Influence of Organizational Structure on Performancr of Public Universities in Kenya

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Abstract: University performance is very crucial in every country in the world. This is because universities discharge important functions of teaching, research and community service. This paper investigated the influence of organizational structure on performance of public universities in Kenya. The data for the study was collected from 23 public universities in Kenya and respondents were 103 heads of departments from different universities sampled. The data was collected using questionnaire and interview schedule then analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. The findings indicated that there is a correlation between organizational structure and performance of public universities in Kenya. R value was 0.566 and $P < 0.05$ at 5% level of significance. It was thus concluded that organizational structure influences public university performance in Kenya. It was finally recommended that all universities should come up with an organizational structure that favors performance.
Key Words: Organizational Structure, performance of public universities, statistical methods.

I. INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

According to Mwangi and Waithaka (2018), universities face some challenges in their daily operations but they still remain very important institutions due to their key roles of teaching, research and community service. According to Otieno (2020), public universities in Kenya have a central role in realization of vision 2030- an economic blue print which intends to transform Kenya into an industrialized middle income country. Oanda, Chege and Wesonga (2021) noted that the three Kenyans' pillars of the vision 2030 which are the political pillar, economic pillar and Social pillar are fortified by the performance of universities in Kenya. This implies that eradication of poverty, elimination of negative ethnicity, gender stereotyping and bad leadership is possible if universities and other academic institutions perform their functions as expected.

Universities also have a fundamental role in promoting national values among the youths (Sindabi, 2021). In this function the universities are supposed to go beyond teaching, learning, passing or failing exams and finding jobs. However, they need to create desired value system in an individual (Otieno, 2020). Universities should therefore propagate values like dignity, tolerance, equality among all people as well fair and equitable administration of justice (Browne, 2020).

However, there is a sharp contrast in the expectations outlined in the strategic intents (mission and vision) when compared to reality in the context of public universities in Kenya (Sindabi, 2021). The universities have excess non academic staff but have acute shortage of academic staff, a serious show of skewed human resource policy (Ayiro, 2020). There is lack of requisite infrastructure in universities resulting in undue pressure on the existing facilities and personnel. There are also claims that corruption and lacks of national values have marred public universities in Kenya (Matende, 2020). The public universities in Kenya are in quality crisis due to endless industrial actions and reduced funding by government of Kenya who is the chief provider of funds (Wasonga. 2021). Notably, all the public universities in Kenya have very elaborate strategic plans as a requirement by the Commission of University Education (CUE) in Kenya. These strategic plans have very elaborate and clear strategic themes that if well implemented can cause a positive difference (Mumba, 2021). Even though these strategic plans are revised every five years at high costs, about 60% of these strategic plans are not implemented. Some strategic plan documents remain as booklets on display on managers' shelves (Mumba, 2021).

It is therefore notable that there is a big gap in performance of public universities in Kenya. As a result, this study sought to explore alternative way of enhancing performance of public universities in Kenya by determining the influence of organizational structure on the performance of public universities in Kenya.

Statement of the Problem

The demand for university education has continuously increased in Kenya as evidenced by the gross enrolment of students in universities which has been over five hundred students for the past five academic years (Ministry of Education, 2021). This is a serious growth as compared to only one thousand students who were in the university five decades ago. This growth of population of students has created a number challenges that have become strong hindrance to the performance of the universities (Wainaina, 2020). The challenges include limited research funding, inadequate teaching staff and old bureaucratic structure that is not widely criticized by the stakeholders (Ayiro, 2020). The study thus intended to address the gap in performance of public universities in Kenya by investigating the influence of organizational structure on performance of public universities in Kenya.

Objective of the Study

The specific objective of this study was to examine the influence of organizational structure on performance of public universities in Kenya.

Research Hypothesis

H_1: There is no relationship between organizational structure and performance of public universities in Kenya.

