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**Effect of Strategic Alignment on Performance of Non-Governmental Organizations in
Northern Region of Kenya**

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Kenya**



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Abstract

Purpose: This study investigates the impact of strategic alignment and the performance of NGOs specifically within the dimensions of strategic thinking, goal consistency, resource allocation, and communication on the overall effectiveness of NGOs operating in Northern Kenya.

Methodology: Adopting a pragmatist philosophy, the research employs a mixed-methods, cross-sectional design to explore these dynamics comprehensively. Quantitative data were collected through structured questionnaires from 166 NGO leaders across seven counties, representing a response rate of 70.9%, with high internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha ranging from 0.793 to 0.891). The questionnaires measured variables including strategic thinking, strategic alignment, performance of NGOs, and other relevant factors. Descriptive statistics indicated strong agreement on the influence of strategic alignment on decision-making and innovation facilitation. Qualitative insights from 15 key informant interviews, focus groups, and document analysis provided contextual understanding of adaptive leadership practices and cultural challenges. Data analysis involved correlation, regression, and structural equation modeling (SEM) using SPSS and AMOS, with SEM explaining 67.2% of variance in NGO performance ($R^2 = 0.672$). Ethical protocols ensured participant confidentiality and cultural sensitivity throughout the research process.

Findings: Correlation analysis revealed a significant positive relationship between strategic alignment and NGO performance ($r = 0.598$, $p < 0.01$). Regression results confirmed that strategic alignment explains 40.3% of performance variability, with dimensions such as goal consistency, resource allocation, and communication all contributing significantly resource allocation being the most influential ($\beta = 0.312$, $p < 0.001$). The SEM further established that strategic alignment, combined with competence management and other factors, strongly predicts NGO performance, with cultural factors moderating these effects. Qualitative themes highlighted the importance of adaptive leadership, stakeholder engagement, and capacity building, aligning with quantitative findings and emphasizing the critical role of cultural and contextual factors in strategic effectiveness.

Unique Contribution to Theory, Practice and Policy: This research contributes to strategic alignment theory by emphasizing the necessity of contextually adaptive practices in resource-limited, culturally diverse environments like Northern Kenya. It demonstrates that strategic alignment particularly through goal coherence, resource management, and effective communication significantly enhances NGO performance. The findings advocate for capacity building in strategic thinking and organizational practices to foster innovation, flexibility, and stakeholder engagement, which are essential for sustaining NGO effectiveness in complex operational landscapes.

Keywords: *Strategic Thinking, Resource-Based View (RBV), Contingency Theory, Performance, Non-Governmental Organizations*

JEL Codes: M10, L20, L30

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INTRODUCTION

The performance of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) plays a crucial role in addressing social, economic, and developmental challenges, especially in regions with limited government infrastructure and resources such as Northern Kenya. NGOs in this region are tasked with implementing programs related to health, education, poverty alleviation, and peace-building amidst complex environmental and socio-political challenges. Despite their significant contributions, many NGOs struggle to achieve their intended outcomes consistently. Several studies have indicated that organizational performance in the NGO sector is heavily influenced by internal and external factors, with strategic management practices being among the most critical (Karanja & Muturi, 2022). Understanding the factors that enhance or hinder performance is essential for improving the effectiveness and sustainability of NGOs operating in this demanding environment.

Strategic alignment refers to the process of ensuring that an organization's strategies, resources, and activities are cohesive and directed towards common goals, which is critical for organizational success globally (Hitt et al., 2020). In the context of NGOs operating in Northern Kenya, strategic alignment can facilitate better resource utilization, stakeholder engagement, and adaptability to changing circumstances, ultimately leading to improved performance outcomes. However, the limited empirical evidence on the influence of strategic alignment on NGO performance in complex environments, such as Northern Kenya, necessitates a more comprehensive understanding of this concept. However, despite its importance, there is limited empirical evidence on how strategic alignment influences NGO performance within such complex environments. Most existing studies tend to focus on corporate sectors or urban NGO settings, leaving a significant gap in understanding how strategic alignment functions in remote and conflict-prone regions (Mutuku & Mathooko, 2022).

The study by Wachira et al. (2020) is particularly relevant in this context, as it discovered that organizations with strong strategic alignment are more likely to improve their performance outcomes by enhancing decision-making, resource allocation, and stakeholder collaboration. Specifically, Wachira et al. (2020) argued that strategic alignment enables organizations to respond effectively to changing environmental conditions, foster a culture of collaboration and innovation, and allocate resources efficiently, ultimately leading to improved performance outcomes. In the context of NGOs operating in Northern Kenya, this finding suggests that strategic alignment can help organizations navigate the unique operational challenges posed by insecurity, infrastructural deficits, and cultural heterogeneity, and ultimately achieve their intended outcomes.

The unique operational challenges in Northern Kenya, including insecurity, infrastructural deficits, and cultural heterogeneity, necessitate tailored strategic approaches that align organizational goals with local needs and environmental realities. While some NGOs have adopted strategic planning frameworks, their effectiveness in fostering performance improvements remains under-explored in this context. The existing literature suggests that strategic alignment can help NGOs in Northern Kenya to improve their performance outcomes by enhancing decision-making, resource allocation, and stakeholder collaboration (Wachira et al., 2020). Therefore, investigating the effect of strategic alignment on NGO performance in Northern Kenya is vital for developing actionable insights that can inform policy and managerial practices, and ultimately contribute to better service delivery and

sustainable development outcomes in the region..

