Research Article

Influence of Organizational Culture on Organizational Management Performance of Universities in Meru County

[1]**Ninah Makena Muriuki**
Kenya Methodist University.
Corresponding author's Email: *kiambi.ninah@gmail.com*

Abstract

Organizational culture, comprising shared values, norms, and behaviors, profoundly impacts how institutions operate. Understanding this relationship is crucial for enhancing management effectiveness and achieving institutional goals. The purpose of the study was to investigate the influence of organizational culture on organizational management performance of Universities in Meru County. The study employed a descriptive research design to explore the correlation between organizational culture and organizational management performance across six universities in Meru County. It encompassed all 72 individuals, including administrators, faculty, and staff members, from both public and private institutions. Quantitative data was gathered through structured surveys, utilizing standardized scales. Analysis involved descriptive statistics for summarization and inferential statistics like correlation and regression analysis to explore the relationship. Findings were presented visually using tables, charts, and graphs. The study revealed that organizational culture significantly influences the organizational management performance of universities in Meru County. Respondents indicated strong agreement that effective financial management, accountability, and quality of education are key aspects of their university's culture. Regression analysis showed a positive influence of organizational culture on management performance, with 57.2% of the variation explained. The ANOVA results further supported this, demonstrating a significant combined effect. Based on the findings, the study therefore concluded that organizational culture significantly influences the organizational management performance of universities in Meru County. Strong consensus among respondents and positive regression results underscored the pivotal role of culture in driving success. The study hence recommended that university leadership should invest in fostering a positive culture by promoting open communication, recognizing achievements, and prioritizing employee well-

being. Moreover, integrating cultural considerations into management practices, including assessments and training, is advised to align strategies with organizational values and enhance overall performance.

Introduction

Universities serve as dynamic hubs of knowledge creation, dissemination, and innovation within society. The management of these institutions plays a pivotal role in shaping their effectiveness, efficiency, and overall performance. One critical factor that profoundly impacts organizational management within universities is organizational culture (Paais & Pattiruhu, 2020). Organizational culture refers to the shared values, beliefs, norms, and practices that define the collective identity and behavior of individuals within an organization. In the context of universities, organizational culture encompasses the attitudes, behaviors, and traditions that shape the academic community's interactions, decision-making processes, and overall work environment (Joseph & Kibera, 2019).

A positive organizational culture enhances organizational management performance in universities by fostering a conducive environment for academic excellence, innovation, and institutional development (Meng & Berger, 2019). A culture that values collaboration, transparency, and inclusivity promotes effective communication, teamwork, and knowledge sharing among faculty, staff, and students. This facilitates interdisciplinary research collaborations, fosters creativity and innovation, and enhances the quality of teaching and learning experiences (Lam *et al.,*2021).

Furthermore, a strong organizational culture reinforces institutional values and priorities, guiding strategic decision-making processes and resource allocation strategies (Soomro & Shah, 2019). Universities with a vibrant and supportive culture attract and retain top talent, enhance employee satisfaction and morale, and promote a sense of belonging and pride within the academic community. Ultimately, a positive organizational culture contributes to higher levels of productivity, performance, and effectiveness, enabling universities to achieve their mission and goals effectively (Arif *et al.,*2019).

Organizational culture has significantly enhanced organizational management performance in Australian universities by fostering a culture of innovation and collaboration. Australian universities prioritize a culture of academic freedom and creativity, allowing faculty and staff to explore new ideas and approaches to teaching, research, and administration (Rofifah *et al.,*2021). This emphasis on innovation has led to the development of cutting-edge research programs, interdisciplinary collaborations, and industry partnerships that contribute to Australia's global reputation for academic excellence (Al-Swidi *et al.* 2021).

