

## **ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE AND PERFORMANCE OF PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES IN KENYA**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Higher educational institutions have increasingly faced complex and changing environments and the key to success of these institutions is the development of a particular culture. Organizational culture has been assumed to have important implications, not only for the individual's behavior in the organization but also for organizational effectiveness. It is a critical factor in enhancing the attainment of organizational goals and objectives. Organizational culture as a social phenomenon has therefore been affirmed as enhancing and sustaining performance. This research therefore attempts to find out the relationship between organizational culture and the performance of Public Universities in Mount Kenya Region. The specific objectives of the study are; to identify the relationship between power culture, task culture, person culture and role culture and performance of public universities in Mount Kenya Region. The study was conducted in the Mount Kenya Region, as a region where higher education has undisputedly gained popularity over the recent years, where a descriptive research design was adopted and the study population consisted of eight public of students associations of public universities in Mount Kenya Region. The data was collected using questionnaires, which were analysed both quantitatively and qualitatively. The target population constituted of 66 deans of schools, 172 heads of departments and 28 leaders computed and analysed using Statistical Package for Social Studies (SPSS). Quantitative data was interpreted and inferences were made and presented using

charts, tables and percentages, while qualitative data was organized into thematic categories according to the objectives of the study. The study established that organizational culture had a significant and a positive effect on the performance of public universities in the Mount Kenya Region. The study established that many of the officers in the universities in exercising their powers makes what they feel is the appropriate decision and emphasizes that the workers have no choice but to comply. It was established that majority of officers and supervisors tries to find some sort of common ground and attempts to please everyone in carrying their day to day operations. However, majority of the officers organize a meeting of all interested parties providing them with an opportunity to work out their differences. The study established that administrators emphasizes on teamwork in all the university's departments. However, some of the officers were accused of treating students unfairly especially when under pressure. The study established that employees in the university have a strong creative and innovative skills in their work place thus translating to improved performance of the university. The study found that employees are upraised regularly in terms of qualification and potential and rewarded fairly by the university management. The study established that employees understand the core values of the university and practices them at all times and that they believed that the administration is reliable in handling personal employee's matters. The study concluded that, power culture, task culture, role culture and person culture influences

the performance of public universities in Kenya. For effective performance of the university, the management should invest in improving the organizational culture. The study recommends that the university should have a clear policy on communication procedures and minimum credentials for one to occupy a certain university office and that

departments should be harmonized and structured properly for effective communication. The study also recommended that teamwork and periodic review of the employees' role should be encouraged.

**Key Words:** *organisational culture, performance, public universities, Kenya*

## **INTRODUCTION**

In today's dynamic and complex environment, there is a strong need for educational institutions to become globally competitive. In order for educational institutions to attain successful performance, they should manage their organizational culture. Performance refers to the degree of achievement of the mission at work place that builds up an employee job (Cascio, 2006). Most organizations view their performance in terms of effectiveness in achieving their mission, purpose or goals and efficiency in deploying resources. Many academics and practitioners argue that the performance of an organization is dependent on the degree to which the values of the culture are widely shared. There are many factors affecting institutional performance, organizational culture being one of the major factors. It is therefore critical for all institutional leaders to understand the underlying values of their institutions because these factors directly influence the institutional performance and how much work is required to ensure successful outcomes for the institution, (Prosci, 2010). Organizational culture has the potential to enhance the performance of any institution and the sense of certainty about problem solving (Kotter, 2012).

According to Tierney (2006), cultural awareness in higher education helps to achieve organizational goals, analyse organizations, explain differences among organizations, and unify personnel. Azhar (2003) also asserts that the phenomenon which often distinguishes good organizations from bad ones could be summed up as corporate culture. The researcher also says that well-managed organizations have distinctive cultures that are responsible for their ability to be successful. Every organization has a culture that exerts powerful influences on the behaviour of organizational leaders and staff. Organizational culture can be one of the most important means of improving organizational performance. Organizational culture has become very important in the recent years, it plays a role that is significant and affects the operations of any institution. Culture may not guarantee success but institutions with strong cultures have most always, done better than their competitors. The fact that organizations may have strong or weak cultures affects their ability to perform. It not only affects the way institutional leaders behave, but also the decisions they make about the institution's relationships with its environment and its strategy, (McCarthy, Minichiello & Curran, 2000).

Studies have shown that organizational culture has a direct effect on vital outcomes of any organization, including customer satisfaction and business growth. The strong effects of organizational culture are consistent across a wide spectrum of businesses and industries, from education institutions, churches, service industry and manufacturing companies. Hence, according to Azhar (2003), organizational culture is presumed to have far-reaching implications for organizations' performance, making it an important topic to understand. Tierney (2006) suggests that there are two major research views regarding organizations and organizational culture. The functional view regards organizational values as absolute, culture as an ontological entity, and culture as a product of the organization. Here, researchers examine causal laws, observable behaviours, and organizational structures. By contrast, the interpretive approach regards organizations as cultures that subjectively create their own realities. Here, researchers assess how personnel interpret their organizations. Administrators and researchers should analyse culture in their own organizations to reduce conflict and to promote the sharing of goals.

The culture and performance have been interrelated to each other based upon perfect association between business processes (Reichers and Schneider, 1990). The culture construct based upon operational complexity has its basis towards different business processes. In more than 200 organizations economic and long term performance have been investigated (Kotter and Heskett, 1992). Firstly culture and performance were considered interrelated to each other by forceful management. Secondly nature and scope of culture based upon theoretical point of view have been presented more appropriately. While strong association between management practices, performance and culture management have been presented so that culture establishment takes place effectively. The competitive advantage of an organization is attained through strong association and establishment of culture. The organization culture helps in measuring limitation to overcome performance measurement (Rousseau, 1990). The limitations shows that culture and employee performance shows negative correlation as employee performance is badly affected by it.

