POSITIONING STRATEGIES ADOPTED BY THE INTERNATIONAL PLANNED PARENTHOOD FEDERATION AFRICA REGIONAL OFFICE IN NAIROBI
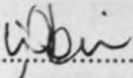
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A RESEARCH PROJECT SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT FOR THE AWARD OF THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF BUSINESS ADMINSTRATION, SCHOOL OF BUSINESS. UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI

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DECLARATION

This research project is my original work and has not been submitted for a degree in any other University or institution.

Signed...⟨signature⟩..................... Date...8th NOVEMBER 2012.

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This research project has been submitted for examination with my approval as the University Supervisor

Signed...⟨signature⟩..................... Date.........9. 11. 2012

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DEDICATION

This proposal is dedicated to my husband and best friend, Gitau, for his encouragement, wisdom and for being very supportive throughout the study period. I also appreciate my siblings (Nick, Njoroge, and Carol) and my dearest parents (John and Gladwell Wachira) for cultivating intellectual virtues in me and for always being supportive. Most importantly I thank God for giving me the strength and Grace to press forward when it was difficult.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

CYP   – Couple Years of Protection

FP   – Family Planning

FPRH   – Family planning and Reproductive health

HIV   – Human Immunodeficiency -Deficiency

IPPF   – International Planned Parenthood Federation

IPPFARO   – International Planned Parenthood Federation Africa Regional office

NGO   – Non-Governmental Organization

SRH   – Sexual and Reproductive Health

SRHR   – Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights

UN   – United Nations

UNFPA   – United Nations Population Fund

USA   – United States of America

WHO   – World Health Organization

ABSTRACT

This study was conducted with the main objective of establishing the positioning strategies used by IPPFAR in Nairobi. The study considered the whole organization but only interviewed the senior management team as they are the ones that influence the organizations direction and strategy. Primary data was collected through in-depth interviews with the directors of the organization and received 97% response rate. The data was analysed using content analysis. The study revealed that although the organization did not have a policy on positioning, it has positioning strategies in place that are well articulated in the various strategy documents such as the strategic plan and in the donor commitments and call to actions the organization commits to. Several positioning strategies were identified such as pricing and quality, attribute/benefit strategy, competitive strategy, differentiation, product user and strengthening current position strategy. It was established that the organization does not deliberately set this strategies for completion but rather for a reactive and proactive response to the needs in the field of SRH and to meet their goals and objectives as an organization with a mandate. As the organization strives to position it undergoes several challenges caused by various factors. The structure of the organization is one of the major constraints when it comes to positioning as it takes a heterogeneous rather than homogenous approach. Adopting a common position is difficult as in often times it is driven by available funding and the donor priorities. Another key constraint for the organization is the need for huge resources to achieve an effective position for the organization. Positioning requires a certain level of investment in order to effectively compete and be distinctive compared to its competitors. The research recommended that the organization explores how best they can still reach their target population while exploring a good cost recovery

strategy; a research will be useful in informing the role of effective and competitive position and in assessing the benefits of such positioning. Another key recommendation from the study is the need for the organization to reposition the secretariat in a way that influences national governments, the policy organizations and the donor community while their affiliate associations focus on programming and service delivery. In a nutshell, it is critical that the organization puts together a positioning policy that guides how the organization is positioned. Further studies were suggested in the area of assessing the link between the positioning strategies being used and its relationship with performance. It was also suggested that a study be carried out to assess how the organization positions itself compared to other similar organizations.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study

According to Kotler (2003), organizations today work in a dynamic and competitive environment which requires them to devise mechanisms that makes them unique. With the market flooded with similar products and services companies must pursue relevant positioning and differentiation. They constantly need to get new value adding components or benefits in their services or products to excel. A firm has competitive advantage when it is able to create more economic value than its rivals (Barney, 2007)

Not-for-profit organizations working in sexual and reproductive health make a huge contribution in providing Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) services and in advocating for an enabling environment for the provision of these services. These organizations draw their funding from a wide range of donors to implement their programmes. Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights organizations work in a very dynamic environment that requires well informed strategies that address changes in the external and internal environment. This makes it necessary for them to re-evaluate their focus to enhance their positioning. In the last two decades, a shift of focus from family planning to HIV programmes was witnessed.

An increase in the number of NGOs registered has been observed in the recent years, especially those working in the area of HIV. The high numbers of NGOs can be associated by the high HIV prevalence rate and the need to mitigate the effects of the pandemic. This has as a result created a lot of competition for the available resources.

The number of programmes implemented by this organizations are largely influenced by the level of funding available and factors that influence funding include: international priorities, change in donor political administrations, in-country political dynamics and governance, and shift in funding mechanisms into performance based funding. These factors have largely been attributed to the way organizations position themselves. (UNFPA, 2003: IPPF, 2010: Dalen, Hendrik and Mieke, 2005).

Ansoff (1990) views the manager's role to have become more difficult as they have work on their firm's profitability and competitiveness. He urges firms to match their strategy and supporting capability with the environment. Companies are making deliberate efforts to continually appraise the environment they work in and put in place well informed strategies that position them strategically in the market place.

1.1.1 Positioning Strategies

Kotler and Keller (2006) define positioning as the act of designing the company's offerings in the minds of its target market. It can also be viewed as the approach an organization takes to meet the challenges in the market. The manner in which an organization positions itself in the market highly determines the ultimate achievement of its goals. According to Shimp (2010), positioning represents the key features, benefits and image of a brand in the collective mind of a target population.

Porter (2001) explains strategic positioning using the using the six principles that give companies a distinctive strategic position in the market place; he notes that standing for something by building unique brands that have a strong reputation, focusing on

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profitability, offering consumers exclusive benefits, establishing a unique value chain by doing things differently and establishing a sustainable competitive advantage, specializing on services or products that the company is good at and ensuring that everything the company does reinforces the company's strategy. In addition to strategic positioning, a company should develop a positioning statement which encompasses the products membership in a category, shows the points of parity and points of differences from other members in the group (Tybout and Sternthal, 2001: Calder and Reagan, 2001).

Positioning strategies can be conceived and developed in a variety of ways. A comprehensive market research must be conduct to understand consumer preference of products and their views of competing products. Other factors include; product attributes competition, application, the types of consumers involved, or the characteristics of the product class. Perceptual maps can be used to locate the brand or organization relative to the alternatives on dimensions reflecting the attributes (Etzel, Walker, Stanton, 2007). Amstrong and Kotler (2006) argue that strategies used by organization vary from one organization to the other. Companies must understand what their customer needs are and be able to deliver on this needs better than their competition in order to build and maximize on profitable relationships.

A good positioning strategy should motivate its target market into action and should substantially reflect on the organization's distinctive or superiority features or attributes vis-à-vis that of the competitors (Shimp, 2010). As competition intensifies in the service sector, it is becoming ever more important for service organizations to differentiate their products in ways that are meaningful to customers (Lovelock & Wirtz, 2007).

1.1.2 NGOs in Reproductive Health at Africa Regional level

Initial investigations of the evolution of NGOs show that the term NGO was first identified in 1942 in documents exchanged in Europe and the United States of America (USA). These documents elaborated on the distinction between governmental and nongovernmental organizations in US publications. During this period the United Nations (UN) was the first organisation to officially use the NGO terminology with the objective of peace keeping and promoting good relationships between nations. Insurgence of NGOs in Africa can mainly be traced within the end of the 20th Century especially towards the end of the colonial era, the downfall of apartheid and other human catastrophe like the genocide in Rwanda. There exist wide variations in NGOs that work in different areas such as relief, rehabilitation and in development programs and operate in international, regional and national focus and continue to growing creating a distinctive niche within the civil society (Lewis and Kanji, 2009: Judge, 1994)

Some NGOs work in the reproductive health sector at international, regional and national levels working in the legal context of the countries where they are placed. In its framework the World Health Organization (WHO) defines health to be a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being, and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity, reproductive health addresses the reproductive processes, functions and system at all stages of life. It then defines reproductive health to imply that people are able to have a responsible, satisfying and safe sex life and that they have the capability to reproduce and the freedom to decide if, when and how often to do so. (Hendrik and Mieke, 2005).

