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Christian Ntibi Mawanika, Anne Kiboi & Lawrence Odollo

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¹Christian Ntibi Mawanika, ²Anne Kiboi & ³Lawrence Odollo

Email of corresponding author: ntibichristian@gmail.com

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Abstract

Public universities evaluate their performance based on various factors, such as student affairs and learning, research, community service, financial service, innovation, and development. This study sought to examine the effect of institutional determinants on the performance of public universities in Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo. The research was anchored on institutional theory. The study was based on positivist research philosophy and used descriptive research design and the explanatory cross-sectional research design. The target population comprised of 1059 from Board of directors of university, university council, faculty council, and departmental council members of the three public universities in Kinshasa, DRC. The sample was 290 respondents obtained using Yamane formula. Sampling was done through stratified sampling and simple random sampling techniques. Primary data was collected using a structured questionnaire. The study used multiple regression and Structural Equation Modeling. The findings indicated that institutional determinants (organizational structure, organizational resources and organizational culture) exhibited a strong and positive effect on performance. The path coefficient for institutional determinants was 0.476, with a standard error of 0.068 and a critical ratio of 3.900, significant at $p < 0.001$, suggesting that institutional determinants were major contributors to performance improvement. The study concluded that institutional determinants significantly affect performance of public universities in Kinshasa, DRC. The study recommends that university management should regularly review and optimize the organizational structure to ensure it remains responsive to the evolving demands of higher education. It is also recommended that rather than focusing solely on increasing resources, university management should maximize the efficient utilization of existing financial, human, technological, and physical resources. Another recommendation is that management should intentionally cultivate an organizational culture characterized by professionalism, integrity, accountability, collaboration, innovation, and continuous improvement.

Keywords: *Institutional determinants, Organizational Structure, Organizational Resources, Organizational Culture, Performance of Public Universities*

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1.0 Introduction

Institutions embody a logical intention that directs activities towards specific objectives and every good institution possesses a mission, a vision, objectives and strategies that direct it towards achievement (Munir, 2019). Globally, Tandilashvili (2019) in the United States of America (USA) revealed that several factors, including academic, non-academic, program-related, environmental, reputation, and access factors influence university performance. The study proposed that universities should assess on the strengths and weaknesses; opportunities and threats so to enhance performance of university. This understanding would allow universities to improve the services they provide. Alani and Hawas (2021) in Oman found that personal factors, teacher-related factors, institution-related factors, and environmental factors have a positive relationship with performance of university. Tiron-Tudor et al. (2022) found as well that institutional and human factors have a big effect on Romanian public universities' performance, particularly in the areas of research and teaching.

In New Zealand by Tani et al. (2019) discovered that family duties, employment and social involvement, and financial worries positively influence university performance. The study proposed that achievement in higher education is influenced by various elements, including academic, non-academic, and individual aspects. In Vietnam by Le et al. (2020) identified several crucial elements that contribute to the improvement of university performance. These factors include the pedagogical knowledge and abilities of lecturers, professional knowledge and credentials, the availability of learning resources and favourable settings, the structuring of courses and the motivation of students. The study suggested that universities should consider factors such as the interior environment and academic learning space in order to effectively enhance performance of universities. Rashida et al. (2019) found no association between students' educational achievements and the type of school they attended (rural or urban) in Russia. The study proposed that education stakeholders and academicians should consider this educational factor.

Regionally, Khumalo and Utete (2023) in South Africa identified instructional methods, institutional facilities, study groups, and parental support as factors that positively influence universities success. The study recommended that academic administrators should offer diverse amenities and implement a range of instructional approaches to improve performance. Ghebregiorgis (2020) in Eritrea found that human variables, environmental factors, and socio-economic factors have a positive influence on performance of universities. Mokua (2020) in Kenya identified several factors that have a major effect on performance in the education sector. These factors include peer pressure, the availability of school resources, the student-teacher ratio, and family support. The study recommended that all stakeholders should guarantee that learning institutions have sufficient learning materials and an acceptable number of good teachers. Additionally, parents should actively engage in monitoring and supporting their children's academic performance to enhance overall achievement.

Locally, in an endeavour to enhance the efficiency of educational institutions in the Congo (DRC), the Ministry of Education has developed the Education Sector Strategy 2022–2026. This strategy aims to optimize the execution and assessment of policies in the education sector (ESU, DRC, 2022). Therefore, it has been predicted that public universities in the DRC will strengthen their administrative operations in accordance with this plan in order to promote university performance. The plan aims to promote international openness and embrace current technology in higher and university institutions. It also focuses on enhancing research activities, in line with the purpose of fostering a culture of quality and excellence (ESU, DRC, 2022).

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Menga-Mokombi (2020) argued that the main obstacles to good performance in public universities in the DRC are the absence of networking and inter-sectoral cooperation, insufficient technological progress, limited effect of academic and professional associations and inadequate allocation of public resources to research and development (R&D). The allocation of resources to the education sector accounts for a mere 1.8% of the country's GDP, which is an approximately 10.9% of the overall national budget. This amount is insufficient to adequately fund the operations of public universities, hindering their ability to achieve optimal performance.

Public universities lack autonomy in their program offerings. This is seen in the fact that institutional considerations and student recruitment are not completely considered. This lack of consideration has negative repercussions on the public universities' performance (Menga-Mokombi, 2020). In addition, the Congolese higher education system has been hindered by a shortage of competent personnel, which is essential for enhancing the education quality. This is because some education institutions fail to achieve the requirements established by the Ministry of Education (Tshiunza, 2019). Consequently, potential students are departing the country to study overseas, with the intention of obtaining advanced education and essential competencies, and thereafter returning to contribute to the country's progress (Bakamana, 2021).

The performance of an institution encompasses various factors which are either internal or external (Shahjahan, et al., 2021). The internal factors include strong leadership as effective leaders inspire and motivate employees, provide guidance, empower employees and create a positive culture; strategic planning as a well-developed plan helps an organization align their resources, capabilities and actions to achieve their goals; efficient resource management including human resources, financial capital, technology, and infrastructure; effective communication to ensure information flows smoothly across all levels and functions; adaptability as there is a need to adapt to changing market conditions, customer needs and technological advancements; and stakeholder engagement including customers, employees, suppliers, and the community (Loku & Loku, 2020).

