

Journal of Business and Strategic Management

(JBSM) Strategic Leadership Practices and Sustainability of

Non- Government Organizations Beyond Donor Funding in Garissa County,
Kenya



Strategic Leadership Practices and Sustainability of Non- Government Organizations Beyond Donor Funding in Garissa County, Kenya

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Accepted: 26th June 2025 Received in Revised Form: 10th July 2025 Published: 24th July 2025

Abstract

Purpose: The purpose of the study was to determine the effect of strategic leadership on sustainability of non- government organizations beyond donor funding in Garissa County, Kenya.

Methodology: A descriptive survey research design was employed to explore the research objectives. The study targeted 228 top and middle-level management personnel from 98 NGOs registered in Garissa County, with a sample size of 159 participants. A stratified sampling technique combined with a simple random sampling method will be used to select the respondents. Data was collected through structured questionnaires, which was designed to gather relevant information. To ensure the validity and reliability of the instruments, content validity and Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was applied. Data analysis included descriptive statistics, such as means, standard deviations, frequencies, and percentages. Additionally, inferential statistics, including Pearson correlation and multiple regression analysis, were used. The findings are presented in tables and charts to enhance the clarity and accessibility of the results.

Findings: The study concluded that strategic leadership had a significant positive effect on sustainability of non- government organizations beyond donor funding in Garissa County, Kenya.

Unique Contribution to Theory Practice and Policy: The study recommended that organizations should embrace strategic alignments. It also recommended the adoption and reinforcement of strategic agility practices and the adoption of a good strategic direction.

Keywords: *Donor Funding, NGO Management, Strategic Leadership, Sustainability*

INTRODUCTION

Strategic leadership has gained prominence globally as a key driver of organizational sustainability, particularly in navigating complex and rapidly evolving business environments. Scholars such as Cortes and Herrmann (2021) and Kılıç (2022) emphasize its role in fostering innovation, adaptability, and resource optimization. Strategic leaders are seen as pivotal in managing disruption, engaging stakeholders, and promoting ethical leadership across economic, environmental, and social dimensions (Nwachukwu & Vu, 2020). Empirical studies from Thailand (Suriyankietkaew & Kungwanpongpan, 2021), Malaysia (azly Andriani et al., 2024), China (Toseef et al., 2022), and the United States (Edwards Harris, 2023) demonstrate how strategic leadership enhances sustainable competitive advantage through visionary direction, strategic agility, and stakeholder influence. In nonprofit contexts, strategic leadership has also been linked to transparency and financial resilience, as seen in Indonesia (Candra & Sundiman, 2020).

In Sub-Saharan Africa, strategic leadership has similarly been associated with sustainable organizational performance, though research remains limited in the NGO sector. South African studies highlight strategic leadership roles in managing complexity, shaping organizational culture, and developing human capital (Takawira & Mutambara, 2023). In Nigeria, strategic planning has been shown to enhance SME profitability, especially in volatile environments (Kowo & Akinbola, 2019). These regional insights affirm the relevance of strategic leadership in fostering long-term viability and competitive advantage across diverse sectors. However, despite growing evidence, the application of strategic leadership within African NGOs particularly in contexts marked by donor dependency and operational opacity remains underexplored.

In Kenya, strategic leadership has been recognized as a vital contributor to organizational sustainability across sectors. Studies by Kimani (2022) and Kising'u (2017) underscore its importance in managing dynamic environments, fostering innovation, and achieving competitive advantage in both public and private institutions. Oluoch, K'Aol, and Kosha (2021) further demonstrate its role in enhancing financial sustainability within Kenyan NGOs. While these findings affirm the transformative potential of strategic leadership, there is a notable research gap concerning its influence on NGO sustainability beyond donor funding especially in marginalized regions like Garissa County. This study seeks to address that gap by contextualizing global and regional strategic leadership insights within Kenya's NGO landscape, offering a focused examination of how leadership practices can drive long-term resilience and performance in resource-constrained settings.

