Organization health conceptualized as an emergent capability in a public sector reform program: Empirical and practical implications

Philip Ouma Awino(a)* James M. Kilika(b) Stephen M.A Muathe(c)

(a,b,c) Department of Business Administration, Kenyatta University, Kenya

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ABSTRACT

The study reports findings of an investigation on the effect of emergent capability derived from an organization development (OD) program on the effect of the OD on realized performance in a National Police Service public sector reform program in Kenya. The study considered how four components of the OD process were realized from the reform program and determined the level of emergent capability that resulted from the OD components. Primary data was obtained from a sample of 294 senior officers in job groups PG5-PG11. The study finds that the level of OD realized from the reform program was rated at a moderate level and contributed to an equivalent level of emergent capability of the form of organization health. OD has a significant positive effect on the emergent capability and performance while the emergent capability has a positive effect on performance and partially mediates the effect of OD on performance. The study calls on practicing managers to consider integrating the OD process with the strategic management process from initiation to the end of the process. Future research is called upon to consider expanding both the conceptual and methodological scopes adopted in this study to enhance the generalizability of the findings.

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Introduction

Organization development as a process is a systematic means for planned change that involves the entire organization and is intended to increase organizational effectiveness (Middlemist & Hitt, 1988). Cummings and Huse (1988) conceptualized organization development (OD) in broader terms as a system-wide application of behavioral science knowledge to the planned development and reinforcement of organizational strategies, structure, and processes for improving an organization’s effectiveness. Two conceptualizations stand out in the literature on describing the nature, process and components of OD. Glans et al (2008)’s approach considered OD as continuous process that comprises OD diagnosis, action planning, intervention and evaluation. Patel (2015)'s approach considered OD as a process whose aim is to transmit skills and knowledge to organizations so as to augment their capacity to manage their future and solve their problems. The two conceptualizations by Glanz et al., (2008) and Patel, (2015) concur on their focus that places implementation and intervention stages at the center of the focus of the OD programs. Conceptualized in this manner, OD depicts both a process and strategy that increases Organizational effectiveness by facilitating personal and organizational change through the use of interventions anchored on behavioral science knowledge.

As organizations embrace OD efforts and adopt it as the basis for implementing strategic change, attention needs to shift to what its primary point of focus should be. This is so due to experienced failure levels in organizations despite the heavy investments made by organizations. Empirical evidence shows that not all OD programs have been successful. While evidence exists to show how OD programs have succeeded, there are also incidences where OD efforts failed to meet expected targets Appiah-Adu, kpatattah, Djokoto, and (2016) and Mosadeghrad and Ansarian (2014). Commonly found case studies on OD include those reported by Treacy D.Gilbert wood,C. Kerridge, A, Manning L&ward .R.(2021) relied on data from the Bureau of labor Statistics that pointed out that across the industry the success rate ranged from 30 to 50% while that of failure rate was over 50%. Suhariadi, Purba, and Wicaksono (2015),
George, Walker, and Monster (2019), and Doroshuk (2019) provide empirical evidence of successful OD programs in institutions of higher learning as well as corporate organizations using a variety of performance metrics. Conversely, some authors found that not all OD programs are successful. For example, Mourier and Smith (2001) found a 75% failure rate of strategies among American manufacturing and services organizations. Similarly, Sturdy and Grey (2003) found a 66% failure rate among organizations in meeting objectives through planned strategies. Mosadeghrad and Ansarian (2014) offered explanations on the causes of the high failure rate based on Human resources, Strategic, Contextual, Procedural, and Structural barriers.

Due to these realities, it is the view of the authors that the focus of OD programs should be to generate in-built capability for sustaining the gains earned from the OD process. This capacity propels and reengines the organization’s development strategic orientation thus enabling an organization to function well in a bid to realize its mission and vision (French, Bell & Zawacki, 2008). The capability of the organization should take the form of its ability to adapt, teamwork, vision, and communication that manifest in a way that will enhance core competencies and capability of the organization to gain and sustain competitive advantage (Ceglitski, 2016). This generated capability from the Organization Development programs, therefore, facilitates an organization to attain its strategic fit in the manner it responds to the environmental dictates.

What then should be the form of the capability generated from the OD interventions? In order to address this concern, the paper suggests the need to embrace a behavioral lens in analyzing both the intermediate and ultimate outcomes of an OD program. The behavioral lens takes cognizance of the social nature of the organization that requires a multidisciplinary approach in studying the role of OD interventions or programs (Crucle, S; Klutitmana; T. Meyfroodt; K. & Desmidt, S. (2020). At the intermediate level of outcome, the focus needs to be given to building capacity of systems, processes, personnel, and culture as the supporting pillars to sustained target performance of organizations' high investments in OD programs. At the ultimate level of analysis, the attention is mostly given to the aspect of performance whose key metrics and indicators include improved efficiency, effectiveness, profits, and market share among others.

In considering the intermediate level of the need to build capability, the paper takes note of the prevailing gaps in scholarship where the focus has turned to the ultimate level, which has still not been able to explain why OD programs have registered very high degrees in some of the cases. The paper proposes that by addressing the intermediate level, it provides an opportunity to address this gap and offer plausible explanation to the cause of failures in OD programs. Relying on the behavioral lens therefore, the authors adopted the type of capability generated from OD programs in the form of organization health.

