Influence of Organizational Motivation to Innovate on Innovation in Laikipia County Government, Kenya

Rosemary N Kibui, David Magu, Susan Ngure

Dedan Kimathi University of Technology, School of Business Management and Economics, Department of Business Management.
Email: rozekibui@gmail.com, magudavie@gmail.com, sngure37@gmail.com

Abstract
Public sector organizations have increasingly turned to innovation in order to deliver value to citizens amid increasing budgetary pressures. Research has shown that there are specific internal factors that influence the innovative capability of an organization. This study aimed to determine the influence of Organizational Motivation to Innovate (OMI) on Innovation in the County Government of Laikipia, Kenya. The study was guided by the Componential Theory of Organizational Creativity and Innovation. A descriptive research design was used to explore the relationships between the variables. The target population was 1,521 employees of the County Government of Laikipia, from which a sample of 314 was selected. Descriptive and inferential statistics were generated with SPSS. Results revealed that Organizational Motivation to Innovate had a positive correlation with Innovation, and that the relationship was statistically significant. Organizational Motivation to Innovate could explain 52% of the variance in the dependent variable, Innovation. Practices such as incorporating innovation in the organization's vision, encouragement of idea generation, recognition of innovators, and allowing employees operational autonomy can improve the innovative capability of public sector organizations.
Keywords: Public Sector Innovation, County Governments Kenya, Organizational Motivation To Innovate, Kenyan Public Sector, Organizational Vision.

Introduction
An organization can be said to have innovated if it introduces a product or process that is new or improved and that differs from its existing products and processes, and avails it to users (OECD & Eurostat, 2018). While the concept of innovation has not traditionally been linked to the public sector, Setnikar and Petkovsek (2013) point out that this has been changing over the past two decades. Increased global uncertainty and citizen demands, changing demographics and austerity measures have all combined to push public organizations to seek out innovative solutions to pressing social problems. In Kenya, county governments were

created through its 2010 Constitution (Kenya Law Reports, 2010), where the Executive and the Legislature arms of government were devolved into 47 political and administrative units. Ngigi and Busolo (2019) note that the devolved system of government reflected a desire by Kenyans to bring public services closer and enhance their self-governance. Counties have however not been able to innovatively tackle their resource challenges, which has often affected their ability to deliver a higher standard of living for their residents. Waribu (2021) conducted a study to determine the extent to which counties were employing innovation in the implementation of their development plans. Findings indicated that while most counties had embraced ICT tools to improve service delivery, they lacked schemes to motivate employees to innovate. Majority of the respondents also felt that the counties lacked a cohesive innovation strategy.

Laikipia County has shown exception however, having had a significant number of well documented innovations. The County would be the first since the advent of devolution to finance its projects through a private infrastructure bond (Kweyu, 2021). Laikipia has demonstrated a steady increase in tax revenue every year, which it has attributed to technology innovation in revenue collection. In 2021, the County received recognition for its innovative model of supporting SMEs from the Ministry of Industrialization, Trade and Enterprise Development, while over thirty five different county governments visited Laikipia to benchmark and learn from the initiatives it has pioneered in various sectors (County Government of Laikipia, 2021c).

Statement of the Problem

Kenya's Vision 2030 is cognizant of the importance of innovation in the achievement of its ambitious development plans. To support innovation in local governments, the national government has launched various policy frameworks to guide the management of innovation at the county level. However, most counties appear to have adopted a business as usual approach in their operations. Studies indicate that county employees felt that their organizations had not taken deliberate steps to encourage innovation, or reduce barriers to innovation. Laikipia County has been exceptional in this regard, with several well documented innovative practices being implemented that have improved its fiscal health. While the innovative approach adopted by Laikipia is documented, the factors influencing innovation in the County are not well articulated. Related studies have been based on local governments outside Kenya, while local studies have focused on non-government public bodies such as parastatals. This study aimed to bridge this research gap by investigating how Organizational Motivation to Innovate influences Innovation in Laikipia County Government, Kenya.

Literature Review
Theoretical Literature Review

The study was guided by the Componential Theory of Organizational Creativity and Innovation, first proposed by Theresa M. Amabile in 1988. This theory posits that there are three main elements of an organization that determine its capacity to be innovative; organizational motivation to innovate, resources, and management practices. These elements influence individual or team creativity, which leads to organizational innovation Amabile (1988). OMI has two elements; the fundamental inclination of the organization towards innovation, and its top-down supports for innovation. According to Amabile (1997), an organization with an inclination towards innovation would demonstrate that innovation is generally valued and risk taking is encouraged. Additionally, innovation is seen as part of the

vision of the organization, and this vision is clearly communicated to staff. Supports for innovation include an encouragement to come up with new ideas, fair evaluation, recognition and reward of innovative ideas, and a tolerance for failure. These supports can be found throughout the organization and originate from the highest levels of management. An environment supportive of innovation also lacks elements that impede creativity such as negative criticism of new ideas, strict managerial controls and excess formality in the organizational structure.