Problem Statement

NGOs in Kenya are expected to complement government efforts by delivering essential services in education, health, disaster relief, and community development. Ideally, these organizations should operate with sustainable systems that enable them to function effectively beyond donor funding. This would require strategic leadership to build internal capacities, diversify funding sources, retain talent, and align organizational vision with long-term impact. Effective strategic leadership ensures focus, adaptability, and resource stewardship even in uncertain environments.

However, data shows that the long-term sustainability of NGOs especially in Garissa County, is threatened by overreliance on donor funding. Despite 98 NGOs being registered in the county, many projects stall or collapse when donors exit, leaving communities without critical services. USAID (2017) highlights rampant project closures in ASAL regions like Garissa, while UKAID (2022) found that 65% of donor-funded projects in the county were rated unsatisfactory post-donor withdrawal due to poor strategic planning and weak leadership structures. Supuko (2018) similarly reported that 58% of donor-funded projects in Kenya fail on time, budget, scope, and client satisfaction after funding ends.

This situation disproportionately affects marginalized and vulnerable populations in Garissa's arid and semi-arid areas, where NGOs serve as lifelines. Although strategic leadership has been shown to enhance sustainability in universities and other sectors (Kising'u, 2017; Oluoch et al., 2021; Kimani, 2022), its role in NGOs within Garissa County remains underexplored. The region faces unique challenges such as geographical isolation, donor dependency, and fragile institutional structures, yet the literature has not sufficiently examined how strategic leadership constructs such as strategic direction, human resource management, organizational agility, and alignment influence sustainability. This study therefore aims to fill that gap by investigating the influence of strategic leadership on the sustainability of NGOs in Garissa County beyond donor funding, offering empirical insights to inform policy and capacity-building.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Framework

The study is anchored on three foundational theories: Contingency Theory of Leadership, Dynamic Capability Theory, and Goal-Setting Theory. Developed by Fred Fiedler in 1964, the Contingency Theory posits that effective leadership depends on the fit between a leader's style and the situational context. It suggests that no single leadership approach is universally effective; rather,

success hinges on aligning leadership style with organizational conditions such as task structure and environmental complexity. This theory informs the study by emphasizing strategic alignment, where leadership must adapt to Garissa County's donor-dependent and volatile NGO environment to ensure sustainability. Dynamic Capability Theory, introduced by Teece, Pisano, and Shuen in 1997, highlights an organization's ability to sense, seize, and transform resources in response to changing conditions. It underscores the importance of strategic agility, enabling NGOs to pivot, innovate, and remain resilient amid funding fluctuations and socio-economic challenges. Goal-Setting Theory, developed by Edwin Locke in 1960, asserts that specific, challenging goals enhance performance by directing effort and fostering motivation. It supports the strategic direction construct in the study, showing how clear vision, mission, and objectives can guide NGOs toward long-term impact beyond donor cycles.

Individually, each theory contributes a distinct lens: Contingency Theory explains the need for adaptive leadership styles in Garissa's unique NGO landscape; Dynamic Capability Theory provides a framework for agility and innovation in resource-scarce settings; and Goal-Setting Theory highlights the role of purposeful direction in sustaining operations. When combined, these theories form a robust framework that integrates situational responsiveness, adaptive capacity, and goal-oriented strategy. This synthesis allows the study to examine how strategic leadership through alignment, agility, direction, and HRM can collectively influence the sustainability of NGOs beyond donor funding. The theoretical blend not only grounds the conceptual model but also guides the empirical investigation into leadership practices that foster resilience and continuity in Garissa's NGO sector.

Conceptual Framework

The study examined the effect of strategic leadership on sustainability of non- government organizations beyond donor funding in Garissa County, Kenya. The independent variables were (strategic alignment, strategic agility, strategic direction and strategic human resource management) and the dependent variable sustainability of NGOs. Below is a diagrammatical presentation of the relationship between strategic leadership (strategic alignment, strategic agility, strategic direction and strategic HRM) and sustainability of NGOs beyond donor funding in Garissa County.