NGOs in Africa work in a multifaceted and huge region dealing with a range of issues in sexual and reproductive health. These organizations often take a three tier approach focusing on policy, programmes, and service delivery. Depending on their thrust, they offer a range of reproductive health services which include; Family Planning, safe motherhood, HIV related services, maternity, antenatal, post natal, fertility, paediatric and gynaecologic services. Implementation of reproductive health services differ from one organization to the other.

Family planning and Reproductive health (FPRH) in Africa currently receives $840 million a year. This funding does not cover the $1.4 billion cost required for the delivery of core FPRH services. In order to bridge the gap a 70 percent increase, amounting to an additional $595 million per year would be required. The four main donors of FPRH are United Nations Population Fund UNFPA, United States government, the United Kingdom and the European commission. The increase in funding to close the gap would imply a 2.5 % increase in the overall official development assistance to Africa. Some of the key challenges that cause variances in funding include change in international priorities, change in donor administrations, and variance in in-country dynamics and governance (UNFPA, 2003b).

1.1.3 International Planned Parenthood Federation

International Planned Parenthood Federation Africa Region (IPPFAR) was founded in 1971 in Tema, Ghana, by representatives from eight countries; Ghana, Liberia, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, and Mauritius. The Africa Regional office is in Nairobi and is part of the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF) which has

five other regions in Tunis, New Delhi, Malaysia, Brussels and New York. Through the Regional Office membership in the global Federation (IPPF), the organization adheres to international policies and standards that give it credibility, while the regional character allows the organization to form partnerships with international, regional and sub-regional institutions to tackle the continent's growing reproductive health challenges (IPPF, 2010)

IPPFAR is one of Africa's leading NGO working in sexual and reproductive health and rights. The IPPF Africa Region is a made up of a network of 42 countries in sub-Sahara Africa. In each of these countries IPPFAR has an affiliate organization know as a Member Association; these Member Associations have full member status, associate or observer status in the federation. The organization provides a wide range of SRH services and information to men and women from diverse social and economic backgrounds through our network of Member Associations in 42 countries in sub-Sahara Africa.

IPPFAR programming is guided by a five year strategic plan which is drawn from the Federation's fifteen year strategic framework. IPPFARO is currently implementing a five year strategic plan running from 2011 to 2015. Its programmes are aligned along five strategic areas of Advocacy, HIV, Abortion and safe motherhood, Access to services and Family planning and Adolescents and Young people. The main focus of the Regional office is to build the capacity of Member Associations into strong, efficient entities with the capacity to deliver and sustain high quality; youth focused, and gender sensitive services. The organization has over 2,900 static clinics with 11,300 service delivery points in Africa which are responsible for delivering over 26 million sexual and

reproductive health services. The organizations is achieves an estimated 1,400,000 couple years of protection (CYP) and averts over 800,000 pregnancies every year with a resource base of over US $ 34,000,000 of both unrestricted and restricted funding (IPPF, 2011)

1.2 Research Problem

Organizations today operate in fairly competitive environment which makes it necessary for them to put in place strategies that enhance their competitiveness. Companies that invest in well informed positioning strategies are in a better position to compete for the scare resources available and are better placed to deliver high results. According to Porter (1996) companies that focus on positioning strategy stand a high chance of achieving long-term growth as opposed to those that opt for operational efficiency.

Barney (2007) notes that organizations have adopted different strategies to cope with the changing environment such as forming strategic alliances, engaging in mergers and acquisitions, adopting international strategies while others engage in vertical integration or corporate diversification. Kotler and Amstrong (2006) support the argument by adding that successful companies know their customers' needs and are able to deliver on them better than their competitors. Organizations must actively engage in the best possible positioning strategies compared to those of their competitors in the market to be able to compete effectively and gain competitive advantage (Zellner, 2003: Wiley, 1995: Czepiel, 1992). Johnson, Scholes and Whittington (2009) conclude that companies in the service industry base their performance on how they sustain the quality of their services within the agreed budgets to provide the best value for money.

Non-governmental organizations today face the risk of extinction with the shift in focus by donors and the international community's programming and funding mechanisms. To remain relevant NGOs are tasked with the responsibility of positioning themselves strategically in the environment they work in. Sexual and Reproductive health sub-sector is placed within the broader health sector. Donor policies, politics, global trends, country needs, a donor's interest in a country, climate change, programme performance and impact and outcomes of an organization given the level of funding received have a major influence on which programmes are supported or implemented. NGOs have over the years been blamed for creating dependency in developing countries and for depleting resources which could be used to make a difference in people's lives. Donors as a result have changed their approach to a more performance based kind of funding. Given these factors NGOs have put different strategies in place to compete for the scarce resources.

Several studies have been conducted on positioning strategies both locally and internationally. A number of empirical studies have been undertaken by different sectors to test different dimensions of positioning. Some authors that have conducted research and suggested that there is a positive relationship between an organization's performance and well defined positioning strategies; this however falls short as there lacks sufficient empirical evidence to support it. (Porter, 1996; Devlin, Ennew and Mirza, 1995; Brooksbank, 1994). McAlexander and Becker (1993) conducted an empirical study focusing on healthcare professions and specifically on practising dentists in the USA and found a significant correlation between positioning strategies and financial performance. Locally, Kisyoka (2005) focused on positioning strategies adopted by Health Maintenance Organizations (HMOs) in Kenya while Ministry of Health in Kenya (1994)

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and Alumila (2004) focused on the nature of healthcare services in Kenya and on the distribution strategies used by HMOs respectively.

To the best of my knowledge none of these studies were conducted to investigate the positioning strategies adopted by the International Planned Parenthood Federation Africa Regional office in Nairobi. This study is therefore necessary in the establishment of positioning strategies adopted by IPPFARO. Understanding these strategies is critical to the organization in seeking to gain a competitive advantage. This study therefore seeks to fill this knowledge gap by attempting to answer the following research question: what is the effectiveness of positioning strategies adopted by International Planned Parenthood Africa Regional office in Nairobi?

1.3 Research Objective

The study has one objective: To determine the positioning strategies used by IPPFARO in gaining a competitive position in the area of SRH

1.4 Value of study

Literature review did not identify any formal policies on positioning strategies in IPPFARO; the study will be useful in providing valuable information regarding the benefits of developing a policy on positioning for IPPFARO and other non-governmental organizations. The information collected in this study will also be useful to scholars as it will be a source of secondary information for their studies. It will be used in developing arguments for or against established theory in strategic management. The study findings will also form a basis for further research on the subject.

This study will directly benefit IPPFARO as the findings will help them assess their competitive position, the study will also be useful in assessing and reviewing the positioning strategies employed by the organization in strengthening its position as the leader in service provision and advocacy of SRHR programmes in sub-Sahara Africa. Moreover, the study will be of value to other stakeholders in the NGO sector working in the same context as IPPFARO and in reproductive health in formulating a policy on positioning and in the implementation of positioning strategies in their respective organizations. It will help them assess or understand the relationship between positioning strategies and performance of their organization.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1   Introduction

This chapter will be critical in providing a theoretical rationale of the problem that is being studied. It will explore the existing research on the subject matter and how it relates to the problem. Literature review is important in avoiding duplication of materials already covered and in the establishment of literature gaps. This chapter will define positioning, look into existing positioning strategies, gaining positioning strategies and the challenges in positioning.