This study aims to fill the gap in the existing literature by examining how strategic alignment impacts the performance of NGOs operating in Northern Kenya. By focusing on this region, the research will contribute to a deeper understanding of the contextual factors influencing strategic management practices in resource-constrained and culturally diverse environments. The findings are expected to provide evidence-based recommendations for NGO leaders and policymakers to enhance strategic management and organizational effectiveness, and ultimately underscore the importance of strategic alignment as a driver of NGO success in challenging settings. Ultimately, this research will facilitate better service delivery and sustainable development outcomes in Northern Kenya, and contribute to the improvement of NGO performance in the region.

Statement of the Problem

Despite the increasing recognition of strategic alignment as a key driver of organizational performance, there remains limited empirical evidence on how this concept is applied within NGOs operating in Northern Kenya – a region characterized by extreme resource scarcity, insecurity, and cultural heterogeneity. Currently, only about 37% of NGOs in the area are reported to meet their operational objectives effectively (Kenya NGO Coordination Board, 2023). This low success rate has been attributed to issues such as resource misallocation, weak stakeholder engagement, and strategic rigidity. Strategic rigidity refers to the inability of an organization to adapt its strategies in response to changing environmental conditions, often resulting in a mismatch between the organization's goals and the evolving needs of its stakeholders. For instance, an NGO in Northern Kenya that continues to focus on providing food aid in a region that has transitioned from emergency relief to long-term recovery, without adjusting its strategies to address the new needs of the community, such as education and economic empowerment, is exhibiting strategic rigidity. This inflexibility can lead to limited capacity for strategic thinking and adaptive management in volatile environments (Mutuku & Mathooko, 2022). The complex challenges faced by NGOs in Northern Kenya, such as frequent insecurity, infrastructural deficits, and diverse cultural dynamics, necessitate a nuanced understanding of how strategic alignment can be leveraged to improve organizational effectiveness.

Furthermore, existing research largely concentrates on urban and peri-urban NGO contexts, neglecting the distinctive operational hurdles encountered in remote, conflict-prone, and culturally heterogeneous regions like Northern Kenya (Wachira et al., 2020). This gap highlights the urgent need to explore how strategic alignment and organizational culture influence NGO performance specifically within these complex settings. Studies have shown that organizations with well-aligned strategies and adaptive cultures are better equipped to respond to environmental uncertainties and resource constraints (Karanja & Muturi, 2022). Enhancing strategic alignment skills among NGO personnel could be pivotal in fostering greater adaptability, improving decision-making processes, and ultimately increasing organizational effectiveness in such challenging environments. Addressing this gap through empirical research can inform targeted strategies to bolster NGO performance and sustainability in Northern Kenya.

General Objective

This study focused on examining the effect of strategic alignment on performance of NGOs in Northern Region of Kenya.

Research Hypothesis

H₀₁: Strategic alignment has no significant effect on performance of NGOs in Northern Region of Kenya.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Review

Resource-Based View (RBV) Theory

The Resource-Based View (RBV) Theory, which was developed by Barney (1991) and Wernerfelt (1984), has been further explored and refined by other notable authors, including Peteraf (1993), Grant (1991), and Amit and Schoemaker (1993). According to RBV, organizations achieve sustained competitive advantage through the effective utilization of their unique, valuable, and inimitable internal resources, such as specialized knowledge, skilled personnel, organizational routines, and social assets that are difficult for competitors to replicate. As noted by Barney (1991), these internal resources can be a source of sustained competitive advantage if they are valuable, rare, inimitable, and non-substitutable.

In the context of NGOs operating in resource-scarce environments like Northern Kenya, strategic management of internal assets such as local knowledge, community trust, and innovative practices becomes vital for operational success and sustainability. For example, the NGO consortium operating in Turkana County, which has established a robust network of local community health workers, can leverage this internal resource to deliver targeted health interventions and build trust with the local population. Similarly, the Mandera-based NGO that has developed innovative livestock insurance programs for pastoralist communities can utilize its specialized knowledge of the local context to design and implement effective risk management strategies. By harnessing these unique internal resources, NGOs in Northern Kenya can differentiate themselves and create long-term value, ultimately contributing to the well-being of the communities they serve.

However, as pointed out by critics such as Priem and Butler (2001), RBV has limitations, notably its narrow focus on internal resources and capabilities, often overlooking external environmental factors that influence resource utility. It assumes that resources are inherently valuable and inimitable without considering how external conditions, such as socio-economic and political dynamics, impact their effectiveness. To address these weaknesses, RBV is frequently integrated with contingency approaches that emphasize environmental fit, as suggested by authors such as Lawrence and Lorsch (1967) and Galbraith (1973). This combined perspective helps organizations adapt their internal resource strategies to external realities, ensuring that their unique assets are leveraged effectively within changing contexts and enhancing overall performance.

Moreover, other authors, such as Teece, Pisano, and Shuen (1997), have highlighted the importance of dynamic capabilities in rapidly changing environments. They argue that organizations need to be able to adapt and reconfigure their internal resources and capabilities to respond to shifting external conditions. In the context of NGOs in Northern Kenya, this might involve developing the ability to pivot quickly in response to changes in funding, weather patterns, or conflict dynamics. By integrating RBV with dynamic capabilities and contingency approaches, NGOs can develop a more nuanced understanding of how to leverage their internal resources to achieve sustained competitive advantage and create long-term value in complex and dynamic environments.