Independent Variables

Dependent Variable

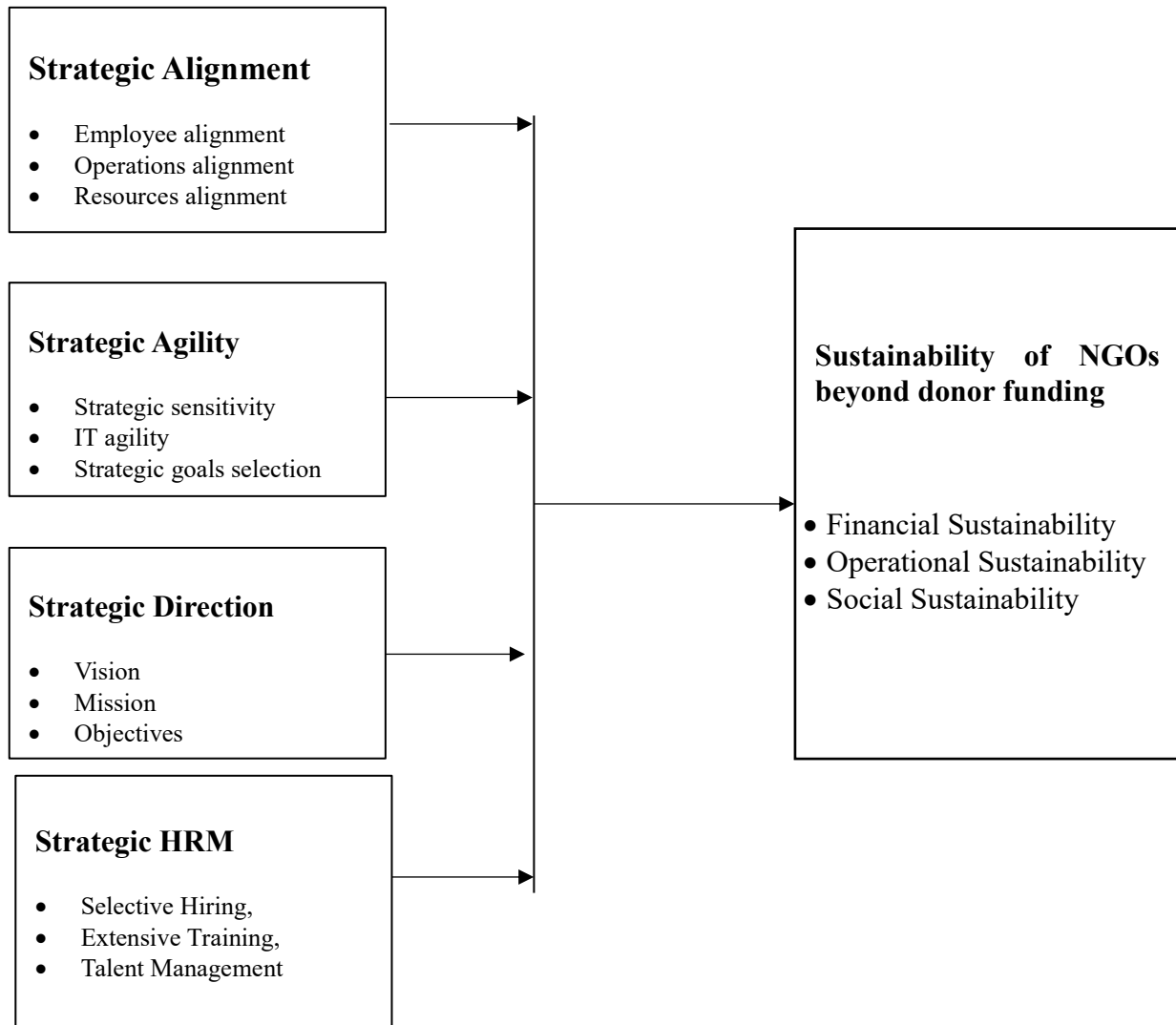


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Empirical Review

Kimbrough and Miller (2022) examined the impact of strategic alignment on competitive advantage among 100 technology firms in the United States using a quantitative approach. Their