II.   LITERATURE REVIEW

The history of organizational structure can be traced back to the days of the early man during hunting and gathering. But it has persisted with man through the industrial age up to post industrial age (Sichei, 2019). According to Stephen and Timothy (2020) decision to structure and restructure is quite paramount in today's business settings in which organizations such public university under this study operates. An organizational structure divides the entire organization into distinct parts, functions and defines the relationships among the various teams. The organization structure defines who has responsibility for what roles as well as documenting the reporting lines within the organization. The organization structure also defines the chain of command and resources accountabilities (Aslam, 2019). Designing the structure of an organization goes beyond the definition of the relationships among the parts, but also shows the resources and systems needed to support performance within the organization. The appropriate structure should therefore facilitate proper coordination of organizational processes to achieve the set goals of the organization (Barbu, & Carpusneanu, 2018).

Researches by different scholars show that organizational structure influences behavior and norms in a university setting, consequently, university performance (Bjorkman, 2019). Jarzabkowski (2018), in his longitudinal study of organizational structure in five universities in Japan noted that high performance in universities of Japan because the structures of the universities were two in one in many ways. They were bureaucratic and liberal; competitive and Collegial; private and public, critical and supportive, traditional and innovative. Based on the above arguments, a university that wants to perform must accept to be double edged in many ways.

Organizational structure shapes both competence and processes of an organization that leads to performance as noted Wolf (2019) in his survey study of selected universities in United Kingdom. Clemmer (2018) contradicted this in his study of universities in Russia and concluded that organizational performance is determined by the structure adopted by the organization.

D'ortenzio (2019) in his study on Australian universities noted that there are factors which tend to influence the university performance. This study noted that organizational structure, organizational leadership, organizational environment, and organizational culture contributed to a greater extent towards university performance. Universities with bureaucratic structures, poor leadership, unfavorable organization environments and weak organizational culture tend to have highest failure rate almost all university performance attributes such teaching effectiveness, research output and community outreach. However, it was noted that universities that exhibited lean structures, strong leadership, conducive organizational environments, and strong organizational cultures tend to be more efficient and had higher success rates when similar performance attributes were considered.

It is the organizational structure that formalizes how people interact within an organization, flow of communication and also define power relationships as noted in the study of universities in Algeria and Morocco (Hall, 2019 and Haji, 2020). These sentiments are supported by Weber (2019) who poses that organizational structure had greater influence on university performance in South Africa and Botswana. These studies used quantitative survey where 30% of the university administrative staffs were interviewed on performance matters and the main attribute of organizational structure in these studies was centralization. However, an organization's structure of a university can depend on its size, the sector it operates in (public or private), the number of people it employs and its physical resources. Developing a structure that supports university performance is difficult

because of uncertainty and dynamic environment hence it is a critical component of successful university performance (Namoso, 2020).

Robbin and DeCenzo (2020) in his study of selected universities in Niger argued that the Organizational Structure performs a significant role in the achievement of organizations set objectives and accomplishment of its strategic goals and direction. Organization's structure becomes more relevant when it is in harmony with the objective mission, competitive environment and resources of the organization. They believe "One cap fits all" is non-existence in an organizational structure design as no two firms are entirely similar and as such faces different challenges from its environment. Mansoor et al. (2021) in Algeria reportedly asserted that performance effect of Organizational Structure is moderated by changes in the environment. The duo concluded that, to attain desired superior performance by an organization adequate attention is required to have Organizational Structure that can match the prevailing environment dynamism in place. These structures are characterized with different attributes such as control, communication, organizational knowledge, task, prestige, governance and values. Hajipour, Mohammad and Arash (2021) studied on relationship between industry structure, strategy type and organizational characteristics. Results indicate industry structure determines organizational characteristics.

In Tanzania Sinyati (2019) contend that ideal organizational structure is a recipe for superior performance. Organizational structures are discussed in the existent literature with reference to two key factors; formalization and centralization asserted (Namoso & Gudergan, 2019) in their study of university of Mbarara in Uganda.

