Influence of Organizational Resources on the Performance of Public Universities in Kenya

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ABSTRACT

Public universities in Kenya are under both moral and legal obligations to perform three important functions, which are providing excellent teaching, research, and community outreach. These functions are important because if they are well performed, the country will realise its vision for 2030. However, the performance of public universities in Kenya is still far below expectations based on both global and regional comparisons. The study, therefore, is intended to determine if the performance problem in the universities can be solved by the organisational resources; hence, the objective of the study is “to determine the influence of organisational resources on the performance of public universities in Kenya.” A mixed approach consisting of both quantitative and qualitative research designs was used. The quantitative data was obtained using a questionnaire, while the qualitative data was obtained through interviews. The collected data were analysed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. From the analysis, it was found that organisational resources had positive statistical significance for the performance of public universities in Kenya ($\beta = 0.504; t = 5.936; p<0.05$). The study, therefore, concluded that effective human, financial, and physical resources definitely lead to positive improvements in the performance of public universities in Kenya. It was therefore recommended that the government of Kenya should plough more resources into the universities as a way of improving their performance.

Keywords: Human Resource, Organizational Resources, University Performance

I. INTRODUCTION

Kenya, as a country, requires highly trained and skilled workforce, a function that is performed by universities. Universities are also under moral obligation to contribute to the economic, cultural, and intellectual betterment of a society in general. Public universities are under legal obligation to perform the above function (Odhiambo, 2018). In addition, Universities have a fundamental role in promoting national values among the youths in Kenya. In this function, the universities are supposed to take their students beyond teaching, learning, passing or failing exams and finding jobs. However, they need to create desired value system in an individual. Universities should therefore propagate values like dignity, tolerance; equality among all people as well as fair and equitable administration of justice asserts (Chebiwot et al., 2020)

However, there is a sharp contrast in the expectations outlined in the strategic intents contained in mission and vision statements. The universities have excess nonacademic staff but acute shortage of academic staff, a serious show of skewed human resource policy (Kyondo et al., 2023). There is lack of requisite infrastructure in universities, resulting in undue pressure on the existing facilities and personnel. There are also claims that corruption and lack of national values have marred public universities in Kenya (McCowan, 2018). The public universities in Kenya are in a quality crisis due to endless industrial actions and reduced funding by government of Kenya, who is the chief provider of fund (Chebiwot et al., 2020).

It is due to this inadequate performance in the Kenyan public universities that a debate has been generated on what is required to improve their performance (Kyondo et al., 2023). In this study, performance of public universities in Kenya has been given a fresh look in line with their three core functions of excellent teaching, research and community service (Shisia & Wanjere, 2019). At the same time organizational resources has been defined as human,
physical and financial resources that a university possesses (Ongeti&Machuki, 2018). The study therefore intended to examine the influence of organizational resource and performance of public universities in Kenya.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Public universities in Kenya are charged with three major functions which include excellent teaching, research, and community outreach (Odhiambo, 2018). In order to discharge these functions, each university should have highly skilled human resource, adequate physical resource and financial resource. Performance of a university is therefore dependent on how well these three major functions are executed.

However, in Kenya, the three key roles that define performance of the university are inadequately done hence outcry of poor performance of public universities in Kenya (Giteru & Bula, 2023). The government through the commission for university education requires that each university prepares an elaborate strategic plan that outlines the expected performance after a specified period of time usually five years. However, the expected level of performance has not been achieved (Kithinji et al., 2022). Other studies have shown that desired performance level can be realized in an organization if appropriate human, physical and financial resources are used in an organization but none of these studies has been done in the context of all the public universities in Kenya. Therefore, this study intends to fill this gap by investigating the influence of organizational resources on the performance of public universities in Kenya.

1.2 Objective of the Study

The main objective of this study was to determine the influence of organizational resources on performance of public universities in Kenya.

1.3 Hypothesis of the Study

H0: There is no significant influence of organizational resources and the performance of public universities in Kenya

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Organizational Resources and Performance of Universities

Different Scholars have varying definitions for organizational resource. An organizational resource is a moderately detectable, tradable resource that adds to an association's market position by improving client worth and bringing down expense or both (McCowan, 2018). The fundamental principles of asset reliance are the criticalness of natural affectability for seeing how an association works and the job assets play in determining the performance of an organization. Organizational Resources also refers to people, materials and technologies, information, capital and entrepreneurship, needs and expectation (Bichii & Waruguru, 2023). On the other hand, Mwai et al. (2020), characterize organizational resources as all assets, abilities, organizational cycles, association's ascribes, data and information constrained by an association that empowers the association to imagine and execute techniques to improve its proficiency and viability. For this study, the definition by (McCowan, 2018) was used since it encompasses both tangible and intangible resources that an organization can possess.