Despite eliciting different conceptualizations from scholars and researchers, there is consensus that organization health sustains targeted performance outcomes from any change program. Fisher (2009) perceives the health of the organization to arise from all the social, psychological, and physiological components of its systems. The approach by Fisher leans towards a systems orientation in which an organization is viewed from a biological lens where the structure of an organization is equated to the skeleton of a living organism, whereas organization health is described as the soft tissues and the muscle that brings the skeleton to life. From this analogy, the structure and health are interlinked and interdependent since the skeleton must be supported by the muscles and soft tissues in order to stand and function well and vice versa. Accordingly, aspects that will define organization health include the ability to adapt, employee commitment, teamwork, skill development, vision, reward and recognition, trust and respect, communication, work-home balance, leadership, succession planning, employee health, and awareness. These components of organizational health are considered critical elements suitable to enhance an organization’s capability to respond to its strategic needs hence improving efficiency by enabling the organization to gain core competencies and capabilities. The study considered the conceptual and theoretical role that the construct of Organization Health can play if integrated into the conceptualization of the phenomenon involving OD and its intended ultimate outcome in an organizational setting as constituting an important component of the phenomenon brought about by the OD process that presents a call for a scholarship to take up in establishing its role in the phenomenon. The current paper proposes to make an attempt towards responding to this call.

The paper focuses on an OD Program implemented in a public sector setting in the form of National Police Service (NPS) reforms and assesses the extent of its implementation, the extent of the attained level of organization health that the system was able to obtain from the reforms and its overall effect in the relationship between the investments in the OD programs and the corresponding performance. Police performance across the world has been a major concern as each police service is expected to be efficient, effective, responsive, and be customer friendly. These have propelled various governments to initiate performance initiatives to realize their missions and visions in their efforts to meet stakeholders’ expectations. In this endeavor, the Kenya Government has in the past years heavily invested in the National Police Service, through the implementation of various performance initiatives aimed at making it more effective, efficient responsive, and productive (Waweru & Maina, 2019). Despite the huge investments in the transformation initiatives aimed at enhancing performance outcomes and the gains realized which included institutional establishment and strengthening, improved capacity building of the staff; legal and structural changes and enhanced operation preparedness, the NPS is still facing challenges and problems associated with performance.

The study identified several gaps that need to be addressed as the scholarship addresses the call to integrate organization health in the phenomenon arising from the application of OD programs in organizations. These touch on the existing synergy between organization development and strategy, the state of extant research on organization health, and research attempting to link organization development and organizational health. With regards to the need for extension of the synergies between strategy and
OD to study the analysis of the OD programs at the intermediate level of outcomes of the OD programs, extant efforts have focused on the antecedents and ultimate levels where attention has been given to the OD programs and performance-related outcomes (Asumeng & Osae-Larbi, 2015). This created gaps in that, explanations for failure or success have not addressed possible reasons emanating from the intermediate level. This study responded to this by adopting a multidisciplinary approach embracing both behavioral science and resource-based schools to study the role of the emergent capability generated from the investment in OD programs. The extant research in organization health has approached it from a behavioral lens which has limited its scope of strategic contribution in explaining organizational outcomes (Cummings & Worley, 2008). By adopting a resource-based lens, the paper conceptualizes organization health as a form of strategic capability and seeks to explain how it emerges from the deployed OD programs as well as its contribution to sustaining the ultimate intended outcomes of the OD programs.

The research was done in both OD and organization health, mostly have conceptualized a direct relationship and ignored the indirect path that will require the role of a mediating condition. Those that were done in organization health included; Mohammadisadr, Siadat, and Arbabisarjou (2012), Shir ali, Feizi and Alipour (2013), Singh (2014), Francesconi and Wouterse (2015), and Montazeri, Ghezelayagh, and Pour (2017) all of which conceptualized organization health as a predictor variable. Even though these studies confirmed the direction of the relationship between the predictor and criterion variables, they failed to consider a possible conceptualization in which it is an intermediate state of outcome that emerges from an antecedent factor. By its nature, organization health serves as a condition prevailing in an organization that derives from an antecedent factor (Francesconi & Wouterse, 2015).

In the context where the study was done, public sector reforms were implemented for several years with the aim of enhancing the capability of the system to improve performance and satisfy citizens’ expectations. In spite of these investments spanning several years, the system has continued to register performance at a level below expectations as it has been characterized by increased criminal cases, public complaints, perceived corruption index, and systematic failure of governance (Hope, 2018; IAU Annual Report, 2017 & 2018; IAU Annual Report, 2019; NPS report, 2017,2018; Transparency International, 2018). The authors in their review of previous research in the NPS did not come across documented empirical evidence on the level of OD achieved by the reforms and the capability the reforms have injected into the NPS system suitable to sustain performance in the medium and long terms (Jonyo, 2015; Tuwai, Kamau, & Kuria, 2015). The study, therefore, sought to answer three questions:

i. What level of OD has been accomplished in the NPS from the implemented public sector reforms?

ii. Is there evidence of some form of emergent capability derived from the level of OD accomplished in the NPS?

iii. What is the empirical and practical effect of the identified emergent capability in the relationship between the OD level achieved and performance of the NPS?

Literature Review

Theoretical Review

The study adopted three theoretical frameworks which included Organizational Assessment Model, Organization Health 12-Factor Model, and Resource-Based View Theory. The proponents of the Institutional and Organizational Assessment (IOA) model were Lusthaus, Anderson, Carden, Adrien, and Montalvan (2002). The aim of the model is to help organizations define the overall performance as well as improve it by analyzing the environment, capacity, and rewarding of their staff. The model, therefore, is composed of four major components including performance, environment, rewarding, and capacity. The model helps an organization in the design of a suitable methodology that helps in the diagnosis of strengths and weaknesses. The theory assumes that there is an interaction between the external and internal environment of organizations which determines their strategic orientations. With these in focus, the components of rewarding, capacity, and external environment of an organization are critical in determining performance levels by enhancing its efficiency, relevance, effectiveness, and financial viability. The components of performance can be measured as follows: efficiency is manifested inaccuracy, the value of service and timeliness and program delivery; effectiveness is demonstrated in mission fulfillment; relevance relates to determining the degree to which the organization adjusts to environmental dynamism and uncertainties; and financial viability is based on an organization’s ability to conduct its financial obligations (Lusthaus et al., 2002).