Empirical Literature Review

Wang and Tsai (2014) conducted a longitudinal survey of firms in the service industry in Taiwan. The study was based on the componential theory of organizational innovation and creativity. The measures for OMI included the degree to which the vision of the organization was aligned with innovation, whether employees were encouraged to innovatively solve problems, if they were recognised and rewarded for creative work, and how new ideas were received in the organization. The study findings indicated a significant positive direct effect of OMI on innovation. Dedahanov et al (2017) surveyed functional level managers of Korean manufacturing firms to investigate how the characteristics of their organizational structure affected innovative behaviour in the firm. The study found that in organizations whose structures did not allow employees decision making powers over their work, employees were less likely to display innovative behaviour. When employees felt like they had little or no influence over how to do their work, they were reluctant to suggest or try out new ideas. Wipulanusat et al (2018) conducted a study involving civil servants in the Australian public service. Among the hypothesis under testing was that culture for innovation has a positive impact on innovation in the workplace. Culture for innovation was measured using aspects such as the degree to which innovation was prioritised in the organization and encouragement of employees to innovate. Findings indicated a positive relationship between innovation culture practices and innovation in the organization. Respondents felt that they were able to produce creative work when their organizations prioritized development of new ideas and managers actively encouraged innovation. To assess innovation in the Kenyan public sector, Agolla and Van Lill (2017) conducted research in two Rural Development Authorities (RDAs). These RDAs are parastatals under the Ministry of Regional Development Authorities. Focused group discussions with middle level managers in these organizations revealed that while they understood the concept of innovation, risk aversion of top management as well as a lack of capacity for change management acted as barriers to innovation in these organizations. A lack of reward or recognition for innovators and rigid policies that placed emphasis on maintaining of the status quo were also identified by the managers as barriers to innovation.

Conceptual Framework

Grant et al (2014) define a conceptual framework as a logical structure that provides a visual display of the interrelationships between the main concepts under study. The conceptual framework is a representation of how the researcher intends to explore the research problem in an integrated way. Figure 1 below depicts the conceptual framework of this study.
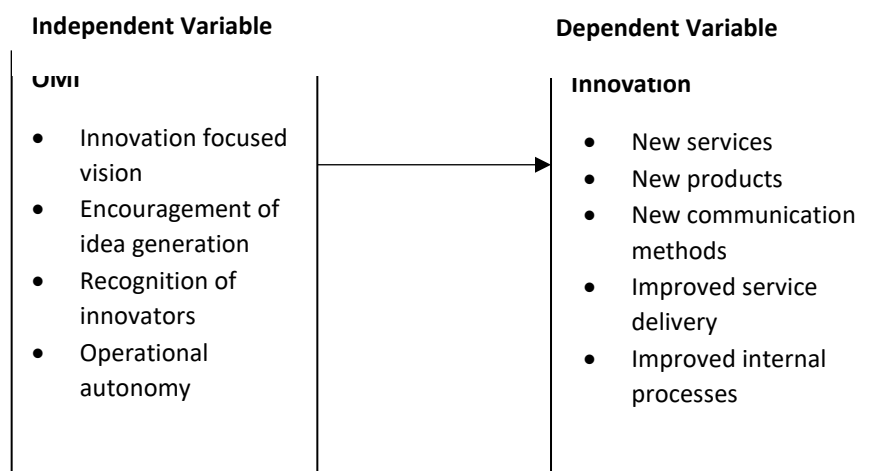
Independent Variable

Dependent Variable

OMI

- Innovation focused vision
- Encouragement of idea generation
- Recognition of innovators
- Operational autonomy

Innovation

- New services
- New products
- New communication methods
- Improved service delivery
- Improved internal processes

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Methodology

This study adopted a descriptive research design. The purpose of a descriptive research design is to describe phenomena as it occurs in nature (Siedlecki, 2020). The choice of this research design was informed by the fact that the study described how a specific organizational factor influenced innovation. The study did not seek to manipulate any variables but to present how the phenomena are found in nature, and interactions between the variables in the target population. The target population for the study was 1,521 permanent and contractual employees of Laikipia County Government. The staff were grouped into two categories depending on their level of seniority in the organization. The first category was senior management, consisting of the county governor, deputy governor, members of the chief executive committee, chief officers, directors and all other county level officers. The second was front line staff, referring to non-managerial staff in the eight county departments. A sample of 314 respondents was selected from the population. Data was collected using an online self-administered questionnaire that used close ended 5 point Likert Scale questions. To evaluate its reliability and validity, the questionnaire was pilot tested on 40 employees of Nyeri County Government. Cronbach's Alpha scores were computed using the data obtained. The results as presented in Table 1 show that all the variables had Alpha coefficients greater than 0.7, an indication that the data collection tool was adequate in measuring the effects of Motivation to Innovate on Innovation.

