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Strategic Management Practices and Performance of Selected Commercial State Corporations in Nairobi County, Kenya

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Abstract

Commercial state corporations play an important role in the provision of public goods and services and in Kenya's socioeconomic development. However, persistent performance challenges have raised concerns about the strategic management practices used within these entities. This study examined the relationship between resource allocation, management style, organizational culture, and the performance of selected commercial state corporations in Nairobi County, Kenya. The study was guided by the Resource-Based View, Transformational Leadership Theory, and Schein's Organizational Culture Framework. A descriptive quantitative research design was adopted. The target population comprised 300 managers from 20 commercial state corporations, from whom 107 top-, middle-, and lower-level managers were sampled. Data were collected using questionnaires, following a pilot study involving 20 respondents who were excluded from the main survey. Seventy-nine usable questionnaires were returned, representing a response rate of 73.8%. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, analysis of variance, and multiple linear regression. Resource allocation had the strongest bivariate association with performance ($r = 0.72$, $p < 0.001$). The regression model was statistically significant, $F(3, 75) = 39.10$, $p < 0.001$, and explained 61.0% of the variance in performance ($R^2 = 0.610$). Resource allocation had the largest estimated regression coefficient ($B = 0.421$), followed by management style ($B = 0.218$) and organizational culture ($B = 0.173$). The findings indicate that effective resource deployment, supportive management practices, and an enabling organizational culture are important predictors of performance in the selected corporations. The study recommends strengthening human-resource capability, infrastructure and organizational systems, management capacity, and collaborative workplace cultures.

Keywords: *Strategic Management, Resource Allocation, Management Style, Organizational Culture, Organizational Performance, Commercial State Corporations*

1.0 Introduction

Strategic management has become increasingly important in both private and public sectors as organizations navigate globalization, technological advancement, resource constraints, and intensified competition. It provides a framework for establishing long-term objectives, developing appropriate strategies, allocating resources, and responding to changes in the operating environment. Effective strategic management practices enhance operational efficiency, organizational competitiveness, and sustainability (Gulaid, 2024). Strategies provide approaches for achieving desired organizational outcomes, while effective implementation determines the extent to which organizations realize their performance objectives (Agaba et al., 2023). In the public sector, strategic management is particularly important because organizations must balance multiple and sometimes competing demands while ensuring efficiency, accountability, and value for money (Axelsson & Hoglund, 2023).

Across Africa, strategic management practices have gained prominence as governments seek to strengthen the performance of public institutions and state-owned enterprises. Regional policy initiatives emphasize strategic management as an important mechanism for improving institutional effectiveness and service delivery (Wanyama & Aila, 2022). However, many state corporations continue to experience bureaucratic inefficiencies, political interference, weak governance, corruption, and inadequate resource utilization. These challenges constrain organizational effectiveness and reduce the contribution of state corporations to national development. In Kenya, commercial state corporations play a significant role in economic and social development through the provision of essential goods and services, employment creation, and revenue generation. The government has consequently introduced reforms aimed at strengthening governance, operational efficiency, and accountability within these entities (Masya et al., 2022). Despite these initiatives, several commercial state corporations continue to experience financial inefficiencies, managerial challenges, and inadequate strategic direction, resulting in poor organizational outcomes (Wanyama & Aila, 2022). This situation highlights the need to examine how strategic management practices influence the performance of commercial state corporations.

Organizational performance refers to the extent to which an organization achieves predetermined objectives through the efficient and effective utilization of available resources. It can be assessed using indicators such as operational efficiency, profitability, customer satisfaction, effectiveness, and achievement of strategic objectives. In commercial state corporations, financial performance has traditionally been measured through indicators such as operating profit margins, return on assets, and return on equity (Wanyeri & Moronge, 2018). However, contemporary approaches recognize that organizational performance extends beyond financial outcomes to include operational and customer-related dimensions. For this study, performance of commercial state corporations is assessed using customer satisfaction, operational efficiency, and strategic alignment. Customer satisfaction reflects the extent to which products and services meet stakeholder expectations and can be assessed through feedback, ratings, surveys, reviews, and retention levels (Bryson & George, 2020). Operational efficiency concerns the ability of an organization to maximize outputs while minimizing resource wastage. Strategic alignment refers to the extent to which organizational resources, activities, structures, and employee efforts are coordinated toward the achievement of the organization's mission, vision, and strategic priorities (Bryson & George, 2020). Collectively, these dimensions provide a broader assessment of organizational performance.

