Academic Journal of Humanities and Social Science Research Vol 2, Issue No1

Academic Journal of Humanities and Social Science Research
www.academicpubs.org

DOI: https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.17255968

Influence of Organizational Structure on the Performance of Paint Manufacturing Firms in Kenya

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Published:10/3/2025

DOI: https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.17255968

Abstract: The purpose of this study was to examine the influence of organizational structure on the performance of paint manufacturing firms in Kenya. The study adopted a correlational research design to establish the relationship between structural dimensions and firm outcomes. The target population consisted of 26 paint manufacturing companies registered with the Paint Manufacturers Association of Kenya, with 156 employees forming the unit of observation. A sample of 113 respondents was derived using stratified random sampling based on the Taro Yamane formula. Primary data were collected using structured questionnaires administered physically and online over a two-week period. Data analysis involved both descriptive statistics (means and standard deviations) and inferential analysis using binary logistic regression at a significance level of 0.05. The findings indicated that organizational structure had a significant effect on firm performance. Specifically, companies with flat organizational structures were 85 times more likely to report improved performance compared to those with tall or highly hierarchical structures. The results highlighted the advantages of decentralized decision-making, broader spans of control, and streamlined communication channels in enhancing operational efficiency and responsiveness within the industry. The study concludes that flat organizational structures foster better performance outcomes among paint manufacturing companies by enabling faster decision-making, reducing bureaucracy, and improving coordination across departments. It recommends that firms adopt structures with clearer spans of control, open lines of communication, and mechanisms for quick feedback to boost competitiveness. Finally, the study suggests that managers consider flatter organizational designs as a strategic option for sustaining performance in an increasingly dynamic market environment.

Key Words: Organizational, Structure, Performance, Paint Manufacturing Firms, Kenya

Citation: Karani, M. W., Munga, J., & Mbithi, M. (2025). Influence of Organizational Structure on the Performance of Paint Manufacturing Firms in Kenya. *Academic Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences Research, 2*(1). **https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.17255968**

1. Introduction

Organizational structure is a central determinant of how firms allocate responsibilities, coordinate tasks, and communicate internally. It defines the flow of authority, reporting relationships, and decision-making patterns, thereby shaping organizational efficiency and adaptability. In highly competitive and dynamic industries, such as manufacturing, the choice of structure can significantly influence a firm's ability to respond to market shifts, innovate, and achieve superior performance (Nosike et al., 2021). Flat structures, with wider spans of control and decentralized decision-making, often promote faster communication and responsiveness, whereas tall, hierarchical structures can create bureaucratic delays but enhance formal control.

The paint manufacturing industry in Kenya plays an important role in supporting the construction, real estate, and industrial sectors. Growth in urbanization, housing demand, and infrastructure development has fueled rising demand for paint products. However, this sector also faces challenges such as stiff competition from local and multinational firms, fluctuating raw material costs, and the need for consistent quality and innovation (Gagai et al., 2021). These challenges require organizational designs that balance efficiency with flexibility, enabling firms to achieve competitiveness in an increasingly demanding market.

Although global research has explored the relationship between organizational structure and firm performance, there remains limited evidence specific to Kenya's manufacturing sector, and particularly the paint industry. Most local studies have concentrated on banks, public institutions, and other service-oriented organizations, leaving a contextual gap regarding production-driven industries. Since industry dynamics vary across sectors, structural choices that enhance performance in one context may not be directly transferable to another (Akpa et al., 2021).

This study therefore examines the influence of organizational structure on the performance of paint manufacturing firms in Kenya. Grounded in contingency theory and Resource-Based View (RBV), it tests whether structural characteristics, especially the distinction between flat and hierarchical forms, significantly affect performance outcomes. The findings aim to provide both theoretical insights and practical recommendations for managers seeking to optimize organizational design in the paint manufacturing sector.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

