ORIGINAL RESEARCH ARTICLE

The moderating influence of legal and regulatory framework on the relationship between organizational structure and strategy implementation by devolved governments in Kenya

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ABSTRACT

The legal and regulatory framework that established devolved units prescribed an organisational structure that supported the implementation of strategic plans. Despite the huge resources committed to the devolved governments, many complained of carrying huge wage bills, suffered from inappropriate organisational structures, lacked harmonised job groups, and lacked adequate technical staff in critical fields. A study on the moderating influence of the legal and regulatory framework on the relationship between organisational structure and the implementation of strategic plans by devolved government in Kenya is grossly missing. This study aimed to fill this knowledge gap. The study is anchored on Higgins' Eight 'S' model of strategy implementation, structural contingency theory, and institutional theory. The study employed a cross-sectional descriptive survey research design. The target population was the 47 devolved governments in Kenya, represented by the five devolved units in the Nairobi Metropolitan Area, comprising Nairobi, Kiambu, Murang'a, Machakos, and Kajiado. A stratified random sampling technique was applied to Yamane's formula to select 217 respondents from 474 senior county officers in the five counties. Data was collected using a semi-structured, self-administered questionnaire. Descriptive data analysis and inferential statistics were produced using SPSS and presented in figures and tables. A content analysis approach that analyses textual data for patterns and common themes was applied to the qualitative data and, hence, converted to quantitative results presented in table format. The study findings revealed that the legal and regulatory framework had no significant influence on the relationship between organisational structure and the implementation of strategic plans by the devolved governments in Kenya. The study recommends that devolved governments be granted some level of autonomy in designing organisational structures that align with strategy implementation. However, future researchers should enrich the debate by investigating the role of public participation, political interference, gaps in the legal and regulatory framework. County leaders should focus on strengthening the coordination between the county and national government to avoid conflicts.

Keywords: Legal and regulatory framework, organisational structure, strategy implementation, devolution

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1.0 Introduction

Chandler (1962) conceptualized the structure-follows-strategy paradigm based on his case study of four American conglomerates that dominated American industry from the 1940s onwards. Raps (2005) pointed out that successful strategy implementation depended on the organisational structure, while Schaap (2006) suggested that adjusting organisational structure according to strategy translated to successful strategy implementation (Chiuri, 2015). Robbin and DeCenzo (2004) argued that the organisational structure played a significant role in the achievement of an organisation's set objectives and supported the accomplishment of its strategic goals and direction. A study by Mwangi (2016) showed that a positive and significant relationship existed between the structural adaptations of manufacturing SME companies and their performance. However, a study of higher education institutions by Chiuri (2015) showed that organisational structure had an insignificant effect on strategy implementation. Further empirical investigations are needed to further understand the role of organisational structure dynamics.

The devolved system of government was adopted in Kenya as a strategy for enhancing efficiency in the delivery of social services by matching the developmental needs and aspirations of local communities with the governance of public institutions (Keraro & Isoe, 2015). The devolution system of governance has been embraced globally by such countries as Britain, Germany, Switzerland, the United States of America, Canada, and Australia. Regional examples of devolution, such as South Africa, Nigeria, and Ethiopia, have implemented successful devolved government systems (Rodríguez-Pose & Gill, 2004). Kenya adopted a devolved system of government through a constitutional referendum that transformed the government structure from centralised to decentralised and from “top-down” to “bottom-up” in decision-making in 2010 (Otieno & Theuri, 2016). This changed the relationship between government and citizens, with the emphasis being on public participation.

Devolution is an extensive form of decentralisation that involves the transfer of authority, decision-making, and resources to sub-national tiers of government that elect their own leaders and raise revenue. Although legislative frameworks differ from country to country, some of the devolved government units have independent authority that extends to making investment decisions (Ong’olo & Awino, 2013). The County Government Act 2012 became the legislative framework that empowered the devolved units to collect revenue in their areas of jurisdiction, such as taxes on property and entertainment (Kimenyi, 2013; Otieno & Theuri, 2016). Following the 2013 general elections, devolved governments became operational, and as provided by the Constitution of Kenya’s Fourth Schedule, pre-primary education, health services, water, sanitation, local road maintenance, firefighting services, local housing, agriculture, and social welfare became the responsibility of the newly devolved units (Government of Kenya (GoK), 2010; Kagumu, Odhiambo, & Waiganjo, 2017). The County Government Act 2012 provided an organisational structural framework that determined the functional responsibilities that would be domiciled at the county level. While devolution is a new phenomenon in Kenya, the moderated role of the legal and regulatory frameworks in the relationship between the existing

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devolved government's organisational structures and the success or failure of strategy implementation requires empirical investigation.

1.1 Strategy implementation

Strategy implementation, defined as the totality of activities and choices made by the organisation in executing a strategic plan (Wheelen & Hunger, 2012), includes the processes by which objectives, strategies, and policies drawn during the strategy formulation stage are put into action, which include projects, budgets, and policies and procedures. On the other hand, strategic management is the set of decisions and actions that result in the formulation and implementation of plans designed to achieve a company's objectives (Pearce, Robinson, & Mital, 2012). Strategy implementation is regarded by scholars and practitioners as the most difficult, challenging, and time-consuming activity (Barnat, 2012; Mwangi, 2016; Sage, 2015; Sial, Usman, Zufigar, Satti, & Khursheed, 2013). Researchers have carried out far more research on strategy formulation than on strategy implementation, despite the obvious importance of the implementation process (Chiuri, 2015; Okumus & Roper, 1998; Schaap, 2012).

Crittenden and Crittenden (2008) opined that the successful implementation of a well-formulated and appropriate strategy helps organisations produce excellent performance (Schaap, 2012). Practical experiences and management scholarship demonstrate that strategy implementation significantly influences organisational performance (Hrebiniak & Joyce, 1984; Li, Guohui, & Eppler, 2008). While strategy implementation plays an important role in determining organisational success, few studies have examined the dynamics of strategy implementation by public service organisations (Bryson, Berry & Yang, 2010; Elbanna, Andrews & Pollanen, 2016; Poister, Pitts & Edwards, 2010).

Around the world, the largest business corporations as well as start-ups apply many of the concepts and techniques in strategic management (Wheelen, Hunger, Hoffman, & Bamford, 2017). However, research evidence on strategy implementation reveals that organisations fail to implement up to 70% of their strategy implementation initiatives (Franken, Edwards, & Lambert, 2009; Hammer & Champny, 1993; Higgs & Rowland, 2000; Higgs & Rowland, 2005; Kotter, 1990; Miller, 2002; Siddique & Shadbolt, 2016). Additionally, about 40–60 percent of the potential value of a strategic plan remains unrealized due to system inefficiencies during implementation (Franken *et al.*, 2009; Mankins & Steele, 2005). Strategic plans, in some cases, deliver only 63% of their promised financial value (Mankins & Steele, 2005), with 66% of corporate strategy never executed (Johnson, 2004). Unfortunately, many business leaders and managers know more about developing strategies than they do about their implementation (Epstein & Manzoni, 1998; Hrebiniak, 2006, 2008, 2013). Further, the developers of the balanced scorecard (Kaplan & Norton, 1992, 1996, 2005; Waruhiu, 2014) argued that 80–95% of a company's employees are unfamiliar with their company's strategy.

The scholarship on strategy implementation broadly covers barriers to strategy implementation (MacLean, Berends, Hunter, Roberts & Mugavin, 2012; Nazemi, Asadi & Asadi, 2015), critical success factors (Brenes, Mena & Molina, 2008; Kiboi, 2014; Kitumu, 2016; Omondi, Ombui &

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Mangatu, 2013; Trkman, 2010), and challenges of implementation (Chiuri, 2015; Kalali, Anvari, Pourezzat & Dastjerdi, 2011; Mwanje, 2016). Other studies consider different contexts, for example, Mwangi's (2016) study of the determinants of strategy implementation by manufacturing SMEs in Kenya, Katana's (2017) study of strategy execution in shipping companies in Kenya, and Kagumu's (2018) study of the determinants of strategy implementation by devolved government in Kenya. More research is needed in the context of public sector management to broaden the scope of knowledge on the antecedents to the implementation of strategic plans.

1.2 Legal and regulatory framework and strategy implementation

A legal framework can be defined as the laws, regulations, and policies that are put in place to govern an organization or an activity (Awino & Marendi-Getuno, 2014). A regulatory framework is a legal instrument employed for the implementation of a social-economic policy objective. As a legal instrument, the regulatory framework has the capacity to enforce the compliant behaviour of an organisation or individual leader, or else face penalties or sanctions (Hertog, 2010). According to Asquer (2018), regulations were popularised in the 1980s as government strategies to influence, guide, and control sectors of economies or societies. Since then, regulation as a governance tool has spread around the world and has seen many regulatory reforms made in many countries around the world. The growth of regulatory reforms has been informed by the need to apply scarce resources (Hertog, 2010).