Strategic management practices encompass the formulation, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of organizational strategies intended to achieve predetermined objectives. They involve assessing internal and external environments, establishing organizational priorities, allocating resources, and aligning organizational capabilities with strategic goals (Bryson & George, 2020; Henry, 2021). In the context of commercial state corporations, effective strategic management can facilitate appropriate resource utilization, strengthen managerial effectiveness, and improve organizational responsiveness. The study focuses on resource allocation, management style, and organizational culture as key strategic management practices. Resource allocation involves distributing scarce organizational resources to activities that support strategic priorities. Effective allocation ensures that financial, human, physical, and technological resources are directed toward activities that maximize organizational outcomes and minimize resource-related risks (Shigali & Shitseswa, 2023). Its indicators include capabilities and competencies, infrastructure, processes and systems, and unique organizational potentials.

Management style refers to the approaches managers use to direct employees and accomplish organizational objectives. Transactional and transformational management styles have been associated with more effective strategy implementation, whereas laissez-faire approaches may undermine organizational effectiveness (Abubakar et al., 2019). The study assesses management style through compelling and engaging vision, employee motivation, and strategic planning. Organizational culture comprises shared beliefs, values, norms, and assumptions that influence how employees interpret and respond to organizational activities. It provides a foundation for strategy implementation by shaping communication, decision-making, employee behaviour, and strategic relationships (Maika & Wachira, 2020). The study assesses organizational culture through artifacts, espoused values, and underlying assumptions. These strategic management practices provide the basis for examining their influence on the performance of commercial state corporations.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Organizational performance reflects an organization's ability to achieve predetermined goals and sustain desired outputs in a volatile and uncertain socio-economic environment. In Kenya, commercial state corporations continue to experience persistent performance challenges despite their strategic importance to economic development. Approximately 70% of Kenyan state corporations reportedly fail to implement their strategies within the first two years, with corruption, debt burdens, regulatory constraints, public dissatisfaction, and strategic failures contributing to this situation (Lerai, 2023). Bureaucracy, managerial incompetence, weak accountability, mismanagement, wastage, and poor service delivery further undermine their effectiveness (Mwangi & Nyaribo, 2022; Muhatia et al., 2020).

Recent studies have examined strategic innovation competencies, leadership approaches, organizational culture, and strategic management practices in Kenyan state corporations (Kamwere & Murigi, 2023; Dubat, 2024; Miano et al., 2025; Njoroge, 2025). However, limited attention has been given to the combined relationship of resource allocation, management style, and organizational culture with organizational performance in commercial state corporations. Existing studies have also used different institutional settings, methodological approaches, and outcome measures, limiting direct application to the selected commercial state corporations in Nairobi County. This study therefore examined these three strategic management practices jointly to provide context-specific evidence on their relationship with organizational performance.

1.2 General Objective

To determine how strategic management practices relate to the performance of selected commercial state corporations in Nairobi County, Kenya.

1.3 Specific Objectives

i. To determine the relationship between resource allocation and the performance of selected commercial state corporations in Nairobi County, Kenya.
ii. To establish the relationship between management style and the performance of selected commercial state corporations in Nairobi County, Kenya.
iii. To assess the relationship between organizational culture and the performance of selected commercial state corporations in Nairobi County, Kenya.

2.0 Literature Review

2.1 Theoretical Review

The theoretical review examines theories that explain the relationships between the study variables and provides a basis for interpreting organizational phenomena. This study is anchored on the Resource-Based View (RBV), Schein's Model of Organizational Culture, and Transformational Leadership Theory, which collectively explain how organizational resources, culture, and leadership influence strategic management and organizational outcomes.

