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**Effects of Organizational Culture on Organizational Performance of Nairobi County
Government, Kenya**

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Abstract

Purpose: The research examined how organizational culture affects the performance outcomes of the Nairobi County Government in Kenya. The study specifically investigated how shared beliefs and values, together with organizational norms, affect financial performance, customer service delivery, social responsibility, and employee stewardship.

Methodology: The study utilized a correlational research design. The target population comprised 32,099 Nairobi County Government employees across various departments. A sample size of 384 respondents was selected using stratified random sampling. Data were collected using structured questionnaires validated through pilot testing. Reliability was confirmed using Cronbach's Alpha ($\alpha = 0.85$). Data were analyzed using SPSS through descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, and simple linear regression.

Findings: The Results revealed a strong positive correlation between organizational culture and organizational performance ($R = .746$). Regression analysis showed that organizational culture accounted for 55.7% of performance variation ($R^2 = .557$). The standardized coefficient ($\beta = .746$, $p < .05$) confirmed that organizational culture significantly predicts performance outcomes. The one-unit increase in organizational culture results in a 0.746-unit increase in organizational performance.

Unique Contribution to Theory, Practice, and Policy: The study contributes to Resource-Based Theory through its findings, which show that organizational culture functions as an intangible resource that determines the performance of institutions that operate under devolved governance systems. Practically, the study provides evidence that strengthening shared values, ethical norms, participatory leadership, and coordination mechanisms enhances performance in county governments. From a policy perspective, the findings of the study support institutional reforms that establish cultural development programs as essential components for effective governance through institutional structures.

Keywords: *Organizational Culture, Organizational Performance, Public Sector Governance*

JEL Codes: *D23, M14, H83*

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INTRODUCTION

Organizational performance is a central concern for modern institutions because organizations must achieve their goals efficiently using available resources (Korhonen, 2023). However, the concept of performance differs between private and public sector organizations. In private sector institutions, performance is primarily measured through profitability, market competitiveness, and shareholder value, while public sector organizations emphasize broader societal outcomes. In contrast, public sector organizations evaluate performance based on service delivery effectiveness, accountability, responsiveness to citizens, and the efficient utilization of public resources (van der Kolk, 2022). Within devolved governance systems such as Kenya's county governments, performance is therefore closely associated with the ability of institutions to provide quality public services while maintaining transparency and responsible management of public funds (Abdulkadir et al., 2021).

Modern institutions consider organizational performance to be their main focus because organizations need to reach their specific targets and goals. Organizations achieve their performance results through efficient resource usage which helps them achieve predetermined goals while generating expected results (Taouab & Issor, 2019). The performance of public and private institutions depends on their capacity to operate efficiently while maintaining accountability and fulfilling their institutional responsibilities (Kwarteng, Dadzie, & Famiyeh, 2020).

Organizational culture serves as an essential factor that creates institutional effects which exist beyond their official processes and structural systems. The cultural framework of an organization shapes how its employees behave when they need to accomplish organizational goals (Ali & Anwar, 2021). Constructive organizational culture strengthens shared principles and expected conduct while discouraging undesirable practices (Yesil & Kaya, 2022). A constructive organizational culture develops shared organizational values and standard operating procedures, which prevent employees from engaging in unwanted behavior (Yesil & Kaya, 2022). Understanding organizational culture enhances employees' comprehension of organizational operations and guides expected future behaviors (Nguyen, Mia, Winata, & Chong, 2019). Organizational culture, therefore, acts as a regulatory mechanism directing conduct toward shared ideals and expected standards.

Empirical research demonstrates that organizational culture affects performance results in organizations. The research conducted by Kwarteng et al. (2020) demonstrates that organizational culture, rather than other factors, determines the operational efficiency of public sector organizations. Yesil and Kaya (2022) conducted their research, which proved that organizational culture positively affects the performance of businesses. According to Ali and Anwar (2021) strong organizational culture creates a work environment that guides employee behavior while enabling organizations to develop and execute their policies.