Universities evaluate their performance based on various factors, such as student affairs and learning, research, community service, financial service, innovation, and development (Chukwemeka, 2020). Acevedo-de-los-Rios and Rondinel-Oviedo (2021) state that the actions of individuals involved in higher education institutions can either help or hinder the institutions in achieving their objectives. Therefore, various internal and external factors affect performance by influencing the behaviour of institutional processes and systems that are directly involved in transforming the organization in terms of service delivery (Donina & Hasanedendic, 2018).

Institutional determinants, according to Sendra-Pons et al. (2022), refer to the characteristics and elements that shape the functioning and behaviour of institutions. They come from legal, governance initiatives, based on management capabilities, unofficial models and social consistency. The institutional determinants include institutional environment, resistance to change, relationships with other social factors, levels of homogeneity, and instrumentality of institutions. They usually provide the framework and rules for a stabilized organization, influencing performance and innovation. Institutional determinants also contribute to the development of interdisciplinary and knowledge production within universities (Tiron-Tudor et al., 2022). For public universities to remain competitive in the education market, there is a need to take into consideration institutional determinants such as organizational structure, organizational resources and organizational culture (Shisia et al., 2019). The study therefore sought to determine effect of institutional determinants on the performance of public universities in Kinshasa, DRC by looking

how organizational structure, organizational resources and organizational culture influence performance of public universities.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

The performance of any university attracts much interest among all stakeholders in the education sector and thus the key factors to eliminate poor performance should be reviewed (Mwamba, 2022). Nevertheless, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) suffers from an inefficient administrative system in its public universities, where individuals selected to carry out policies are appointed based on political affiliations rather than their qualifications and expertise (Menga-Mokombi, 2020). The structural and governance issues faced by public universities have also contributed to a decline in the quality of teaching and research offered by these institutions (Risasi & Sabiti, 2020; Yoatile et al., 2021; Paluku, 2020).

Despite enrolling many students in public universities in the DRC, statistics show that those who graduate are only 17%, which is a high dropout rate and this points to the inefficiency of the institutions (Enguta, 2020; Paluku, 2020; Mwamba, 2022). Research also shows that out of the 9,000 students who graduate yearly from the public universities, only less than 100 manage to get employment (Enguta, 2020). This has been attributed to the academic programs which do not expose the students to internship opportunities which are crucial for professional experience as the courses have not been reviewed to be more innovative and market driven (Balembe, 2020; Kabuya, 2022).

The reviewed studies were carried out in public institutions in DRC (Yoatile, et al., 2021; Vundu, 2022; Lofinda, 2019; Paluku, 2020; & Mwamba, 2022). According to the reviewed studies, Yoatile et al. (2021) looked at the performance of scientific staff; Vundu (2022) looked at the performance of pedagogical institutes in University of Kisangani). Thus, none of the studies looked how public universities perform in Kinshasa where most of the public universities are located. The present study sought to address this deficiency on performance of public universities in Kinshasa by looking at the dimensions of sustainability, efficiency, innovation, and customer satisfaction. Moreover, the examined research had investigated many factors that affect performance. The study conducted by Lofinda (2019) examined various aspects including time management, study methods, examination preparation, and teacher attitude. Paluku (2020) investigated on finance capital, human capital, social capital, and teaching-research activities. The present research therefore strived to sort this deficiency on the various factors effecting the performance of public universities; specifically focusing on institutional determinants.

1.2 Research Objectives

- i To investigate the effect of organizational structure on the performance of public universities in Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo.
- ii To determine the effect of organizational resources on the performance of public universities in Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo.
- iii To examine the effect of organizational culture on the performance of public universities in Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo.

1.3 Research Hypothesis

H₀₁: There is no statistically significant effect of institutional determinants on the performance of public universities in Kinshasa, DRC.

Sub-hypotheses

H_{01a}: There is no statistically significant effect of organizational structure on the performance of public universities in Kinshasa, DRC.

H_{01b}: There is no statistically significant effect of organizational resources on the performance of public universities in Kinshasa, DRC.

H_{01c}: There is no statistically significant effect of organizational culture on the performance of public universities in Kinshasa, DRC.

2.1 Theoretical Framework

2.1.1 Institutional Theory

The institutional theory has been conceptualized from research literature on institutional sociology (Meyer & Rowan, 1977; DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Scott, 1987). The institutional theory encompasses the stability and change of institutions. It helps in the understanding the pressure that institutions undergo to become more similar. This is because institutions work towards becoming easily acceptable and recognizable within their environment thus being legitimized. The theory postulates how through accidental and deliberate choices, institutions somehow mirror values, ideologies and norms of the field they are operating in (Saebo, 2017). This eventually leads to the institution meeting the expected characteristics in the environment thus receiving legitimacy and worthy in the society (Toma, et al., 2005).

According to the theory, institutional organizations use ambiguous technologies such as teaching to produce outputs which are new knowledge where efficiency and quality is difficult to determine (Morphew & Huisman, 2002). This leads the institutions to work towards having structures and activities which are identifiable both externally and internally. The theory shows that the environment in an institution can influence the development of formal structures. It shows that organizations usually adopt structures that are prevalent in their environment, for example the procedures, job titles and roles (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). The institutional environment legitimacy therefore helps the survival of organizations. According to the theory, the legitimacy that comes with the institutional environment can hinder the competitive advantage of the organization and also reduce its efficiency. Organizations usually counter this by decoupling their technical core from the legitimized structures. This ensures that they maintain confidence in their internal and external structures (Meyer & Rowan, 1977).

This theory was relevant to the study because public universities operate in an institutional environment in which the government and the university council determine in part the expectations for the university practices and behaviour. Public universities that exploited their institutional determinants such as organizational resources, management capabilities were able to come up with strategies to ensure they perform better. In addition, the public universities must conform to certain laid structures in the institutional environment in order to be considered legitimate. The theory was also relevant to the study because public universities were expected to operate within set guidelines that are viewed as legitimate within the education sector. Therefore, this study sought to find out how the institutional theory could inform the institutional determinants and the physical facilities

to enhance the relationship between factors and public universities performance. The theory was important in this study as it highlighted how public universities should consider and streamline the various institutional determinants such as their structure, culture, and resources, to improve their performance.