As mentioned in the theoretical framework of this study, types and amount of resources present in an organization can be source of competitive advantage and consequently performance (Mwangi & Waithaka, 2023). He adds that resources can be categorized into tangible and intangible. The tangible resources include physical assets, human capital and current assets. While intangible assets include trademarks, reputation and business deals. Organizational resources can also be categorized into four – human resource, financial resources, physical resources and information resources (Giteru & Bula, 2023). In this study, organizational resources are categorized into three including information and operational system, employee competence and capabilities and teaching resources for ease of study and measurement.

Human resource is the most vital resource for any organization since through human resource an organization fail or prosper. Proper use of human resource in a university can result in effective strategic plan implementation and consequently increased university performance (Njoroge, 2020). When compared with other resource at the disposal of an organization for example public universities which are a case in this study, Human resource plays a pivotal role than any other category of resources. This is because it is people who suggest strategies, create goods, deliver and come up with appropriate organizational structures for implementation of strategies (Ombaka et al., 2015). Organizations therefore implement strategies and achieve their objectives through efforts of people in them. Human capital as strategic tool can create competitive advantage for an organization and hence growth. To ensure strategies
are properly executed and consequently increased performance, crucial role of human capital must be recognized, a fact this study has empirically tested.

A university that meets the need of her Human Resource will get her strategies well executed and performance highly improved. Efficient management and development of Human Resource also results into retention of employees and consequently high university performance (Stewart, 2023). In a university set up efficiency in human resource is demonstrated by the level of employee competence and capabilities (Kimiti and Kilika, 2018). The competence and capability of an employee can be improved through training and development.

Employees’ ability is a wellspring of upper hand, since it is installed in the aggregate information on the individuals in an association which is created over some stretch of time and significant as the company's schedules for overseeing individuals can guide employee’s ability and conduct to meet destinations and make esteem. The key Human Resource exercises legitimately applicable to building employees’ capacity include pulling in and holding people with abilities identified with the center skills of the association. So as to adapt to the difficulties presented by globalization and quick change, universities are progressively depending on employees’ abilities (Maina & Njagi, 2019).

Organizational resources are significant and do contribute towards universities’ performance. He added that, of all categories of resources that an organization may own, its human resource that plays the most crucial part of coordination to ensure other resources function. First, a universities’ arrangement of human asset is responsible for its performance and achievements. Second, the dynamic condition recommends that static resources like packs of HR practice cannot be the only one to produce continued upper hand. Or maybe, as colleges acclimate to monetary change, mechanical changes, globalization, and expanded rivalry, they should modify their practices and reconfigure their assortment of aptitudes to meet these evolving needs (Bichii & Waruguru, 2023). Hence, representatives' abilities permit colleges to make these fundamental changes.

Physical resources such as Machinery, equipment, buildings and others also have capacity to contribute to the process of effective strategic plan implementation which results into increased performance of the university (Kithinji et al., 2022). Effective and efficient research process in a university requires physical resources. The physical resource form work surfaces where work is planned and is executed. However, Kimiti and Kilika (2018), noted that presence of physical resources alone cannot give the university the desired competitive advantage unless there is the required human resource to effectively use the resources for execution and hence performance of the university. The physical resources required by a University are mainly teaching and learning resources (Ismail, et al, 2011).

Teaching and learning resources are educational materials and media that lecturers use to support teaching and learning of specific concepts as set out in the course outlines (Kyondo et al., 2023). The use of TLR increases teaching effectiveness which is one of the performance indicators in public universities. A study on influence of teaching learning resources (TLR) in Harvard and Massachusetts Universities reveal that in these institutions all students graduate in time. But in the same country in some institutions only about 25% of the students continue to graduation the disparity being due to difference in teaching and learning resources (Maina & Njagi, 2019).

Financial resources are the life line of an organization; it determines the opening and closure of functional university premises and even the institution at large (Ammar & Ismail, 2017). Universities have different sources of finance namely: students’ fees, government subsidies, research grants, revenue from income generating projects among others. These financial resources ensure universities run by taking care of recurrent expenditures, providing physical resources and investment in different income generating projects (Chebiwot et al., 2020). However, he notes that for financial resources to improve performance in a university there must be prudent financial management policies and proper budgeting.

There is great advancement on how information is gotten and utilized in university today. This has resulted in digitalization, reformation and transformation of university libraries into electronic information service systems (Ammar & Ismail, 2017). Universities that have embraced this change have greater improvement in teaching effectiveness and research which are also key determinants of performance of public universities in this study. Such universities are also able to effectively execute their strategies thus resulting into better performance. In spite of numerous electronic resources some lecturers still insist in using old lecture method resulting into inefficient and ineffective learning.