Devolved governments are required by the Constitution of Kenya, 2010, Article 220(2)(a) to develop strategic plans in line with the County Government Act 2012 (Government of Kenya (GoK), 2012a), Public Financial Management Act 2012, Urban Areas and Cities Act 2011, and Intergovernmental Relations Act 2012. In addition, the Ministry of Devolution and Planning devolved government policy to provide guidance on the integrated development planning process (GOK, 2016). Integrated development planning requires that the efforts of national and devolved units and other relevant stakeholders be coordinated at the local level to ensure that economic, social, environmental, legal, and spatial aspects of development are brought together to produce plans that meet the needs and set targets that benefit local communities. At the national level, economic development planning, implemented through successful five-year medium-term plans, is guided by the Kenya Vision 2030 economic blueprint (Government of Kenya, 2007). County Integrated Development Plans (CIDPs) are designed to guide development at the devolved government level. The County Government Act 2012, Part XI, details the goals and procedures for county planning (Government of Kenya (GoK), 2012a). The act expressly states that the goal of county planning is to provide a platform for unifying planning, budgeting, financing programmes, implementation, and performance reviews. The Public Financial Management Act 2012 (GoK, 2012), on the other hand, expounds on the budgeting aspects by clarifying that budgets must be based on programmes, projects, and other expenditures contained in the CIDP. The Urban Areas Act 2011 emphasises the need for five-year CIDPs and the need to align annual budgeting with the plan. The Urban Areas Act 2011 specifies that urban or city plans must guide and inform all planning for development and decision-making but must be linked to the CIDPs.

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The Intergovernmental Relations Act 2012, on the other hand, establishes the National and County Government Coordinating Summit (known as the Summit), which is responsible for monitoring county development plans and recommending actions. The Act established the Intergovernmental Relations Technical Committee (IGRTC), which provides technical secretariat support services to the Summit and Council of Governors. The Council of Governors is established by the same Act with a mandate to coordinate the reporting and monitoring of the implementation of inter-county agreements on inter-county projects.

A report produced in 2014 by the Institute of Economic Affairs Kenya documented the experiences of their team of experts involved in the development of the first round of CIDPs in Laikipia, Nandi, Uasin Gichu, and Meru counties. The report revealed the challenge of reaching a consensus between members of the county assembly and the executive. The plans, therefore, produced long lists of proposed projects. In addition, the report showed a lack of a clear format for budgeting and public participation and thus recommended a harmonised framework.

A review of the second round of county integrated development plans covering 208–2022 revealed challenges of weak collaboration and partnership with national governments and various development partners (County Government of Kiambu, 2018; County Government of Murang'a, 2018) due to inadequate and overlapping legal and regulatory frameworks. Counties reported low capacity in monitoring, evaluation, and reporting, a lack of data and information, and low awareness of county plans, acts, and policies by citizens and other stakeholders (County Government of Kajiado, 2018; County Government of Kiambu, 2018; County Government of Machakos, 2018).

Empirical research evidence shows that regulations are beneficial to industries such as the financial markets as their presence allows public participation. A study by Kale, Eken, and Selimler (2015) investigated the influence of regulations, political events, and macroeconomic changes on the efficiency of the Turkish banks during the period 1997–2013. Their study found that an that an established regulatory framework with tighter regulations and restrictions, close monitoring, strengthened supervision, and more capital and reforms had a positive impact on the efficiency of the Turkish banks. Koech, Namusonge, and Mugambi's (2016) study of 46 state corporations found that the legal and regulatory framework were critical in determining the effectiveness of corporate governance in state corporations in Kenya. Karama's (2022) study of 35,444 staff from eight selected counties revealed that the legal and regulatory framework had a positive and significant influence on service delivery and helped in resource mobilisation and stakeholder engagement.

There is a need to provide empirical evidence on the moderating influence of legal and regulatory frameworks and the relationship between a devolved government's organisational structure and the implementation of strategic planning. This study aims at providing empirical evidence on the role of legal and regulatory frameworks in the implementation of strategic plans by devolved governments in Kenya.

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1.3 Organisational structure and strategy implementation

According to Bucic and Gudergan (2004), organisational structure can be defined as the formal system of task and reporting relationships that control, coordinate, and motivate employees so that they cooperate to achieve organisational goals (Awino, 2015). Robbin and DeCenzo (2005) pointed out that organisational structure plays an important role in the achievement of objectives, the accomplishment of strategic goals, and setting direction. According to Govindarajan and Fisher (2010), the structure makes it possible to apply the process of management and helps create a framework of command and order that enables the activities of the organisation to be planned, organised, directed, and controlled. Chandler (1962) conceptualised the structure-follows-strategy paradigm based on his thesis of four case studies of American conglomerates that dominated American industry from the 1940s onwards. The debate triggered by Chandler's work on the contingent relationship between strategy, structure, and firm performance flourished in the 1970s and 1980s (Awino, 2015). Raps (2005) pointed out that successful strategy implementation depended on the organisational structure, while Schaap (2006) suggested that adjusting organisational structure according to strategy translated to successful strategy implementation (Chiuri, 2015). A study by Markiewicz (2011) revealed the importance of processes and structures in the successful implementation of strategies, while Amollo (2012) identified organisational structure as a key challenge affecting the implementation of strategic plans (GoK).

The Olson, Slater, and Hult (2005) study examined the three structural dimensions that influence how communication, coordination, and decision-making are carried out in an organization. According to Olson *et al.* (2005), the formalisation dimension refers to the degree to which decisions and working relationships are governed by formal rules and procedures. Formal rules and procedures enable organisations to increase efficiency in dealing with routine aspects of work. Firms with fewer formal procedures are often referred to as organic, while firms with rigid rules and procedures are seen as bureaucratic. Organisations with high formalisation are likely to obstruct the creativity and innovativeness needed to solve problems (Maduenyi, Oke, Kadeyi, & Ajagbe, 2015). Centralization refers to the degree to which decision authority is closely held by top managers or is delegated to middle- and lower-level managers (Olson *et al.*, 2005). While centralised organisations put out fewer innovative ideas, implementation decisions tend to be straightforward. On the other hand, a decentralised organisation encourages a variety of views and ideas to emerge from different groups (Olson *et al.*, 2005). County governments require creating a delicate balance between centralization and decentralisation in order to effectively implement the strategy. The specialization dimension of organization structure refers to the degree to which tasks and activities are divided between specialists (high specialization) and generalists (low specialization). While specialists may enable organisations to respond rapidly to changes in the environment due to their “specialist” knowledge, generalists help hold down the costs of doing business (Olson *et al.*, 2005). County governments, like most public organisations, seem to operate in a complex and rapidly changing environment, which may require an intricate balance between the three structural dimensions to effectively implement strategy.

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1.4 Higgins's eight 'S's model of strategy implementation

The Higgins Eight 'S's Model is a heuristic framework that integrates all the important factors for successfully executing strategy and was introduced by James Higgins in an article published in 2005 (Higgins, 2005). The model is based on the McKinsey Seven 'S's model first introduced in 1980 by Waterman, Peters, and Phillips (Waterman, Peters & Phillips, 1980) and further expounded by Peters and Waterman in their book *In Search of Excellence* in 1982 (Higgins, 2005; Peters & Waterman, 1982). The model emphasises a cross-functional way of thinking about strategy execution or implementation across an organization. Higgins (2005) identified strategy and purpose, organisational structure, leadership or management style, staffing (number and types of employees), organisational resources (people, technology, and finances), and shared values (culture). Higgins added that strategic performance is a derivative of the other seven 'S's, as it is possessed by the organisation as a whole. Performance can be measured at any level, and usually financial performance is the most critical indicator of strategic performance.

Higgins (2005) noted that the key to effective implementation is to align all the factors with strategy in order to achieve the desired objectives. By applying this model, devolved government leaders as well as managers can foresee the changes needed to make the strategy workable. This model serves as a road map for strategy formulation and implementation and helps uncover the causes of failure during implementation (Kibicho, 2015). In adapting the model, this study considered that the organisational structure of devolved government bears a critical influence on strategy implementation, thus informing the study's theoretical framework.

1.5 Structural contingency theory

According to Van de Ven *et al.* (2013), the major contribution of structural contingency theory is that the designs of organisations and institutions directly affect the behaviour and performance of millions of workers and organisations, as well as the aggregate productivity and well-being of economies throughout the world. Structural Contingency Theory developed in the 1960s and 1970s and was influenced by the work of Burns and Stalker (1961), Chandler (1962), Woodward (1958, 1965), and Lawrence and Lorsch (1967), who sought to identify reasons for organisation design variety and the appropriate organisation characteristics given the contingent factors. These early scholars cemented the theory's core argument that there is a link between organisational form, environmental characteristics, and performance (Pennings, 1987). Structural Contingency Theory is premised on the earlier developed contingency theory, which is an approach to the study of organisational behaviour that explains how contingent factors such as technology, culture, and the external environment influence the design and function of organisations (Islam & Hu, 2012; Kessler, 2013; Van de Ven, Ganco, & Hinings, 2013). The Structural Contingency Theory found its empirical grounding in the work of Pennings (1987), who carried out empirical tests that examined the interaction between environmental uncertainty, organisational structure, and various aspects of performance. Donaldson's (1987, 1995, 2001, 2006) studies, on the other hand, examined the strategy-structure link and proposed the need to obtain structure-contingency 'fit' for improved performance (Chiuri, 2015). Studies by Donaldson (1987, 1995) obtained empirical support for the strategy-structure link in structural contingency theory. Donaldson's work established the use of formalisation,

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centralization/decentralisation, and specialisation as the underlying dimensions in strategy-structure analysis (Donaldson, 2006; Ellis, Almor, & Shenker, 2002).