Many organizational difficulties, particularly those in the realm of higher education, may be better understood via the lens of institutional theory. The theory also provides a framework for understanding cultural understandings, shared expectations, and the processes involved in producing institutional change. Institutional theory also helps organizations increase their legitimacy by conforming to widely accepted practices, leading to acceptance and support from their environment. The theory also explains the adoption and the spread of formal organizational structure, such as written policies and standard practices (Amenta & Ramsey, 2009).

According to Mohammed (2017), the institutional theory is static in nature. Their effort to conceptualize the formal structure is wanting as it does not consider dimensions such as centralization, complexity and formalization. Further, the theory is criticizing for showing that institutional arrangements are dominated by particular groups and interests who can be challenged (Suddaby, 2010). The institutional theory is also criticized because it neglects broad patterns of social change.

This theory has been criticized because by being limited to operate in accordance with the institutional environment, it limits the discretion in choices that an institution can make. The external pressure also limits the management of institutions to conform to a limited range of decisions (Saebo, 2017). The institutional theory has also been criticized for assuming that organizations are passive. The theory also fails to address the strategic behaviour of institutions and the influence of strategies on the concepts of institutionalization (Scott, 2005).

2.2 Literature Review

2.2.1 Institutional Determinants and Performance

Ozgenel (2020) investigated the influence of institutional determinants on the performance of schools by specifically focusing on school climate, principal behaviour and teacher behaviour. The study adopted correlational survey design and the sample consisted of teachers. Data analysis was done using regression analysis and correlation analysis. The results showed that the administration plays an important role in the formation of school climate. The study also found that there was a positive relationship between institutional determinants and performance. In Thailand, Channuwong et al. (2022) evaluated the institutional determinants that affect universities performance by focusing on organizational policy, organizational leadership, organizational structure and organizational culture. The study was carried out in private universities and used correlation analysis and regression analysis. The findings indicated that there was a positive relationship between institutional determinants and the performance of universities. Work performance, organizational efficiency, and leadership to accomplish organizational objectives may all be enhanced by addressing institutional determinants, according to the research.

Using the concept of research productivity, Battol et al. (2018) investigated institutional determinants in Pakistan. Teachers at public universities participated in the survey research that formed the basis of the study, and t-tests were used to evaluate the obtained data. The results demonstrated that department chairs' expressions of gratitude and support had a favourable effect on faculty members' scholarly output. The study also found that extra administrative duties affect

research productivity. Similarly, Batool, et al. (2021) focused on the parameters of research procedure, job and compensation, assets and instructional material. The study adopted correlational research design where data was collected from academic staff. The research found that public universities' performance was positively correlated with institutional determinants.

Infrastructure, personnel, instructional materials, and usefulness were the main variables of Santos and Celis (2020) research in the Philippines. Data was gathered from marketing students at private universities and colleges using a descriptive research approach. According to the research, infrastructure and personnel have a moderate effect on students' academic achievement, but instructional materials and practicality have a little one. The research also found that the most important factor influencing the success of universities is lecturer's teaching method. Fehan and Aigbogun (2021) research in Syria looked at the concepts of good communication and leadership style. Structural equation modelling was used in the investigation. Institutional determinants and organizational performance were shown to be positively related, according to the findings.

Mwanthi (2018) examined institutional determinants in Kenyan organizations by analysing their structures, cultures, and systems. The research used a cross-sectional design and was conducted at ten different institutions, some of which were public and some private. The findings demonstrated a favourable correlation between institutional determinants and university performance. Additionally, the research found that universities perform better when their processes and procedures are aligned with the execution of their strategies. Leadership, growth and training, organizational culture, and structure were the four main concepts investigated by Ongwae et al. (2028) on university campuses in Kenya. Data was gathered from both academic and non-academic staff members through survey research methodology. The findings showed that public universities perform better when their leaders have a common vision, their workers have confidence and trust in them, and when leaders encourage staff to share what they know. Additionally, the research found that public university performance was positively correlated with institutional determinants.

Down his research on the relationship between institutional determinants and organizational performance, Wamuyu (2024) discussed on procurement method, organizational culture, institutional resources, and organizational resources. The research was conducted using a descriptive research approach, and regression analysis was used to examine the data. The results showed that organizational resources are effectively distributed and the recruitment of skills employees enhances organizational performance. Physical facility features and worker workload were the primary areas of concern for Adesola and Ekundago (2022) in Nigeria. Department chairs and other academic staff members provided data, which was then examined by correlation analysis. Public university performance is determined by institutional determinants, according to the research.

According to the empirical studies, public university performance is effected by a wide range of institutional determinants. Since no study discovered a negative correlation, it followed that these institutional determinants effect the performance of universities. Both public and private institutions had participated in the investigations, and researchers had used a variety of approaches. None of the studies reviewed existing literature as data was collected from teachers, non-academic staff and in some studies from students. Additionally, emerging nations had been the subjects of more research than industrialized ones.

2.2.1.1 Organizational Structure and Performance

Ellerbrock et al. (2018) studied middle school students in the United States and Australia, developed countries, to determine the effect of organizational structure on the performance of public universities. The study reviewed existing literature. The results showed that organizational structure of people, place, and time boost academic performance. Academic performance was positively correlated with organizational structure, according to the research.

Abdulrahman (2019) studied the relationship between organizational structure and performance at Nigeria's Yusuf Maitama Sule University, focusing on developing economies. Descriptive research methods, including regression and correlation analyses, were used in the study. Academic staff members provided the study's primary data. The results showed that academic performance is greatly affected by the kind of organizational barrier and hierarchical layer. The research also discovered that organizational structure was positively correlated with university performance. Similarly, Ogosi and Agbaeze (2018) carried out a study on organizational structure by reviewing existing literature. The findings noted that organizational structure in terms of branches and departments have a positive effect on performance as they enhance efficiency and collaboration.