2.2   Concept of Positioning

Kotler (2003) defines positioning as the act of designing the company's offering and image to occupy a distinctive place in the target market's mind. The intent of positioning is to provide an end product that gives the target market a reason to buy it. Solomon (1996) goes further to define service positioning as the way in which service features are fitted into the consumer's lifestyle while Arnott (1993) defines positioning as the deliberate, proactive, iterative process of defining, measuring, modifying and monitoring consumer perceptions of a marketable object. Pearson and Robinson (1997) see positioning as the way in which organizations are structured and coordinated to achieve its strategic purpose. For example, organization can come from highly centralized, functional structures to highly decentralized strategic business units.

Barney (2007) notes that the way in which a firm position is about the strategies they adopt. The strategy a company selects is important; it requires a good understanding of the logic which strategy is derived as well as the logic through which strategy is

implemented; both constitute the economics of strategic choice and the organizational elements of the strategic implementation. Kotler and Keller (2006) argue that marketing strategies are built on segmentation, targeting and positioning. The firms identify the marketplace groups and needs, target them strategically by position themselves distinctively in a way that the market recognizes the superiority of their products and services.

Development of a positioning strategy is influenced by the nature of the business and it can take place at different levels. Although this is the case, consistency is emphasized as different services may have points of overlap, hence the poor positioning of one service will affect the others. Due to the intangibility and experiential nature of services, it is critical to have an explicit positioning strategy to unify the expectation of a customer which essentially strengthens an organization's position against that of the competition (Lovelock and Wirtz, 2007).

Several authors have looked at the process of positioning; Ferrel and Hartline (2008) looked at six steps that are necessary for creating a favourable position for a company. They involve the identification of characteristics, needs, preferences and benefits desired by the target population, the critical evaluation of the distinctiveness of competitors, positioning of the company's offering against those of the competition, identifying a distinctive or unique position of a firm's products that focuses on customer benefits that the competition is not offering, the development of a marketing plan to persuade action from the consumer and continuous assessment of the target market, the firm's position against that of completion to ensure that the firm's offering are on track.

Kotler and Amstrong (2006) looked at a three step approach that focuses on the identification of sets of possible competitive advantage for building a position, choosing the right competitive advantages, and selecting the overall positioning strategy may be used to understand positioning strategies. What works varies from company to company as they engage in different positioning strategies. Companies must understand what their customer needs are and be able to better deliver on this needs better than their competition in order to build and maximize on profitable relationships. Positioning requires the identification and communication of area of similarities and divergence. This then leads to the determination of a frame of reference which is achieved through the identification of the target market, competition, the ideal points-of-parity and points-of-difference (Kotler and Keller, 2006).

Once an organization develops a positioning strategy it is critical for it to communicate its positioning strategy through a positioning statement. The positioning statement should encompass the products membership in a category, show the points of parity and points of differences from other members in the group (Tybout and Sternthal, 2001: Calder and Reagan, 2001). According to Shimp (2010) two critical aspects must be satisfied in order to have a good positioning statement; it should motivate customers into buying a product or procuring a service while substantially reflecting the organization's distinctive or superiority vis-à-vis that of competitors. In addition, Loverlock and Wirtz (2007) urge that the positioning statement is important and should integrates three forms of analysis; market analysis, internal corporate analysis and competitors' analysis which ultimately articulates the company's desired position in the market place . Calder and Reagan (2001)

further illustrate what should be included in a positioning statement as the target group and need; the brand which is the concept and the point of difference.

Companies that successfully position themselves are able to guide their marketing strategy and are able to achieve a customer focussed value proposition. Payne (2001) argues that selecting a winning service positioning strategy requires a conscious identification of an organization's strengths and opportunities in the market. Kotler and Armstrong (2006) use perceptual maps to describe the marketers' approach in providing a comparison of the consumer perceptions of their brands against those of a competing brand as a way of planning positioning strategies.

2.2.1 Positioning Strategies

Various scholars have identified different positioning strategies in the existing literature namely; competitive positioning strategy, differentiation, hybrid strategy, head to head strategy, attribute or benefit strategy, quality /pricing strategy, strengthening current position and repositioning strategy. According to Johnson et al. (2009) competitive positioning strategy is about gaining advantage against the competitors; in the not-for-profit organizations, competitive advantage may be assessed through its ability to provide leadership and excellence in a sector. Organizations must identify the sources of competition, their direct competition in this case and environmental factors that fuel or influence competition.

While Berkowitz, Kerin and Rudelius (1989) discuss two approaches in positioning of a product in the market; head to head positioning and differentiation. Head to head positioning involves competing directly with the competitor on similar attributes or

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benefits as those of the competitor while differentiation involves locating a brand in a smaller niche in the market that is not very competitive. Kotler and Keller (2006) further elaborate that for a company to achieve competitive positioning they must carefully explore a differentiation strategy that is most compelling to the consumers as relates to the aspects of the products and services they are providing.

Johnson et al. (2009) expound on the discussions by explaining that differentiation approach is influenced by the needs of the customer and the competitors. The aim of the company to achieve competitive advantage is then realized through offering better products and services to the target clients than those of the competitors by either providing the same price or enhancing margins by pricing slightly higher. It is important to lay emphasis on the firm's ability to differentiate their products from what the competition is offering (Ferrell and Hartline, 2008). Sharp and Dawes (2001) further expound on differentiation as a strategy that seeks to provide products or service benefits that are different from those of competitors are widely valued by the consumers.

Porter (1985) affirms that when a firm uses differentiation, they seek to be unique in the industry while still delivering what is valued by their target market. A firm assess at least one of two most valued attributes valued by their customer and positions itself distinctively. Sometime this uniqueness may be followed by a premium price. Other firms may engage in hybrid strategy which seeks to simultaneously attain differentiation and lower price compared to that of competition. The rationale behind this strategy is to achieve enhanced customer benefits while delivering low prices. A contrary view may argue that when a firm differentiates, then there is no need to lower its prices (Miller, 1992: Hill 1998).

Pricing and quality as positioning strategies are perceived as the quality and the price of a service or product. A company may seek to use a low-price strategy against its competitors while still maintaining the perceived product or service benefits to those offered by the competitors. In the context of not-for-profits or the government the price in this case refers to the unit costs of the organization receiving the budgets and the efficiency gains they make without the loss of perceived benefits (Johnson et al, 2009). On cost leadership Porter (1985) argues that for a firm that sets out to use low costs in the industry, its sources of cost advantage are diverse and depend on the structure of the industry. The company seeking cost leadership may pursue preferential access to raw materials, economies of scale or use other factors and if it can achieve and sustain it then it will perform above average compared to its competitors.

According to Craven (1990) Product User strategy focuses on the buying behaviour of the consumers given that they consume certain products or services. Wells and Prensky (1996) stated that consumer behaviour is influenced by culture, value, demographic factors, personality lifestyle, and reference groups while Xavier (2002) contributes to these discussions by arguing that a firm may position its services in a way that satisfies the needs of the group or individuals seeking these services. A not-for-profit organization working in the service sector may provide a package with a range of services which may be free or highly subsidized as opposed to providing single service to a focus population which in most cases is poor, marginalized or underserved.

Another positioning strategy used is attribute or benefit strategy which exploits a particular service benefit, feature or attribute. In Palmer (2003) assessment a service is offered on an experiential basis and the consumer can only assess it once they experience

it. It may however have some descriptive attributes such as affordability which may or may not appeal to a consumer. Shimp (2010) views attribute positioning to be understood from either product-related or non-product related aspects. Product related focuses on a product superiority that consumers will find desirable; such as superior materials design and colour while non-product attributes are those images associated with usage and create an impression of a product. Kotler (2003) lays emphasis on service consistency and argues that firms must remain steadfast and deliver on the services with the specifications they made to their customers.