The research studies reviewed display specific limitations that restrict their ability to study multiple geographical contexts. The research on organizational culture and performance has been conducted in emerging Asian economies, which produced positive results that are specific to each context.

Research in developing countries has increased, yet there exists a research gap about county government institutions in Kenya, which needs survey research to be done in these areas.

Although numerous studies have examined the relationship between organizational culture and performance, most of the available evidence originates from private sector institutions or centralized public organizations in developed and emerging economies. These studies provide useful insights but may not fully capture the institutional realities of devolved governance systems such as those found in Kenya. County governments operate within complex political and administrative environments characterized by political competition, ethnic diversity, public accountability pressures, and evolving governance structures. These contextual dynamics may shape organizational norms, leadership practices, and employee behavior differently from the settings in which most existing organizational culture models were developed.

Research studies that investigate the connection between organizational culture and performance have produced inconsistent results, which depend on different organizational contexts and strategies (Belias & Koustelios, 2019; Kwarteng et al., 2020). However, none of the reviewed studies specifically examined the relationship between organizational culture and performance within government institutions at the county level in Kenya.

Therefore, there remains a contextual and knowledge gap in understanding how organizational culture influences organizational performance within county governments operating under Kenya's devolved governance framework. The current study seeks to address this gap by examining the influence of organizational culture on organizational performance within Nairobi County Government, Kenya.

Statement of the Problem

Organizational performance has received significant attention of late as every organization must adopt effective internal systems and practices to achieve its objectives with the available limited resources. Organizations have to make use of their meager resources to continue to grow or survive in increasingly competitive and dynamic environments. Public participation has made Kenya's governance system a focal point under the Constitution, and individual participation is recognized as part of Kenya's governance and national values. Founded in 2013 with the primary objective of promoting local development within Nairobi city and its surrounding areas, the Nairobi County Government was expected to enhance service delivery, accountability, and institutional effectiveness.

However, the County of Nairobi has undergone many challenges, including governance conflicts and service delivery inefficiencies. Rather than viewing these challenges merely as isolated administrative problems, it is hypothesized that an underlying organizational culture characterized by opacity, weak accountability mechanisms, and fragmented coordination among departments may underpin many of the service delivery failures within the county administration. Despite administrative reforms and structural adjustments, performance outcomes have remained inconsistent. While considerable attention has been given to structural and strategic mechanisms within public institutions, less emphasis has been placed on internal institutional factors such as organizational culture.

The shared beliefs, values, and norms of an institution, which create its behavioral expectations, shape organizational culture, which determines how employees execute their tasks. The presence of a weak or misaligned organizational culture creates obstacles that prevent employees from performing their work duties in government operations. Although previous studies have examined various determinants of organizational performance in different sectors, empirical evidence on the influence of organizational culture on performance within county governments remains limited and inconsistent. This study sought to determine the influence of organizational culture on the organizational performance of Nairobi County Government, Kenya.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The section evaluates all theoretical and empirical studies that establish the relationship between organizational culture and organizational performance. The discussion shows how organizational culture affects performance outcomes, which include efficiency, effectiveness, and service delivery.

Theoretical Framework

The Organizational Culture Theory, together with the Resource-Based View (RBV) Theory, served as the primary theoretical foundation for this study.

Organizational Culture Theory (Schein, 1985) explains that shared assumptions, values, and beliefs shape behavior within organizations and influence how institutions function and perform. According to this theory, organizational culture determines how employees interact, make decisions, solve problems, and respond to internal and external pressures. In public sector institutions, a culture characterized by shared purpose, accountability, and adaptability enhances coordination and improves service delivery outcomes. The theory, therefore, provides the foundational explanation for the independent variable of this study: organizational culture.

The Resource-Based View (RBV) Theory (Barney, 1991) posits that organizations achieve sustained performance when they effectively utilize internal resources that are valuable, rare, inimitable, and well organized, commonly referred to as the VRIO framework. While RBV is often applied in private-sector contexts to explain competitive advantage, in public sector institutions, it can instead be interpreted in terms of institutional capability. Organizational culture represents an important intangible resource that strengthens coordination, employee commitment, and administrative efficiency. When a county government develops a strong and cohesive culture, it becomes better positioned to utilize its limited financial and human resources effectively. In this way, organizational culture functions as an institutional capability that enables public organizations to maximize the impact of their constrained budgets while improving service delivery outcomes.

