



## Understanding Strategy Implementation: Progress along Performance of Meru County Government in Kenya

*Kelvin Mutuma Ntoiti*  
*Stephen Muathe Makau*

School of Business, Kenyatta University, Nairobi, Kenya

[Doi:10.19044/esj.2022.v18n32p52](https://doi.org/10.19044/esj.2022.v18n32p52)

Submitted: 12 September 2022

Accepted: 25 June 2022

Published: 31 October 2022

Copyright 2022 Author(s)

Under Creative Commons BY-NC-ND

4.0 OPEN ACCESS

*Cite As:*

Ntoiti K.M. & Makau S.M. (2022). *Understanding Strategy Implementation: Progress along Performance of Meru County Government in Kenya*. European Scientific Journal, ESJ, 18 (32), 52. <https://doi.org/10.19044/esj.2022.v18n32p52>

### Abstract

Below-average performance is a characteristic that has been common to many county governments in Kenya. The counties, formulate a County Integrated Development Plan as a guiding roadmap for five years. Besides the well-formulated strategies in Meru County, performance and effective service delivery have not been satisfactorily achieved. This study was designed to investigate the strategy implementation and performance of the Meru County Government. The study's specific objectives were; to determine the effects of resource allocation, organizational culture, leadership, and organizational structure on strategy implementation and performance of Meru County Government. The variables of the study were measured using their respective indicators as follows. Resource allocation; finance and human resources. Organizational culture; values and goals. Leadership; style and leaders' experience. Organizational structure; degree of decentralization. Performance; service delivery and county infrastructural development. Data was collected using a questionnaire with a Likert scale type of questions. The study targeted 291 employees of Meru County Government and a descriptive research design was used. Multiple regression analysis was used to analyze data. Findings indicated that the above-outlined variables had a positive and significant influence on the county government's performance. The study among others recommends that; the county government should allocate adequate resources for the execution of its strategies, and to improve organizational leadership, the management should have more employees contribute to decision-making

and periodic workshops and/or training should be held for all staff. On organizational structure; promoting interdepartmental learning and creating a short chain of command can help transform performance for the better.

---

**Keywords:** Balanced Score Card, Dynamic Capability, Resource Allocation, Organizational leadership, Organizational Structure

## 1.0 Introduction

A serious issue that has developed since businesses and governments embraced strategic orientation in their operation is how to implement and reap the benefits of their thoughtful process (Hitt, et. al., 2017). According to Verweire (2014), strategies remain until they are successfully executed to help the organization and the people around them. Strategy implementation entails the practice that transforms plans and strategies into actions to realize the planned objectives. Proper strategy implementation, which has eluded many organizations for years, transforms a written document into activities that drive business growth (Hitt et al., 2017)

Strategy makes organizations and individuals look forward to tomorrow and far deep into the future (Brinkschröder, 2014). Organizations develop and execute their strategy to reach their desired state; for the government and all its agencies, their strategies are inclined towards an improved future for its citizens. The improved performance, higher efficiency, or sustainability that a strategy may promise is all tied to how the strategy will be executed. Many plans have looked good on paper and sounded comprehensive during discussions but the impacts of these plans upon final evaluation after execution are of no match compared to what was promised – mostly failing. According to Verweire (2014), strategy implementation has become a hot topic in today's corporate world. Organizations commit significant amounts of resources to training, consulting, and strategy formulation in the expectation that their brilliant strategies will transform into a brilliant performance.

According to the County Governments Act (2012), The County is responsible for a variety of administrative and development functions. These are the roles that the County Government of Meru was created and lives to serve; they include, County legislations by the county assembly and devolved functions that encompass health, agriculture county transport (county roads), Trade development and regulation, County planning and development, Education (ECD), Firefighting services, County public works, and services, etc. The performance of the Meru County government is measured by the extent to which the government succeeds in serving its purposes and its real outputs produced in comparison to the set goals and objectives (Abass, Munga & Were, 2017). The goals and

objectives are seen regarding the County Integrated Development Plan; which is developed by policymakers in the county as a strategic guide for five years.

As per the reports by Infotrak (2020) Meru County is among the top 10 least-performing counties in the country right now. The performance is directly related to how the government uses its available resources and the rate of success of its strategy implementation. This report when compared with the 2020 report released by KNBS is a stunning juxtaposition. The release by KNBS (2020) reported that Meru County is the second richest county in Kenya jointly ranked with Nyeri and Kirinyaga. The county is nothing but a real potential of becoming a top economic hub in the country and region. But InfoTrak (2020) reports show otherwise when it comes to the performance of the county government of Meru

Many projects initiated by the Meru County government are yet to bring their complete intended benefits to the residents. Instead, some have become never-ending involvements continually consuming both national and local resources every financial year. A report by The Meru County Government (2019) indicated that around 131 multi-sectoral projects valued at Ksh. 18.9 billion have either stalled or only existed on papers are at 10% - 95% stages of completion. The projects have led to slow infrastructural development in the county and thus hindered higher rates of economic development in the region. Some of these projects are strategies that were laid out in 2016 to be successfully implemented in two years. The current performance to a large degree is attributable to the county's strategy implementation practices.

## **1.1 Objectives of the Study**

1. To assess the relationship between the performance of the Meru County Government and leadership in the organization.
2. To determine the effects of organizational structure on Meru County Government's performance.
3. To assess the impact of resource allocation on the Meru County Government's performance.
4. To determine the impact of organizational culture on Meru County Government's performance in Kenya.

## **2.0 Review of Literature**

### **2.1 Theoretical Review**

#### **2.1.1 Resource Based Theory**

The concept of this theory was first created in the year 1959 it was brought up by Penrose (1959). Later it was advanced by Wernefelt (1980) and Barney (1991). Wernefelt advanced it by writing a Publication on Resource

Based View while Barney published Firm Resources. Another notable contributor was Prahalad and Hamel (1990) who wrote Core Competences of the Corporation among others. However, Barney is widely quoted as the developer of Resource Based View due to the larger part played by his scholarly work. His publication, Resource Based View is a theory that focuses on strategic management and states that the success of an organization can't entirely be explained by conditions in the surrounding environment but relies heavily on the abilities of the resources that a firm has in its possession.

