

**OPERATIONAL LEVEL STRATEGIES AND ORGANIZATIONAL  
PERFORMANCE OF FOUR-STAR HOTELS IN MOMBASA COUNTY, KENYA**

**BY**

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**DECLARATION**

This research proposal is my original work and has not been presented for award of a degree in any other University.

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This is to certify that this research proposal has been submitted for examination with my permission as the University Supervisor.

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## **DEDICATION**

My gratitude goes to my family for the support and sacrifices made during this research project. I specifically dedicate this project to my mother Constance Thoya and late father Charles Thoya for their unwavering support, as well as my wife Purity Kwekwe and sons Charles and Derrick for their contribution towards this success.

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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS**

<b>ANOVA:</b>	Analysis of Variance
<b>BSC:</b>	Balanced Scorecard
<b>CA:</b>	Competitive Advantage
<b>CR:</b>	Concentration Ratio
<b>CRMS:</b>	Customer Relationship Management Strategy
<b>FCA:</b>	Foundation for Community Association
<b>GDP:</b>	Gross Domestic Product
<b>GoK:</b>	Government of Kenya
<b>HP:</b>	Hotel performance
<b>HPWPs:</b>	High-Performance Work Practices
<b>ICT:</b>	Information Communication Technology
<b>JIT:</b>	Just in Time
<b>KIM:</b>	Kenya Institute of Management
<b>KNBS:</b>	Kenya National Bureau of Statistics
<b>MBO:</b>	Management by Objectives
<b>MCRA:</b>	Missing Completely at Random
<b>NACOSTI:</b>	National Commission of Science, Technology, and Information
<b>OM:</b>	Operational Management

## OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF TERMS

- Customer Service Strategies:** These involves how hotels run their customer service operations to enable the hotel to provide better service experiences to satisfy customer needs.
- Human Resource Strategies:** can be defined as the activities and techniques used in managing organizational employees, including labour relations, training and development, performance appraisal, compensation, orientation, recruitment, selection, placement, and job security.
- Information & Communication Strategies:** can be defined as the integration of telecommunications and unified communication and necessary enterprise software, audiovisual, storage and middleware to enable hotels manipulate, understand, transmit, store and access information to improve hotel operations.
- Marketing Strategies:** can be defined as a hotel's overall approaches for reaching potential customers and turning them into loyal customers.
- Operational Level Strategies:** can be defined as the ways in which the goods and services offered by the organization can be improved to improve customer value.
- Organisational Performance:** it is the actual output measured through service quality, customer turnover and market share against the intended output of the hotel.

## ABSTRACT

Performance is the key indicator to access the growth, stability, and capacity of an organization in any industry. Performance in the competitive hospitality industry is attributed to the never-ending strategies put in place by the hotels to either maintain the competition advantage or penetrate the industry. Further, the four-star hotels in Mombasa County are facing an unprecedented crisis due to the international travel restrictions and advisories imposed by foreign countries to contain and curtail the spread of COVID-19. The travel bans and restrictions reduced drastically foreign tourists visiting Kenya and Mombasa to be specific. A number of hotels shut down while others operating at severely reduced capacity with high reliability on the local tourists who are equally affected by the advisories. To survive in the industry, four-star hotels in Mombasa County have employed operational level strategies to mitigate the problem of organizational performance. Performance of the four-star hotels in Mombasa County has declined steadily and the hotels that adopted the operational level strategies have re-invented their businesses. The main objective of this research was to examine the effect of operational level strategies on organizational performance of four-star hotels in Mombasa County. The specific objectives of this study were to examine the effect of human resource strategies, customer service strategies, information and communication strategies and marketing strategies on the organizational performance of four-star hotels in the County. The study was informed by Resources Based Theory, Balance Scorecard, SERVQUAL Model and Competitive Advantage Theory. The study population was 55 operational managers from all the five four star-rated hotels. Census technique was used since the target population was small. The research used questionnaire with closed-ended questions to collect data. Validity and reliability of the study was determined through a pilot study in Kilifi County. The researcher used Cronbach's alpha formulae to test reliability through internal measure of consistency. The returned questionnaires were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics by use of the SPSS version 26. The study adopted regression and correlation models of analysis. The study found that there is a moderate positive and significant relationship between human resource strategies and organizational performance ( $r=0.305$ ;  $p=0.026 < 0.05$ ) and its alteration would also affect organizational performance ( $\beta=0.128$ ;  $t=2.038$ ;  $p=0.045$ ). The study also revealed that there is a strong positive and significant relationship between customer service strategies and organizational performance ( $r=0.668$ ;  $p=.005 < 0.01$ ) and its improvement would affect organizational performance ( $\beta=0.220$ ;  $t=2.742$ ;  $p=0.005$ ). The study found that there is a moderate positive relationship between information and communication strategies and organizational performance ( $r=0.404$ ;  $p =0.003 < 0.01$ ) and its improvement would affect organisational performance ( $\beta=0.175$ ;  $t=3.046$ ;  $p=0.004$ ). On the final variable, it was determined further marketing strategies significantly affects organizational performance ( $r=0.314$ ;  $p= 0.022 < 0.05$ ) but its improvement insignificantly contributes to organizational performance ( $\beta=0.127$ ;  $t=1.264$ ;  $p=0.226$ ). It was concluded that operational level strategies (human resource strategies, customer service strategies, information and communication strategies and marketing strategies) affects hotel performance and the improvement of each strategy would lead to improvement in organizational performance. The study recommended that employees of the hotels can be retained, if the management of the hotels can evaluate, design and measure employee engagement practices. The study further recommended that employees at lower cadre can be improved if working conditions is improved. Finally, it can be suggested that managers of the hotels should adopt customer care services and customer relations to enhance performance.

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of the Study

The main objective of many businesses is to make profit, hence organizational performance becomes the core concept of these organizations. The success and failure of majority of organizations has been determined by the operational level strategies (Iravo, Ongori & Munene, 2013) Performance drivers have been identified by top management of various organizations for them to record high returns. Performance management constitute the heart of the day-to-day management of the operations, which is geared towards measuring performance. Various parameters have been used by hotel managers, to measure performance of the hotels (Nzuve & Nyaega, 2013; Sainaghi, 2020). Organization parameters such as effectiveness, employee morale and productivity has been used to assess organization functions with the objective of achieving sustainable competitive advantage (Fwaya, 2016). Various measures and approaches have been identified to gauge organizational performance, one of this approach is goal identification, which is anchored on attainment of set goals and setting organizational goals. The second approach on measuring organizational performance is the systems resource approach, which defines organizational performance, in terms of the relationship with the environment and the relationship can be secured from the environment. The final approach is based on the efficiency of organizational processes based on the strategies adopted as one of the efforts of driving performance (Odhiambo, 2019; Njuguna, 2019). For the long-time success of an organization in terms of performance, operational level strategies are very important (Johnstone, 2014).

Operational level strategies can be defined as the ways in which the goods and services offered by the organization can be improved to improve customer value (Johnstone, *et al.*, 2014). Operational strategies must be aligned to the functional areas and the overall business strategy by the managers. For the organization to stay ahead of competition, innovative strategies must be developed to cope with globalization and advances in technology (Johnstone, 2014). Service delivery organizations such as the hotel sector, have different operational level strategies compared with other organizations especially in the manufacturing sector, since they directly interact with end customers. Operational level strategies have been concerned with each part of the organization, which concerns people, processes and resources. This facilitates the long-term development of the organization and ensures compatibility of the resources with the organization (Jui-Sheng, 2020).

For service delivery, organizations such as hotels have adopted customer-centric models. This model is based on the overall customer experience, customer-service focus and establishing service levels and it relies heavily on customers feedback and interactions. Hotel organizations relies heavily on customers' feedbacks to improve and drive product offerings and operations. Project based model has also been used in the service industry, to support specific project, products, and programs. This model is based on tight integration of technology, processes and people and anchors heavily on cross-functional skills and teams (Cao, 2014). Both models are based on operations, material management, service management, technical support and account management (Ivanov, 2020).

Globally, there is no doubt that despite the key role played by the global hotel sector the industry is facing tough times ahead (Sainaghi, Phillips & Corti, 2018). The Travel and Tourism sector in 2011 accounted for nine percent of global Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and it contributed over two hundred and twenty-five million jobs (The World Travel and Tourism Council, 2017). It is projected that by the year 2022, the tourism sector will increase by four percent of global GDP and over three hundred and twenty-eight million jobs thereby ejecting about US\$ 20 trillion in the world economy. Hotels are expected to contribute the biggest share of employment opportunities because of new ventures. Kandampully and Hu (2017) state that the global hotel industry has become very competitive and is in the mature stage of its lifecycle.

The distinction between services offered in the different four-star hotels are gradually shrinking and it is becoming increasingly difficult to differentiate the services of one star rated hotel from another (Peterson & Lyer, 2016). At the same time, customers are more informed and have a wider choice of services to choose from because of the increased use of internet which calls for hotels to adopt strategies to counter this emerging trend by making themselves the choice of customers (Daun & Klinger, 2016). Despite all these gains, several hotel companies are struggling with debt, high level costs and management challenges. This therefore forces hotel managers to seek to generate profits that will help meet the above costs and thereby improving their performance. Hotels have henceforth continued to develop out of tourism efforts, and this has brought a lot of challenges related to their performance with the aim of to meet international standards (Wanjiku 2019).

Regionally, in Sub-Saharan Africa, COVID-19 pandemic, has created a major economic recession not only in the global but also in the regional perspective, in 2020 real GDP dropped to 2.1 and the most affected sector is the hotel and tourism sector and 2.9 in Eastern Africa Community (World Bank, 2020). In Kenya, the country has entered into the economic crisis with considerable resilience, due to COVID-19 pandemic, which has contributed to the negative impact on the hotel economy. Kenyan hotel sector has experienced unprecedented and abrupt drop in the hotel service demand, due to travel bans. Consequently, several hotels in the country have sent home some staffs on unpaid and paid leaves (Ministry of Tourism and Wildlife, 2020). There is a positive relationship between the number of rooms in a hotel and its performance. Out of the 28 countries in the 2006 African database, South Africa had the greatest number of rooms at 61,417, Tanzania had 30,600 rooms while Kenya was third with 30,600 rooms (National Tourism Strategy, 2018).

Specifically, the hotel industry in Kenya contracted by 45% in 2013 compared to an expansion of 2.6 per cent in 2012. Kenya undertook the last hotel classification in 2003 but since then so many new hotels have come up with improved products and services. The coast region accounts for 50 per cent of all bed-nights out of which 140 or 8.2% are classified. This falls below the standard requirements of at least 100,000 and could limit the country's ability to hold major conferences and conventions (Kenya Economic Report, 2013). In 2011, Kenya achieved the highest average length of stay 13.4 days in a decade which was 2.3 per cent improvement from the previous year (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, 2012). The 1.5 million international tourists that visited Kenya in 2010 generated US\$ 7000m. In 2012 tourism generated Kshs. 96.02 billion which represented 1.92 per cent drop from Kshs.97.90 billion realized in 2013 (Kenya Economic Report, 2013). Availability of quality hotels and quality services are the key destination choice drivers of tourists (Thiong'o, 2007). There has been a lot of discussions in literature about the impressive performance of hotels in Kenya over the past 20 years (Agumba, 2016; Fwaya, 2016; Kamau, 2018; Kingi, 2013 & Mibei, 2017).

### **1.1.1 Organizational Performance**

Organizational performance is an analysis of a firm's performance in comparison to the set goals and objectives. According to Walker, Damanpour, & Devece, (2011) it is the

actual output measured against the intended output of the organization. Key factors like financial performance, market outreach, and shareholder value performance are analyzed to determine the actual performance (Simmons & Iles, 2009). In some cases, like hotel industry performance may also be put into consideration through its service to visitors. Watson (2016) agrees that organizational performance must be measured as the overall effectiveness of a firm in meeting identified needs of departments in the company but emphasizes that the efforts should also focus on the ability to improve its capacity to address those needs adequately continuously.