Ferrel and Hartline (2008) argue that strengthening the current position strategy requires a firm to continuously assess what the needs of their clients are and to what extent the customer perceive the products of the company to be satisfying their needs. A company known for excellent customer service will continually protect its position against its competitors and raise their bar to a new level every time. On the other hand a company may employ tactics that weaken the strengths of a competitor forcing them to change their positioning strategy.

In a hypercompetitive environment, firms must engage in different positioning strategies by engaging in strategies that overcome competitors' barriers, competing successfully which would entail pre-emptying competitors remaining unpredictable or by misleading them or by overcoming competitors market based moves (Johnson et al., 2009). Ferrel and Hartline (2008) support this argument by encouraging companies to assess the performance of their products in the market and consequently applying repositioning strategy if they are not doing well. Poor performance is caused by a combination of factors that influence the decision of a customer not to partake the services or products of

that given company. A new position should be devised to mitigate the impact caused by loss of customers. Repositioning in this case will involve changing marketing mix elements. It may also attempts to reposition the firm's competition as opposed to that of the organization.

2.2.2 Gaining a competitive Position

As stated by Porter (2001) gaining competitive position is a about a company profiling itself in a unique way and choosing to compete distinctively. Having a strategy is a matter of discipline that requires a strong focus on profitability rather just growth , an ability to define a unique value propositioning and willingness to make tough trade-offs in choosing what business the company engages in. It calls on a company's ability to offer unique value through the provision of well targeted tailored services or products. While Kotler and Amstrong (2006) view gaining competitive advantage for an organization to mean offering consumers greater value, either through lower prices or by providing more benefits that justify high price.

According to Pearce and Robinson (1997) managers examine their value chain activities by looking at the sources of their competitive advantage; in which case they query their position by providing rapid response capability, low cost and differentiation. Companies may evaluate their plans and how they respond to aspects of geographical expansion, financial reformation, infrastructure fortification which looks into making a strong and efficient company, consumer marketing, differentiation or in often cases market focus. Companies that want to gain a competitive position must deliberately engage in value creation. A company must look into new customer benefits from the customer's view;

make use of the company's core competencies in its business domains; choose and manage business partnerships from its collaborative networks (Kotler and Keller, 2006).

Every firm whether it is in profit or not profit industry have the responsibility of creating a competitive advantage. For example according to Stanton (1984) healthcare services often fall victim of improper categorization as non business entities which in many ways can be attributed to the attitude of health care providers towards healthcare marketing. Healthcare provision like any other business could benefit from proper marketing programmes (Zeithami and Bitner, 2004; Monash, 2004). Not-for-profit organizations are entities with diverse funding portfolios which in some cases influence the direction of strategy that these organizations engage in. These diverse sources of funding increase the level of expected outcomes and objectives of the donors which leads to political lobbying and difficulties in setting a clear strategic plan. The underlying factors make it necessary for the not-for-profit organizations to have competitive strategies that make them distinct in competing for funding (Johnson et al., 2009).

Gaining a competitive position involves making significant changes of the existing position. Loverlock and Wirtz (2007) argue that it may take advertising of the brand to change the negative perception of the client. It is also necessary to explore the possibilities of a company engaging in innovative positioning to introduce new dimensions into positioning as opposed to focusing on matching or beating competition. Hutt and Speh (2007) look at two perspectives as being instrumental in gaining competitive position; building on a unique competitive position by globalizing of businesses that have unique businesses and product lines by enjoying a meaningful advantage on either differentiation or cost leadership, and maintaining a consistent

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positioning strategy to reinforce its distinctive offerings while maintaining a larger international opportunity.

2.2.3 Positioning of Non-Governmental organizations

Organizations are increasingly working towards positioning themselves strategically in the fields that they work in. This has mainly been brought about by the changing environment that they work in. According to Plan (2010), creating a brand position would encompass an organization that is value driven, differentiated and connects with the target audience. The organization must define its vision, mission and values and how they ultimately lead to the achievement of its goals.

Non-governmental organizations position themselves using different brand propositioning, this ultimately defines who they are in the minds of those who benefit from their services / products or who fund their organizations. Not-for-profit organizations are adopting and following the laws of marketing in order to distinctively compete in the market. (Weaver, 2008).

2.2.4 Challenges in positioning

One of the key challenges in service position according to Berry (1990) is relatively intangibility of services; they are produced and consumed simultaneously, and often less standardized than goods. Due to these unique qualities of services, it is difficult to carry out service positioning. According to Robinson (2009) the position a firm achieves may not necessarily be the one it sets out to have. This is because the position of the firm is based on the customers' perception in the end and not what is intended by the firm.

Firms in some cases get into trouble when do not deliver what they promise their consumers. Kotler (2003) cautions companies against inconsistency when promoting an organization's products and services. Companies may sometimes over sell their products and cannot deliver on the benefits promised which compromises their credibility with their target population.

Kotler (2003); Barkowitz et al. (2002) and Monash (2004) identify four positioning errors. Under positioning is one of the errors identified by these scholars and reflects on the buyers little knowledge of a product especially when the firm is not well known by the consumer. Alternatively it could be caused by entry into a market that is already overcrowded by similar or alternative products or services. Over positioning on the other hand creates an image that is hyper in the minds of the consumer which leads them to think that the product is made for a specific market which they do not fit into. Confused positioning occurs when a product makes many changes or too many claims of what it can deliver or keeps changing. This often confuses the consumer on what a particular product can deliver. Lastly, doubtful positioning leads the buyers to disbelieve a product or service: buyers find it hard to believe the claims on the features of a product.

A company has to be careful with the additional costs that come with positioning such as the technological costs, improvement of service, quality and other value adding components. Competition in some cases may wipe out the investment made on positioning. Firms that use differentiation as a strategy for example may face the issue of forgeries where their products are imitated even they may be distinct on the basis of quality and reputation. (Hitt, Ireland & Hoskisson, 1997).

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the methodology that was used for this study. The methodology includes the research design, data collection and data analysis techniques that were used.

3.2   Research Design

According to McMillan and Schumacher (1984) research design refers to the way a study is planned and conducted, and the procedures and techniques that are used to answer the research question. Beyond addressing the tools required, resources needed, the cost involved and the time requirements, research design addresses the subjects of study, what is being observed, how it will be observed and collected.

A case study research design was used for the purpose of this study. Due to the nature of the study, a case study was appropriate since it allowed in-depth interrogation of the unit of study and laid emphasis on the depth rather than breadth of study. A case study examines data within the context of its use, which is within the situation which the activity takes place (Yin, 1984)

3.3   Data Collection

The study used secondary and primary data. Secondary data was gathered through a review of key organization documents such as the organization's strategic plan, the organization's constitution and all relevant reports to provide information on positioning strategies as outlined in these documents.

Primary data was collected through in-depth interviews with the four directors in the senior management who represent programmes, policy, advocacy and operations. These Directors were crucial to the process as they provided strategic information about the organization's position. In addition, they represented the diverse aspects of the organization. The in-depth interviews were useful in triangulating the information available from secondary data.

3.4   Data Analysis

Data collected was analysed using content analysis. This technique is seen as rich and meaningful as it relies on coding and categorizing data. Both conceptual and relational analyses were used. On one hand conceptual analysis was useful in exploring themes in text both implicitly and explicitly while limiting subjectivity using contextual translating rules. On the other hand relational analysis started by identifying concepts but goes further to explore the relationship between concepts identified

Content analysis not only allows for the themes to emerge naturally but provides an opportunity for the data to produce unanticipated themes. Raw data was examined using many interpretations in order to find correlation between the research objects and the outcomes with reference to the research question. The findings are presented under the various themes; strategies adopted by the organization, the challenges facing the organization in implementing these strategies and the effectiveness of the strategies.

CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS, FINDINGS AND INTERPRETATION

4.1. Introduction

Non-governmental organizations today work in a very dynamic environment that requires them to continuous scan both their internal environment to ensure that they are strategically placed to ensure maximum achievement of their goals. IPPF Africa Region based in Nairobi operates as a secretariat for 42 Member Associations in sub-Saharan Africa; with this kind of setting it positions itself strategically with donors, its partners and its beneficiaries. This chapter looks at the outcomes of the data that was collected, shares results, interpretations and gives discussions of these findings.

4.2. Organization Background information

The case study focussed on the senior management team of IPPF Africa Regional Office in Nairobi. Positioning is a strategic issue and is driven by the leadership of the organization. Five directors were interviewed; the regional director, operations director, external relations and communications director, the East and Southern sub-region director and the West and Central Africa Director.

These key resource person represented the different components of the organization. The regional director has the overall mandate of steering and pushing forward the organization strategy and direction and therefore sets paces in terms of how the organization is positioned, the operations director plays a critical role in the operational efficiency of the regional office and ensures that the right staff are in place, the office is

run in a cost efficient and effective manner and ultimately that staff welfare is taken into account to ensure that they reach their full potential, the ERA director is the face of the organization in the external environment and is critical in moulding the donor and partner perceptions while the two sub-regional directors are responsible for delivering a well targeted and strategic position.

4.2.1. Organization structure

IPPF as a global federation has been existence for the last 60 years. The organization was started in the early 1950s by group of men and women to campaign for the women to gain their rights in controlling their fertility issues. The organization has since evolved to comprehensively cover different aspects of sexual and reproductive health such as HIV / STI programmes, advocacy. and access to SRH services programmes including family planning, comprehensive abortion care, gynaecological and obstetrics services. paediatric services, cancer screening and treatment, fertility services and other SRH services and specialized counselling. IPPF is now a global federation with 152 national organizations working in 172 countries.

IPPF Africa Regional office in Nairobi is the secretariat for the Africa Region and hosts a network of 42 member associations. These associations are divided into 2 sub-regions; Eastern and Southern Africa Sub-region and West and Central sub-region. The member countries are indigenous and nationally owned civil society organizations that do not root from an international organization. They are governed and operated within their country contexts.

4.2.2. Organization Core Business

As a leading SRHR service provider and advocate, the organization provides a range of services that includes Family planning, HIV / STI related services, Safe Motherhood, Gynaecological Paediatric and other medical and non-medical SRH services. According to the latest online survey conducted in 2011 for 38 IPPF Africa Member Associations show that organization has 11,386 services delivery points of which 2,958 are clinic based and 8,428 are non-clinic based. The table below shows the distribution of their service delivery points by location of distribution.

Service Delivery Points		
	Clinic based	Non-clinic based
Urban	1,747	3,419
Peri-Urban	588	1,679
Rural	623	6,288
Totals	2,958	11,386

Table 1: Distribution of services by location

The organization demonstrates its performance through the number of services delivered by its member associations. According to the literature from the organization, the last five years has registered a significant increase in the number of services provided. The

organization uses various strategies to increase geographical coverage and uptake of SRHR services. Some of the approaches noted include use of mobile, satellite and outreach services, commercial marketing, community mobilization and sensitization, use of open days to the community and through provision of integrated SRHR services approaches which increased the number of services received by one client per visit. The graph below shows service statistics provided by the IPPF Africa Region in the last six years.
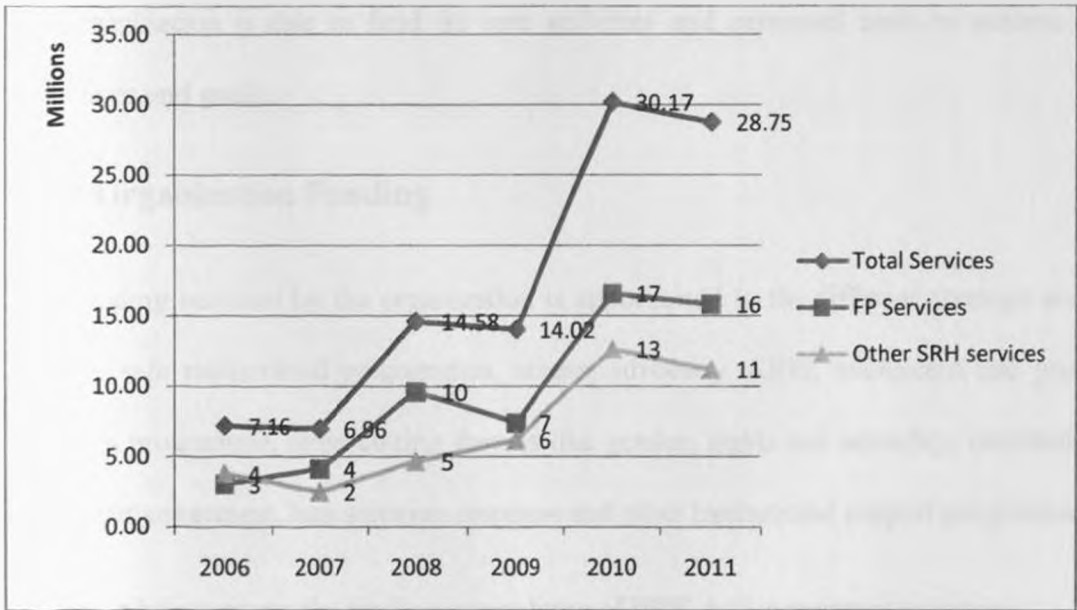
Chart 1: IPPF Africa Region 6 year analysis of services statistics

Although IPPF core business is Family Planning, the organization also provides a range of other SRH services such as HIV related, paediatric, gynaecology and obstetrics services, fertility services, SRH services for young people and other specialized services and counselling. Although FP services provided have not been stable, the trends show that the services provided have been increasing. On the other hand, emphasis and

investment in infrastructure and capacity has supported the rise in numbers for other SRH services such as HIV and specialized counselling and services.

With this volume of services and other programmes that the organization provides they have a mix of donors and partner who fund their activities. They draw from both restricted resources which imply that the donor specifies how their funding will be spent with clear targets; in most cases these funding is normally for activities and a very small percentage for staff costs. Unrestricted core funding is the other type of fund and with it; the organization is able to fund its core activities and personnel costs to achieve its objectives and goals.

4.2.3 Organization Funding

The funding received by the organization is apportioned to the different strategic areas such as safe motherhood programmes, access, advocacy, AIDS, adolescent and young people's programme, cross cutting themes like gender, rights and sexuality, commodity security management, humanitarian response and other institutional support programmes

The table below shows the funding expenditure of IPPF Africa region programmes.

	Expenses in US$	Percentage
5 Programmatic focus areas		
HIV and AIDS	870,351	10%
Access	608,767	7%
Abortion	1,301,112	14%
Adolescents	446,433	5%

Advocacy	1,838,867	21%
Supporting strategies		
Capacity Building	1,707,619	19%
Governance and Accreditation	146,426	2%
Monitoring and Evaluation	834,961	9%
Resource mobilisation	651,469	7%
Volunteer activities	316,654	4%
Audit fee, Depreciation & exchange loss	155,377	2%
Total	8,878,036	100%

Table 2: IPPFAR programmes expenditure 2010: Source: IPPFAR Annual report 2010

The table above shows the amount of funding allocated on annual basis for IPPFAR programmes and other secretariat operations; it was adopted from the organization's external annual report of 2010. To fund the secretariat activities above IPPF Africa Region draws from a restricted and unrestricted allocated on the basis of level of funds raised by the Federation and through the organization's resource allocation system. In 2010, the organization's funding for both the member associations and the secretariat was US$ US$32.793 million compared to US$ 34.958 million in 2009. The decrease was 6.2% which caused by a reduction of unrestricted grant by some donors.