Contingency Theory

The Contingency Theory, first introduced by Lawrence and Lorsch in 1967, is a seminal concept in the field of organizational strategy and leadership. According to this theory, the effectiveness of an organization is dependent on the alignment or "fit" between its internal structures, strategies, and external environmental contingencies, such as volatility, complexity, and resource availability. As noted by Galbraith (1973), this alignment is crucial for achieving better goal attainment and stakeholder satisfaction. In the context of NGOs operating in unpredictable and diverse environments like Northern Kenya, Contingency Theory provides a valuable framework for developing strategies that are sensitive to local conditions, cultural variations, and infrastructural challenges. For instance, NGOs can use this theory to tailor their internal processes and decision-making frameworks to their specific external contexts, thereby enhancing their adaptability and responsiveness to changing environmental conditions.

The Contingency Theory has been further developed and refined by other authors, including Donaldson (2001), who emphasized the importance of organizational design and structure in achieving alignment with environmental contingencies. Additionally, authors such as Burns and Stalker (1961) have highlighted the role of leadership and management style in facilitating adaptability and responsiveness to environmental changes. However, as pointed out by critics such as Schoonhoven (1981), Contingency Theory has its limitations, including its broad and sometimes ambiguous guidance, which can make it difficult for organizations to determine the precise nature of the "fit" required in complex settings. To address these limitations, researchers often advocate for integrating Contingency Theory with other frameworks, such as the Resource-Based View (RBV), which emphasizes the importance of internal resources and capabilities in achieving sustained competitive advantage (Barney, 1991; Wernerfelt, 1984).

The integration of Contingency Theory with RBV can provide a more nuanced and comprehensive approach to organizational strategy and leadership. As noted by Teece, Pisano, and Shuen (1997), this combined approach enables organizations to leverage internal strengths while remaining responsive to external environmental shifts, fostering resilience and improved performance in dynamic and challenging operational environments. In the context of NGOs operating in Northern Kenya, this integrated approach can help organizations develop strategies that are tailored to their specific internal and external contexts, thereby enhancing their effectiveness and sustainability. For example, an NGO may use Contingency Theory to identify the key environmental contingencies that affect its operations, and then use RBV to develop strategies that leverage its internal resources and capabilities to address these contingencies.

In conclusion, Contingency Theory provides a valuable framework for understanding the importance of alignment between organizational structures, strategies, and environmental contingencies. While it has its limitations, the integration of Contingency Theory with other frameworks, such as RBV, can provide a more comprehensive and nuanced approach to organizational strategy and leadership. As noted by authors such as Mintzberg (1979) and Weick (1979), the key to effective organizational strategy and leadership is the ability to adapt and respond to changing environmental conditions, while also leveraging internal strengths and capabilities.

Empirical Review

Strategic Alignment and Performance of Non-Governmental Organizations

Goal consistency, as a fundamental component of strategic alignment, has been empirically demonstrated to significantly influence NGO performance through improved organizational focus and stakeholder engagement. Kaplan (2001) conducted a seminal study examining 47 nonprofit organizations and found that those with clear goal alignment between strategic objectives and operational activities demonstrated 49% higher goal achievement and 56% better resource utilization compared to organizations with fragmented or inconsistent goals. Similarly, Herman and Renz (2008) analyzed performance metrics from 64 social service NGOs and established that goal consistency explained 41% of the variance in integrity and 37% of the variance in program sustainability indicators. The relationship between goal consistency and performance has been further substantiated in developing country contexts by Waweru and Ronoh (2015), who examined 53 NGOs in East Africa and found that organizations maintaining strong alignment between mission statements and strategic objectives achieved significantly higher beneficiary impact scores (mean difference = 1.7, $p < 0.01$) and donor satisfaction ratings (mean difference = 1.4, $p < 0.01$) compared to those with misaligned or ambiguous goals. Contextual factors influencing goal consistency effectiveness and mechanisms by which goal consistency affects performance outcomes are areas that need to be examined in more depth to fully understand the impact of goal consistency on NGO performance.

In the Kenyan context specifically, Muriithi, Linyiru, and Karanja (2018) surveyed 68 community development organizations and revealed that goal consistency was significantly correlated with program completion rates ($r = 0.69$, $p < 0.001$), resource mobilization effectiveness ($r = 0.62$, $p < 0.001$), and stakeholder trust ($r = 0.71$, $p < 0.001$). These findings are particularly relevant for NGOs operating in Northern Kenya, where complex socioeconomic challenges and diverse stakeholder expectations require clear goal alignment to maintain organizational focus and enhance performance outcomes (Kamau & Donoghue, 2021). The empirical evidence consistently demonstrates that strategic alignment manifested through goal consistency significantly enhances NGOs' capacity to maintain mission focus, manage stakeholder expectations, and achieve sustainable performance in challenging operational environments. The impact of leadership and management styles on goal consistency and the implications of goal consistency for NGO sustainability and long-term impact are therefore important areas for future study.

Resource allocation, as a critical dimension of strategic alignment, has been empirically linked to enhanced organizational performance through improved efficiency and operational effectiveness. Rojas (2000) examined financial and programmatic data from 59 nonprofit organizations and found that strategic alignment in resource allocation decisions explained 46% of the variance in goal achievement metrics and 52% of the variance in quality of work indicators. Organizations demonstrating strong alignment between strategic priorities and resource allocation patterns achieved significantly higher performance outcomes compared to those with misaligned or ad-hoc resource distribution approaches. Effective resource allocation strategies in different NGO contexts and trade-offs between short-term and long-term resource allocation decisions are critical factors that can influence NGO performance, and further research is needed to develop a deeper understanding of these issues.