### **Organizational Culture**

Allaire (2009) describes organizational culture as a relatively uniform perception held of the organization, it has common characteristics, it is descriptive, it can distinguish one organization from another and it integrates individuals groups and organization system variables. In order to aid long term performance, there are three main criteria needed to develop a suitable culture: It must be strategically relevant; it needs to be strong in order so that people can care about what is important; and the culture must have an ability to adapt to changing circumstances. According to Ravasi and Schultz (2006), organizational culture is a set of shared mental assumptions that guide interpretation and action in organizations by defining appropriate behavior for various situations. Organizational culture may affect employees' identification with an organization.

According to Cameron (2005), there are four types of organizational culture; power, role, person and task cultures. Brown (1998) stated that, power culture has a single source of power from

which rays of influence spread throughout the organization. This means that power is centralized and organizational members are connected to the center by functional and specialist strings. Brown (1998) stated that, the strength of a role culture lies in its functions or specialties; finance, purchasing and production, which can be thought of as a series of pillars which are coordinated and controlled by a small group of senior executives. This implies that the foundation and pillars of such an organization are the formalized and centralized functions; which are controlled by role and communication procedures. Person culture is where the individual is the central focus and any structure exists to serve the individuals within it, for example doctors, consultants, architects, university professors and specialists. Individuals have almost complete autonomy and any influence over them is likely to be on the basis of personal power, (Handy, 1999).

According to Handy (1999), task culture is job or project-oriented, and its accompanying structure can be best represented as a net. Some of the strands of the net are thicker or stronger than others, and much of the power and influence is located at the interstices of the net, at the knots. Task cultures are often associated with organizations that adopt matrix or project-based structural designs. This culture seeks to bring together the appropriate resources and the right people at the right level in order to assemble relevant resources for the completion of a particular project. According to Schein (2004), there is a close relationship between an organizational culture and performance. The researcher observes that, a high degree of organizational performance is related to an organization which has strong culture with well integrated and effective set of values, behaviors and beliefs. The survival of any organization solely rests on its effectiveness and efficiency in utilizing the resources supplied. Despite hard economic times and the stiff competition evidenced in education sector in the twenty first century, any institution that strives to survive must justify its existence through its performance. However, very few institutional leaders realize the weight a culture of an institution has on its performance.

### **Organizational Performance**

According to Richard (2009) organizational performance encompasses three specific areas of a firm outcomes; financial performance, product market performance and shareholder return. Performance is something which all education institutions strive for, regardless of their size. Small institutions want to get big, big institutions want to get bigger. Indeed, institutions have to grow every year at least, in order to accommodate the increased educational needs that have emerged over time. Smart and Hamm (2003) state that measuring performance in education is very important. If an academic institution wants to deliver quality results, then it should evaluate its performance. Performance is a broader indicator that can include productivity, quality, consistency and so forth. On the other hand, performance measures can include results, behaviors and relative measures, education and training concepts, management development, and leadership training for building necessary skills and attitudes of performance management (Richard, 2009).

Organizational performance, however, means different things to different institutions. There are many parameters an institution may use to measure its performance. Since the main goal of most business organizations is profitability, most organizations will measure their performance in terms of profits. However, most education institutions are for non-profit and their leaders may use one of the following criteria for assessing and measuring their performance; number of employees, number of students, resolution of conflicts, employees and student complaints, increased market share, financial sustainability, technology and innovation and availability of facilities. Ultimately, success and performance of an institution will be gauged by how well an institution does, relative to the goals it has set for itself (Richard, 2009).

In this study, performance will be measured by the extent to which the institution has systems in place to explicitly manage its culture. Azhar (2003) asserts that the phenomenon which often distinguishes good organizations from bad ones could be summed up as organization culture, well- managed organizations apparently have distinctive cultures that are, in some way, responsible for performance. Every organization has a culture that exerts powerful influences on the behavior of employees and managers and it can be one of the most important means of improving performance in any organization. In this context, performance of public universities will be anchored on their ability to offer quality and relevant higher education to the learners and also provide meaningful employment to the staff and other stakeholders. Performance will be measured through the number of students the institution is able to accommodate, attract and retain, ability and good will to resolve conflicts, technology in place and innovations by the institution and the availability of sufficient and conducive learning facilities.

### **Public Universities in Mount Kenya Region**

According to Commission for Higher Education (CHE), (2017), there are 67 universities in Kenya, 22 of which are public, 9 public university constituent colleges, 17 private chartered universities, 5 private university constituent colleges, 13 institutions with letter of interim authority, and 1 registered private institution. As provided by the act of parliament, the president of the Republic of Kenya appoints the chancellors of the public universities who are the heads of the universities (CHE, 2017). There are 6 main public universities in Mount Kenya Region which include; Dedan Kimathi University of Technology, Karatina University, Murang'a University College, Kirinyaga University, Chuka University and Meru University of Science and Technology. Smaller campuses include; Kenyatta University Nyeri Campus, and University of Nairobi Nyeri Extra Mural Centre. In the last four decades, there has been rapid growth of the higher education sector as a whole. Demand for higher education in Mount Kenya Region has attracted various universities, both public and private to open up campuses. This has been done to serve the numerous number of students enrolling for higher education institutions (CHE, 2017).

The current state of the public universities consists part of the inherited legacies from the past and policy intentions of the future. The public universities have for a long time relied on

government funding till late 90's when self-sponsored university programmes were introduced due to the growing needs of higher education, this has allowed the universities to generate incomes that subsidizes the government funding (Kenyan Education, 2011).