Organizational structure and performance were investigated by Chizyuka and Daka (2021) in Zambia. The study used a qualitative research approach and was carried out in both public and private secondary schools. According to the research, while public schools were structured hierarchically, private schools were found to employ a team-based approach. Nyathi and Bhebhe (2019) looked on the correlation between school administration and student achievement in Swaziland's secondary schools. Principals and classroom instructors made up the study's sample population, and the researchers used a case study approach. Interviews and focus groups were used to gather data. The research proved that organizations with highly adaptable structures are better able to create an environment that is favourable to education.

Kintu and Waal (2021) investigated the effect of firm structure on productivity in Ugandan organizations. Data analysis in the research was done using regression analysis. The findings demonstrated a favourable correlation between organizational structure and performance. Furthermore, Mugizi et al. (2019) evaluated a private university's performance in relation to its organizational structure. Factor analysis and a cross-sectional research methodology were used in the study. High levels of formalization and centralization were associated with improved university performance, according to the data.

More research on the effect of university organizational structure on performance had been conducted in developing countries than in developed ones, according to the reviewed literature. The research also showed that hierarchical organizational structure were preferred by the majority of public universities. The studies had also used a variety of study designs, including descriptive and cross-sectional approaches.

2.2.1.2 Organizational Resources and Performance

Public university performance in the United States was studied by Colvard et al. (2018) in relation to organizational resources. The study examined existing literature. The findings showed that organizational resources address affordability, completion, attainment gap concerns, and learning which contributes to higher performance. In Uzbekistan, Zakhro (2020) investigated the link between organizational resources and public university performance by specifically looking at the construct of media resources. According to the results, universities may improve their performance

by incorporating media resources into the educational process, which can inspire the development of novel approaches to instruction.

Omondi and Koskei (2024) looked at classroom resources in Kenya to see how organizational resources affected performance. Public elementary schools served as the settings for this descriptive study. According to the findings, classroom resources have an effect on both educators and students. Academic performance is improved when class resources are well-managed. Furthermore, a research on organizational resources and public sector organizations was carried out by Ongeti and Machuki (2018). The research used a descriptive cross-sectional survey. The research proved that organization resource was positively correlated with organization success. Performance is enhanced by enhancing organizational resource integration.

The effect of organizational resources on the efficiency and effectiveness of public universities was investigated by Otiende et al. (2024). Regression analysis was used to examine the data, and the research used a mixed-methods approach. The findings demonstrated that public universities' performance was positively correlated with organizational resources. The research also found that universities perform better when their human, financial, and physical resources are effective. In Nigeria, Ofem et al. (2021) explored the effect of organizational resources and performance of public universities. The study adopted ex-post facto research design and data was collected from students and analysed using regression analysis. According to the results, academic performance was enhanced by organizational resources, which included investments in school infrastructure, resource allocation, and financial resource structure.

Using financial resources as a case study, Mukolo (2023) examined the effect of organizational resources on DRC's higher education institutions. There was a favourable correlation between organizational resources and the performance of higher education institutions. According to the report, if universities want to improve their performance, they need to rethink their educational funding process from the ground up.

The above literature reviewed found that public universities' success was highly dependent on a number of organizational resources, including physical, financial, human, and media resources. Research had also focused more on developing nations than developed ones. Public university performance was positively correlated with organizational resources, according to the research. This was established by analysing several study approaches, the majority of which included regression analysis.

2.2.1.3 Organizational Culture and Performance

Bamber (2019) examined the effect of company culture on academic institutions' performance in the UK. The majority of colleges adhere to a hierarchical culture, whereas a small number follow either a market-driven or clan-based model, according to the survey research that was conducted for this study. Volkova and Plakhotnik (2019) conducted a research at a Russian university that used English as its language of instruction. Academic and non-academic staff members were both surveyed. Market culture was prevalent, according to the data. Additionally, the research demonstrated that the chosen clan culture differed from the perceived market culture. Clan culture was shown to boost organizational performance and employee dedication, which is why it was implemented.

The effect of organizational culture on the performance of higher education institutions in Turkey was investigated by Ozsoy and Uslu (2019) using convenience sampling. Organizational culture

showed to be favourable to educational institutions, according to the research. Key factors in increasing the effectiveness of higher education institutions, include commitment, symbols, power distance, and communication connection dimensions. The research by Khan and Ahmed (2022) in Pakistan was carried out at academic libraries. University performance was positively correlated with corporate culture, according to the study's quantitative research approach.

Public universities in Kosovo were studied by Tahiraj and Krek (2022) to see how organizational culture affected their performance. Data was gathered from faculty members as part of the study's quantitative research approach. The findings demonstrated that the performance of the organization is significantly affected by the fact that the prevailing culture works against the key intended reforms. Cruz (2019) used a descriptive correlational research strategy in the Philippines. According to the research, school organizations are now favouring clan culture as their preferred culture. This is because clan culture has the power to effect employee behaviour and attitudes, leading to more loyalty and dedication on the job and ultimately better performance.

Indiya et al. (2018) looked at how corporate culture affected public universities in Kenya. Data was gathered from management professionals at eleven public institutions, and the study used a correlation research methodology. Public university performance was positively correlated with organizational culture, according to the research. The study also found that performance may be boost by enhancing and sustaining culture-based quality management systems.

From the reviewed empirical studies, university campuses tend to favour clan cultures. Research had also shown a dearth of research examining the relationship between organizational culture and the performance of public colleges in Africa. Although the studies analysed used a variety of methods, they all reached the same conclusion: public colleges benefit from a positive organisational culture.

2.3 Conceptual Framework

The study was guided by the following conceptual framework.

