



Strategic Intent and Performance of Airtel Kenya Limited in Nairobi City County, Kenya

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ABSTRACT

The remarkable expansion and influence of the telecommunications industry to economic development in Kenya have compelled Airtel Kenya Limited to implement strategic management tactics to navigate the volatile market, on the backdrop of poor performance. The study focused on determining the effect of strategic intent on performance of Airtel Kenya Limited in Nairobi City County, Kenya. Dynamic capabilities, resource-based view, and Ansoff strategic success theories supported the research. Descriptive design was used targeting 132 non-support permanent employees working at the Sales, Marketing and Enterprise and Strategic departments, Airtel Kenya Limited head office, Nairobi, Kenya. Stratified sampling design was adopted, involving 98 respondents and primary data collected through structured questionnaire. A pilot study involving 10 non-support permanent staff in the Corporate and Strategy departments at Safaricom Public Limited Kenya, Nairobi's head office was conducted to determine the instrument's reliability. Descriptive and inferential statistics supported data analysis and results presented in tables and narrations. Relevant academic research ethical considerations were observed. Strategic intent ($\beta = 0.424$; $p=0.000$) significantly affected performance. The study established a statistically significant effect of strategic management on performance of Airtel Kenya Limited, coefficient of determination 63.9% and significance 0.000. Communications Authority of Kenya should review sector policies on strategic management practices to align with current market dynamics.

Key Words: *Strategic Intent, Organization Performance, Airtel Kenya Limited*

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Background

The American Telephone & Telegraph (AT&T) Company firm operates on business strategies built on principles of integrity, customer experiences, and trust. American Telephone & Telegraph



has experienced optimal financial and non-financial performance levels, emerging as the leading mobile services provider in the USA, amassing a market share of 46.9% by 2023 (Ezeigweneme, Umoh, Ilojiana, & Adegbite, 2024). Moreover, as a growth strategy, the firm is focused on enhancing customer quality experiences and expanding its fibre footprints globally. This strategic move has seen the firm currently establish its fibre footprints in more than 26 million fibre locations in 100 plus metro areas, and is on course to achieve more than 30 million fibre locations establishment (25 million consumer and 5 million business locations) by end of 2025 (Arisar, Lian-Ju, & Jokhio, 2024).

In Africa, the telecommunications industry in Rwanda was characterized by a monopoly where only Mobile Telephone Network (MTN) Rwanda was the sole operator until 2006 when the industry was liberalized and in 2009, Tigo Rwanda started operations in Rwanda. The firm was founded on affordability and innovativeness strategic management practices which saw it amass 3.2 million customers as at the end of 2016 characterizing the firm's optimal performance. In a strategic move to reduce the increasing competition pressure, the firm was sold off to Bharti Airtel Rwanda for \$60–70 million, an Indian-based global telecom firm in 2017 and operated as Airtel-Tigo until 2020 when it was rebranded to Airtel Rwanda (Joyce, Namusonge, & Iravo, 2022). This strategic acquisition resulted in Airtel Rwanda becoming the second largest telecommunications operator in Rwanda, with a 40% market share. Additionally, according to Kiraboet *al.* (2020), Airtel Rwanda's strategic decision of listing in the London Stock Exchange in 2019 saw the firm raise \$750 million in sales of shares, through an initial public offering.

In Kenya, Safaricom Public Limited Company's (PLC) outstanding performance has resulted into its dominance of the telecommunications industry which has been attributed to the firm's massive investment in strategic management practices. As of June 2022, Safaricom Limited accounted for 40 million prepaid and 1 million post-paid subscribers, translating to 66.1% against Airtel Kenya's 26.3% market share in the same period (Communications Authority of Kenya, 2022). Safaricom's impressive performance has been linked to the firm's adequate strategic management plans (transforming lives) which are reviewed occasionally to reflect the dynamic market environments. Built on four strategic pillars; innovation, customer obsession, collaboration, and purpose, Safaricom PLC's strategic practices have significantly enhanced the firm's adequate performance, thus positioning the firm as the market leader. The firm in the half-year ended September 2023 recorded a net income of Ksh34. 2 billion and a customer base of 32.2 million, attributed to its well-researched and market-informed strategic orientations (Safaricom, 2023). Jostling for market share, new subscribers, and reliable network coverage, Airtel Kenya's challenges denting its success potential could be relatively addressed through the adoption of informed strategic management practices.

