

International Journal of Management and Leadership Studies
2025; 5(2): 98-114
ISSN 2311-7575

ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE AND PROJECT PERFORMANCE IN PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS: A CASE OF KALRO NAIROBI

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ABSTRACT

Public institutions in Kenya continue to face challenges in achieving successful project implementation, largely due to the influence of organizational culture. This study examined how organizational culture affects project performance at the Kenya Agricultural and Livestock Research Organization (KALRO) in Nairobi. Specifically, it assessed the effects of decision-making processes and ethical standards on project outcomes. The study was anchored on Schein's Model of Organizational Culture, Denison's Model, and the Resource-Based View (RBV) theory. A descriptive research design was employed, with a census sampling approach involving 30 respondents drawn from a target population of 40 staff members. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, correlation, and regression analyses. The findings revealed a positive relationship between organizational culture dimensions and project performance. The study concludes that participatory decision-making and adherence to ethical practices significantly enhance project outcomes. It recommends that KALRO strengthen these cultural aspects to improve operational efficiency and promote sustainable project performance in public institutions.

Keywords: *Organizational Culture, Project Performance, Decision-Making Processes, Ethical Standards, Project Outcomes*

INTRODUCTION

The concept of organizational culture and its influence on institutional success gained momentum in the 1980s, particularly with the rise of Japanese firms known for their cohesive and progressive workplace cultures. These companies, recognised for their innovation and productivity, began outperforming many Western counterparts (Yip et al., 2020). Project performance is often viewed as a trade-off among multiple metrics and dimensions, focusing on accomplishments such as scope, quality, and stakeholder satisfaction rather than solely on inputs like time and cost. Project success is closely linked to project performance, which has been assessed through various criteria. Younus and Younis (2021) identified five dimensions used to measure project performance: overall success, benefits to the developing organisation, positive effects on service users, improvements to institutional infrastructure, and contributions to organizational growth. They further proposed that project efficacy, customer outcomes, business success, and long-term preparedness constitute the four essential elements of a successful project. Enhancing organizational culture is therefore vital for improving productivity and performance. However, establishing an effective culture remains a challenge for many

project managers, and weak organizational culture has been identified as a major contributor to poor productivity and project inefficiencies (Zhu et al., 2021).

Globally, organizational culture has been recognised as a key determinant of business efficiency and competitiveness. It shapes how employees interact, innovate, and align with organizational goals. Companies such as China's Alibaba Group exemplify how a strong, adaptive, and value-driven culture fosters creativity, teamwork, accountability, and continuous improvement—factors that contribute to sustained project success and innovation (Setiawan, 2020; Liu, 2018). These global insights highlight that an organisation's culture can be a strategic asset that drives superior performance when effectively nurtured. Across Africa, research consistently shows that organizational culture significantly influences project performance in both public and private sectors. Studies in Nigeria, Uganda, Ethiopia, and Tanzania reveal that effective cultures enhance coordination, leadership alignment, employee empowerment, and communication—resulting in improved project outcomes (Toriola-Coker et al., 2021; Beyene, 2021; Swai & Tieng'o, 2022). In Kenya, however, many public institutions still struggle to embed strong cultural values due to leadership gaps, inadequate resources, and weak communication systems (Hassan, 2017; Seboru, 2015). Although a cohesive culture promoting ethics, teamwork, and participatory decision-making is essential for successful project implementation, findings on its precise impact remain inconclusive. Scholars therefore call for further empirical studies to clarify how specific cultural dimensions shape project performance, particularly within Kenya's public sector institutions.

Organizational Culture

Organizational cultures can transform significantly over time, influencing people either positively or negatively (Aranki et al., 2019). Culture has been identified as one of the key factors distinguishing successful organisations from unsuccessful ones (Schönborn et al., 2019). It plays a central role in creating a sustainable competitive advantage and has been widely recognised in literature as a major determinant of organizational performance (Nikpour, 2017). Indeed, organizational culture has been broadly embraced as a critical element in understanding how organisations operate across various contexts. According to Gavric, Sormaz, and Ilic (2016), cultural dimensions are at the heart of organizational life, serving as a regulatory mechanism that guides and influences members' behaviour. It permeates all organizational activities, acting as a fundamental factor for growth, development, and long-term success.