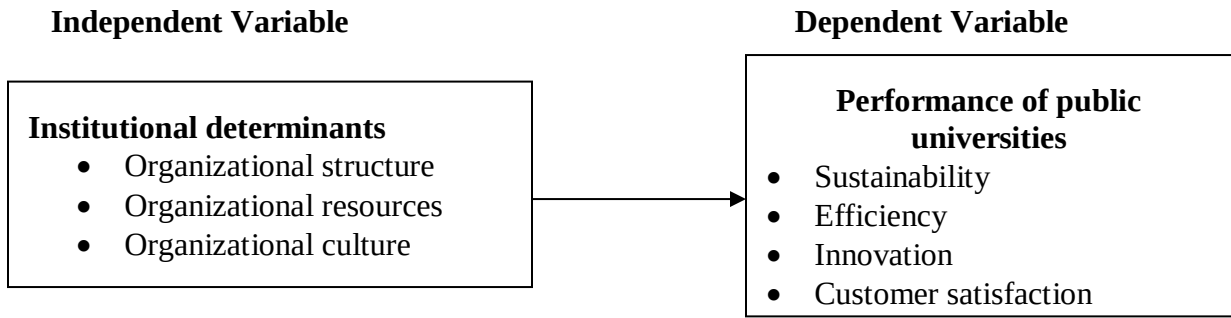


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

According to the conceptual framework, institutional determinants under the parameters of organizational structure, organizational resources, and organizational culture affect the performance of public universities under the dimensions of sustainability, efficiency, innovation, and customer satisfaction.

3.0 Methodology

A research philosophy lays forth the ground rules for doing research in accordance with preconceived notions about what constitutes knowledge and the nature of reality (Ramsberg,

2018). The study adopted the positivism paradigm which adheres to the view that only factual knowledge gained through observation, including measurement, is trustworthy. In addition, descriptive research design and the explanatory cross-sectional research design were used. Descriptive research design enabled the study to get precise answers to who, what, when, where, and how questions related to a given topic (Pawar, 2020). Information about the factors and public universities performance in Kinshasa, DRC was gathered using the descriptive research design. On the other hand, the explanatory cross-sectional research design enabled the study to collect data from the public universities at a specific point in time to explain the how and why behind the institutional determinants influencing performance.

Board of directors of university, university council, faculty council, and departmental council members composed the target population of this research. The unit of observation comprised of 1059 board of directors, university council, faculty council, and departmental council members, while the three public universities in Kinshasa, DRC, served as units of analysis. This study used Yamane formula to determine the sample size of 290 respondents. Due to the hierarchical nature of the public universities included in this study, stratified random sampling was used. These included board of directors, university council, faculty council and departmental council. Researchers used simple random selection to choose participants from each of the study's strata, which represented the hierarchy of the respondents. This study used a structured questionnaire to collect data from the respondents. Analysis of data gathered was realized through the use of the Software Package for Social Science (SPSS Version 27.0). Descriptive statistics were produced in terms of percentages, means and standard deviations and presented in terms of graphs, charts and tables while for the inferential statistics, structural equation modelling (SEM) was used to test the relationship among the variables. Thereafter, simple tabulation and arrangement of responses in frequency tables was utilized to present the research findings while different charts were also used to show distributions.

4.0 Findings and Discussion

4.1 Descriptive Statistics

Effect of Institutional determinants on Performance of Public Universities

The researcher used mean scores and standard deviation to rank the items under each variable. According to Oxford (1990), mean scores fall into three categories: low, medium and high as a likelihood of a particular response or event. The ranges for high incidence are 3.5 - 5.0, medium incidence range is 2.5 - 3.4 and low incidence range is 1.0 - 2.4. The results for the descriptive results are presented in the following subsection.

The objective of this study was to determine the effect of institutional determinants on the performance of public universities in Kinshasa, DRC. The institutional determinants variable was measured using items that were categorized into organizational structure, organizational resources and organizational culture. The results on the extent to which the respondents agreed/disagreed with the statements are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of Institutional Determinants

Statement	Mean	Std. Deviation
The organizational structure promotes effective communication in the university	3.21	1.448
The organizational structure ensures there is flow of information in different departments	3.18	1.357
The organizational structure ensures all work processes are efficiently functioning	3.08	1.449
the organizational structure ensures that there is no overlapping of functions	3.10	1.439
The organizational structure boosts performance	3.10	1.409
The university budgets for the available financial resources	3.09	1.462
The university has recruited adequate human resources to manage all operations	2.71	1.388
The university has adequate physical resources to boost learning outcomes	2.79	1.421
The university has acquired technological resources to enhance efficiency of operations	2.77	1.377
The organizational resources influence performance	3.00	1.448
The university has shared assumptions known by all stakeholders	2.76	1.495
The university has a motto that is known by all stakeholders	2.90	1.507
The university has core values that are known by all stakeholders	2.98	1.482
The university has shared beliefs that are known by all stakeholders	2.84	1.447
The organizational culture has influenced the work behavior of employees	3.08	1.414
Total	2.97	1.436

Table 1 presents the respondents’ perceptions regarding institutional determinants in public universities in Kinshasa. An analysis of the institutional determinants highlights a critical point of systemic divergence. While the composite mean of 2.97 suggests a moderate or near-neutral level of agreement, the standard deviation (SD = 1.436) indicates considerable variation in respondents’ perceptions of institutional determinants. This variation suggests that respondents did not perceive institutional structures, resources, and culture uniformly across the universities. For instance, certain campuses, departments, or faculties may be well-resourced and structurally sound, while others face moderate institutional deficits. This stark internal variance implies that institutional determinants do not affect the university performance uniformly, pointing to pockets of institutional strength alongside moderate systemic bottlenecks.

Further, the findings indicate a moderate level of agreement among respondents that the organizational structure supports internal coordination, information flow, and the efficient functioning of work processes. This is evidenced by the moderate mean scores recorded for the statements that structure promotes effective communication (M = 3.21, SD = 1.448), facilitates the

flow of information across different departments ($M = 3.18$, $SD = 1.357$), and ensures the efficient functioning of all work processes ($M = 3.08$, $SD = 1.449$). Although these mean scores indicate moderate agreement, the relatively high standard deviations imply considerable variation in respondents' views, suggesting that operational clarity and communication efficiency are not experienced uniformly across all departments or universities. The findings further reveal structural weaknesses in optimizing institutional roles and maximizing productivity. This is demonstrated by the moderate and tightly aligned mean scores for the statements that the structure ensures functions do not overlap ($M = 3.10$, $SD = 1.439$) and directly boosts organizational performance ($M = 3.10$, $SD = 1.409$). Despite these moderate averages, the high standard deviations indicate substantial disagreement among respondents. This divergence implies that role duplication and fragmentation may be significant in specific sectors of the universities, which consequently hinders overall performance. These findings imply that while the organizational structure provides a basic framework for communication and work processes, it has not been sufficiently optimized to eliminate departmental silos or role ambiguity. Consequently, the potential for public universities in Kinshasa to achieve high operational efficiency and performance remains constrained due to inconsistent information flow, overlapping functions, and structural bottlenecks.

