



**INFLUENCE OF TECHNOLOGICAL INFRASTRUCTURE ON THE STRATEGIC IMPLEMENTATION OF DEVOLVED
MINISTRY OF HEALTH FUNCTIONS IN MAKUENI COUNTY, KENYA**

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MINISTRY OF HEALTH FUNCTIONS IN MAKUENI COUNTY, KENYA**

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ABSTRACT

The objective of this study was to evaluate the influence of technological infrastructure on the strategic implementation of devolved ministry of health functions in Makueni. Descriptive research design was used in this study. Staff working at Makueni County Referral Hospital in Makueni County were chosen as the target respondents because they were the ones with the highest level of knowledge and experience on the issues related to the devolved Ministry of Health functions in the county. A total of 96 participants were enough to reliably achieve this research targets. Stratified random sampling technique were used to select a sample from the population of the study. Data was collected using structured questionnaires. The questionnaires were taken personally to the respondents and in some instance with the help of the person in charge. The quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive statistical package for social services (SPSS). A correlation analysis was conducted to establish the relationship between the independent and dependent variables. The findings of the study were presented in tables and figures. Based on the findings above the study revealed that technological infrastructure has positive and significant effect on strategic implementation of devolved ministry of health functions in Makueni County. The study recommended development of a comprehensive technology infrastructure plan for Makueni County. The plan should include the establishment of an integrated information system, the adoption of cloud-based technologies, the development of an integrated mobile health system, the utilization of geographic information systems, and the implementation of data analytics systems to better understand and manage health data.

Key Words: Technology, Infrastructure Development, Strategic Plans

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INTRODUCTION

Strategic implementation is the process of converting a strategic plan, which is a broad plan of action, into specific and measurable objectives. It involves the development of an action plan that outlines the steps needed to achieve the goals of the strategy (Afuah, 2020). Strategic implementation is an important part of the strategic planning process, as it ensures that the strategy is put into practice in a timely and efficient manner. The devolved ministry of health functions has been heavily influenced by strategic implementation (Pauliuk, 2018). By devolving health functions to the county governments, the ministry has been able to focus on more strategic tasks such as policy development and implementation, resource allocation, and monitoring and evaluation. This has enabled the ministry to be more effective in its efforts to improve the health of Kenyans.

In the devolved system, healthcare is organized in a four-tiered system as described in the Kenya health policy 2014-2030. According to the health policy 2014-2030, the lowest level is the community health services that is comprised of all community-based demand creation activities, that is, the identification of cases that need to be managed at higher levels of care (MoH, 2021). It further describes the community units as non-facility base, with their functions extensively described in the community strategy. On average, for every 5,000 populations a community unit needs to be established. This translates to over 8,800 community units nationally. Health care provisions within the devolved system of government come up against several obstacles. As argued by (Kimathi, 2017) key among these challenges are uneven inter-county levels of development, unequal distribution of resources for health especially the distribution of health facilities, human resources, and poorly developed communication infrastructure.

Strategic implementation has played a key role in influencing devolved ministry of health functions in Kenya. Since the introduction of devolution in Kenya, the Ministry of Health (MoH) has been tasked with

the responsibility of coordinating and delivering health services throughout the country (Kihara, 2017). As such, strategic implementation has been essential in enabling the MoH to effectively meet its objectives and deliver health services to the people of Kenya. Strategic implementation has been essential in enabling the MoH to effectively meet its objectives and deliver health services to the people of Kenya. Through strategic implementation, the MoH has been able to develop and implement plans that prioritize the health needs of the population, strengthen the health system, and engage with stakeholders. As a result, the health system in Kenya has become more efficient, effective, and accessible (Bonfrer, & Gustafsson-Wright, 2017).