Performance according to Eze, Akyuz and Opusunju (2020) concerns with the actual outputs and outcomes achieved through various concerted activities and processes to realize the underlying firm's goals. According to Walker and Monster (2019), it concerns with achieving the defined outcome of the respective firm. Helmold and Samara (2019), hold that it is how well a firm does and how the set periodical objectives and goals are completed effectively and efficiently. Various scholars have differently conceptualized organizational performance. Ferreira and Mueller, and Papa (2020), argue that based on strategic directions, scholars have attributed market survival, profitability, and growth as basic measures and indicators of performance. Performance is



characterized by the accomplishment of organizational mission through the engagement of adequate management practices, persistent rededication, and strong governance (Walker *et al.*, 2019). Further, a study by Gabow (2019) assessed organizational performance through efficiency, effectiveness, customer retention and new processes. Moreover, Njenga (2018) and Adudu (2022) conceptualized organizational performance through profitability and sales growth of a firm. According to Manayang (2022), organizational performance is characterized by donor funding and the accomplishment of set goals.

In this study, performance was measured through signal quality, new subscribers, and innovative products. Signal quality according to David and Grobler (2020) refers to the strength, reliability, and clarity in electronic signals transmitted and received in a communication channel. Signal quality therefore shows efficiency and effectiveness in transmission. On the other hand, new subscribers refer to the additional users registered with a telecommunications service provider and are measured in absolute numbers. New subscribers can be organic or acquired from a rival firm's customer base. Innovative products concern with unique and differentiated products or services that provide a difference to consumers and enhance customer satisfaction. Innovative products enhance customer satisfaction, ensuring growth in the firm's market segment.

Airtel Kenya Limited is one of the leading telecommunication firms in Kenya, with its origin being traced back to 2010 (Airtel Kenya, 2022). The company is owned by Bharti Airtel, an Indian telecommunications firm. Currently, it is the second largest mobile operator in Kenya, after Safaricom Public Limited Company. Airtel has a presence operation in 14 countries across Africa with its operations being concentrated in East and Western African regions. On average, Airtel Kenya Limited boasts of 16.7 million mobile subscribers out of the available 59.8 million subscribers representing a 28% market share (Communications Authority, 2022). Before rebranding to Airtel Kenya in November 2010, the company underwent a tremendous transformation in name, from originally being referred to as Kencell, then Celtel, then Zain, and finally, Airtel Kenya Limited (Airtel Kenya, 2022). In its expansion and growth objectives, Airtel Kenya Limited has focused on bringing its services closer to the customers at an affordable rate to promote its brand recognition among users in Kenya and the Eastern Africa region. The company's strategic management practices such as low pricing have proved a game-changer in the Kenyan telecommunications industry, as it has brought in the much-needed competition for the continued quality products provision.

The company has also resorted to expansion through the launching of regional customer service centers where users can access instant services and seek help on the difficulties experienced with the company's products and services in a bid to remain competitive locally, regionally, and internationally. According to Communications Authority (2022), Airtel Kenya Limited currently has 60 retail outlets spread across Kenya to enhance its brand awareness and develop its mobile services and products. In line with the company's long-term plan of delivering quality service experience to its customers, the expansionary efforts are focused on achieving this milestone. However, dwindling market performances have put the firm's sustainability in jeopardy. To achieve its underlying growth and expansion objectives embedded in the firm competitive advantage, Airtel Kenya Limited needs to redefine its strategic management practices to continue growing its market share from 28% to somewhere 50% (Arowo, 2023). The management needs to embark on strategy formulation, implementation, and evaluation to enable the firm to adopt



procedures that can propel it to achieve the desired performance standards amidst the highly competitive telecommunications industry. The strategic intent will be a significant step towards this goal realization as it will enable the firm to determine its needs to formulate a relevant strategic plan that can deliver optimal performance levels as sought in the current study, hence achieving the desired competitiveness.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