The proponents of the 12-factors organization health model was Fisher (2009), an organization specialist who recognized the significance of the human element in organizational health. The model prescribes factors affecting the capacity and organizational effectiveness and efficiencies and by extension, improved performance. The assumption of the model is that all the twelve human factors are critical for organizational health. The model asserts that change agents must consider social, sociological, and physiological aspects of organizational health in order to function and grow. It also assumes that prediction and understanding of human behavior in the workplace are critical for the realization of an organization's health sustainability. There are twelve factors discussed under this model, which are categorized under four levels, which include the foundation (leadership, succession planning Employee health), the first level (communication, trust, and respect, and work-home balance), second level (vision, skill development, and rewards and recognition) and third level (ability to adapt, employee commitment and teamwork). From the discussion, organization health sets the climate for a strategy to bring about its result to an organization and hence becomes a competence that sustains the superior performance of an organization. In view of the current research, the organization health model anchors the mediating variable, that is, organization health. This model, therefore, was adopted to establish the mediation relationship between organization development and performance.
The study adopted the Resource based theory which emerged in 1980’s and 1990’s whose proponents were Wernerfelt (1984) and Barney, Wright, and Ketchen (2001). However, its origin can be traced through the “Theory of the Growth of the Firm” by Penrose (1959). The proponents of the theory contended that firms possess resources some of which allow them to attain competitive advantage and another category of resources, which can lead to long-term superior performance (Barney, Wright & Ketchen, 2001). In addition, other researchers as well, posit that resources that are valuable and rare can give rise to the formation of competitive advantage and which can be sustained over a longer period of time to the level that the firm is in a position to guard against the imitation, transfer, and substitution of the resources (Armstrong & Shimizu 2007). The resources that are valuable for strategic management orientation and for the building of a competitive edge with a firm are regarded as strategic resources. These resources are characterized by unique features of imitatibility, immobility, non-suitability, and rarity. The RBV theory over time underwent two strategic phases which included the competitive advantage phase and the sustainability phase. The competitive advantage phase is characterized by a situation in which there is a productive use of the firm’s resources which are valuable, rare, and appropriable (Kauffman, 2015). This phase, therefore, leads to a short-term competitive advantage. The short-term competitive advantage over time leads to a sustainable phase which is characterized by sustainable process and strategic fit processes over time. The phases result in a strategic capability asset base (Mweru & Maina, 2016). This, therefore, makes a firm build strong capabilities and competencies within the firm aimed at enhancing a competitive edge over and above its competitors, Taher, (2021). The theory also postulates that with the resources are combined the creation of capabilities which is regarded as a special type of resources is realized and alternatively, the core competencies are also created Barney, Wright & Ketchen (2001); Nason, and Wiklund (2018) The theory may be regarded as the backbone of an organization’s capability for sustainable strategic management ventures and improved performance.

Empirical Review and Hypothesis Development

Organization Development and Organizational performance

The significance of OD in enhancing the strategic management process and propelling growth and development cannot be underestimated (Witek-Crabb, 2014). Scholars agree that there is a linkage between OD and Organization Performance (Beer, 1980; Cummings and Worley, 2008). While considering the linkage between OD and strategic management, there was a proposition to the effect that the linkage of the two enhances performance to an extent that a simultaneous approach of integrating them into one is needed (Beer & Nohria, 2000). In addition, while scholars such as Cummings and Worley (2008), Church, and Burke, (2017) Glans, Rimer, and Viswanath (2008) conceptualize it as a planned change process as well as strategy manifested as OD diagnosis, action planning, intervention and evaluation which is linked to strategic management, others such as Beer (1980) view it as a system of information, analysis, action planning intervention, and evaluation. These are aimed at enhancing congruence among changing organizational culture, structure, people, process, and strategy with a view to developing new and inventive organizational solutions as well as the ability to self-maintain (Mehta, 2009). These raise implications on the intermediate outcome of OD that should be given scholarly attention as they point to a similar set of attributes as those considered by the proponents of organization health.

Cummings and Worley (2008) presented the strategic change as a new influence on OD’s evolution where organizations and their political, technological, and social environments have become more complex and more unpredictable. On the other hand, Waddell, Cummings, and Worley (2004) contend that OD is characterized by top management support and involvement, the concentration on planned change which accommodates adaptation to the strategic change environment. Various scholars such as Idris, Adekala, and Genty (2014), contend that there is a relationship between organization development and performance, in that, organization development enhances efficiency and effectiveness in an organization, thus improving performance. In addition, scholars such as Cummings and Worley, (2008) posited that organization development enables an organization to address the key goals of its strategic management agenda, therefore, helping an organization to improve its key performance and thereby, enhancing its growth and development. Similarly, the critical role of organization development cannot be gainsaid as put forth by Mkhize, (2017) who emphasized that the use of organization development approaches plays a critical role in improving performance. Thus, in the strategic change process, OD is seen as an investment that needs to be managed with a strategic orientation lens making it a strategic asset. It is in this perspective that OD will enable the organization’s capability and competencies in adapting to its external environment and foster its growth and development (Hastings, & Schwarz, 2022).