The findings are corroborated by those of Ellerbrock et al. (2018) who showed that organizational structure of people, place, and time boost academic performance. Another study by Abdulrahman (2019) indicated that the nature of hierarchical layer and organizational boundary significantly influence academic performance. The results also conform with those of Nyathi and Bhebhe (2019) which showed that there are benefits of high flexible organizational structure which foster conditions that are more conducive to teaching and learning. Therefore, although the organizational structure was found to support effective communication, functionality of work processes, and the minimization of overlapping functions, the findings suggest that further structural improvements are needed to enhance university performance.

Under organizational resources, the analysis suggests that critical financial, human, physical, and technological resources have been moderately institutionalized or deployed. This neutrality is evidenced by the mean scores recorded for the statements that a sufficient number of employees have been recruited to effectively manage operations ($M = 2.71$, $SD = 1.388$), that adequate physical resources are available to boost learning outcomes ($M = 2.79$, $SD = 1.421$), and that the acquisition of technological resources has enhanced institutional efficiency ($M = 2.77$, $SD = 1.377$). Although these moderate mean scores reflect a neutral satisfaction, the relatively high standard deviations reveal substantial variation in the respondents' views. This divergence implies that resource deficits are not felt equally, suggesting an inequitable or fragmented distribution of organizational assets across the universities. The findings further reveal that while the strategic importance of resources is recognized, execution gaps persist at the administrative level. This is demonstrated by the moderate mean scores for the statements that available financial resources are adequately budgeted for ($M = 3.09$, $SD = 1.462$) and that organizational resources highly influence performance ($M = 3.00$, $SD = 1.448$). However, the high standard deviations associated with these scores point to considerable variance in opinions, indicating systemic inconsistencies and localized gaps in the budgeting process that leave specific departments vulnerable. Consequently, these findings imply that while organizational resources are fundamentally understood to drive institutional operations and learning outcomes, public universities remain moderately underfunded and under-equipped. Without sufficient manpower, robust physical assets, and up-to-date technological infrastructure, these institutions cannot fully leverage their resource capacity to optimize academic and administrative performance.

This analysis is supported by those of Colvard et al. (2018) which found that organizational resources address affordability, completion, attainment gap concerns, and learning which contributes to higher performance. Zakhro (2020) also established that media resources in education process can lead to creation of new innovative ways of teaching and learning practices which boost universities performance. Omondi and Koskei (2024) also found that well managed class resources enhance academic performance while Ongeti and Machuki (2018) established that strengthening organizational resources integration boosts performance. According to Otiende et al. (2024) effective human, financial and physical resources lead to improved universities performance. The results are also in line with those of Ofem et al. (2021) which indicated that organizational resources in terms of investment in school facilities, allocation of resources and structure of financial resources improved academic performance. As such, the limitation of organizational resources within public university may constrain the efficiency of operations as well as the learning outcomes expected from the learners.

Regarding organizational culture, the analysis indicates that the adoption of an institutional culture tailored to improving performance remains at a moderate and inconsistent level. This challenge is evidenced by the low-to-moderate mean scores recorded for stakeholders' awareness of foundational cultural markers, with respondents moderately disagreeing that stakeholders possess a strong knowledge of the university's shared assumptions ($M = 2.76$, $SD = 1.495$), institutional motto ($M = 2.90$, $SD = 1.507$), core values ($M = 2.98$, $SD = 1.447$), and shared values ($M = 2.84$, $SD = 1.447$). Furthermore, the high standard deviations associated with these statements indicate significant polarization in opinions among the respondents. This widespread divergence suggests a noticeable lack of cultural alignment, implying that core values and institutional philosophies are not communicated or internalized uniformly by all stakeholders across the various institutions. In addition to these alignment gaps, the findings reveal a moderate acknowledgment of culture as a driver of employee action. This is demonstrated by the moderate mean score for the statement that organizational culture directly influences the work behavior of employees ($M = 3.08$, $SD = 1.414$). However, the relatively high standard deviation serves as a clear illustration that perceptions regarding this behavioral influence differ considerably among the respondents. Consequently, these findings imply that while there is an underlying recognition of culture's potential to shape employee behavior, public universities have failed to deeply embed and standardize their identity systems. Without a cohesive, well-communicated framework of shared assumptions and values, the organizational culture cannot effectively serve as a unified strategic tool to optimize employee behavior and enhance institutional performance.

The analysis implies that although public universities recognize the effect organizational culture, the mechanisms used to entrench it among all the stakeholders are only moderately implemented. This may limit the ability of the universities to influence the work behaviour of the employees which is crucial in boosting organizational performance. The findings are in tandem with those of Ozsoy and Uslu (2019) noted that commitment, symbols, power distance and communication relationship dimensions are key in improving the performance of higher education institutions. The results are also supported by those of Cruz (2019) who found that organization culture influences work behaviour, attitudes of employees, increasing their loyalty and commitment thus increased performance. In addition, Indiya et al. (2018) also noted that having positive believes can enhance performance through improving and maintaining quality management systems basing on the existing culture.

4.2 Hypothesis Testing

4.2.1 Institutional determinants and Performance

The main hypothesis of the study was that “there is no statistically significant effect of institutional determinants on the performance of public universities in Kinshasa, DRC”. Institutional determinants were subdivided into organizational structure, organizational resources and organizational culture while performance was subdivided into sustainability, efficiency, innovation and customer satisfaction. Table 2 showed structural path coefficients.