By 2022, Airtel controlled 26.3% of the mobile subscription market share in Kenya, signifying continued low marketability of its products. Despite an increase from 64.7 million to 69.5 million mobile subscribers as of December 2022, Airtel Kenya's user subscriptions had stagnated at 17.9 million. Over a period of four years from 2019 to 2022, Airtel Kenya's market share experienced fluctuations; 2019 at 24.6%; 2020 at 26.8%; 2021 at 26.9% and 2022 at 26.4% (Communications Authority, 2022). The after-tax loss of Airtel Kenya Ltd in 2019 stood at Ksh.2.8 billion, 2020 at Ksh.2.78 billion, 2021 at Ksh.6 billion and 2022 at Ksh.3.8 billion (Airtel Africa PLC, 2022). Additionally, Airtel Kenya Ltd has experienced constant network outages, attracting heavy fines from the Communication Authority of Kenya. In 2019, Airtel Kenya Ltd was fined Ksh.26.6 million for its 75% service quality rating, which was below the required 85%. In 2022, Airtel Kenya Ltd was fined 26.3 million for network outage following its 67.4% service quality rating (Communications Authority of Kenya, 2022). Several studies done on strategic management practices and firm performance have however failed to contextually, methodologically and knowledgeably focus on Airtel Kenya Limited, thus the rationale for the current study.

Although Kumar (2021) researched on strategy and performance of pharmaceutical firms in India and revealed a significant relationship, the context of this study was foreign and limited by scope to pharmaceutical firms. Maina's (2019) study on strategies and performance of NGOs in Kenya lacked empirical evidence and findings on telecommunication firms. Sigane and Gichinga (2018) studied strategic management and performance in telecom companies in Somalia, applying the quantitative research design. Arowo (2023) studied strategic leadership and performance in telecommunication firms in Kenya. The studies considered above present contextual, methodological, and knowledge gaps on this topic necessary in propelling the organization in attaining optimal firm performance in the highly competitive industry. These knowledge gaps have therefore, necessitated the current study to be conducted.

1.3 Objective of the Study

The study aimed to determine the effect of strategic intent on performance of Airtel Kenya Limited in Nairobi City County, Kenya.

2.0 Literature Review

2.1 Theoretical Literature Review

2.1.1 Dynamic Capabilities Theory

Shuen, Pisano, and Teece (1997) are credited for this model which is a strategic management model focusing on an organization meeting new challenges characterizing its operations (Bleady and Ibrahim, 2018). The dynamic capabilities theory according to Gupta, Modgil, Gunasekaran, Bag (2020), was developed on the background of underlying challenges that faced organizations and the need to develop innovative solutions to such problems became a necessity for the survival



and continuity of such firms. The theory of dynamic capabilities, therefore, builds on the precepts that organizations need to adapt and integrate their functional competencies, resources, and organizational skills to align with changing market requirements.

According to Cavusgil, Seggie, and Talay (2007), this theory assesses a firm's implementation of multiple capabilities to respond to the new changes to remain operationally viable. The theory assumes that a firm's underlying key competencies or resources should be nurtured to result into a short-term competitive advantage necessary in building a long-term competitive position for the underlying firm. The model assesses the ability of successful firms to craft new strategies that are game-changers amidst an upsurge of challenges that threaten the going-concern of a firm (Pisano, 2017). Such strategies according to the proponents of the theory, enable respective firms adapt to the radical uncertainties, with optimal capability standards maintained to result in optimal performance.

The theory helped to assess the flexibility of Airtel Kenya Ltd to review its strategies to be responsive to the emerging challenges in the market that threaten its performance or competitiveness. Through adaptation and integration, the dynamic capabilities theory helped explain strategic intent and strategy formulation on performance of an organization (Gupta *et al.*, 2020). Airtel Kenya Limited's usage of resources to achieve short-term competitiveness capable of fostering long-term optimum performance levels made the theory relevant in this study and application for practice among firms facing challenges in their respective niches.