A number of studies have provided evidence on the possible contribution of OD to performance. The studies on the success of OD programs include Suhariadi, Purba, and Wicaksono (2015) who focused on OD programs implementations at Airlangga University in relation to change in systems structures and cultures. In addition, a study by Nyaungwa, Linganiso, and Karodia, (2015) focused on OD implementation success rates. The studies used different dimensions to determine the level of success rates in different organizations. On the other hand, studies that focused on failure rates included that of Schaffer and Thomson, (1992); Mosadegghrad and Anasarian, (2014). The study conducted by Suhariadi, Purba, and Wicaksono (2015) on the OD implementation process indicates that change in system, structure, and culture results in some superior performance in Airlangga University such as improved ranking of the university around the globe, increased appraisal performance from the external auditor, robust university culture in new-public management as well as improved overall performance based on human resources.
Despite the evidence on success registered, there have been several incidences of failures on OD programs. In terms of failure rate, a number of studies that have been undertaken over the years indicate a high percentage of failure rate. For instance, a study conducted in 300 electronic companies in the USA, indicated that 63% of them failed in their change programs (Schaffer & Thomson, 1992). Similarly, the failure rate of Total Quality Management (TQM) programs reported by Burrows (1992) indicated a 95% failure rate, and also about 90% of TQM in the USA indicated failure as reported by Crosby (1992). Further, Cândido and Santos, (2015) in regard, to strategy implementation, 50 to 90 percent of strategic initiatives fail and they assert that, although these perspectives have had a noteworthy impact on management theory and practice, they remain controversial. In addition, Mosadeghghrad and Anasarian (2014), contended that over the years even though there could be methodological gaps and weaknesses of the studies undertaken, the failure rate of over 70% of organization programs have been reported. Thus, the increasing failure rate has been a growing concern among change agents, consultants, and strategic leaders which has prompted the need to find solutions to the barriers to the change process. Mosadeghghrad and Anasarian, (2014) observed that the failures of OD implementations programs have been attributed to a number of factors among them; lack of communication to the agents of change which fail to create awareness about the need for change among employees, and lack of leadership commitment to the strategic change process. Other factors include insufficient education and training, employees' apathy, inadequate management support, poor leadership, inappropriate organizational culture, inadequate resources, poor communication, inappropriate planning, insufficient customer focus, and lack of a monitoring and measurement system.

The role of the Emergent Capability

OD can be viewed from a strategic standpoint as constituting a strategic investment by an organization that would be categorized as part of the strategic decisions. Strategic decisions focus on the future of organizations and require relatively high percentages of the organization's resources. The resource-based view considers the investments as strategic assets that are deployed to give organizations the required capability in their systems to sustain competitive advantage in the medium and long-term periods. In considering the success rate of OD programs, it becomes necessary to address the question as to how OD programs can be managed to inject into systems of organizations the inbuilt capability to sustain the momentum for change, remains strategically focused, and aligned to the pursuit of the desired vision. Teece and Pisano (2003) conceptualized the term capability to revolve around the key role in strategic management of appropriately adapting, integrating, and reconfiguring the internal environment of an organization. In view of shifting environments, organizations are called upon to develop firm-specific capabilities suitable to enable them to respond to the shifts in the external environment.

Organization Development considered from a behavioral lens offers a glimpse into how its outcomes in an organizational setting could give rise to conditions that are of strategic importance to organizations that would be core drivers of the strategic pursuits of organizations such as flexibility, intentional emergence of goals, leadership system and organization climate (Robbins & Judge, 2015); Buchanan and Huczynski, (2013). Fisher (2009)'s approach postulated a connection between OD and organization health by pointing at the areas of organizational health that change agents need to focus on. The approach that viewed organization health in terms of the capacity and effectiveness of organizations called on change agents to focus on attaining a state of health that is supported by leadership, leadership development, trust, communication, vision, ability to adapt, commitment, and teamwork. Harjinati and Gustomo (2017) in their approach to organization health identified three clusters of organization health focusing on internal alignment, quality of execution, and capacity for renewal whose specific components stretch from vision, strategy, culture, and climate, service delivery, adaptation to its external environment and strategic fitness. The work identifies the aspects of capabilities as a key indicator of organization health.

According to Lencioni (2012), organization health essentially makes organizations effectively function through instilling a cohesive leadership team, establishing clarity among those leaders, timely communication, and putting in place just enough structures to strengthen that clarity going forward. In this view, the components of organization health as an ongoing process of continuous development include leading effectively, building vibrant morale, mastering communication, learning, and evolving. On the other hand, Orvik and Axelsson (2012), conceptualize organizational health in terms of how an organization deals with strategic challenges and dynamic environmental factors which are competing. The ability to function well is propelled by the availability of resources which Madhani (2010) contends that the most critical part of an organization is to interpret and analyze its internal resources and lay emphasis on the resources and capabilities in strategy formulation to realize sustainable competitive advantage.