The impact of organizational structure in paint manufacturing firms in Kenya is a critical ingredient in determining their performance. An effective organizational structure helps firms to streamline their operations, enhance productivity and ensure effective communications. Firms in the paint manufacturing sector can leverage on organizational structures to allocate their resources, coordinate their activities, and ensure that the everyone is working towards achieving the strategic goals (Gagai et al., 2021). The use of effective organizational structure will enable the firms to deal with the changing market needs, build an innovative organizational culture and respond to the market needs. Despite the crucial role of organizational structure in the paint manufacturing firms in Kenya, few studies have examined its impact on performance of these firms. Mutua and Kori (2022) examined the role of organizational structure on the performance of commercial banks in Kenya. This study noted that organizational structure has a positive impact on the performance of these commercial banks. Riany (2021) explored the effects of organizational structure on the performance of human resources firms in Nairobi County and noted that the organizational structure impacts the culture which in turn impacts responsiveness to the market. While these studies focused on organizational structure, they were done in other sectors which offer a contextual gap which this study seeks to fill. The study will fill this research gap by examining the Influence of Organizational Structure on the Performance of Paint Manufacturing Firms in Kenya.

1.2 Research Objective

To establish influence of organizational structure on the performance of paint manufacturing firms in Kenya.

1.3 Hypothesis

$H0_1$: Organizational structure does not have significant influence on the performance of paint manufacturing firms in Kenya.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Theoretical Review

Contingency Theory

Contingency Theory is a foundational perspective in organizational studies which argues that there is no single best way to organize, lead, or make decisions; rather, the effectiveness of an organizational structure depends on how well it aligns with situational variables (Donaldson, 2001). Emerging in the 1960s through the work of scholars such as Lawrence and Lorsch, the theory emphasizes "fit" between an organization's internal arrangements and its external environment. According to this view, organizations operating in stable environments may benefit from mechanistic structures characterized by clear hierarchies and formalized procedures, while those in dynamic and uncertain environments perform better with flexible, organic structures that promote adaptation and innovation. The relevance of Contingency Theory to organizational structure lies in its practical application: managers must assess environmental, technological, and size-related conditions before designing or adjusting structural configurations. In manufacturing firms, for instance, contingency thinking suggests that functional, divisional, or matrix structures should be chosen not based on managerial preference but on the extent to which they enable efficiency, responsiveness, and coordination in specific contexts. This makes the theory particularly valuable for examining performance in industries facing rapid technological change or market competition. However, Contingency Theory has been criticized for its lack of predictive power and overemphasis on environmental determinism. Critics argue that it often fails to account for managerial agency, cultural factors, and institutional constraints that also shape structure. Moreover, the theory's "fit" logic can be difficult to operationalize empirically, leading to inconsistent findings across studies.

Resource-Based View (RBV)

The Resource-Based View (RBV) of the firm, first articulated by Penrose (1959) and later developed by Barney (1991), suggest that sustainable competitive advantage arises from a firm's ability to acquire, develop, and deploy unique resources and capabilities that are valuable, rare, inimitable, and non-substitutable. Unlike external environment-focused perspectives, the RBV emphasizes internal strengths as the primary source of superior performance. These resources include tangible assets such as technology and infrastructure, as well as intangible capabilities like knowledge, skills, culture, and innovative capacity. Organizational structure plays a critical role in enabling effective utilization of these resources. A well-designed structure creates mechanisms for coordinating activities, sharing information, and aligning decision-making processes, thereby ensuring that resources are leveraged optimally. For example, a functional structure may enhance efficiency by pooling expertise within specialized departments, while a matrix structure may promote innovation by encouraging cross-functional collaboration. In manufacturing contexts, such as paint firms, structure determines how research and development, production, and marketing units interact to exploit technological knowledge, manage costs, and respond to customer demands. Without appropriate structural arrangements, valuable resources risk being underutilized or misallocated, diminishing their contribution to performance. Despite its strengths, the RBV has been critiqued for being static and inward-looking. Critics argue that it underestimates the influence of external forces, such as industry dynamics and institutional pressures, on resource value. Moreover, identifying and measuring intangible resources remains challenging, limiting the theory's empirical application. Nevertheless, the RBV remains a powerful lens for understanding how organizational structure transforms internal capabilities into competitive advantage.