findings revealed that firms aligning corporate strategies with market demands and technological capabilities gained significant competitive advantages and sustained long-term performance. However, the study focused exclusively on technology firms in developed economies, leaving a gap in understanding how strategic alignment influences sustainability in non-profit, donor-dependent organizations operating in resource-constrained environments such as Garissa County, Kenya. Teece (2023), through case studies, emphasized the role of dynamic capabilities in fostering strategic agility and organizational sustainability. Organizations that continuously developed and applied these capabilities were found to be more resilient and adaptable to environmental changes. Yet, the study did not address how such capabilities manifest in NGOs, particularly those facing donor withdrawal and institutional fragility—an area that warrants further exploration in the Kenyan context.

Focused Momentum (2024) explored strategic direction as a guiding framework for organizational success, highlighting its role in aligning efforts toward common goals and enhancing adaptability. While the study underscored the importance of strategic direction in sustaining performance, it lacked methodological clarity and did not examine its application in NGOs, especially in marginalized regions. Peng et al. (2024) investigated the influence of strategic human resource management (SHRM) on green innovation and environmental performance in the Asia-Pacific region, finding that SHRM practices enhance employee self-efficacy and innovation. Although insightful, the study focused on environmental outcomes and corporate settings, leaving a gap in understanding how SHRM contributes to financial and operational sustainability in NGOs. These gaps collectively justify the current study, which seeks to investigate how strategic alignment, agility, direction, and SHRM influence the sustainability of NGOs in Garissa County beyond donor funding. This is an addition that offers empirical insight into leadership practices within a uniquely vulnerable and under-researched sector.

METHODOLOGY

This study used a descriptive survey research design. This study considered all 98 NGOs as the unit of analysis. Slovin's formula (2018), originally derived from Yamane (1967), was applied to determine the sample size of 78 NGOs. Structured questionnaires were used to obtain primary data. The questionnaire items were based on a five-point Likert scale. the researcher obtained an approval to carry out the study from the National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI). The questionnaires were administered to selected respondents and the collected data was edited carefully for purposes of coding into SPSS program for analysis. During the pilot phase, questionnaires were delivered to 10 employees in NGO in neighboring county. The

questionnaire underwent face validity by being reviewed by supervisors and experts, with necessary adjustments made. Content validity was used in this study to ensure that the statements comprehensively measure what they are intended to measure. Content validity was tested using content validity index. To ensure the reliability of the data gathered and the subsequent findings, Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was used. A Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.7 or above was considered acceptable. The research evaluated and displayed data in the form of tables, means, and charts using descriptive statistics. Deeper analysis involving correlation analysis and multiple regression analysis were used to determine the nature of the relationship between variables at a generally accepted conventional significant level of $P=0.05$. Multiple regression analysis was applied to analyze the relationship between a single dependent variable and each of the independent variables respectively. The regression model which was used to investigate effect of strategic leadership on Sustainability of NGOs beyond donor funding in In Garissa County in the study is shown below:

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

RESULTS

Response Rate

This researcher circulated seventy-eight (78) questionnaires to respondents and seventy-four (74) questionnaires were duly filled and collected representing a return rate of 94.87%. According to Connor *et al.*, (2023), a return rate of 50% is deemed to be average, a return rate of 60% to 70% is deemed as adequate, and a rate of 70% or higher is deemed excellent. Therefore, the 94.87% return rate for this study was judged appropriate.

Descriptive Statistics

A descriptive analysis of the variables was carried out on all variables.