Together, Organizational Culture Theory and the Resource-Based View Theory provide a complementary theoretical foundation. Organizational Culture Theory explains how shared values and norms influence employee behavior and institutional functioning, while RBV highlights how these cultural attributes operate as strategic internal resources that strengthen institutional capability. In combination, the two theories demonstrate that a well-aligned organizational culture enhances the ability of Nairobi County Government to utilize its available resources efficiently and improve overall organizational performance.

Empirical Review

Liu, Tsui, and Kianto (2021) investigated how knowledge-friendly organizational culture affects organizational performance through their meta-analysis which included data from European, Asian, and North American countries. The study synthesized empirical studies from different national contexts rather than focusing on a single country. The supportive cultural environments developed a positive relationship with financial and non-financial performance indicators which reached statistical significance. The study showed that organizations achieve better performance when their cultures support teamwork, innovative activities, and shared values between employees. However, the study relied on a meta-analytic approach that synthesized findings from previously published studies rather than collecting primary data from employees within a specific organizational setting. Consequently, the study does not capture the lived organizational experiences of employees working within particular institutional environments such as devolved county governments.

Kwarteng, Dadzie, and Famiyeh (2020) studied how organizational culture affects public sector organizations' performance. The study found that organizational culture significantly influences institutional performance outcomes, with supportive cultural attributes such as shared values and coordinated systems enhancing effectiveness. The public sector evidence establishes the relationship between culture and performance according to this study. However, the study was conducted outside the Kenyan governance context and did not focus on decentralized or devolved administrative systems such as county governments.

Muthoni and Kinyua (2021) studied how organizational culture affects organizational performance within state corporations in Kenya. The study discovered that organizational culture dimensions, which included shared values, employee involvement, and institutional norms, positively impacted organizational performance. The findings showed that Kenyan public institutions achieve higher efficiency, accountability, and institutional effectiveness through strong cultural alignment. This study provides contextual evidence from Kenya supporting the culture–performance relationship. However, state corporations operate as semi-autonomous government entities with relatively stable managerial structures and lower levels of political influence compared to county governments. County governments operate within highly political and decentralized governance systems characterized by electoral leadership changes, public participation requirements, and complex accountability structures. These structural and political differences limit the direct generalization of findings from state corporations to county governments such as Nairobi County.

Identified Gaps

The studies establish a beneficial link between organizational culture and performance, yet there exist critical areas that require further investigation. Liu et al. (2021) provided broad international insight but did not examine culture–performance dynamics within specific devolved public governance systems. In addition, the meta-analysis methodology synthesizes secondary data from previous studies rather than examining organizational culture through direct employee experiences within a single institution. In contrast, the present study employs a primary survey design to capture the lived reality of Nairobi County Government employees and their perceptions of organizational culture and performance.

Kwarteng et al. (2020) studied public sector institutions and found that organizational culture has a major effect on how institutions perform their duties. Their research took place outside Kenya while their study did not investigate either devolved governance systems or county administration operations. The different administrative systems together with distinct political conditions and various decentralization strategies make it impossible to apply results from this study to Kenyan county governments.

Similarly, Muthoni and Kinyua (2021) examined state corporations in Kenya and confirmed that organizational culture positively influences organizational performance. While this provides valuable local evidence, state corporations are semi-autonomous public enterprises that operate under centralized governance frameworks and professional management systems. In contrast, county governments function within politically decentralized systems established under Kenya’s devolved governance structure, where leadership transitions, political accountability, and public participation significantly shape organizational processes. The study did not specifically focus on devolved county administrations, nor did it isolate Nairobi County Government as a distinct unit of analysis.