2.2 Empirical Review

Different researchers have studied the impacts of organizational structure on firm's performance in different sectors in different countries**.** Tolofari (2024) examined the impact of organizational goal personalization and performance of paint manufacturing firms in Nigeria. An explanatory cross-sectional design was employed, on 19 paint manufacturing firms. Structured questionnaires were used in the data collection and the Cronbach alpha to identify the reliability. The study used the mean and standard deviation to analyze the variables. The findings revealed that there is a positive relationship between organizational goal personalization and the performance of paint firms. Importantly, the study noted that goal personalization improves corporate image, resource maximization and improves customer service. The main limitation of this study is that it focused in goal personalization and its impacts on performance, which creates a contextual gap on the current study. Besides, the study was conducted in Lagos which has a different competitive environment compared to Nairobi, creating a research gap.

Karemu et al. (2021) instigated the influence of organizational structure on the performance of Telephone Operators in Kenya. The main variables used in the study include teamwork, organizational structure, and learning organizational structure. The study analyzed the telephone firms using profit margins and the market share. The research used the contingency theory to show the relationship between the structure and the performance. This study used a mixed methodology to collect data and interpret it. The data was gathered by a semi-structured questionnaires while the secondary data was obtained using the financial reports from the companies' websites. A sample of 360 was obtained from a population of 6167 whereby the employees working in telephone firms were targeted. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyze the data. The findings noted that organizational structure has a positive impact on the performance of mobile telephone operators in Kenya. The main limitation of this study is that it was done on the mobile telephone sector which operates in a different competitive environment compared to paint manufacturing sector. Consequently, the results from this study cannot be used to make a generalized conclusion on the study topic.

Obwoge and Namusonge (2024) studied the impact of organizational structure on the performance of state department of higher education. This study employed the institutional theory for the theoretical review and a descriptive research design. The descriptive design targeted 245 employees whereby 150 people were used as the final sample. The primary data for this study was collected using a structured questionnaire which was used to capture the quantitative data. The data was analyzed using descriptive statistics and inferential statistics. The findings showed that organizational structure led to improved performance of the state department for higher education. The main limitation of this study is that it was done in the state department of education which operate in a different funding and regulatory model than the private paint manufacturing firms in Kenya. As such, the findings cannot be used to make a generalized findings for the current study topic.

Kaphle (2023) explored the impact of organizational structure in the performance of local governments in India. The study analyzed the organizational structure form the lens of centralization, specialization, and formalization and how it affects performance. A pragmatic research model was used and a mixed research design was used. An in-depth interview with the local government officials was conducted to collect the data for this study. The results showed that local governments have very little differentiation on organizational structure in the local governments. It was noted that organizational structure has a direct positive impact on the performance of local governments in India. The study noted that there isa very low support execution of the organizational structure. The main limitation of this study is that it was done in India which has a different economic and regulatory compared to Kenya. Consequently, the results cannot be used to make a generalized conclusion on the impact of organizational structure on the performance of paint manufacturing firms in Kenya.

Cyiza and Hakizimana (2022) considered the influence of organizational structure on the performance of training projects in Rwanda. The study used an explanatory research design, with target of 127 people. A sample of 107 respondents was targeted whereby a questionnaire was employed in the data collection. The data was analyzed using Microsoft Excel and presented using charts. Both descriptive and inferential analysis techniques were used in this study. The study noted that organizational structure aspect of job design does not have a significant impact on performance. However, the study showed that organizational hierarchy has a statistically significant influence on performance of training projects in Rwanda. It was also noted that departmental deign has a statistically impact in the performance of the training projects in Rwanda. The main limitation of this study is that it was done in Rwanda, which has a different economic and regulatory environment than Kenya. As such, the findings form this study cannot be used to make a generalized conclusion on the current study.

3. Research Methodology

This study adopted a correlational research design, as it sought to establish the statistical influence of organizational structure on firm performance without manipulating variables. A correlational design was considered appropriate because it allows the identification of associations and the prediction of outcomes, rather than causal determination, which was beyond the scope of this study.

3.1 Target Population and Units of Analysis

The unit of analysis comprised the 26 paint manufacturing companies registered with the Paint Manufacturers Association of Kenya. The unit of observation consisted of 156 employees drawn from managerial categories, namely operations, marketing, finance, customer relations, and human resource management. This managerial cohort was targeted because they possess strategic insights into both structural arrangements and organizational performance.