A major criticism of the structural contingency theory was that it was static and failed to deal with organisational change and adaptation (Awino, 2015; Galunic & Eisenhardt, 1984). However, structural contingency theory falls within the functionalist tradition of social science, which sees organisations as adapting to their changing environment, thereby changing from one fit to another over time. This process is articulated in the theoretical model of Structural Adaptation to Regain Fit (SARFIT) (Donaldson, 1987, 2001; Donaldson & Joffe, 2014).
According to Hamilton and Shergill (1992), the SARFIT model posits that an organisation in fit enjoys higher performance, which works to generate extra resources leading to growth in size, geographical reach, innovation, and diversification. This growth increases the level of contingency variables such as size, which results in a misfit with the existing structure. The misfit reduces performance, eventually leading to a performance crisis and adaptive structural change to regain fit. Thus, SARFIT theory supports the dynamic nature of the organisational environment and thus allows for variability in organisational structural designs.

In addition to explaining the link between organisational structural design and performance, structural contingency theory enables a researcher to hypothesise a conditional relationship between independent variables and a dependent variable and test the empirical validity of the relationship (Badara & Saidin, 2014). Structural contingency theory supports the examination of the moderating or mediating influence of the variables (Badara & Saidin, 2014). Sekaran and Bougie (2013) add that a moderating variable is one that has a strong contingent influence on the relationship between a dependent and an independent variable. The study hypothesises that there is a contingent relationship between the legal and regulatory framework governing devolution and the implementation of strategic plans by the devolved government in Kenya. Devolved government leaders must therefore pay close attention to organisational structural dynamism and environmental complexity with a view to ensuring alignment with strategic initiatives to guarantee higher performance.

1.6 Institutional theory

In his work on institutions and organisations, Scott (1995, 2004) identified three main institutional pillars that structure and determine organisational behaviour, namely regulative, normative, and cognitive (Njoroge, 2015). Regulation provides explicit guidelines to organisations through rules, controls, rewards, and sanctions, while norms guide behaviour through a less explicit system of standards and values. The cognition pillar includes cultural elements that govern choice, often without receiving conscious thought. The potential contribution of institutional theory to strategy implementation comes from its highlighting of the interactive role that institutions play in both constraining and enabling organizational action in response to environmental pressures (Kinuu, 2014).

Institutional theory can be traced back to Selznick's classic study of the Tennessee Valley Authority in 1949, which marked the beginnings of "old" institutionalism (Kessler, 2013). New

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institutionalism is marked by the publication in 1977 of Meyer and Rowan's classic paper on institutionalised organisations, followed by DiMaggio and Powell's (1983) paper on institutional isomorphism and collective rationality in organisational fields. Later work by Lawrence and Suddaby (2006) extended this study by focusing attention on "institutional work," which they defined as the processes by which actors engage in creating, changing, and maintaining institutions (Kessler, 2013).

Critics of institutional theory have argued that not all organisations within a common environment respond to social pressure the same; in reality, however, some organisations seem to be able to resist institutional pressures due in part to the influence of "institutional entrepreneurs" (Kessler, 2013). Institutional entrepreneurs are actors with the unique capability of discerning and resisting the powerful influence of collective social beliefs. Some institutions are able to strategically resist change. Scott (2004) argued that institutional theory recognises organisations not as passive actors but as having the capacity to respond to institutional demands in diverse ways, from conformance to reshaping those pressures. Institutional theory therefore underpins the interaction between the legal and regulatory frameworks that shape the conformance behaviour, or lack thereof, of the subnational government units.

For example, the County Act of 2012 and the Public Finance Management Act of 2012 guide the planning and implementation of devolved government plans, while the Intergovernmental Relations Act of 2012 spells out the regulatory framework within which these institutions operate effectively. The county planning policy framework influences how efficiently and effectively counties act in delivering service to citizens. Institutional theory therefore explains the moderating influence of legal and regulatory frameworks on the relationship between organisational structure and strategy implementation and forms the anchoring postulation of this study.

1.7 Problem statement

A regulatory framework is a legal instrument employed for the implementation of a social economic policy objective with the capacity to enforce compliant behavior of an organization or individual leader or else face penalties or sanctions (Hertog, 2010). Structural contingency theory posits that external factors, such as a legal and regulatory framework, are contingent on the relationship between organisational structural design and performance. Sekaran and Bougie (2013) add that a moderating variable is one that has a strong contingent influence on the relationship between a dependent and an independent variable.

Strategic management scholars agree that the successful implementation of a well-formulated and appropriate strategy helps organisations produce excellent performance (Crittenden & Crittenden, 2008; Schaap, 2012). Strategy implementation scholarship has elucidated important factors forthe successful implementation of strategic plans: organisational structure, organisational culture, systems and processes, resources, and leadership styles (Higgins, 2005; Okumus, 2001, 2003; Siddique & Shadbolt, 2016). Robbin and DeCenzo (2005) pointed out that organisational structure plays an important role in the achievement of objectives, the

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accomplishment of strategic goals, and setting direction. According to Govindarajan and Fisher (2010), the structure makes it possible to apply the process of management and helps create a framework of command and order that enables the activities of the organisation to be planned, organised, directed, and controlled.

Extant literature on the link between legal and regulatory frameworks and organisational performance has been confirmed (Ani, 2011; Awino & Marendi-Getuno, 2014; Kale *et al.,* 2015; Karungani & Ochiri, 2017; Koech, 2018; Oguba, 2015; Omondi *et al.,* 2013; Pedo, Kabare, & Makori, 2017). For example, Kale *et al.'s* (2015) study on the effects of regulations on the efficiency of the Turkish banking industry and Koech *et al.'s* (2016) study on the influence of legal and regulatory frameworks on the effectiveness of corporate governance of state corporations in Kenya show a positive and significant link with performance. In the establishment of the devolved system of government, the County Government Act 2012 and the Public Finance Management Act 2012 became the legislative framework that empowered the devolved units to collect revenue in their areas of jurisdiction, such as taxes on property and entertainment (Kimenyi, 2013; Otieno & Theuri, 2016).

The framers of devolution insisted that a legal and regulatory framework would be necessary to guide the structural design of county governments and act as enablers and not inhibitors of strategy implementation. The established statutes prescribe the organisational structure design and the demand that each county formulate five-year County Integrated Development Plans (CIPDPs) to guide the economic development of their regions. Questions remain on whether the legal and regulatory framework has a moderating influence on the relationship between organisational structure and strategy implementation success. The study by Pedo *et al.* (2017) on public-private partnerships found that government policy moderated the relationship between the public-private partnership framework and the performance of public-private partnerships in road projects in Kenya. A study by Karama (2022) found a moderating influence of the legal framework on the relationships between strategic planning, stakeholder engagement, and devolved service delivery in devolved governments. No study has adduced empirical evidence to ascertain the moderating influence of the legal and regulatory framework on the relationship between organisational structure and strategy implementation. This knowledge gap is the subject of this study.

The consequences of a lack of clarity on the role of the legal and regulatory framework and the link between organisational structure and strategy implementation are evidenced by the unsatisfactory performance of devolved governments. For example, a September 2022 report by the World Bank (2022) noted that significant geographic inequalities with respect to income distribution, citizens' access to, and the quality of services remain a challenge across the country (World Bank, 2022). The Kenyan devolved system of government was established to address development inequalities and disparities between regions by transferring additional resources, discretion over resources, and policy decision-making power to the devolved units (Khaunya, Wawire, & Chepng'eno, 2015; World Bank, 2012). Furthermore, during the first ten years of devolution, the performance of the devolved units has varied (World Bank, 2016, 2022). The

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county government has failed to account for 16 billion Kenya shillings, according to a report by the Auditor General Report of 2019 (Ireri, Namusonge, & Nyang'au, 2022).

A study to establish how county governments were going about developing their integrated development plans showed huge challenges. A report produced in 2014 by the Institute of Economic Affairs Kenya that examined Laikipia, Nandi, Uasin Gichu, and Meru counties revealed that there were challenges in reaching a consensus between members of the county assembly and the executive. In addition, the report showed a lack of a clear format for budgeting and public participation and thus recommended a harmonised framework. A review of the second round of county integrated development plans covering 208–2022 revealed organisational structural challenges that produced weak collaboration and partnership with national governments and various development partners (County Government of Kiambu, 2018; County Government of Murang'a, 2018) due to inadequate and overlapping legal and regulatory frameworks. Counties reported low capacity in monitoring, evaluation, and reporting, a lack of data and information, and low awareness of county plans, acts, and policies by citizens and other stakeholders (County Government of Kajiado, 2018; County Government of Kiambu, 2018; County Government of Machakos, 2018).