2.1.2 Ansoff Strategic Success Theory

The theory was developed by Ansoff (1984) and further developed by McDonnell and Ansoff (1990) (Kipley & Lewis, 2009). The theory is based on three paradigms that determine an organization's success including turbulence characterizing an organization's operating environment, aggressiveness, and the organization's responsiveness to changes emanating from its environment. Therefore, according to Ansoff, organizational performance is considered optimal when the management responsiveness and aggressiveness match the turbulent environment, measured in terms of the quality of strategies formulated (Loredana, 2016).

The Ansoff strategic success model was motivated by the fact that chances of an organization succeeding today and failing to succeed in the future remain real in contemporary organizations which calls for strategy alignment alongside internal capabilities to face the turbulent environment and overcome its severe impacts (Kipley, Lewis, & Jeng, 2012). According to Ansoff, valid organizational models are those that are informed by turbulences in the environment to ensure solutions are obtained for current and future challenges characterizing organizations.

The Ansoff strategic success model is relevant in contemporary organizations as it enables the determination of changes underlying an organization that need immediate action through strategy and internal capability review to achieve the future success of the underlying firm. The diagnostics of identifying changes necessary and recommending appropriate strategies and internal capabilities draw from the concepts of strategic success hypothesis (Moussetis, 2011). The theory focuses on equipping managers with evidence-based strategies to respond to the ever-changing and turbulent business environment which if not addressed can render an organization obsolete. Therefore, the Ansoff strategic success theory explained strategic management and performance of Airtel Kenya Ltd. The theory's need for environmental scanning and formulation of relevant



strategies to match the turbulent environment perfectly aligned with the strategic intent of Airtel Kenya Ltd need to achieve environmental scanning and adoption of strategies that conform to such turbulences.

By undertaking a needs assessment, the theory assessed Airtel Kenya Limited's ability to formulate relevant strategies that align with prevailing market conditions. The theory also helped the company measure its level of success in implementing formulated strategies to result in optimal performance levels. Such outcomes were evaluated to determine whether the formulated strategies were meeting the defined objectives and recommend for strategy reviews where there is a lack of goal achievement, thus the relevance of the theory. Through its capability tenet, the Ansoff strategic success model helped examine the level of organizational performance that is considered optimal when the three tenets i.e., strategy, environment and capability are considered in the strategic management practices of a firm, herein Airtel Kenya limited.

2.1.3 Resource Based View Theory

RBV was coined by Penrose (1959) and further advanced by renowned scholars including Prahalad, Hamel (1991), Barney (1991), and Wernerfelt (1984) (Taher, 2012). Also known as the resource advantage theory, the theory holds that every firm is characterized by both tangible and intangible resources or assets that play a critical role in such firms attaining an optimum performance level subject to their adequate usage and exploitation. Such resources according to the RBV theory, range from physical assets to human assets that can be used to the advantage of an organization to result into optimal operating standards, hence becoming viable and stable amidst challenging operation conditions (Lockett, Thompson, & Morgenstern, 2009).

This theory majors on the significance of internal resources unique to an organization and the ability of strategic managers and leaders to use them in enhancing their competitiveness and performances. According to Arend and Lévesque, (2010), the background of the RBV theory is that organizations develop key competencies from the resources they hold which distinguishes them from other organizations and use this as an advantage to develop competitive advantage. Organizations with distinct resources ought to strategically deploy them to their advantage and failure to do so, Lockett *et al.* (2009) notes that the inadequate deployment of such resources could significantly hamper the growth, development, and performance of the underlying organization.

Developed on the background of management philosophy, the theory values a firm's resources as great enabler of achieving sustainable performance level as opposed to the firm's positioning in the external operating environment (Taher, 2012). Consequently, instead of just analysing the environmental opportunities and the underlying threats, a firm's optimal performance levels should be built on the firm-specific resources and its capabilities (Arend & Lévesque, 2010). RBV helped to understand strategy implementation and strategy evaluation on performance of Airtel Kenya Limited.