The Resource-Based View (RBV) conceptualizes an organization as a collection of tangible and intangible resources, including physical assets, human capital, knowledge, capabilities, and institutional resources (Barney, 1991). The theory argues that competitive advantage is achieved when firms possess resources that are valuable, rare, difficult to imitate, and non-substitutable. The foundations of RBV can be traced to Penrose's work on the role of firm resources in organizational growth, followed by Wernerfelt's (1984) formalization of the resource-based perspective and Barney's (1991) development of the VRIN framework. RBV emphasizes internal resources and capabilities as foundations for strategy formulation and implementation. Firms that invest in competencies, infrastructure, systems, and organizational processes are better positioned to implement strategies effectively and achieve superior performance (Shigali & Shitseswa, 2023). However, the theory has been criticized because resources are broadly defined, making them difficult to operationalize and measure consistently. Intangible resources such as knowledge, reputation, and organizational capabilities may also be subjective (Henry, 2021). Despite these limitations, RBV is relevant to the study because it explains how organizational resources and capabilities can facilitate successful strategic management and organizational performance.

Schein's Model of Organizational Culture, developed by Edgar Schein, explains organizational culture through three interconnected levels: artefacts, espoused values, and basic underlying assumptions (Schein, 1983). Artefacts represent the visible aspects of culture, including organizational structures, practices, symbols, and routines. Espoused values encompass formally expressed principles, mission statements, codes of conduct, and strategic goals that indicate what an organization claims to value. Basic underlying assumptions constitute deeply embedded and often unconscious beliefs that influence members' perceptions, decisions, and behaviour. The model provides a framework for understanding how organizational culture shapes behaviour and organizational practices. Nevertheless, it has been criticized for emphasizing shared assumptions and values while paying insufficient attention to organizational conflicts, subcultures, and external environmental influences (Ghumiem et al., 2023). Its relatively static orientation may also overlook the dynamic nature of organizational culture. Despite these limitations, Schein's model is pertinent because it explains how shared values, beliefs, and organizational practices can influence the implementation of strategic management practices.

Transformational Leadership Theory, associated with Burns (1978), emphasizes leadership that inspires followers to transcend individual interests and pursue shared organizational goals. Transformational leaders articulate a compelling vision, motivate employees, encourage innovation, and foster commitment to organizational objectives. Such leadership can enhance employee engagement and strengthen identification with the organizational mission (Kiilu & Awuor, 2022). Transformational leaders also facilitate strategic change by aligning employees' individual aspirations with the organization's broader vision (Joram, 2018). The theory nevertheless recognizes potential limitations, including excessive dependence on leaders, conformity, unrealistic expectations, and possible manipulation or abuse of power (Ateş et al., 2018). Despite these concerns, transformational leadership is relevant to this study because effective strategic implementation requires leaders who can communicate organizational priorities, motivate employees, facilitate change, and create a shared commitment to organizational objectives. Collectively, the three theories provide complementary perspectives on how resources, organizational culture, and leadership contribute to effective strategic management and organizational success.

2.2 Empirical Review

The empirical review examines prior studies on the relationship between strategic management practices and organizational performance. Specifically, it reviews empirical evidence on resource allocation, management style, organizational culture, and strategic management practices, while identifying contextual, conceptual, and methodological gaps that justify the present study.

Previous research demonstrates that effective resource allocation contributes to organizational performance. A quantitative study involving 97 respondents found that knowledge-based resources significantly enhanced organizational performance. However, the study was conducted in Indonesia, creating a geographical gap that the present study addresses by examining resource allocation in Kenyan commercial state corporations. In Zimbabwe, Mapetere et al. (2023) examined resource allocation and strategy implementation in commercial state-owned enterprises using 478 respondents from the communication technology and courier services sector. The findings established a positive relationship between resource allocation and strategy implementation. However, the study was undertaken in Zimbabwe, limiting its applicability to Kenya. Similarly, Dubat (2024), using a descriptive design and 165 respondents, found a positive relationship between resource allocation, strategic innovation, service capabilities, and organizational performance. Nevertheless, the study emphasized dynamic capabilities rather than resource allocation as an independent strategic management practice, presenting a conceptual gap. The current study therefore examines the direct influence of resource allocation on the performance of Kenyan commercial state corporations.

Rahman et al. (2020) examined the influence of leadership styles and organizational culture on public-sector performance in Saudi Arabia using 400 respondents. The findings indicated that both leadership styles and organizational culture positively influenced organizational performance. However, the Saudi Arabian context differs from that of Kenyan commercial state corporations, creating a geographical gap. Badarai et al. (2022) investigated transformational leadership and organizational performance in state enterprises in Zimbabwe and South Africa using a qualitative case-study approach and 314 respondents. The study established a direct relationship between transformational leadership and organizational performance. However, its qualitative orientation limits statistical generalization. Miano et al. (2025), using a mixed-methods approach and 177 respondents, examined passive-avoidance, transformational, and transactional leadership styles. Transformational leadership positively influenced performance, whereas passive-avoidance and transactional leadership had insignificant effects. The mixed-methods approach and differing contextual focus leave room for further quantitative investigation of management style within Kenyan commercial state corporations.