A strong organizational culture is built on a set of deeply held and widely shared values that align with the organization's strategy and structure (Deloitte, 2018). When such a culture exists, three key outcomes are observed: employees follow consistent procedures when engaging with management, they trust that the expected responses are accurate, and they understand how the organisation's values translate into rewards and recognition (Kohll, 2020). More specifically, organizational culture guides decision-making and actions, shaping employees' cognition, behaviour, and emotions (Picciotto, 2020). However, culture does not always produce favourable outcomes and is not static. Because it is dynamic, organizational culture can either enhance or hinder performance depending on how it evolves (Picciotto, 2020). This underscores the need for public institutions such as the Kenya Agricultural and Livestock Research Organisation

(KALRO) to continually strengthen and align their organizational culture to improve performance and achieve institutional goals.

Organizational Decision-Making

Decision-making is one of management's primary and most critical responsibilities. It constitutes the "heart" of executive operations within an organisation (Elliott et al., 2020). Effective decision-making processes determine how efficiently goals are achieved and resources are utilised. Understanding how decisions are made within an organisation like KALRO can therefore provide valuable insights into improving project implementation, accountability, and overall institutional effectiveness.

Ethical Standards

Ethical standards, when reinforced through sound policies and ethical leadership, ensure compliance with both legal and moral obligations while fostering public trust and institutional credibility (Ferrell et al., 2019). In public institutions such as KALRO, upholding strong ethical standards is vital for effective project management, equitable resource allocation, and constructive stakeholder engagement. Ngirinshuti and Mukashema (2020) emphasise the importance of establishing ethical frameworks anchored in honesty, trustworthiness, and social accountability to promote transparency and integrity in organizational operations.

Project Performance

Project performance is a multidimensional concept encompassing efficiency, effectiveness, and sustainability in achieving project goals (Zhu et al., 2021). It is typically assessed through key indicators such as adherence to budget, timelines, quality standards, and stakeholder satisfaction (Younus & Younis, 2021). Successful project performance depends on several interrelated factors, including leadership quality, resource availability, and organizational culture (PMI, 2021). Understanding these elements is essential for achieving desired project outcomes and ensuring the effective utilisation of public resources.

In Kenya, the government has introduced several reforms aimed at enhancing project success and public sector efficiency. As outlined in Government Sessional Papers No. 1 of 1986, 1992, and 1994, the reforms sought to manage payroll costs more effectively, improve service delivery, and promote a balanced allocation of operational and maintenance expenditures. These efforts represented a significant shift in policy concerning civil service organisation, compensation and benefits, personnel management, training, and financial accountability (GOK, 2007). Despite these initiatives, many public projects continue to experience delays, cost overruns, or even stagnation (Mpofu et al., 2017). Bureaucratic procedures and rigid organizational structures in public institutions often impede project execution, highlighting the need for a strong organizational culture that fosters innovation, flexibility, and adaptability (Andrews & Boyne, 2018).

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

In Kenya, the Kenya Agricultural and Livestock Research Organisation (KALRO) plays a pivotal role in advancing agricultural research, innovation, and technology transfer to enhance food security and improve livelihoods. Ideally, projects implemented by KALRO should be completed within the defined scope, time, and budget, thereby contributing

effectively to the country's agricultural development objectives. However, in practice, the organisation has experienced persistent challenges in project performance, including delays, cost overruns, and the inability to fully achieve intended outcomes. This disparity between expected and actual project results points to underlying institutional and cultural factors that may hinder effective project delivery. Evidence from internal performance reviews and sectoral evaluations highlights issues such as decision-making bottlenecks, weak communication channels, limited teamwork, and inconsistent adherence to ethical standards as key contributors to these inefficiencies. Consequently, this study seeks to examine the influence of organizational culture on project performance at KALRO, to identify specific cultural dimensions that either enhance or constrain successful project implementation.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