According to Otieno (2019) in his study of organizational structure in selected universities in Kenya, Organizational structure is seen as the location of decision-making responsibilities in the university, the formal division of the organization into subunits, and the establishment of integrating mechanisms to coordinate the activities of subunits.
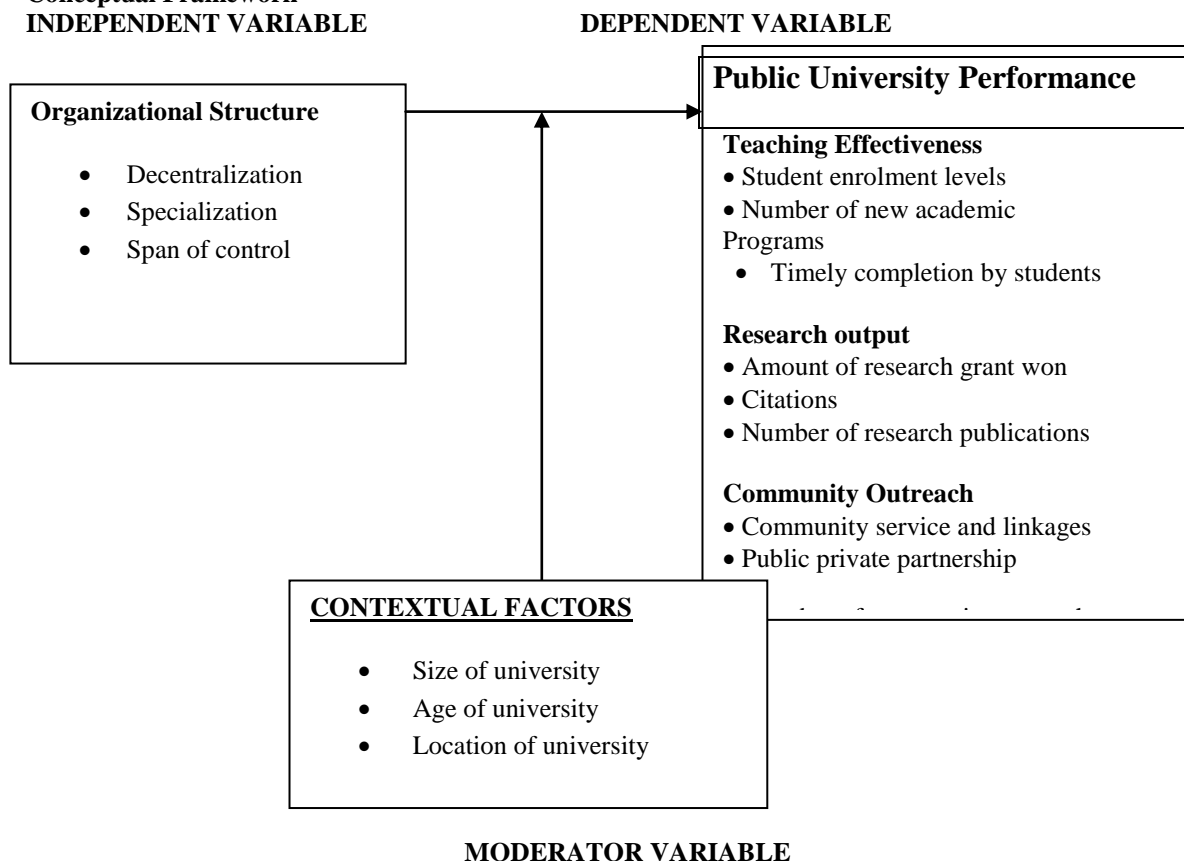
Another study about influence organizational structure on performance of public universities in Kenya shows no significant relationship. This is because all public universities have similar structure where the University council is the most supreme organ (Koech, 2019). The effect of organizational structure on performance is thus manifested indirectly through its influence on coordination, supervision and communication channels a fact this study intends to prove. While Waweru (2018) took a study on large private sector in Kenya found that there was weak correlation of organizational and performance. Kwasi and Moses (2018) study of performance of university of Nairobi found that there is significant positive relationship between organizational structure and performance.

From the empirical literature above, it was not that there are contradicting information about the influence of the organizational structure and university performance. This study therefore attempted to clear this gap by investigating organizational structure and performance of public universities in Kenya.