Consequently, there exists only limited research that links particular elements of organizational culture with total institutional performance in Nairobi County Government. The research examines how shared values across organizations, together with their coordination systems and cultural alignment practices, affect financial performance, customer satisfaction, social responsibility, and employee stewardship within urban county governance systems.

Conceptual Framework

The framework illustrates the relationship between organizational culture, measured through basic beliefs, values, and norms, and organizational performance reflected in financial performance, customer service, social responsibility, and employee stewardship.

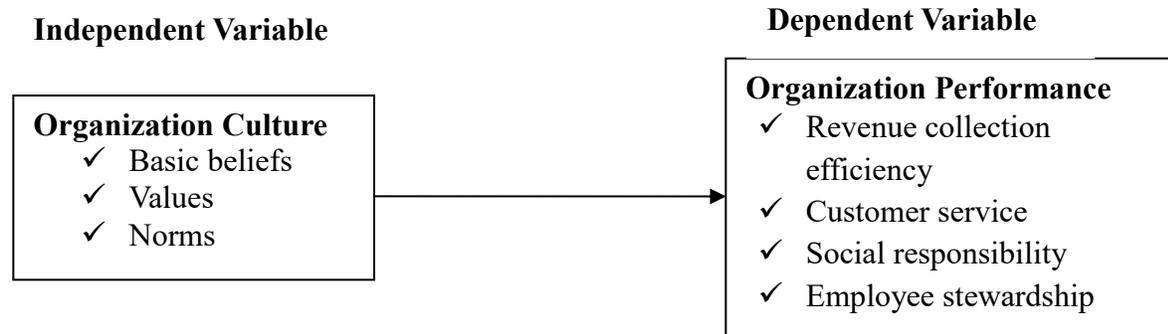


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Source: Researcher, (2026)

METHODOLOGY

The research used a correlational research design to study the organizational culture and organizational performance relationship in Nairobi County Government. A correlational design was selected because it facilitates the systematic assessment of relationships among variables without manipulation of the study conditions. The research design allowed the researcher to determine which aspects of organizational culture County Government organizations use and which aspects their organizations use to achieve financial results and customer satisfaction and social responsibility activities and employee engagement. It supported the collection of quantitative data, allowing for statistical testing of the strength and direction of relationships among the study variables within a real-life institutional setting. The population for the study comprised 32,099 employees working across various departments within Nairobi County Government. The study used stratified random sampling methods to achieve equal representation from all departments. The sample size for the study reached 384 respondents after using Fisher et al. (1991) formula to establish 95% confidence level and 5% margin of error. Researchers used stratification to maintain accurate departmental representation while reducing errors in the sampling process and any sampling bias.

Data were collected using structured questionnaires with closed-ended items measured on a five-point Likert scale to capture quantitative data. To ensure validity, the instruments were reviewed by experts. Reliability testing was conducted using Cronbach's alpha coefficient, and a value of 0.85 was obtained, confirming high internal consistency of the instrument. Authorization to conduct the research was obtained from relevant authorities, and respondents were assured of confidentiality and anonymity to encourage honest and accurate responses. The questionnaires were administered using the drop-and-pick-later method. The data were coded and analyzed using SPSS Version 26. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize the data. Pearson correlation analysis tested the strength and direction of the relationship between organizational culture and organizational performance. Simple linear regression analysis was conducted to determine the predictive effect of organizational culture dimensions on organizational performance outcomes,

thereby providing a comprehensive understanding of how these variables interact within Nairobi County Government.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Descriptive Analysis of Organizational Culture and Organizational Performance

To be able to establish the organizational culture of Nairobi County, study respondents shared their views on several statements by rating. The findings were then presented as shown in Table 1 using mean and standard deviation.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of Organizational Culture

Organizational Culture	Mean	Std
Decisions are usually made at the level where the most relevant and accurate information is available.	3.16	1.39
All employees believe they can contribute positively to the organization's success.	2.99	1.44
The skills and abilities of employees are regarded as a key institutional capability.	3.00	1.38
Management consistently follows established policies and procedures across all departments.	3.04	1.41
The organization ensures effective coordination among different units so that activities are well aligned and mutually understood.	3.03	1.46
Information is shared openly within the organization, allowing employees to access what they need when required.	3.04	1.37
The organization encourages and recognizes employees who are willing to take calculated risks.	3.02	1.36
Organizational decisions are made with careful consideration of the needs and interests of customers.	3.10	1.39
Mean	3.05	0.03