Xanthopoulou et al. (2022) used the Competing Values Framework and 424 participants to examine organizational culture and performance in Greece. The findings showed that adhocracy, clan, hierarchy, and market cultures positively influenced organizational performance. However, the Greek context and reliance on a specific cultural framework create geographical and methodological gaps. Ghumiem et al. (2023), using 408 employees in Libya, found that mission clarity, consistency, inclusivity, and adaptability strengthened organizational performance. Despite these findings, the study's Libyan context limits generalization to Kenya. Njoroge (2025), focusing on Kenyan state agencies, found that communication and leadership characteristics positively influenced employee performance. However, the study concentrated on employee-level outcomes rather than overall organizational performance, leaving a conceptual gap that the present study seeks to address.

2.3 Conceptual Framework

Independent Variables **Dependent Variables**

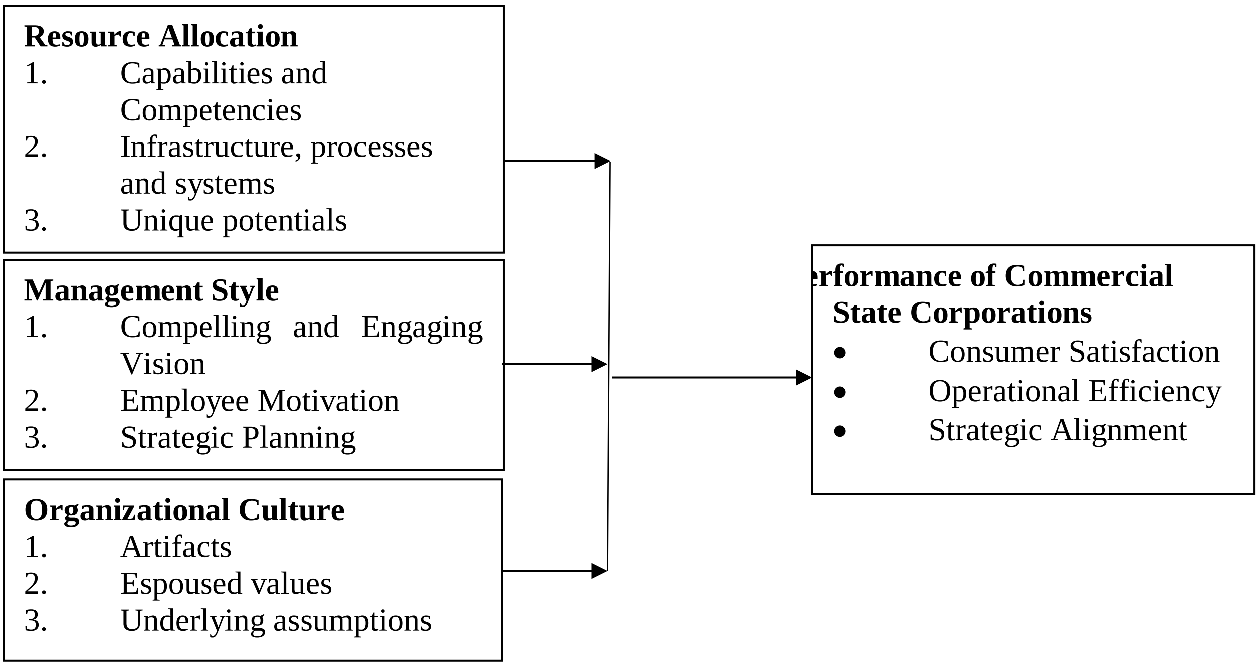

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

3.0 Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive research design to systematically describe and examine the characteristics of the study variables and respondents. The design was appropriate because it enabled the researcher to collect quantitative information from different categories of respondents and assess patterns and relationships among strategic management practices and organizational performance (Bryson & George, 2020). It further facilitated the comparison and interpretation of the variables under investigation. The target population comprised 300 managers drawn from 20 commercial state corporations operating within or near Nairobi County. Kenya has 248 state corporations, of which 46 are classified as commercial state corporations (Lerai, 2023). The unit of analysis was the selected commercial state corporation, while the unit of observation was the individual top-, middle-, or lower-level manager. The target population comprised 75 top-level, 100 middle-level, and 125 lower-level managers.