The Resource Based View asserts that a firm's capacity to manage the institutional context of its resource decisions determines its long-term competitive advantage (Wilkinson & Wood 2017). Organizations differ in what methods are used to acquire, develop, and allocate these resources and put them to use. If an organization can acquire and make good decisions on these resources the firm is always staged for success (Augier, 2018). Resource Based Theory inspires managers to start by looking within the organization and various departments for strengths and weaknesses before venturing into the external environment. Resource Based View guide managers and policymakers in what to do with the resources to get superior performance (Dagnino, 2012). The theory puts forward the following views for organizations to follow to achieve competitive advantage and easily realize their goals. The resources a company possesses should be of value, rare, hard to imitate, immobile, and heterogeneous (Wilkinson & Wood 2017). The study found significant weight on the Resource Based View because its approach and principles can be practically applied in improving the operation and performance of Meru County Government, Kenya.

### **2.1.2 Transformational Leadership Theory**

Downton (1978) is considered the pioneer of the transformational leadership theory, a concept that was later worked on and developed further by Burns (1978). Transformational leadership has been a key concept in leadership research over the past years (Goethals, 2004). Transformational leadership theory is a theory of leadership that works with individuals beyond their personal interests. James MacGregor Burns first proposed the concept of transformational leadership when researching political leaders, but it is increasingly utilized to examine corporations as well.

Transformational leadership approach focuses on how organizational leaders can create positive and valuable change within an organization through its members. It's a leadership philosophy in which a leader works with supporters to identify needed changes, spark a purpose, and implement the plan with a group of devoted followers (Sashkin, 2004). Transformational leadership is the leadership style that emphasizes charismatic and emotional leadership qualities. As the name indicates, the transformational leadership

theory tries to bring a fresh perspective on leadership (Sashkin, 2004). At various levels of an organization, including teams, divisions, departments, and the broader company, transformational leadership can be developed.

To make significant changes in a company, transformational leadership must display the following four characteristics: Individualized concern, motivation, idealized influence, and intellectual stimulation (Towler, 2022). These are the functions that can help in effective strategy implementation practices at Meru County Government. Inspirational Motivation; the transmission of a consistent vision, objective, and value system to the followers is the foundation of transformative leadership. Intellectual Stimulation: A transformational leader inspires his teams to be inventive. Leaders always inspire their employees to come up with new innovative ideas and never publicly criticize them when they make mistakes. Idealized Influence: Strategic leaders believe that a person could only influence followers when he does what he says. Others who desire to follow suit look up to leaders as role models. Individualized attention: Transformational leaders act as role models to their subordinates, praising their creativity and initiative. Followers are treated differently depending on their talents and competence (Towler, 2022). This study found the relevance of the transformational leadership theory since it would help to connect the role of strategic leaders' commitment and effective leadership to strategy implementation.

### **2.1.3 Systems Theory**

In the 1940s and 1950s, Ludwig von Bertalanffy's study was the first to introduce the concept of comprehensive systems theory. His work was later furthered by Ashby (1956) and Bateson (1979). Bertalanffy pushed for open systems rather than the closed systems associated with traditional science initially. Closed systems would not interact with other systems, whereas open ones did connect with others. Instead of a single cohesive theory, systems theory is a strategy for envisioning an organization's structure and qualities in terms of the connections and interdependence between its components. All the different parts and divisions of an organization or business; in this case, Meru County Government should work in coordination with each other and the environment for effective strategy implementation.

The Systems Approach sees the institution as a system made of interrelated elements which work together as sub-systems, and is widely recognized as the basis of organizational growth and successful organizational structure. Real and excellent systems are aware of their surroundings and engage with them, as well as having the ability to obtain whole new props (László, 1972). Modifying one part of a system has ramifications on the overall system. These changes are

predictable. The degree to which systems learn and evolve is governed by how well they are engaged with the surrounding environment (Jackson, 2000). In this theory, a system is any collection of diverse components that interact to make a complex whole. Organizations and governmental bodies have different departments and divisions that work in synergy for effective strategy implementation, Human Resource Management, Planning, Accounting, and Finance, Procurement, Research, and Development are just a few examples. Systems theory guides and informs how Meru County Government can set its organizational structure and other components for effective strategy execution.

#### **2.1.4 The Balanced Scorecard Model**

Balanced Score Card is a tool for measuring corporate performance. It was developed by Kaplan and Norton (1992). Previously, organizations and governments used only financial measures to determine strategic organizational success. The duo created the Balanced Scorecard model to include both financial and non-financial metrics to measure strategic performance. For this reason, the balanced scorecard has become the most widely used model when studying and gauging organizational performance (Niven, 2008). The Balanced Scorecard as a performance metric can also be used to recognize, improve, and regulate an organization's different strategic functions and consequential outcomes both within and outside. The Balanced Scorecard encompasses measuring the following facets of a business: finance, learning and growth, customers, and business processes (Kaplan & Norton, 1992). The model then aligns the elements to the strategy and vision of the organization to aid improved performance.

On the customer dimension, each organization exists to serve a specific group of clients and their needs; in this study, residents of Meru County are the customers of the Meru County Government. The citizens are the target and the consumers of the services offered by the county government. Customers' needs might change at any time; thus, businesses focus on meeting them. Every strategy implementation practice is carried out with the final beneficiaries in mind. When accessing business processes; all processes in the strategy implementation process should add significant value to the entity. The strategy implementation process sheds light on what the organization must excel at to satisfy the target population who consume our services. In today's volatile operating environment, learning and growth is key to the performance and survival of any organization. Learning and growth is the other important facet measured by the Balanced Scorecard as a performance measurement tool. In a dynamic environment, an organization's capacity to adjust and innovate indicates if it is capable of continuous progress and growth. The financial perspective is a quantitative benchmark in the Balanced Scorecard based on past figures. For a for-profit organization, profit must exceed costs.



For this case; the Meru County government must achieve the highest efficiency possible in raising and spending its finances during strategy implementation. The Balanced Scorecard Model can enable Meru County Government to consolidate huge amounts of information into a single report, providing insight into the quality of services they offer and their current performance. Not only this, but a balanced scorecard can also contribute to quality addition and improve strategic performance and organizational efficiencies.