Table 1
Cronbach's Alpha Scores for the Study Variables

Variable	No. of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Innovation	5	0.975
Motivation to Innovate	16	0.989

The collected data was analysed using SPSS. Descriptive statistics were generated to display the characteristics of the variables. Various diagnostic tests of linear regression were carried

out to verify if the data met the assumptions of linear regression. Inferential analysis was then performed including model fitness, ANOVA, and bivariate regression.

Results
Descriptive Analysis Results for Innovation
To determine the level of innovation in Laikipia County Government, several statements describing various indicators of innovation were presented. The respondents were asked to indicate their views on whether the County had innovated in these areas in the past five years. The responses were in form of a Likert Scale, where a response of 1 indicated that they strongly disagreed, and a response of 5 that they strongly agreed.

Table 2
Descriptive Analysis Results for Innovation

	SD %	D %	U %	A %	SA %	Mean	SD
New products	12.1	21.0	7.3	25.2	29.3	3.41	1.440
New services	13.4	22.8	15.1	24.5	24.2	3.23	1.389
New communication methods	18.5	15.8	12.8	20.5	32.6	3.33	1.517
Improved service delivery methods	15.4	20.5	9.1	19.8	35.2	3.39	1.512
Improved internal processes	28.5	19.5	15.4	20.5	16.1	2.76	1.461
Overall						**3.22**	**1.464**

As presented in Table 2, most employees agreed that the County had introduced innovation, as evidenced by the response means of above three for all except one of the innovation indicators. This finding is consistent with the literature on the high level of innovation in Laikipia County such as Kweyu (2021); Njuguna (2021), and showed that the employees were aware of the various innovative initiatives being undertaken by the organization.

Additionally, the highest number of respondents (35.2%) strongly agreed that the County had introduced improved methods of service delivery, an indicator that the awareness of innovation amongst county employees was strongest with regards to this indicator. This finding concurs with that of Frishammar et al (2019), who reported that the type of innovation that tends to be best known amongst employees is the one that presents immediate evidence. People can easily recognize a product or service that did not exist before, especially if it changes their daily routines. Service delivery in Laikipia County government would be more likely to provide this immediate evidence and change routines because it is the core mandate of the organization.

The highest number of respondents (28.5%) strongly disagreed that the County had introduced improved internal processes, a finding which is supported in literature. According to Naschold (2017), changes to internal processes of public sector organizations has and continues to be a slow process due to the bureaucratic nature of these bodies, and the level of oversight that many are subjected to. It is therefore expected that innovation in internal

processes is likely to lag the other innovation indicators, which may be easier to implement, and whose effects may be felt more immediately.

Descriptive Analysis Results for OMI
OMI was operationalized through four parameters. These were the existence of an innovation oriented organizational vision, encouragement to generate new ideas, recognition of innovators, and the degree of freedom or operational autonomy that employees were allowed in the performance of their duties. Respondents were asked to indicate the degree to which they agreed with several statements regarding the influence of each of the four parameters on the various types of innovation in Laikipia County Government. The responses were in form of a Likert Scale where 1 indicated strongly disagree and 5 indicated strongly agree.

Table 3
Descriptive Analysis Results for OMI

NP- Products	New	NCM- communication methods	New	ISDM- service methods	Improved delivery	IIP- Improved internal processes	

	SD %	D %	U %	A %	SA %	Mean	SD
An innovation-oriented vision has positively influenced the development of:							
NP	21.8	12.1	17.8	25.5	22.8	3.15	1.464
NCM	28.9	12.8	20.8	23.8	13.8	2.81	1.429
ISDM	14.1	26.2	7.0	23.2	29.5	3.28	1.472
IIP	19.8	27.2	14.8	19.1	19.1	2.91	1.421
Overall						**3.03**	**1.447**
Encouragement to generate new ideas has supported development of:							
NP	11.7	15.4	8.7	32.2	31.9	3.57	1.379
NCM	22.8	29.9	11.4	17.1	18.8	2.79	1.448
ISDM	16.4	19.8	10.1	18.1	35.6	3.37	1.528
IIP	27.5	18.1	10.1	29.9	14.4	2.86	1.464
Overall						**3.15**	**1.455**
Recognition of innovators has positively influenced development of:							
NP	29.5	11.4	15.4	17.1	26.5	3.00	1.592
NCM	24.2	11.1	13.8	28.5	22.5	3.14	1.500
ISDM	23.8	16.8	9.4	27.2	22.8	3.08	1.519
IIP	26.8	15.8	19.8	23.5	14.1	2.82	1.416
Overall						**3.01**	**1.507**
Having freedom to make decisions has had a positive influence on development of:							
NP	28.2	37.6	12.4	11.7	10.1	2.38	1.282
NCM	33.9	27.9	15.4	11.4	11.4	2.39	1.354
ISDM	27.2	35.6	9.1	16.4	11.7	2.50	1.354
IIP	26.8	25.8	13.8	17.4	16.1	2.70	1.438
Overall						**2.49**	**1.357**