Strategic Alignment and Sustainability of NGOs

Feedback on statements regarding strategic alignment and its influence on sustainability of NGOs beyond donor funding was solicited from respondents, and the results are displayed in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Strategic Alignment

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
The NGOs' mission and vision are clearly communicated to all employees	74	3.84	.724
Employees' personal values align with the NGO's values and goals.	74	4.12	.680
The daily operations of the NGO are closely linked with its strategic objectives	74	3.96	.752
The NGO's operational activities are coordinated and streamlined to achieve its strategic goals	74	3.89	.813
The NGO allocates resources effectively to support its strategic initiatives.	74	3.97	.684
There is a clear alignment between the NGO's resource distribution and its strategic priorities	74	3.44	.831
Valid N (listwise)	74		

Results in Table 1 indicated that all items recorded standard deviation values less than two (<2) showing that the views by respondents were converging. The strongest convergence in opinion was on the statement that employees' personal values align with the NGO's values and goals ($M=4.12$, $SD=.680$). The results agreed with Subramaniam *et al.*, (2022) who examined strategic management practices in the construction sector and found that alignment had a positive link with organizational performance.

Strategic Agility

The results of the respondents' views on the item of strategic alignment and its influence on sustainability of NGOs beyond donor funding are displayed;

Table 2: Strategic Agility

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
The NGO consistently monitors changes in the external environment to inform strategic decisions	74	4.05	.739
The leadership team quickly identifies emerging trends and adjusts strategies accordingly	74	4.00	.716
The NGO effectively adapts its technological infrastructure to meet evolving needs.	74	3.97	.792
The organization's IT systems support rapid decision-making and strategic flexibility.	74	3.93	.784
The NGO carefully selects strategic goals that align with its mission and vision.	74	3.89	.835
The process of setting strategic goals is transparent and involves key stakeholders.	74	3.67	.975
Valid N (listwise)	74		

The findings presented in Table 2 demonstrated that all items had mean scores that were consistent with the study questions, and that standard deviation values were less than two (<2). This suggested that there was a convergence of opinions, with the item concerning the NGOs consistently monitors changes in the external environment to inform strategic decisions ($M=4.05$, $SD=.739$). The results agreed with Ben-Sasson *et al.*, (2022) who concluded that a firm's strategic agility influences its performance.

Strategic HRM

The statements pertaining to project data collection were completed by respondents, and the results are shown in Table 3;

Table 3: Strategic HRM

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
The organization carefully selects employees who align with its strategic goals and values	74	3.94	.768
The hiring process ensures that only the most qualified candidates are chosen for roles that support the NGO's mission.	74	3.89	.713
The NGO provides comprehensive training programs to ensure employees possess the skills needed to achieve strategic objectives.	74	3.61	.982
Employees regularly undergo training that enhances their ability to contribute to the organization's long-term goals.	74	3.94	.768
The organization has effective talent management practices that identify and develop high-potential employees	74	3.68	.955
Employee performance is regularly reviewed, and opportunities for career growth align with the NGO's strategic direction	74	3.99	.758
Valid N (listwise)	74		

Results in Table 3 indicated that all statements under strategic agility returned moderately high mean scores and low standard deviation values below two (<2) indicating that there was convergence in opinion by respondents, and the sentiments converged more on the statement about Employee performance is regularly reviewed, and opportunities for career growth align with the NGO's strategic direction ($M=3.99$, $SD=.758$). The results agreed with Taherdoost (2021).