Through the RBV theory, the management of Airtel Kenya Limited was able to identify the key resources ranging from physical assets, financial, to human resources needed to implement strategies to achieve the desired performance levels (Lockett *et al.*, 2009). Additionally, such resources helped the firm to successfully evaluate the adequacy of implemented strategies, to determine if they are meeting the expected deliverables and in case there are inconsistencies, enable timely reviewing of such strategies for the optimal performance of the company. Without



sufficient resources, strategy implementation and strategy evaluation would remain a dream to a firm such as Airtel Kenya.

2.2 Empirical Literature Review

Nyaga and Kinyua (2022) examined empirical literature on competitive advantage as a product of strategic intent. Competitive advantage theory and exploratory design were used where empirical literature was reviewed. The study revealed that strategic intent helps achieve competitive advantage to a firm. This study, however, did not target a specific population for analysis, resulting into the methodological gap that was addressed in the current study by focusing on Airtel Kenya limited. Obonyo (2020) researched on strategic intent and performance of electronic media in Kenya. Open systems theory and exploratory research were used where comprehensive literature review from periodicals, abstracts, international indices, books, and papers presented in conferences were sampled. It was found that strategic intent, which is characterized by direction and intention statements, is a critical component to overcoming constraints such as limited resources to achieve the desired performance levels, thus being a key strategic management practice. This study, however, did not involve collection of first-hand data as was sought in the current research.

Barusman (2018) analysed strategic formulation and competitive advantage of private institutions in Uganda. The study found that in-depth strategic formulation affected competitiveness of private institutions of higher learning. This study however, suffered from the methodological limitation in the aspects of target population and data collection, and analysis was not considered as aimed in the current study. It was also a foreign study where competitive factors may sharply defer from the local scenario as sought in the current research. Manyang (2022) researched on strategy formulation and performance of not-for profit organizations. Stakeholder theory where both explanatory and descriptive methods were used. 98 participants were targeted where a sample of 79 respondents was drawn. Open-ended surveys were deployed for data collection. Strategy formulation influenced of performance of non-profit organizations. This study however, failed to specify the model of data analysis for the findings that was sought to be addressed in the current study by using the SPSS Version 26 software to analyse data.

Chepkwei (2021) examined strategy implementation and hospitality industry performance. Contingency theory and exploratory research design were used that majored in review literature from peer-reviewed publications, academic websites, and papers presented at conferences revealing great relationship between constructs. Conceptually, the study lacked a defined dependent variable as a response to the strategic implementation (independent variable), hence was addressed in the current research through the organizational performance concept. Nuwagaba, Angima, Namateefu, and Mugizi (2023) researched on strategy implementation and performance. Dynamic capabilities theory and cross-sectional design were used. 160 state agencies were targeted, and data collected by questionnaire and analysis achieved through factor approach. The study found that institutionalization factors are critical in strategy implementation to result into optimal performance levels among public entities. This involved public institutions study while the current stud was on a private firm.

Onyegbula, Nwoye, and Daniel (2023) studied strategy implementation and impact on performance. Institutional theory and descriptive design were used. 342 firm staff were targeted



where descriptive and inferential statistics were used. Strategy implementation and performance recorded strong positive outcome. This study was however, done in a regional country with different operating factors, compared to the local's Kenya. Sylvia (2021) researched on strategic evaluation and financial performance of SMEs, Sudan. Using cross-sectional research design, 4,951 SMEs were targeted, and data collected through questionnaire and analysis achieved through SPSS software. Government regulations negatively affected SMEs financial performance. In this study however, there was no definition of the underlying theoretical model to guide its literature review.

Juma, Wanyama and Masibo (2023) studied evaluation and academic performance. The study adopted RBV theory and targeted a population of 258 secondary schools in the region. Document analysis and interviews were used. The study found that strategy evaluation directly enhance performance. Study done on educational institution that is not profit oriented as was in the case of current study's firm, Airtel Kenya that is for-profit. Seje, Ombati, and Maithya (2021) examined strategy control and evaluation on performance improvement. Porter's generic strategy theory of competitive advantage was used. Descriptive survey design was used where 135 public secondary schools formed the target population. One-third (33%) of the target population (45 schools) were sampled and stratified. Most principals did not adopt strategy control and evaluation which negatively affected their performance in management practices. This study however, targeted performance of individuals.