However, Songa (2020), further argued that it is the ability of an organization resource to create a competitive advantage that makes it important. From this, it can be concluded that organizational resource should have the following features: it must have ability to exploit hidden opportunities and eliminate threats in the organizational environment; it should be unique among the firms’ current and feature competitors; it must be very difficult to imitate thus the firm or competitors should not have perfect substitutes for it.
Organizational resources in firms around the coastal part of Kenya make created competitive advantages – the core value of organizational resource (Kiroro, 2020). He made a conceptual look at the various patterns of relationship between competitive advantage and firm’s performance, namely: competitive advantage will not definitely lead to good performance but it is a comparative term. A further examination of the three patterns of relationship between competitive advantage and firm’s performance that were as follows: competitive advantage leading to better performance; competitive advantage without improved performance and better performance without competitive advantage (Songa, 2020). The ultimate purpose of the article was to point out that organizational resources only play a crucial role of creating a competitive advantage that an organization must leverage on. Competitive advantage arises from the uniqueness among the firms and at the same time how each firm takes advantage of its unique resources to outplay others (Shisia & Wanjere, 2019).

In summary, the empirical literature on organizational resources and organizations performance do not point at the direct relationship between the two. However, they argue that organizational resources are only sources of competitive advantage that each organization must leverage on for any superior performance to be realized. The study therefore intended to fill the gap by determining the effects of organizational resources on performance of public universities in Kenya.

III. METHODOLOGY

The study used a mixed research design consisting of quantitative and qualitative approach. The mixed approach was adopted because the study wanted to capitalize on the strength of each method. The target population was 489 heads of departments in 31 public universities in Kenya. However, only 23 public universities with a total of 308 heads of departments were purposively sampled because they had taken more than five years since their time of establishment to the time when the research was conducted for the study. To get the right number of heads of department to participate in the study, Slovin’s formula \(N/1+N (e)^2\) was used. The formula yielded a sample size of 174 heads of departments. However, only 112 heads of department were available and were given the questionnaires for the sake of study. The heads of departments were randomly sampled however; a precaution was taken so that each school within the sampled universities produced one head of department who participated in the study.

The data was the analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. The descriptive statistics was given in terms of mean and standard deviation. The hypothesis of the study “\(H_1: \) there is no relationship between organizational resources and performance of public universities in Kenya” was tested using inferential statistics at 5% level of confidence.

\[Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1X_1 + \beta_2X_2 + \ldots \beta_nX + \varepsilon\]

Organizational resources in public universities are assumed to have a strong influence on universities’ performance. The main resources that are found in a university setting include: human resource or human capital, physical resources and financial resources. According to resource based theory, it is the organizational resources that cause difference in performance of the organizations in the same industry and operating under similar environment.

There are seven commonly used university performance metrics which universities measure and report as a way of gauging their performance. They include students’ enrolment, workforce diversity, students’ satisfaction, students’ completion rates, amount of research funding, and average age of facilities and employees satisfaction (Ammar & Ismail, 2017). The number students enrolled per year in a program or in a whole college can a quantitative measure of performance. The rate of attraction and retention of a diverse workforce is an indicator of quality performance in a university.

Another important measure of university performance is students’ satisfaction. This can be done by carrying out students’ survey either annually or per semester. It can asking questions such as “Are you satisfied with university in terms of welcoming, sense of belonging and being treated with dignity?” similar questions can be asked to employees to determine their level of satisfaction as well as community services (Odhiambo, 2018)

IV. FINDINGS & DISCUSSIONS

The results for both descriptive and inferential statistics were presented in the tables 1, 2, 3 and 4. After which they were discussed.
From Table 1 all indicators of organizational resources have posted mean above four (agreed). However, despite posting the high means, there are enough teaching and learning resources overtakes them (mean = 4.28155), followed closely by there are well designed information and operational system (mean = 4.21359). Lest in prevalence is there are employees with high competence (mean = 4.17476).

The standard deviation for all the three items in this section is below one. This implies that respondents’ opinions about the items were quite convergent.

From Table 2 above, the first question which test about quantity of research by staff has a mean of 3.9234 and standard deviation of 1.01. This means most of the respondents agree that the research publication has increased in most universities. However, the standard deviation is about 1 showing that the respondents’ opinion is almost normally distributed. Other questionnaire items about research grants and quantity of research have a mean above 3.700 which is closer to four. This shows that most of the respondents agree that research grants are available and many individuals from university departments are winning these grants. The standard deviation for all the questionnaire items relating to research publications and grants are closer to 1.00. This shows that the respondents’ opinion is quite convergent about these issues and the distribution is almost normal.

The mean for the questionnaire items testing about community outreach programs in public universities range from 3.771 to 4.213. This shows that the respondents generally agree that universities have outreach strategies, financial plans on outreach programs, there is cohesion with community surrounding the university and community outreach improve university performance. The standard deviation of all items testing community outreach is about 1.00. This shows that the respondents’ opinion about the community outreach programs is convergent and the distribution is almost normal.