Statement of the Problem

Health as a function is significant to the welfare and success of any nation, according to the World Bank (2012), the way a health sector is run fundamentally, determines the efficacy of the service delivery. Healthcare provisions within the devolved system in Kenya are faced with many obstacles such as; most are understaffed, ill-equipped, lack drugs and other medical supplies, lack proper basic amenities such as toilets, (Kimanthi & Muchui, 2018). In Makueni County, despite having allocated Ksh. 1.7 billion in the financial year 2015/2016, frequent strikes by health workers coupled by lack of medical supplies have been reported to often paralyze operations at the Makueni Level 4 hospital and other county health facilities leading to poor delivery of services to patients (Kimanthi, 2016). According to a Ministry of Health 2015 Oral report, Makueni County has a dentist/patient ratio of 1: 14,286 adversely affecting the provision of health service to the populace in the county. Further, according to the Ministry of Health 2016 report on Makueni County: Health at a Glance, the situation is made worse by the alarming doctor/patient and nurses/patient ratios which are currently estimated at 1: 5,882 and 1: 1,515 respectively and which is far from recommended ratio by WHO. This leads to overworking of these human resources consequently leading to poor

service delivery, (Changalawa, 2016). On assessing county readiness to provide healthcare services under the devolved system in Kenya, Barker, Mulaki, Mwai and Dutta (2014) revealed that Makueni County was among the counties that were less prepared.

A number of studies have been conducted on strategy implementation, for instance: Strohhecker (2018) focused on factors influencing strategy implementation decisions, Al-Kandi, Asutay, and Dixon (2017) focused on factors influencing the strategic implementation process and its outcomes in Saudi Arabian Banks, Rajasekar (2014) studied the factors affecting effective strategic implementation in a service industry in the Sultanate of Oman. These studies are related to the study topic, but they were all carried out internationally, creating a gap for similar studies to be carried out in Kenya. Similar studies conducted in Kenya include: Mbaka and Mugambi (2017) focused on Factors affecting successful strategy implementation in the Water Sector in Kenya, Guzami (2018) studied factors influencing strategy implementation in community based organizations in Seme, a sub-county in Kenya, Kurendi (2017) carried out a study on factors influencing strategy implementation among flower firms in Naivasha, Nabwire (2017) focused on factors affecting implementation of strategy in Barclays Bank of Kenya, while Kirui (2016) focused on factors influencing implementation of strategic plans in local authorities in Migori county, and Ngui (2018) studied the factors affecting implementation of devolution strategy at the Nairobi County Government in Kenya and concluded that similar studies should be undertaken to establish whether all counties face same implementation challenges or whether there are major differences. From all the studies done in Kenya, it is evident that there existed mixed results which were inconclusive, and none had been carried out in the Ministry of Health and Sanitation in Makueni County. In view of this, there was a study gap registered that the current research sought to address by conducting a study on evaluating the influence of technological infrastructure on the

strategic implementation of devolved ministry of health functions in Makueni.

Research Objectives

The objective of this study was to evaluate the influence of technological infrastructure on the strategic implementation of devolved ministry of health functions in Makueni County. The study was tested the following hypothesis;

- **H₀**. There is no relationship between technological infrastructure and strategic implementation of the devolved ministry of health functions in Makueni County.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Review

The Resource-Based View of Strategy Theory

The resource-based view of strategy theory was first introduced by the economists Jay B. Barney and Craig J. Upton in 1986. According to this theory, the sustainability of a firm's competitive advantage is dependent on the resources it has access to, and the way those resources are managed. This means that the resources a firm has access to, such as financial capital, human capital, technological infrastructure, and organizational capabilities, can be leveraged to gain a competitive advantage (Freeman, Dmytriiev, & Phillips, 2021).

The resource-based view of strategy theory can be used to support the influence of technological infrastructure on the strategic implementation of the devolved ministry of health functions (Miller, 2019). Technological infrastructure provides the necessary systems, networks, and tools to allow the ministry to efficiently and effectively manage its operations and resources. By leveraging technology, the ministry can create new ways to deliver services and improve service delivery, which can lead to greater efficiency and effectiveness of the devolved health services (Nagano, 2019). The growth of knowledge through the resource-based view. *Management Decision*, 58(1), 98-111.). Additionally, technology can provide access to data and analytics tools which can be used to identify

gaps in service delivery, and inform decision-making. Finally, technology can improve communication and collaboration between the ministry and other stakeholders, allowing for better coordination of resources and service delivery (McGahan, 2021).