Furthermore, Australian universities value inclusivity and diversity, promoting a culture of respect and openness that empowers individuals from diverse backgrounds to thrive within the academic community. This inclusive culture extends to governance structures, with universities implementing transparent decision-making processes and actively involving stakeholders in strategic planning and policy development (Lee & Jang, 2020). Moreover, Australian universities prioritize staff development and well-being, recognizing that a supportive work environment is essential for attracting and retaining top talent. By fostering a positive organizational culture, Australian universities have been able to achieve high levels of employee satisfaction, productivity, and institutional effectiveness (Kassem *et al.,*2019).

Organizational culture has played a crucial role in enhancing organizational management performance in Chinese universities by fostering a culture of discipline, teamwork, and innovation. Chinese universities emphasize a strong work ethic and a commitment to excellence, instilling a

sense of pride and dedication among faculty, staff, and students(Chu *et al.,* 2019). This culture of discipline is reflected in rigorous academic standards, performance evaluation mechanisms, and accountability measures that ensure the quality and integrity of teaching, research, and administration (Shao, 2019).

Additionally, Chinese universities prioritize teamwork and collaboration, fostering a culture of collective responsibility and mutual support among academic and administrative units. This collaborative culture enables universities to leverage diverse expertise and resources to address complex challenges and pursue strategic priorities effectively (Meng & Berger, 2019). Moreover, Chinese universities embrace a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship, encouraging faculty and students to explore new ideas, technologies, and approaches to research and education. By nurturing a dynamic and forward-thinking organizational culture, Chinese universities have been able to adapt to rapid changes in the higher education landscape and maintain their competitive edge on the global stage (Shamim *et al.,*2019).

Organizational culture has played a critical role in enhancing organizational management performance in Egyptian universities by fostering a culture of resilience, adaptability, and community engagement (Pathiranage, 2019). Egyptian universities operate within a dynamic and challenging socio-political environment, where they must navigate resource constraints, political instability, and societal expectations. In response to these challenges, Egyptian universities have developed a culture of resilience and adaptability, enabling them to respond effectively to changing circumstances and overcome obstacles to academic excellence (Cherian *et al.,*2021).

Furthermore, Egyptian universities prioritize community engagement and social responsibility, fostering strong ties with local communities, government agencies, and industry partners. This culture of engagement enables universities to identify and address pressing societal needs

through research, outreach, and service initiatives that contribute to national development priorities (Abdelzaher & Abdelzaher, 2019). Moreover, Egyptian universities value traditions and heritage, promoting a sense of pride and identity among faculty, staff, and students. By embracing a rich cultural heritage while also embracing innovation and change, Egyptian universities have been able to achieve high levels of institutional effectiveness and societal impact (Al-Romeedy, 2019).

Organizational culture has been instrumental in enhancing organizational management performance in South African universities by fostering a culture of inclusivity, transformation, and social justice (Rehman *et al.,* 2019). South African universities operate within a diverse and complex socio-political landscape, where they must address historical inequalities, promote diversity, and advance reconciliation efforts. In response to these challenges, South African universities have developed a culture of inclusivity and transformation, prioritizing equity, diversity, and social justice in all aspects of academic life (Soomro & Shah, 2019).

Furthermore, South African universities emphasize a culture of social responsibility and community engagement, actively addressing pressing societal challenges through research, outreach, and service initiatives that promote sustainable development and improve the quality of life for marginalized communities (Aboramadan *et al.,* 2020). This culture of engagement extends to governance structures, with universities implementing inclusive decision-making processes and actively involving stakeholders in strategic planning and policy development. Moreover, South African universities prioritize student success and well-being, providing support services and initiatives that promote access, retention, and academic achievement for all students. By fostering a culture of inclusivity, transformation, and social responsibility, South African universities have been able to achieve high levels of institutional effectiveness and societal impact (González-Rodríguez *et al.,* 2019).

Organizational culture is a significant determinant of organizational behavior and performance in universities across Kenya. It encompasses the shared values, beliefs, norms, and practices that shape the attitudes and behaviors of members within the academic community (Onyango & Ondiek, 2021). In the context of universities, organizational culture influences various aspects of management, including decision-making processes, communication channels, leadership styles, and the overall effectiveness of institutional operations (Arokodare *et al.,*2019).