The respondents’ opinion in this section is slightly negatively skewed thus slightly deviating from the normal distribution to the left hand side. The highest skewness in the questionnaire is observed on the questionnaire item...
testing on the availability research funds for candidates who qualify and the lowest is 0.478 noting that measure of grant is expanding in the university financial plan.

The respondents’ opinion on most of the items in this section has small negative kurtosis values. This implies that the distribution curve is flatter than the normal curve and contains just a few outliers. However, the items testing on the availability of research grants, increase in quantity publications and expanding level community outreach all have positive values for kurtosis and this shows that there exist limited outliers.

Table 3
Model Summary for Organizational Resources and University Performance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>R</th>
<th>R Square</th>
<th>Adjusted R Square</th>
<th>Std. Error of the Estimate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>.504*</td>
<td>.254</td>
<td>.246</td>
<td>.583418</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. Predictors: (Constant), Organizational resources

The results in Table 3 reveal that the value of adjusted $R^2$ is 0.246. This therefore indicates that organizational resources which are information and operational system, employees’ competence and capabilities as well as number of teaching resources accounts for up to 24.6% of the variability in university performance, leaving out a further 76.4% to be accounted for by other variability not fitted into the model. It is therefore concluded that that it is possible to generate substantial levels of university performance by adopting of appropriate resources. $R^2$ is the coefficient of determination and summarizes how much the variability in the outcome variable is related to predictor variables.

Table 4
ANOVA Results for Organizational Resources and University Performance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Regression</td>
<td>11.691</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11.691</td>
<td>34.346</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Residual</td>
<td>34.378</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>.340</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>46.069</td>
<td>102</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. Dependent Variable: Public university performance
b. Predictors: (Constant), Organizational resources

From Table 4 above, p value = 0.000 thus p is less than 0.05 which is the alpha value, a demonstration that organizational resources is statistically significant on performance of public universities in Kenya.

Table 5
Regression Coefficients for Organizational Resources and University Performance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Coefficientsa</th>
<th>Unstandardized Coefficients</th>
<th>Standardized Coefficients</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Std. Error</td>
<td>Beta</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 (Constant)</td>
<td>2.002</td>
<td>0.337</td>
<td></td>
<td>5.936</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational resources</td>
<td>0.461</td>
<td>0.079</td>
<td>0.504</td>
<td>5.861</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. Dependent Variable: Public university performance

The estimated regression model in Table 5 above confirmed that organizational resources is statistically significant at $\beta = 0.504$; $t = 5.936$; $p = 0.000$. It is notable that at 95% levels of confidence, organizational resources have a positive effect on performance of public universities in Kenya. Therefore, an increase of one unit in organizational styles is responsible of causing an increase of 0.504 in performance of public universities in Kenya. The study concludes that there is a statistically positive relationship between organizational resources and performance of public universities in Kenya.

Arising from the data, a simple regression equation that may be used to estimate university performance is given its existing organizational resources is expressed as follows:

$$UP = 2.002 + 0.504OR + \epsilon$$

Where;
UP = University Performance.
OR= Organizational Resources.

This shows that performance of public universities in Kenya can increase by 46.1% if appropriate resources are put in place for performance of its three basic functions which are teaching, research and community outreach.

The findings resonate with those of Ongeti and Machuki (2018) which sought to find out the relationship between organizational resources and performance of Kenyan state corporations. Using cross-sectional descriptive survey, of 63 Kenyan state corporations and analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. The findings revealed a statistically significant relationship between aggregated organizational resources and performance.

The study also agrees with that of Chebiwot et al. (2020) who sought to assess organizational engagement climate. By testing a model of six specific organizational resources, organizational engagement climate, and positive direct and indirect associations with job resources and employee engagement, Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) and structural equation modeling (SEM) on 1,578 employees. Findings revealed that four were positively associated with job resources, and two were positively associated with engagement. Organizational engagement climate was positively associated with job resources and employee engagement. Significant indirect relationships were also observed.

On the other hand, this study contradicts that of Maina and Njagi (2019) which noted that universities only require human resource or human capital to perform. Other resources are thus inconsequential for university performance. The same contradiction is also noted in the study of Mwai et al. (2018) which studied about factors determining university performance using selected universities in Canada and noted that performance was mainly about culture and structure but not resources.

V. CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusions

Based on the findings and discussions above, the study concluded that, organizational resources are statistically significant to performance of public universities in Kenya.

5.2 Recommendations

Following this conclusion, it is important that public universities in Kenya should invest in both human resource and physical structure. These resources should be well utilized to enable the universities to realize their goals. Universities should find different ways of sourcing for finance since the funding from the government of Kenya can to sustain all financial requirements in the public universities. The study recommended the following: an open and objective recruitment and selection processes, renovation of physical resources and prudent fiscal management.

REFERENCES