## **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

According to Ojo (2008), despite the plethora of studies on organizational culture in the last few decades, the empirical evidences emerging from various studies about the relationship between organizational culture and performance have so far yielded mixed results that are inconclusive and contradictory. The researcher further states that researchers concur on the fact that there is no agreement on the precise nature of the relationship between organizational culture and performance. Organizational culture is a popular but also a very complex concept that has been identified as an influential factor affecting the successes and failures of organizations in diverse ways. With the emergence of increased competition in the higher education sector, coupled with inadequate funding from the government, institutional performance has been affected more so on service delivery. Waithaka (2010) agrees that university performance in Kenya is too rigid resulting to bad consequences. Currently, universities have attracted unprecedented public scrutiny and have encountered challenges in their performance such as: increase in student numbers, scarce resources, staff turnover, weak capital outlays, industrial disputes and "brain drain". With increased student numbers this translates to large work-loads for the staff which affects performance. To tackle these challenges, universities need to be strategic and to realize the importance of positive organizational culture as an important aspect in order to gain competitive advantage (Wambugu, 2012). Although empirical research has been carried out there has been little evidence to prove the effect of organizational culture on performance (McKinnon, 2003). The issue of the interrelation between the organization culture and organizational performance is not brought out clearly as far as the variables under investigation are concerned. Several researchers have described organizational culture and organization performance from other wider dimensions. Sebastian (2010) studied on organizational culture relative to performance in Kenya Airways and concluded that culture has a significant role in service delivery, customer satisfaction, staff motivation and morale. Kibet (2014) focused on the effect of organizational culture on the performance of the hospitality industry and found out that certain elements of organizational culture are positively correlated to organizational performance. Oduol (2014) focused on the effect of organizational culture on performance of subsidiaries of selected regional commercial banks in Kenya and found out that for performance of firms to improve, present organizational culture should be supportive and compatible with intended strategies and day to day running of employees' activities. Onyambu (2012) studied on culture change at Kenya Power and Lighting Company and concluded that successful culture change starts with training of employees and formulation of a mission and vision that provides a clear sense of direction. This calls for the development and perpetuation of a strong culture in an organization that supports high performance. Muya and Wesonga (2012) carried out a study on the impact of organization culture on performance of educational institutions and found out that

the type of culture prevailing in an institution has a great bearing on its performance. The knowledge gap also comes in the sense that little has been done to bring out the joint effects of the four traits in Handy's classification underlying organizational culture on performance in higher education. Organizational culture research has not been effectively done in developing countries and in particular Kenya hence a major gap in relevant literature on Kenya or the developing countries at large. According to Njuguna (2014) public universities have not been able to offer competitive and relevant education to the students who in turn form the workforce. This has led to redundancy and high levels of unemployment among the graduates with most of them not able to fit in the job market. Private universities on the other had have embraced relevant organizational culture of peak, competitive and relevant performance and student learning which includes the employees to turn around their performance in the ever competitive market. Organizational culture dictates the kind of services that beneficiaries get and that of the employees. Therefore this study aims at addressing this gap by examining the effect of organizational culture among public universities in Mount Kenya Region on their performance.

### **GENERAL OBJECTIVE**

The main objective of this study is to find out the effects of organizational culture on performance of public universities in Mount Kenya Region.

### **SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES**

1. To determine the effects of power culture on performance of public universities in Mount Kenya Region.
2. To establish the effects of task culture on performance of public universities in Mount Kenya Region.
3. To identify the effects of role culture on performance of public universities in Mount Kenya Region.
4. To find out the effects of person culture on performance of public universities in Mount Kenya Region.

### **THEORETICAL LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **Institutional Theory**

This theory was developed by William Scott in 1995. Institutional theory focuses on understanding the context in which employee performance is embedded on the role of social, economic and political systems in which employees operate and their choices and behavior is embedded (Baughn, Chua and Neupert, 2006). It departs from the position that these systems are deeply rooted and embedded within in the social fabric of societies which produce normative expectations that are gendered (Scott, 1995). They prescribe appropriate attitudes and try to explain how men and women behave. When such normative expectations and attitudes are wide



spread, broadly diffused and deeply rooted, they take on a rule-like status in social thought and action (Baughn, 2006).

Institutional theory stresses both the dependency of individual actions on institutions and the role of human agency in institutional change (Greenwood, 2008). The development of institutional theory in organization studies can be roughly divided into the three stages (Greenwood, Oliver, Sahlin & Suddaby, 2008), namely old institutionalism; originating at the end of the 1940s and the beginning of the 1950s, new institutionalism; originating at the end of the 1970s and the beginning of the 1980s and a variety of new perspectives on institutional theory; evolving since the 1990s. The old institutionalism considers that the organization is embedded in the local community, the new institutionalism acknowledges the importance of interaction of individuals in the organization and goals are achieved by creating a vision, mobilizing resources and motivating others to achieve and sustain the vision (Battilana, Leca & Boxenbaum, 2009).

The recently developed insights of institutional theory may be of more use in understanding the nature of issues and phenomena of higher education. Some studies already demonstrated that even new institutionalism affords a better understanding of issues related to teaching and learning. For instance, Iravo (2015) use institutional theory to identify the effect of culture on employee performance in public secondary schools in Bungoma, Kenya and concluded that for an institution to improve its performance, both leaders and employees should focus on the leadership of the institution, the economic condition and training and education of employees. Gallant and Drinan (2006) enhanced the understanding of academic cheating from the perspective of the institutionalization of academic integrity. They concluded that academic integrity is very important to the adaptability and coherence of higher education and that without integrity institutionalized higher education institutions would ultimately face unpredictable negative future consequences. Yuzhuo (2015) also used institutional theory to bring out its use in higher education research and the results indicate that the application of institutional theory in higher education research is dominated by the concepts of new institutionalism developed in the 1970s and 1980s.

In this study, the theory focuses on understanding the context in which employee performance in public universities is embedded on the role of social, economic and political systems in which employees operate and their choices and behavior is embedded. These systems are deeply rooted and embedded within the social fabric of societies which produce normative expectations that are gendered (Scott, 1995). They prescribe appropriate attitudes and try to explain how men and women behave in these institutions. When such normative expectations and attitudes are wide spread, broadly diffused and deeply rooted, they take on a rule-like status in social thought and action (Baughn, 2006).