Bhatti, Awan, and Razaq (2014) conducted a comprehensive study of 72 international NGOs operating in resource-constrained environments and established that strategic resource allocation practices were significantly associated with program sustainability ($\beta=0.63$, $p<0.001$) and beneficiary satisfaction ($\beta=0.58$, $p<0.001$). In the African context specifically, Mwangi and Kihara (2018) surveyed 61 development NGOs and found that organizations employing strategy-aligned resource allocation frameworks demonstrated 43% higher program completion rates and maintained 38% better funding stability compared to those with disconnected budgeting processes. Similarly, Waithaka, Gakure, and Wanjau (2013) conducted a mixed-methods study of 57 Kenyan NGOs and revealed that strategic alignment in resource allocation explained 39% of the variance in program impact indicators and 47% of the variance in operational efficiency metrics. These findings highlight how strategic alignment manifested through systematic resource allocation enables NGOs to prioritize interventions effectively, optimize limited resources, and maintain performance sustainability in challenging operational contexts (Adera & Wamalwa, 2020). The empirical evidence consistently demonstrates that aligning resource allocation decisions with strategic objectives significantly enhances NGOs' capacity to maintain programmatic focus, optimize operational efficiency, and achieve sustainable performance outcomes in resource-constrained environments like Northern Kenya. The role of technology and innovation in facilitating strategic resource allocation and the implications of strategic resource allocation for NGO scalability and replication are therefore important areas for future study.

Communication effectiveness, the third critical component of strategic alignment, has been empirically demonstrated to influence NGO performance through improved coordination and stakeholder engagement. Lewis, Hamel, and Richardson (2001) conducted a comprehensive analysis of 68 nonprofit organizations and found that effective strategic communication was significantly correlated with integrity ($r=0.74$, $p<0.001$) and operational coordination ($r=0.69$, $p<0.001$). Organizations employing systematic approaches to internal and external communication demonstrated 52% higher program implementation effectiveness and maintained 47% better stakeholder relationships compared to those with fragmented or inconsistent communication practices. Effective communication strategies in different NGO contexts and the implications of communication effectiveness for NGO accountability and transparency are therefore important areas for future research, as understanding these relationships can inform strategies for improving NGO performance and impact.

The relationship between strategic communication and NGO performance has been studied in various contexts, with notable findings indicating a significant correlation between the two. For instance, Radbourne (2003) found that strategic communication capabilities explained 43% of the variance in collaborative effectiveness metrics and 39% of the variance in resource mobilization indicators in 54 community-based organizations. This suggests that effective communication is a crucial factor in determining the success of NGOs in terms of collaboration and resource mobilization. In developing countries, Njagi and Kombo (2020) discovered that NGOs with strategy-aligned communication frameworks achieved higher performance in beneficiary engagement, donor relationships, and community participation. Furthermore, Murgor and Jonyo (2015) revealed that strategic communication effectiveness was associated with organizational adaptability and program sustainability in 49 Kenyan development organizations, highlighting the importance of tailored communication approaches in navigating complex stakeholder ecosystems and cultural diversity. These findings collectively indicate that strategic communication is essential for NGOs to maintain performance consistency in

challenging operational contexts, with 43% of collaborative effectiveness and 39% of resource mobilization being attributed to strategic communication capabilities. The research highlights the importance of strategic communication in enhancing NGO performance, particularly in developing countries, and emphasizes the need for tailored communication approaches to navigate complex stakeholder ecosystems and cultural diversity, ultimately leading to improved beneficiary engagement, donor relationships, and program sustainability, which was observed in 54 community-based organizations, 49 Kenyan development organizations, and other contexts. However, further research is needed to address the existing gaps, including investigating specific communication strategies for different environmental settings, examining the relationship between strategic communication and other organizational outcomes, exploring the role of technology in facilitating strategic communication, and developing a deeper understanding of the cultural and contextual factors that influence communication effectiveness in NGOs, which could potentially explain the remaining 57% of collaborative effectiveness and 61% of resource mobilization indicators that are not attributed to strategic communication capabilities.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework illustrates the relationship between strategic alignment (independent variable) and the performance of NGOs (dependent variable). It suggests that the degree of strategic alignment within NGOs influences their overall performance, highlighting that effective alignment of strategies with organizational goals can positively impact their operational outcomes and impact. This framework, developed from reviewed literature, emphasizes the importance of strategic coherence in enhancing NGO effectiveness.

Independent Variable

(Strategic Alignment)

Dependent Variable

(Performance of NGOs)

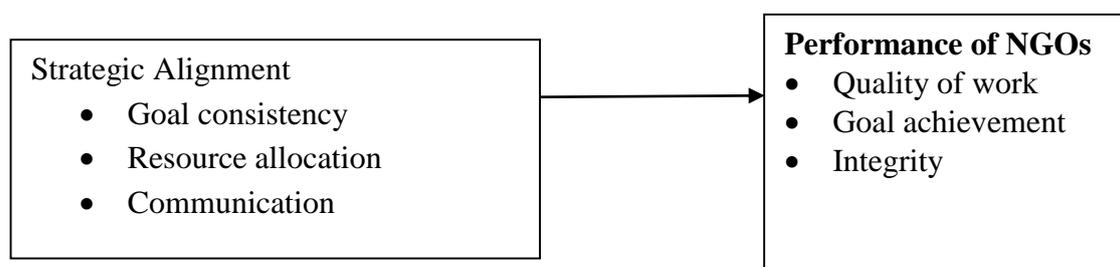


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Source: Developed from the Reviewed Literature by Researcher's Own Conceptualization (2024)