This theory applies to the devolved Ministry of Health functions in Makueni county in that it suggests that the Ministry should focus on the resources that are valuable, rare, and inimitable, as these will give them a competitive advantage and help them to better implement their strategic objectives. For example, the Ministry should focus on developing and leveraging technological infrastructure such as telemedicine and electronic medical records systems. These technologies can help to improve the efficiency and accuracy of health care delivery, which has become increasingly important as the Ministry takes on more responsibility for health care in Makueni county.

Additionally, these technologies can help to reduce costs and improve access to health care services, making them valuable resources for the Ministry. Furthermore, these technologies are rare and inimitable, meaning that the Ministry can gain a competitive advantage by leveraging them. Finally, these technologies are non-substitutable, meaning that they cannot be replaced by anything else, and thus they are essential for the successful implementation of the Ministry's strategic objectives.

Empirical Literature Review

The technological infrastructure of Kenya Counties has had a significant impact on the strategic implementation of devolved health functions in the county. Technology-driven healthcare solutions have enabled the county to provide better care to its population. These solutions have included the introduction of remote monitoring systems for chronic diseases, improved access to health information, and increased efficiency in the delivery of healthcare services. The technological infrastructure of Kenya Counties has been instrumental in the successful implementation of

devolved health functions. It has enabled the county to leverage its resources in order to provide better care to its residents. For example, the introduction of telemedicine has enabled the county to provide access to high-quality medical care to remote areas. This has resulted in improved access to healthcare services and better patient outcomes.

Moreover, technological infrastructure has improved the efficiency of the delivery of healthcare services. For example, electronic health records have been implemented in Kenya Counties in order to better track patient data and ensure accurate and timely delivery of services. This has resulted in improved patient outcomes and better quality of care. Automation and Data Analytics: Automation and data analytics can be used to streamline operations and optimize performance. Automation can help reduce paperwork, improve accuracy, and provide insights into the effectiveness of the health ministry's efforts. Additionally, data analytics can be used to identify areas of improvement and develop strategies to address them (Tabesh, Mousavidin, & Hasani, 2019). Connectivity and digital platforms can enable collaboration and communication between stakeholders, including health workers, citizens, and government officials. These platforms can be used to disseminate information, share resources, and facilitate the exchange of ideas and best practices. Artificial intelligence can help transform the way health ministry's operate by providing automated decision-making and predictive capabilities. AI-driven systems can be used to monitor and analyze health data, identify potential trends, and recommend interventions. Additionally, AI can be used to streamline administrative processes and reduce costs.

In addition, the technological infrastructure of Kenya Counties has enabled the county to leverage its resources in order to reduce costs. For example, the introduction of mobile health clinics has enabled the county to provide access to healthcare services in a cost-effective way. This has resulted in improved access to healthcare services for the county's residents and reduced healthcare costs for the

county. The technological infrastructure of Kenya Counties has had a significant impact on the strategic implementation of devolved health functions. It has enabled the county to provide better care to its residents and leverage its resources in order to reduce costs. As such, the technological infrastructure of Kenya Counties has been instrumental in the successful implementation of devolved health functions.

The development and implementation of health strategies will require the use of technological infrastructure. This includes the development of health information systems, the use of telemedicine, and the integration of new technologies into the healthcare system. The use of technological infrastructure in the healthcare system has enabled the strategic implementation of the devolved ministry of health functions. The main goals of the devolved ministry of health functions are to provide access to quality health services, improve health outcomes, and reduce health disparities. In order to achieve these objectives, there must be a comprehensive planning process that leverages technological infrastructure. The first step in implementing the devolved ministry of health functions is to analyze and evaluate the current healthcare system. This involves assessing the current healthcare organizations, assessing the current healthcare services, and assessing the current healthcare infrastructure. This analysis will allow the ministry to identify areas of need and develop a plan to address those needs.

Once the analysis is completed, the ministry must then develop a strategy for the implementation of the devolved functions. This strategy should include the necessary technological infrastructure to support the devolved functions. The need for technological infrastructure for the devolved ministry of health functions is essential for successful implementation. The technological infrastructure will provide the necessary services for the devolved functions to operate properly and efficiently. Depending on the size and complexity of the ministry and its devolved functions, the technological

infrastructure will vary in scope. Generally, this infrastructure will include network and data management systems, hardware and software solutions, and communication systems.