## **Schein's Model of Organizational Culture**

This model was developed by Schein in 2004. According to Schein (2004), culture exists simultaneously on three levels: Artifacts, values, and basic assumptions. Assumptions represent taken for granted beliefs about reality and human nature. Values are social principles, philosophies, goals, and standards considered to have intrinsic worth. Artifacts are the visible, tangible, and audible results of activity grounded in values and assumptions. The concept of organizational culture was popularized in the early 1980s; its roots can be traced back to the early human relations view of organizations that originated in the 1940s. Human relations theorists viewed the informal, non-material, interpersonal, and moral bases of cooperation and commitment as perhaps more important than the formal, material, and instrumental controls stressed by the rational system theorists. The human relations perspective drew its inspiration from even earlier anthropological and sociological work on culture associated with groups and societies (Geertz 1973; Mead 1934; Durkheim 1964; Weber 1947, 1958). Different concepts of culture, stemming from two distinct disciplines (anthropology and sociology), have been applied to organizational studies since the early 1980s. These two principles represent different paradigms in Burrell and Morgan's (1979) framework, and have contributed to the emergence of the different theories and frameworks of organizational culture in the academic literature. Anthropology takes the interpretive view and sees culture as a metaphor for organizations, hence defining organizations as being cultures. On the other hand, sociology takes on the functionalist view and defines culture, as something an organization possesses. Despite the separate definitions of organizational culture, there seems to be a movement towards a general consensus.

The increased interest in culture has led to the development of different theories aiming at explaining organization culture and its impact on organization culture. Different authors including Hofstede, Schein, Deal and Kennedy (2004) and Schwartz (2006) have come up with models to explain organization culture. The most widely used organizational culture model is that of Edgar Schein (2004) who adopts the functionalist view and described culture as a pattern of basic assumptions, invented, discovered, or developed by a given group, as it learns to cope with its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, that has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore is to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems.

Schein's model of organizational culture has already been used by researchers in their studies; Abdalla (2013) used the model to bring out the relationship between organizational culture and performance of selected United Nation's agencies in Kenya. Yang (2015) also used Schein's model and concluded that organizational culture has a great bearing on the effectiveness of Western Cape Banking Industry. In this study, Schein's model enhances a deeper understanding of cultural issues in public universities which is necessary to decipher what goes on in them. Schein's model serves as a way to diagnose and initiate change in the organization culture that institutions develop as they progress and cope with external environmental pressures. In

understanding the role of Schein's culture model in achieving the desired performance in public universities, they will need to understand that not only their internal culture but the cultural attributes best suited to promoting desired behaviors on the part of the higher education as a whole. An important role for public universities is to help define and bring about the cultural orientations that will provide the context and promote the behaviors, values, and relationships that foster effective performance. This literature suggests it would be worthwhile to carefully study the organizational cultures of the public universities so as to determine how they are directly or indirectly affecting their performance (Baker, 2002).

### **Hofstede's Culture Dimension Model**

This model was developed by Hofstede in 1968. Hofstede developed the original model as a result of using factor analysis to examine the results of a world-wide survey of employee values by IBM in the 1960s and 1970s. The original theory proposed four dimensions along which cultural values could be analyzed: individualism-collectivism; uncertainty avoidance; power distance and masculinity-femininity. A fifth dimension, Long-term orientation, was added in 1991 based on research by Michael Bond who conducted an additional study. The masculinity dimension represents a preference in society for achievement, heroism, assertiveness and material reward for success. Its opposite, femininity, stands for a preference for cooperation, modesty, caring for the weak and quality of life. The masculinity-femininity dimension of a culture refers to the degree to which values associated with stereotypes of masculinity and femininity is emphasized (Hofstede, 2001).

Secondly, Individualism-collectivism refers to whether individual or collective action is the preferred way to deal with issues. In cultures oriented toward individualism, people tend to emphasize their individual needs, concerns, and interests over those of their group or organization (Tossi & Greckhamer, 2004). The opposite is true in organizations high on collectivism where an individual is expected to interact with members of his or her group (Brislin, 1993). According to Hofstede (2001), power distance is the extent to which people believe that the power and status are distributed and unequal distribution is accepted as a proper way for social systems to be organized. Power distance influences the amount of formal hierarchy, the degree of centralization and the amount of participation in decision making in organizations. Organizations with high power distance tend to be more centralized and employees participate less in decision making.

Furthermore, Williamson (2007) explains the uncertainty avoidance dimension expresses the degree to which the members of a society feel uncomfortable with uncertainty and ambiguity. It ultimately refers to man's search for truth, it indicates to what extent a culture programs its members to feel comfortable in unstructured situations; unstructured situations are unknown and different from usual. Uncertainty avoiding cultures try to minimize the possibility of such situations by strict rules and laws, safety and security measures by a belief in absolute truth.

Long-term orientation is the fifth dimension which was added after the original four. Hofstede created a Chinese value survey which was distributed across 23 countries, from the results, long-term and short-term orientation became the fifth cultural dimension. Long-term orientation dimension can be interpreted as dealing with organization's search for virtue (Chui & Kwok, 2008). It is when members are focused on the future and are willing to sacrifice short-term emotional gratification in order to prepare for the future. Members of this cultural dimension value persistence, perseverance and are able to adapt. Short-term orientation is when one is focused to the present and the past and considers them more important than the future. Members value tradition, current social hierarchy and fulfilling current obligations.