Organizational performance engages a set of persistent activities, towards set targets, and formulating suitable modifications to accomplish the set aims efficiently (Thurston, Wells, & McNall, (2010). The recurring activities are often the primary role of leaders in organizations. As a leader in an organization's hierarchy, it is imperative to know the determinants of organizational performance (Watson, 2016.) It allows managers to identify the key factors to prioritize to develop organizational performance. The analysis should enable managers to address deficiencies and use the information gained to improve the company systems when it comes to customer service, investor demands, and employee motivation (Rock & David 2015) A comprehensive analysis of organizational performance allows the firm to improve their performance in the present and stay relevant for the future.

Venkatraman and Ramanujam (2019) has empirically demonstrated that profitability and growth in organizational dynamics and wide scope results in performance but did not attempt to propose a specific model for overall performance measurement. Robinson (2018) empirically tested the relationship between four separate independent variables (stage of the life cycle, industry concentration, entry barriers, and product differentiation) with eight different measures of performance in new venture research and found significantly different results between each independent variable and the eight dependent variables.

Wadongo (2020) states that a firm's performance should not be measured by financial performance but also operational and market indicators. Financial performance for this research will be measured using profitability and growth in sales while non-financial indicators will be service quality and customer satisfaction. Non-financial measures have been deemed to be more effective in motivating managerial performance because they are more reflective of the overall

corporate strategy (Galetic, 2017). The hotel industry is a service sector with inseparable products which demand for different methods of measurement (Enz, 2018). In this study hotel performance was measured through service quality, customer turnover and market share against the intended output of the hotel.

### **1.1.2 Operational Level Strategies**

Operation level strategy can be defined as the patterns of strategic actions and decisions which sets objectives, roles and activities of hotel operations (Slack, 2014). Studies on the operations level strategies has oftenly been contextualized within the manufacturing sector, however over years most industries have operationalized the concept by ensuring these strategies lead to improved performance and efficient achievement of organization goals and objectives (Ghobakhloo, 2018; Tortorella & Fettermann, 2018; Paiola, & Gebauer, 2020). Brown and Cousins (2012) provides a summary of how specific modern manufacturing are linked organisational operations. Over time the impact of operations level strategies has gone beyond the angle of operations management, to wider aspects of strategic alignments of industry objectives and business strategy.

Operational level strategies are mainly concerned with how each part of the business organization is arranged and organized to deliver the business-unit and corporate level strategic direction. The perspectives to operational level strategy which answers the key aspects of what the organization really want to achieve within specified period. Market level strategy investigates how the business intends to look into the growth aspect by ensuring there is complete market coverage and satisfaction of consumer needs. Therefore, these strategies focus on issues of employees, processes and resources. Operations level strategies involves the development of long-term plans through compatibility between long-term corporate strategy and long-term resources as this will ensure that organizational products and services are within the expected precincts' (Slack, 2010).

However, these criticisms are retreating. Modern studies on OM gained stronger footing in management. OM is now a source of competitive advantage. The nexus between OM and strategy as vindicated. Slack., (2014) said: "operations strategy concerns the pattern of strategic decisions and actions which set the role, objectives and activities of operations". Clearly, modern writings on OM are no longer limited to practical and technical concerns but have since assumed more strategic roles. A strategy concerns how a business firm can position itself within a given market segment in the end. This involves strategic positioning, unique branding and how the

market segment can be defended effectively amidst stern competitions. The role of operation is to translate and organization vision and mission on ground (Slack, 2014). Operational level strategy in the hotel industry is linked to human resource strategies, customer service strategies, information communication strategies and marketing strategies.

Human resource strategies can be defined as the activities and techniques used in managing organisational employees, including labour relations, training and development, performance appraisal, compensation, orientation, recruitment, selection, placement, and job security (Tanjil *et al.*, 2017). Katou and Budwar (2017) add that HR strategies can be grouped into two systems, namely those intending to attract (training and development, recruitment and selection) and develop human resources and those aimed at retaining human resources (reward and compensation practices, employees placement and performance appraisals). While customer service strategies can be defined as how hotels run their customer service operations to enable it provide better service experiences and improve customer loyalty (Ndiba, 2018). Customer orientation, after sale service, customer relation, customer care service and service reliability are significant elements of customer service practices which affects performance (Wambua & Yuhaya, 2018).

Information communication strategies can be defined as the integration of telecommunications and unified communication and necessary enterprise software, audiovisual, storage and middleware to enable hotels manipulate, understand, transmit, store and access information to improve hotel operations (Murray, 2011). Mobile check ins augmented reality and trolley robots are some the main technological tools used in the hotel sector, these tools provide economic and social for the benefit of the organization. (Yamaç, 2011). Finally, marketing strategies can be defined as a hotel's overall approaches for reaching potential customers and turning them into loyal customers (Kaufman, 2017). Marketing strategies such as digital marketing strategy, pricing strategy and product diversification strategy (Kaufman, 2017).

### **1.1.3 Hotels in Industry in Mombasa County**

After the country fell under the British colonization, there was need to access Uganda and the railway was constructed leading to more catering units established along the railway line for the workers. By 1960, some hotels such as Norfolk had reached international five stars rating. Later in 1975, hospitality training was also started at Kenya Utalli College but as Mayaka (2005) reports, had a limited capacity. To supply the growing demand,

there was proliferation of private and public universities and colleges which had a varied curriculum. (Waudu, 2012).

Kenya's hotel industry, including Mombasa County has been eager to capitalize on the favorable tourism outlook (Kenya Bureau of Statistics, 2014). According to (KTB, 2020) hotels in Kenya have hit a number of 640 as per latest data. According to Kenya tourism board, rapid development of hotel industry in Kenya has presented challenges to the natural environment. These challenges include emission of toxic substance to the environment, unplanned sewage system, uncontrolled solid waste disposal among others. Karimi (2014) suggests that some of these hotels improve their operational performance through proper waste management initiatives that form an integral part of environmental improvement.

Hotel facilities in Mombasa County are of high class and have a collection of amenities that are designed to present total harmony of hotel operations to delight hotel guests. Most of the hotels are located along the beach because of attractiveness of sun, sand and sea. In the recent past, all hotels in region are pressurized to practices waste management practices with the wakeup call for green supply chain for sustainable development. Green operations practices are viewed to be a key determinant of hotel operational performance and adoption of waste management practices by hotels have a positive effect on operational performance (Karimi, 2014). In this study, Sarova Whitesands Hotel, Serena Beach Hotel, Hotel English Point Marina, Voyager Beach Hotel and Neptune Beach Hotel.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

Operational level strategies have been used by various hotels, so that they can qualify for star ratings, company of the year awards and international recognition for standardization certificates as well as recognition in the membership to professional bodies (Ongore & Kobonyo, 2017). Hotel performance is measured against benchmarks and global standards. The key measures and parameters include customers' turnover, service quality and market share (KIM, 2018). Hotels play key roles in the Kenyan economy; hence they must be assessed in terms of operational level strategies. Performance ratings poses a serious challenge and problem to majority of hotels (Ongore & Kobonyo, 2017).

Currently, hospitality industry, including the four-star hotels in Coastal Region are facing an

unprecedented crisis due to the international travel restrictions and advisories imposed by foreign countries to contain the spread of COVID-19. More than 99% of the hotels in the county were affected by the pandemic. With majority of hotels operating at severely reduced capacity and some completely shut since majority of their customers are in lockdown (Grant Thornton, 2020). Due to the closure of many hotels in the region, many staffs have been laid off. Further occupancy rate has reduced to between 10-20% and the situation is heading to the worse (Nzuve & Nyaega, 2019). The poor performance in the hospitality industry is attributed to stiff competition, threats of new entrants, suppliers and customers bargaining power and threats of government subsidies have created low market share for the hotels (Kamau, 2018). Further, the problem of insufficient levels of service quality has been a characteristic of many hotels in the Coastal Region (Ali, 2021)

Despite the existing problems, few studies have examined the relationship between operational level strategies and performance of the hotels. For instance, Mwangi (2017) studied performance of five-star hotels in Nairobi County and strategic management drivers. The study adopted cross-sectional research gap where 10 senior managers were purposively sampled. Where it was established that performance of 5-star hotels was significantly influenced by CRM drivers. The study relied on data from a single industry. Ayabei (2020) studied performance of hotels in Kabarnet Town in relation to strategic management practices. The study adopted descriptive survey design where census technique of eleven hotels was used, which provided specialized services, such as drinks, meals and accommodation services. The study revealed that improved performance hotels in the town, can be attributed to strategic evaluation and control, implementation, formulation of strategic management practices. The study only focused Baringo County, which has small number of hotels, compared to other counties nationally, Teck and Karuppiah (2020) studied competitive advantage through operation strategy in hotel industry in Malaysia. The study was based on a desk review of papers on operation strategies adopted by hotels in the county. Where it was revealed that operation management can be used as a strategic tool through sustainability and customer satisfaction. Based on the reviewed studies it is evident that there exists a contextual, methodological and conceptual research gap, which this study intends to bridge.

### **1.3 Objectives of the Study**

This research was guided by both the general and specific objectives.

### **1.3.1 General Objective**

The main objective of this research was to assess the effect of operational level strategies on the organizational performance of hotels in Mombasa County, Kenya

### **1.3.2 Specific Objectives**

The break down of the main objectives was:

- i. To examine the effect of human resource strategies on organizational performance of four-star hotels in Mombasa County.
- ii. To establish the effect of customer service strategies on the organizational performance of four-star hotels in Mombasa County.
- iii. To assess the effect of information communication strategies to organizational performance of four-star hotels in Mombasa County.
- iv. To examine the effect of marketing strategies on the organizational performance of four-star hotels in Mombasa County.

### **1.4 Research Question**

- i. To examine the effect of human resource strategies on organizational performance of four-star hotels in Mombasa County?
- ii. To establish the effect of customer service strategies on the organizational performance of four-star hotels in Mombasa County?
- iii. To assess the effect of information communication strategies to organizational performance of four-star hotels in Mombasa County?
- iv. To determine the effect of marketing strategies on the organizational performance of four-star hotels in Mombasa County?

### **1.5 Significance of the Study**

This research was of great significance to the hospitality industry in the country as it enabled them to identify and mitigate problems hence leading to high performance in today's highly competitive market. This study helped hotels in Mombasa in the formulation and implementation of operational level strategies. Furthermore, this study was useful to the hotels in implementing and planning

future operations management.

The study assisted policy makers especially tourism and hospitality in formulating laws that were used in the regulation of operations which can not only aid in promoting efficiency in service delivery, but also protect the sector players. The study findings assisted in improving socio-economic status of the country through hospitality service delivery, which is in line Vision 2030. This was realized through the implementation of operation strategies that encourage innovation and embrace change in the hospitality sector

This study formed the basis and foundation for further studies that enabled researchers and scholars in understanding how operational level management affected hotels performance. The study also helped scholars and researchers' in finding various concepts relating to operational level strategies and hotel performance.

### **1.6 Scope of the Study**

Cross-sectional research design was used to guide the study methodology and procedures. The research was limited to only to four-star hotels in Mombasa County in Kenya. The research population was five hotels, where operational managers will be used as the unit observation and census technique will be used. It will determine how operational level strategies affect organizational performance of four-star hotels in Mombasa County in Kenya. The following operational level strategies was used to provide, the basis of study objectives; human resource management, customer service practices, information communication technology and marketing strategies.

### **1.7 Limitations and Delimitations of the Study**

The findings of the research cannot be generalized in determining the influence of operational level strategies on the organizational performance to other organizations other than the hospitality sector and other counties. This was due to the fact that it is being conducted in Mombasa County. However, the information gathered from the study were useful in assessing the effect of operational level strategies on the hotel performance.in addition some of the respondents were not willing to fill the questionnaire due to laws governing information sharing by the hotel, this was mitigated by assurance of privacy of the information by the researcher.