## **2.2 Empirical Review**

### **2.2.1 Resource Allocation and Performance**

Resource management involves resource allocation which affects performance. Abass (2020) investigated resource management practices that influenced the success rate of road construction projects in Wajir County. This investigation targeted 193 stakeholders who were directly involved in the forty-seven major projects that were being implemented by the county government in various sub-counties in Wajir. A questionnaire was applied to gather data for the research. It was realized that proper resource allocation directly helped in solving problems associated with the availability of resources and work efficiency for projects and strategic success. Well-organized resource allocation plans allowed managers to prepare to assign resources effectively to the tasks in strategy implementation and manage them. In conducting this study, the influence that environmental changes have on the performance of county government was not considered. This is a real factor, especially in recent years when economic, health, political, legislative, and social environments barely remain the same (World Economic Situation and Prospects, 2020)

In Tana River County, Hantiro and Maina (2020) studied how strategy execution affected the service delivery and performance of the county government. The study targeted to gather information from top management employees of the county government. One hundred and sixty-six respondents were targeted and by use of a proportionate stratified sampling method sixty-six were chosen. To collect data, questionnaires were used. One of the variables; resource allocation registered a positive and strong correlation with the independent variable; performance. The study obtained its findings 23 exclusively from senior management employees who do not share a common view with operational level staff and those with hands on the ground.

Ngumbi and Wambua (2018) study focused on organizational resources and implementation of strategy in the Kenya administration police at Baringo County. Resource Based View, Mckinsey 7S Model, and Institutional Philosophy were used to guide this research. For obtaining information from the target sample, a descriptive research approach was

adopted, which included the use of Likert scale type 22 questionnaires. The study targeted seven hundred and twenty AP officers. The study realized a strong correlation between the sufficiency of allocated resources and the performance levels of the Police in Baringo County. However, the limitation was that the study was confined to the Kenyan police department and Baringo County.

### **2.2.2 Organizational Culture and Performance**

According to the findings of Joseph and Kibera's (2019) study on organizational culture and performance as demonstrated by banks in Kenya. Organizational culture does have a major impact on microfinance banks' performance according to the findings. Organizational culture is a critical source of long-term performance and competitive advantage in businesses. In light of performance of the County Government of Meru this study supports the idea that certain cultural practices affect success in organizations. Primary and secondary data from yearly reports from the Kenya and Microfinance Rating Africa and the Association of Microfinance Institutions were considered in Joseph and Kibera's (2019) research. A systematic questionnaire helped with data collection from CEOs, the Human Resources Manager, and the marketing manager. This study exhibited gaps in the area that information for analysis and conclusion was extracted; only from top personnel alone. Additionally, the study was narrowly focused on microfinance institutions.

Abass et al., (2017) investigated the link between strategy execution and success in Kenyan county governments, focusing on Wajir County. He identified three variables that he presumed affected strategy implementation, among them was organizational culture. A questionnaire was utilized to gather information from 83 respondents out of a total of 166 employees. Data was analyzed through descriptive research design. According to the findings, there existed a significant relationship between culture and the performance of the institution. Positive and motivated employees encouraged performance. Nonetheless, this study did not take into account the effects of environmental changes on county government performance. This is a real factor, especially in recent years where economic, health, political, legislative, and social environments barely remain the same for a significant period.

Targeting 172 major contractors in Malaysia from which a representative sample of 61 was selected. Bamgbade et al., (2018). examined the effect of organizational culture on sustainable construction among Malaysian contractors. Data was collected from respondents via postal and physically given questionnaires. Collected data was evaluated using fractional least squares structural equation modeling, and it was discovered a relationship between adhocracy culture and effective construction and project implementation. According to a report by Wire (2021) on the Kenya



Construction Industry, the industry contributed 5.6% to GDP in the year 2019 and created employment for almost 222,000 citizens. Construction projects comprise a large percentage of the strategies laid down by the Meru County Government. According to Bamgbade et al. (2019), organizational culture has a substantial impact on the effectiveness of these strategies. Contextual gaps are evident in the study as it was conducted in Malaysia, a country that does not share the same political system or comparable economic development as Kenya and its Counties.

### **2.2.3 Organizational Leadership and Performance**

Atito (2017) studied leadership styles and strategy execution in a sample of Kenyan STIMA Saccos. The target population was 62 managers from STIMA Sacco Nairobi and Kisumu branches. Data for the research was collected by a questionnaire. Results showed that at STIMA Sacco Kenya, democratic and transactional leadership styles had a significant effect and a strong association with strategy execution; however, authoritarian and transformational leadership styles have good values but have little impact on strategy implementation. In light of the current study, the research by Atito (2017) exhibited both knowledge and contextual gaps. The study examined leadership styles alone which independently cannot be used to gauge performance in an organization; this brings a discrepancy between what the study revealed about performance and what should be known about performance. The study also targeted SACCOs whose findings cannot be accurately applied in governmental bodies.

Abdi (2018) reported that strategic leadership has quite a huge effect on organizational performance. His statistical report showed that 82.2% of results delivered heavily relied on the efficiency of leadership. The study by Abdi (2018); strategic management and firm's performance of tea plantation enterprises in Nandi County. With a target population of nineteen tea plantations. The target population was divided into 3 levels of management in accordance to their seniority using random sampling processes. Findings from the study failed to explain specifically in what manner the leadership influences results; could it be the competence of the leaders? Or how leaders motivated and inspired employees? Or is it the style of leadership?

Ejimabo (2015) through his research on; Influence of decision-making in organizational leadership and management activities, looked at how decisions made in organizational management and leadership activities affect creativity, development and effectiveness, performance, and goal achievement in modern companies. The researcher used the Kurt Lewin leadership theory to guide the research. This research included 400 previous and present corporate leaders and managers. A blend of interviews and questionnaires helped in data gathering. The findings demonstrated a substantial need for

development and change in corporate policy-making, with technology, diversity, globalization, strategy, collaboration, and leadership effectiveness all being taken into consideration. The rigidity of structured interview guides and questionnaires limited the range of important data that could be collected resulting in a gap in knowledge in this study. The research being conducted in the business sector which is majorly focused on increasing profits and little on sustainability and service delivery to the citizens limits the practical applications of the findings 27 by this study; hence the contextual gap. The method used in selecting the sample was not comprehensive creating a gap by excluding other employees lower in the organizational hierarchy.