Network and data management systems are an essential part of the technological infrastructure as they provide the ability to store and access data as well as manage the flow of data. This includes the implementation of secure networks to ensure the safety and integrity of the data exchanged. Additionally, these systems can provide the ability to track and manage the data and to ensure its accuracy. Hardware and software solutions are also important for the devolved ministry of health functions. These solutions allow for the efficient operation of the devolved functions and for the integration of data across systems. This includes the ability to access data from different sources and to provide a centralized repository of information. Additionally, these solutions can provide the ability to customize the data and to create reports that can be used for analysis and decision-making purposes.

Communication systems are also important for the devolved ministry of health functions. These systems provide the ability to communicate and share information between different departments and systems. This includes the ability to send emails, texts, and other forms of communication. Additionally, these systems can provide the ability to track and monitor communication and to ensure the accuracy of the information exchanged. By implementing the necessary technological infrastructure, the devolved ministry of health functions can be effectively implemented. This includes the ability to store, access, and manage data, the ability to customize the data, and the ability to communicate and exchange information between departments. Additionally, this infrastructure allows for the efficient operation of the devolved functions and the integration of data across systems. As such, this technological infrastructure can lead to the successful implementation of the devolved ministry of health functions.

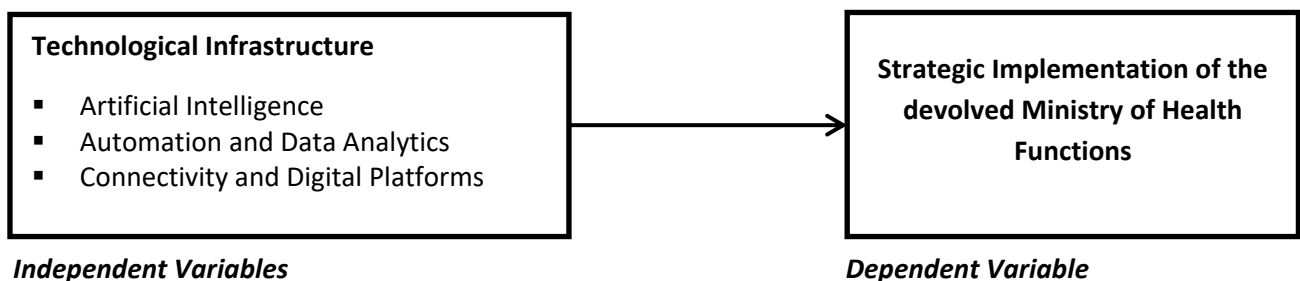
Technology has played a major role in improving service delivery in the health sector. It has enabled organizations and governments to develop better systems for providing quality healthcare services to patients. This includes providing better access to healthcare services, better communication between healthcare providers and patients, improved patient outcomes, and better data management. For example, the use of electronic health records (EHR) has enabled healthcare providers to access patient records quickly, easily, and securely. This has allowed for more efficient and accurate diagnosis of conditions, better treatment, and more accurate billing and payment systems. Additionally, EHRs have made it easier for healthcare providers to access patient medical history and to track patient progress over time.

In addition, the use of telehealth has been a major factor in improving the delivery of healthcare services. Telehealth has enabled healthcare providers to provide care to patients remotely, eliminating the need for in-person visits. This has

allowed for greater access to healthcare services, especially in rural areas where access to healthcare is limited. Additionally, telehealth has enabled healthcare providers to provide more personalized care to patients, as they can access information about their medical history and other health-related issues.

Technology has also improved the data management capabilities of the healthcare sector. By using data analytics tools, healthcare providers can process and analyze data more quickly and accurately, allowing them to make better decisions about patient care. This has allowed for more efficient and effective patient care and has improved the overall quality of healthcare services. The use of technological infrastructure has made a significant impact on the delivery of healthcare services. By providing better access to healthcare services, improved patient outcomes, and better data management, it has enabled healthcare providers to provide better care to their patients and has improved the quality of healthcare services.