Hofstede's theory of cultural dimensions describes the effects of a society's culture on the values of its members, and how these values relate to behavior, using a structure derived from factor analysis. Without question, Hofstede has developed by far the most influential cultural framework, with over 1,100 citations to his work reported in the decade between 1987 and 1997 (Sivakumar & Nakata, 2001). The theory has been widely used in several fields as a paradigm for research, particularly in cross-cultural psychology, international management, and cross-cultural communication. Abdalla (2013) used Hofstede's model in a study to bring out the relationship between organization culture and performance. The model was also used in a study on Kaizen and organizational culture in manufacturing firms in Kenya by (Kariuki, 2013). Makambe and Pellissier (2014) applied Hofstede's cultural dimensions at Botho University and found out that there are major differences in cultural behaviors along the cultural dimensions of Hofstede and failure to consider those differences will lead to conflict between employees and management.

In this study, public universities have employees of different backgrounds and ethnic groups with different cultures and understanding Hofstede's cultural dimensions will enable people of different cultural inclinations work together more, associating more and communicating on a daily basis. Failure to understand these cultural dimensions leads to disharmony in the workplace which will have a negative impact on productivity and customer satisfaction. In this study, Hofstede's cultural dimensions are used to determine how different ethnic groups can relate and how employees and management can harmoniously co-exist and effectively handle the expectations of these dominant ethnic groups.

It is obvious that every cultural model has to be approached with great caution and an uncritical reading of cultural dimensions can lead to false conclusions. But even if Hofstede's conceptualization of culture has attracted some criticism; Hofstede is though one of the most renowned and most cited experts. The continuity of Hofstede's researches can be observed over decades and the approach of his scientific school is still being applied and improved.

## **EMPIRICAL REVIEW**

### **Power culture and Performance**

Mugendi (2010) examined the effect of school culture on performance in KCSE in secondary schools in Chogoria Division, Mara District and established that school had varying cultures which influence the performance of students. Public universities are no exception, this particular study tends to examine the effect of four types of culture; power, role, person and task cultures on performance of public universities. Handy (1999) illustrates the power culture as a spider's web, with the all-important spider sitting in the center because the key to the whole organization sits in the center, surrounded by ever-widening circles of intimates and influence. The closer you are to the spider, the more influence you have. Various empirical studies have been conducted on how organizational culture organizational performance. Some studies have consistently cited organizational culture as a key determinant of successful performance in institutions.

Omega (2012) examined the perceived relationship between organizational culture and employees' job satisfaction at KCB. The results show that organizational culture dimensions have a direct influence on the performance of the organization. The results of the study show that if managers get this culture right, it can result in a happy, satisfied organization that in turn can breed quite intense commitment to corporate goals. Anticipating wrongly can lead to intense dissatisfaction and sometimes lead to a high labor turnover as well as a general lack of effort and enthusiasm from the employees. In a study done by Oduol (2015) on effect of organizational culture on the performance of subsidiaries of selected regional commercial banks in Kenya, leaders should adopt a good organizational culture that motivates the employees and involve them in decision making. This will consequently lead to more effort by the labor force since they will feel a sense of ownership in the firm hence reduce the top down communication approach.

Onyango (2014) also examined the influence of organizational culture on employee job performance at Pacis Insurance Company Limited. From the findings, the study concluded that an organization that has a culture of involving its employees will tend to perform well because the employees tend to own the organization's decisions. A culture of involvement emphasizes the input and participation of its employees, promotes teamwork and improves self-esteem, treats its employees with dignity and respect; hence improved job performance and productivity in the organization. Onyambu (2013) examined organizational culture change at KPLC and established that organizational culture change process was supported by top management and championed by a team of Change Agents or Ambassadors drawn from formal and informal structures of the organization. The ability of power culture to adapt to changes in the environment is very much determined by the perception and the ability of those who occupy the positions of power within it.

## **Role Culture and Performance**

In a study done by Njugi and Agusioma (2014) on the effect of organization culture on employee performance in NGO's, organizational culture has a great influence on performance as it dictates how things are done, organization's philosophy, work environment, performance targets and organizations stability. Employees seek a work environment that maximizes their ability to be innovative, creative, and independent of micro-management, cohesion with fellow colleagues among others. However role culture is characterized by strong specialized areas coordinated by a narrow band of senior management at the top and a high degree of formalization and standardization.

The work of the functional areas of organizations with role culture and the interactions between them are controlled by rules and procedures defining the job, the authority that goes with it, the mode of communication and the settlement of disputes. Employees are the role occupants but the role continues even if they leave, training is therefore important to ensure performance in the job. In a study done by Munyambu (2015) on the relationship between culture and organizational performance: A Case Study of Del Monte Kenya Limited, findings were that employees are committed to their work due to extrinsic motivational factors and recommendations were that the management needs to take active roles in training its employees. Taras(2011) study suggested that companies that make even moderate adjustments to selection, training and work design systems based on cultural value differences in a normal functioning organization are likely to yield 10-20 percent improvement in performance which may translate into several million dollars of additional revenue annually.

The common link between the power-oriented and the role-oriented organizational cultures is that they depend on the use of external rewards and punishments to motivate organizational members (Harrison & Stokes, 1998). Zain (2009) examined the effect of four dimensions of organization culture namely teamwork, communication, reward and recognition, and training and development on employee performance and found that all the four dimensions of organization culture were important determinants of performance. Effective organizations that role culture is dominant, empower their people, build their organizations around teams, and develop human capability at all levels (Lawler, 1996). Onyango (2014) study on influence of organizational culture on employee job performance at Pacis Insurance Company emphasizes on teamwork in order to enhance performance and productivity.