- i. To assess the effect of organizational decision-making process on project performance in Kenya Agricultural and Livestock Research Organization.
- ii. To analyze the effect of ethical standards on project performance in Kenya Agricultural and Livestock Research Organization.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Literature Review

Schein's Theory of Organizational Culture

Schein (1985) developed one of the most influential frameworks for understanding organizational culture, comprising three interrelated levels: artifacts, espoused values, and basic underlying assumptions. Artifacts represent the visible and tangible aspects of culture—such as the physical environment, language, dress code, technology, rituals, myths, and organizational symbols—that provide the most apparent expressions of an organization's identity (Nguyen, Hai, & Watanabe, 2017). Espoused values encompass the stated principles, norms, and philosophies that guide behavior within the organisation, while basic underlying assumptions refer to the deeply ingrained beliefs and perceptions that unconsciously shape members' actions and attitudes. This theory is relevant to the current study because it highlights how the visible and invisible elements of organizational culture influence behaviour, performance, and employee motivation. A positive culture, as described by Schein, encourages employees to utilise their full potential, align with organizational goals, and contribute effectively to project success.

Denison's Model of Organizational Culture

Denison (1984) proposed a model that links organizational culture directly to organizational effectiveness. The model identifies four key cultural traits—involvement, consistency, adaptability, and mission—as critical determinants of performance. Involvement refers to the degree to which employees are engaged in decision-making and management processes, fostering empowerment and commitment. Consistency reflects the existence of shared values and coordinated systems that promote internal integration. Adaptability represents an organization's capacity to respond swiftly to external environmental changes, while mission denotes a clear sense of purpose, vision, and strategic direction. This model is particularly applicable to the present study as it provides a structured framework for evaluating how cultural traits influence performance outcomes. It emphasises the collective behaviour of organizational members rather than

individual actions, thereby offering valuable insights into how shared values, participation, and adaptability shape institutional performance (Ahmady, Nikooravesh, & Mehrpour, 2016).

Resource-Based View (RBV) Theory

The Resource-Based View (RBV), advanced by Barney (1991), posits that an organization's sustainable competitive advantage stems from the effective and efficient utilization of its unique resources and capabilities. For a resource such as organizational, to confer a lasting advantage, it must be valuable, rare, inimitable, and non-substitutable (Barney, 1991). A viable organizational culture fosters behaviors that support superior performance; a unique culture differentiates the organization from its competitors, while an inimitable culture is difficult for others to replicate due to its deeply rooted values and practices. This theory supports the present study as it underscores the importance of leveraging human and cultural resources to enhance institutional performance. In the context of the Kenya Agricultural and Livestock Research Organisation (KALRO), cultivating a distinctive and inclusive organisational culture characterised by participatory decision-making, adherence to ethical standards, teamwork, and open communication can strengthen internal capabilities and improve project performance.

Empirical Literature Review

Decision-making and project performance

Hector et al. (2015) examined the impact of strategic decision-making efficiency on organizational effectiveness in Mexico using a survey of 103 technological firms. The findings revealed that faster decision-making processes had a significant and positive effect on organizational outcomes. The study recommended that technology-based firms should adopt accelerated decision-making mechanisms to enhance performance and competitiveness. However, while the study focused on private technology firms in Mexico, the present research will be conducted in the public research institution KALRO in Kenya, where contextual factors may differ substantially.

Similarly, Rana, Arfan, and Majid (2012) investigated the effect of decision-making approaches on organizational performance among 187 Pakistani banks. The study established that emotional intelligence mediated the relationship between decision-making and organizational success. It further revealed that logical and autonomous decision-making approaches positively influenced institutional efficiency. The current study differs as it focuses on a research institution in Kenya rather than financial institutions, thereby broadening the contextual understanding of decision-making. In Malaysia, Omenazu (2022) explored the influence of decision-making on organizational performance in construction projects. Targeting 936 managers from 157 firms, the study showed that decision support systems and dialogue-based decision-making approaches significantly enhanced performance. The study underscored the importance of evaluating advocacy decisions to ensure their viability. These insights are relevant for the current study, which also explores decision-making effectiveness but within a public research setting.