3.2 Sampling Procedure and Sample Size

The study employed a stratified random sampling technique to ensure that all managerial functions were proportionately represented. The sample size was determined using Taro Yamane's (1967) formula, yielding 113 participants. Stratification was done by departmental role (operations, marketing, finance, customer relations, human resources), followed by random sampling within each stratum. This enhanced representativeness and reduced sampling bias.

$$n=\frac{N}{1+N(e)^2}$$

n = sample size

N = population size

e = margin of error (level of precision, e.g., 0.05 for 95% confidence level)

$$N=\frac{156}{1+156+(0.05)^2}$$

N=113

3.3 Data Collection Instruments and Procedure

Primary data were collected using a structured questionnaire comprising closed-ended items measured on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The questionnaire was divided into two sections: organizational structure (centralization, formalization, departmentalization, and coordination) and firm performance (efficiency, innovation, market responsiveness, and financial outcomes). Data collection was conducted over a two-week period using both physical distribution and online surveys to maximize response rates.

3.4 Ethical Considerations

This study adhered strictly to ethical standards in social science research to safeguard the rights and welfare of participants. Prior to data collection, clearance was obtained from the relevant institutional review board, and authorization was also sought from the management of the selected paint manufacturing companies. Each participant received an information sheet outlining the purpose of the study, their role, and the voluntary nature of participation. Informed consent was obtained in writing before completing the questionnaire. Confidentiality was maintained by anonymizing responses and ensuring that no identifying details of individual participants or firms appeared in the final report. Data were stored securely and accessed only by the researcher.

Respondents were informed that they could decline to answer any question or withdraw at any stage without penalty. These measures ensured that the research was conducted with integrity, transparency, and full respect for participant autonomy.

3.5 Data Analysis

Data were coded and analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 25. Descriptive statistics (means, frequencies, standard deviations) were computed to summarize organizational structure and performance variables. For inferential analysis, a binary logistic regression model was employed to test the influence of organizational structure on performance outcomes, categorized as low performance (0) and high performance (1). The regression model was specified as:

$$\text{Log}\left(\frac{p}{1-p}\right) = \beta 0 + +\beta 1X1 + \varepsilon$$

p = probability of high performance, $\beta 0$ = constant, $\beta 1$ = coefficient of organizational structure, X1= organizational structure, ε = error term.

3.6 Limitations of Methodology

Although the study was carefully designed, certain methodological limitations should be acknowledged. First, the research relied primarily on self-reported questionnaire data from managers, which may be subject to response bias or social desirability effects. Second, the sampling frame was restricted to 26 paint manufacturing firms in Nairobi County, which may constrain the generalizability of the findings to other regions or to manufacturing sectors beyond paints. Third, while logistic regression assumptions were tested, measurement of abstract constructs such as "performance" may still be influenced by perceptual differences among respondents. Nonetheless, the use of stratified random sampling, validated instruments, and reliability checks enhanced the credibility of results, and the findings remain useful for theory, practice, and policy.

4. Results and Discussions

The study achieved a response rate of 90.3% with 102 responses being successfully collected from the targeted sample of 113.

4.1 Descriptive Statistics on Organizational structure

Results in table 1 showed that there are "Clear hierarchy levels are clearly defined through existing organizational structure" as showed by a mean of 3.66, the results also showed that respondents agreed with the statement that " through departmentalization employees are able to coordinate and specialize in tasks " as given by a mean of 3.67, in addition participants agreed with the statement that "We have balanced the span of control in our organization that have facilitated communication and supervision across all departmental levels" as showed by mean score of 3.70. Lastly, participants agreed with statement that "there is a balance between centralization and decentralization in our organization aligns that aligns with the strategic decisions" as showed by mean of 3.91.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics on Organizational structure

Statement	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Dev
Clear hierarchy levels are clearly defined through existing organizational structure	102	1	5	3.66	1.039
Through departmentalization employees are able to coordinate and specialize in tasks	102	1	5	3.67	1.111
We have balanced the span of control in our organization that have facilitated communication and supervision across all departmental levels.	102	1	5	3.70	1.022
There is a balance between centralization and decentralization in our organization aligns that aligns with the strategic decisions	102	1	5	3.91	.966