The research results presented in Table 1 demonstrate that organizational culture exists within Nairobi County Government but its operational presence remains weak and its institutional application has not achieved comprehensive implementation. The overall mean value of 3.05 shows that organizations practice their cultural traditions at moderate levels because their systems and structures and norms exist but their departments execute these elements differently. The County Government has adopted decentralized decision-making practices which enable operational staff members to make decisions according to the higher informed decision-making score of 3.16. The system improves responsiveness and efficiency through its complex urban governance operations. The standard deviation values above 1.30 across most items show that people have different views about the situation because organizations experience different levels of decentralization and decision-making success throughout their different departments.

The two moderate scores show that organizations maintain communication channels which their operational teams need to work together, while their shared systems remain unexploited. The department exhibits some level of collaboration with other departments; however, unit

discrepancies show that coordination depends on informal practices that stem from departmental leadership rather than established collaborative procedures. The organization exhibits major deficiencies because employees do not believe they have the power to make identifiable organizational changes that they possess. The results show that employees view themselves as valuable resources to the organization yet they experience barriers which prevent them from using their power and influence at work. This could limit motivation, innovation, and discretionary effort. Similarly, the moderate rating for risk-taking ($M = 3.02$) reflects a cautious administrative culture, likely influenced by public sector accountability requirements and bureaucratic controls.

The research results confirm the findings of Hartnell, Ou, and Kinicki (2019) who proved that organizations achieve better results through their organizational culture components of employee participation and organizational routine and flexibility. The study showed that organizations attain sustained performance success through their ability to maintain strong cultural values which operate in unison. The researchers discovered that organizational culture which includes shared values and participative decision-making and coordinated systems functions as a positive force which drives both employee performance and institutional effectiveness at their study institution.

The research results demonstrate that Nairobi County Government maintains an unchanging organizational culture which operates through established processes and typical work methods. The organizational culture of the organization appears to prioritize compliance rather than fostering innovation. The organization needs to develop strong systems that enable employees to take decisions and execute their work because these systems will lead to better organizational performance.

Correlation Analysis

Table 2: Correlation Matrix

	Organizational Culture	Organizational Performance
Organizational Culture Pearson Correlation	1.000	0.746**
Organizational Performance Pearson Correlation	0.746**	1.000

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

The analysis showed that there is a substantial positive connection between organizational culture and organizational performance, which produced results of ($r = 0.746$, $p = 0.000$). The organization benefits from shared values and norms, and their combination with coordination systems and supportive leadership structures, which drive improvements in financial results and customer service, social responsibility, and employee stewardship. The strength of this relationship demonstrates that culture plays a central role in shaping performance outcomes. The research supports the importance of using a complete management framework that needs a solid cultural base system to enhance operational performance in Nairobi County Government.

Regression Analysis

To assess the extent to which organizational culture predicts organizational performance, a simple linear regression analysis was conducted.

Model Summary

The model summary presents the overall explanatory power of the regression model. The coefficient of determination (R^2) measures the organizational performance variance which organizational culture explains. The adjusted R^2 provides a more accurate estimate by adjusting for the number of predictors in the model.

Table 3: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R-Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.746a	.557	.556	.29717

Predictor: Organizational Culture

The regression analysis produced an R value of .746 which demonstrates a strong positive link that exists between organizational culture and organizational performance. The R^2 value of .557 shows that 55.7% of the organizational performance changes can be attributed to organizational culture. The adjusted R^2 of .556 shows that the model maintains its strong ability to explain results after researchers have adjusted for sampling error. The organization uses its culture as a main performance indicator, while the rest of its performance assessment requires testing of additional unidentified factors.