Strategic Direction

Questionnaire statements on monitoring reporting elicited sentiments from respondents and results are shown in Table 4;

Table 4: Strategic Direction

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
The NGO's vision clearly defines its long-term goals and aspirations	74	4.00	.716
Employees understand and are motivated by the NGO's vision for the future.	74	4.04	.728
The NGO's mission statement is clear and provides guidance for decision-making	74	3.96	.740
The NGO's mission is consistently reflected in its day-to-day activities and strategic decisions	74	4.04	.752
The organization sets specific, measurable objectives that align with its overall strategy.	74	3.89	.761
The strategic objectives of the NGO are regularly reviewed and updated to ensure alignment with the mission and vision.	74	3.77	.842
Valid N (listwise)	74		

The results in Table 4 indicated that the mean scores were substantially high with standard deviation values being less than two (< 2), pointing to the fact that there was general convergence of opinions towards the mean. The statement that employees understand and are motivated by the NGO's vision for the future ($M=4.04$, $SD=.728$) and that the NGO's mission was consistently reflected in its day-to-day activities and strategic decisions received the highest means ($M=4.04$, $SD=.752$) respectively. The results concur with Kuske *et al.*, (2022).

Sustainability of NGOs Beyond Donor Funding

The opinions of the respondents regarding the statements pertaining to completion of residential housing projects are displayed in Table 5;

Table 5: Completion of Residential Housing Projects

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
The organization consistently generates surplus revenue that exceeds its expenses	74	3.68	.907
The NGO effectively manages its finances to ensure a positive financial outcome each year.	74	3.77	.852
The NGO has successfully maintained its projects even after donor funding has ended	74	3.71	.838
The organization develops strategies to ensure the continuation of projects without reliance on donor funding.	74	4.07	.725
The NGO has a sustainable model in place to continue providing services even after donor funding is no longer available.	74	3.96	.824
The organization has developed alternative revenue sources to sustain its services after donor exit.	74	3.95	.751
The NGO has been able to meet all of its financial obligations even after donor funding has ended.	74	3.65	.902
Valid N (listwise)	74		

Results in Table 5 show that standard deviation values for all the items under completion of residential housing projects were less than two (<2) signifying the convergence in opinion by respondents and most concurrence in opinion was around the statement that the organization develops strategies to ensure the continuation of projects without reliance on donor funding ($M = 4.07$, $SD = .725$). The results agreed with Muthini and Nyang'au (2022) who reviewed performance of housing projects in Makueni County, Kenya, and found that there was a moderate and significant relationship between strategic management practices and project completion.

Correlation Analysis Results

The Pearson Product-Moment Correlation was used to conduct correlation analysis in order to ascertain the degree of relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable. The correlation coefficient is a number between -1.0 and +1.0; and the closer the coefficient is to -1 or +1, the more closely the two variables are related (Baak *et al.*, 2020).

Table 6: Correlation Analysis

		Y	X ₁	X ₂	X ₃	X ₄
Y	Pearson Correlation	1				
	Sig. (2-tailed)					
	N	114				
X ₁	Pearson Correlation	.689**	1			
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000				
	N	114	114			
X ₂	Pearson Correlation	.612*	.132	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.067			
	N	114	114	114		
X ₃	Pearson Correlation	.745**	.214*	.182	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.022	.052		
	N	114	114	114	114	
X ₄	Pearson Correlation	.466	.092	-.032	.066	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.329	.738	.487	
	N	114	114	114	114	114

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

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

Key: Y = Sustainability of NGOs beyond donor funding; X₁ = Strategic Alignment; X₂ = Strategic Agility; X₃ = Strategic HRM; X₄ = Strategic Direction

The correlation results presented in Table 6 indicated that there was a positive and significant linear relationship between the dependent variable and the independent variables namely strategic alignment $r = 0.689$, $p\text{-value} = .000$; strategic agility $r = 0.612$, $p\text{-value} = .000$; strategic HRM $r = .745$, $p\text{-value} = .000$ and strategic direction $r = .466$, $p\text{-value} = .000$.

Regression Analysis

This study sought to determine the influence of strategic leadership practices and sustainability of NGOs beyond donor funding.