County governments reported organisational structural challenges that hampered their efficiency in implementing their strategic plans. While devolved governments complained of carrying huge wage bills, reports showed counties suffered from inappropriate organisational structures and lacked harmonised job groups (County Government of Murang'a, 2018). Some devolved units were reported to suffer from inadequate technical staff in critical fields, while others were slow in decentralising services to the sub-county units due to funding constraints (County Government of Machakos, 2018; County Government of Murang'a, 2018). The aim of this study is to examine the moderating influence of legal and regulatory frameworks on the relationship between organisational structure and the implementation of strategic plans by devolved governments in Kenya. The findings of this study will not only address this important knowledge gap but also guide further policy development on the adequacy of the current legal and regulatory framework and provide advice on whether to give devolved governments greater autonomy or not in designing their organisational structures.

1.8 Conceptual framework

A conceptual framework is a visual representation of the relationship between the independent variable and the dependent variable (Imenda, 2018). In this study, the independent variable was organisational structure and its influence on the dependent variable, strategy implementation. Organisational structure was analysed in terms of its degree of formalisation, centralization/decentralisation, and specialisation, while strategy implementation was measured as the timeliness of completion of projects and programmes, efficiency in the use of resources, and level of satisfaction of service consumers. The moderating influence of the legal and regulatory framework was measured in terms of its adequacy and compliance with the legal and regulatory framework. Figure 1 shows this relationship.

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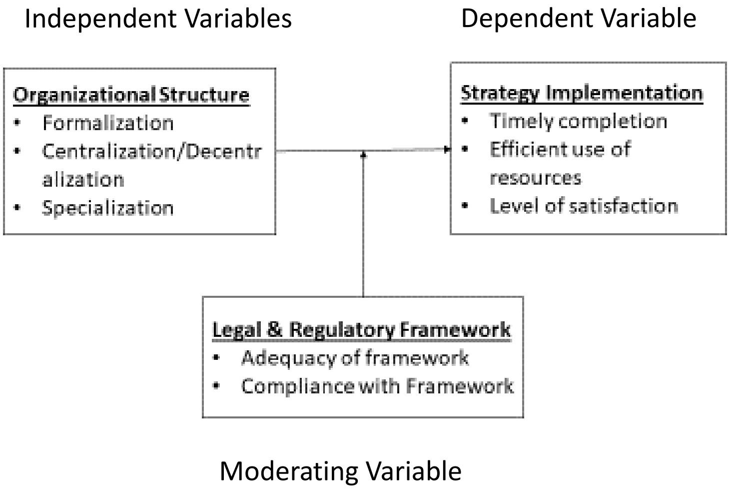

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

1.9 Empirical review of organizational structure on strategy implementation

Olson *et al.* (2005) conducted a study involving 200 marketing managers in the United States of America to establish the relationship between how a firm was structured and which market behaviours they mphasized. The scholars found that firms that matched structure (conceptualised as a measure of the degree of formalisation, centralization, and specialisation) to strategic behaviour performed better than those that did not. Similarly, Sorooshian, Norsima, Yusof, and Rosnah's (2010) study on small and medium-sized enterprises in Iran confirmed organisational structure played an important role in the relationship between strategy implementation and the financial performance of firms. However, Sorooshian *et al.* (2010) suggested that future research should consider the influence of other social forces like the managers' culture, arguing that this limited the application of their study in other countries.

In their study, involving 172 Slovenian companies that examined the activities for and/or obstacles to strategy implementation, Čater and Pučko (2010) found that the activity of adapting organisational structure to the selected strategy had a positive influence on performance. The scholars suggested that their study hypothesis, which validated the activities for and obstacles to strategy implementation, should be tested in other countries in a transitioning Western world economy.

Hilman and Siam (2014) conducted a study on the moderating influence of communication on the relationship between organisation structure and culture on the performance of higher education institutions in Palestine. Overall, the study found that organisational structure and organisational culture did not significantly influence performance. The authors, however, pointed out that their research was limited by the quantitative nature of their data and suggested a qualitative and meta-analytic approach could be used to study the relationships.

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Oyewobi, Windapo, Catell, and Rotimi's (2013) study focused on the impact of organisational structure on performance strategies in construction organisations in South Africa. The research revealed that organizational structure had no direct impact on both the financial and non-financial performance of large construction organizations. However, the authors, who only collected 30 questionnaires, pointed out that their study was constrained by the small number of respondents interviewed. This study adds to the number of studies on the structure-strategy-performance trilogy for which the outcomes are inconclusive.

Chiuri (2015), in her study on the influence of culture, external environment, structure, managerial skills, and human resource development on strategy implementation, revealed that organisational structure and managerial skills had an insignificant effect on strategy implementation in higher education institutions in Kenya. Mwangi (2016), in a study to establish the influence of strategy implementation on the performance of manufacturing SMEs in Kenya while considering the moderating influence of age and size of the firm, confirmed that a positive and significant relationship exists between strategy implementation and performance. In particular, the study found that a positive and significant relationship existed between the structural adaptations of the manufacturing SME companies and their performance. Thus, organisational structure proved an important factor in explaining the performance of SMEs in Kenya, according to the owners and/or CEOs of the firms.

Awino's (2015) study examined the structure-strategy-performance paradigm. The study utilized a cross-sectional survey where data was collected from CEOs and middle-level managers of 102 large manufacturing firms in Kenya. The scholar found that, on its own, organisational structure did not influence performance when measured using return on assets (ROA). However, when tested using non-financial measures such as internal processes, customer perspective, and performance structure, they influenced the performance of the Kenyan companies. Katana's (2017) study on determinants of strategy implementation in shipping companies in Kenya found the structure to be statistically insignificant. However, the Kagumu *et al.* (2017) study, which examined the relationship between organisational structure and strategy implementation at five county governments in central Kenya, found that organisational structure had a positive and significant influence on strategy implementation. Kagumu *et al.* (2017) conceptualised structure in terms of line of command, responsibility and authority, and job definition. The study also measured strategy implementation success using non-financial measures. Thus, the debate on the role of structure in strategy implementation remains inconclusive.

1.10 Empirical Review of the Influence of Legal and Regulatory Frameworks on Strategy Implementation

The empirical evidence on the role of the legal and regulatory framework in the implementation of strategic plans is inconclusive. For example, Ani's (2011) study of the relationship between environmental uncertainty and business-level strategy in one of Ghana's telecommunication companies found that the most influential external environmental factors that affected strategic management decisions were the regulatory environment along with customer behaviour and

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economic instability. He opined that an organisation's environment has an influence on business-level strategies. The study recommended further study of the regulatory and legal systems in the telecommunications sector and their influence on strategy implementation.

In their study, Kale, Eken, and Selimler (2015) investigated the effects of regulations, macroeconomic changes, and political events on the efficiency of the Turkish banks during the period 1997–2013, in which crucial changes were experienced. The study established that tighter regulations and restrictions, close monitoring, strengthened supervision, capitalization, and reforms had a positive impact on the efficiency of Turkish banks. A study by Omondi *et al.* (2013) of International Reproductive Health NGOs in Kenya established that there is a relationship between regulation policy, management competencies, resource allocations, and the implementation of strategic management plans. A conceptual analysis study by Awino and Marendi-Getuno (2014) examined the implications of the legal framework, implementation challenges, and organisational performance with respect to public procurement. The study revealed that a comprehensive procurement policy and regulatory framework should govern all stages of the procurement process, including issues related to ethics, transparency, and all methods within the procurement system. The research concluded that a good policy and regulatory framework within the procurement process enhances organisational performance through increased transparency, integrity, openness, impartiality, and fair competition.

Oguba (2015), in a case study of the National Oil Corporation of Kenya, examined the effects of regulations on strategic planning. The study found that government regulations affected safety standards, product quality, price ceilings, and price floors, which affected strategic planning processes. The research recommended that a mechanism be put in place for continued review of the legal and policy frameworks to ensure they were up-to-date for the industry to remain competitive. Karungani and Ochiri's (2017) study focused on the impact of procurement policy on the performance of the Nairobi County Government. The study found that policy and regulatory framework were the reasons for the improvement in transparency, ethical standards, openness, impartiality, and improved decision-making in the department.

Pedo, Kabare, and Makori's (2017) study examined the performance of public-private partnership policy frameworks in road projects in Kenya. The study confirmed that government policy moderated the relationship between the public-private partnership framework and the performance of public-private partnerships in road projects.

Koech (2018), on the other hand, examined the effectiveness of legal and regulatory frameworks on corporate governance at state corporations in Kenya. Specifically, the study examined the adequacy and level of compliance with the legal and regulatory framework. The study established that the legal and regulatory framework was a significant factor in determining the effectiveness of corporate governance by state corporations in Kenya. In a study investigating the moderating influence of legal framework on the relationship between strategic planning, stakeholder engagement, and service delivery services in eight selected counties in

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Kenya, Karama (2022) found that there was a positive and significant relationship between legal framework and service delivery.