4.2 Descriptive Statistics on Performance of Paint Manufacturing Companies

Results in table 2 showed that participants agreed with the statement that their organization's performance has reflected the goals and objectives as showed by mean score of 3.91, in addition participants agreed with the statements that the organization has been able to capture and maintain its market share as showed by mean score of 3.794. Participants also agreed that, "organization has been able to consistently meet the customers' expectations as showed by a mean score of 3.78. Lastly, participants agreed that their brands have been well recognized and also accepted as showed by mean score of 3.92. These results resonate with Karemu et al. (2021) who also established that organizational structure positively influences performance in the Kenyan telecommunications sector, reinforcing the role of structure in facilitating communication and coordination. On the other hand, Tolofari (2024) focused on goal personalization in Nigerian paint firms, finding that aligning organizational goals with employees enhances performance. Although slightly different in focus, both studies converge on the idea that structural alignment whether through goals or hierarchy—improves efficiency and outcomes.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics on Performance of Paint Manufacturing Companies

Statements on Performance	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Dev
Our organization's performance has reflected the goals and objectives.	102	1	5	3.91	.857
Our organization has been able to capture and maintain its market share	102	1	5	3.94	.993
Our organization has been able to consistently meet the customers expectations	102	1	5	3.78	.971
Our brands are well recognized and feasible	102	1	5	3.92	.852

4.3 Binary Regression between Organizational structure and Performance

The results of the model summary showed a Nagelkerke R Square of 0.555 which implied that 55.5% of the changes / variations in the performance of the paint manufacturing companies in Nairobi county can be explained by the organizational structure. Results also showed that organizational structure had a significant influence on performance of the paint manufacturing companies, therefore the null hypothesis claim that organizational structure does not significantly influence performance was rejected. The results showed an odds ratio of 85 which implied that organizations with a flat organizational structure have 85 better chances of having high performance. These findings are consistent with Kaphle (2023), who demonstrated that organizational structure positively impacts performance in Indian local governments, although contextual differences limit direct generalization. Similarly, Cyiza and Hakizimana (2022) confirmed that organizational hierarchy and departmental design significantly affect project performance in Rwanda, aligning with the current study’s evidence that structure drives outcomes.

Y= -0.194+4.443.

Table: Binary Regression Model Summary and Odds

Model Summary			
Step	-2 Log likelihood	Cox & Snell R Square	Nagelkerke R Square
1	53.196[a]	.337	.555

a. Estimation terminated at iteration number 7 because parameter estimates changed by less than .001.

Variables in the Equation		B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Odds
Step 1[a]	**Organizational Structure**						
	Tall – reference category	-	-	-	-	-	1
	Flat	4.443	1.070	17.245	1	.000	85.000
	Constant	-.194	.361	.289	1	.591	.824

a. Variable(s) entered on step 1: Organizational Structure.

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

The study concluded that organizational structure, more so a flat organizational structure significantly enhances performance of paint manufacturing companies in Kenya. The study recommends that paint manufacturing firms in Nairobi County prioritize the development and maintenance of a clear and effective organizational structure, ensuring that roles, responsibilities, and hierarchies are well-defined to enhance decision-making, coordination, and communication. The study also study recommends that industry leaders and policymakers create guidelines that encourage optimal organizational structures in the manufacturing sector, recognizing their role in enhancing performance outcomes.

6. Limitations and Future Research

While the correlational design adopted in this study was appropriate for establishing the statistical relationship between organizational structure and firm performance, several methodological limitations must be noted. First, the study relied on self-reported questionnaire data, which may be influenced by response bias and subjective perceptions. Second, the focus on 26 paint manufacturing firms in Nairobi County restricts the generalizability of findings to other regions or industries. Finally, organizational performance was measured through perceptual indicators, which may not fully capture financial or operational realities. Future research could address these limitations by employing mixed methods designs that integrate qualitative interviews with quantitative surveys, or by using longitudinal data to track performance outcomes. Expanding the study across different manufacturing sectors and geographical locations would also enhance external validity and comparative insights.

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