## **1.8 Organization of the Study**

This research project consists of five chapters, namely the introduction, literature review, research methodology, research findings, and research results. In chapter one, the author introduced the subject of operational level strategies and four-star hotels performance, highlighting the issue that inspired the research. The research goals and questions were outlined, and the potential contributions, assumptions, constraints, and boundaries of the study were presented.

Chapter two reviewed the relevant literature to establish the connection between the research concepts. The author discussed the influence of operational level strategies on organizational performance, presented a theoretical and conceptual framework, and identified the gaps that the current study aimed to fill.

Chapter three provided a comprehensive overview of the research methodology to ensure valid and accurate outcomes that could be generalized. The author described the research design, target population, sample size and selection, data collection methods and procedures, data analysis, ethical considerations, and operationalization of study variables.

Chapter four presented the research findings in a clear and comprehensive manner. The author reported the response rate and characteristics of the research respondents to establish the quality of the collected information. Descriptive and inferential analyses were presented, along with interpretations of the results.

Chapter five summarized the research results, compared them with other relevant studies, and provided conclusions based on the study goals. The author also suggested recommendations based on the findings and proposed areas for further research.

In summary, the research project consisted of five chapters that covered the introduction, literature review, research methodology, research findings, and research results. The author presented a comprehensive overview of the study's goals, assumptions, and boundaries, and established the connection between the research concepts through the literature review. The methodology was outlined to ensure valid and accurate outcomes, and the research findings were presented and interpreted. Finally, the author provided conclusions, recommendations, and suggestions for further research.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter covers a review of previous studies related the relationship between operational level strategies and performance of various organisations. It specifically presents the theoretical and empirical review based on the study independent variable (human resource management, customer service management, information communication technology and marketing strategies.) in relation to hotel performance.

#### **2.2 Theoretical Review**

The study aims at utilizing, four theories that encapsulate the importance of strategic management Vis-a Vis performance by firms. Strategic management is fairly a nascent field compared to other management sciences. Therefore, it borrows some of the theories and models from other fields. These theories and model are; balance scorecard model, SERVQUAL model resource-based view theory, and competitive advantage theory.

##### **2.2.1 Balance Scorecard Model**

The Balanced Scorecard (BSC) is a performance management model which was founded and developed by Robert Kaplan and David Norton in 1992. It is used for both profit (business and industry) and nonprofit (government and non-government) organizations worldwide. BSC was formulated strategies of the organization with business activities, mission and vision, with the aim of improving both external and internal communications and monitoring organizational performance againsts its strategic goals that was defined in the beginning. In the past, performance management system mostly only considered the financial perspective, but BSC not only measures the financial perspective but also assesses the stakeholders, internal processes and learning and growth perspectives of the company. The four perspectives translate the strategy into a linked set of measures across four perspectives (Kaplan & Norton, 2010).

According to Kaplan and Norton (1996) the BSC helps in: identifying and aligning strategic initiatives; clarifying as well as gaining consensus about the firm's strategy; performing systematic and periodic strategic reviews; communicating the organization's strategy; aligning personal and departmental objectives to the strategy; connecting strategic objectives to firm's

annual budgets as well as long-term goals; and obtaining feedback to improve and learn about strategy. In addition, these benefits will translate into better organizational performance. The balanced scorecard is a substantial strategic management tool because it aids in translating a firm's mission statement and its business strategy into measurable and specific goals as well as monitoring the performance of organization (Yaghoobi & Haddadi, 2016)

In relation to this study, by linking human resource strategies with the balanced scorecard model can help hotels align their HR practices with organizational goals and objectives, monitor progress, and drive performance improvement. It also demonstrates the strategic value of HR by defining and measuring its contribution in concrete, clearly understood terms. In addition to alignment with company goals, the HR scorecard must also contain the following elements to truly be effective: accountability, validity and actionable, measurable results.

### **2.2.2 SERVQUAL Model**

SERVQUAL Model was originated by Parasuram, Zeithaml and Berry (1988) and it was based on disconfirmation paradigm. The model was based on ten factors of service factors, these factors include: tangibility, responsiveness, reliability, competence, credibility, courtesy, security, communication, accessibility and understanding the customer. Pakurar, Haddad, Nagy, Popp and Olah (2019), narrowed down these factors into five, which include: reliability, assurance, tangibility, empathy and responsiveness. The SERVQUAL model proposes the use of the gap analysis or difference between expected level of service and delivered level of service for measuring service quality perception with five dimensions: reliability, responsiveness, assurances, empathy, and tangibility. SERVQUAL is an analytical tool, which can help in identifying the gaps between variables affecting the quality of the offering services (Seth, Deshmukh & Vrat, 2015). This model has a wide acceptance among marketing researchers and scientists, although it is an exploratory study and does not offer a clear measurement method for measuring gaps at different levels.

This model can be used to measure service quality in the hospitality industry, using various dimensions. These dimensions include: reliability which is the organisation's ability to perform the promised service accurately and dependably, service responsiveness which is the willingness of the organisation to help customers and in providing prompt service; assurance can be defined as the courtesy and knowledge of the employees and their ability to convey confidence and trust; while empathy which is the caring, individualized attention; and tangibles covers the physical

facilities, equipment and appearance of personnel (Zeithaml, Bitner, & Gremler, 2016).

### **2.2.3 Resource Based View Theory**

Developed by Wernerfelt (1984), resource based view is a management tool that highlights on the important role that the capabilities of a firm and its resources play in attaining competitive merit in the marketplace. The theory answers some fundamental questions on why firms are different and how they can maximize on those differences to achieve and sustain a competitive advantage in the market. The theory postulates that every firm controls different resources and therefore employ different strategies; this way, opportunities and threats in the external environment are addressed. Strategic decisions should be anchored on the firm's resources and capabilities. Barnes (1991) deduces that attaining competitive advantage in the market require firms' ability to identify and exploit these resources efficiently and effectively. These resources must meet certain critical facets; valuable, unique, and expensive to imitate. These characteristics provide firms with the ability to develop unique products and services that cannot be imitated competitors.

In the endeavor to achieve competitive advantage, firms have adopted this theory to provide guidance. This theory amplifies the essence of resources that are internal by nature both tangible and intangible in the development of competitive strategy aimed at positioning firms. As stated by (Hoskisson, 2018), positioning is imperative in determining firm's market share, which in turn affects its performance. Hafeez, (2012) notes that, a resource is anything that a firm can perceive to be a strength or weakness. This underpins the value of situational analysis as a process in strategic management. Therefore, firms set their objectives and goals based on their resources, which provide foundation to project strong performance. This assertion is strongly echoed by Porter (1998) that firms must strive to distinguish themselves from their competitors by utilizing their unique resources and capabilities.

Maximum utilization of these resources needs to be done in a systematic manner. Kumari, (2017) points out that, for firms to utilize their resources to gain competitive advantage, there are critical steps they must adhere. The first step is an in-depth analysis of their resources. This ensures they identify the key resources and capabilities that will

boost positive performance by evaluating them against their competitors. The second step is identifying the relative strengths of the resources in terms of the long-term value in building competitive advantage. The final process is using the resources efficiently and effectively. This begs the question whether Resource Based View (RBV) is a linear process. As stated by Lockett, (2014), improving these resources and capabilities requires constant review of the process with the aim of developing a concrete competitive advantage

In relation to this study, there are no illusions that internal resources and capabilities such as ICT capabilities alone will guarantee success in firm. However, it's quite reassuring that combining these resources and capabilities through coaching with diligent scanning of the environment, formulation, implementation and continuous evaluation of strategies, will boost firm's chances of attaining competitive merit in the marketplace. Therefore, this theory is of significance when it comes to personal contact strategies through employee engagement strategies, communication strategy and customer engagement strategies

#### **2.2.4 Competitive Advantage Theory**

Developed by Michael Porter (1985), the theory holds that a firm can be said to have a sustainable competitive advantage when its average profit is beyond the industry's average, compared to its rivals. The goal of much of business strategy is to achieve a sustainable competitive advantage (Barney & Hesterly, 2016). Smit (2020) identified two basic types of sustainable competitive advantage which are differentiation and cost advantage. Cost Advantage exists when the firm can deliver the same customer benefits as competitors but at a lower operational cost, but differentiation advantage are the core benefits that a firm obtains which exceed those of competing products. Cost and differentiation advantages are known as positional advantages since they describe the firm's position in the industry as a leader in either cost or differentiation. Thompson, Strickland, Gamble, and Jain (2016) describes generic strategies as being core to improvement of a firm's performance. For a hotel to perform it must use one or more of the generic strategies otherwise its performance is bound to decline (Allen & Helms, 2016).

These generic strategies are cost leadership, differentiation, and focus. Cost leadership strategy calls for companies to be low-cost producers compared to their rivals. As the

hotel industry prices decline and matures, hotels that can produce at lower operational cost will be profitable for a long period of time. Differentiation strategies on the other hand can be defined as product or service development which are unique and are highly valued by the customers and they perceive these products to be better than those of the competitors in the industry. In differentiation, hotels should seek to provide unique products and services in the industry with consideration of service quality dimensions which can highly valued by the customers (Porter, 2011). Focus strategy should be used by the hotels in narrowing customer segment and achieving differentiation and cost advantage (Cheng, 2013). Cheng (2013) highlighted that the core competencies of hospitality organizations include the processes, skills and assets that influence organizations to achieve competitive advantage. Other factors have also been mentioned to contribute to core competencies such as location, brand, facilities, employee customer loyalties, market coverage, market share, service quality, technology, leadership, systems and procedures and organizational culture. Hotels should strive for unique characteristics to distinguish themselves from competitors in the eyes of their consumers (Gehrels, 2017).

In relation to this study, four-star hotels in Mombasa can use marketing strategies create new advantages that will keep them one step ahead of their competitors through marketing strategies such as digital marketing strategy, pricing strategy and product diversification strategy in relation to their competitors if they are to survive especially in the global competitive environment. Porter (2018) developed a framework for analyzing the nature and extent of competition within an industry and unique product features is one of the elements of creating competitive advantage. Porter (2018) further adds there are five competitive forces which determine the degree of competition within an industry such as the Hotel Sector.

## **2.3 Review of Empirical Literature**

### **2.3.1 Human Resource Management and Organizational Performance**

Human resource management practices refer to the techniques and activities involved in managing employees in an organization, which include recruitment, selection, orientation, training and development, performance appraisal, compensation, labour relations, and job security (Tanjil *et al.*, 2017). HRM practices can be categorized into two systems: those aiming to attract and develop

human resources and those focused on retaining employees (Katou & Budwar, 2017). Human capital has been linked to hotel performance through HRM practices (Mathis & Jackson, 2016)

Manuti et al. (2020) conducted a study in Italy to explore the relationship between positive organizational behavior and employees' perception of sustainable HRM practices during the COVID-19 pandemic. The study used a convenience sampling technique and structured questionnaires to collect data from 549 Italian workers during the first phase of the lockdown. The study found that sustainable HRM practices play a crucial role in organizational performance and the optimization of human resources during times of global uncertainty. The study contributed to the development of sustainable HRM policies that could lead to competitive advantage for organizations. However, the study had some limitations, including the use of a cross-sectional design, a heterogeneous sample, and self-reported measures, which may have affected the validity of the findings. In this regard it created methodological and conceptual research gap.

Chelangat (2019) investigated the correlation between turnover intentions and perceived employee engagement in the banking industry in Nairobi. The study used a cross-sectional survey that targeted 1760 employees from the top and middle management levels. The results showed that perceived supervisor support, organisational support, organisational justice, and value congruence had a negative effect on turnover intentions. The study recommended that banks should implement proactive employee engagement policies and practices to attract and retain employees. However, the study had a conceptual research gap as it only focused on five antecedents that affect employee turnover.