The Behavioral scientists in considering some of the justifying factors for the adoption of OD have identified features of organization health that touch on clarity of goals, a structure that is clearly linked to goals, flexible forward planning, learning opportunities, environmental scanning, and responsiveness to the environment, proactiveness in external relations (Robbins & Judge 2015; Huczynski & Buchanan, 2013). These attributes have been considered from the RBV perspective as representing an intermediate state that derives from the resource investments which give some form of capability. There is therefore a clear conceptual connection between what has been conceptualized as organization health on the one hand from the behavioral perspective of OD and the types of capabilities that can emerge from the OD process when viewed from the strategic lens of the RBV. Based on this logic, the paper considered that both the RBV and the behavioral perspective would be suitable in guiding conceptualization of investigations that seek to identify the resident potential in an OD program to generate capabilities that can sustain the gains that an organization obtains from investments in an OD program. The study, therefore, conceptualized organization health as the form of capability that would constitute an intermediate state of outcome from the OD initiatives in the public sector reforms initiated by the NPS.
Extant research however has not considered this possibility so as to model the role of organization health as a mediating factor when linking OD programs to performance. The review of previous researches found that even though different researchers have undertaken to investigate the role played by organization health with regard to the performance of an organization, the conceptualization has mostly focused on the construct playing the role of an independent variable in relation to outcomes such as performance, organization commitment, SME growth, psychological empowerment (Mohammadisadri, Siadat, & Arbabisarjou, 2012; Shiriali, Feizi and Alipour, 2013; Singh, 2014; Francesconi and Wouterse, 2015; Montazeri, Ghezelayagh & Pour, 2017). Even though across these studies, organization health is found to contribute positively to the respective dependent variables it was related to, what the studies failed to address is the question of where it derives from given that by its nature of existence and definition, it depicts a condition resident in an organization that would arise in a secondary form from a primary factor. Therefore, in response to this conceptual and subsequent empirical gap, the study proposed that in an OD situation, the components of the OD program when implemented would result in a suitable capability related to intermediate outcomes that take the form of organization health. Thus organization health was conceptualized to serve the role of a mediating variable in the current study. Using this logic, it was possible for the authors to propose a number of hypotheses. The study, therefore, proposed the following hypotheses for consideration, that:

**H1:** The implemented public sector reforms have achieved a sufficient level of OD that explains a significant level of the variation in the NPS performance.

**H2:** There is an intermediate level capability outcome from the achieved level of OD that is positively related to the level of OD achieved.

**H3:** The intermediate level capability outcome emerging from the OD level is positively related with the level of performance the NPS has attained from the public sector reform program.

**H4:** The emergent intermediate level capability outcome from the OD program mediates the effect of the OD program on the performance attained from the OD program.

**Research and Methodology**

**Study Context and population**

The research was conducted in the National Police Service in Kenya. The National Police Service in Kenya is composed of three services namely, the Kenya Police service, the Administration Police Service, and the office of Director Criminal Investigations (DCI). In terms of operations, the Command structure is decentralized into 47 counties and 8 regions under the command and control of county commanders and Regional Police Commanders respectively. The target population for the study was composed of 1,111 senior officers of the National Police Service of the ranks of PG5-PG11. The total population was distributed to the various job groups as PG11 (30), PG10 (62), PG9 (105), PG8 (57), PG7 (94), PG6 (357), and PG5 (406). The study selected the Nairobi Metropolitan region that comprises five counties of Nairobi city, Kiambu, Machakos, Muranga, and Kajiado. A sample of 294 officers was obtained using Slovin's formula (Ellen, 2020) and distributed to each county through a proportionate stratified sampling method.

**Research Design**

The study’s designs were both explanatory and descriptive which enhanced the determination of causal relationships between variables and the explanation of patterns identified in variables respectively (Saunders *et al.*, 2009; Zikmund, Carr & Giffin, 2013). The research design was found appropriate because it facilitated the collection of quantitative data and the testing of hypotheses to make inferences in answering the research questions. The research used both explanatory and descriptive research designs because according to Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2009) no single research design can give optimum results in isolation as each of them complements one another. Based on this assertion, explanatory research design assisted the researcher to determine causal relationships between the variables of the research (Saunders *et al.*, 2009). The descriptive research design also was suitable in describing the characteristics of a particular individual, or a group of individuals since the researcher did not have control over the variables (Siedlecki, 2020).

**Research Data and Analysis**

The data was collected using a structured questionnaire which was pilotied prior to administering in the field and was found to be reliable. Variables were operationalized using indicators obtained from the conceptual and theoretical literature and questions presented to respondents were structured on a 5-point Likert scale for them to indicate the extent to which each of the independent variables had been implemented, state of the realized attribute of the mediating variable, and the level of actual performance attained of the dependent variable. The questionnaires were administered through a drop and pick method. Telephone calls were made prior to dropping the questionnaires in the respective regions where a serving officer was adopted as a research assistant to whom the purpose of the research was explained. The research assistants distributed the questionnaires after telephone calls to each sampled respondent, explained to each, and agreed on a date to collect the filled questionnaires. All the filled questionnaires were collected from the respective regions by the researchers and coded for processing.
The responses were first summarized using descriptive statistics after which inferential analysis was carried out involving various diagnostic tests and tests of hypotheses using linear regression models. The diagnostic test results and instrument reliability score are reported in Table 1. Hypotheses 1-3 were tested using a simple linear regression after computing a composite index of the independent and dependent variables based on the harmonic mean relying on a version of the formula derived from Kilika (2012), Kilika, K'O buryo, Ogutu, and Munyoki (2016). Hypothesis 4 required several regression analyses as guided by Baron and Kenny (1986). The first of the three steps in the process answered hypotheses 1-3 while the last step required a multiple regression model involving the independent, dependent, and mediating variables.