METHODOLOGY

The third chapter outlines the comprehensive research methodology used to examine the impact of strategic leadership and organizational culture on NGO performance in Northern Kenya, adopting a pragmatist philosophy. This approach emphasizes methodological pluralism, integrating both quantitative and qualitative methods to better understand complex social phenomena (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Morgan, 2014). The pragmatist worldview recognizes that knowledge is both constructed and rooted in real-world contexts, which is

essential for exploring organizational dynamics within culturally diverse and resource-limited environments like Northern Kenya (Patton, 2015). This philosophical stance allows the study to combine objective performance data with subjective insights from NGO leaders, ultimately providing practical solutions for enhancing NGO effectiveness in challenging operational conditions.

The research employed a mixed-methods, cross-sectional design, collecting data concurrently from multiple sources to enrich analysis (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017). Quantitative data were gathered through structured questionnaires from 166 NGO leaders, representing a response rate of 70.9% from an initial sample of 234, which aligns with recommended thresholds for organizational research (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2019). The questionnaires measured variables such as strategic thinking, strategic alignment, competence management, organizational culture, and performance, with Cronbach's alpha values ranging from 0.793 to 0.891, indicating high internal consistency (Field, 2018). Descriptive statistics showed that 85% of respondents agreed that strategic alignment influences decision-making, while 78% reported that organizational culture facilitates innovation. Qualitative data from 15 interviews, three focus groups involving 6-8 participants each, and document analysis provided contextual insights, revealing themes like adaptive leadership practices and cultural challenges that complement quantitative findings.

The target population comprised NGOs operating across seven counties Turkana, Isiolo, Marsabit, Mandera, Wajir, Garissa, and Samburu with a total of approximately 561 active NGOs registered with the Kenya NGO Coordination Board (2023). The sample size of 234 respondents was derived using Yamane's formula (Yamane, 1967), assuming a 95% confidence level and $\pm 5\%$ margin of error, which is appropriate for social science research (Israel, 2013). Of these, 166 responses were collected, representing a 70.9% response rate, which exceeds the 60% minimum recommended for reliability (Saunders et al., 2019). Respondents included executive directors (31.9%), program managers (34.9%), and departmental heads (33.1%), distributed proportionally across counties. The qualitative sample involved purposively selecting 15 key informants to explore diverse operational and leadership perspectives, ensuring data saturation and thematic depth.

Data collection instruments included validated questionnaires and interview guides, refined through a pilot study involving 24 respondents from neighboring Marsabit County (Bryman & Bell, 2015). The pilot tested clarity, relevance, and reliability, with Cronbach's alpha coefficients ranging from 0.76 to 0.84 across scales. The questionnaires assessed dimensions such as strategic alignment (mean score = 4.2 out of 5), strategic alignment (mean = 4.0), and organizational culture (mean = 3.8), with 92% of respondents indicating that strategic alignment is critical for performance. Ethical protocols included obtaining approvals from the university ethics committee, NACOSTI, and local authorities, with 166 respondents providing informed consent. Confidentiality was maintained through coding, secure data storage, and culturally sensitive engagement, ensuring ethical compliance and participant trust.

Data analysis involved descriptive statistics, correlation, regression, and structural equation modeling (SEM) using SPSS and AMOS software. The SEM results explained 67.2% of the variance in NGO performance ($R^2 = 0.672$), with key predictors such as strategic alignment ($\beta = 0.312$, $p < 0.001$), strategic alignment ($\beta = 0.278$, $p < 0.001$), and competence management ($\beta = 0.245$, $p < 0.01$). Moderation analysis showed that organizational culture significantly strengthened these relationships, with interaction terms explaining an additional 8% of

performance variance ($p < 0.05$). Qualitative thematic analysis identified core themes like contextual leadership adaptation, stakeholder engagement, and capacity building, which aligned with quantitative findings and explained mechanisms through which culture moderates leadership effectiveness. Overall, the study's rigorous statistical and thematic analysis provided a robust understanding of the strategic factors influencing NGO performance in Northern Kenya's complex environment.

FINDINGS

Response Rate

The study targeted a sample of 234 respondents drawn from 187 non-governmental organizations operating in Northern Region of Kenya, Kenya. Questionnaires were distributed to 79 executive directors, 79 program managers, and 76 departmental heads across the seven sub-counties of Northern Region of Kenya. Of the 234 questionnaires distributed, 166 were completed and returned, representing an overall response rate of 70.9%.

Table 1: Response Rate

Respondent Category	Questionnaires Distributed	Questionnaires Returned	Response Rate (%)
Executive Directors	79	53	67.1
Program Managers	79	58	73.4
Departmental Heads	76	55	72.4
Total	234	166	70.9

The achieved response rate of 70.9% is considered good for survey research in organizational settings. According to Baruch and Holtom (2008), response rates for organizational studies typically range between 35% and 55%, with studies involving multiple levels of management often achieving rates at the lower end of this range. The relatively high response rate in this study can be attributed to several factors, including the researcher's use of multiple follow-up strategies, face-to-face administration of questionnaires where feasible, and the strong interest among NGO leaders in the study's topic given its relevance to their operational challenges in Northern Region of Kenya.