## **Person Culture and Performance**

A study done by Chindia and Kibera (2015) on organizational culture and accuracy of performance in large manufacturing firms in Kenya, mentioned that in person culture the individual is the central focus and any structure exists to serve the individuals within it, for example doctors, consultants, architects, university professors and specialists. Individuals have almost complete autonomy and any influence over them is likely to be on the basis of personal

power. A study done in Sweden by Martinsson (2011) on the impact of organization culture on quality management in manufacturing, due to tougher conditions and raised pressure from the environment, companies have to perform on their very edge which implies that the expectation on the managers goes up. The increasing competition forces many companies to operate in survival mode where not much time is available for thinking about the results beyond next month. They argue that the solution to this problem is closer than realized it is within the people who perform the actual work and can see problems and opportunities on a daily basis. The ideas and thoughts from employees are more valuable than managers think. Historically it has been, and still is, common to hear the comment that the operator should not think, they should do. The making of ideas should be part of everyone's work, no matter if the person is an operator, a middle manager or a senior leader. In order for this process to take place the people within the organization have to feel empowered.

Nazir (2005), in a study done on person culture fit and employee commitment in banks in India, the system of control mechanism prevalent in the organization plays a pivotal role in directing the actions of individual members. Researchers argue that the formal control mechanisms are more relevant in the manufacturing sector because of processes and products being more tractable. On the contrary, since the service sector has a very high frequency of multiple engagements, and a good number of professional staff, social control mechanisms, such as cultural values, are found preferable to affect member's actions. These control mechanisms have far-reaching implications for organizational members. One such implication is the congruency between individual and organizational values.

It has been argued that, drawing on underlying values, individuals may manage their lives in ways that help them choose identical roles, occupations, and even organizations proposed that individuals may be attracted to organizations they perceive as having values similar to their own. Similarly, organizations attempt to select recruits who are likely to share their values. New entrants are then further socialized and assimilated and those who do not fit leave. Thus, basic individual values or preferences for certain modes of conduct are expressed in organizational choices and then reinforced within organizational contexts. Moreover, values provide the starting point and the process of selection and socialization jointly acts as a complementary means to ensure person-organization/culture fit. Further, strong congruence between individual value preferences and organizational values is believed to result in strong employee commitment.

### **Task Culture and Performance**

The emphasis on task culture is on getting the job done, and it seeks to bring together the appropriate resources and the right people at the right level in order to assemble the relevant resources for the completion of a particular project. A study done by Odhiambo, Kibera and Munyoka (2016) on organizational culture, industry competition and performance of microfinance institutions in Kenya, possession of a strong organizational culture that enhances reconfiguration and deployment of organizational resources is key. Ng'ang'a and

Nyongesa(2012) studied on the impact of organizational culture on performance of educational institutions in Kenya and found out that the survival of any organization solely rests on its effectiveness and efficiency in utilizing the resources supplied by tax payers in serving its clients. Amidst hard economic times and the stiff competition evidenced in the education sector in the twenty first century, any institution that endeavors to survive must justify its existence through its performance.

A study done by Sifuna (2013) on leadership in Kenyan public universities and the challenges of autonomy and academic freedom, resources and infrastructure for research are of critical importance as the lack of them could be a primary contributor to the brain drain of scientists to industrialized countries. There is the issue of infrastructure availability and quality which is fundamentally connected to funding. Although no regional infrastructure audit has been conducted, it is reported that there are severe infrastructure constraints in most institutions in Africa. These constraints are affecting the capacity for both teaching and research. Teaching effectiveness is being limited by inadequate facilities, laboratory equipment and computing infrastructure, while student access is limited due to insufficient classrooms or accommodation. Task culture depends on teamwork to produce results; one example of a task culture is NASA, the US space agency, which in the 1960s had the specific task of putting a man on the moon before the end of the decade and bringing him back safely. Zain (2009) examined that team work is an important determinants of performance. Onyango (2014) in his study, concluded that teamwork amongst the employees leads to improved job performance and productivity in the organization.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **Research Design**

The study applied a descriptive and exploratory research design. Descriptive survey design was used in preliminary and exploratory studies to allow the researcher gather information, summarize, present and interpret it for the purpose of clarification. It also allows the researcher to describe record, analyze and report conditions that exist or existed. This design allowed the researcher to generate both numerical and descriptive data that was used in measuring correlation between variables. Descriptive survey research was intended to produce statistical information about the effect of organization culture on performance of public universities in Mount Kenya Region while exploratory research design served to establish the effect of one variable on another. The field survey implies the process of gaining insight into the general picture of a situation, without utilizing the entire population (Gall, 1996).



## **Target Population**

The target population for this study was 266 constituted of 66 deans of schools, 172 heads of departments and 28 leaders of students' associations within eight public universities in Mount Kenya Region.

## **Sampling Design and Procedure**

The Study used stratified random sampling technique to get the subjects of the study. The researcher administered instruments on sample participants who were objectively constituted using stratified random sampling method. According to Render, Stir and Michael (2009), a stratum is a subset within a population that share common characteristics or traits and random sampling is used to select a sufficient number of subject from each stratum, sufficient meaning is a simple size that is large enough to represent the population. The only requirement is that each item in the population falls into one stratum. The target population was 266 respondents from public universities in Mount Kenya Region. The respondents were listed and further divided to 3 groups which will include; deans of schools, head of departments and leaders of students' associations for ease in data collection. Each strata represents the 3 categories of the target population. The stratified sampling was done where the elements in each strata are put in a list and then every kth element in the list was chosen for inclusion in the sample. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003), a sample of 30% is good enough to represent a target population therefore the study's sample size became 78.

## **Research Instruments**

A structured questionnaire was used to collect primary data. The questionnaires are preferred in this study because respondents of the study were literate and quite able to answer questions asked adequately. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003), questionnaires are commonly used to obtain important information about a population under study. The questionnaire is carefully designed and tested with a few members of the population for further improvements. This was done in order to enhance its validity and accuracy of data to be collected for the study. On the other hand secondary data such as the performance of public universities was collected from newspapers, published books, journals and magazines as well as other sources such as annual reports.