Conceptual Framework



Independent Variables
Figure 1: Conceptual Framework
Source: Author (2023)

METHODOLOGY

Descriptive research design was used in this study. The population for this study was 126 staff working at the Ministry of Health in Makueni County. Staff working at Makueni County Referral Hospital in Makueni County were chosen as the target respondents because they were the ones with the highest level of knowledge and experience on the issues related to the devolved Ministry of Health functions in the county. The sampling frame for this study included all staff from the devolved Ministry of

Health in Makueni County. The researcher used Yamane's method to determine what constitutes a statistically significant sample size in light of the study's aims. A total of 96 participants were enough to reliably achieve this research targets. Data was collected using structured questionnaires. A pilot test was conducted to test the reliability and validity of the research instruments. This involved pre-testing the questionnaire with a sample of the target population.

The quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive statistical package for social services (SPSS). Descriptive statistics was used to analyze, explain and summarize properties of the data collected aided by a Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) and Excel. Quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive statistics and inferential statistics. The findings of the study were presented in tables and figures. A correlation analysis was conducted to establish the relationship between the independent and dependent variables. A Pearson was used to determine if there was a significant positive association between independent variable and dependent variable. Regression analysis was also used to find out how an independent variable predicts a given dependent variable.

RESULTS

Descriptive Analysis

Descriptive analysis is a statistical method used to describe and summarize data. It involves organizing data into meaningful categories, then describing the characteristics of each category. Common techniques used in descriptive analysis include frequency distributions, cross tabulations, descriptive statistics, and graphical representations of data.

Technological Infrastructure on Strategic Implementation

This research aimed to evaluate the influence of technological infrastructure on the strategic implementation of devolved ministry of health functions in Makueni County. The data was presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Technological Infrastructure on the Strategic Implementation

Opinion	SD	D	N	A	SA
The technological infrastructure has had a major impact on the successful implementation of devolved ministry of health functions.			10(10.4%)	53(55.25)	33(34.4%)
The technological infrastructure has been instrumental in helping devolved health ministries to develop and execute effective strategies.	3(3.1%)	28(29.2%)	27(28.1%)	38(39.6%)	
The technological infrastructure has enabled devolved health ministries to better track, analyze and assess the performance of their initiatives.			17(17.7%)	58(60.4%)	21(21.9%)
The technological infrastructure has enabled devolved health ministries to improve the delivery of health services.			1(1.0%)	62(64.6%)	33(34.4%)
The technological infrastructure has enabled devolved health ministries to better manage resources, allocate funds and monitor progress.	3(3.1%)	4(4.2%)	48(50.0%)	41(42.7%)	
The technological infrastructure has enabled devolved health ministries to streamline and automate processes.	9(9.4%)			36(37.5%)	51(53.1%)
The technological infrastructure has enabled devolved health ministries to effectively communicate and collaborate with stakeholders.			9(9.4%)	54(56.3%)	33(34.4)

Source: Survey Data (2023)

In reference to the study findings as displayed in Table 1, most of the study participants 89.6% agreed generally that the technological infrastructure has had a major impact on the successful implementation of devolved ministry of health functions while only 10.4% were neutral to the opinion statement. The study also found that, most of the study participants 67.7% were in agreement that the technological infrastructure has been instrumental in helping devolved health ministries to develop and execute effective strategies, 29.2% were neutral while only 3.1% disagree with the opinion statement. In addition, most of the respondents 82.0% agreed that the technological infrastructure has enabled devolved health ministries to better track, analyze and assess the performance of their initiatives, only 17.7% were neutral to the opinion. It was further revealed that most of the respondents 99.0% agreed that the technological infrastructure has enabled devolved health ministries to improve the delivery of health services while only 1.0% of the respondents were neutral to the opinion. Most of

the respondents, 92.7% of the agreed that the technological infrastructure has enabled devolved health ministries to better manage resources, allocate funds and monitor progress, 4.2% of the respondents were neutral while only 3.1% of the participants disagreed with the opinion. Most of the respondents 90.6% agreed that the technological infrastructure has enabled devolved health ministries to streamline and automate processes while 9.4% disagreed with the statement. Lastly, the most of the respondents 90.7% agreed that the technological infrastructure has enabled devolved health ministries to effectively communicate and collaborate with stakeholders, while only 9.4% disagree with the statement.