3.0 Methods

Descriptive research design which according to Asenahabi (2019) describes characteristics of study subjects was used. The design was used to enable the description of study phenomena in their original state of nature. This design was therefore, preferred as it helped in determining characteristics of population, necessary in achieving the generalization and conclusion findings as noted by Huntington-Klein (2021). The entire subject of interest having same characteristics and which a research project is focused on is target population (Newhart & Patten, 2023). The target group is made up of all potential study participants whose traits will make it possible to address the central issue and questions (Harris, Holyfield, Jones, Ellis, Neal, & Neal, 2019). 132 non-support permanent staff working at the Marketing, Sales, and Enterprise and Strategic departments of Airtel Kenya Limited, head office, Nairobi were targeted. The respondents in the study were the departmental heads, assistant heads and employees of the Marketing, Sales, and Enterprise and Strategic, and Sales departments. Employees and heads from these units were preferred as they are considered to be more knowledgeable in information concerning strategic management practices and performance of Airtel Kenya Ltd.

Kalton (2020) state a sample is a representative segment of the target population while Turner (2020) asserts that sampling procedure involves sample size determination. Stratified sampling was used where 98 respondents were selected using the Kothari (2004) formula. The respondents were stratified into Marketing, Enterprise and Strategic, and Sales departments using the following Kothari (2004) sampling;

$$n = \frac{z^2 \cdot N \cdot \partial_p^2}{(N - 1)e^2 + z^2 \partial_p^2}$$



$$n = \frac{1.96 * 2(132 * 0.05 * 2)}{(132 - 1)0.05 * 2 + 1.96 * 2(0.5 * 2)} = 98$$

Where, $n = 98$

$N = 132$

$e = 0.05$,

$\hat{\sigma} =$ population standard deviation, 0.5,

$Z = 1.96$

This is a pre-study on a small population to test the adequacy and relevance of data collection tool (Newhart & Patten, 2023). A pilot study was conducted involving randomly selected 10 (10% of 98) non-support staff drawn from Corporate and Strategy departments at Safaricom Public Limited Company Nairobi's head office, Kenya. An equivalent of 10% target population is sufficient to form a pilot study (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003).

Validity concerns research instrument's ability to provide information that correspond to the real world (Coleman, 2022). This study employed the expert rating technique where two professors with relevant knowledge were consulted to assess the content validity of the data collection tool. Coleman (2022) assert that an expert rating resulting into Content Validity Index (CVI) of 0.75 is considered sufficient and thus, validity of the underlying research instrument (Amirrudin, Nasution, & Supahar, 2021). Therefore, the decision-criteria for the current study's research instrument validity was a minimum threshold CVI score of 0.75.

$$CVI = K \div N$$

Where; K represents valid items

N is questionnaire total items

Reliability assesses the consistency of the findings of a study utilizing the research tools (Peeters & Harpe, 2020). Cronbach Alpha threshold of 0.7 was adopted where Amirrudin *et al.* (2021) state that an Alpha of 0.7 or higher is enough for evaluating the dependability of a research instrument. 10 non-support staff from Corporate and Strategy departments at Safaricom PLC Kenya, Nairobi's head office were randomly selected fir reliability test, which was equivalent to 10% of the target population.

This is the actual activity of gathering data from the target population (Harris *et al.*, 2019). Data collection started by obtaining clearance from the Kenyatta University post graduate school and permit from NACOSTI. The questionnaire was self-administered. However, where self-administration of the questionnaires was not permissible due to unavailability or unreachability of the respondents, the questionnaires were left behind for filling and collected after seven days, to allow adequate time for response.

Qualitative data was coded into SPSS using the 5-point Likert and analyzed for relevant statistics. Descriptive statistics like mean and inferential like p-values were used for data analysis. Findings were presented by tabulations and narrations. At 95% confidence level, the following model was used.