The study employed purposive and stratified sampling techniques. Purposive sampling facilitated the selection of relevant commercial state corporations, while stratified sampling enabled the population to be divided into homogeneous managerial categories, thereby ensuring representation across organizational levels (Lerai, 2023). A sample of 107 respondents was selected, comprising 15 top-level, 30 middle-level, and 62 low-level managers. Primary data were collected using a semi-structured questionnaire incorporating a four-point Likert scale. Questionnaires were appropriate for generating standardized quantitative data efficiently and economically (Ahearne et al., 2013). The drop-and-pick method was used for administration, allowing respondents adequate time to complete the instruments while enabling the researcher to clarify questions where necessary.

A pilot study involving 20 respondents from state corporations excluded from the main survey was conducted to identify weaknesses in the research instrument and data collection procedures (Koech et al., 2016). Content validity was established through expert and supervisor review, while face validity was assessed based on the suitability of the instrument to the study objectives (Muhatia et al., 2020). Reliability was evaluated using Cronbach's alpha coefficient, with a threshold of 0.70 considered acceptable for internal consistency (Joram, 2018). Data were analyzed using SPSS. Descriptive statistics, including means and measures of dispersion, were used to summarize the data. Inferential analysis involved Pearson correlation, analysis of variance (ANOVA), and multiple linear regression. The regression model was specified as:

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

where Y represented commercial state corporations' performance; X_1 represented resource allocation; X_2 represented management style; X_3 represented organizational culture; and ε represented the error term. Ethical approval and research authorization were obtained from Kenyatta University and NACOSTI, respectively. Participation was voluntary, and respondents provided informed consent. Anonymity was maintained by excluding identifying information from questionnaires, while confidentiality and secure handling of research data were ensured. Respondents were also informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any stage without penalty (Wanyama & Aila, 2022).

4.0 Findings and Discussion

The study achieved a response rate of 73.8% (approximately 74%), with 79 of the 107 questionnaires administered to respondents in the selected commercial state corporations correctly completed and returned. Twenty-eight questionnaires were either not returned or were incomplete and were excluded from the analysis. The 79 usable responses formed the analytic sample for the descriptive and inferential analyses reported in this section.

4.1 Correlation Analysis

Table 1 presents the Pearson correlation coefficients among resource allocation, management style, organizational culture, and performance of commercial state corporations.

Table 1: Correlation Analysis

	Resource Allocation	**Management Style**	**Organizational Culture**	**Commercial State Corporations' Performance**
Resource Allocation	1			
Management Style	0.58**	1		
Organizational Culture	0.61**	0.56**	1	
Commercial State Corporations' Performance	0.72**	0.64**	0.62**	1

The results indicate significant positive relationships between all the independent variables and organizational performance. Resource allocation had the strongest association with performance ($r = 0.72$, $p < 0.001$), followed by management style ($r = 0.64$, $p < 0.001$) and organizational culture ($r = 0.62$, $p < 0.001$). The findings suggest that improvements in these strategic management dimensions are associated with enhanced performance.

4.2 Analysis of Variance

Table 2: ANOVA Results

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F-Statistic	Sig. (p-value)
Regression	61.000	3	20.333	39.10	< 0.001
Residual	39.000	75	0.520		
Total	100.000	78			

Source: Research Data (2026)

The ANOVA results demonstrate that the regression model is statistically significant, $F(3,75) = 39.10$, $p < 0.001$. Thus, resource allocation, management style, and organizational culture jointly provide a significant explanation of variations in commercial state corporations' performance. The analysis was based on 79 valid responses from 107 questionnaires, representing a 74% response rate.

4.3 Model Summary

Table 3: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.781	0.610	0.594	0.721

Source: Research Data (2026)

The model produced a strong positive multiple correlation ($R = 0.781$). The R^2 of 0.610 indicates that resource allocation, management style, and organizational culture jointly explain 61.0% of the variation in commercial state corporations' performance, while 39.0% is explained by factors outside the model. The adjusted R^2 of 0.594 indicates that the model retains substantial explanatory power after accounting for sample size and the number of predictors.