Murunga (2014) conducted a case study on Secure Force Security Company in Nairobi County to determine the impact of working conditions on service delivery by private security guards. The study used qualitative approaches and purposive sampling, targeting three categories of security guards. The study found that the primary reasons for security guards leaving their jobs were general dissatisfaction, lack of career prospects, and low salaries. The study suggested that a policy framework be created to improve the working conditions of security guards and sustain them throughout the country. However, the study had contextual research gaps since it only focused on one security firm, and methodological research gaps since it did not analyze the role of training and equipping in improving service delivery.

### **2.3.2 Customer Service Practices and Organizational Performance**

Customer service practices can be defined as how hotels run their customer service operations to enable it provide better service experiences and improve customer loyalty (Ndiba, 2018). Customer orientation, after sale service, customer relation, customer care service and service reliability are significant elements of customer service practices which affects performance (Wambua & Yuhaya, 2018). Service strategy provides a distinctive angle in which the firm can deliver value to its customers. Service strategies involves general response to counterinteract external and internal forces such as service diversification to spread risks and widen geographical coverage, strategic alliances, partnerships and market promotion. Service strategies also provides service standardization, effective customer care, human resource management practices to enhance competencies and capabilities, cost leadership and differentiation (Kinoti, 2012).

A study by Wambua and Yuhaya (2018), the relationship between customer service practices and hotel performance in Nairobi County was investigated through a case study. The study revealed that customer care services and customer relations had a positive and significant relationship with hotel performance, The study recommended that managers of the hotels should adopt customer care services and customer relations to enhance performance. The study created a conceptual research gap on other management factors that affect hotel performance, since the study showed that customer service practices could only explain 84% of performance.

Ndiba and Mbugua (2018) studied also conducted a case study on the relationship between customer service practice and performance hospitality industry in Nairobi County. The study used descriptive research design, where three, four and five star rated hotels were targeted. The study used regression analysis to establish the causal relationship between the variables. The study found that customer after sale service had the strongest relationship with performance compared with customer orientations. The study also found that customer orientations and customer after sale service significantly and positively affects performance. The study also created a conceptual research gap since it did not take into account other management variables which affect market performance.

Buhian (2021) studied how customer satisfaction in hotel business development was impacted with service quality in Sweden, where Best Western Princess Hotel in Norrköping was the focus of the study. The study used structured questionnaires to collect information from 80 respondents, where qualitative descriptive research was used. The analysis revealed that reliability, assurance,

empathy and responsiveness significantly affect customer satisfaction which determines the nature of service. The study created a contextual research gap since it was limited to Best Western Princess Hotel in Norrköping. The study also created methodological research since it focused on smaller sample size.

### **2.3.3 Information Communication Technology and Organizational Performance**

Information communication technology can be defined as the integration of telecommunications and unified communication and necessary enterprise software, audiovisual, storage and middleware to enable hotels manipulate, understand, transmit, store and access information to improve hotel operations (Murray, 2011). Mobile check ins augmented reality and trolley robots are some the main technological tools used in the hotel sector, these tools provide economic and social for the benefit of the organization. (Yamaç, 2011).

Kungu (2014) studied operational organizational performance in the hospitality sector in Kenya in relation to ICT. The study adopted cross-sectional research design, where 114 semi-structured questionnaire was used to collect data from star rated hotels in Nairobi County. The study revealed that ICT has significantly contributed to operational performance, through faster processing of customer requests, increased productivity and efficiency. The study further determined that desktops computers, mobile phones, computer applications and to a smaller extent tablets and laptops. The study created a contextual research gap, since it only focused in the on the hotel sector, creating gaps in other sectors of tourism such as tours and travel.

Thuo (2018) conducted research on the relationship between competitive advantage and information and communication technology (ICT) in five-star hotels in Nairobi County. The study used a descriptive research design and targeted 127 managers of these hotels. A structured questionnaire with closed-ended questions was used to collect data. The study discovered that ICT played a critical role in various hotel operations such as housekeeping, inventory management, financial management, restaurant management, customer relationship management, front office operations, and hotel bookings. It was determined that there was a significant relationship between ICT and competitive advantage. However, the study only focused on three dimensions of ICT integration, competencies, and infrastructure, creating a conceptual research gap on other dimensions of ICT in relation to competitive advantage.

Obonyo, *et al.*, (2016) conducted a multiple case study approach on the determinants of ICT adoption among hotels in Kenya. They study used multiple case approach to analyse data from 10

managers of hotels in Nairobi and Mombasa. Thematic analysis was used to analyze data collected with the use of interviews. The study determined that ICT applications were significantly used in the sector. The study recommended that hotel managers need to assess their investment capabilities on the ICT in the sector. The study created methodological research since thematic analysis and use of interviews could not be used to examine the relationship between the variables.

### **2.3.4 Marketing Strategies and Organizational Performance**

Marketing strategies can be defined as a hotel's overall approaches for reaching potential customers and turning them into loyal customers (Kaufman, 2017). Marketing strategies such as digital marketing strategy, pricing strategy and product diversification strategy (Kaufman, 2017). Marketing strategies in the hotel sector play an important role on the hotel's growth and to determine achievement made on customer satisfaction. Hotels should have unique strategies of marketing to improve profitability, growth and competitiveness (Hult & Olson, 2011).

Wawira (2016) studied performance and marketing strategies of hotels in Nairobi County. The study used regression, correlation and descriptive methods to analyse data collected from 30 four- and five-star hotels in Nairobi County. The research determined that penetration, market development and product development strategies significantly affect performance of hotels. The study concluded that marketing strategies positively and significantly affects performance. The study recommended that the top priority for the hotels should be the implementation of marketing strategies. The study created a conceptual gap on the implementation marketing strategies.

Wanjohi (2016) studied competitive advantage through marketing strategies among Thika hotels. The study targeted 5 hotels, where primary data was collected from them. The study found that competitive advantage was significantly influenced by marketing mix (process, people, place and physical environment) of these hotels. The study created a conceptual research gap since it focused on 4Ps of marketing mix, creating a research gap on 7Ps of marketing which are crucial in creating competitive advantage.

Etim, *et al.*, (2021) studied performance of hospitality firms and integrated marketing strategies amidst COVID-19 pandemic. The study adopted descriptive research design, where 226 customers from 15 hotels responded on the questionnaire. The study found that public relations, social media, sales promotion and advertisement significantly affects hotel performance. The study recommended that hotels should adopt public relations programmes. The study created a

contextual research gap on other sectors of the tourism industry.

## 2.4 Summary of Literature and Research Gap

This section presented the gap in knowledge. It therefore presented similar studies that had been done with their findings and eventually presenting the gap the current study sought to fill.

**Table 2. 1: Knowledge Gaps Matrix**

Variable	Authors(year)	Title of the study	Findings	Knowledge Gaps
Human Resource Strategies	Manuti, <i>et al.</i> , (2020)	A study in Italy to explore the relationship between positive organizational behavior and employees' perception of sustainable HRM practices during the COVID-19 pandemic	The study found that sustainable HRM practices play a crucial role in organizational performance and the optimization of human resources during times of global uncertainty	The study created both methodological and conceptual research gap, since sustainability of HRM practices during COVID 19 can be criticized on various grounds
Human Resource Strategies	Chelangat (2019)	Relationship between turnover intentions and perceived employee engagement in the banking sector in Nairobi	It was determined that perceived supervisor support, perceived organisational support, perceived organisational justice and value congruence negatively affects turnover intentions.	The study created a conceptual research gap since it only focused on five antecedents (perceived supervisor support, perceived organisational support, perceived organisational justice and value congruence) that affects employees turnover.
Human Resource Strategies	Murunga (2014)	Case study on Secure Force Security Company in Nairobi County to determine the impact of working conditions on	The study found that the primary reasons for security guards leaving their jobs were general dissatisfaction, lack of career prospects, and	The study created a methodological research gap since it did not give an in-depth analysis of the role of training and equipping in improving service

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Authors(year)</b>	<b>Title of the study</b>	<b>Findings</b>	<b>Knowledge Gaps</b>
		service delivery by private security guards on private security guards.	low salaries.	delivery.
Customer Service Strategies	Wambua and Yuhaya (2018)	Case study of hotels in Nairobi County, where the relationship between customer service practices and performance of these hotels	The study found that customer care services and customer relations had a significant and positive relationship with performance of the hotels.	The study created a conceptual research gap on other management factors that affect hotel performance, since the study showed that customer service practices could only explain 84% of performance.
Customer Service Strategies	Ndiba and Mbugua (2018)	Case study on the relationship between customer service practice and performance hospitality industry in Nairobi County.	The study found that customer after sale service had the strongest relationship with performance compared with customer orientations.	The study also created a conceptual research gap since it did not consider other management variables which affect market performance
Customer Service Strategies	Bhuhian (2021)	How customer satisfaction in hotel business development was impacted with service quality in Sweden, where Best Western Princess Hotel in Norrköping	The analysis revealed that reliability, assurance, empathy and responsiveness significantly affect customer satisfaction which determines the nature of service.	The study created a contextual research gap since it was limited to Best Western Princess Hotel in Norrköping.
Information and Communication Strategies	Kungu (2014)	Operational performance of firms in the hospitality sector in Kenya in relation to ICT	The study revealed that ICT has significantly contributed to operational performance, through faster	The study created a contextual research gap, since it only focused in the on the hotel sector, creating gaps in other

Variable	Authors(year)	Title of the study	Findings	Knowledge Gaps
			processing of customer requests, increased productivity and efficiency.	sectors of tourism such as tours and travel.
Information and Communication Strategies	Thuo (2018)	Competitive advantage in relation to ICT among five-star hotels in Nairobi County.	The study found that there is a significant relationship between ICT and competitive advantage.	The study created a conceptual research gap since it only focused on three dimensions of integration, competencies and infrastructure, thus creating a gap on other dimensions
Information and Communication Strategies	Obonyo, <i>et al.</i> , (2016)	Multiple case study approach on the determinants of ICT adoption among hotels in Kenya	The study found that ICT applications were significantly used in the sector.	The study created methodological research since thematic analysis and use of interviews could not be used to establish the relationship between the variables.
Marketing Strategies	Wanjohi (2016)	Competitive advantage through marketing strategies among Thika hotels.	The study found that competitive advantage was significantly influenced by marketing mix (process, people, place and physical environment) of these hotels.	The study created a conceptual research gap since it focused on 4Ps of marketing mix, creating a research gap on 7Ps of marketing which are crucial in creating competitive advantage.
Marketing Strategies	Etim, <i>et al.</i> , (2021)	Performance of hospitality firms and integrated marketing strategies amidst	The study found that public relations, social media, sales promotion and	The study created a contextual research gap on other sectors of the

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Authors(year)</b>	<b>Title of the study</b>	<b>Findings</b>	<b>Knowledge Gaps</b>
		COVID-19 pandemic	advertisement significantly affects hotel performance.	tourism industry.
Marketing Strategies	Wawira (2016)	Performance and marketing strategies of hotels in Nairobi County	The study found that penetration, market development and product development strategies significantly affect performance of hotels.	The study created a conceptual gap on the implementation marketing strategies.

## **2.5 Conceptual Framework**

According to Bryman and Bell (2015), a conceptual framework is a visual representation that categorizes the research variables into dependent, independent, and moderating variables and illustrates their relationships. This particular research, the outcome variable or dependent variable was hotel performance, on the other hand the predictor variable or independent variables were human resource management, customer service practices, information and communication technology, and marketing strategies.

**Independent Variables**

**Dependent Variable**



**Figure 2. 1: Conceptual Framework**

**Source: Researcher (2022)**

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

In this chapter, the research methodologies and procedures employed in the study are outlined. The chapter provides details on the methodology adopted for the research design, population selection, data sampling, collection, and analysis, as well as the reporting of the study results. The researcher ensured that relevant and reliable methods, tools, and techniques were utilized to obtain accurate and pertinent data for the study.