In Nigeria, Emakwu, Faajir, and Teryima (2018) investigated managerial decision-making and organizational performance at Guinness Breweries. The findings indicated that both individual and group decision-making approaches significantly influenced operational

efficiency. While informative, the study was limited to the private manufacturing sector in Nigeria, whereas the current study will focus on a public research context in Kenya. Usengumuremyi, Iravo, and Namusonge (2020) examined corporate governance and decision-making procedures in Rwanda's public sector. The results indicated that tactical decision-making positively affected governance effectiveness through the establishment of clear objectives, competent personnel, and effective control mechanisms. However, since the study covered the public sector broadly, its findings may not fully apply to specialised research institutions like KALRO.

Locally, Murage and Okelo (2016) analysed strategic decision-making processes and organizational performance among 312 construction firms in Nakuru County. Their findings showed that dialogue-based decision-making strongly influenced performance compared to lobbying approaches. Similarly, Ambani (2016) studied the effect of employee participation in decision-making at the Kenya Medical Research Institute in Kisumu, revealing that participatory decision-making enhanced job performance. These findings resonate with the present study, which investigates how participatory and evidence-based decision-making influence project performance at KALRO. In contrast, Oloo and Orwar (2016) studied lower-level employee involvement in decision-making in Nairobi's retail sector and found that limited participation negatively affected motivation and retention. However, since the study focused on Uchumi Supermarket a now-defunct retail chain its applicability to KALRO's institutional context may be limited.

Ethical Standards and Project Performance

Ethical standards are foundational to building organizational integrity, trust, and effective performance. Treviño and Nelson (2016) emphasised that ethical principles foster moral behaviour and accountability, positively influencing organizational outcomes. Similarly, Ferrell, Fredrich, and Ferrell (2019) found that ethical conduct enhances stakeholder trust and long-term organizational sustainability. Weaver, Treviño, and Cochran (2020) also demonstrated that ethical decision-making mitigates risk by preventing reputational and legal challenges, thereby strengthening overall performance.

Zhu et al. (2013) examined the moderating effect of moral leadership on corporate social responsibility outcomes among 199 tourism firms in South China. The study found that ethical leadership improved organizational reputation and performance. Likewise, Kang (2019) observed that ethical leadership in South Korean multinational firms positively influenced employees' adherence to institutional ethics, enhancing work performance.

In the U.S., Goebel and Weißenberger (2017) surveyed 295 SMEs and established a strong correlation between ethical workplace culture and organizational success. They recommended embedding values such as accountability, integrity, and time management to enhance productivity. Similarly, Kim and Thapa (2018) investigated South Korean food service franchises and found that ethical leadership and corporate social responsibility significantly improved performance, urging firms to consider ethics in leadership recruitment and strategic planning. Delegation of authority and fairness are also key ethical dimensions that influence performance. Olajide, Okunbanjo, and Adeoye (2016) found that employee effectiveness increased when authority was delegated appropriately in Nigerian firms. Suleiman and Kathairi (2013) defined interactional fairness as respectful, transparent, and honest communication—an element shown by Niazi and

Hamid (2016) to have a strong positive correlation with employee performance in Pakistan’s banking sector. Similarly, Krishnan, Loon, Ahmad, and Rehman (2018) found a significant relationship between fairness and employee efficacy in Malaysian manufacturing firms. In Kenya, Gaitho (2019) demonstrated that ethical standards and organizational structure significantly affect service delivery in county governments. The study highlighted the importance of ethical leadership and integrity in public institutions—a principle directly relevant to KALRO, where adherence to ethical standards is essential for effective project performance and stakeholder trust.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