Statement of the Problem

Despite its importance, organizational culture in Kenyan universities often faces challenges that hinder optimal management performance. These include resistance to change, hierarchical structures that impede communication and collaboration, outdated traditions that stifle innovation, and a lack of inclusivity and diversity. Moreover, conflicting subcultures within academic departments or administrative units can lead to fragmentation and inconsistency in institutional practices (Akanji *et al.,* 2020). These issues can undermine leadership effectiveness, faculty morale, student engagement, research productivity, and overall insitutinal performance. Addressing these challenges requires a comprehensive understanding of the dynamics of organizational culture and its impact on management within the unique context of Kenyan universities.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of the study was to investigate the influence of organizational culture on organizational management performance of Universities in Meru County.

Justification of the study

This study delves into how organizational culture affects the management performance of universities in Meru County. By exploring this relationship, it seeks to uncover unique cultural dynamics within the county's academic

institutions and their impact on management practices. Understanding these dynamics is essential for fostering an environment conducive to innovation, collaboration, and excellence, thus enhancing the overall effectiveness and competitiveness of universities in Meru County.

Theoretical Review

Schein's Organizational Culture and Leadership (1985)

Schein's theory of Organizational Culture and Leadership was introduced by Edgar H. Schein in 1985. This seminal work has since become a cornerstone in organizational studies, providing a comprehensive framework for understanding how organizational culture influences leadership behavior and organizational outcomes (Akpa *et al.,* 2021). Schein argues that organizational culture is a deeply ingrained phenomenon that shapes the beliefs, values, and behaviors of individuals within an organization. He identifies three levels of culture: artifacts and symbols, espoused beliefs and values, and basic underlying assumptions. According to Schein, organizational culture is manifested through these levels and influences every aspect of organizational life, including leadership styles, decision-making processes, and employee behavior (Schein, 2020). In the context of the study on the influence of leadership commitment on organizational management performance of Universities in Meru County, Schein's theory provides valuable insights. Leadership commitment is a critical component of organizational culture, as leaders play a central role in shaping and reinforcing cultural norms and values. According to Schein, leaders are cultural architects who define and articulate the core values and beliefs of an organization. Their commitment to these values sets the tone for organizational behavior and influences management performance (Rahil, & Dumitru, 2019).

Schein's theory suggests that in universities in Meru County, leadership commitment to the espoused values of the institution will positively impact management performance. Leaders who

demonstrate a strong commitment to academic excellence, integrity, and innovation are likely to inspire similar values among employees, leading to enhanced organizational effectiveness (Aboramadan *et al.,*2020).

Empirical Literature Review

A. Influence of organizational culture on organizational management performance of Universities

Organizational culture profoundly influences the management performance of universities, shaping leadership behavior, employee commitment, and organizational outcomes. Through a comprehensive review of literature spanning diverse theoretical frameworks and empirical studies, this essay elucidates the intricate relationship between organizational culture and the effectiveness of management practices within academic institutions. Taylor *et al.,* (2019) on Organizational Culture and Leadership establishes the foundation by emphasizing the pivotal role of leaders in shaping and nurturing organizational culture. His findings underscore the importance of a strong cultural framework aligned with organizational goals for effective management. However, while Schein's theoretical framework provides valuable insights, the lack of empirical evidence to support its claims highlights a significant research gap. Future studies should endeavor to empirically validate the relationship between organizational culture and leadership effectiveness within universities.

Monaci (2020) empirical study contributes valuable findings by identifying four dimensions of organizational culture and their impact on organizational effectiveness. Their research highlights the importance of strong cultures characterized by involvement, consistency, adaptability, and mission in fostering higher performance. However, the study primarily focuses on private sector organizations, leaving a gap in understanding how these findings translate to the unique context of universities. Future research should explore the applicability of these

dimensions to academic institutions and their management practices. Martinez *et al.* (2023) competing Values Framework offers a comprehensive tool for understanding and managing organizational culture, elucidating different cultural orientations and their implications for effectiveness. While the framework provides valuable insights, its direct application to universities remains underexplored. Future studies should investigate how universities align with different cultural orientations and how this alignment influences their management performance.