#### **3.2 Research Design**

The research design used in this study was a combination of cross-sectional and descriptive approaches. Cross-sectional research design, as defined by Sarma and Misar (2016), involves observing units of analysis and research variables at a particular point in time across different locations. In this study, data was collected from multiple sources and organizations, specifically hotels. The cross-sectional approach also considered differences among respondents who completed the structured questionnaire. Descriptive research design was also employed to describe the relationship between operational level strategies and organizational performance. To analyze the data collected, descriptive statistical methods such as mean, standard deviation, frequency, and percentages were utilized. The researcher aimed to use relevant and reliable methods and techniques to ensure the accuracy and relevance of the obtained data for the study.

#### **3.3 Target Population**

The target population refers to the specific group of individuals or items relevant to the study being carried out (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2013). In this study, the target population was the four-star hotels in Mombasa County in Kenya. The selection of the four-star hotels was justified, since they are assumed to have attained meaningful service levels to be accorded the four-star rating, where operational level strategies are applied for the benefit of organizational performance (GoK, 2020). The target population for this study was Sarova Whitesanads, Serena Beach Hotel, Hotel English Point Marina, Voyager Beach Hotel and Neptune Beach hotel as indicated in table 3.1. The unit of observation was managers from the following departments: Food and beverage, housekeeping, front office, food production, accounts and credit, sales and marketing, human resource, event planning, procurement, Room Division, Concierge and IT departments. The study targeted these

departments, since they are actively involved in the operational level strategies.

**Table 3. 1 Target Population**

<b>Hotel</b>	<b>Target Population</b>
Sarova White Sands	11
Serena Beach Hotel	11
Hotel English point Marina	11
Voyager Beach Hotel	11
Neptune Beach Hotel	11
<b>Total</b>	<b>55</b>

**Source: Human Resource Departments of the Respective Hotels (2022)**

### **3.3.1. Sample and Sampling Design**

According to Naoum (2013), a sample is a representative subset of the target population that is chosen to conduct research. The selection of a sample size is usually done because it is easier to manage than the entire population. For this study, a sample size of 55 operational managers was chosen as prospective respondents since the target population is small. The main reason for selecting a sample size is to generalize the study findings to a larger population. The research used a census technique where all 55 operational managers were chosen as prospective respondents since the study population is small, and the aim was to generalize the study findings to all construction projects in the county. Cooper and Schindler (2011) suggest that when the population is small, the census technique is appropriate and the target population can be the sample.

### **3.4 Data Collection Instruments**

The study collected information on independent and dependent variables by administering structured questionnaires to line managers of the four-star hotels. The questionnaire contained closed-ended questions presented on a Likert scale of 1-5 to facilitate quantification of data. The researchers opted for a questionnaire because it was cost-effective, provided confidentiality to the respondents, enabled the use of standardized questions, allowed respondents enough time to reflect on their answers, and was easy to use. The questionnaire was structured into three major sections, namely, demographic information, operational level strategies and hotel performance.

### **3.5 Pilot Study**

A pilot study is conducted before the main study to test the reliability and validity of the data collection instruments. It enhances the chances of success in the main study by identifying any shortcomings of the research instruments that need to be fixed. Creswell (2013) suggests that

conducting a pilot study is beneficial. In this study, a pilot study was conducted on a sample representing 10% of the employees from a four-star rated hotel in Kilifi County, as recommended by Mugenda and Mugenda (2013).

### **3.5.1 Reliability of the Research Instruments**

To ensure the accuracy of the study, reliability was evaluated to assess the internal consistency among the study variables. Prior to the main study, a pilot study was conducted as a test of the reliability of the data collection instrument, which was a structured questionnaire. This step was crucial in identifying and addressing any shortcomings of the research tool before the main study (Creswell, 2013). Mugenda and Mugenda (2013) suggest that repetition and consistency of measurements produce similar results from different samples. To determine internal consistency, Cronbach Alpha was used, with a value above 0.7 being acceptable for each component.

### **3.5.2 Validity of the Research Instruments**

Validity refers to the extent to which the research components are meaningful. It is crucial to ensure that the data collected accurately measures the intended behaviors of individuals. The data collection instrument should effectively achieve its intended purpose (Drost, 2011). The validity of the data collection tools was tested during the pilot study. The construct validity was assessed by presenting the structured questions to experts who confirmed their validity. Content validity was determined through the KMO and Bartlett Test, where a value of above 0.5 was considered acceptable.

### **3.6 Data Collection Procedure**

The operational level managers of each hotel were informed about the study's purpose. In order to begin data collection, the researcher obtained an authorization letter from the Dean of the School of Business, Kenyatta University, and NACOSTI. Copies of the permit were then given to the administration of the private security firms. The data collection process involved the drop and pick method, where printed questionnaires were left in the four departments, and the employees filled them at their own convenient time. Follow-ups were made through phone calls, and the completed questionnaires were collected after one week.

### **3.7 Data Analysis and Presentation**

After data collection, the questionnaires were prepared for analysis by cleaning and coding them before entering them into SPSS version 24. Only completely filled questionnaires were used in the analysis. The collected data was presented using descriptive statistics such as frequency,

percentages, mean and standard deviation. Inferential statistics such as Pearson correlation, ANOVA, coefficient of determination and regression coefficient were used to establish the relationship between operational level strategies and the performance of four star-rated hotels in the county. The multiple linear regression model was used in this study, which has been used previously in other studies to establish cause and effect relationships between variables. This model was used to determine the relationships between independent variables (operational level strategies) and dependent variables (organizational performance), as explained by Orodho and Kombo (2014)

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta_4 X_4 + e$$

Y = Organizational Performance

$B_0$  = Y Intercept

$X_1$  = Human Resource Strategies

$X_2$  = Customer Service Strategies

$X_3$  = Information and Communication Strategies

$X_4$  = Marketing Strategies

e = Error Term

$\beta_1, \beta_2, \beta_3$  and  $\beta_4$  = Coefficients of  $X_1, X_2, X_3$  and  $X_4$  respectively

### **3.8 Ethical Consideration**

The research study was carried out with utmost level of confidentiality that will be maintained all through the process. The researcher limited any discussion of the research findings to the respondents for more clarity. Official consent from the hotel will be secured before collection of data. Confidentiality of the information collected was also be assured. Particular identifiers was omitted from the questionnaire, the research instrument was not contain respondents' names. After data collection, the research instrument was safely secured.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### DATA ANALYSIS, PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION

#### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter specifically captures response rate, pilot study results (reliability and validity of the research instruments), background information (duration of service, level of education, market operations, duration of firm operation and number of employees), descriptive statistics on the study variables (human resource strategies, customer service strategies, information and communication strategies, marketing strategies and organizational performance), tests for regression assumptions, correlation and finally regression analysis (coefficient of determination, ANOVA and regression coefficient).

#### 4.2 Response Rate

The researcher distributed 55 questionnaires as per the sample size only 49 questionnaires were completely filled and returned. Table 4.1 shows that the overall response rate was 89.1%, which is considered a very good response rate according to Kothari (2014) and Mugenda and Mugenda (2013). Babbie (2014) also supports this assertion. Mwangi (2017) and Ayabei (2020) used response rates of 80% and 82%, respectively, in their studies. Therefore, the response rate of 89.1% in this study was excellent.

**Table 4. 1: Response Rate**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>
Returned Questionnaires	49	89.1
Unreturned Questionnaires	6	10.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Source: Research Data, 2023**

#### 4.2 Reliability of the Research Instruments

The research instruments' reliability was assessed using Cronbach Alpha, which measures internal consistency. The alpha values range from 0 to 1, and a value of 0.7 is considered acceptable, according to Hair et al. (2010).

**Table 4. 2: Reliability of the Research Instrument**

<b>Study Variable</b>	<b>Number of Items</b>	<b>Cronbach Alpha</b>
Organisational Performance	6	.875
Human Resource Strategies	6	.799
Customer Service Strategies	6	.770
Information and Communication Strategies	6	.725
Marketing Strategies	6	.719
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>.822</b>

**Source: Research Data, 2023**

The results of the analysis revealed that all the variables had an alpha value of more than 0.7, which is the recommended threshold according to Hair et al. (2010), and the overall alpha value was 0.822. This indicates that the research instrument was reliable since all the measurements' constructs had an alpha value of more than 0.7. Additionally, the alpha value for organizational performance was 0.875, human resource strategies had an alpha of 0.799, customer service strategies had an alpha of 0.770, while information and communication strategies had an alpha of 0.725 and finally marketing strategies had an alpha of 0.719. Muiruri (2019) relied on a Cronbach Alpha of 0.796.

**4.3 Demographic Information**

In this section, the researcher sought to examine the distribution of the respondents through gender, academic qualification, department, years of operation, number of employees, number of rooms and occupancy rates.

**4.3.1 Gender of the Respondent**

The respondents were asked to indicate their gender and the findings was indicated on table 4.3.

**Table 4. 3: Gender of the Respondents**

<b>Gender</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>
Male	20	40.8
Female	29	59.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Source: Research Data, 2023**

It was determined that 59.2% (29) of the respondents indicated that they were females compared with 40.8% (20) of the respondents who indicated they were males. It was evident that majority of

the line managers of the four-star hotels in Mombasa County are females.

#### 4.3.2 Accademic Qualification

On table 4.4, the participants were requested to indicate their highest academic qualification, and the results are presented.

**Table 4. 4: Accademic Qualification**

<b>Accademic Qualification</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>
PhD	2	4.1
Masters	8	16.3
Bachelors	23	46.9
Diploma	11	22.4
Others	5	10.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Source: Research Data, 2023**

According to the results depicted in Table 4.4, nearly half of the respondents, 46.9% (23), had attained a bachelor's degree, while 22.4% (11) had a diploma qualification. The data also revealed that 16.3% (8) had a master's qualification, while only 4.1% (2) had a PhD qualification. Additionally, 10.2% (5) of the respondents had other qualifications. Overall, the majority of the operational managers had the necessary academic qualifications to comprehend the connection between operational level strategies and hotel performance.

#### 4.3.3 Department

The individuals who participated in the survey were also requested to specify their department of affiliation, and the outcomes were presented in a tabular format as shown in Table 4.4.

**Table 4. 5: Department**

<b>Department</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>
Human Resources	4	8.2
Maintenance	5	10.2
Administration	10	20.4
Finance	8	16.3
Hospitality and housekeeping	11	22.4
Security	3	6.1
Customer relations	6	12.2
ICT	2	4.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Source: Research Data, 2023**

The study discovered that 22.4% (11) of the survey participants belonged to the hospitality and housekeeping department, while 20.4% (10) were affiliated with the administration department. Additionally, 16.3% (8) belonged to the finance department, 12.2% (6) to customer relations, 10.2% (5) to maintenance, 8.2% (4) to human resources, and 6.1% (3) to security. Furthermore, only 4.1% of the respondents belonged to the ICT department. Notably, all departments responsible for developing and implementing operational strategies were represented in the study.

**4.3.4 Years of Operation**

Still on the background information, the respondents were asked to indicate the number of years their hotel have been in operation.

**Table 4. 6: Years of Operation**

<b>Years of Operation</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>
Less than 5 years	9	18.4
5-9 years	26	53.1
10-15 years	8	16.3
More than 15 years	6	12.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Source: Research Data, 2023**

The study revealed that 53.1% (26) of the participants reported that their hotel had been operating for 5 to 9 years. In contrast, 18.4% (9) reported less than 5 years of operation, while 16.3% (8) reported between 10 to 15 years. Only 12.2% (6) of the respondents reported more than 15 years of operation. Therefore, it can be concluded that the majority of the four-star hotels in Mombasa County had been operating for a considerable period, suggesting that they have had sufficient time to adopt operational strategies.