2.0 Methodology

This study employed a cross-sectional descriptive survey research design that, according to Cooper and Schindler (2011), allows a researcher to collect a wide range of information from a sizeable population in a highly effective, easy, and economical way. Other scholars (Kagumu, 2018; Katana, 2017) employed similar designs of self-administered questionnaires that were distributed to a randomly selected sample of respondents. The study included some open-ended questions that provided qualitative data that enabled the development of a broad perspective and a rich understanding of the research problem (Sekaran, 2013). Content analysis was employed in analysing textual data for patterns and common themes, and hence the qualitative data was converted to quantitative results and presented in table format. Content analysis is appropriate where there is a need to analyse textual data to determine words and word patterns and further code the data to produce categories presented in quantitative tables (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008).

The target population for this study was the 47 devolved governments in Kenya, represented by five (5) devolved governments in the Nairobi Metropolitan Area, comprising Nairobi, Kiambu, Murang'a, Machakos, and Kajiado. The Nairobi Metropolitan Area was defined by the presidential executive order of February 2017 that also created the Nairobi Metropolitan Area Transport Authority (NaMATA). A stratified random sampling method was employed to draw a research sample of 217 from the 474 senior officers of the five counties.

Table 1. Target Population in Nairobi Metropolitan Area Counties

County Name	CEC members	Chief Officers	Directors	Sub-County Administrator	County Assembly Committees	Total
Nairobi	10	22	42	17	21	112
Murang'a	10	9	11	7	21	58
Kiambu	10	10	41	12	23	96
Kajiado	10	15	25	5	20	75
Machakos	10	26	64	8	25	133

Source: County Governments, County Assembly Forum, 2020

To determine the sample size, the study applied Yamane (1967) formula often employed in many social science studies (Musi, Mukulu & Oloko, 2018) to determine the sample size and computed as follows;

$$n = N/[1+N(e2)],$$

where;
n = Sample size;
N = Population size;

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e = Precision level which in this case is 0.05.
Therefore, the sample size is given as;
474/[1+474(0.05x0.05)] = 474/2.185 = 217

Table 2 shows the resulting sample sizes for each category of respondents.

Table 2. Sample Size

County Official	Nairobi Pop	SS	Murang'a Pop	SS	Kiambu Pop	SS	Kajiado Pop	SS	Machakos Pop	SS	TOTAL SS
CEC members	10	5	10	5	10	5	10	5	10	5	25
Chief Officers	22	10	9	4	10	5	15	7	26	12	38
Directors	42	19	11	5	41	19	25	11	64	29	84
Sub-County Administrator	17	8	7	3	12	5	5	2	8	4	22
County Assembly Committees	21	9	21	10	23	10	20	9	25	11	48

Source: County Governments, County Assembly Forum, 2020

The questionnaires used included Likert scale psychometric constructs ranging from 1 to 5, where each respondent was required to rate each given statement describing a variable. Each question in the constructs was set in unambiguous terms, allowing respondents to respond without wasting time. A few open-ended questions were provided at the end of each set of Likert scale questions to allow respondents to provide additional information not captured in the Likert scale questions. This additional information was intended to enrich the study by capturing the respondents understanding of their environment and its daily challenges.

The research instruments for this study were pilot tested on 17 respondents, which is 8% of the calculated sample size of 217 and was drawn from Nairobi City County. Nairobi City County was selected because of its accessibility and was found to be representative of the other five counties in the Nairobi Metropolitan Area. The subjects who participated in the pilot study were excluded from the final study to avoid survey bias and fatigue. The purpose of the pilot study was to assess the reliability of the reliability of the research instruments for use in the main study. Further, the research instrument was tested for reliability and for facial, content, and construct validity.

Strategy implementation success measures constituted an assessment of effectiveness and efficiency, that is, the extent to which strategy implementation decisions were timely and cost-effective; an assessment of the extent to which strategy implementation decisions were equitable and aligned with CIDPs priorities and produced satisfaction in service delivery. A five-point Likert scale was used to measure the county leader's agreement or disagreement with statements on strategy implementation (5 = strongly agree, 4 = agree, 3=neutral, 2 = disagree, and 1=strongly disagree).

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Organisational structure constituted measures of degree of formalisation, centralization, and specialisation based on the work of Olson *et al.* (2016). A five-point Likert scale was used to measure the county leader's agreement or disagreement with statements on organisational structure and to rate each statement on a scale 5 (strongly agree), 4 (agree, 3=neutral, 2 (disagree, 1 (strongly disagree). The moderating effect of the legal and regulatory framework was measured by the degree to which the policy adequately regulates and enforces compliance with the rules and procedures of the policy framework (Koech, 2018). A five-point Likert scale (5=strongly agree, 4=agree, 3=neutral, 2=disagree, 1=strongly disagree) was used to measure the degree to which the policy regulates and enforces compliance.

To demonstrate whether the model worked or not, the study employed a multiple regression analysis. The statistical model was accepted against a probability threshold (p-value) of 0.05 (Téllez, Garcia, & Corral-Verdugo, 2015). If the test generated a p-value greater than 0.05, it meant that none of the independent variables predicted the dependent variable and that the model did not work. On the other hand, a p-value of less than 0.05 implied that the independent variables predicted the dependent variable, and the model worked. The study employed statistical diagnostic tests for normality, homoscedasticity, and multicollinearity before proceeding with inferential analysis.

3.0 Results and discussion

3.1 Pilot Study Results

The pilot study was conducted to test the reliability of the research instrument, and as noted earlier, the respondents for the pilot test were drawn from Nairobi City County but were excluded from the final study. A reliability test aimed at establishing the degree to which individual items used in a construct were consistent with their measures was conducted. The Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha (Cronbach, 1951; Schrepp, 2020) that measures how well a set of items within a variable measure a single unidimensional construct (Katana, 2017) was employed. Reliability is expressed as a coefficient (α) between 0.0 and 1.0. A reliability coefficient alpha of 0.70 is deemed acceptable in basic research (Schrepp, 2020).

A sample of 17 respondents was obtained during the pilot study, representing 8% of the whole sample. Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) recommend that a pilot study sample of between 1% and 10% of the actual sample size is adequate. The pilot study's Cronbach's alpha test found that strategy implementation construct had a coefficient of 0.9230, organisational structure had a coefficient of 0.8550, and legal and regulatory framework's coefficient was 0.7039. The variables under study had a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of more than 0.7, so the items within each variable were deemed to provide a reliable measure.

3.2 Response rate

The study administered 217 questionnaires using the drop-and-pick-later method between September 2021 and February 2022 in the five counties. Of the 217 questionnaires, 90 were returned, representing a 41.5% return rate. According to Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2009),

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a 30–40% response rate is acceptable. Sekaran and Bougie (2013) noted that a 30% response rate is acceptable for mail-administered questionnaires. For Rogers, Miller, and Judge (1999), a response rate of 50% is acceptable in descriptive social studies; likewise, Hager, Wilson, Pollak, and Rooney (2003) recommend a 50% response rate to be adequate for data analysis. Hence, the response rate of 41.5% in this study is sufficient for carrying out analysis and drawing inferential conclusions. The response rate is comparable to the previous research study by Čater and Pučko (2010), which achieved a response rate of 49%.

3.3 Diagnostic tests

Before carrying out the regression analysis, the data was tested to confirm it satisfied the main assumptions of parametric tests: normality, homoscedasticity, and multicollinearity. The results of the Shapiro-Wilk and Kolmogorov-Smirnov tests of the normality of the study variables were inconclusive; however, a visual inspection of the shape of the histogram and Q-Q plot showed that the data collected closely approximated a normal distribution. An inspection of the scatterplot showed that the scores were randomly scattered about a horizontal line, and hence the assumption of homoscedasticity was also met. On the other hand, collinearity statistics for organisational structure (VIF score of 2.085) and legal and regulatory framework (VIF score of 2.011) indicated that multicollinearity was not a problem.

3.4 Descriptive results on strategy implementation

Using a five-point Likert scale, the study sought to establish the respondent's view on the statement describing the implementation of strategic plans by devolved governments in Kenya. Table 3 shows the respondent's rating of their agreement with the statements on strategy implementation. The results revealed that the majority, 36 respondents representing 40.4%, were undecided on whether their county leaders gave implementation priority to projects and programmes that met the county development objectives as captured in the CIDPs.

Additionally, 35 respondents, representing 39.3%, were undecided on whether county citizens and stakeholders were satisfied with the delivery of projects and programmes by their counties. A further 33 respondents, representing 37.1%, were undecided on whether development projects and programmes were completed within budget and whether their counties ensured that projects and programmes were distributed equally to all stakeholders, including minority groups. The overall mean of 3.03 indicated that respondents were undecided on the county's effectiveness in strategy implementation. The small standard deviation (.874) and an equally small variance (.764) indicated there was little variation in respondents' views.