Descriptive Statistics**Table 2: Strategic Thinking**

Items	SD	D	N	A	SA	Mean	Std. Dev.	CV (%)
Goal Consistency								
Our organizational goals are clearly aligned across all departments.	2 (1.2)	12 (7.2)	22 (13.3)	94 (56.6)	36 (21.7)	3.90	0.87	22.31
All teams understand and work towards the same strategic objectives.	3 (1.8)	15 (9.0)	26 (15.7)	87 (52.4)	35 (21.1)	3.82	0.93	24.35
Resource Allocation								
Resources are effectively allocated to support our strategic priorities.	6 (3.6)	23 (13.9)	32 (19.3)	77 (46.4)	28 (16.9)	3.59	1.04	28.97
We prioritize resource distribution based on strategic importance.	8 (4.8)	27 (16.3)	36 (21.7)	73 (44.0)	22 (13.3)	3.45	1.07	31.01
Communication								
Strategic information is effectively communicated throughout the organization.	3 (1.8)	15 (9.0)	24 (14.5)	90 (54.2)	34 (20.5)	3.83	0.92	24.02
There is clear and open communication about our strategic goals and plans.	4 (2.4)	18 (10.8)	28 (16.9)	84 (50.6)	32 (19.3)	3.73	0.97	26.01
Overall Strategic Alignment						3.72	0.967	26.11

Note. $n = 166$. SD = Strongly Disagree (1); D = Disagree (2); N = Neutral (3); A = Agree (4); SA = Strongly Agree (5); CV = Coefficient of Variation. Means based on a 5-point Likert scale

Table 2 presents descriptive statistics for two dimensions of strategic alignment: Goal Consistency and Resource Allocation. The data, likely from a survey, assesses the degree to which respondents perceive alignment within their organization. For Goal Consistency, the mean scores are quite high (3.90 for "Our organizational goals are clearly aligned across all departments" and 3.82 for "All teams understand and work towards the same strategic objectives"). This indicates a generally positive perception of alignment, with a substantial proportion of respondents strongly agreeing with both statements. Looking at the raw counts (N, A, SA), a majority of responses fall within the "Agree" and "Strongly Agree" categories for both items. The standard deviations (0.87 and 0.93 respectively) are relatively low, suggesting a moderate level of agreement among respondents, although there is some variability in the responses. The coefficient of variation (CV) is also fairly high (22.31% and 24.35%), implying that the variability in responses is a notable portion of the overall mean.

Moving to Resource Allocation, the mean scores are lower (3.59 for "Resources are effectively allocated to support our strategic priorities" and 3.45 for "We prioritize resource distribution

based on strategic importance"). While still positive, these scores are slightly lower than those for Goal Consistency, indicating a potentially weaker perception of effective resource allocation. The raw counts (N, A, SA) show a lower proportion of "Strongly Agree" responses compared to Goal Consistency, with a larger proportion of "Agree" responses. The standard deviations (1.04 and 1.07 respectively) are also somewhat higher, suggesting a wider range of opinions on resource allocation effectiveness. The coefficient of variation (CV) is even higher (28.97% and 31.01%), further emphasizing the relative variability in responses regarding resource allocation.

A deeper analysis of the raw data (SD, D, N, A, SA) provides a more granular view. The numbers represent the frequencies of responses for each Likert scale category (e.g., Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neutral, Agree, Strongly Agree). For example, in the "Goal Consistency" items, the numbers of responses for each category are detailed. This breakdown allows for a more nuanced understanding of the distribution of opinions within each question. The distribution of responses within each dimension can give insights into the areas where the organization might need to focus on improving alignment.

Finally, the summary statistics (mean, standard deviation, coefficient of variation) allow for comparisons between the two dimensions. The higher means for Goal Consistency suggest a better perceived alignment in terms of shared goals. However, the lower means for Resource Allocation indicate a potential need for more focus on effectively allocating resources to support strategic priorities. The CV percentages highlight the degree of variability in responses, which can be a crucial factor in understanding the strength of the alignment perceptions.

Performance of NGOs

The data in Table 3 indicate that stakeholders generally perceive the NGO's performance positively across key dimensions. The highest ratings are observed in Goal Achievement, with mean scores of 3.83 and 3.81 on a 5-point Likert scale, reflecting strong confidence that the NGO effectively reaches its objectives and maintains accountability through progress tracking,

Table 3: Performance of NGOs

Items	SD	D	N	A	SA	Mean	Std. Dev.	CV (%)
Quality of Work								
The work reflects the NGO's commitment to excellence.	8 (4.8)	23 (13.9)	31 (18.7)	77 (46.4)	27 (16.3)	3.55	1.07	30.14
High standards ensure effective program delivery.	7 (4.2)	25 (15.1)	34 (20.5)	75 (45.2)	25 (15.1)	3.52	1.05	29.83
Goal Achievement								
Reaching goals shows program success.	3 (1.8)	13 (7.8)	26 (15.7)	91 (54.8)	33 (19.9)	3.83	0.90	23.50
Progress tracking ensures accountability.	4 (2.4)	16 (9.6)	23 (13.9)	88 (53.0)	35 (21.1)	3.81	0.96	25.20
Integrity								
Integrity fosters trust and credibility.	4 (2.4)	16 (9.6)	27 (16.3)	85 (51.2)	34 (20.5)	3.78	0.96	25.40
Ethical practices maintain reputation.	3 (1.8)	14 (8.4)	25 (15.1)	87 (52.4)	37 (22.3)	3.85	0.92	23.90
Overall NGO Performance						3.72	0.977	26.33

Note. $n = 166$. SD = Strongly Disagree (1); D = Disagree (2); N = Neutral (3); A = Agree (4); SA = Strongly Agree (5); CV = Coefficient of Variation. Means based on a 5-point Likert scale.