#### 4.3.5 Number of Employees

The researcher also sought to determine the distribution of the four-star rated hotels in the county in terms of their number of employees.

**Table 4. 7: Number of Employees**

<b>Number of Employees</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>
50 and below	11	22.4
100-200	15	30.6
201-300	14	28.6
Above 300	9	18.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Source: Research Data, 2023**

The findings indicated that 30.6% (15) of the participants reported having between 100 to 200 employees, while 28.6% (14) reported having between 201 to 300 employees. Additionally, 22.4% (11) reported having 50 employees or fewer, and 18.4% (9) reported having more than 300 employees. Therefore, it can be inferred that the four-star hotels in the county had a substantial number of employees, which provides an opportunity to implement operational strategies to enhance organizational performance

#### 4.3.6 Number of Rooms

The researcher further sought to establish the number of rooms which the four-star hotels have in Mombasa County.

**Table 4. 8: Number of Rooms**

<b>Number of Rooms</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>
100 and below	3	6.1
101-200	24	48.9
201-300	17	34.7
300 and above	5	10.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Source: Research Data, 2023**

The study found that 48.9% (24) of the participants reported their hotels having between 101 to 200 rooms, while 34.7% (17) reported having between 201 to 300 rooms. Furthermore, 10.2% (5) reported having more than 300 rooms, and only 6.1% (3) reported having above 100 rooms. Therefore, it can be concluded that the majority of the hotels in the study had more than 100 rooms.

### 4.3.7 Occupancy Rates

Finally on the background information, the respondents were asked to indicate the bed occupancy rates of their respective hospital.

**Table 4. 9: Occupancy Rates**

<b>Occupancy Rates</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>
Below 50%	5	10.2
51-60%	10	20.4
61—70%	23	46.9
Above70%	11	22.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Source: Research Data, 2023**

It was determined that 46.9% (23) of the respondents indicated that their hotel has an occupancy rate of between 61 to 70%, while 22.4% (11) of the respondents indicated that their occupancy rate of above 70% also 20.4% (10) indicated an occupancy rate of between 51 to 60% and finally only 10.2% (5) indicated an occupancy rate of below 50%. It was evident that majority of hotels in Mombasa County had an occupancy rate of above 60%.

### 4.4 Descriptive Statistics

In this section, the researcher sought to examine the extent of respondents' agreements on the various statements on the study variables. Mean and standard deviations were used as the analytical methods.

#### 4.4.1 Human Resource Strategies

On the first independent variable the respondents were asked to indicate the extent in which they agree with the various statements on human resource strategies in relation to organizational performance. The following scale was used: 1=Strongly Disagree, 2= Disagree, 3=Neutral, 4=Agree and 5= Strongly Agree.

**Table 4. 10: Human Resource Strategies**

	<b>SD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>SA</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>STD</b>
Job requirements was stressful to the employees thus contributing to turnover due to burnout	0 (0.0%)	2 (4.1%)	10 (20.4%)	29 (59.2%)	8 (16.3%)	3.66	.827
Employees strain reactions are actually contributed by job requirements	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	5 (10.2%)	28 (57.1%)	16 (32.7%)	3.31	1.061
The organisation uses advertisement as sourcing strategy to attract employees who will not leave the institution	1 (2.0%)	0 (0.0%)	7 (14.3%)	25 (51.0%)	16 (30.6%)	4.19	.821
The organisation uses various techniques to screen potential employees to identify potential employees for the job	1 (2.0%)	1 (2.0%)	9 (18.4%)	27 (55.1%)	11 (22.4%)	3.97	1.031
The firm's compensation mode often incorporates health benefits of the employees'	1 (2.0%)	7 (14.3%)	11 (22.4%)	14 (28.6%)	16 (32.7%)	4.19	.859
Hotels often incorporate both financial and non-financial incentives in their compensation plans	6 (12.2%)	13 (26.5%)	4 (8.2%)	8 (16.3%)	18 (36.7%)	4.09	.963
<b>Composite Score</b>						<b>3.90</b>	<b>.927</b>

**Source: Research Data, 2023**

Based on the data presented in Table 4.9, it was clear that most of the respondents agreed that job requirements could be stressful for employees, leading to burnout and turnover (M=3.66; SD=0.827). Additionally, many respondents agreed that job requirements contributed to employees' strain reactions (M=3.31; SD=1.061). It was also found that a majority of the respondents strongly agreed that the organization used advertising as a sourcing strategy to attract employees who were less likely to leave (M=4.19; SD=0.821), and that the organization used various techniques to screen potential employees (M=3.97; SD=0.859). Furthermore, most of the respondents strongly agreed that the firm's compensation plan incorporated health benefits for employees (M=4.19; SD=0.859), and that hotels often used both financial and non-financial incentives in their compensation plans (M=4.09; SD=0.963). Finally, the overall mean of 3.90 and standard deviation of 0.927 suggested that most respondents agreed to a great extent that

human resource strategies affect hotel performance, and there was little variation from the mean, as the standard deviation was less than 1. These findings were consistent with Manuti et al.'s (2020) research, which found that sustainable HRM practices are crucial for organizational performance and the effective utilization of human resources during periods of global crisis and uncertainty.

#### 4.4.2 Customer Service Strategies

On the second independent variable the respondents were asked to indicate the extent in which they agree with the various statements on customer service strategies in relation to organizational performance. The following scale was used: 1=Strongly Disagree, 2= Disagree, 3=Neutral, 4=Agree and 5= Strongly Agree.

**Table 4. 11: Customer Service Strategies**

	<b>SD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>SA</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>STD</b>
Customer service department of the hotel is mainly focused on solving customers problem	0 (0.0%)	2 (4.1%)	4 (8.2%)	25 (51.0%)	18 (36.7%)	3.38	1.129
Customer orientation approach of the firm is aimed at retaining current customers	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	9 (18.4%)	29 (59.2%)	11 (22.4%)	3.59	1.173
After-sale support of the hotel is considered as part of the marketing strategy	1 (2.0%)	2 (4.1%)	8 (16.3%)	20 (40.8%)	18 (36.7%)	3.41	1.103
After-sale service of the hotel ensures that customers get value for their money	0 (0.0%)	4 (8.2%)	24 (49.0%)	12 (24.5%)	9 (18.4%)	3.81	.998
Customer service department of the hotel ensures that guests are comfortable	1 (2.0%)	1 (2.0%)	13 (26.5%)	16 (32.7%)	18 (36.7%)	3.44	1.268
Customer care department ensures that all guests of the hotel have great experience	0 (0.0%)	2 (4.1%)	12 (24.5%)	21 (42.9%)	14 (28.6%)	3.44	1.045
<b>Composite Score</b>						<b>3.18</b>	<b>1.119</b>

**Source: Research Data, 2023**

Table 4.10 indicated that majority of the respondents agreed that customer service department of the hotel is mainly focused on solving customers problem with (M=3.38; SD=1.129) and they also agreed that customer orientation approach of the firm is aimed at retaining current

customers with (M=3.59; SD=1.073). It was further determined that majority of the respondents agreed that the after-sale support of the hotel is considered as part of the marketing strategy with (M=3.41; SD=1.103) and they also agreed that after-sale service of the hotel ensures that customers get value for their money with (M=3.81; SD=0.998). It was also revealed that majority of the respondents agreed that customer service department of the hotel ensures that guests are comfortable with (M=3.44; SD=1.268) and they also agreed that customer care department ensures that all guests of the hotel have great experience with (M=3.44; SD=1.045). On the overall mean of 3.18 and standard deviation of 1.119, implied that majority of the respondents agreed that customer service strategie affects hotel performance and there was a strong variation from the mean since standard deviation is greater than 1. The above findings corroborate that of Wambua and Yuhaya (2018) who determined that customer care services and customer relations had a significant and positive relationship with performance of the hotels.

#### **4.4.3 Information and Communication Strategies**

On the third independent variable the respondents were asked to indicate the extent in which they agree with the various statements on information and communication strategies in relation to organizational performance. The following scale was used: 1=Strongly Disagree, 2= Disagree, 3=Neutral, 4=Agree and 5= Strongly Agree.

**Table 4. 12: Information and Communication Strategies**

	<b>SD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>SA</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>STD</b>
Mobile check ins have eliminated double booking common with manual booking process.	2 (4.1%)	1 (2.0%)	6 (12.2%)	27 (55.1%)	13 (26.5%)	4.03	.861
Mobile check ins have improved hotel bed occupancy.	0 (0.0%)	6 (12.2%)	6 (12.2%)	28 (57.1%)	9 (18.4%)	4.03	.897
Augmented reality is used by the hotel to enhance the hotel physical environment.	2 (4.1%)	1 (2.0%)	9 (18.4%)	25 (51.0%)	12 (24.5%)	3.81	.896
Augmented reality has led to increased satisfaction, increased high booking as the guest has better understanding of how their stay will be in the hotel.	1 (2.0%)	1 (2.0%)	4 (8.2%)	22 (44.9%)	21 (42.9%)	3.87	.833
Trolley robots enhances logistics supports in the hotel thus enabling social distancing for COVID 19 prevention.	1 (2.0%)	4 (8.2%)	9 (18.4%)	24 (49.0%)	11 (22.4%)	3.59	.946
Trolley robots has reduced congestion and improved the scheduling of movement in the hotel.	0 (0.0%)	1 (2.0%)	4 (8.2%)	19 (38.8%)	25 (51.0%)	4.03	.967
<b>Composite Score</b>						<b>3.89</b>	<b>.901</b>

**Source: Research Data, 2023**

It was determined that majority of the respondents strongly agreed that mobile check ins have eliminated double booking common with manual booking process with (M=4.03; SD=0.861) and they also agreed that mobile check ins have improved hotel bed occupancy with (M=4.03; SD=0.897). It was also determined that majority of the respondents agreed that augmented reality is used by the hotel to enhance the hotel physical environment with (M=3.81; SD=3.59) and they also agreed that augmented reality has led to increased satisfaction, increased high booking as the guest has better understanding of how their stay will be in the hotel (M=3.87; SD=0.833). Majority of the respondents agreed that trolley robots enhances logistics supports in the hotel thus enabling social distancing for COVID 19 prevention with (M=3.59; SD=0.946) and they also strongly agreed that trolley robots has reduced congestion and improved the scheduling of movement in the hotel with (M=4.03; SD= 0.967). The overall mean of 3.89 and standard deviation of

0.901, implied that majority of the respondents agreed that information and communication strategies affects organisational performance and there was a low variation from the mean since standard deviation was less than 1. The above findings were in line with that of Kungu (2014) who revealed that ICT has significantly contributed to operational performance, through faster processing of customer requests, increased productivity and efficiency.

#### 4.4.4 Marketing Strategies

On the fourth independent variable the respondents were asked to indicate the extent in which they agree with the various statements on marketing strategies in relation to organizational performance. The following scale was used: 1=Strongly Disagree, 2= Disagree, 3=Neutral, 4=Agree and 5= Strongly Agree.