Table 7: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.822 ^a	.675	.645	.41957

a. Predictors: (Constant), strategic alignment, strategic agility, strategic human resource management and strategic direction

From Table 7, the correlation coefficient denoted as R value was .822 demonstrating that the relationship between the independent variables' strategic alignment, strategic agility, strategic human resource management and strategic direction on sustainability of NGOs beyond donor funding in Garissa County, Kenya was positive and significant. This was supported by R Square value of .675, which indicated that the joint independent variables under strategic leadership practices accounted for 67.5% of the variation in sustainability of NGOs beyond donor funding. The adjusted R square value of .645 was determined that after controlling for the variables in the model, denoting that the joint variables accounted for 64.5% of the variation in sustainability of NGOs beyond donor funding, while other factors not included in the model explained 35.59% of the variation in in Garissa County, Kenya. The standard error of .41957 indicated the deviation from the line of best fit.

Table 8: ANOVA

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	15.752	4	3.938	57.072	.000 ^b
	Residual	7.585	109	.069		
	Total	23.337	113			

a. Dependent Variable: Sustainability of NGOs beyond donor funding

b. Predictors: (Constant),

strategic alignment, strategic agility, strategic human resource management and strategic direction

Table 8 shows analysis of variance results and indicates that the model was significant since the p-value = 0.000 (< 0.05) thus indicating that the model was statistically significant in establishing the influence of strategic leadership practices on sustainability of NGOs beyond donor funding. The regression model of independent variables and the dependent variable was significant ($F(4, 109) = 57.072$, p-value = .000). The F-calculated value of 57.072 was greater than the F-critical ($F(4, 109) = 2.454$), hence signifying that the joint independent variables were operative predictors in the model and in so doing, inferring that the regression model perfectly fitted the data.

Table 9: Coefficients

		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	
Model		B	Std. Error	Beta	t
1	(Constant)	2.388	.627		3.808
	Strategic alignment	.318	.101	.300	3.148
	Strategic agility	.201	.078	.196	2.576
	Strategic HRM	.457	.123	.396	3.715
	Strategic Direction	.053	.020	.063	2.650

a. Dependent Variable: Sustainability of NGOs Beyond Donor Funding

Table 9 presents results on beta coefficients of the independent variables premised on strategic leadership practices and their influence on sustainability of NGOs beyond donor funding. The regression model equation is;

$$Y = 2.388 + .318X_1 + .201X_2 + .457X_3 + .053X_4$$

The correlation analysis revealed that all four strategic leadership constructs (strategic human resource management, strategic alignment, strategic agility, and strategic direction) had a statistically significant positive relationship with the sustainability of NGOs beyond donor funding, with p-values below 0.05. Strategic human resource management showed the strongest correlation ($r = .745$), followed by strategic alignment ($r = .689$), strategic agility ($r = .612$), and strategic direction ($r = .466$). These results affirm that strategic leadership practices are positively associated with NGO sustainability, highlighting the importance of internal leadership mechanisms in enhancing resilience and continuity in donor-dependent contexts.

Further analysis using a multiple regression model indicated that the combined influence of the independent variables accounted for 67.5% of the variation in NGO sustainability, with an adjusted R^2 of 0.645. The overall model was statistically significant ($p = 0.000$), with an F-calculated value of 57.072 exceeding the F-critical value of 2.454, confirming the predictive strength of the model. The regression coefficients showed that each strategic leadership variable had a significant impact, with strategic agility ($\beta = .457$) exerting the highest influence, followed by strategic human resource management ($\beta = .318$), strategic alignment ($\beta = .201$), and strategic direction ($\beta = .053$). These findings underscore the critical role of strategic leadership in shaping sustainable outcomes for NGOs in Garissa County, especially in navigating the challenges of donor withdrawal.