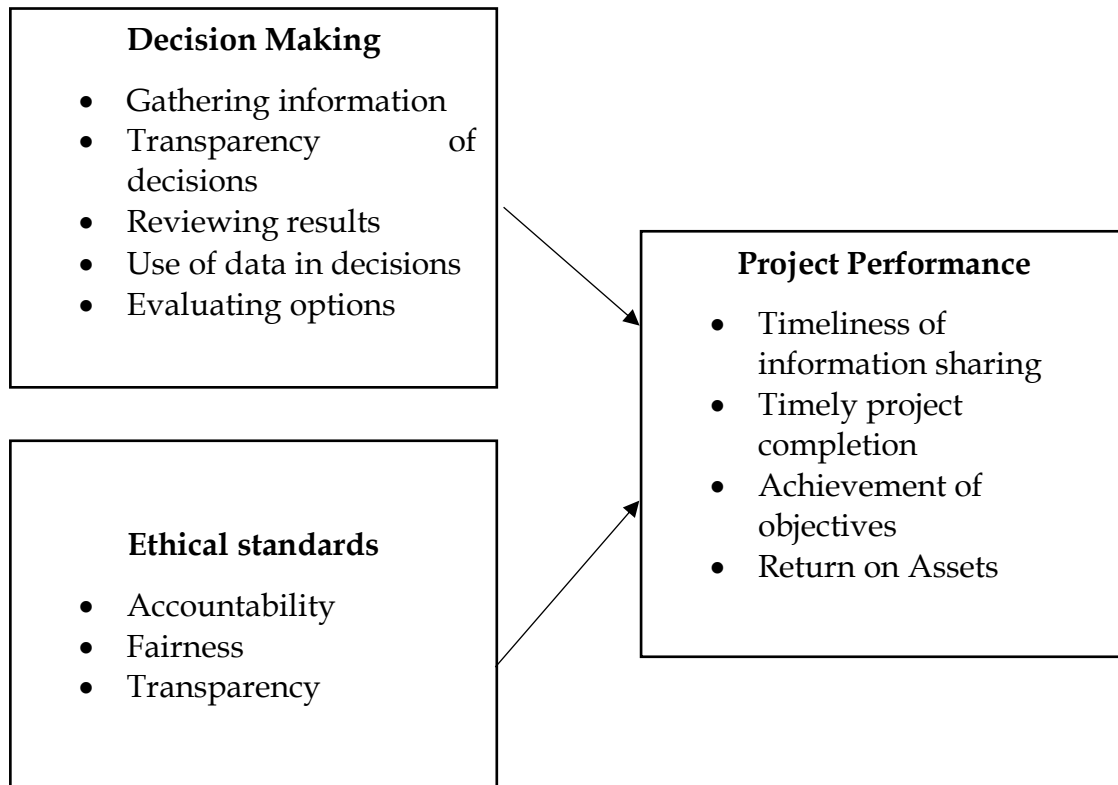


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study adopted a descriptive research design, which allows for systematic collection and analysis of data to explain existing conditions and relationships within a population. This design was suitable as it enabled the researcher to gather factual and perceptual information from staff at the Kenya Agricultural and Livestock Research Organisation (KALRO) regarding how organizational culture influences project performance.

Target Population

The target population consisted of 40 project staff at KALRO Nairobi, including 10 Heads of Departments, 20 Project Coordinators, and 10 Research Scientists directly involved in project planning and implementation. A census approach was used to include all members of the target population, ensuring comprehensive coverage and eliminating sampling error. However, the findings were limited to KALRO Nairobi due to time and resource constraints.

Table 1: Population Distribution

Category	Population
Heads Departments	10
Project Coordinators	20
Research Scientists	10
Total	40

Sample and Sampling Technique

The study employed a census sampling technique, which involved including all members of the target population since the project management department at KALRO was small and manageable. This ensured comprehensive representation and accuracy in findings. Data were collected using semi-structured questionnaires, which were organized into five sections covering demographics, decision-making, ethical standards, teamwork, and communication structures in relation to project performance.

Pilot Study

A pilot study involving 10 staff members from ILRI (excluded from the main study) was conducted to test the questionnaire's clarity and effectiveness. Validity was ensured through expert review by the research supervisor, while reliability was tested using the test-retest method, with a Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of 0.7 or above considered acceptable. According to Heale and Twycross (2015), validity refers to the accuracy with which a concept is measured and the extent to which statistical inferences accurately reflect the variables under study. Content validity in this research was ensured through a comprehensive review of relevant literature to identify the key dimensions of organizational culture and project performance. Additionally, expert review by the research supervisor enhanced the instrument's precision. The supervisor evaluated the questionnaire's items to determine whether they adequately represented the study variables. Based on the feedback provided, necessary revisions were made to improve the clarity and relevance of the items, thereby ensuring that the instrument accurately captured the constructs being investigated.