Assoratgoon and Kantabutra (2023)'s study (2003) explores the role of organizational culture as a mechanism for social control, highlighting its impact on employee commitment and alignment with organizational goals. However, the study's generalizability to universities is limited, indicating a need for research to examine how these mechanisms operate within academic institutions. Future studies should explore the unique cultural dynamics within universities and their implications for management effectiveness. Hofstede's cultural dimensions theory (2010) offers cross-cultural insights into the management of organizational culture, emphasizing the importance of understanding cultural differences in managing organizations. While widely applied across various contexts, its direct application to universities remains underexplored. Future research should explore how cultural dimensions manifest within academic institutions and their influence on management practices.

Ahmad and Shah's empirical study (2014) provides valuable insights into the impact of organizational culture on innovation and knowledge management within Malaysian universities. Their findings highlight the positive association between a supportive culture and innovation. However, the study's focus on Malaysian universities limits its generalizability to other cultural contexts. Future research should explore similar relationships in diverse cultural settings to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the influence of organizational culture on management performance. Gorzelany

et al., (2021) explores the process of changing organizational culture, shedding light on the challenges and complexities involved in cultural change initiatives. While offering valuable insights, its application to universities specifically remains limited. Future research should investigate the unique challenges and strategies involved in changing the culture of academic institutions, providing practical recommendations for effective management.
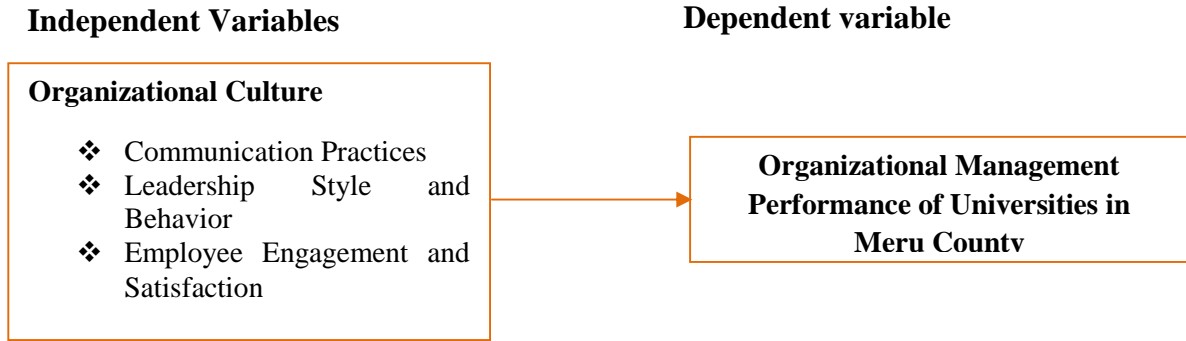
Conceptual framework

Independent Variables   **Dependent variable**

Organizational Culture

- ❖ Communication Practices
- ❖ Leadership Style and Behavior
- ❖ Employee Engagement and Satisfaction

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Organizational Management Performance of Universities in Meru County

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework
Source: Researcher (2024)