Table 2: Structural Path Coefficients for Institutional determinants and Performance

			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P
Performance	<---	OS	1.031	.056	18.446	***
Performance	<---	ORS	.954	.057	16.863	***
Performance	<---	OC	1.029	.056	18.322	***

The findings indicated that organizational structure (OS) had a positive and significant influence on the performance of public universities. The path coefficient for organizational structure was 1.031, with a standard error (S.E.) of 0.056, and a critical ratio (C.R.) of 18.446, which was significant at $p < 0.001$. This implied that the hypothesis related to organizational structure was rejected. The coefficient of 1.031 indicated that for every unit increase in organizational structure, the performance of public universities increases by 1.031. This result highlighted that organizational structured played a major role in enhancing the performance of public universities.

Previous studies such as those of Ellerbrock et al. (2018), Abdulrahaman (2019), Ogosi and Agbaeze (2018), Kintu and Waal (2021) and Mugizi et al. (2019) confirmed these findings as they noted that there was a positive relationship between organizational structure and academic performance. Therefore, the implementation of either formalized or centralized organizational structure may contribute to improved organizational performance.

Similarly, organizational resources (ORS) were found to have a strong positive effect on performance, with a coefficient estimate of 0.954, an S.E. of 0.057, and a C.R. of 16.863, significant at $p < 0.001$. This suggested that the hypothesis related to organizational resources was rejected. The coefficient of 0.954 showed that a unit increase in organizational resources contributes to a 0.954 units increase in the performance of public universities performance.

The findings mirror those of Omondi and Koskei (2024), Ongeti and Machuki (2018), Otiende et al. (2024) and Mukolo (2023) who noted that organizational resources and the performance of higher education institutions had a significant positive relationship. This is an indication that financial resources, human resources, physical resources and technological resources affect both students and teachers leading to better institutional outcomes.

Moreover, organizational culture (OC) exhibited a significant effect on performance, with a coefficient estimate of 1.029, an S.E. of 0.056, and a C.R. of 18.322, significant at $p < 0.001$. This implied that the hypothesis concerning organizational culture was rejected. Therefore, the coefficient of 1.029 showed that a unit increase in organizational culture contributes to a 1.029 units increase in the performance of public universities.

The positive relationship between organizational culture and the performance of universities is supported by Ozsoy and Uslu (2019), Khan and Ahmed (2022), Indiya et al. (2018) which

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confirmed that organizational culture predicts academic performance. As such, organizational culture aspects such as shared values, assumptions and motto contribute significantly to the performance of universities.

The results demonstrated that all three dimensions of institutional determinants organizational structure, organizational resources and organizational culture positively and significantly influence the performance of public universities in Kinshasa. These findings highlighted the critical role institutional determinants played in boosting the performance of public universities. Therefore, the main hypothesis, H_{01} , which stated that there is no statistically significant effect of institutional determinants on the performance of public universities in Kinshasa, DRC, was rejected

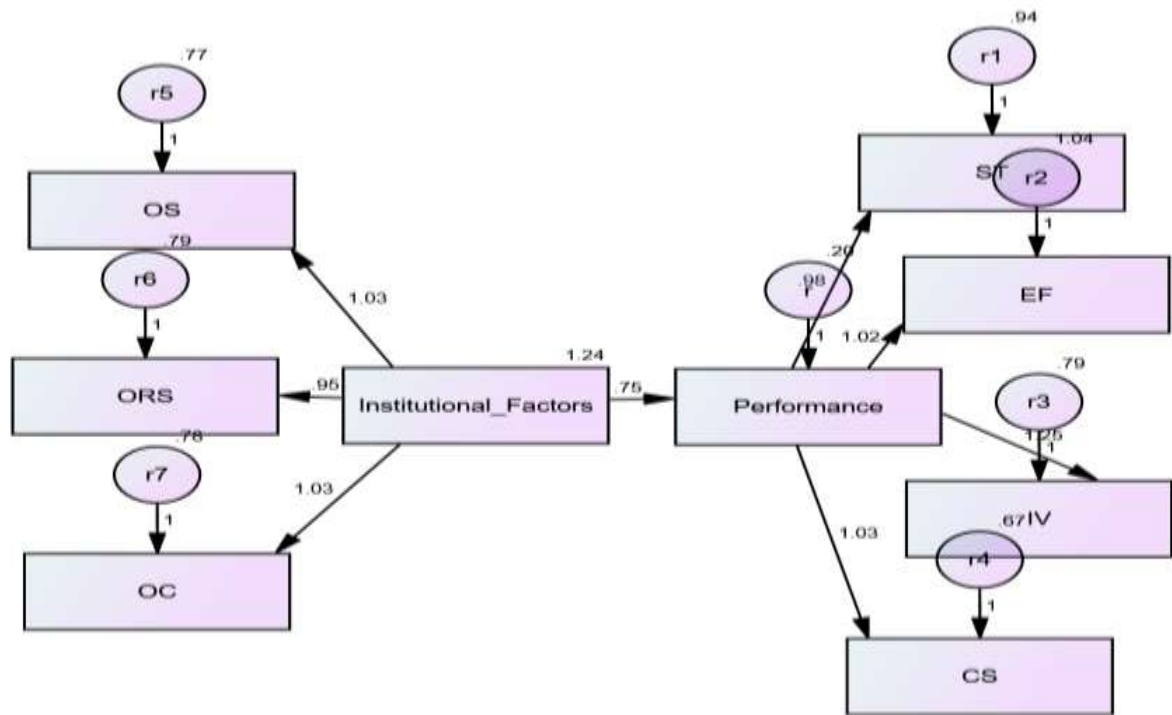


Figure 2: SEM on Institutional determinants and Performance

Figure 2 presents the Structural Equation Model (SEM) examining the influence of institutional determinants on the performance of public universities in Kinshasa, DRC. The findings indicate that institutional determinants had a strong positive effect on performance. This is evidenced by the path coefficient of 0.75 between institutional determinants and performance, suggesting that improvements in institution-related factors were associated with enhanced institutional performance. The high coefficient demonstrates that institutional determinants are important determinants of performance in public universities.