As presented in Table 3, the means for three of the four parameters were above three, an indicator that most respondents agreed that the various measures of OMI had a positive influence on innovation. The positive effect of encouragement of new idea generation had the highest response mean of 3.15. The influence of employee freedom on the various innovation indicators had the lowest response mean of 2.49. These results are consistent with those of Gaspary et al. (2020), who found that putting in place measures that encourage staff to be innovative was one of the main drivers of innovation in the companies they studied. Employees were more likely to innovate when they felt that they were in a conducive environment in which to do so. The weaker level of agreement regarding the positive influence of employee freedom on innovation is also supported in literature. Siregar et al. (2021) found that the relationship between employee autonomy and innovative behaviour was mediated by the management structure of the organization. In hierarchical organizations, autonomy was not considered a significant factor for innovation. Being a public sector organization, the County is likely to have a hierarchical management structure, and a similar relationship between employee autonomy and innovation would be expected.

Inferential Analysis Results

A regression of OMI against Innovation was performed. Table 4 shows the results from the testing of model fitness. The coefficient of determination, (R^2) = 0.520. This implies that OMI was able to explain at least 52% of the variance in the dependent variable, Innovation.

Table 4
Model fitness of OMI and Innovation

R	R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
.721[a]	.520	.60811

The model summary was assessed for significance using ANOVA. As shown in Table 5, the F value =320.433 was and p= 0.000 <p= 0.05, indicating that the model was statistically significant.

Table 5
ANOVA Results for OMI and Innovation

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	118.495	1	118.495	320.433	.000[b]
Residual	109.460	296	.370		
Total	227.956	297			

a. Dependent Variable: Innovation
b.   Predictors: (Constant),   Motivation   to   Innovate

In order to determine the significance of beta coefficients for the model summary presented in Table 5, results of the standardized regression were generated and are presented in Table 6. The results show that β=0.712, p=0.000. This implies that an increase of 0.712 in OMI would lead to a unit increase in Innovation. The computed p value of 0.000 was less than 0.05, indicating that OMI had a significant effect on Innovation.

Table 6
Regression Coefficients for OMI and Innovation

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	1.141	.122		9.385	.000
Motivation Innovate	to.712	.040	.721	17.901	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Innovation

The resultant bivariate model for Motivation to Innovate was therefore stated as follows;
Innovation = 1.141 + 0.712 (Motivation to Innovate)
ElMelegy et al. (2016) arrived at similar conclusions in their study of architectural firms in Dubai. One of the hypotheses tested was that OMI had a significant positive relationship with Innovation in the surveyed firms. The results indicated that the p value for OMI was less than 0.05. The null hypothesis was therefore rejected and the study concluded that OMI had a significant positive relationship with Innovation. Similarly, Dimaunahan and Amora (2016) hypothesized that OMI did not predict Innovation. Their study was based on departments of the public service of the Philippines. The results indicated that the p value for Motivation to Innovate was less than 0.05. The null hypothesis was therefore rejected and the study concluded that OMI was a reliable predictor of Innovation.

Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations
Summary
The hypothesis of this study was that there is no significant relationship between OMI and Innovation in Laikipia County Government, Kenya. These results showed that there is a positive and significant relationship between OMI and Innovation. The null hypothesis was therefore rejected. OMI was able to explain at least 52% of the variance in the dependent variable, Innovation. These findings were supported by those of previous studies such as (ElMelegy et al., 2016; Wang and Tsai, 2014; Dimaunahan and Amora, 2016).

Conclusions
The study concluded that organization-wide practices that demonstrate support for innovation such as including innovation as part of its vision, encouraging employees to innovate, recognizing innovators and allowing employees freedom to make decisions can positively impact the innovation capability of a public sector organization.

Recommendations
This study recommends that government policies which seek to encourage innovation in public sector organizations should emphasize a number of things. First is the need for these organizations to make innovation part of their vision statements, and to communicate these clearly to employees. Second is the presence of supports for innovation, which should come from senior management. Thirdly is the equipping of supervisors with management skills that would allow for the flourishing of innovation amongst employees, such as granting of operational autonomy over their work.

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