Reliability refers to the consistency of a research instrument in producing stable and dependable results over repeated applications (Orodho, 2009). It ensures that the findings are free from bias, errors, and inconsistencies (Creswell, 2014). The study employed the test-retest method, administering the same questionnaire to a sample of respondents at one-week intervals to assess the instrument's stability over time. This interval was considered adequate to minimize memory effects while maintaining contact feasibility. The reliability of the instrument was determined using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient, with a value of 0.7 or above considered acceptable for internal consistency (Creswell, 2017).

Data analysis and Presentation

Data were coded and analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations, were used to summarise respondents' characteristics and key study variables.

Inferential statistics were then applied to examine relationships between organizational culture dimensions and project performance. Correlation analysis assessed the strength and direction of linear relationships, while multiple regression analysis determined the combined and individual influence of decision-making, ethical standards, teamwork, and communication structure on project performance.

Ethical Considerations

The design of the investigation and procedures are guided by an array of ethical guidelines. Researchers should adhere to certain codes of conduct when collecting data from people (Bhandari, 2021). Ethical parameters which will be applied in the present study include; informed consent, voluntary participation, confidentiality, privacy and anonymity.

FINDINGS

The study achieved a high response rate, with 30 out of 40 questionnaires returned, representing 75%, which was considered excellent for data analysis. Reliability testing using the test-retest method and Cronbach's Alpha produced coefficients above 0.7 for all variables, confirming that the research instruments were consistent and dependable. Demographic analysis showed that most respondents were male (60%), aged between 30 and 39 years (33.3%), and held bachelor's degrees (60%). The majority had worked at KALRO for between 6 and 10 years (60%), indicating extensive institutional experience. In terms of job roles, 60% were research scientists, 33.3% project coordinators, and 6.7% heads of departments. Overall, the findings demonstrate that KALRO's project teams comprise well-educated, experienced professionals actively engaged in research and project implementation, providing credible insights for the study.

Table 2: Descriptive analysis of decision-making and project performance

Statement	SA	A	N	D	SD	Total
Decision-making processes are transparent and participatory	20.0	30.0	20.0	30.0	0.0	100.0
Employees are involved in project-related decision-making	10.0	10.0	20.0	40.0	20.0	100.0
Decisions made are communicated to staff in a timely manner	10.0	60.0	10.0	20.0	0.0	100.0
Decision-making structures are flexible to meet project demands	10.0	40.0	10.0	40.0	0.0	100.0
Data and evidence are used to support decisions	0.0	30.0	30.0	40.0	0.0	100.0

The study examined the influence of decision-making on project performance at KALRO. Findings revealed that 50% (16) of respondents agreed that decision-making processes were transparent and participatory, incorporating employee views. However, 30% (9) indicated that decisions were primarily made by top-level management, leaving some employees excluded. Additionally, 60% (18) reported limited involvement in project-related decisions, while 20% (6) acknowledged that certain employees were engaged. These results suggest that a significant portion of staff are not fully involved in decision-making, contrasting with Ambani (2016), who found that employee participation

enhanced effectiveness at the Kenya Medical Research Institute. There is a clear need for KALRO to increase employee involvement to improve project outcomes. Regarding communication, 70% (21) of respondents reported that decisions were communicated promptly through emails, memos, calls, and WhatsApp messages, while 20% (6) indicated delays due to bureaucracy, negatively affecting project outcomes.