The results further show that both organizational structure and organizational culture were the strongest indicators of institutional determinants, with factor loadings of 1.03, followed by organizational resources (0.95). These findings imply that both organizational structure and organizational culture contribute most significantly to the formation of the institutional determinants construct. The relatively high loadings for all three indicators indicate that they adequately represent the latent construct of institutional determinants. This suggests that universities that have adopted an organizational structure, instilled an organizational culture and

effectively utilized their organizational resources are likely to experience improved institutional outcomes.

The findings also reveal that performance was effectively measured through sustainability, efficiency, innovation, and customer satisfaction. Among these dimensions, customer satisfaction exhibited the highest factor loading (1.03), followed by efficiency (1.02), sustainability (1.00), and innovation (0.67). Customer satisfaction and efficiency were therefore the most outstanding constructs of performance within the public universities, with innovation having the least contribution. These findings imply that improvements in organizational structure, organizational resources and organizational culture are likely to enhance university performance through increased sustainability, operational efficiency, innovation, and customer satisfaction. The strong relationship between institutional determinants and performance further demonstrates the importance of investing in institutional development as a strategic approach to improving the effectiveness and competitiveness of public universities in Kinshasa, DRC.

The regression model therefore became;

Performance = 1.031organizational structure + 0.954 organizational resources + 1.029 organizational culture

The Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) results indicate that the measurement model for institutional determinants achieved an acceptable fit to the observed data. This is evidenced by the Goodness-of-Fit Index (GFI) of 0.940, which exceeds the recommended threshold of 0.90, and the Root Mean Square Residual (RMR) of 0.000, which indicates minimal discrepancy between the observed and estimated covariance matrices. These results suggest that the measurement model adequately represents the underlying structure of institutional determinants. The factor loadings further demonstrate that organizational structure, organizational resources and organizational culture are appropriate indicators of the institutional determinants construct. Specifically, organizational structure and organizational culture both recorded the highest factor loading ($\lambda = 1.03$), and organizational resources ($\lambda = 0.95$). Since all factor loadings exceeded the recommended threshold of 0.50, the indicators exhibited satisfactory convergent validity and adequately measured the latent construct.

The findings further suggest that both organizational structure and organizational culture contribute most strongly to the measurement of institutional determinants, followed by organizational resources. The relatively high factor loadings indicate that the indicators share a substantial proportion of variance with the underlying construct and therefore provide reliable measures of institutional determinants. This confirms that the selected dimensions adequately capture the concept of institutional determinants within public universities in Kinshasa, DRC. Based on the model fit statistics and factor loadings, the measurement model for institutional determinants was deemed satisfactory and retained for subsequent structural analysis. The results therefore provide evidence that organizational structure, organizational resources and organizational culture are valid and reliable indicators for measuring institutional determinants in the context of public university performance.

The RMSEA value of .074, which is less than 0.08, suggested that the model has a close approximation to the data, indicating a good fit. The 90% confidence interval values (.013 and .074, respectively) further confirmed the precision of the RMSEA estimate, while the PCLOSE value of .075 supported the hypothesis of close fit. The findings concur with those of Ozgenel (2020), Channuwong et al. (2022), Batool, et al. (2021) who found that there was a positive

relationship between institutional determinants and performance. This is an affirmation that institutional determinants such as organizational structure, organizational resources and organizational culture greatly influence the efficiency, innovation, sustainability and customer service in institutions of higher learning. As the findings revealed that organizational structure, organization resources and organizational culture had strong positive and statistically significant effect on performance. Therefore, the main hypothesis “There is no statistical effect of institutional determinants on performance of public universities in Kinshasa, DRC” was rejected

5.0 Conclusion

The research concluded that public university performance is greatly affected by institutional issues. The research also concluded that organizational structure, resources, and culture had a favourable and substantial effect on the performance of public institutions. This evidence suggests that the organizational structures of Kinshasa's public universities are well-suited to carrying out their many missions. Because of this, there was less overlapping of roles, better communication, and more efficient work processes. The research concluded that public universities in Kinshasa had a moderate level of success in allocating available finances, hiring enough staff, and acquiring physical and technological resources. The research further concluded that when it came to corporate culture, stakeholders' understanding of common assumptions, fundamental values, beliefs, and motto had a moderate effect on work behaviour.

6.0 Recommendations

University management should regularly review and optimize the organizational structure to ensure it remains responsive to the evolving demands of higher education. Clear reporting relationships, streamlined decision-making processes, and well-defined responsibilities should be maintained to minimize bureaucratic delays, improve coordination, and enhance institutional responsiveness. A more agile organizational structure will enable universities to adapt quickly to emerging academic and administrative challenges. Rather than focusing solely on increasing resources, university management should maximize the efficient utilization of existing financial, human, technological, and physical resources. Modern resource planning systems, transparent budgeting processes, and periodic resource utilization audits should be introduced to ensure that available resources generate the greatest possible value and contribute directly to institutional performance.

Additionally, university managers should diversify institutional revenue sources by strengthening partnerships with industry, alumni, research organizations, and international collaborators. Encouraging income-generating activities, research commercialization, consultancy services, and competitive grant acquisition can reduce dependence on traditional funding sources while improving the university's financial sustainability and operational flexibility. Management should intentionally cultivate an organizational culture characterized by professionalism, integrity, accountability, collaboration, innovation, and continuous improvement. Institutional values should not only be communicated but also demonstrated through leadership behaviours, daily management practices, and employee recognition systems. A strong organizational culture creates consistency in employee behaviour and strengthens institutional identity.

Furthermore, Managers should reinforce employees' understanding of the university's mission, vision, core values, and strategic priorities through leadership communication, staff orientation programs, institutional forums, and regular engagement activities. When employees clearly understand and embrace the institution's shared purpose, they are more likely to demonstrate

commitment, teamwork, and consistent professional behaviour. Institutional strengthening should become a core component of university strategic planning. Strategic plans should provide clear directions for improving organizational structure, optimizing resource utilization, strengthening institutional culture, and modernizing administrative systems. Universities should align financial planning, infrastructure development, digital transformation, and human resource deployment with their long-term strategic priorities to ensure that institutional resources are managed efficiently and contribute directly to improved organizational performance.

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