are customer centric; meaning they are customer facing and driven. Therefore, customer complaints whether from donor or receivers of services need to be shared with all the staff in the organization so that it can addressed adequately and professionally. These NGOs need to take into consideration feedback from their beneficiaries and donors in order to put measures in place to address them so that they can be used for strategy implementation.

6.0 Recommendations

HIV/AIDS NGOs should ensure that their strategies are driven by the needs of their customers. Customer complaints whether from donor or receivers of services need should be shared with all the staff in the organization so that it can addressed adequately and professionally. Organization should take into consideration customer feedback need to put measures in place to address them. Staff and management should always engage in an open and frequent communication when working in the organization.

The NGOs should also put in place processes to ensure that activities and tasks within the organization are driven towards meeting the customer needs. The study recommends the policy makers to formulate policies that can enable strategic alignment facilitate strategy implementation. The policies should consider customer's alignment as strategy facets that influence strategy implementation. By being aligned to their customers (the donors and recipients of their services), HIV/AIDS NGOs will be able to meet the strategic objectives of reducing HIV/AIDS outcomes on the communities they operate in.

7.0 References

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