### Table 1: Diagnostic test and reliability test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Test</th>
<th>Measures</th>
<th>Results</th>
<th>Interpretations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Multicollinearity</td>
<td>VIF</td>
<td>VIF &lt; 10</td>
<td>No multicollinearity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heteroscedasticity</td>
<td>Breush-pagan</td>
<td>P &gt; 0.05</td>
<td>No heteroscedasticity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Normality</td>
<td>Shapiro- Wilk test</td>
<td>P &gt; 0.05</td>
<td>Normally distributed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sample adequacy</td>
<td>Bartlett’s Test of Sphericity</td>
<td>KMO = 0.717</td>
<td>The research sample was adequate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO)</td>
<td>Bartlett’s Test  = 0.000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linearity</td>
<td>Pearson’s correlation coefficient</td>
<td>r &gt; 0</td>
<td>Positive linear relationship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reliability</td>
<td>α Organization Development</td>
<td>0.958</td>
<td>Reliable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>α Organizational Performance</td>
<td>0.938</td>
<td>Reliable</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>α Organization health</td>
<td>0.938</td>
<td>Reliable</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Research Findings

#### Characteristics of the Respondents

In respect to demographic statistics, the majority of the respondents were male-only accounting for 23%. Education-wise, respondents with bachelor’s degrees and higher qualifications accounted for 53.6% followed by those with A-level education at 6.1% while form two and form one drop-out accounted for 0.4% of the respondents. The correspondence of the respondents also shows that in terms of the county from which the respondents were drawn, 57.6%, 18.7%, 7.2%, 9.4%, and 7.2% were drawn from Nairobi, Kiambu, Kajiado, Machakos, and Muranga Counties respectively. Statistics further showed that of the three branches that make up NPS, Kenya Police Service, Administration Police and Director of Criminal Investigation accounted for 55.8%, 30.2%, and 14% of the respondents respectively. Regarding the respondents’ ranks, 2.5%, 5.8%, 9.4%, 8.3%, 4.3%, 31.7% and 38.1% for PG5, 1-5 years, 1-10 years, 11-20 years, 21-25 years, 25-30 years and above years respectively.

#### Level of OD Achieved by the NPS Reforms

Four components of OD were assessed from the reform program implemented in NPS in terms of the extent to which the reform programs had emphasized and implemented related activities in the various functions of the NPS both at the headquarters and in the regions where the bulk of the NPS work is undertaken. There were several items presented to the respondents drawn from the NPS service charter and the relevant supporting conceptual and theoretical literature underpinning OD practice. The responses obtained from the 5-point Likert scale are summarized in Table 2.

### Table 2: Extent of Organization development intervention (OD)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>No of Items in Questionnaire</th>
<th>Mean Score</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
<th>Extent of OD achieved</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>OD Diagnosis</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3.05</td>
<td>1.05</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OD Action Planning</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.01</td>
<td>1.05</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OD Intervention</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3.03</td>
<td>1.09</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OD Evaluation</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.95</td>
<td>1.09</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aggregate</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>3.01</td>
<td>1.07</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Based on the summarized statistics in Table 2, the four OD components were found to be implemented to a moderate extent. The least emphasized was evaluation which was slightly below 3. Therefore, the level of OD achieved in the NPS from the reform program was a moderate extent.

#### Level of Emergent Capability Generated

Emergent capability generated from the level of OD achieved from the NPS reforms was assessed using components of organization health. The construct of organization health was measured using four components of ability to adapt, teamwork, vision, and communication. The respondents were required to indicate the extent to which they had observed aspects associated with each of the dimensions of organization health to have become a defining characteristic of the NPS system since the reform process was initiated. The responses obtained from the 5-point Likert scale were summarized using means and standard deviations in Table 3.
Table 3: Level of Emergent Capability

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimension of Capability</th>
<th>No of Items in Questionnaire</th>
<th>Mean Score</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
<th>Level of Capacity attained</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ability to adapt</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.39</td>
<td>0.99</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teamwork</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.42</td>
<td>0.98</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vision</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.44</td>
<td>0.97</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.49</td>
<td>0.91</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aggregate</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>3.44</td>
<td>0.96</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The results show that the level of emergent capability observed by the respondents to have become a defining feature of the NPS after the reforms were implemented was at a moderate level. The standard deviation was relatively low to imply that there was a high concurrence among the respondents on what was observed as the intermediate outcome from the investments in the NPS reforms to support the achieved level of OD.

Level of Organizational Performance Achieved

Organizational performance was assessed using four metrics: customer satisfaction, efficiency, effectiveness, and responsiveness. The respondents were required to refer to records on performance in their respective areas of jurisdiction and comment on the level of performance that had been attained as a result of the implementation of the NPS reforms. The responses obtained using the Likert scale are presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Organizational Performance achieved from the level of OD attained

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimension of Performance</th>
<th>No of Items in Questionnaire</th>
<th>Mean Score</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
<th>Level of Capacity attained</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Customer Satisfaction</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.85</td>
<td>1.02</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Efficiency</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2.94</td>
<td>1.08</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effectiveness</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3.08</td>
<td>1.02</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responsiveness</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.10</td>
<td>1.04</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aggregate</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>2.99</td>
<td>1.04</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The level of performance attained from the NPS reforms was at the moderate level. The lowest scored area was customer satisfaction while responsiveness was the highest-rated.

Role of Emergent Capability

In determining the empirical and practical role of emergent capability, the analysis required that first, the study establish whether there is any effect of the achieved level of OD on the realized performance, determine whether the achieved OD has any effect on the emergent capability and whether the emergent capability has any effect on the realized performance obtained from the investments in the OD program. Models 1-3 provide the results of the analyses for these concerns. The role of the emergent capability was empirically assessed in the form of the possibility of the emergent capability being a mediating variable in the relationship between the achieved level of OD and the level of realized performance. Four regression analyses were performed to test the four hypotheses of the study. The results of the regression analyses are presented in Table 5. Model 4 addresses this concern while the ultimate decision on whether there is evidence of mediation was done using a comparison of the behavior of the regression parameters between models 1 and 4.