Donors are shifting to restricted kind of funding as opposed to unrestricted funding which is more flexible in terms of countries and programmes that are funded. In addition to the funding the member association receive from the IPPF income, they are also responsible for raising resources locally by providing subsidized services, fundraising with international organizations and national governments, through membership or generate

income from assets and investments. The chart below shows the funding mix by IPPF Africa Region member associations.

INCOME $000's

42%

16%

42%

▣ Local Income
▣ International Income
▢ IPPF Income
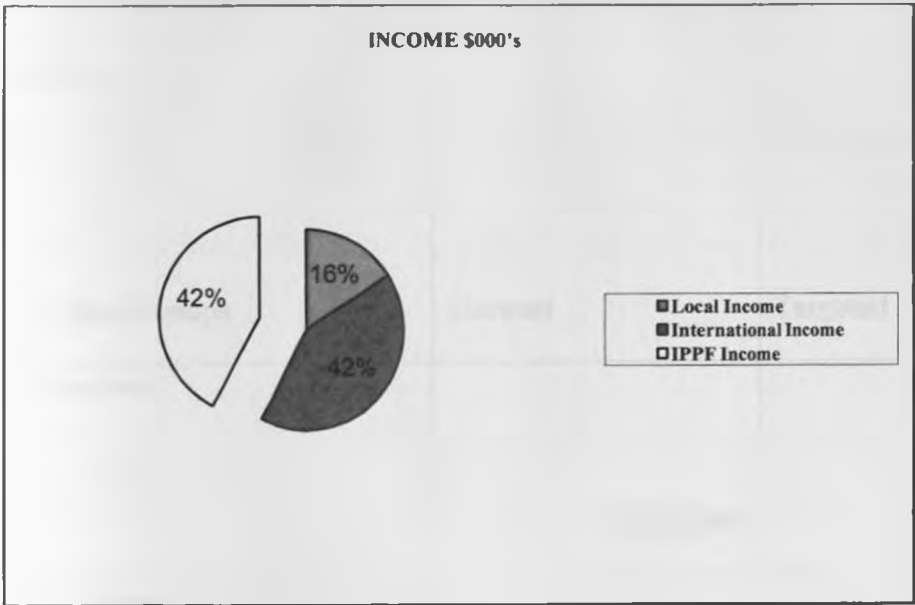
Chart 2: IPPFAR MA income mix 2010: Source: IPPFAR annual report 2010

4.3. Funding trends for Family Planning and Reproductive health

Over the years funding for family planning and reproductive health has been dwindling. Many factors come into play when it comes to funding NGOs that provide these services. These include; donor priorities, political environment of the donor country, new aid architecture and variance in in-country dynamics and governance. NGOs in the FPRH sub-sector have to put in more work and better strategies to gain the confidence of donors to fund them and to justify a sustained funding by donors to run their programmes and with the changing aid mechanisms.

Although organizations need to keep reinventing themselves to tap into the existing pot of funding, there still remains a challenge; the funding allocated for FPRH programmes

and the targeted funding to meet the need falls short by 70%. According to the UNFPA (2008) there is a $595 million FPRH funding gap in Africa. The chart below shows four categories that would need to change their strategies to achieve the target of increasing funding.

Funding Groups	Current	Targeted
Consumers	155,000,000	180,000,000
Aids Donors	140,000,000	225,000,000
Domestic Governments	145,000,000	325,000,000
FPRH Donors	400,000,000	515,000,000
Total	840,000,000	1,245,000,000

Table 3: Funding trends for FPRH in 2008. Source: RSG FPRH Funding Model 2008

4.4. Positioning strategies adopted by IPPF Africa Region in Nairobi

In their marketing of programmes and services the organization has adopted various positioning strategies in order to realize its goals and objectives. IPPF Africa Region targets the poor, marginalized and/or socially excluded populations. As such their strategies are tailor made to reach these populations while their approach is developed in a way that attracts donors to fund their projects. Some of the strategies that the organization has adopted are; pricing and quality strategies, repositioning, strengthening current position, competitive strategies, differentiation, product user and attribute / benefit strategy.

4.4.1. Competitive strategy

A competitive positioning strategy is about gaining an advantage against the other companies and organizations working in the same field or providing similar services. In the case of NGOs providing services being competitive is about defining the target market and providing better services that are distinct in the minds of these target population. IPPF Africa Region's affiliate organizations are indigenous and nationally owned organization. IPPF has been in existence since the early 1960s and they have been providing family planning and other reproductive health services. Against this background, IPPF associations have built a strong brand and reputation compared to the organizations that were founded in the later years. Moreover, the history and nature of IPPFAR therefore gives it leverage over the other organizations that are formed temporarily to respond to reproductive health problems especially those related to the HIV pandemic.

Another advantage that the organization has that makes it competitive is the network of member associations that constitute the federation. These associations are strategically positioned at national level to influence policy with their governments on FP and RH. The study identified that IPPFAR together with other donors developed and action plan to support the implementation of the continental framework of SRHR. With this governments and other partners are held responsible in the implementation of the strategy. With this initiative, IPPFAR set pace for other organizations and established them as a leader in reproductive health. This has so far given them leverage and support from the international community and national government where SRHR issues are related. They are able to influence a shift in regional agenda as in the case of the MPOA as an operational plan for the strategic framework for SRHR.

The management style of IPPFAR makes it different from other organizations; the organization is run by volunteers. The structure gives the organization strength and distinctiveness, the volunteers' present unique opportunities for the organization. They are involved in various aspects of the organization: policy, advocacy, programming and service delivery. The network of volunteer in the Africa region represents different cadres of people in society and ranges from young people to senior citizens. Given the good mix in professions and age, the organization is able to influence in society and make a change at a very low cost. Other organizations invest heavily in this kind of professionals; this therefore gives the organization a competitive position.

The pioneering and development of SRH and HIV linkages agenda has set it aside IPPF as a leader in SRHR. Together with other partners IPPF took leadership for developing a toolkit for assessing integrated services and has shared globally experiences from the

member association on delivering SRH and HIV linkages. Some of the IPPF Africa region associations are being used as model clinics by governments and partners.

4.4.2. Differentiation strategy

IPPF has various packages within the organization that differentiates it from other organizations. One such package is the quality certification system known as the accreditation system. The IPPF accreditation system is administered to IPPF member associations and is based on membership standards that are organized under ten principles which translate to 49 standards. This tool is administered to the member associations to ensure that they self reflect and be accountable as well as to ensure that they are following the organization's policies and principles in providing the highest level of quality of services.

Accredited IPPF Member Associations benefit from the confidence of the donors, partners and their clients as they these stakeholders can rely on the quality of services and are accountable so they will give value for money. IPPFAR not only uses this to leverage funding but also in gaining the confidence of national government to have strategic partnerships on issues that relate to SRHR.

The organization also offers a global recognized tool unique to IPPF known as the global indicator survey which is an online survey that is based on 30 performance indicators that are administered on an annual basis to all IPPF affiliate organization and assess the organization's performance using strategic areas such as governance and programmes. Many donors within the realm of FP/RH use these indicators to assess whether the organization is giving value for their invested and whether the organization to reaching

the intended population. This tool gives the organization precedence over other organizations that may rely on research to demonstrate results.