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Table 3: Descriptive Results on Strategy Implementation

Statement	SD N (%)	D N (%)	N N (%)	A N (%)	SA N (%)	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance
Our county strategic plans and their implementation process are acceptable to all stakeholders.	1 (1.1%)	17 (18.9%)	28 (31.1%)	37 (41.1%)	7 (7.8%)	3.49	1.052	1.107
Our county strategic goals are specific enough and represent the expectation of all county stakeholders	4 (4.4%)	13 (14.4%)	32 (35.6%)	28 (31.1%)	13 (14.4%)	3.52	1.008	1.016
Our county strategic plan have the support of all stakeholders	4 (4.4%)	18 (20.0%)	34 (37.8%)	24 (26.7%)	10 (11.1%)	3.71	1.114	1.241
Our county strategic plans define the tasks, duties and activities required for implementation	3 (3.3%)	7 (7.8 %)	18 (20.0%)	46 (51.1%)	16 (17.8%)	3.69	1.035	1.071
Our county strategic plans allocates leadership responsibilities	1 (1.1%)	7 (7.8 %)	25 (27.8%)	36 (40.0%)	21 (23.3%)	3.49	1.030	1.062
Our county strategic planning process receives adequate and helpful technical assistance from consultants	4 (4.4%)	16 (17.8%)	30 (33.3%)	32 (35.6%)	8 (8.9 %)	3.43	.937	.878
The county frequently communicates to all stakeholders about the status of the strategic plans	4 (4.4%)	22 (24.4%)	27 (30.0%)	30 (33.3%)	7 (7.8 %)	3.92	.974	.949
Our county communication system provides reliable status of the strategic plans implementation	4 (4.4%)	19 (21.1%)	32 (35.6%)	29 (32.2%)	6 (6.7 %)	3.48	1.073	1.151
Our county has a reliable conflict resolution mechanism	2 (2.2%)	22 (24.4%)	35 (38.9%)	24 (26.7%)	7 (7.8 %)	3.39	1.148	1.319
Our county uses the County Integrated Monitoring and Evaluation (CIME) system as the formal mechanism for continuously collecting and analyzing data on the implementation of strategy action plans	7 (7.8%)	23 (25.6%)	31 (34.4%)	22 (24.4%)	7 (7.8 %)	3.61	1.088	1.184
The county discusses and holds itself accountable for effective implementation of the strategic action plans.	2 (2.2%)	15 (16.7%)	29 (32.2%)	35 (38.9%)	9 (10.0%)	3.10	1.227	1.507
Our county takes corrective action and aligns its operations to achieve its performance targets	1 (1.1%)	18 (20.0%)	23 (25.6%)	41 (45.6%)	7 (7.8 %)	3.59	1.111	1.234
In general planning, communication, control and feedback processes influences strategy implementation by devolved governments	2 (2.2%)	12 (13.3%)	21 (23.3%)	32 (35.6%)	23 (25.6%)	3.49	1.052	1.107
Overall Mean, Standard Deviation and Variance						3.351	.696	.484

Key: SD=Strongly Disagree; D=Disagree; N= Neutral; A=Agree; SD=Strongly Agree;

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3.5 Descriptive results on the influence of organizational structure on strategy implementation

Organisational structures influence the implementation of strategy. There are three dimensions of organisational structure: formalisation, centralization/decentralisation, and specialisation (Olson, Slater, & Hult, 2005). Using a five-point Likert scale, the study sought to establish the respondents views on the relationship between organisational structure and the implementation of strategic plans by devolved governments in Kenya.

Table 4 shows the rate of the respondent's agreement with the statement on the relationship between organisational structure and strategy implementation. The analysis revealed that the majority of respondents, 40, representing 44.4%, agreed that the county provided adequate information before implementing a new strategy or project. Similarly, 39 respondents, representing 43.3%, agreed the county had a well-designed reporting authority structure and employees knew to whom they reported.

Additionally, 38 respondents, representing 42.2%, agreed the county had a centralised decision structure that allowed quick decisions to be made, encouraged division of work and specialisation, and, in general, clear systems of rules, regulations, procedures, and policies of how work was organised influenced strategy implementation by the devolved governments. An overall mean of 3.535 indicates that respondents agreed that organisational structure influenced strategy implementation by devolved government. A standard deviation of.769 and a variance of.592 indicate close agreement in the respondent's views.

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Table 4: Organizational structure

Statement	SD N (%)	D N (%)	N N (%)	A N (%)	SA N (%)	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance
Our county revises and creates appropriate reporting authority to match the changes in strategy requirements	3 (3.3%)	14 (15.6%)	24 (26.7%)	34 (37.8%)	15 (16.7%)	3.49	1.052	1.107
Our county gives adequate information before a new strategy or project is implemented	2 (2.2%)	15 (16.7%)	20 (22.2%)	40 (44.4%)	13 (14.4%)	3.52	1.008	1.016
Our county is governed by a clear system with rules, regulations, policies and procedures	3 (3.3%)	11 (12.2%)	21 (23.3%)	29 (32.2%)	26 (28.9%)	3.71	1.114	1.241
We have a centralized decision structure that allows quick decisions to be made.	2 (2.2%)	12 (13.3%)	18 (20.0%)	38 (42.2%)	20 (22.2%)	3.69	1.035	1.071
Strategic implementation work and activities are well coordinated across sections, departments and divisions	1 (1.1%)	18 (20.0%)	22 (24.4%)	34 (37.8%)	15 (16.7%)	3.49	1.030	1.062
Our reporting authority allows quick decisions and feedback	0 (0.0%)	16 (17.8%)	31 (34.4%)	31 (34.4%)	12 (13.3%)	3.43	.937	.878
Our county has a well-designed reporting authority and employees know to whom they report to	2 (2.2%)	6 (6.7%)	16 (17.8%)	39 (43.3%)	27 (30.0%)	3.92	.974	.949
Reporting authority in our county are flexible enough to allow changes to be effected quickly and timely	4 (4.4%)	13 (14.4%)	24 (26.7%)	34 (37.8%)	15 (16.7%)	3.48	1.073	1.151
Our county makes sure that employees have adequate knowledge, experience and skills	6 (6.7%)	14 (15.6%)	25 (27.8%)	29 (32.2%)	16 (17.8%)	3.39	1.148	1.319
Our county encourages division of work and specialization	5 (5.6%)	9 (10.0%)	20 (22.2%)	38 (42.2%)	18 (20.0%)	3.61	1.088	1.184
Jobs in our organization are well structured with no overlaps, conflicts or ambiguity	10 (11.1%)	20 (22.2%)	24 (26.7%)	23 (25.6%)	13 (14.4%)	3.10	1.227	1.507
In general, clear systems of rules, regulations, procedures and policies of how work is organized influences strategy mplementation by devolved governments	5 (5.6%)	11 (12.2%)	18 (20.0%)	38 (42.2%)	18 (20.0%)	3.59	1.111	1.234
Overall Mean, Standard Deviation & Variance						3.535	.769	.592

Key: SD=Strongly Disagree; D=Disagree; N= Neutral; A=Agree; SD=Strongly Agree.

3.6 Descriptive results on the influence of legal & regulatory framework on strategy implementation

This study theorises that the legal and regulatory frameworks were contingent on the relationship between organisational structure and the implementation of strategic plans by the devolved government in Kenya. According to Omondi *et al.* (2013), a relationship exists between

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regulation policy and the implementation of strategic plans. Awino and Marendi-Getuno (2014) pointed out that a comprehensive policy framework enhances performance through increased transparency, integrity, and openness in procurement.

Using a five-point Likert scale, the study sought to establish the respondents views on the statement describing the influence of legal and regulatory framework statements on the implementation of strategic plans by devolved governments in Kenya. Table 5 shows the descriptive analysis results. The study revealed that the majority of 37 respondents, representing 41.6%, agreed that adequate laws and regulations existed to guide the decisions and actions for the implementation of CIDPs and that existing laws and regulations provided sufficient guidelines and formats for aligning CIDPs with national development plans. The study further revealed that 34 respondents, representing 38.2%, were neutral on whether responsible government agencies investigated complaints by stakeholders about mismanagement during the implementation of CIDPs.

The study showed that 31 respondents, representing 34.8%, agreed that there were regular audits to ensure compliance with the rules and regulations for the implementation of CIDPs and that, in general, established laws and regulations influenced the implementation of strategic plans by devolved governments in Kenya. The data showed a mean of 3.578, indicating respondents agreed that legal and regulatory frameworks influenced strategy implementation. The standard deviation of.773 and a variance of.598 show there was little variation in the respondent’s views.