These findings align with Oloo and Orwa (2016), who emphasized that effective communication enhances performance. On decision-making structures, 50% (15) of participants noted that they were flexible and responsive to project needs, accommodating changes when necessary. However, 40% (12) disagreed, citing stalled projects due to rigid structures and limited consideration of alternative views. Finally, regarding the use of data and evidence in decisions, 40% of respondents disagreed that empirical evidence informed project decisions, 30% agreed, and another 30% were indifferent. This indicates a lack of consensus on whether data-driven decision-making is consistently applied at KALRO, with some decisions reportedly influenced by external vested interests.

Table 3: Correlation Analysis between decision-making and Project Performance in KALRO

	Project Performance in KALRO	Decision-making
Project Performance in KALRO	1	
Decision-making	.725** .000	1

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Analysis in Table 3 provided result on the Pearson Correlation Coefficient which in determining the association between decision-making and project performance in KALRO. The Pearson Correlation Coefficient ($r = 0.725$; $n = 30$) revealed that where ($P = 0.000 < 0.01$), there is statistically strong association between decision-making and performance of projects in KALRO. The study observed that an increase in the unit of decision-making results to an increase in the project performance, which further predicts a strong positive relationship between the elements.

Table 4: Regression analysis between Decision-making and Project Performance in KALRO

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	.250	.135		1.843	.069
Decision-making	.605	.220	-1.107	3.840	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Project Performance in KALRO

The results of the linear regression analysis between KALRO project performance and decision-making are shown in Table 4. The findings show that decision-making and project performance in KALRO are strongly correlated ($t(30) = 3.840, p < 0.05$). A decline in the significance level suggests that decision-making and project performance in KALRO are significant variables.

Table 5: Descriptive analysis of ethical standards and project performance in KALRO

Statement	SA	A	N	D	SD	Total
Ethical standards are upheld in financial reporting in KALRO	20.0	50.0	30.0	0.0	0.0	100.0
KALRO upholds ethical standards in implementing projects	40.0	50.0	10.0	0.0	0.0	100.0
Integrity in leadership is promoted in KALRO	10.0	40.0	20.0	30.0	0.0	100.0
Delegation of duties is practiced in project activities in KALRO	10.0	50.0	10.0	30.0	0.0	100.0
KALRO promotes integrity and accountability in project work	50.0	40.0	10.0	0.0	0.0	100.0

The study examined the influence of ethical standards on project performance at KALRO. Findings revealed that 70% of respondents agreed that ethical standards were upheld in financial reporting, citing regular audits and public posting of reports, while 30% were neutral, indicating a lack of awareness. This suggests that KALRO makes considerable efforts to maintain ethical compliance in financial practices. Regarding project implementation, 90% of participants confirmed adherence to ethical procedures, noting that following stipulated guidelines reduced operational costs and enhanced project outcomes. Leadership integrity was affirmed by 50% of respondents, who highlighted principles such as zero tolerance for corruption, though 30% reported challenges such as nepotism and cronyism, indicating room for improvement.

These findings align with Kim and Thapa (2018), who found that ethical leadership positively impacts organizational success. On delegation of duties, 60% indicated that responsibilities were appropriately delegated to equip staff with necessary skills and

ensure project continuity during absences or retirements, while 30% noted that some projects were too sensitive to delegate. This supports Olajide, Okunbanjo, and Adeoye (2016), who observed that delegation enhances employee effectiveness. Finally, 90% of participants agreed that accountability and integrity were central to project management, with staff held responsible for their actions, ensuring adherence to honesty and promoting timely, quality project outcomes.

Table 6: Correlation Analysis between Ethical Standards and Project Performance in KALRO

	Project Performance in KALRO	Ethical Standards
Project Performance in KALRO	1	
Ethical Standards	.694**	1
	.000	

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

The results of the correlation evaluation between KALRO project performance and ethical standards are shown in Table 3. The results indicate that ethical standards and project performance in KALRO, Nairobi, had a favourable and statistically substantial linear relationship ($r=0.694$, $n=30$, $p<0.01$).

Table 7: Regression Analysis between Ethical Standards and Project Performance in KALRO

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	.250	.135		1.843	.069
Ethical Standards	.907	.204	2.246	4.434	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Project Performance in KALRO

Table 7 presents the findings of the linear regression coefficient conducted between ethical standards and project performance in KALRO. Given that ethical standards strongly predict the project performance in KALRO ($t(30) = 4.434$, $p<0.05$), the findings indicate that ethical standards is an important variable.