Research Methodology

The study employed a descriptive research design, focusing on quantifying the relationship between organizational culture and organizational management performance in universities within Meru County. This design allowed for the systematic collection and analysis of quantitative data to describe the extent of organizational culture and its impact on management performance. The target population included all 6 Universities located within Meru County. This encompasses both public and private universities operating in the region. The study aimed to capture the perspectives of university administrators, faculty members, and staff members who have direct experience with leadership practices and management performance within their respective institutions. The study included all 72 individuals from six universities: A/Nazarene, Meru, KeMU, Nairobi, Moi, and Mt Kenya. Each university contributed 2 administrators, 5 faculty members, and 5 staff members, totaling 12 administrators, 30 faculty members, and 30 staff members. This full population sampling aligns with Leedy's recommendation of sampling populations larger than 100 for validity. Quantitative data was collected through structured surveys administered to university administrators, faculty members, and staff members. The survey instrument included standardized scales to measure leadership commitment and indicators of organizational management performance. The surveys was distributed electronically or in person, depending on the preferences and accessibility of participants. Quantitative data analysis involve descriptive statistics, including measures of central tendency and variability, to summarize the collected data. Inferential statistics, such as correlation analysis and regression analysis, was used to examine the relationship between organizational culture and organizational management performance. The findings was presented using tables, charts, and graphs to visually illustrate the key findings and patterns observed in the data.

Results

Response rate

The study surveyed 72 individuals from six universities from which a total of 69 questionnaires were received back, resulting in a response rate of 95.8% as shown in Table 1. This response rate is deemed satisfactory, as Creswell (2014) asserts that a response rate of over 50% is considered acceptable for a survey.

Table 1: Response Rate

	Number of Informants	Percent
Response Number	72	95.8
Non- Response Number	69	4.2
Total	**110**	**100**

Source: Researcher (2024)

Descriptive Findings

Descriptive findings refer to the results of data analysis that describe the characteristics of a sample or population under investigation.

Organizational Culture on Organizational Management Performance

The study sought to find out the influence of organizational culture on organizational management performance of Universities in Meru County. The results are as shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Top Organizational Culture on Organizational Management Performance

Item	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Our university effectively manages its financial resources to support its mission and goals.	69	4.33	0.743
The administrative processes in our university are efficient and streamlined.	69	4.03	0.883
Our university effectively recruits and retains qualified faculty and staff.	69	4.16	0.953
The university's strategic planning processes are effective in guiding its growth and development.	69	3.53	0.992
Our university demonstrates accountability and transparency in its operations.	69	4.09	0.751
The quality of education and research outcomes in our university meets or exceeds expectations.	69	4.23	0.943
Overall, I am satisfied with the organizational management performance of our university	69	4.13	0.883

Source: Researcher (2024)

The study findings, as depicted in Table 2, indicate that organizational culture significantly influences the organizational management performance of Universities in Meru County. The majority of respondents strongly agreed that their university effectively manages its financial resources to support its mission and goals (Mean = 4.33, Std. Deviation = 0.743), and demonstrates accountability and transparency in its operations (Mean = 4.09, Std. Deviation = 0.751). Moreover, respondents also strongly agreed that their university effectively recruits and retains qualified faculty and staff (Mean = 4.16, Std. Deviation = 0.953), and that the quality of education and research outcomes meets or exceeds expectations (Mean = 4.23, Std. Deviation = 0.943). However, there was slightly lower agreement regarding the effectiveness of strategic planning processes in guiding growth and development (Mean = 3.53, Std. Deviation = 0.992). Nevertheless, overall satisfaction with organizational management performance was high among respondents (Mean = 4.13, Std. Deviation = 0.883). These findings highlight the pivotal role of organizational culture in shaping various aspects of university management performance, from resource management to academic excellence.

Organizational Management Performance of Universities

The study sought to find out the organizational management performance of Universities in Meru County. The results are as shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Organizational Management Performance of Universities

Item	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Our university effectively utilizes its resources to achieve its goals and objectives.	69	4.43	0.943
The university's management implements efficient processes and systems to support academic and administrative operations.	69	4.3	1.083
The university demonstrates transparency and accountability in its decision-making processes and financial management.	69	4.16	0.953
Our university consistently evaluates and improves its academic programs and services to meet the needs of students and stakeholders.	69	3.53	1.492
The university fosters a supportive and inclusive environment for faculty, staff, and students	69	4.09	0.851

Source: Researcher (2024)