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Table 5: Legal & Regulatory framework

	SD	D	N	A	SA	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance
	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)			
Adequate laws and regulations exist to guide the decision and actions for the implementation CIDPs	2 (2.2%)	7 (7.9%)	12 (13.5%)	37 (41.6%)	31 (34.8%)	3.99	1.006	1.011
The existing laws and regulations provide sufficient guidelines/format for aligning CIDPs with national development plans	2 (2.2%)	3 (3.4%)	20 (22.5%)	37 (41.6%)	27 (30.3%)	3.94	.934	.872
There is regular audit to ensure compliance with the rules and regulations for the implementation of CIDPs	2 (2.2%)	13 (14.6%)	23 (25.8%)	31 (34.8%)	20 (22.5%)	3.61	1.062	1.128
Responsible government agencies investigates complaints by stakeholders about mismanagement during the implementation of CIDPs	5 (5.6%)	8 (9.0%)	34 (38.2%)	27 (30.3%)	15 (16.9%)	3.44	1.055	1.113
Action is taken against failure to comply with the established laws and regulations for planning, implementation and evaluation of CIDPs	7 (7.9%)	19 (21.3%)	27 (30.3%)	27 (30.3%)	9 (10.1%)	3.13	1.110	1.232
Disputes over laws and regulations governing implementation of CIDPs are promptly and adequately resolved	3 (3.4%)	22 (24.7%)	32 (36.0%)	24 (27.0%)	8 (9.0%)	3.13	1.002	1.004
In general established laws and regulations influences the implementation of strategic plans by devolved governments	1 (1.1%)	6 (6.7%)	27 (30.3%)	31 (34.8%)	24 (27.0%)	3.80	.956	.913
Overall Mean, Standard Deviation and Variance						3.578	.773	.598

Key: SD=Strongly Disagree; D=Disagree; N= Neutral; A=Agree; SD=Strongly Agree;

3.7 Qualitative analysis of strategy implementation

The study included two open-ended questions with respect to strategy implementation, and their responses were subjected to content analysis. Content analysis is appropriate in analysing textual data to determine words and word patterns, code the data, and produce categories presented in quantitative tables (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008).

3.7.1 Kindly mention other aspects of strategy implementation not captured that affect your county.

Table 6 shows the frequencies of responses on "other aspects of strategy implementation not included that affect devolved governments." The respondents indicated that the role of public participation in providing implementation feedback (40%) and adherence to monitoring and evaluation systems for quality service delivery (33%), were the most important aspects to be included in assessing the implementation of strategic plans by devolved governments. Additionally, the respondents indicated that other aspects to be included were links with the

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Kenya agenda (13%), decentralisation of implementation within devolved units (7%), and funding of emergency projects (7%).

Table 6. Other aspects of strategy implementation not captured

Statement	Frequencies (N)	Percentage
Role of public participation in providing implementation feedback	6	40%
Adherence to monitoring and evaluation system for quality service delivery	5	33%
Links with Nairobi Metropolitan Transport Authority agenda	2	13%
Decentralization of implementation within devolved units	1	7%
Funding of emergency projects	1	7%

3.7.2 In your opinion, what strategy implementation challenges have you experienced in the last 5 years?

Table 7 shows the frequencies of responses on "strategy implementation challenges experienced in the last five years." The respondents indicated that poor prioritisation of projects (23%) was the most important challenge, followed by delays in the implementation of strategic plans (20%), inadequate funding of projects (18%), and a lack of goodwill from top management and the national government (18%). The respondents further identified poor monitoring and evaluation (17%) and the COVID-19 pandemic (3%) as additional challenges to strategy implementation by devolved governments. This confirms previous observations made in this study and frequent media reports of internal management conflicts and the lack of sufficient funding from devolved governments to grant service delivery for devolved functions.

Table 7. Strategy Implementation Challenges Experienced

Statement	Frequencies (N)	Percentage
Poor prioritization of projects	14	23%
Delays in implementation of strategic plans	12	20%
Inadequate funding of projects	11	18%
Lack of goodwill from top management and national government	11	18%
Poor monitoring and evaluation	10	17%
COVID-19 pandemic	2	3%

3.8 Qualitative analysis of organizational structure

The respondents were provided two questions with respect to organisational structure, and their responses were analysed.

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3.8.1 Kindly mention other aspects of organisational structure not captured that influence the implementation of strategic plans by your county.

Table 8 shows the frequencies of responses on “other aspects of organisational structures not included” that affect strategy implementation by devolved governments. The respondents indicated that unclear structure (38%) was the most important aspect, followed by political interference (33%), and a lack of regular monitoring and evaluation (13%). Cultural aspects (3%) attracted the least attention from respondents.

Table 8. Other aspects of organizational Structure not captured

Statement	Frequencies (N)	Percentage
Unclear structure	15	38%
Political interference	13	33%
Regular monitoring and evaluation	5	13%
Role conflicts	3	8%
Recruitment policy	3	8%
Culture	1	3%

3.8.2 In your opinion, what organisational structure challenges have you experienced in implementing your county strategic plans in the last 5 years?

Table 9 shows the frequencies of responses to “organisational structure challenges experienced that influence the implementation of strategic plans” by devolved governments. The respondents indicated that inadequate resources (32%) were the most important challenge, followed by poor coordination across departments (23%), and poor systems in human resources management and development (18%). The respondents identified the COVID-19 pandemic as an additional challenge (5%) to strategy implementation. This is in line with the global challenge of COVID-19, which impacted service delivery across nations in 2020 and 2021.

Table 9. Organizational Structures challenges experienced

Statement	Frequencies (N)	Percentage
Inadequate financial resources	22	35%
Poor coordination across departments	14	23%
Poor systems in human resource management & development	11	18%
Interdepartmental conflict	7	11%
Poor Motivation	5	8%
COVID-19 pandemic	3	5%

3.9 Qualitative analysis of legal and regulatory framework.

The respondents were provided two questions with respect to the legal and regulatory framework, and their responses were analysed.

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3.9.1 Other aspects of the legal and regulatory framework not captured that influence the implementation of strategic plans

Table 10 shows the frequencies of responses on "other aspects of the legal and regulatory framework not included that affect strategy implementation" by devolved governments. The respondents indicated that the review of gaps in the legal and regulatory framework (44%), and the role of fines and court orders for violations of county acts (33%), were the most important aspects to be included in assessing the legal and regulatory framework that influence the implementation of strategic plans by devolved governments. As per the opinion of the respondents, other aspects to be included were public participation in the review of CIDPs (17%) and the enforcement of the Public Finance Management (PFM) Act (6%).

Table 10. Other aspects of Legal and Regulatory Framework not captured

Statement	Frequencies (N)	Percentage
Review of gaps in the legal and regulatory framework	8	44%
Role of fines and court orders for violations of County Acts	6	33%
Public participation in review of CIDPs	3	17%
Enforcement existing of Public Finance Management (PFM) Act	1	6%

3.9.2 What legal and regulatory framework challenges have you experienced in implementing your county strategic plans in the last 5 years?

Table 11 shows the frequencies of responses on "legal and regulatory framework challenges experienced that influenced the implementation of strategic plans in the last 5 years." The respondents indicated that conflict between the county and national government (37%) was the most important challenge, followed by internal conflict and delays in approval of annual plans and CIDPs (30%) and poor enforcement of the PFM Act (19%). The respondents identified failure to incorporate feedback from public participation forums (15%) as an additional challenge to strategy implementation by devolved governments. This confirms previous observations made in this study and frequent media reports of conflicts between devolved units and national governments and internal conflicts within devolved units themselves.

Table 11. Legal and Regulatory Framework Challenges Experienced

Statement	Frequencies (N)	Percentage
Conflict between county and national government	10	37%
Internal conflict and delays in approval of annual plans and CIDPs	8	30%
Poor enforcement of PFM Act	5	19%
Failure to incorporate feedback from public participation forums	4	15%

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3.10 Statistical model and hypothesis testing

The objective of the study was to establish the moderating influence of legal and regulatory frameworks on the relationship between organisational structure and the implementation of strategic plans by the devolved governments in Kenya.

Hypothesis (H_{01}): The legal and regulatory frameworks have no significant influence on the relationship between organisational structure and the implementation of strategic plans by devolved governments in Kenya.

Hypothesis (H_{02}): The legal and regulatory frameworks have a significant influence on the relationship between organisational structure and the implementation of strategic plans by devolved governments in Kenya.

The predictive model of the moderating influence of the legal and regulatory framework (X1) on the relationship between organisational structure (X2) and strategy implementation (Y);

$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \varepsilon$ ...Equation 1

$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_2 + \beta_2 X_2 + \varepsilon$ ...Equation 2

$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_{1*} \beta_4 X_{2+} \varepsilon$ ...Equation 3 (Hierarchical Multiple Regression)

Where;

Y = Strategy Implementation

X_1 = Legal & Regulatory Framework

X_2 = Organizational Structure

$\beta_{0,}\ \beta_{1,}\ \beta_{2,}\ \beta_3\ \beta_4$ = regression coefficients to be estimated

ε = Error Term

3.11 Model summary and analysis

The objective of the study was to establish the moderating influence of legal and regulatory frameworks on the relationship between organisational structure and the implementation of strategic plans by the devolved governments in Kenya. A hierarchical regression model was employed to analyze the strength of the influence of the legal and regulatory framework on the relationship between organizational structure and strategy implementation (Badara & Saidin, 2014).

3.12 Model summary

Table 12 shows the model summary of the moderating effect of the legal and regulatory frameworks on the relationship between organisational structure and strategy implementation. The adjusted coefficient of determination (Adjusted R-Squared) of 0.217 shows that 21.7% of the change in strategy implementation is explained by organizational structure at the exclusion of the constant and other variables. The balance effect of 78.3% is explained by other factors excluded from the first model. The second model shows the relationship between organisational structures, legal and regulatory framework, and strategy implementation. The

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change in R-Square of 3.5%, from 22.6% to 26.1%, demonstrates that the legal and regulatory framework enhanced the relationship between organisational structure and strategy implementation.