## **Data Collection Procedure**

The researcher requested the university administration to be allowed administer questionnaires to the employees in the universities. Questionnaires designed were used to collect primary data for the study. All questionnaires schedules were printed and administered by the researcher to the respective respondents to obtain immediate feedback. Data collected was assembled and stored in both hard copies and soft copies for further analysis. The data collection process is estimated to take approximately four weeks.

## **Data Analysis and Presentation Techniques**

Once the data after field work was collected, the researcher edited and counter checked completion of questions in order to identify items which were not appropriately responded to. Quantitative data was coded manually, organized, and analyzed using percentages and frequencies. The results was presented in tabulated form for easy interpretation. Qualitative data generated from questions was organized into themes, categories and patterns pertinent to the study. This helped identify information that was relevant to the research questions and objectives. The data was then keyed in, and a software program used to analyze data. According to Madhu (2005), there are in fact, a number of software packages available that facilitate data analysis. These include statistical packages like SPSS and Microsoft Excel. SPSS is able to handle large amount of data, given its wide spectrum of statistical procedures purposefully designed for social sciences. The following regression model was used to establish the relationship between variables. The variable Y is usually defined as;

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1X_1 + \beta_2X_2 + \beta_3X_3 + \beta_4X_4 + \varepsilon$$

Where: **Y** = Performance;  **$\beta_0$**  = Constant;  **$X_1$**  = Power culture;  **$X_2$**  = Role culture;  **$X_3$**  = Person culture;  **$X_4$**  = Task culture;  **$\varepsilon$**  = Error term of the model;  **$\beta_1$ ,  $\beta_2$ ,  $\beta_3$  and  $\beta_4$**  = Coefficients of independent variables

The Correlation coefficients will provide for the degree and direction of relationships. It measures the association, or co-variation of two or more dependent variables. The statistical calculation of such correlation will be done and expressed in terms of correlation coefficients. The  $\gamma$  will provide information on the direction and magnitude of an observed correlation between two variables (X and Y). Inferential statistics will also be carried out to establish the nature of the relationship that exists between variables. Data will be interpreted with the help of significance P-values, if the P-value is less than 0.05 the variables will be deemed significant to explain the changes in the dependent variable. The coefficient of determination ( $R^2$  or  $r^2$ ) will be used to analyze the percentage in which the independent variables determines the dependent variable. It will indicate the proportion of the variance in the dependent variable that is predictable from the independent variable.

## **RESEARCH RESULTS**

With an R squared of 0.719 it was concluded that a variable of 71.9% on the performance of universities due to power culture, task culture, role culture and person culture at 95% confidence interval. This shows that 71.9% changes in performance of universities could be accounted to changes in power culture, task culture, role culture and person cultured while other factors not considered in this study account for only 28.1% of the changes in performance of public universities. The correlation coefficient (R) shows that there was a fairly strong positive relationship between the study variables as shown by 0.878.

The study established that some officers in the universities in excising their powers makes what they feel is the appropriate decision and emphasizes that the workers have no choice but to comply. It was established that some officers and supervisors tries to find some sort of common ground and attempts to please everyone in carrying their day to day operations. However, majority of the officers organizes a meeting of all interested parties providing them with an opportunity to work out their differences. The study established that administrators emphasizes on teamwork in all the universities' departments. The study found out that students attend to their classes under minimal supervision and that administrators utilize resources effective. However, some of the officers were accused of treating students unfairly especially when under pressure.

The study established that employees in the university have strong creative and innovative skills in their work place thus translating to improved performance of the university. The study found out that employees are upraised regularly in terms of qualification and potential and rewarded fairly by the university management. However there was a bit of concern on the way the university departments are structured which affects working together. The study established that employees are carry their duties independently and that they consider themselves to be loyal to the university. The study established that employees understand the core values of the university and practices them at all times and that they believed that the administration is reliable in handling personal employee's matters.

## **CORRELATION ANALYSIS**

### **Relationship between Power Culture and Performance**

The study sought to establish whether there exists a relationship between power culture and performance of universities. The computed chi-square value (46.741) at 12 degrees of freedom the study found that there is a significant relationship between power culture and performance of universities since the computed p-value (0.0001) is less than 0.05 at 95% confidence level.

**Table 1: Relationship between Power Culture and Performance**

<b>Chi-square tests</b>	<b>Value</b>	<b>Df</b>	<b>Asymp. sig. (2-sided)</b>
Pearson Chi-Square	46.741a	12	.0001
Likelihood ratio	22.711	12	.032
Linear-by-linear Association	5.333	1	.024
N of Valid cases	71		

### **Relationship between Task Power and Performance of Universities**

The study sought to establish whether there exists a relationship between task culture and performance of universities .The computed chi-square value (23.117) at 12 degrees of freedom,

the study found that there is a significant relationship between task culture and performance of universities since the computed p-value (0.012) is less than 0.05 at 95% confidence level.

**Table 2: Relationship between Task Power and Performance of Universities**

<b>Chi-square tests</b>	<b>Value</b>	<b>Df</b>	<b>Asymp. sig. (2-sided)</b>
Pearson Chi-Square	23.117a	12	0.012
Likelihood ratio	22.279	12	.005
Linear-by-linear Association	5.161	1	0.012
N of Valid cases	71		

### **Relationship between Role Culture and performance**

The study sought to establish whether there exists a relationship between role culture and performance of universities. The computed chi-square value (27.277) at 12 degrees of freedom, the study found that there is a significant relationship between role culture and performance of universities since the computed p-value (0.005) is less than 0.05 at 95% confidence level.

**Table 3: Relationship between Role Culture and Performance**

<b>Chi-square tests</b>	<b>Value</b>	<b>Df</b>	<b>Asymp. sig. (2-sided)</b>
Pearson Chi-Square	27.277a	16	.005
Likelihood ratio	26.787	16	.032
Linear-by-linear Association	5.999	1	.014
N of Valid cases	71		

### **Relationship between Person Culture and Performance**

The study sought to establish whether there exists a relationship between person culture and performance of universities. The computed chi-square value (25.875) at 12 degrees of freedom, the study found that there is a significant relationship between person culture and performance of universities since the computed p-value (0.013) is less than 0.05 at 95% confidence level.