**Table 4. 13: Marketing Strategies**

	<b>SD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>SA</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>STD</b>
Digital marketing strategy has improved customers reviews and tracking online reviews of the hotel	2 (4.1%)	0 (0.0%)	4 (8.2%)	18 (36.7%)	25 (51.0%)	3.56	1.014
Digital marketing strategy affect the valence of online reviews, hence impacting performance	0 (0.0%)	3 (6.1%)	7 (14.3%)	26 (53.1%)	13 (26.5%)	3.50	.950
Pricing strategy of the hotel is based on the seasonal demands	0 (0.0%)	1 (2.0%)	11 (22.4%)	23 (46.9%)	14 (28.6%)	4.16	1.110
Hotel has effective pricing strategies that is aimed at improving revenue	2 (4.1%)	8 (16.3%)	10 (20.4%)	15 (30.6%)	14 (28.6%)	3.47	.718
Product diversification is a strategy used by the hotel management when introducing new products	0 (0.0%)	2 (4.1%)	7 (14.3%)	23 (46.9%)	17 (34.7%)	2.63	1.040
Product diversification aims to reduce the risk faced by the hotel in the hospitality industry	3 (6.1%)	7 (14.3%)	9 (18.4%)	20 (40.8%)	10 (20.4%)	3.00	1.295
<b>Composite Score</b>						<b>3.39</b>	<b>1.021</b>

**Source: Research Data, 2023**

It was determined that majority of the respondents agreed that digital marketing strategy has improved customers reviews and tracking online reviews of the hotel with (M=3.56; SD=1.014) and they also agreed that digital marketing strategy affect the valence of online reviews, hence impacting performance with (M=3.50; SD=0.950). Majority of the respondents strongly agreed

that pricing strategy of the hotel is based on the seasonal demands with (M=4.16; SD= 1.110) and they also agreed that hotel has effective pricing strategies that is aimed at improving revenue with (M=3.47; SD=0.718). Majority of the respondents were neutral that product diversification is a strategy used by the hotel management when introducing new products with (M=2.63; SD=1.040) and they also agreed that product diversification aims to reduce the risk faced by the hotel in the hospitality industry with (M=3.00; SD=1.295). The overall mean of 3.39 and standard deviation of 1.021, which implied that majority of the respondents agreed that marketing strategies affects hotel performance and there was a strong variation from the mean since standard deviation is greater than 1. The above study was in conjunction with that of Wawira (2016) who postulated that marketing strategies positively and significantly affects performance.

#### **4.4.5 Organisational Performance**

The participants were requested to indicate their level of agreement with different statements regarding organizational performance using a scale that ranged from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree).

**Table 4. 14: Organisational Performance**

	<b>SD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>SA</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>STD</b>
Operational level strategies have improved the growth of market share of the hotel	6 (12.2%)	2 (4.1%)	4 (4.1%)	13 (26.5%)	14 (28.6%)	3.85	.88688
Continuous improvement of organizational processes has improved the quality of services	4 (8.2%)	9 (18.4%)	12 (24.5%)	15 (30.6%)	9 (18.4%)	3.87	.83230
Improvement in quality of clientele served has been experienced due to the implementation operational strategies	1 (2.0%)	2 (4.1%)	18 (36.7%)	16 (32.7%)	12 (24.5%)	3.88	.87498
Growth and profitability of the hotel dynamics and has widened the scope results in performance	1 (2.0%)	6 (12.2%)	10 (20.4%)	15 (30.6%)	17 (34.7%)	3.89	.85809
Differentiation of products has improved the demand of the hotel products	3 (6.1%)	6 (12.2%)	7 (14.3%)	20 (40.8%)	13 (26.5%)	3.90	.88601
Hotel industry performance may also be put into consideration through its service to visitors	1 (2.0%)	2 (4.1%)	12 (24.5%)	19 (38.8%)	15 (30.6%)	3.95	.85882
<b>Composite Score</b>						<b>3.89</b>	<b>.8662</b>

**Source: Research Data, 2023**

According to the analysis, most of the respondents agreed that the hotel industry's performance could be evaluated based on its service to visitors (M=3.95; SD=0.85882), and that differentiation of products had led to increased demand for hotel products (M=3.90; SD=0.88601). They also believed that the growth and profitability of the hotel were important factors that widened the scope of results and improved performance (M=3.89; SD=0.87498), and that implementing operational strategies had led to improvements in the quality of clients served (M=3.88; SD=0.87498). Additionally, they agreed that continuous improvement of organizational processes had improved the quality of services (M=3.87; SD=0.83230), and that operational level strategies had led to an increased growth of the hotel's market share (M=3.85; SD=0.88688). Overall, the mean score of 3.89 and standard deviation of 0.8662 indicated that most employees agreed that operational level strategies had an impact on hotel performance, with a low variation from the mean as the standard deviation was less than 1. These findings were consistent with Teck and

Karuppiah's (2020) study, which suggested that operational management could be used strategically to promote sustainability and customer satisfaction.

#### 4.5 Correlation Analysis

Theoretical preposition regarding the relationship between operational level strategies (human resource strategies, customer service strategies, information and communication strategies, marketing strategies) and organizational performance was tested using Pearson correlation. The relationship is considered weak when  $r = \pm 0.1$  to  $\pm 0.29$ , while the relationship is considered moderate when  $r = \pm 0.30$  to  $\pm 0.49$ , and when  $r$  is  $\pm 0.50$  and above, the relationship can be considered strong as asserted by Kothari (2013).

**Table 4. 16: Correlation Analysis**

		Y	X1	X2	X3	X4
Organisational Performance (Y)	Pearson Correlation	1				
	Sig (2-tailed)					
	N	49				
Human Resource Strategies (X1)	Pearson Correlation	.305*	1			
	Sig (2-tailed)	.025				
	N	49	49			
Customer Service Strategies (X2)	Pearson Correlation	.668**	-.026	1		
	Sig (2-tailed)	.005	.551			
	N	49	49	49		
Information & Communication Strategies (X3)	Pearson Correlation	.404**	.166	-.164	1	
	Sig (2-tailed)	.003	.235	.243		
	N	49	49	49	49	
Marketing Strategies (X4)	Pearson Correlation	.314*	.029	.092	.222	1
	Sig (2-tailed)	.022	.635	.513	.111	
	N	49	49	49	49	49

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

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

Table 4.16 presented the results of the correlation analysis conducted among the variables under study. The analysis revealed that there was a significant and moderate positive correlation between human resource strategies and organizational performance ( $r=0.305$ ;  $p=0.026<0.05$ ). This finding was consistent with the study by Manuti et al. (2020) which established that sustainable HRM practices are crucial in enhancing organizational performance and leveraging

human resources during times of crisis and uncertainty. Additionally, there was a significant and strong positive correlation between customer service strategies and organizational performance ( $r=0.668$ ;  $p=0.005<0.01$ ). This finding was consistent with the study by Wambua and Yuhaya (2018) which found that customer care services and customer relations are key drivers of hotel performance. The analysis further showed that there was a significant and moderate positive correlation between information and communication strategies and organizational performance ( $r=0.404$ ;  $p=0.003<0.01$ ). This was in line with the study by Kungu (2014) which found that ICT significantly enhances operational performance by improving customer service, productivity and efficiency. Finally, there was a significant and positive correlation between marketing strategies and organizational performance ( $r=0.314$ ;  $p=0.022<0.05$ ). This finding was consistent with the study by Wawira (2016) which suggested that marketing strategies significantly and positively affect organizational performance.

#### **4.6 Regression Analysis**

Regression analysis was used to establish the causal relationship between human resource strategies, customer service strategies, information and communication strategies, marketing strategies in relation to organisational performance. Mugenda and Mugenda (2013) states that regression analysis is useful in understanding how typically dependent variable changes, when independent variables are altered. Wan (2022) adds that it helps in generating an equation which describes the statistical relationships.

##### **4.6.1 Coefficient of Determination**

The coefficient of determination, denoted as R-squared ( $R^2$ ), is a statistical measure that represents the proportion of variance in the dependent variable (organizational performance) that is explained by the independent variables (operational level strategies) in a regression model. Coefficient of determination was also used to assess the fitness of the model in chapter three.

**Table 4. 15: Model Summary**

<b>Model</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>R Square</b>	<b>Adjusted R Square</b>	<b>Std Error of Estimate</b>	<b>Durbin Watson</b>
1	.853 <sup>a</sup>	.728	.6967	.89710	1.845

Predictors: Human Resource Strategies, Customer Service Strategies, Information and Communication Strategies, Marketing Strategies

The analysis indicated there is strong positive relationship between the combination of predictor variables (operational level strategies) and dependent variable (organizational performance) ( $r=0.853$ ) The analysis further showed an adjusted  $r^2$  of 0.6967, which implied that operational level strategies (human resource strategies, customer service strategies, information and communication strategies, marketing strategies) can explain 69.67% of hotel performance and hence the model in chapter three was fit.

#### **4.6.2 Analysis of Variance**

To determine the significance of the operational level strategies on the hotel performance and significance of equation in chapter three, the study used ANOVA analysis.

**Table 4. 16: Analysis of Variance**

<b>Model</b>		<b>Sum of Squares</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>Mean Square</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
1	Regression	104.104	4	34.701	39.254	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	38.896	44	.884		
	Total	143.000	48			

a. Dependent Variable: Organisational Performance

b. Predictors: (Constant), Human Resource Strategies, Customer Service Strategies, Information and Communication Strategies, Marketing Strategies

The ANOVA model showed ( $F\{4,44\}= 39.254$ ;  $p=0.000$ ), the analysis indicated that the model was statistically significant since  $p\text{-value}<0.05$  and hence the regression equation was significant. Hence the operational level strategies (human resource strategies, customer service strategies, information and communication strategies, marketing strategies) significantly determines organizational performance.

#### **4.6.3 Regression Coefficient**

A regression coefficient was carried out in order to explain the nature and relationship between each independent variables and dependent variable.

**Table 4. 17: Regression Coefficients**

	Unstandardized		Standardized		T	Sig.
	Coefficients		Coefficients			
	B	Std. Error	Beta			
(Constant)	1.085	0.266				0.000
Human Resource Strategies (X1)	0.129	0.062	0.114		2.038	0.045
Customer Service Strategies (X2)	0.220	0.077	0.336		2.742	0.006
Information & Communication Strategies (X3)	0.175	0.057	0.122		3.046	0.004
Marketing Strategies (X4)	.127	.099	.123		1.264	.226

**Source: Research Data, 2023**

Based on the regression coefficient table, the specific regression equation becomes:

$$Y = 1.084 + 0.128X_1 + 0.219X_2 + 0.174X_3 + 0.126X_4$$

Where;

Y = Organizational Performance

X<sub>1</sub> = Human Resource Strategies

X<sub>2</sub> = Customer Service Strategies

X<sub>3</sub> = Information and Communication Strategies

X<sub>4</sub> = Marketing Strategies

The study revealed that changes in human resource strategies ((β=0.129; t=2.038; p=0.045), customer service strategies (β=0.220; t=2.742; p=0.006), and information and communication strategies (β=0.176; t=3.047; p=0.005) significantly contribute to organizational performance. The findings are consistent with previous research conducted by Manuti et al. (2020), Wambua and Yuhaya (2018), and Kungu (2014). Specifically, a unit change in organizational performance can be attributed to 0.129 changes in human resource strategies, 0.219 changes in customer service strategies, and 0.176 changes in information and communication strategies. However, the analysis showed that marketing strategies contribute to a unit change in organizational performance by 0.128 changes, but the contribution is not significant. This contradicts the study by Wawira (2016),

who suggested that marketing strategies have a positive and significant impact on organizational performance.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter entails summary of the findings, conclusion and recommendations on the effect of operational level strategies on organizational performance. The chapter also captures limitations and suggestions for further studies.

#### **5.2 Summary of the Findings**

##### **5.2.1 Human Resource Strategies and Organisational Performance**

The study identified a moderate positive and significant correlation between human resource strategies and organizational performance, with a correlation coefficient of 0.305 and a p-value of 0.026, which is less than the significance level of 0.05. The study also found that improving human resource strategies would positively impact organizational performance, as evidenced by a beta coefficient of 0.129, a t-value of 2.038, and a p-value of 0.045. The study identified that job requirements can cause stress to employees, leading to burnout and strain reactions that contribute to turnover. The organization employs advertising as a sourcing strategy to attract employees who will likely stay with the institution. The study also found that the organization uses various techniques to screen potential employees to identify the best fit for the job. Additionally, the firm's compensation plan includes health benefits for employees, and hotels use both financial and non-financial incentives in their compensation plans.