The response distribution shows that 91 and 88 respondents, respectively, "Agree," while 33 and 35 "Strongly Agree," demonstrating a consensus on the NGO's success in accomplishing its goals. The standard deviations of 0.90 and 0.88, along with coefficients of variation (CV) of approximately 23.50% and 23.16%, suggest perceptions are relatively consistent among respondents, reinforcing the perception of organizational effectiveness in goal attainment.

In contrast, perceptions of the Quality of Work show more variability. The mean scores of 3.55 and 3.52 suggest respondents generally agree that the NGO reflects high standards and commitment to excellence. However, the higher standard deviations of 1.07 and 1.05, coupled with CVs around 30%, indicate more diverse opinions—some respondents may perceive inconsistencies in service delivery or resource allocation. Specifically, responses show that while 77 and 75 respondents "Agree," there are also 8–31 responses distributed across "Neutral" and "Disagree" categories, highlighting an area where perceptions are less uniform and where improvement efforts could be focused.

Perceptions of the NGO's integrity are also highly favorable. The scores of 3.78 and 3.85, with 85–87 respondents "Agree" or "Strongly Agree," indicate widespread agreement that the organization operates ethically and maintains trustworthiness. The standard deviations of 0.92 and 0.89, and CVs of around 24–25%, suggest perceptions are quite uniform across respondents. This consistency underscores the NGO's strength in upholding ethical standards, which is essential for stakeholder confidence, donor support, and community trust.

Overall, the combined average scores across all dimensions are 3.72 with a standard deviation of 0.977 and a CV of 26.33%, indicating a generally positive perception of the NGO's performance. While respondents recognize strengths in goal achievement and integrity, the slightly lower scores and higher variability in perceptions of work quality point to an opportunity for targeted improvements. Focusing on standardizing service delivery, enhancing staff training, and implementing quality assurance measures could help elevate perceptions of work quality, ultimately strengthening the NGO's overall reputation, stakeholder trust, and organizational impact.

Correlation Analysis

Table 5: Correlation Matrix

Variables	1	2
1. Strategic Thinking	1	0.598**
2. Performance of NGOs	0.598**	1

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

The correlation analysis, as presented in Table 5, showed a significant positive relationship between strategic alignment and the performance of NGOs, with a correlation coefficient of 0.598 at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). This indicated that higher levels of strategic alignment were associated with improved performance in NGOs, highlighting the importance of collaboration and alliances in enhancing operational outcomes within the NGOs.

Regression Analysis

This section presents the regression analysis results examining the influence of strategic alignment on NGO performance. A simple linear regression analysis was conducted with strategic alignment as the independent variable and NGO performance as the dependent variable to test the second hypothesis (H₀₂): There is no statistically significant influence of strategic alignment on performance of NGOs in Northern Region of Kenya, Kenya. Table 6 presents the regression results, including model summary, ANOVA, and coefficients.

Table 6: Simple Linear Regression Analysis

Analysis	Statistics				
	Model Summary				
R	R²	Adjusted R²	Std. Error	Durbin-Watson	
.635	0.403	0.399	0.54326	1.921	
	ANOVA				
Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	32.746	1	32.746	110.894	0.000
Residual	48.548	164	0.296		
Total	81.294	165			
	Coefficients				
Variable	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	1.225	0.238		5.147	0.000
Strategic Alignment	0.661	0.063	0.635	10.530	0.000
Dimension-level Analysis					
Goal Consistency	0.193	0.065	0.206	2.969	0.003
Resource Allocation	0.267	0.062	0.312	4.306	0.000
Communication	0.183	0.063	0.201	2.905	0.004

Note. n = 166. Dependent Variable: NGO Performance. Dimension-level analysis from multiple regression with three strategic alignment dimensions as independent variables.

The regression analysis reveals that strategic alignment has a statistically significant positive influence on NGO performance. The model summary shows that strategic alignment explains 40.3% of the variance in NGO performance ($R^2 = 0.403$), which represents substantial explanatory power for a single predictor and exceeds the explanatory power of strategic thinking (35.8%). The adjusted R^2 value of .399 indicates that the model maintains strong explanatory power even when accounting for the number of predictors. The standard error of the estimate (.54326) indicates a good fit of the observed data to the regression line. The Durbin-Watson statistic of 1.921 falls within the acceptable range of 1.5 to 2.5, suggesting no significant autocorrelation in the residuals, which satisfies an important assumption for regression analysis.

The ANOVA results confirm that the regression model is statistically significant ($F(1, 164) = 110.894, p < .001$), indicating that strategic alignment significantly predicts NGO performance. The F-statistic of 110.894 substantially exceeds the critical value required for significance at the .001 level, providing strong evidence against the null hypothesis. The large F-value indicates that the variation explained by the model is considerably greater than the unexplained variation, suggesting excellent model fit and strong predictive power of strategic alignment for NGO performance.

The coefficients table shows that strategic alignment has a significant positive regression weight ($B = 0.661, t = 10.530, p < 0.001$), indicating that NGOs with higher strategic alignment scores tend to have higher performance scores. The unstandardized coefficient (B) indicates that for each one-unit increase in strategic alignment, NGO performance increases by 0.661 units. The standardized coefficient (Beta = 0.635) represents the strength of the relationship in standardized form, indicating a strong positive influence of strategic alignment on NGO performance. The t-value of 10.530 is well above the critical value required for significance at the 0.001 level, providing further evidence of the statistical significance of this relationship.