**Table 4: Relationship between Person Culture and Performance**

<b>Chi-square tests</b>	<b>Value</b>	<b>Df</b>	<b>Asymp. sig. (2-sided)</b>
Pearson Chi-Square	25.875a	12	.013
Likelihood ratio	21.333	12	.002
Linear-by-linear Association	5.465	1	.027
N of Valid cases	71		

## **INFERENTIAL ANALYSIS**

R squared is coefficient of determination which tells us the variation in the dependent variable due to changes in the independent variable, from the findings in the above table the value of adjusted R squared is 0.719 an indication that there is a variation of 71.9% on the performance of universities due to power culture, task culture, role culture and person culture at 95% confidence interval. This shows that 71.9% changes in performance of universities could be accounted to changes in power culture, task culture, role culture and person cultured while other factors not considered in this study account for only 28.1% of the changes in performance of public universities. R is the correlation coefficient which shows the relationship between the study variables. From the findings shown in the table above there was a fairly strong positive relationship between the study variables as shown by 0.878.

**Table 5: Model Summary**

<b>Model</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>R Square</b>	<b>Adjusted R Square</b>	<b>Std. Error of the estimate</b>
1	.878(a)	0.7709	.719	0.6944

The findings concurs with Kamaamia (2017) study on the effect of organizational culture on organizational performance: a case of Kenya school of monetary studies which found that all the variables had statistically significant relationships, regression analysis was conducted to determine the level of the relationships. The regression showed an R squared value of (0.348), which means that about 35% of organizational performance is attributable to internal business procedures, organizational culture and customer service. Several empirical studies have supported the positive link between culture and performance (Gordon & Di-Tomaso, 2012: Kotter & Heskett, 1992). Moreover, studies done by Chatman & Jehn (2014), and Denison & Mishra (1995) have contributed significantly to the field of culture and performance studies whereby culture has been treated as variable for a specific research purpose. For example, Denison & Mishra (1995), utilizing a more rigorous methodology, discovered that cultural strength was significantly correlated with short-term financial performance. Schneider (2010) also found that organizations that focus clearly on the culture are more successful. It is because focused cultures provide better financial returns (which include higher return on investment, higher return on assets and higher return on equity).

**Table 6: Coefficients Table**

<b>Model</b>	<b>Unstandardized Coefficients</b>			<b>Standardized Coefficientst</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
	<b>B</b>	<b>Std. Error</b>	<b>Beta</b>		
(Constant)	1.155	1.231		1.973	.106
Power Culture	0.804	0.240	0.230	1.850	.0028
Task Culture	0.882	0050	0.231	3.616	.006
Power Culture	0.853	0.017	0.275	3.159	.015
Person Culture	0.793	0.112	0.211	3.432	.0012

Multi-regression analysis was used to measure the nature of the relationship between the performance of donor universities due to changes in power culture, task culture, role culture and person's culture. The model which was adopted for this study is:

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

Where: Y= The performance of universities,  $\beta_0$ = Constant,  $X_1$  = Effects of power culture,  $X_2$  =Effects of task culture and,  $X_3$  =Effects of role culture,  $X_4$  = Effects of person culture and  $\beta_i$  =Coefficient of independent variables.

Therefore the model adopted was:

$$Y = 1.155 + 0.804X_1 + 0.882 X_2 + 0.853 X_3 + 0.793 X_4$$

From the above regression equation it was revealed that holding power culture, task culture, role culture and person culture to a constant zero, performance in the universities would be at 1.155. A unit increase in power culture would lead to increase in performance of universities by a factor of 0.804 ( $B=0.804$ ,  $P<0.05$ ), a unit increase in task culture would lead to increase in performance of universities by a factor of 0.882 ( $B=0.882$ ,  $P<0.05$ ), a unit increase in role culture would lead to increase in performance of universities by a factor of 0.853 ( $B=0.853$ ,  $P<0.05$ ) and a unit increase in person culture would lead to increase in performance of universities by a factor of 0.793 ( $B=0.793$ ,  $P<0.05$ ). Therefore there is a significant relationships between all the independent variables and the dependent variable since all the P values a less than 0.05.

The findings concurs with Kamaamia (2017) study on the effect of organizational culture on organizational performance: a case of Kenya school of monetary studies which found that the regression coefficients also revealed that the relationship between combined variables were and organizational performance were all statistically significant. Organizational culture had a Beta coefficient  $\beta$  (-0.308);  $p < 0.014$ ; Customer relations had a Beta coefficient  $\beta$  (0.230);  $p < 0.000$ ; internal business processes had a Beta coefficient  $\beta$  (0.569);  $p < 0.000$ . However, Rousseau (2010) and (Lim, 2005) in similar studies found that there is no positive correlation between strong culture and employees' performance. This was against theoretical argument that there is a strong positive correlation between strong culture and performance, whether organizational or employees.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

The study concluded that there was a positive and significant effect of organizational culture on the performance of public universities in Kenya. Task culture, power culture, role culture and person culture as aspects of organizational culture all determined organizational performance to a tune of 79.1% as indicated by the coefficient of variation (R squared). However on the degree on influence role culture influenced performance more than the other variables. Therefore, it can be

concluded that role culture to a great extent influences performance of public universities in Kenya.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The study recommended that departments should be harmonized and structured properly for effective communication amongst departments. The study further recommends that the university should have a clear policy on the communication procedures and minimum credentials for one to occupy a certain office.

The study, from the findings, recommends that universities should conduct periodic employee's role, needs and student demands to enable smooth running of the universities in Kenya. For the purposes of growth and development teamwork it was recommended that core values of the university and practices should be communicated to all parties concerned.

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