4.0 Results

Regression analysis to was performed to examine variables' relationships. Strategic intent, strategy formulation, strategy evaluation, and strategy implementation were regressed against the performance of Airtel Kenya limited.

4.1 Correlation Analysis

To determine the inter-variable (independent versus dependent) correlation, a regression analysis was conducted.

Table 1: Correlation Analysis

Variable	Performance	Strategic Intent
Performance	1	
Strategic Intent	0.424** (0.001)	1

**0.05 level (2-tailed test)

Source: Research Data (2024)

Table 1, strategic intent recorded moderate great positive correlation with performance ($r=0.424$; $p\text{-value}=0.000$). These results conform to those of Mugunda, Kinyua, and Kahuthia (2020) which found that strategic intent is positively correlated with performance of Safaricom Ltd.

4.2 Strategic Intent and Performance

Table 2: Strategic Intent and Performance

Statement of Strategic Intent Practice	Mean	Standard Deviation
Firm conducts need assessment to determine its reason for existence today and in future	3.45	0.774
All key stakeholders are engaged in any needs assessment exercise where suggestions and recommendations are put forward and considered in strategic plans	3.43	0.693
The firm's strategic plan is well-documented, communicated and known to its internal and external stakeholders	3.48	1.066
Employees are inspired and motivated by the firm's strategic direction, which creates in them a sense of belonging	3.85	1.126
Strategic intent has significantly enhanced the firm's innovativeness	3.34	0.804



Aggregate Scores

3.51

0.8926

Respondents remained neutral the firm conducted needs assessment to determine the reason for its continued existence and this indicator varied in opinion between 2.676 and 4.224 (Mean= 3.45; Standard Deviation= 0.774), all leading stakeholders were engaged in the needs assessment and that their suggestions and recommendations were considered in the strategic plans which also varied in opinion between 3.237 and 4.623 (Mean= 3.43; Standard Deviation= 0.693), the organization's strategic plan was well-documented, communicated and known to the internal and external stakeholders with a variation of opinion between 2.414 and 4.546 (Mean= 3.48; Standard Deviation= 1.066). These results are consistent with those of Eze, Akyüz, and Opusunju, (2020) which revealed that stakeholder engagement, needs assessment, and clear communication of strategic plans enhance a firm's performance levels.

Additionally, most respondents remained neutral that employees were inspired and motivated by the firm's strategic direction which resulted in creating a sense of belonging, with a margin variance of opinion between 2.724 and 4.976 (Mean= 3.85; Standard Deviation= 1.126), and that strategic intent had greatly enhanced the firm's innovativeness with a variance of between 2.536 and 4.144 (Mean= 3.34; Standard Deviation= 0.804). On aggregate, participants were neutral that strategic intent enhanced Airtel's performance, which varied in opinion response between 2.6174 and 4.4026 (Mean= 3.51; Standard Deviation= 0.8926). These results support those of Obonyom (2020) which established that strategic intent characterized by direction and intention statements, is a critical component to overcoming constraints such as limited resources to achieve the desired performance levels.

5.0 Conclusions and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusions

Strategic intent enhances organizational performance. As was experienced with Airtel Kenya Limited, strategic intent determines the present and future success level of a firm if conceived in a conducive environment. Therefore, organizational performance is highly influenced by its strategic intent which is coined around the vision and mission statements.

5.2 Recommendations

To the Kenyan telecommunications regulator, (Communications Authority of Kenya), the study recommends for the review of sector policies to align with current market dynamics such as provisions on penalties over network outages. The Communications Authority of Kenya should seek to bring all stakeholders on board and revise the provisions, considering market dynamics and competitions to protect service providers from harsh penalties that could jeopardize their business operations. To the Chief Executives Officer (CEO) of Airtel Kenya Limited, the study recommends for an overhaul in its strategic plan and institute measures to consider evidence-based strategic plans that reflect 21st century market dynamics. The CEO should set the tone for strategic change to birth new strategic ideas that can competitively rival those of sector competitors to acquire the industry leader status.



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