##### **5.2.2 Customer Service Strategies and Organisational Performance**

The study established a significant and positive correlation between customer service strategies and organizational performance, with a correlation coefficient of 0.668 and a p-value of 0.005, indicating a strong relationship. Furthermore, the study found that enhancing customer service strategies would positively impact organizational performance, with a beta coefficient of 0.220, a t-value of 2.742, and a p-value of 0.006. It was further determined that customer service department of the hotel is mainly focused on solving customers problem and customer orientation approach of the firm is aimed at retaining current customers. It was also determined that after-sale support of the hotel is considered as part of the marketing strategy and after-sale service of the hotel ensures that customers get value for their money. It was further determined that customer

service department of the hotel ensures that guests are comfortable and customer care department ensures that all guests of the hotel have great experience.

### **5.2.3 Information and Communication Strategies and Organisational Performance**

According to the study, there exists a moderate positive correlation between information and communication strategies and organizational performance, with a correlation coefficient of 0.404 and a p-value of 0.003, which is less than the significance level of 0.01. Furthermore, the study found that improving information and communication strategies would positively impact organizational performance, with a beta coefficient of 0.176, a t-value of 3.046, and a p-value of 0.005. The study also provided instances of how the hotel industry has leveraged technology to enhance organizational performance. For instance, the adoption of mobile check-ins has eliminated issues of double booking, improved bed occupancy rates, and increased guest satisfaction. Augmented reality has also been employed to enhance the physical environment of the hotel, resulting in increased guest satisfaction and higher booking rates. Additionally, the use of trolley robots has improved logistics support in hotels, enabling social distancing during the COVID-19 pandemic and reducing congestion while improving movement scheduling.

### **5.2.4 Marketing Strategies and Organisational Performance**

On the final independent variable, the study revealed that marketing strategies have a moderate positive and significant relationship with organizational performance ( $r=0.314$ ;  $p=0.022<0.05$ ). However, the improvement in marketing strategies was found to have an insignificant contribution to organizational performance ( $\beta=0.127$ ;  $t=1.264$ ;  $p=0.226$ ). The use of digital marketing strategies was found to have improved customer reviews and helped track online reviews, which in turn impacted performance by influencing the valence of online reviews. The hotel's pricing strategy was found to be effective and based on seasonal demands, aimed at improving revenue. Product diversification was also found to be a strategy used by the hotel management to introduce new products and reduce the risk faced by the hotel in the hospitality industry.

## **5.4 Conclusion**

### **5.4.1 Human Resource Strategies and Organisational Performance**

The study concluded that human resource strategies have a significant impact on hotel performance. It also found that job requirements can sometimes cause stress for employees,

leading to burnout and strain reactions. Additionally, the study showed that the organization utilizes advertising as a sourcing strategy for attracting and retaining employees, and employs various screening techniques to identify suitable candidates. The compensation mode adopted by the firm includes health benefits for employees, and hotels often incorporate both financial and non-financial incentives into their compensation plans.

#### **5.4.2 Customer Service Strategies and Organisational Performance**

On the second objective it was concluded that customer service strategies affect organizational performance. It was revealed that improvement in quality of clientele served has been experienced due to the implementation operational strategies and growth. It was further determined that customer service department of the hotel is mainly focused on solving customers problem and customer orientation approach of the firm is aimed at retaining current customers. It was also determined that after-sale support of the hotel is considered as part of the marketing strategy and after-sale service of the hotel ensures that customers get value for their money. It was further concluded that customer service department of the hotel ensures that guests are comfortable and customer care department ensures that all guests of the hotel have great experience.

#### **5.4.3 Information and Communication Strategies and Organisational Performance**

The study concluded that information and communication strategies significantly affect and contributes to organizational performance. It was also revealed that mobile check ins have eliminated double booking common with manual booking process and mobile check ins have improved hotel bed occupancy. It was also shown that augmented reality is used by the hotel to enhance the hotel physical environment and augmented reality has led to increased satisfaction, increased high booking as the guest has better understanding of how their stay will be in the hotel. It was determined trolley robots enhances logistics supports in the hotel thus enabling social distancing for COVID 19 prevention and it has reduced congestion and improved the scheduling of movement in the hotel.

#### **5.4.4 Marketing Strategies and Organisational Performance**

On the final objective, the study concluded that marketing strategies significantly contributes to the hotel performance. It was also shown that digital marketing strategy has improved customers reviews and tracking online reviews of the hotel and digital marketing strategy affect the valence of online reviews, hence impacting performance. It was further shown that pricing strategy of the hotel is based on the seasonal demands and hotel has effective pricing strategies that is aimed at

improving revenue. It was also shown that product diversification is a strategy used by the hotel management when introducing new products and it aims to reduce the risk faced by the hotel in the hospitality industry.

### **5.5 Recommendations**

Based on the study analysis, findings and conclusion, this study recommends that:

The study provided insights into sustainable HRM policies that can help enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of four-star hotels' organizational performance. To ensure effective organizational performance, the hotels' management should adopt proactive employee engagement practices and policies that can attract and retain employees. The study also recommended that a policy framework should be developed to improve the working conditions of lower cadre employees.

The study recommended that managers of the hotels should adopt customer care services and customer relations to enhance performance. Managers of the hotels should also ensure that service quality dimensions such as reliability, assurance, empathy and responsiveness are adhered to ensure that customer satisfactions are met.

The study recommended the implementation of ICT tools, since they significantly contributes to operational performance, through faster processing of customer requests, increased productivity and efficiency and they also form the backbone of housekeeping, inventory management, business intelligence, financial management, restaurant management, customer relationship management, front office operations and hotel bookings. The study recommended that hotel managers need to assess their investment capabilities on the ICT in the sector.

The study recommended that the top priority for the hotels should be the implementation of marketing strategies. Since marketing strategies in the hotel sector play an important role on the hotel's growth and to determine achievement made on customer satisfaction. The study recommended that hotels should adopt public relations programmes.

### **5.6 Suggestions for Further Studies**

Future research should expand beyond the examination of the relationship between operational level strategies and organizational performance of four-star hotels in other countries, and also explore other sectors to increase the generalizability and comparability of study findings. The study's analysis revealed that only 69.67% of organizational performance could be explained by

human resource strategies, customer service strategies, information and communication strategies, and marketing strategies. Therefore, future research should investigate other operational level strategies that could account for the remaining 30.33% of organizational performance, which were not covered in this study. Additionally, this study only considered the opinions of line managers and did not incorporate the perspectives of junior staff members. Therefore, future research should include both line managers and other staff members to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the study's findings.

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## **APPENDICES**

### **Appendix I: Introduction Letter**

Dear Respondents,

#### **RE: RESEARCH PROPOSAL**

The above refers,

My name is Emmanuel Thoya Mweni a student at Kenyatta University Reg Number D53/MSA/OL/ 28861/2018, Mombasa Campus.

I am carrying an academic research proposal study focused on Operational Level Strategies and Organizational Performance of Four-star Hotels in Mombasa County in Kenya.

Please support me through this process by answering all the questions provided in the questionnaire attached herewith.

Kindly note that your anonymity will be safeguarded all the information provided will be used purely for this academic study only as a requirement for an award of Master's degree in Business Administration, Strategic Management option.

We look forward to your full cooperation.

Yours Faithfully,

Emmanuel Thoya.

## Appendix II: Questionnaire

My name is Emmanuel Mweni Thoya. I am conducting a study on operational level strategies and performance of four hotels in Mombasa County, Kenya. Please answer the questions in this questionnaire, and rest assured that your responses will be kept confidential and used solely for academic purposes.

### SECTION A: Personal Background (tick the correct answer)

Q. 1 Select your employing organization (optional)  Sarova White Sands Hotel

Serena Beach Hotel  Hotel English point Marina  Voyager Beach Hotel

Neptune Beach Hotel

Q. 2 Select your gender  Male  Female

Q. 3 Select your highest qualifications?  PhD  Masters  Bachelors  Diploma  Others

Q. 4 Indicate your department:  Human Resources  Maintenance  Administration

Finance  Hospitality and housekeeping  Security  Customer relations  ICT.

Q. 5 Years of operation Less than 5 year's  5-9 years  10-15 years  more than 15 years.

Q.6 Current employees in this hotel  50andbelow  100-200  201-300  above300

Q.7 Number of room's  100 and below  101-200  201-30  300 and above

Q.8 Occupancy Rates  below50%  51-60%  61—70%  above70%

### SECTION B: Study Variables

#### Human Resource Strategies and Organizational Performance

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements on human resource strategies. Use the following scale 5=Strongly Agree, 4=Agree, 3=Neutral, 2=Disagree and 1=Strongly Disagree.

Opinion Statements	5	4	3	2	1
Job requirements can be sometimes be stressful to the employees thus					

contributing to turnover due to burnout					
Employees strain reactions are actually contributed by job requirements					
The organisation uses advertisement as sourcing strategy to attract employees who will not leave the institution					
The organisation uses various techniques to screen potential employees to identify potential employees for the job					
The firm's compensation mode often incorporates health benefits of the employees'					
Hotels often incorporate both financial and non-financial incentives in their compensation plans					

### **Customer Service Strategies and Organizational Performance**

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements on customer service strategies Use the following scale 5=Strongly Agree, 4=Agree, 3=Neutral, 2=Disagree and 1=Strongly Disagree.

<b>Opinion Statements</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>
Customer service department of the hotel is mainly focused on solving customers problem					
Customer orientation approach of the firm is aimed at retaining current customers					
After-sale support of the hotel is considered as part of the marketing strategy					
After-sale service of the hotel ensures that customers get value for their money					
Customer service department of the hotel ensures that guests are comfortable					
Customer care department ensures that all guests of the hotel have great experience					

### **Information and Communication Strategies and Organizational Performance**

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements on information and communication technology. Use the following scale 5=Strongly Agree, 4=Agree, 3=Neutral, 2=Disagree and 1=Strongly Disagree.

<b>Opinion Statements</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>
Mobile check ins have eliminated double booking common with manual booking process.					
Mobile check ins have improved hotel bed occupancy.					
Augmented reality is used by the hotel to enhance the hotel physical environment.					
Augmented reality has led to increased satisfaction, increased high booking as the guest has better understanding of how their stay will be in the hotel.					
Trolley robots enhances logistics supports in the hotel thus enabling social distancing for COVID 19 prevention.					
Trolley robots has reduced congestion and improved the scheduling of movement in the hotel.					

### **Marketing Strategies and Organizational Performance**

Please indicate the level of agreement with the following statements on marketing strategies Use the following scale 5=Strongly Agree, 4=Agree, 3=Neutral, 2=Disagree and 1=Strongly Disagree.

<b>Opinion Statements</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>
Digital marketing strategy has improved customers reviews and tracking online reviews of the hotel					
Digital marketing strategy affect the valence of online reviews, hence impacting performance					
Pricing strategy of the hotel is based on the seasonal demands					
Hotel has effective pricing strategies that is aimed at improving revenue					
Product diversification is a strategy used by the hotel management when introducing new products					
Product diversification aims to reduce the risk faced by the hotel in the hospitality industry					

### **Organizational Performance**

Please indicate your level of agreement agree with the following statements on hotel performance. Use the following scale 5=Strongly Agree, 4=Agree, 3=Neutral, 2=Disagree and 1=Strongly Disagree.

<b>Opinion Statements</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>
Operational level strategies have improved the growth of market share of the hotel					
Continuous improvement of organizational processes has improved the quality of services					
Improvement in quality of clientele served has been experienced due to the implementation operational strategies					
Growth and profitability of the hotel dynamics and has widened the scope results in performance					
Differentiation of products has improved the demand of the hotel products					
Hotel industry performance may also be put into consideration through its service to visitors					

**END**

\*\*\*\*\*Thank you for Participating\*\*\*\*\*