Strategic Implementation of the devolved Public Health in Makueni County

strategic implementation of the devolved Ministry of Health functions in Makueni County, Kenya. The outcomes are presented in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Strategic Implementation of the devolved Public Health

Opinion	SD	D	N	A	SA
There is improved accountability and transparency in the implementation of health policies within the County			22(22.9%)	19(19.8%)	55(57.3%)
Improved healthcare services delivered through devolved Ministry of Health functions.			7(7.3%)	53(55.2%)	36(37.5%)
Increased public engagement in health policy decisions through devolved Ministry of Health functions.	1(1.0%)		16(16.7%)	56(58.3%)	23(24.0%)
Enhanced collaboration between public and private health providers through devolved Ministry of Health functions.			21(21.9%)	39(40.6%)	36(37.5%)
Increased accountability and transparency in the use of resources through devolved Ministry of Health functions.			7(7.3%)	63(65.6%)	26(27.1%)
Increased efficiency in the delivery of health services through devolved Ministry of Health functions	1(1.0%)		5(5.2%)	53(55.2%)	37(38.5%)

Source: Survey Data (2023)

The results of the investigation are displayed in Table 2, most of the participants 77.1% agreed that there is improved accountability and transparency in the implementation of health policies within the County while only 22.9% of the respondents were neutral with the opinion. Most of the respondents 92.7% also agreed that improved healthcare services delivered through devolved Ministry of Health functions, while 7.3% were neutral with the opinion. Most respondents 82.3% as well agreed that increased public engagement in health policy decisions through devolved Ministry of Health functions, 16.7% were neutral while 1.0% disagreed with the opinion. In addition, most respondents 78.1% agreed that enhanced collaboration between public and private health providers through devolved Ministry of Health functions, just 21.9% of them were neutral with the opinion. Further, most of respondents 93.7% agreed that increased accountability and transparency in the use of resources through devolved Ministry of Health functions, 7.3% were neutral. Finally, most respondents 75.3% agreed that increased efficiency in the delivery of health services through devolved Ministry of Health functions, 5.2% were in disagreement with the opinion while 1.0% were neutral with the opinion.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The objective of the study was to evaluate the influence of technological infrastructure on the strategic implementation of devolved ministry of health functions in Makueni County. The findings showed that there was a significant association between the technological infrastructure and strategic implementation of devolved ministry of health functions in Makueni County. The findings were also consistent with the statements in the questionnaire which majority of the respondents agreed. This was also supported by the regression results which revealed that technological infrastructure had a positive and significant impact on the strategic implementation of devolved ministry of health functions in Makueni County.

The study concluded that technological infrastructure has positive and significant effect on strategic implementation of devolved ministry of health functions in Makueni County. The study concluded that the technological infrastructure has had a major impact on the successful implementation of devolved ministry of health functions. The study also concluded that the technological infrastructure has been instrumental in helping devolved health ministries to develop and execute effective strategies. In addition, the study concluded that the technological infrastructure has enabled devolved health ministries to better track, analyze and assess the performance of their initiatives. It was further concluded that the technological infrastructure has enabled devolved health ministries to improve the delivery of health services. The study concluded that the technological infrastructure has enabled devolved health ministries to better manage resources, allocate funds and monitor progress. Lastly, the study concluded that the technological infrastructure has enabled devolved health ministries to effectively communicate and collaborate with stakeholders.

The study recommended development of a comprehensive technology infrastructure plan for Makueni County. This plan should include the establishment of an integrated information system, the adoption of cloud-based technologies, the development of an integrated mobile health system, the utilization of geographic information systems, and the implementation of data analytics systems to better understand and manage health data. Additionally, the plan should identify a set of performance indicators to track progress, and also include a strategy to train and develop the technical capability of health workers. Finally, the plan should consider the cost implications of the various recommendations and the investments required to ensure the successful implementation of the technological infrastructure plan.

Implication for Further Study

Further research has to be done due to the limiting factors mentioned in the study. The study

was only in apposition to focus on Makueni County while there exist other 47 counties in Kenya. The study was only possible to carry out research on the influence of technological infrastructure on the

strategic implementation of devolved ministry of health functions in Makueni County. There is need to do further studies in this area by focusing on other factors and also increasing the sample size.

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