Analysis of Variance

To determine whether the regression model adequately explains variation in organizational performance, an ANOVA test was conducted. The F-statistic indicates whether the overall regression model provides a good fit in predicting organizational performance.

Table 4: Model Fit Results (ANOVA Summary)

Model	df1	df2	F	Sig.
Regression	1	378	474.837	.000

The results indicate that the model is statistically significant $F(1, 378) = 474.837, p = .000$, confirming that organizational culture predicts organizational performance and that the model fits the data well.

Regression Coefficients

The regression coefficients provide insight into the individual contribution of organizational culture to the prediction of organizational performance.

Table 5: Regression Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig. (p)
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1					
(Constant)	0.769	0.102	–	7.483	0.000
Organization Culture	0.739	0.034	0.746	21.791	0.000

The study results demonstrate that organizational culture produces a major positive impact on organizational performance through the regression analysis, which shows statistically significant coefficients at ($\beta = .746$, $p < 0.001$) level. The unstandardized coefficient ($B = .739$) shows that a one-unit improvement in organizational culture is associated with a 0.739-unit increase in predicted organizational performance, assuming other factors remain constant. The evidence shows that organizational culture functions as the primary element that determines institutional performance results. The positive standardized coefficient ($\beta = .746$) shows that culture serves as a strong performance predictor, which outperforms all other potential performance predictors. The study results support Organizational Culture Theory by Schein (1985), which asserts that shared values and norms determine both institutional effectiveness and the performance results that organizations achieve over time. The research by Suherman, Arminarahmah, and Martini (2024) shows that organizational culture drives both employee performance and overall organizational performance, thus proving its essential function in determining performance results.

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

The study examined the influence of organizational culture on organizational performance within Nairobi County Government. The analysis of 378 valid responses revealed that organizational culture practices were moderately embedded, with an overall mean score of 3.05. The strongest cultural dimension was informed decision-making, where decisions were taken at the level with the best possible information ($\bar{x} = 3.16$). The next highest dimension showed customer-oriented decision practices which received a score of 3.10. The two components showed lower results because employees required empowerment to reach their optimal level while believing that their personal work would create an impact ($\bar{x} = 2.99$). The correlation analysis demonstrated that organizational culture and organizational performance exhibited a strong positive relationship which achieved statistical significance ($r = .746$, $p < .001$). The shared values and norms together with coordination and leadership alignment improvements lead to multiple financial performance improvements and customer service enhancements and social responsibility growth and employee stewardship development.

Regression analysis further confirmed organizational culture as a dominant predictor of organizational performance. The model explained 55.7% of the variance in performance outcomes ($R^2 = .557$). The standardized regression coefficient ($\beta = .746$, $p < .001$) demonstrates that organizational culture has a strong predictive effect on performance. The unstandardized

coefficient ($B = .739$) implies that a one-unit increase in organizational culture leads to a 0.739-unit increase in organizational performance, holding other factors constant. These findings establish organizational culture as the strongest determinant of performance within Nairobi County Government.

Conclusion

The study shows that organizational culture has a strong positive effect on the performance of Nairobi County Government organizations. The study shows that organizational culture serves as the main predictor of performance results because it provides 55.7 percent explanatory power ($R^2 = .557$) and a high standardized coefficient ($\beta = .746$). The institution needs to strengthen its shared values system and decision-making processes and institutional norm compliance and information sharing mechanisms to achieve institutional effectiveness.

Recommendations

Practically, the Nairobi County Government needs to establish shared values together with decision-making systems and institutional standards that will deliver better performance results. The leadership should enforce strict guideline compliance while developing better methods for departments to share information, which will create cultural harmony throughout the organization.

At the policy level, the County Public Service Board and County Executive Committee should create an organizational culture development required for governance and performance enhancement through their policy initiatives. The organization needs to establish formal guidelines that will enforce collaboration and transparency, together with accountability practices, to maintain performance improvements. Future research should conduct this study again in different county governments across Kenya to increase the generalizability of the findings. The comparative study will examine different organizational aspects of devolved units to determine their impact on performance results.

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