#### **2.2.4 Organizational Structure and Performance**

Ongeti (2014) investigated Kenyan state corporations' organizational resources, governance frameworks, and performance. A questionnaire was employed for collecting data. A drop-and-pick approach was used to deliver the questionnaire to a sample of 95 Kenyan state enterprises. Regression analysis revealed a significant link between resources and organizational performance. The moderating role of the firm's structures resulted in a marginal increase in explanatory power on performance of 10.7 percent. This indicated that the type of organizational structure in place affects strategic performance. The Kenyan government has established state corporations to serve specific purposes in the country, their scope and roles are narrow and do not mainly encompass governance of the people. For example, Kenya National Trading Corporation for promoting and increasing wholesale and retail trade. Structures of state corporations are different from county government structures thus studies and findings from these areas are far apart and cannot be cross-applied.

Karemu et al., (2021) studied the influence of corporate structure on the performance of Kenyan Mobile Telephone Network Operators. Structural contingency theory was the foundation of the research. Data came from a self-administered questionnaire and public corporate reports. A total of 361 workers were recruited, however, only 258 completed and returned surveys. All workers of Kenya's Mobile Telephone Network Operators were included in the research population of 6,167 people. According to the findings, the organizational structure has a statistically significant impact on the success of an organization. Analysis was done by means of descriptive statistics. The research by Karemu et al., (2021) presented clear statistical evidence on how organizational structures affect organizational performance and strategy implementation. Nonetheless, the study was limited and confined to mobile telephone network operators. Additionally, a gap in the methodology used as the researchers used profit margins and market share to measure

organizational performance. Organizational performance spreads beyond profits and market size (Parmenter, 2015).

Zhang et al., (2015) looked at how organizational structure and culture affected the deployment and effectiveness of Activity Based Costing in Chinese manufacturing firms. Kenya has a lot to gain by learning from the success stories of the Chinese Government and firms. Some of the firms are operating and have become successful in our country and environment. The goal of the study was to look at how organizational structure and culture interact to affect the effectiveness of Activity Based Costing implementation in Chinese enterprises. The contingency theory of management was used to lay the basis for the study. A questionnaire was utilized to gather information from 106 people. According to the research, the structure of an organization has a substantial influence on Activity Based Costing success. The elements of organizational culture and outcome orientation were shown to be strongly connected to the implementation's success. A weakness of the research is evident in regard to what affects organizational performance and strategy implementation, Activity-Based Costing is an important undertaking in an organization that promotes efficiency in resource usage. Use of cost structures only in understanding organizational strategic success results in a knowledge gap.

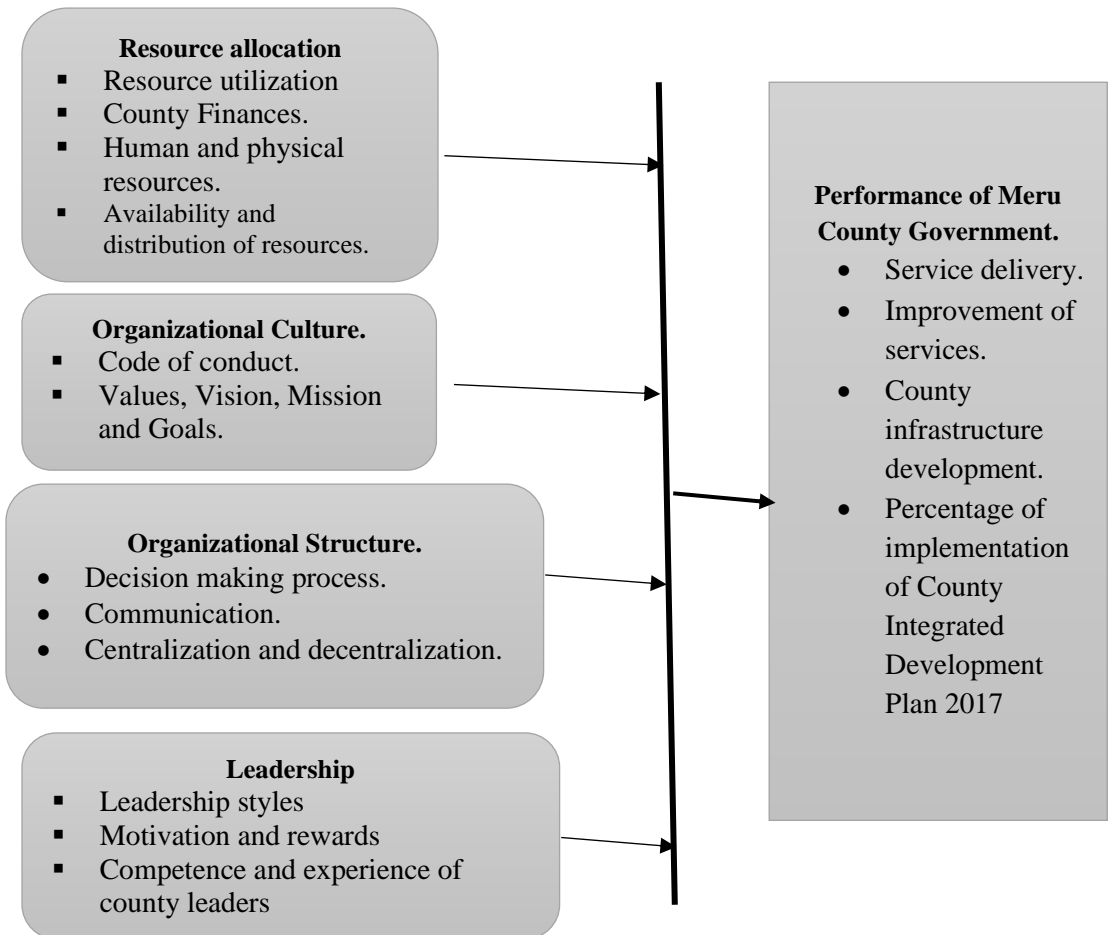
Setiawan et al., (2016), studied administrative structure, leadership, and trust effects on the performance of workers at Ternama University, these were the factors presumed to be affecting the organizational success and strategy implementation of the institution. The study used a survey technique, with path analysis being employed to evaluate the hypothesis. An 80-person sample was chosen through simple random sampling. The study sample was determined by targeting all the employees of Universitas Ternam. From the population, a sampling frame of 120 individuals was created and simple random sampling was used to pick the respondents for the study from the sampling frame. Findings from the research revealed that: administrative structure has a considerable impact on trust; administrative structure has a major impact on performance; leadership has a quantifiable influence on productivity, and that leadership affects performance. In conclusion, these factors, such as organizational structure, trust, and leadership must be considered when attempting to minimize variation in performance.