Table 9: Analysis on project performance in KALRO

Statement	SA	A	N	D	SD	Total
KALRO engages in regular research to meet emerging demands	50.0	50.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0
KALRO engages in innovation to enhance performance	60.0	30.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0
KALRO carries out regular monitoring and evaluation in their research projects	50.0	40.0	10.0	0.0	0.0	100.0
Projects are completed within the planned time	20.0	30.0	10.0	40.0	0.0	100.0
Projects meet their stated objectives and deliverables	40.0	30.0	10.0	20.0	0.0	100.0

The analysis of project performance at KALRO revealed that all respondents (100%) confirmed that the organization conducts regular research to address emerging demands in both crops and animal husbandry, ensuring relevance and alignment with innovations in agriculture. Additionally, 90% of participants noted that KALRO engages in innovative practices aimed at efficient utilization of available resources, leading to the development of new products in the research space. The findings further showed that 90% of respondents affirmed that monitoring and evaluation are regularly conducted, with monitoring ensuring projects are free from errors during implementation and evaluation assessing outcomes upon project completion. Regarding project timelines, 50% of participants indicated that most projects are completed within the scheduled period, while 40% highlighted delays due to unforeseen circumstances or inadequate funding. Finally, the majority of respondents agreed that KALRO projects achieve their intended objectives, as demonstrated by successful research outcomes, including improved crop and livestock varieties, reflecting the institution's overall effectiveness in project execution.

CONCLUSION

The study established that organizational culture significantly influences project performance at KALRO. Findings revealed that while some decision-making processes are transparent and participatory, a notable proportion of employees remain excluded from key decisions, limiting the potential for full engagement and optimal project outcomes. Effective communication and flexible decision-making structures were highlighted as critical enablers of project success, though gaps in the consistent use of data and evidence for decision-making were observed. Ethical standards were found to play a central role in promoting accountability, integrity, and continuity in project execution. While KALRO demonstrates adherence to ethical principles in financial reporting, project implementation, and delegation of duties, challenges such as nepotism and occasional lapses in delegation indicate areas for improvement. Project performance at KALRO is positively influenced by regular research, innovation, and systematic monitoring and evaluation. Most projects achieve their intended objectives, though some experience delays due to funding constraints and unforeseen challenges. The study underscores the need for enhanced employee involvement in decision-making, strengthened ethical practices, and continued emphasis on innovation and monitoring to further improve project outcomes.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the study findings, several recommendations can be made for theory, policy, and practice. From a theoretical perspective, drawing on Schein's Organizational Culture Theory and Denison's Model, KALRO should foster a culture that emphasizes transparency, participation, and shared values. The study revealed that many employees remain excluded from decision-making processes, and promoting involvement, adaptability, and alignment with the organizational mission is likely to enhance engagement and project performance. Additionally, guided by the Resource-Based View, the institution should leverage its human capital by developing, retaining, and empowering skilled staff through participatory decision-making, ensuring that organizational resources are effectively mobilized to achieve sustainable competitive advantage in agricultural research projects.

From a policy standpoint, KALRO should formalize policies that institutionalize inclusive decision-making across all levels, ensuring employees' input is considered during project planning, implementation, and evaluation. Ethical standards should be reinforced through robust institutional policies on accountability, transparency, and delegation of authority, while anti-nepotism and anti-corruption measures should be strictly enforced. Policies on monitoring and evaluation should also be strengthened to track projects systematically and enable timely corrective actions.

Practically, management should implement capacity-building initiatives that train employees in ethical practices, data-driven decision-making, and project management to improve operational efficiency. Decision-making structures should be made flexible to accommodate unforeseen project challenges and encourage innovation, while communication channels must be improved to ensure timely dissemination of decisions, project updates, and evaluation results. Finally, continuous monitoring and evaluation should be paired with feedback mechanisms to allow real-time improvements, ensuring that projects are completed efficiently and achieve their intended objectives.

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