Table 5: Test of Hypotheses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regression Parameter</th>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Model 1</th>
<th>Model 2</th>
<th>Model 3</th>
<th>Model 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>R Squared</td>
<td>0.182</td>
<td>0.392</td>
<td>0.038</td>
<td>0.190</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjusted R²</td>
<td>0.179</td>
<td>0.389</td>
<td>0.035</td>
<td>0.185</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F Value</td>
<td>61.499</td>
<td>177.629</td>
<td>11.045</td>
<td>32.357</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>β Constant</td>
<td>0.874</td>
<td>0.316</td>
<td>2.808</td>
<td>0.915</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B Organization Development</td>
<td>0.427*</td>
<td>0.626*</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.500*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B Organization Health</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.196*</td>
<td>-0.177***</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>H1 Supported</td>
<td>H2 Supported</td>
<td>H3 supported</td>
<td>H4 supported. There is evidence of the partial mediating effect of Emergent Capacity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Model 1, indicates that the adjusted R Square (Adjusted $R^2 = 0.179$) implies that the achieved level of OD from the NPS reforms explains 17.9% of the variation in the realized performance. The other 82.1% of the variation is attributed to other factors which have been excluded from the empirical model. The regression model predicting the effect of OD on performance is significant ($F=61.499; P=0.000$). The coefficient for OD is positive and significant at $p<0.05$. Hypothesis 1 of the study is therefore supported and leads to the conclusion that the achieved level of OD from the NPS reforms has a significant positive effect on NPS performance. The results of Model 2, indicate that the adjusted R Square (Adjusted $R^2 = 0.389$) implies that the achieved level of OD from the NPS reforms explains 38.9% of the variation in the emergent capability. The other 61.1% of the variation is attributed to other factors which have been excluded from the empirical model. The regression model predicting the effect of OD on emergent capacity is significant ($F=177.629; P=0.000$). The coefficient for OD is positive and significant at $p<0.000$. Hypothesis 2 of the study is therefore supported and leads to the conclusion that the achieved level of OD from the NPS reforms has a significant positive effect on the level of emergent capability derived from the deployment of OD through the NPS reforms. In Model 3, it is observed that the adjusted R Square (Adjusted $R^2 = 0.035$ implying that the emergent capability derived from OD explains 3.5% of the variation in the realized performance. The regression model predicting the effect of OD on performance is significant ($F=11.045; P=0.001$). The coefficient for Emergent Capability is positive and significant at $p<0.05$. Hypothesis 3 of the study is therefore supported and leads to the conclusion that the emergent capacity from the NPS reforms has a significant positive effect on NPS performance.

The results presented in model 4 indicate that when the mediating variable is introduced, the adjusted $R^2$ is 0.185 representing a positive increase by 0.006, and implies that the independent variable has a higher explanatory power when the mediating variable is present. The regression model is significant with $F=32.357; P=0.000$. The coefficient for the independent variable is positive and significant and increased by 0.073 points implying that the effect of OD on performance is greater when the emergent capability is included. The coefficient of the emergent capability is 0.196. It is observed that the coefficients for the independent and mediating variables are significant in all the models. Using the criteria for decision-making on statistical mediation by Baron and Kenny (1986), there is evidence of partial mediation. Hypothesis 4 is therefore supported and the study makes the conclusion that the strength of the effect of OD on performance depends on the level of emergent capability derived from the deployment of the various public sector reforms.

**Discussions and Implications**

The focus of the study was to address three concerns. The results presented in the previous section are discussed in line with these questions the study sought to answer. The first concern touched on establishing the level of OD accomplished in the NPS from the implemented public sector reforms. The descriptive results on the four components of OD that were measured indicated that they were rated by the respondents at the level of moderate. Thus, it is observed that the designers and implementers of the public sector reforms have attempted to bring about an atmosphere of OD within the NPS which sets a good stage for the NPS to be strategically aligned in the pursuit of its mission. Even though OD is mostly designed and implemented along with models that lean towards a behavioral orientation, it serves as an essential technique that enables organizations to implement strategic change in a way that enhances strategic fitness in the context of the operation of each organization. The strategic alignment is evident from similarities in the process of OD and that of strategic management where the initial steps inject attributes of strategic thinking into the process thus embedding OD into strategic thinking. To the extent that a moderate level of OD is registered in the reforms, this sends a message about the NPS becoming more strategic in the manner of planning and execution of its programs.

The second concern addressed by the paper regards whether there is evidence of some form of emergent capability being derived from the achieved level of OD. This emergent capability was measured in terms of components of organization health that bear characteristics of capabilities. The findings indicated that the four indicators measured in the research were rated at the level of moderate indicating that the mean score of what the respondents considered to have emerged from the implemented reforms to become a defining feature of the NPS system was at the mean level of M≤3. The specific types of capabilities the research sought to establish whether they had been realized from the level of OD attained were those touching on vision, adaptability, teamwork, and communication. In the current research, the research instrument presented four indicators of ability to adapt, teamwork, vision, and communication. Therefore, the mean value of 3 gives evidence to the effect that some form of capability emerged from the level of OD achieved by the public sector reforms. Further the realized level of capability when regressed as the dependent variable against OD showed a correlation of 0.392 and a positive effect with a coefficient of 0.626. The explained level of variation and the significant beta value show association between OD and the emergent capability. The level of capability when used as an independent variable and regressed against performance explained 3.5% of its variation and had a significant positive contribution. In view of this empirical analysis combining the descriptive statistics and the regression results in models 2 and 3, we find evidence of the existence of an emergent capability taking the form of organization health in the public sector reforms implemented in the NPS.