4.4.3. Pricing and quality Strategy

Pricing strategy implies the price and quality of a service or product, where an organization chooses to use a lower price compared to that of the competitors while still maintaining the perceived service benefits compared to that of competitors. Although the organization is a not for profit organization that delivers service to a defined target population, which is poor, marginalized and hard to reach the organization offers price subsidies on most of the services they offer while providing high quality services. This attracts their target populations to their clinics. The local income generated from providing these services enables them to recover the costs they incur from providing free services. A combination of donor income and local income enables IPPFAR MAs to provide free or highly subsidized services that makes them a preferred service delivery point compared to the private sector and the government.

4.4.4. Product user strategy

This strategy focuses on the buying behaviour of the consumers given that they consume certain products or services. Wells and Prensky (1996) stated that consumer behaviour is influenced by culture, value, demographic factors, personality lifestyle, and reference groups while Xavier (2002) contributes to these discussions by arguing that a firm may position its services in a way that satisfies the needs of the group or individuals seeking these services.

This is an important strategy for IPPFAR who have positioned themselves as an organization that not only provides quality and affordable services for a target population that is poor, marginalized, and hard to reach and a target population of lifestyles that are often discriminated against and is able to respect the rights of these clients. The clients are provided with adequate information and education and make informed choices. Over the years IPPF has created a global brand of being strong advocates and service providers in SRHR. They target the groups that are most controversial such as sex workers, people with alternative sexual lifestyles, people living with HIV, other vulnerable groups such as women and children and people living with disability.

Their advocacy is focussed on equal and fair chance to access reproductive health services and information and not to be discriminated against based on their disposition. This commitment to these groups that has not faltered since the early 1960s has made the organization very popular with donors and partners. The organization is very well preferred among these target groups and can be witnessed by the number of services it provides from year to year. In 2011, IPPFAR was responsible for delivering over 27 million SRH services in sub-Sahara Africa.

4.4.5. Attribute or benefit strategy

This positioning strategy exploits a particular service or benefit. The organization is reputed for providing free or highly subsidized services which use a rights based approach when delivered. A high proportion of people living in sub-Sahara Africa is poor and benefit from these services. Another attribute that makes these services attractive to the clients is the confidentiality and privacy they receive when they come to the IPPF

clinics compared to the government clinic which provides free or highly subsidized services.

IPPFAR clinics were reported to have a reputation of providing youth friendly services, upholding the highest confidence of confidentiality and privacy for their clients. This not only enhances the level of quality of services provided by the associations but still maintains the highly subsidized and low prices that still attract their target population. The quality and cost of services make the clinics the most preferred people especially young people.

4.4.6. Strengthening the current position

Strengthening the current position of the organization involves a continuous assessment of the needs of the clients and to what extent the current services satisfy these needs. The organization that seeks to strengthen its current position aim at raising their standards and quality of the services they provide to be ahead of the competitors. The organization takes cognizance of the internal and external environment and adopts strategies that keep them in the lead.

Despite the organization's strong brand, IPPFAR is constantly re-evaluating its strategy to assess whether they are meeting the needs of their clients. The IPPFAR secretariat in Nairobi conducts a mapping of member association and uses different tools to cluster them and plan accordingly on how best to strengthen these institutions to ensure that they are exploiting their full potential. One strategy that the organization has adopted is performance based funding as a way of strengthening its current position. Donors are increasingly demanding value for the money they invest in organizations for

development. With the performance based tool the organization has developed a set of indicators to measure performance every year as well as commissioned studies to investigate the cost effectiveness of the programmes being implemented by the member associations.

IPPF Africa Regional office delivers results by strengthening the capacity of its member associations. With this regard new strategies that have been adopted while others have been reinforced, these include; commercial and social marketing, outreach and mobile clinic, strengthening of community based services, strengthening this associations capacity to introduce or deliver integrated services as a means to increase the range and reach of service as well as improve the quality of life of people being served. The organization reported to be currently working on new approaches such as social franchising as a way of increasing services provided.

4.5. Challenges in Positioning

As a big secretariat working with over 40 countries, the organization reported several challenges in working towards being a leading SRHR service provider and advocate. Some of the challenges that were discussed during the interviews and in the literature review include structural constraints, diversity in country context, global branding and positioning caused by the nature of each individual national programme, constant changes in the internal and external environment and limited resources that are necessary for proper positioning of the organization. These challenges are discussed as follows:

IPPF Africa regional office operates as a secretariat for 42 independent national associations in 42 countries. This makes it difficult to drive change in a regional

organization with an organization like IPPF which has a unique structure of independent country programmes managed by volunteers. These associations work in diverse contexts and it is difficult to also develop the same strategy for all of them. Their uniqueness is what distinguishes them from other CSOs therefore it is difficult to carry one IPPF brand for all of them. IPPFAR has set guidelines and encourages co-branding in seeking visibility. The organization in some cases faces the risk of under positioning due to the nature and structure of the organization. IPPF Africa Region is very well know at international and regional level but little is known of it at the national levels where its affiliates operate because the national organization are run under different names in the 42 countries. As such, although the secretariat is well positioned internationally it is not well positioned at country levels.

The organization sets out its targets at the beginning of the year to reach a certain level of clients with services which in most cases works out very well. However given the context of Africa's changing political environment and scarce donor funding sometimes the organization is not able to deliver the services it intends to deliver. With donors moving to moving to restricted projects as opposed to core funding which gives organizations more freedom to use the resources and have an equitable division of resources across the 38 countries; some countries that are not the donor preferred countries face scarcity in resources.

Another key constraint in positioning strategies used by IPPF Africa region is the changing environment in which the SRHR NGOs operate in. There is a constant pressure from the environment to innovate and gain sustainability as opposed to over relying on the donors. With IPPFAR providing free or highly subsidised services, it is difficult to

remain afloat with donor funding. The target population being poor, vulnerable and marginalized it is difficult to raise resources locally. In the light of this the organization faces the risk of raising the cost of services in order to achieve the required cost recovery level. this has a negative impact on the organization if not properly done as it eliminates the intended target population which is poor, this may ultimately have a bad long term impact in services delivered as the bulk of the people who need these services are not able to access them.

Strategic positioning of the organization comes with a need for huge investments that may eat into the funding that is set aside for programme work. Positioning requires an investment in infrastructure, service quality and other value adding components and strategy. IPPFAR is looking into investing in social franchising to increase the range and geographical reach of services. This comes with it a huge resource investment that the organization does not currently have and poses a challenge. Another important challenge that faces the organization is the entry of project based organizations that are also competing for the same pot of money. Their establishment may not necessarily have the same end goal as IPPF Africa Region an affiliate organization which is based on long term basis as opposed to short term goals intended by projects.

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. Introduction

This chapter will look at a summary of the findings, draw conclusions based on these findings appropriate recommendations will be made and insight provided in the areas for further research.

5.2. Summary of findings

The research revealed that funding plays a major role in determining the existence of non-governmental organizations. It also found out that the type of funding received whether restricted or non-restricted influences what can and cannot be achieved. In many ways restricted funding although is of equal importance restricts the countries and the nature of staffs that are recruited. With the existence of numerous organizations in the SRHR arena competition for the same pot of money is high as each organization must demonstrate what is unique and distinct about their organization. IPPF Africa Regional Office is conscious that it works in a dynamic environment that requires them to be well placed in order to not only attract donor funding but to also make a difference in the lives of the people they serve.

From the findings it is clear that the organization does not deliberately set out to be compete with other organizations but rather reactive to the needs of both the internal and external environment. There are very few organizations that carry the same structure as IPPF and possess its nature and magnitude therefore it is difficult to compare it with other

unless comparison is drawn against specific component of the organization or services. The study focussed on establishing the positioning strategies adopted by the organization and to some extent the challenges the organization faces in positioning.