### **3.0 Conceptual Framework**

The conceptual framework of this study shows the link between the independent and dependent variables of the research. The study's major focus was the performance of the Meru County Government. The variables that affect performance as conceptualized in this research include; resource allocation, organizational culture, leadership, and organizational structure.

Indicators used to measure and study each of the independent variables are indicated under the particular variable. The independent variables that were studied and measured in reference to the performance of the Meru County Government were resource allocation, organizational culture, organizational leadership, and organizational structure.

**Figure 1.** Conceptual Framework Independent Variables Dependent Variable



Source: Researcher (2021)

#### 4.0 Research Methodology

Successful strategy implementation has been a hard target for many county governments in Kenya. It was evident that the Meru County Government and the citizens were reaping less than expected gains from the county's strategy implementation. The overall objective of this study was to determine the effects of strategy execution on the performance of the County Government of Meru. To study this, the following specific research objectives led the research: to determine the impact of leadership, organizational

structure, resource allocation, and organizational culture on the Meru County Government's performance in Kenya. A questionnaire was used to collect data, with dedicated questions that addressed each of the study's objectives.

This study was conducted using a descriptive research design. A descriptive research design is the most suitable approach for this research due to the special objectives that the study seeks to accomplish. Descriptive research design helped gather both quantitative and qualitative data on strategy implementation and the results achieved by Meru County Government. Meru County Government employees working at all levels of the administrative structure, from top management to Ward Administrators were targeted in this study. This was instrumental in collecting an all-representative set of data and drawing accurate and reliable findings. This study had a target population of 579 workers of the Meru County Government.

**Table 1.** Target Population's Distribution

<b>Divisions.</b>	<b>Total employees</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
County Directors	30	10.3%
County Executive	10	3.4%
Sub-County Administrators	11	3.7%
Ward Administrators.	46	15.8%
Meru County Chief Officers	19	6.5%
Town Administrators.	5	1.7%
Energy Roads and Transport	35	12%
Lands Public Works, Physical Planning & Urban	19	6.5%
Trade Investment Tourism & Co-operative	9	3.1%
Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries	22	7.5%
Education Technology Culture Gender & Social Services	15	5.2%
Environment, Wildlife & Natural Resources	20	6.9%
Finance, Economic Planning & ICT	50	17.2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>291</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: HR Department, Meru County Government (2021)

In this research, the population targeted was categorized into subgroups then a sample was picked from each category using a stratified random sampling method. This method provided data to represent and examine all subgroups in the target population. Additionally, it offered increased statistical efficiency. The stratified random sampling method was proportionate to the total for consistency. Simple random sampling was applied in the strata, giving each individual an equal and non-discriminatory chance of being picked for the study. A sample is said to be representative if it accurately reflects the features, characteristics, and opinions of the entire group (Kozak, 2015). The study picked 40% of the target population. 117 individuals were chosen through the described procedure as illustrated in the table below as the sample for the study. Taking 40% of the target population

provided the significant accuracy required for this study and offered a chance for a reasonable number of participants; close to half of the targeted population. The percentage also offered efficacy in the data collection process and analysis.

**Table 2.** Sample Distribution

<b>Divisions</b>	<b>Population</b>	<b>Sampling Percentage (40%)</b>	<b>Sample</b>
County Directors	30	0.40	12
Sub-County Administrators	11	0.40	4
Ward Administrators.	46	0.40	18
County Executive	10	0.40	4
Town Administrators.	5	0.40	2
Energy Roads and Transport	35	0.40	14
Lands Public Works, Physical Planning & Urban	19	0.40	8
Meru County Chief Officers	19	0.40	8
Trade Investment Tourism & Co-operative	9	0.40	4
Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries	22	0.40	9
Education Technology Culture, Gender & Social Services	15	0.40	6
Environment, Wildlife & Natural Resources	20	0.40	8
Finance, Economic Planning & ICT	50	0.40	20
<b>Total</b>	<b>291</b>		<b>117</b>

Source: Researcher (2021)

From various groups of employees of Meru County government data was gathered with the use of a designed questionnaire. The questionnaire was developed and constructed by the researcher which contained Likert scale type of questions with a combination of unstructured and structured questions to create room for additional information. The data-gathering questionnaire was self-administered; it was dropped and picked later.

A Permit to conduct the study in Meru County Government was obtained by requesting the management for the same. An official authorization letter to conduct the research was obtained from the Kenyatta University Department of Business Administration. Data was gathered by administering the questionnaire to the selected sample; the drop-and-pick latter approach used in the process, allowed respondents an easy time to answer and give quality responses. Two weeks were given for the selected individuals from the sample to fill and return the questionnaire, and a follow-up was made after nine days in the case of non-response.

Data organization and cleaning were done on gathered responses to help in the analysis and drawing of accurate conclusions that helped achieve the outlined research objectives. This research collected and evaluated both quantitative and qualitative data from the returned questionnaires. To analyze quantitative data, descriptive statistics were applied. This analysis was done



using SPSS version 26.0.0. Tabulation of quantitative data was done for each objective to provide a bird's view of the information and helped in identifying any patterns or trends.