4.4 Multiple Regression Analysis

Table 4: Regression Coefficients

Variable	Unstandardized Coefficient (B)	Std. Error	t-value	p-value
Resource Allocation	0.421	0.072	5.80	<0.001
Management Style	0.218	0.069	3.16	0.002
Organizational Culture	0.173	0.066	2.62	<0.010

Source: Research Data (2026)

The regression results indicated that all three predictors were positive and statistically significant predictors of commercial state corporations' performance. Resource allocation had the largest estimated unstandardized coefficient ($B = 0.421$, $p < 0.001$), followed by management style ($B = 0.218$, $p = 0.002$) and organizational culture ($B = 0.173$, $p < 0.010$). These results indicate that stronger resource allocation, management practices, and organizational culture were associated with higher reported performance within the selected corporations. Given the cross-sectional design, the coefficients are interpreted as predictive associations rather than causal effects. Overall, the pattern is consistent with prior studies reporting positive relationships between strategic management practices and organizational performance (Kamwere & Murigi, 2023; Mapetere et al., 2023; Ghumiem et al., 2023; Njoroge, 2025).

4.5 Discussion

The study examined the relationship between strategic management practices and the performance of selected commercial state corporations in Nairobi County, focusing on resource allocation, management style, and organizational culture. Guided by Transformational Leadership Theory, Schein's Organizational Culture Framework, and the Resource-Based View, the study adopted a descriptive quantitative design. From a target population of 300 managers, 107 top-, middle-, and lower-level managers were sampled, and 79 usable responses were analysed. Descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, ANOVA, and multiple regression were used to assess the study relationships.

The findings showed that the strategic management practices examined were positively associated with organizational performance. The regression model was statistically significant, $R = 0.781$, $R^2 = 0.610$, $F(3, 75) = 39.10$, $p < 0.001$, indicating that the three predictors jointly explained 61.0% of the variation in reported performance. Resource allocation had the largest estimated coefficient ($B = 0.421$, $p < 0.001$; $r = 0.72$), highlighting the importance of human, infrastructural, and organizational resources. Management style was also a significant predictor ($B = 0.218$, $p = 0.002$; $r = 0.64$), while organizational culture remained significant ($B = 0.173$, $p < 0.010$; $r = 0.62$). These results support the theoretical expectation that resources, management practices, and organizational culture jointly shape the conditions under which strategies are implemented. However, because the design was cross-sectional, the findings should be interpreted as associations rather than evidence of causation.

5.0 Conclusion

The study concludes that, within the selected commercial state corporations in Nairobi County, resource allocation, management style, and organizational culture were significant positive predictors of reported organizational performance. Resource allocation emerged as the strongest predictor, underscoring the importance of competent personnel, appropriate infrastructure, effective systems and processes, and timely deployment of resources. Supportive management practices, including clear vision, employee motivation, and informed strategic planning, were also associated with stronger performance. In addition, organizational culture contributed through shared values, visible organizational practices, and collaboration in strategy implementation. The findings therefore support an integrated strategic-management approach in which resources, management practices, and culture are aligned with organizational priorities.

6.0 Recommendations

Selected commercial state corporations in Nairobi County should strengthen organizational performance by recruiting and developing competent personnel and by establishing appropriate infrastructure, systems, and processes that facilitate strategy implementation. Adequate and timely resource allocation should be prioritized to support strategic objectives. Management teams should articulate clear organizational visions, develop informed strategic plans, and foster supportive environments that motivate employees. Corporations should also strengthen organizational culture by aligning espoused values, practices, and organizational artefacts with strategic objectives while promoting collaboration in strategy execution.

Future research should examine moderating and mediating factors, including employee engagement and change readiness, to provide deeper understanding of relationships between strategic management practices and organizational performance. Studies should also consider additional variables such as strategic leadership, innovation capability, strategic planning, and digital transformation. Longitudinal and mixed-methods designs are recommended to capture changes over time and complement quantitative findings with qualitative insights. Comparative studies across Kenyan counties, organizational sectors, and African countries would further enhance generalizability and inform public-sector policy and management.

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