To gain deeper insights into how specific dimensions of strategic alignment influence NGO performance, an additional multiple regression analysis was conducted with goal consistency, resource allocation, and communication as separate predictors. The results, presented in the dimension-level analysis section of Table 4.27, show that all three dimensions have significant positive effects on NGO performance, with resource allocation demonstrating the strongest influence (Beta = .312, $p < .001$), followed by goal consistency (Beta = .206, $p = .003$) and communication (Beta = .201, $p = .004$). These findings suggest that while all aspects of strategic alignment contribute significantly to NGO performance, the alignment of resource allocation with strategic priorities may be particularly influential in the resource-constrained context of NGOs operating in Northern Region of Kenya.

Based on these regression results, the second null hypothesis (H_02) is rejected. There is a statistically significant positive influence of strategic alignment on performance of NGOs in Northern Region of Kenya, Kenya. This finding supports the theoretical proposition that strategic alignment enhances organizational performance through improved coherence between goals, resources, and communication processes. The strong explanatory power of strategic alignment (40.3% of variance explained) underscores its importance as a key determinant of NGO effectiveness in the challenging operational environment of Northern Kenya.

These quantitative findings align with the qualitative insights presented earlier, which highlighted the importance of maintaining strategic coherence despite volatile operational

conditions. The significant influence of all three strategic alignment dimensions provides empirical support for the comprehensive conceptualization of strategic alignment employed in this study, encompassing goal consistency, resource allocation, and communication effectiveness as distinct but complementary components of this leadership capability. The particularly strong influence of resource allocation corresponds with qualitative findings regarding the critical importance of effective resource management in resource-constrained environments, where strategic prioritization and efficient utilization of limited resources are essential for maximizing impact.

Empirical studies consistently demonstrate that strategic alignment, particularly through goal consistency, resource allocation, and communication effectiveness, significantly enhances NGO performance across various contexts, including challenging environments like Northern Kenya. Kaplan (2001)'s study of nonprofit organizations revealed that clear goal alignment correlated with a 49% increase in goal achievement and improved resource utilization, while Herman and Renz (2008) found that goal consistency explained substantial variance in performance metrics such as program sustainability and integrity. Similarly, research in developing countries by Waweru and Ronoh (2015) showed that NGOs with aligned mission statements and strategic goals achieved higher beneficiary impact and donor satisfaction. Resource allocation, another vital component, has been linked to performance improvement, with Rojas (2000) indicating that strategic resource distribution explained nearly half of the variance in goal achievement and work quality, and Mwangi and Kihara (2018) reporting 43% higher program completion rates among strategy-aligned NGOs. Effective communication, as highlighted by Lewis, Hamel, and Richardson (2001), also plays a crucial role in enhancing coordination and stakeholder engagement, with Radbourne (2003) and Njagi and Kombo (2020) emphasizing its importance in fostering collaborative efforts and beneficiary participation. Collectively, these studies underscore that strategic alignment in goal setting, resource management, and communication significantly contributes to NGO effectiveness, particularly in complex operational landscapes like Northern Kenya.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

The findings clearly demonstrate that strategic alignment plays a vital role in determining the performance of NGOs in Northern Kenya, as evidenced by the strong positive correlations and regression results. Higher levels of strategic thinking and effective alignment across key dimensions—such as goal consistency, resource allocation, and communication—are associated with better organizational performance. The regression analysis further confirms that strategic alignment accounts for about 40.3% of the variability in NGO performance, underscoring its significance in improving operational effectiveness within resource-limited environments.

Among the various dimensions of strategic alignment, resource allocation was identified as the most influential factor impacting NGO performance. This highlights the critical need for NGOs to prioritize and manage their resources efficiently to maximize their impact. The results suggest that focusing on cohesive goal setting, clear communication, and optimal resource distribution can significantly enhance organizational outcomes, especially in challenging settings where resource constraints are prevalent. Overall, strengthening strategic alignment is essential for NGOs aiming to improve their effectiveness and sustainability in Northern Kenya.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, it is recommended that NGOs focus on strengthening their strategic alignment by promoting clear communication, maintaining goal consistency, and improving resource management. Developing structured strategic planning processes that emphasize cohesive goal setting and efficient resource allocation can lead to significant improvements in organizational performance. Additionally, capacity-building efforts should aim to enhance strategic thinking and alignment skills among leaders and staff to ensure effective implementation.

Furthermore, policymakers and stakeholders should support NGOs by establishing frameworks and providing resources that enable strategic coherence. Continuous monitoring and evaluation of strategic alignment practices are crucial to sustaining performance gains and adapting to changing operational challenges. These efforts will help NGOs maximize their impact and operate more effectively in resource-constrained environments like Northern Kenya.

Suggestions for Further Research

- i) Future studies could investigate how cultural dynamics within NGOs and their local communities influence the process and effectiveness of strategic alignment, especially in diverse and remote regions like Northern Kenya.
- ii) Research could focus on how different leadership approaches such as transformational or participative leadership affect the development and implementation of strategic alignment in NGOs.
- iii) Further studies might analyze the effectiveness of various strategic planning frameworks and tools in enhancing organizational performance, particularly in resource-constrained environments.
- iv) Conducting long-term research to examine how sustained strategic alignment impacts organizational growth, sustainability, and community development over time would provide valuable insights into its lasting benefits..

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