The study established several positioning strategies being used by the IPPF Africa Regional office to meet the goals and objectives of the organization. These include; differentiation, competitive strategy, pricing /quality, product user, attribute/benefit, and strengthening current position. The organization has given more emphasis on strengthening its current position, product user and in quality strategies. In strengthening its current position the organization has invested substantial resources in ensuring that the institutions are strong enough to deliver services and programmes that are critical in achieving their goals. In addition to high performance the organization will have achieved a good position with its donors and beneficiaries.

The organization's quality and pricing strategies play a vital role in attracting their target clients who are poor, marginalized and / or excluded. With today's external environment's focus on sustainability of programmes not-for-profit organizations and especially service providing organization find themselves in a peculiar predicament of what takes precedence, service statistic targets or income targets or both and how to strike the balance for both without losing the objectives and goals of their organizations. IPPFAR has some of their member associations using a cost recovery model whose down side increase prices of services in some clinics in order to subsidize for others. In the context of quality the organization has numerous packages and component within the organization to ensure that the highest level of quality is upheld. The accreditation system

is in place to certify that all affiliate organizations are in compliance. This tool has been used to leverage resources with partners and donors.

The organization's target population is one of the most important component of its existence and if does not meet the needs of this population then it fails to fulfil its goals and objectives. The services provided by IPPFAR are designed to appeal to these target market hence the product user strategy is critical to the organization. Due to the well targeted and tailor made services, the IPPF clinics become the natural and first choice for these clients to seek services. IPPFAR clinics provide high quality, rights based SRH services, for example, a sex worker seeking for treatment will choose their clinics because they know that the services provider will approach them using a rights based approach, will give them counselling and respect the choices they made.

It was evident that the organization is addressing positioning challenges by reinforcing their programmes and the institutional aspects. The organization has now adopted a new strategic direction and one of the approaches that they are using is three change goals that reflect on perform, deliver and unite. The organization's five year strategy is not cast on stone, the means to achieving the goals envisioned in the strategic plan are adjusted according to the context that the organization encounters enroute to delivering it.

5.3. Conclusions

The study found out that although IPPF Regional Office in Nairobi does not have a policy on positioning, the positioning strategies used by the organization are outlined in various strategic documents in the organization. These strategies have been critical in defining the organization's distinctiveness and in influencing their performance.

The researcher established that positioning strategies adopted by the organizations can to a large extent be linked to the reputation that the organization has earned as well as the level of SRH services that has been achieved.

The researcher also noted that although the organization has these strategies in place there is need to repackage and market them better than it is. Some of these strategies if strengthened or reinforced would be critical not only in helping the organization gain leverage with their donors and clients but in further improving the performance of the organization and ultimately leading to the desired goal of all human enjoying good health and high quality of life.

5.4. Recommendations

The organization's distinctive qualities work out as both an advantage and disadvantage. Although it is difficult to carry the same brand with the independent affiliate organization, there is still an opportunity to deliberately work with its member associations to co-brand so that they reap the benefits of the work that has been done by the secretariat at the Africa Regional level and at the international levels.

Provision of free and highly subsidized services serves the organizations mandate to reach the poor marginalized, vulnerable and hard to reach but does not meet the need the income target that requires them recover their cost. There still stands the risk that when services are priced to achieve cost recovery it is likely that the organization may not be appealing and accessible to its target population and may not achieve its intended goals. Although this is the case the organization can still pursue a cost recovery strategy that does not eliminate the target population. For example the company can pursue the idea of

doctor's plaza in the clinic, outsourcing pharmacy services to open up to the public, this will help generate income. Alternatively subsidiary clinic can be opened to generate profits that can be used to subsidize cost for the other clinics

Repositioning of the secretariat from being too TA oriented to include and greater focus in advocacy work and influencing politics to change policy and strengthen governance structures as well as build strong programmes in the affiliate member associations. The organization could also move support closer to their member associations through satellite offices based in the four regions.

Although the secretariat operates in a diverse structure and nature it can still explore the possibility of putting in place a positioning policy that defines how the organization engages with the external environment to achieve maximum results. Influencing the way the organization is perceived by donors and the clients they serve into a positive and strategic one will be useful in building a strong brand. The organization also needs to rethink the best strategies they can adopt to ensure uniformity in branding at the national level in the countries that they work in.

5.5. Limitations of study

This is a case study and the study findings may not necessarily be representative of the whole industry. An in-depth comparative study could not be done to establish the effectiveness of the strategies adopted by the organization given the constraints in time and other resources. The study also only focused on the positioning strategies adopted by IPPF AR without looking at the rationale behind these choices. In addition, due to the

sensitivity and nature of the competition in the industry not all information is available for public consumption.

5.6. Areas for further Research

The study focussed on IPPF Africa Regional office in Nairobi and how it has positioned itself to support its affiliate organization in 42 countries. Another study could be undertaken to have an in-depth understanding of how some of these affiliate organizations interface with IPPF and consequently position themselves in their national context. An in-depth study will also identify the existence of formalized policies in the NGO sector, their effectiveness and the role they play in performance.

Another interesting study would look at how IPPF competes with likeminded organizations that are specifically focussing on SRHR and are of the same structural setting and magnitude. Further investigations can demonstrate where there is a link between positioning strategies adopted and the overall performance of the organization. It can also show the influence of structure on performance.

5.7. Implication of the study on policy, theory and practice

The study found that although the organization has positioning strategies in place to strengthen their position, the organization does not have a policy in place despite the need to have one. The study recommended that the organization looks into formally developing a positioning policy that guides how the organization positions itself and to a large extent the organizations that are affiliated to the secretariat. In practice, the study will be critical in informing the way positioning is implemented and how the organization

can addresses the challenges it is facing in positioning. Ultimately a good positioning strategy may lead to better performance but this must be informed by further investigation and comparison with other organizations of the same magnitude working in the same field.

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APPENDIX: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR THE IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS

Informed Consent

Thank you for accepting to talk to me this morning/afternoon. My name is_____ from_____. I'm a postgraduate student at the University of Nairobi. For the partial fulfilment of Master in Business Administration I'm undertaking a project on the positioning strategies used by NGOs working in Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights and the project is specifically focussing on the International Planned Parenthood Federation Africa Regional Office. The purpose of today's discussion is to seek your opinion on the on this topic as a leader in the organization.

I will appreciate your views and opinions about what the organization has done to remain competitive. I will seek your opinion on some of the successes the organization has experienced in positioning itself and would also like to know what challenges the organization has encountered in adopting in competitively positioning itself and changes (either negative or positive) has the organization experienced in competitively positioning itself in the external environment.

I will not record your name, and nothing you say in this conversation will be linked back to you in any way. Please feel free to openly speak about your experience in the organization. Any information you deem inappropriate for public consumption will not be used or published in this case study.

Thanking you in advance for providing us with this information.

Interview Guide for Senior Management

A. Background Information

1. Does IPPF have a policy on positioning? Engaging with partners? Is there a strategy in the absence of such a policy?

   i. What guides what IPPF does?

   ii. Do you see the necessity of such a policy?

   iii. How do you ensure you are competitive, with the new aid architecture?

   iv. Has the Regional Office been able to raise resources by itself?

2. Which areas of implementation are highly favoured by donors? Is there rationale?

B. Positioning Strategies

1. What programme strategies have been undertaken by the organization?

2. How does the organization adopt to the external and internal environment?

3. How do you compete for the available resources in your Region?

4. How do you influence outcomes for your organization?

C. Effectiveness of the strategies

1. Have these strategies you adopted been beneficial?

   a. Probe for the benefits have you gained from implementing these strategies?

   b. Have the services increased?

   c. Has the resource base expanded? By how much?

2. What changes can be attributed to the strategies adopted by the organization?

D. Challenges

1. What lessons has the organization learnt in implementing these strategies?

2. Do you experience any difficulties in competing for the available resources? What challenges are you facing in implementing the positioning strategies selected by your organization?