The third model shows the relationship between organisational structure, legal and regulatory framework, and the interaction term (organisational structure*legal and regulatory framework). The study analysis revealed that the model became insignificant with the introduction of the interaction term, with the change in R-square being a mere 0.3%. It can therefore be concluded that the legal and regulatory frameworks have no significant moderating effect on the relationship between organisational structure and strategy implementation.

Table 12: Model summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.475[a]	.226	.217	.82694	.226	25.968	1	89	.000
2	.511[b]	.261	.244	.81260	.035	4.168	1	88	.044
3	.513[c]	.264	.238	.81581	.003	.310	1	87	.579

a. Predictors: (Constant), Organizational Structure
b. Predictors: (Constant), Organizational Structure, Legal Regulatory Framework
*c. Predictors: (Constant), Organizational Structure, Legal Regulatory Framework, Organizational Structure*Legal &Regulatory Framework.*

3.13 ANOVA

Table 13 shows the F-statistic used to determine the model's validity. The results reveal that there is a significant and valid relationship between organisational structure and strategy implementation ($F_{(1, 89)}$ = 25.968, P = 0.000). The F-statistic for the second model ($F_{(2, 88)}$ = 15.530, P = 0.000) reveals that the relationship between organisational structure, legal and regulatory framework, and strategy implementation is significant and valid. Similarly, for the third model, the F-statistic ($F_{(3, 87)}$ = 10.375, P = 0.000) shows the relationship between organisational structure, legal and regulatory framework, the moderated organisational structure (organisational structure* legal and regulatory framework), and strategy implementation is significant and valid. The results lend support to the conclusion that the three models are significant and valid.

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Table 13. ANOVA

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	17.757	1	17.757	25.968	.000[b]
	Residual	60.861	89	.684		
	Total	78.618	90			
2	Regression	20.510	2	10.255	15.530	.000[c]
	Residual	58.108	88	.660		
	Total	78.618	90			
3	Regression	20.716	3	6.905	10.375	.000[d]
	Residual	57.902	87	.666		
	Total	78.618	90			

a. Dependent Variable: Strategy Implementation
b. Predictors: (Constant), Organizational Structure
c. Predictors: (Constant), Organizational Structure, Legal Regulatory Framework
*d. Predictors: (Constant), Organizational Structure, Legal Regulatory Framework, Organizational Structure*Legal &Regulatory Framework.*

3.14 Regression weights: Moderating influence of legal and regulatory frameworks on organisational structure and strategy implementation

Table 14 shows that organisational structure has a positive and significant influence ($\beta = 0.490$, $t = 5.096$, $p < 0.001$) on the implementation of strategic plans by devolved governments in Kenya. This implies that a unit change in organisational structure results in a 0.490 increase in strategy implementation by devolved governments. Given that the that the p-value is greater than 0.05, the null hypothesis was rejected, and it was concluded that organisational structure has a positive and significant influence on the implementation of strategic plans by devolved governments in Kenya.

The second model reveals that there is a positive and significant relationship between the legal and regulatory framework and strategy implementation ($\beta = 0.243$, $t = 2.042$, $P = 0.044$). The results show that a unit change in the legal and regulatory framework increases strategy implementation by 0.243 units. A close scrutiny of the beta coefficients, however, reveals that the legal and regulatory framework weakens the positive relationship between organisational structure (from $\beta = 0.490$, $P = 0.000$, to $\beta = 0.377$, $P = 0.001$) and strategy implementation by the devolved government in Kenya.

The third model reveals that the relationship between moderated organisational structure and strategy implementation is insignificant ($\beta = 0.116$, $P = 0.810$) and that the relationship between organisational structure and strategy implementation weakened (from $\beta = 0.377$, $P = 0.001$ to $\beta = 0.116$, $P = 0.810$). In addition, there was hardly any change in R square in Model 3 after the introduction of the product term, as shown in Table 8, which lends to the conclusion that the

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legal and regulatory framework has no significant moderating effect on the relationship between organisational structure and strategy implementation by devolved governments in Kenya.

Table 14. Regression Weights

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	1.178	.352		3.346	.001
Organizational Structure	.490	.096	.475	5.096	.000
(Constant)	.633	.437		1.449	.151
Organizational Structure	.377	.110	.365	3.437	.001
Legal Regulatory Framework	.243	.119	.217	2.042	.044
(Constant)	1.496	1.611		.929	.356
Organizational Structure	.116	.481	.113	.242	.810
Legal Regulatory Framework	.003	.446	.003	.007	.994
Organizational Structure*Legal & Regulatory Framework	.070	.126	.409	.557	.579

a. Dependent Variable: Strategy Implementation

4.0 Conclusion

The descriptive analysis showed that the overall respondents were undecided on the county's effectiveness in strategy implementation. The further results revealed that county leaders were unclear on the implementation priority of projects and programmes that met the county development objectives. They were also undecided on whether citizens and stakeholders were satisfied with the delivery of development projects and programmes and whether these projects were completed within budget or if they were distributed equally to all stakeholders, including minority groups. The results indicated a lack of clarity on the county's effectiveness in strategy implementation. This paints a grim picture of the confidence of county government leaders in their efforts to implement their strategic plans.

Overall, the study revealed that organisational structure influenced strategy implementation by devolved governments. The study showed that county leaders gave adequate information before implementing a new strategy or project and had a well-designed reporting authority structure, and employees knew to whom they reported. County leaders had a centralised decision structure that allowed quick decisions to be made, encouraged division of work and

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specialisation, and, in general, had clear systems of rules, regulations, procedures, and policies of how work was organised that influenced strategy implementation by the devolved governments.

In addition, the study showed there were regular audits to ensure compliance with the rules and regulations for the implementation of CIDPs, and, in general, established laws and regulations influenced the implementation of strategic plans by devolved governments in Kenya. Specifically, the study showed that adequate laws and regulations existed to guide the decisions and actions for the implementation of CIDPs and that existing laws and regulations provided sufficient guidelines and formats for aligning CIDPs with national development plans. The study further showed a lack of clarity on whether responsible government agencies investigated complaints by stakeholders about mismanagement during the implementation of CIDPs, meaning there was a lack of commitment to deal with corruption at the devolved government level.

The analysis of the qualitative data revealed other factors and challenges not addressed by the quantitative data analysis. The study revealed a concern with public participation and a lack of commitment to monitoring and evaluation, and it considered poor prioritisation of projects and delays in implementation as additional challenges. In respect to organisation structure, the qualitative data revealed that political interference, unclear structures, poor coordination across departments, and a poor system of human resource management and development were challenges. The study revealed gaps in the legal and regulatory framework and questioned the role of fines and court orders for violations of acts governing devolved units. The data revealed the existence of conflict within county departments and between county and national governments. The additional challenges and factors identified provide ground for further research on the link between the legal and regulatory framework, organisational structure, and strategy implementation by devolved governments.

As shown by the regression analysis, the legal and regulatory framework on its own had a positive and significant influence on the implementation of strategic plans by the devolved governments in Kenya, in agreement with other similar scholars (Kale *et al.,* 2015; Karama, 2022; Koech, 2018; Pedo *et al.,* 2017). The study found, however, that the influence of organisation structure on the implementation of strategic plans reduces slightly when considered together with the legal and regulatory framework. Overall, the study revealed that the legal and regulatory frameworks had no significant influence on the relationship between organisational structure and the implementation of strategic plans by the devolved government in Kenya.

5.0 Recommendation

This study established that the legal and regulatory framework does not moderate the relationship between organizational structure and strategy implementation and thus recommends that devolved governments should be granted autonomy in designing organizational structures in line with their local context. This way, devolved government can

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help reduce coordination challenges associated with unclear organisational structures and thus drive the implementation of strategic plans.

This study recommends that devolved governments should ensure their strategy implementation policies prioritise development projects and programmes that meet the developmental objectives defined in the county integrated development plans. The policies should ensure the satisfaction of stakeholders and that projects are implemented on time and within budget. Devolved governments must demonstrate commitment to investigating acts of corruption or complaints by stakeholders about mismanagement during the implementation of strategic plans (CIDPs).

In respect to organisational structures, devolved government ensures there is clarity of functions that reduces inter-departmental conflicts, in addition to improving coordination between the county and national government actors and partners. Thus, devolved government leaders should focus on strengthening the coordination between county and national governments to avoid conflicts. The devolved government should put in place systems of human resource management and development that ensure the fair distribution of critical technical skills across the departments.

From the analysis of the qualitative data, the study recommends that further research work should focus their research investigation on the adequacy and level of compliance with the legal and regulatory framework. Further researchers should examine the role of fines and court orders in violation of the County Government Act 2012. Other areas of study include examining the challenges posed by conflict between the county and the national government. The role of political interference and public participation in giving feedback for strategy implementation by devolved governments and other public institutions should be investigated in future studies.

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6.3 Ethical considerations
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6.4 Conflict of Interest
None

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