Specified indicators were identified for each variable, and data was gathered and studied to understand if the variable had any influence on the dependent variable. The indicators also helped in revealing the nature of the relationship between the independent variables and the performance of the Meru County Government. To study resource allocation, the following indicators were considered; Resource utilization, county finances, human and physical resources, and availability of resources. Indicators of organizational culture included; leadership styles, code of conduct, values, vision, mission and goals, and employee experiences as told by employees of Meru County Government. On the organizational structure, decision-making process, centralization and decentralization were studied. The following variables were used under leadership: leadership styles, motivation and rewards, competence, and experience of the county leaders. The percentage of implementation of the County Integrated Development Plan 2017, Service delivery, improvement of services, and county infrastructural development were used to study and analyze the dependent variable; the performance of the Meru County Government. Regression analysis was applied to test the association between the independent and dependent variables. The regression model below was applied;

The model:  $Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1X_1 + \beta_2X_2 + \beta_3X_3 + \beta_4X_4 + \beta_5X_5 + \varepsilon$

Where:

Y - Performance of Meru County Government	X <sub>4</sub> - Organizational Structure
X <sub>1</sub> - Resource Allocation	$\beta_0, \beta_1, \beta_2, \beta_3, \beta_4$ - Coefficients of regression
X <sub>2</sub> - Organizational Culture	$\varepsilon$ - Error Term
X <sub>3</sub> - Leadership	

The relationship among the variables of this research was tested at a 95% confidence level. For presentation, information was presented and displayed in charts, tables, and graphs. This method of presentation provided for easy visualization of statistics, provides a summary of the findings and is in line with people's taste for graphic representations over paragraphs of words (Davis, 2021).

## **5.0 Research Findings**

### **5.1 Regression Analysis**

Inferential statistics were used to determine how Meru County Government's performance was affected by Organizational Structure, Organizational Leadership, Organizational Culture, and Resource Allocation.

Multiple regression analysis was employed in specific. The findings are discussed in the below sections.

**Table 3. Model Summary**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.829 <sup>a</sup>	0.688	0.674	0.23580

a. Predictors: (Constant), Organizational Structure, Organizational Leadership, Organizational Culture, Resource Allocation  
 Source: Research Data (2022)

R-Square ( $R^2$ ) is the measure that represents the proportion of the variance in performance of Meru County Government that is explained by organizational structure, organizational leadership, organizational culture, and resource allocation. From Table 4.11 the value of R-Square is 0.688, this explains that 69% of the variation in performance can be directly attributed to organizational structure, leadership, culture, and resource allocation. The other 31% is attributable to other factors not investigated in this study.

The study established the model’s significance using Analysis of Variance (ANOVA); the outcomes were as shown in Table 4 below.

**Table 4. Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)**

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	11.266	4	2.817	50.655	0.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	5.116	92	0.056		
	Total	16.382	96			

a. Dependent Variable: Performance of Meru County Government

b. Predictors: (Constant), Organizational Structure, Organizational Leadership, Organizational Culture, Resource Allocation  
 Source: Research Data (2022)

The Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) showed that the regression model was significant  $F(4, 92) = 50.655$   $P < 0.05$ ,  $R^2 = 0.688$ . As shown in Table 4.12, the p-value obtained was 0.000<sup>b</sup> which is less than 0.05. The results indicate that the model used in the investigation is statistically significant in explaining how the performance of the Meru County Government is influenced by organizational structure, organizational leadership, organizational culture, and resource allocation.

The study used regression coefficients to determine the proportion of variance in the performance of Meru County Government that could be explained by individual independent variables. The outcomes are presented in Table 4.13

**Table 4.** Regression Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1(Constant)	2.649	.488		5.432	.000
Resource Allocation	.377	.067	.570	5.592	.000
Organizational Culture	.131	.053	.154	2.476	.015
Organizational Leadership	-.380	.095	-.375	-4.014	.000
Organizational Structure	.329	.069	.396	4.786	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Performance of Meru County Government

Source: Research Data (2022)

In regards to the findings in Table 4.13, each of the independent factors had a significant effect on the performance of the Meru County Government. The variables were studied and measured using specific determined indicators as illustrated in the conceptual framework. The four variables satisfied the p-value rule of thumb of being less than 0.05. As per the table above, the model used which was  $Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1X_1 + \beta_2X_2 + \beta_3X_3 + \beta_4X_4 + \beta_5X_5 + \epsilon$  was translated to:

$$Y = 2.649 + 0.377X_1 + 0.131X_2 + 0.380X_3 + 0.329X_4$$

Where: Y - Meru County Government Performance  
 X1 - Resource Allocation  
 X2 - Organizational Culture  
 X3 - Leadership  
 X4 - Organizational Structure

The study showed that resource allocation had a significant positive influence on the performance of the Meru County Government ( $t = 5.592$   $P < 0.05$ ). Barbier (2019), indicated that resources (tangible resources, intellectual resources, monetary resources, and human resources) or of any other kind within an organization should be managed and used effectively because proper use helps managers gain control of the project implementation process. Barbier (2019), also showed that resources had positive significant effects on organizational performance. The current study with its major objective sought to establish the influence of resource allocation on the performance of the Meru County Government. The majority of respondents in the study expressed that resource allocation influenced the performance of the Meru County Government. A significant and positive correlation between resource allocation on organizational performance was established. The study also established that human resources in Meru County Government possessed the necessary skills for effective strategy implementation, the county government

did allocate resources fairly to all departments and that proper audit and monitoring of the use of county resources was done periodically and on time.

The study also determined that organizational culture possessed a positive and significant influence on performance ( $t = 2.476$   $P < 0.05$ ). This finding on the influence of organizational culture on performance is in line with the findings of Joseph and Kibera's (2019) study on Organizational Culture and Performance as Demonstrated by Banks in Kenya. The study found that organizational culture does have a major impact on organizational performance. In this study organizational culture was found to be a critical source of long-term improved performance and competitive advantage in the organizations under the study. Organizational culture in this study was found to have a significant influence on the performance of the Meru County government. The study established that: The culture of Meru County Government encouraged challenges and continual learning, the County government of Meru had a clear and well-understood code of conduct, workplace transparency and timely communication were done through appropriate channels, and workplace politics negatively affected strategy implementation in the county government.