Table 10: Tests of Hypotheses

Hypothesis	β	t	p-value	Decision
Strategic alignment has no significant influence on sustainability of NGOs Beyond Donor funding in Garissa County, Kenya	.318	3.148	.002	H ₀₁ rejected since p-value < .05; H ₀₁ : $\beta_1 \neq 0$
Strategic Agility has no significant influence on sustainability of NGOs Beyond Donor funding in Garissa County, Kenya	.201	2.576	.011	H ₀₂ rejected since p-value < .05; H ₀₂ : $\beta_2 \neq 0$
Strategic HRM has no significant influence on sustainability of NGOs Beyond Donor funding in Garissa County, Kenya	.457	3.715	.000	H ₀₃ rejected since p-value < .05; H ₀₃ : $\beta_3 \neq 0$
Strategic direction has no significant influence on sustainability of NGOs Beyond Donor funding in Garissa County, Kenya	.053	2.650	.009	H ₀₄ rejected since p-value < .05; H ₀₄ : $\beta_4 \neq 0$

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

The study revealed that strategic alignment significantly influences the sustainability of NGOs beyond donor funding. Clear communication of mission and vision to employees, along with coordinated and streamlined operational activities, were key indicators of this alignment. Descriptive statistics showed strong convergence of respondent views, with standard deviation values below two. Strategic alignment emerged as the second strongest factor in the correlation analysis, reinforcing its role in guiding NGOs toward their strategic goals. Hypothesis testing confirmed its significant contribution to sustainability, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis.

Strategic agility, strategic human resource management (SHRM), and strategic direction also demonstrated positive and significant impacts on NGO sustainability. Strategic agility ranked third in correlation strength and was supported by consistent mean scores and low standard deviations, indicating agreement among respondents. SHRM showed the highest correlation with sustainability, emphasizing its critical role in enhancing organizational resilience and capacity. Strategic direction, while ranking fourth, still exhibited high mean scores and strong convergence, affirming its relevance in shaping long-term goals. All three constructs were validated through hypothesis testing, with each showing a significant contribution to sustainability and leading to the rejection of their respective null hypotheses.

Conclusions

The study concluded that strategic alignment, strategic agility, and strategic human resource management (SHRM) each positively and significantly influence the sustainability of NGOs beyond donor funding in Garissa County, Kenya. Strategic alignment requires organizations to address both internal and external obstacles during planning, as failure often stems from neglecting internal challenges. Strategic agility enables NGOs to anticipate and respond to shifts in market conditions, technology, and stakeholder needs by continuously scanning the environment and adjusting strategies. SHRM emerged as a critical factor, though its implementation poses challenges for HR departments and line managers due to evolving responsibilities and procedures. Nonetheless, SHRM compels organizations to assess the value of human capital, evaluate employee competencies, and align talent with strategic goals. These steps essential for building resilient and sustainable operations.

Recommendations

The study recommended that organizations adopt and reinforce four key strategic leadership practices to enhance sustainability beyond donor funding. Strategic alignment ensures that teams work cohesively toward shared goals, improving product development, marketing, resource allocation, and organizational best practices. Strategic agility enables firms to anticipate market shifts, seize emerging opportunities, and foster a culture of experimentation and responsive decision-making. Strategic human resource management (SHRM) strengthens HR processes by making them data-driven and predictable, allowing employees and managers to contribute effectively and confidently to organizational systems. Lastly, a well-defined strategic direction enhances organizational focus, operational efficiency, and investor appeal by aligning individual tasks with broader institutional goals.

Suggestions for Further Study

This study focused on strategic leadership practices and their influence on sustainability of NGOs beyond donor funding in Garissa County, Kenya. Strategic leadership approach embraces positive accountability by incorporating active listening, interpersonal feedback, emotional intelligence-building, and leadership training. These can be taken up by future researchers as they did not form part of the study variables.

The study was also carried out in just one county with the understanding that the findings could be generalized to other similar environments. An understanding of the limits to generalizability is important in cases where cultural, geographical, or political differences exist. This is not only an important consideration for practitioners in search of successful interventions, but also academics trying to understand and contribute to knowledge in a variety of fields. The study could, therefore, be extended beyond the single organization or entity to expand its scope and results.

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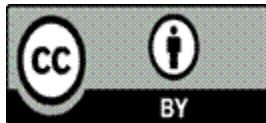
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