Theoretical Review
The study was anchored on institutional theory that instructions adopt similar practices with their competitors only for meeting legal requirements but not efficiency (Eisenhardt, 2018)

Conceptual Framework
INDEPENDENT VARIABLE   **DEPENDENT VARIABLE**

Organizational Structure

- Decentralization
- Specialization
- Span of control

Public University Performance

Teaching Effectiveness
- Student enrolment levels
- Number of new academic
Programs
  - Timely completion by students

Research output
- Amount of research grant won
- Citations
- Number of research publications

Community Outreach
- Community service and linkages
- Public private partnership

CONTEXTUAL FACTORS

- Size of university
- Age of university
- Location of university

MODERATOR VARIABLE

III.   RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study adopted mixed research design consisting of quantitative, cross sectional and descriptive survey design. The target population was 564 heads of departments in 31 public universities in Kenya. 23 public universities with a total of 308 heads of departments were purposively sampled. From 308 heads of departments in the sampled 23 universities, a total of 103 heads of departments were randomly sampled taking note that each school must have at least one head of department in the sample.

The study employed both questionnaire and interview schedule to collect data. The data was the analyzed using inferential statistics mean variance and standard deviation. Data from likert scale was analyzed by inferential statistics. The hypothesis of the study "H_1: there is no relationship between organizational structure and performance of public universities in Kenya" was tested using inferential statistics at 5% level of confidence.

$$Y = \beta_{0 +} \beta_1 X + \varepsilon$$

STUDY FINDINGS

Table 1: Descriptive analysis of influence of organizational structure on performance of public universities in Kenya.

	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Dev
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic
Organizational structure is decentralized	103	2.000	5.000	3.97087	.974743
Supervisor has more employees than he can control	103	1.000	5.000	2.66019	.955412
Workers perform duties for which they are employed	103	1.000	5.000	4.14563	.984266
There is departmental autonomy	103	1.000	5.000	4.00000	1.154701
Decentralized management system	103	1.000	5.000	4.10680	.927918
Valid N (list wise)	103				

Source: Survey Data (2021)

According to Table 1 above, the most predominant aspect of organizational structure is workers perform duties for which they are employed (mean 4.14563), followed by decentralized management system (mean 4.10680). Third in prevalence is there is departmental autonomy (mean 4.000). Since all these aspects of organizational structure are having a mean of above four (4 agreed and above) except the second questionnaire in this category that investigate about the number of employees under control of one supervisor which is 2.6667. It follows therefore that public universities in Kenya have well decentralized, autonomous and well supervised departments.

The standard deviation for all the questions in this section is about one. This implies that the respondents have converging views on the questions asked. For instance, first item that asked about decentralization of organizational structure has a standard deviation of 0.9747. This implies that most of the respondents have almost similar opinion about the issue of decentralization of departmental functions in public universities in Kenya. For the second question in this section which is concerned about the control level of supervisors, the standard deviation is 0.9554. This shows that most of the respondents accept that the universities have assigned the supervisors a good number of employees that they are able to control. This concurs with Mumba (2021) that accepts that supervisors in the university of Nairobi were assigned the number of employees they could easily control thus increasing supervisors' level of control. However, the respondents have slightly divergent views on the autonomy of different departments in the university. This is the only item in this section that has a standard deviation which is slightly more than one. This differs with research conducted by Kilonzo (2018) who conducted a similar research in universities in Nairobi county and accepted that university departments where not autonomous.

Table 2: Regression Analysis Results

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.566[a]	.320	.291	.573693

a. Predictors: (Constant), Organizational structure

ANOVA Results for Organizational Structure and University Performance

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	12.827	1	12.827	38.973	.000[b]
	Residual	33.241	101	.329		
	Total	46.069	102			

a. Dependent Variable: Public university performance

b. Predictors: (Constant), Organizational structure

From table 2 above, R value was 0.566 indicating a correlation between organizational structure and university performance. The value of R square is 0.320 a show that organizational structure accounted for 32% of the university performance.

Analysis of variance test results in the same table above indicate the overall significance for the regression model. The linear regression F-test result was significant at 5% level of significance (F (1, 101) = 38.973, p< 0.05). It is therefore concluded that the model is statistically significant.

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