The regression coefficient on organizational leadership gave positive results, indicating that appropriate leadership led to better performance and the opposite was true ( $t = -4.014$ ,  $P < 0.05$ ). Abdi (2018) reported that strategic leadership has quite a huge effect on organizational performance, his statistical report showed that 82.2% of results delivered heavily relied on the efficiency of leadership. This study investigated how organizational leadership affected the performance of the Meru County Government. Most of the respondents agreed that leadership had an impact on strategy implementation. Following regression analysis, the research found that leadership was statistically significant in explaining Meru County Government's organizational performance. On leadership, the study established the following among other areas of interest; The leadership highly supported the people in Meru County to achieve their career and life goals, the leadership style adopted by the Meru County government allowed for employee participation, and the county government ensured a conducive, safe and healthy working environment for its employees.

On the last variable, the study determined the influence that organizational structure on organizational performance; this factor demonstrated a positive significant relationship with the performance of Meru County Government ( $t = 4.786$ ,  $P < 0.05$ ). According to Karemu et al. (2021) organizational structure has a statistically significant effect on organizational success. The study by Karemu et al. (2021), investigated the effect of corporate structure on the performance of Kenyan Mobile Telephone Network Operators which reported a similar finding as this study. The current study looked at the

impact that organizational structure has on the organizational performance of the Meru County Government. The results from the analysis of collected data showed that organizational structure possessed a significant influence on the performance levels of The County Government. Other realizations made on Meru County's organizational structure are that; the Meru County government had a flexible organizational structure that can adjust to the demands of the environment and strategy implementation process, Power and decision making is centralized in Meru County and the organizational structure allows for easy coordination and control during strategy implementation

## **5.0 Conclusion**

In light of the findings, the study concludes that adequate resource allocation or economical appropriation and use of inputs where they are scarce are vital for the better performance of organizations. Resource allocation is critical in strategic management because it enables managers to plan and prepare for strategy implementation or goal achievement, aids in resource planning, and provides insight into the strategic team's progress. Human resources are the most valuable kind of resource in an organization and should be equipped with technical and practical knowledge of every bit of the strategy implementation process. Audit and monitoring of the use of county resources are important for corrective action to prevent wastage or loss of these scarce items.

On organizational culture, the study concludes that institutional culture has a special place in determining the level of success that will be attained now and in the future of Meru County Government. The code of conduct, vision, mission, and goals of Meru County Government should be at the core of every strategy formulated and every stakeholder in the county government should uphold them in all transactions with the county government. Knowledge of exactly what is expected increases the chances of successful strategy implementation. The study also concluded that culture can help in different ways in changing performance; culture can improve employee engagement, give a sense of direction to everyone in the organization and promote teamwork. It was observed and concluded that Meru County Government had made deliberate efforts in creating a culture that fosters Integrity, Transparency and Accountability, Teamwork, Inclusiveness and innovation, and hard work.

Leadership was found to have a statistically significant impact on strategy implementation and performance of the Meru County Government. The study concludes that leadership experience, competence, and strengthening leadership skills is a viable route to take for Meru County Government. Meru county government leadership shared learned lessons in the organization, they supported goal achievement in different ways, provided

a conducive working environment, and held team-building exercises with colleagues.

The study sought to establish the relationship between organizational structure and organizational performance; whereby a strong statistically significant correlation was realized. Owing to the findings, the study concludes that organization structure dictated how Meru County Government responded to changes in the environment, the organization set up promoted sharing and learning among employees, and the structure of the organization allowed coordination and controls during strategy implementation. A simple and properly laid out structure can help Meru County Government overcome subtle daily bottlenecks and enhance the administration and productivity of departments.

### **5.1 Policy Implications**

On resource allocation, the study recommends that the county government prioritize sufficient resource allocation on matters of strategy implementation to help better service delivery. The county government should also endeavor to create a wide and growing resource base to be able to properly finance its activities alongside the provided resources by the national government. The use of modern technology in this can help prevent loss of revenue, and misuse of resources and provide accurate and reliable data for decision-making on resource allocation. Organizations keep themselves running through resources and resource allocation is a continuous process with priorities changing with the seasons. Human resources being a key player in this process, they must be trained and educated on resource allocation, sustainability, and economics for improved use of limited resources.

Considering the study established that organizational culture had a significant influence on strategy implementation and performance of Meru County Government, the study recommends the following: What the county government of Meru works and stands for should be made clear at every level and every new entrant in the organization should be made aware of this. The organization should make employee relations stronger and connect them to a purpose. The culture should uphold goal attainment and promote easy and clear communication during strategy implementation. It is recommended that leaders create more slots for employees to contribute to organizational decisions. Employees should participate in decision-making for an organization to grow. Such a style of leadership fosters trust and is essential for succession planning it creates a strong sense of responsibility when one's opinion is taken, evaluated, and given for implementation.

In these unpredictable times, indeed, the rate of change is quickening as robots, artificial intelligence, data mining, and remote work increase. People must grasp how change affects both their professional and personal



lives, as well as how to effectively handle it. Leaders of the Meru County government should stay abreast with these changes, especially those touching on work and strategy implementation. Periodic workshops and/or training should be held to review new developments and help see what should be expected. The county government should promote competence and strengthen leadership skills in every employee for they all influence others and are leaders in their work domains. On the organizational structure, the study recommends that the Meru County Government should improve its organizational structure through; participative decision-making, creating a simple and short chain of command for the strategy implementation process, promoting interdepartmental learning, enhancing agility and flexibility in organizational structure and continual review of the current structure to eliminate redundancy and role duplication. It is important that Meru County Government build on what is working in strategy implementation and increase organizational responsibility and accountability at all levels.

### **5.3 Limitations and Future Research**

This study examined strategy implementation practices and their impacts on the performance of the County Government of Meru. The study examined how four major variables including leadership, organizational structure, resource allocation, and organizational culture affected the strategic implementation and performance of county government. From the study, these factors could only explain less than 70% of the current performance levels of the county government. There are other variables that influence the performance of county governments and further research is recommended to be conducted on them. During the research, it was noticed that not only developmental strategies initiated and implemented by Meru County Government had performance issues but also those done by the national government. For effective service delivery in Meru County, strategies implemented by the National Government also influenced the overall quality of service delivered by the Meru County Government. Further research is thus recommended on strategy implementation by the national government. This can be done with a regional or national focus to give recommendations on how to improve the national government's strategy implementation and improve their performance.