The study findings, as shown in Table 3, revealed that the majority of the respondents strongly agreed that their university effectively utilizes its resources to achieve its goals and objectives (Mean = 4.43, Std. Deviation = 0.943). Similarly, respondents indicated a high level of agreement regarding the implementation of efficient processes and systems by the university's management to support academic and administrative operations (Mean = 4.3, Std. Deviation = 1.083). Additionally, there was strong agreement that the university fosters a supportive and inclusive environment for faculty, staff, and students (Mean = 4.09, Std. Deviation = 0.851). However, there was a slightly lower level of agreement regarding the university's consistent evaluation and improvement of academic programs and services to meet the needs of students and stakeholders (Mean = 3.53, Std. Deviation = 1.492). Nevertheless, overall, respondents perceived a high level of organizational management performance within their university, particularly in resource utilization, efficient processes, and fostering a supportive environment.

The outcome of the Regression Analysis

The study used a regression model to establish the influence of organizational culture on organizational management performance of Universities in Meru County. The results for the model summary are presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Outcome of the Regression Analysis

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	3.880	.681		5.699	.000
	Organizational Culture	0.331	.123	.171	1.571	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Organizational management performance of Universities in Meru County.
Source: Researcher (2024)

As can be seen from Table 4, the beta coefficient of organizational culture is 0.331, which means that organizational culture influence has a positive influence on organizational management performance of Universities in Meru County.

Model Summary

Table 5: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.672[a]	.572	.555	.16572
a. Predictor: (Constant), Organizational Culture				

Source: Researcher (2024)

The model summary Table 5 indicates an R-Square of 0.572 which implies that 57.2% of the independent variable, which organizational Culture explained the dependent variable which was organizational management performance of Universities in Meru County.

The analysis of variance results Table 6 indicates that the model fit is significant at $p=0.001^b$, F=45.797 with 80 degrees of freedom. This implies that organizational culture jointly has a significant and positive combined effect on organizational management performance of Universities in Meru County.

Table 6: Test for the ANOVA

Model		Sum of Squares	df	F	Sig.
1	**Regression**	21.667	4	45.797	0.001[b]
	Residual	27.789	64		
	Total	48.456	68		
a. Dependent Variable: organizational management performance of Universities in Meru County					
b. Predictor: (Constant) Organizational Culture					

Source: Researcher (2024)

As shown in Table 6, the ANOVA analysis presents the influence of on organizational culture on organizational management performance of Universities in Meru County. The result of the findings shows a p-value of 0.001 which is revealed to be less than 0.005.

Conclusion

The study concluded that organizational culture significantly influences the organizational management performance of universities in Meru County. Strong consensus among respondents regarding various facets of management performance, coupled with regression analysis results showing a positive relationship between organizational culture and management effectiveness, reaffirmed this assertion. With a substantial proportion of variance in management performance explained by organizational culture, it emerged as a key determinant of success within these academic institutions. Additionally, the significant combined effect of organizational culture, as indicated by the analysis of variance, emphasized its collective impact on management performance. Therefore, the study underscores the critical role of cultivating a positive and supportive organizational culture within universities as a fundamental driver of success. Prioritizing efforts to enhance organizational culture should be a strategic imperative for university leadership seeking to improve management practices and overall performance.

Recommendations of the study

The study recommended that university leadership should invest resources and efforts in cultivating a positive and supportive organizational culture. This entails initiatives such as promoting open communication, fostering collaboration, recognizing achievements, and prioritizing employee well-being. Through nurturing a culture of transparency, accountability, and inclusivity, universities can motivate staff and faculty towards institutional goals.

Additionally, the study recommended that considerations of culture should be integrated into management practices. This involves incorporating cultural assessments into performance evaluations, aligning management strategies with cultural values, and providing training to enhance cultural awareness among leaders and staff. Through aligning management practices with desired organizational culture, universities can effectively manage resources, processes, and relationships, thus improving overall performance.

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