The last concern of the paper addressed the effect of the emergent capability on the relationship between OD and performance. The concern was twofold, first the empirical and secondly the practical. In terms of the empirical, it was interpreted and concluded that the emergent capability serves as a mediating variable in the relationship between OD and performance. Theoretically, a mediating factor is one that surfaces between the time the independent variable starts acting on the dependent and the time when the impact is felt (Sekaran, 2003). The empirical evidence provided indicated that the effect of OD on performance increased by 0.073 points when the emergent capability was introduced into the model and the explanatory power of the model increased by 0.04 when the mediating
variable was introduced. Through this empirical analysis, the paper provides evidence of mediating role of organization health on the relationship between OD and performance. Thus, in investigating the effect of OD, it would be appropriate to conceptualize the emergent capability of organization health as a mediating variable.

The practical aspect of the concern derives from this empirical role of organization health as a mediating variable. It sends the implication that the contribution of OD to performance depends on the level of organizational health that the implementers are able to obtain from the dimensions of OD. In the current study, the descriptive statistics indicated that the level of OD realized from the public sector reforms measured in terms of the four OD components was at a moderate level and similarly resulted in a corresponding moderate level of organizational health. The fact that the coefficient of OD improved as well as the level of performance explained in the mediated relationship offers the logic that the existing relationship between OD and performance depends on the level of the emergent capability generated from the OD efforts.

In this regard, the paper is of the suggestion that the OD initiatives in the organization need to focus on generating higher levels of capability as a possible factor for sustaining the gains expected from the OD programs. In considering the components of this capability, it makes sense to argue that the emergent capability will serve to sustain the expected gains: the ability to adapt, communicate, vision, and teamwork. Based on the logic of the theoretical underpinnings of the study, the study draws an inference from both the systems theory and the RBV. Systems theory focuses on synergy, integration, and networking all of which require the presence of the components of the emergent capability in ensuring systems interconnectedness and functionality. The RBV on the other hand argues for embeddedness, configuration, orchestration, heterogeneity as aspects that need to be cultivated among resources to attain the VRION criteria that will raise the resources from ordinary into the state of strategic. Since OD programs incur huge percentages of investments, it will make economic sense when the OD program best operates under the auspices of strategic change to enable organizations to acquire these characteristics of strategic resources as a means of sustaining the desired expectations of the implemented OD program. By doing so, the paper offers a possible explanation to the cause of failure rate in OD programs based on the potential derived from the emergent capability. The explanation is based on the discovery that OD needs to focus on the capability of systems in an organization where it is implemented so that the inbuilt capability will be able to drive the OD process when it is ongoing and sustain the initiated efforts after the implementation period is over. According to the model by Kurt Lewin based on the three stages of unfreeze, change and refreeze, the change program has a time frame. When the implementation period is over, how are the gains meant to be sustained? The study suggests that the capability injected into the organizational system on the people, culture, leadership and processes during the three stages of the OD implementation is what will sustain the momentum for the intended goals for the OD once the implementation period is over.

These discussions raise a number of practical implications for organizations. First is the need to embrace a strategic orientation when preparing for and carrying out OD programs. Based on the synergy between OD and strategy as well as the potential capability the OD promises, managers will achieve better results from the OD program by ensuring that OD is approached as part of the organization's strategic management process. Secondly, the study finds an implication based on how to execute the various components of OD. The attention of the paper is drawn to three components of a diagnosis, action planning, and evaluation. During the diagnosis stage, the concerned team will need to do a thorough analysis of the situation calling for change so that the organization's strategic imperatives are harmonized with the OD process at its inception. Due to the synergy referred to of OD with strategy, during the action planning stage, the planners need to ensure targets are set not only for the ultimate outcome stage but also for the intermediate so that during the last stage of evaluation, the evaluation is not only done for the ultimate but also for the intermediate. This way, the organization will obtain early signals about the experience and the possibility of challenges arising that can be addressed early to stem the high failure rates.

Conclusion

The study addressed three concerns touching on the level of OD achieved from the public sector reforms implemented in the NPS, whether there is evidence on emergent capability derived from the OD level achieved, and the empirical and practical implications of this emergent capability. The findings reported in this study lead to several conclusions. First, the public sector reforms have achieved a moderate level of OD that the study considers embedding a strategic orientation in the programs undertaken by the NPS. Second, there is evidence about a moderate level of emergent capability being realized in the NPS systems that have taken the form of organizational health. Thirdly, the emergent capability mediates the effect of the realized level of OD on the performance of the NPS. The emergent capability is considered suitable for consideration in helping organizations minimize the possibility of a high failure rate of OD programs since it gives organizations an opportunity to obtain early signals on the progress of the OD program implementation for timely action in minimizing the likelihood of failure. Thus, organizations will require to align the OD program activities with the strategic management processes and monitor progress not only at the ultimate outcome level but also at the intermediate outcome level.

The findings of the study however have some limitations. The findings are based on respondents' opinions of their observations and experiences during the reforms process. Due to the biases that opinions may have, the authors are of the view that quantitative data on the events as they occurred during the reform process would give a more objective set of data whose results could be much easier to generalize. In addition, the findings are based on a quantitative analysis approach which limited the author's ability to obtain qualitative data suitable to explain the behavior of the variables as per the study context. The study calls on future research to consider
investigating the role that the emergent capability will play using a mixed-method approach whereby both qualitative and quantitative data are obtained and considered for analysis. In the same breadth, future research can expand the scope of the conceptualization of the mediating variable beyond the four indicators that were used in this study.

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Data Availability Statement: The data presented in this study are available on request from the corresponding author. The data are not publicly available due to privacy.

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References


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