### **References:**

1. Abass, M. K., Munga, J. & Were, E. (2017). The relationship between strategy Implementation and performance in county governments of Kenya: A case study of Wajir County government. *International Academic Journal of Human Resource and Business Administration*, 2(3), 381-401, ISSN 2518-2374.

2. Ashby, W. R. (1956). *An Introduction to cybernetics*. London: Chapman & Hall.
3. Augier, M., & Teece, D. J. (2018). *The Palgrave encyclopedia of strategic management*.
4. Bamgbade, J. A., Kamaruddeen, A. M., Nawi, M. N. M., Yusoff, R. Z., & Bin, R. A. (2018). Does government support matter? Influence of organizational culture on sustainable construction among Malaysian contractors. *International Journal of Construction Management*, 18(2), 93-107.
5. Barbier, E. B. (2005). *Natural resources and economic development*. Cambridge University Press.
6. Barney, B. (1991). Firm resources and sustained competitive advantage. *Journal of Management*. 17 (1): 99–120
7. Brinkschröder, N. (2014). *Strategy implementation: Key factors, challenges and solutions* (Bachelor's thesis, University of Twente).
8. Chemiat, J. C. & Kiptum, K. G. (2018). Relationship between employee performance appraisal initiative and strategy implementation at Moi Teaching and Referral Hospital in Eldoret, Kenya. *International Academic Journal of Human Resource and Business Administration*, 2(3), 46-63
9. Dagnino, G. B. (2012). *Handbook of research on competitive strategy*.
10. Davis, B., (2021). Home. *Mvorganizing.org*. Available at: <https://www.mvorganizing.org/what-is-an-advantage-to-usingables/#:~:text=The%20advantages%20of%20using%20tables%20and%20graphs%20to%20organize%20data,according%20to%20Texas%20A%26M%20University>. [Accessed August 23, 2021].
11. Verweire, K., 2014. *Strategy implementation*. 1st ed. London.
12. Ejimabo, N. O. (2015). The influence of decision making in organizational leadership and management activities. *Journal of Entrepreneurship & Organization Management*, 4(2), 2222-2839.
13. Goethals, G. R., Sorenson, G. J., & Burns, J. M. G. (2004). *Encyclopedia of leadership*. Thousand Oaks, Calif: Sage Publications.
14. Hantiro, S., B. & Maina, R. (2020). Strategy Implementation and Performance of Tana River County Government, Kenya. *Journal of Strategic management*, 4(1), 16-34
15. Hitt, M. A., Jackson, S. E., Carmona, S., Bierman, L., Shalley, C. E., & Wright, D. M. (2017). The future of strategy implementation. In *The Oxford handbook of strategy implementation*.
16. InfoTrak, (2020). The County Rank Performance Index
17. Jackson, M. C. (2000). Applied Systems Thinking. *Systems Approaches to Management*, 91-104.

18. Joseph, O. O., & Kibera, F. (2019). Organizational Culture and Performance: Evidence From Microfinance Institutions in Kenya. *SAGE Open*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2158244019835934>
19. Kaplan, R. S., and Norton, D. P. (1992). The Balanced Scorecard: Measures that drive performance. *Harvard Business Review*, 71-79.
20. Kozak, K. (2015). Statistics using technology. Lulu. com.
21. László, E. (1972). *The relevance of general systems theory: : papers presented to Ludwig von Bertalanffy on his seventieth birthday*. New York (N.Y.: Braziller.
22. Ngumbi, F. M., & Wambua, P. (2019). Organizational resources and strategic plans implementation in administration police service in Baringo County, Kenya. *European Journal of Business and Strategic Management*, 4(4), 14-33.
23. Niven, P. R. (2008). *Balanced scorecard: Step-by-step for government and nonprofit agencies*. John Wiley & Sons.
24. Ongeti, W. J. (2014). Organizational resources, corporate governance structures and performance of Kenyan state corporations (*Doctoral dissertation, University of Nairobi*).
25. Penrose, E. (1959). *The theory of the growth of the firm*. Oxford [u.a.: Oxford Univ. Pr.
26. Prahalad, C. K., & Hamel, G. (2009). The core competence of the corporation. In *Knowledge and strategy* (pp. 41-59). Routledge.
27. Sashkin, M. (2004). Transformational leadership approaches: A review and synthesis.
28. Setiawan, B. M., Putrawan, I. M., Murni, S., & Ghozali, I. (2016). Effect of organizational structure, leadership and trust on job performance of employee: A case study on employee at Universitas Ternama. *International Review of Management and Marketing*, 6(4), 711-712.
29. Towler, A., 2022. *The qualities of transformational leaders and what distinguishes them from transactional leaders | CQ Net - Management skills for everyone*. [online] CQ Net - Management skills for everyone!. Available at: <<https://www.ckju.net/en/dossier/qualities-transformational-leaders-and-what-distinguishes-them-transactional-leaders#:~:text=There%20are%20four%20main%20components,to%20individual%20and%20organizational%20performance.>> [Accessed 6 September 2022].
30. Verweire, K. (2014). *Strategy Implementation (1st ed.)*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315849447>
31. Von Bertalanffy, L. (1950). An outline of general system theory. *British Journal for the Philosophy of science*.

32. Wernerfelt, B. (1980). A resource-based view of the firm. *Strategic management journal*, 5(2), 171-180.
33. Wilkinson, A., & Wood, G. (2017). Global trends and crises, comparative capitalism and HRM. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 28(18), 2503-2518.
34. WorldBank. (2021). Kenya's Devolution Retrieved 5 October 2021, from <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/kenya/brief/kenyas-devolution>
35. Wire, B. (2021). Kenya Construction Industry Report 2020 - ResearchAndMarkets.com. Retrieved 10 August 2021, from <https://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20210308005442/en/Kenya-Construction-Industry-Report-2020> ResearchAndMarkets.com
36. Zhang, Y. F., Hoque, Z., & Isa, C. R. (2015). The effects of organizational culture and structure on the success of activity-based costing implementation. In *Advances in Management Accounting*. Emerald Group Publishing Limited.