Influence of Organisational Culture on Performance of Professional Regulatory Bodies in Kenya

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Abstract
Professional regulatory bodies in Kenya operate under statutory mandates and are expected to deliver timely services, enforce professional standards and maintain public confidence. Concerns about operational inefficiency, inconsistent compliance enforcement and weak stakeholder confidence make it necessary to examine the internal cultural conditions associated with their performance. This study examined the influence of organisational culture on the performance of professional regulatory bodies headquartered in Nairobi, focusing on core values and behaviours, shared commitment, and creativity and innovation. Performance was understood in terms of service delivery efficiency, stakeholder satisfaction, learning and growth, and internal processes rather than commercial profitability. The study was guided by Strategic Leadership Theory as a background explanation of how leaders may sustain culture. The target population comprised representatives from 28 regulatory bodies that were members of APSEA as of December 2025. A purposive role-based sample of 140 respondents was selected, with five representatives drawn from each body. Composite scores were computed for organisational culture and organisational performance and analysed using descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation and simple linear regression. Organisational culture was positively and significantly associated with performance (r = .694, p < .001) and explained 48.1% of the variance in performance (R^2 = .481). The findings indicate that organisational culture is an important institutional foundation for performance, highlighting the need to strengthen shared values, employee commitment and innovation-supportive practices.

Introduction

Organisational culture is an important factor in explaining the performance of professional regulatory bodies because it shapes how employees interpret institutional mandates, interact with stakeholders, make decisions, and respond to change. Organisational culture refers to the shared values, beliefs, norms, and behaviours that define an organisation's character and identity (Akpa et al., 2021). It provides the informal system through which employees understand acceptable conduct, institutional priorities, and expected performance standards. In professional regulatory bodies, culture is especially important because these institutions are expected to safeguard public-interest, enforce professional standards, promote ethical conduct, and maintain public confidence.

In this setting, organisational performance is a multidimensional outcome reflected in how effectively an institution uses its resources, fulfils stakeholder expectations, develops its internal capabilities and maintains efficient operational processes (Gagai, 2022; Hera et al., 2024). The balanced scorecard provides an appropriate basis for assessing these outcomes because it integrates financial, customer, learning and growth, and internal business process perspectives within a single view of organisational effectiveness (Oyewo et al., 2022). For professional regulatory bodies, these dimensions are reflected in prudent financial management and budget compliance, stakeholder satisfaction and responsiveness, continuous employee development and institutional learning, and the efficiency of regulatory and administrative processes (Cernisevs et al., 2023; Soomro et al., 2021; Mingaleva et al., 2022; Charles & Ochieng, 2023). Performance in this context therefore extends beyond profitability to include the sustainable fulfilment of statutory and public-service responsibilities.

A strong organisational culture supports performance by aligning employee behaviour with institutional goals. Cultural values such as transparency, accountability, integrity, professionalism, collaboration, and innovation influence how regulatory bodies execute their mandates and engage with stakeholders (Lekisima, 2022). When these values are embedded in daily practice, they enhance consistency in decision-making, strengthen internal cohesion, and support responsible service delivery. Culture also acts as a social control mechanism by guiding behaviour beyond formal rules and procedures, thereby helping institutions maintain ethical and performance-oriented conduct (Akpamah et al., 2021).

Strategic leaders play a central role in shaping and sustaining organisational culture. Leaders set the tone for acceptable behaviour, communicate institutional values, model expected conduct, and reinforce practices that support the achievement of strategic objectives (Cherian et al., 2021). In regulatory institutions, a leadership-driven culture is important because employees must balance compliance enforcement, stakeholder service, professional ethics, and institutional accountability. A culture that promotes shared commitment can strengthen employee motivation and teamwork, while a culture that encourages creativity and innovation can improve adaptability, responsiveness, and long-term institutional effectiveness.

In this study, organisational culture was conceptualised in terms of three constructs: core values and behaviours, shared commitment, and creativity and innovation. Core values and behaviours reflect the principles and visible practices that define what the organisation stands for and how members are expected to act (Zeb et al., 2021). Shared commitment reflects the extent to which employees identify with institutional goals and are willing to contribute toward their achievement (Rahmatullah et al., 2022). Creativity and innovation capture the organisation's openness to new ideas, experimentation, adaptability, and continuous improvement (Okwata et al., 2022). These three constructs provide a useful basis for examining how culture contributes to performance in professional regulatory bodies.

Professional regulatory bodies in Kenya work under statutory mandates and considerable public scrutiny. Evidence from the Kenyan regulatory environment points to implementation difficulties, resource constraints, coordination challenges, inconsistent enforcement of compliance, and weaknesses in service standards that can affect institutional legitimacy and stakeholder confidence (KIPPRA, 2023; Kiogora & Ngeno, 2024). These conditions make organisational culture consequential because regulatory performance depends on employees consistently applying standards of accountability, collaboration and adaptability. Findings from private firms cannot be transferred uncritically to these institutions: professional regulatory bodies pursue statutory and public-interest outcomes rather than commercial profitability and remain accountable to government, regulated professionals and citizens. Limited empirical evidence has examined whether a culture combining core values and behaviours, shared commitment, and creativity and innovation is associated with the performance of professional regulatory bodies in Kenya. This study, therefore, examined the influence of organisational culture on the performance of professional regulatory bodies headquartered in Nairobi.

Theoretical Framework

This study was anchored on Strategic Leadership Theory, particularly its recognition of sustaining an effective organisational culture as a strategic leadership dimension (Hitt et al., 2016; Shafique et al., 2021). From this theoretical position, organisational culture is reflected in core values and behaviours, shared commitment, and creativity and innovation, through which strategic priorities are embedded in institutional practices and day-to-day behaviour. Accordingly, the study examines organisational culture as the specific strategic leadership dimension associated with organisational performance.

Within this theoretical framing, organisational culture provides a basis for understanding how shared assumptions and institutional expectations guide organisational behaviour. Schein (2017) explains organisational culture as shared assumptions that develop as members solve problems of internal integration and external adaptation. This means that culture helps employees understand what is valued, how decisions are made, and how the organisation responds to environmental demands. Denison and Mishra (1995) further argue that strong and adaptive cultures influence effectiveness by promoting involvement, consistency, adaptability, and mission orientation. Recent evidence from public entities similarly indicates that organisational culture is important in strategy implementation and organisational performance (Gasela, 2022). These ideas are useful in professional regulatory bodies, where performance depends on internal cohesion, employee commitment, adaptability, and external legitimacy.

Within this framework, the three dimensions examined in the study are treated as complementary expressions of organisational culture that shape institutional behaviour and adaptability. Strategic Leadership Theory, therefore, provides a suitable basis for explaining how organisational culture may influence the performance of professional regulatory bodies in Kenya.

Empirical Review

Empirical literature generally supports the view that organisational culture is related to organisational performance. Akpa et al. (2021) found a strong positive relationship between supportive organisational culture and improved performance, indicating that culture can influence how employees behave, collaborate, and pursue institutional goals. Their findings are relevant to the current study because professional regulatory bodies depend on shared values and coordinated behaviour to enforce standards, serve stakeholders, and maintain public confidence. However, Akpa et al. focused largely on general organisational settings, which limits direct application to professional regulatory bodies. This distinction is important because regulatory bodies operate under statutory mandates, political pressures, public scrutiny, and compliance obligations that may affect the ways in which culture shapes performance.

The alignment between organisational culture and strategic objectives has also been emphasised in the literature. Akpa et al. (2021) reported that organisations with stronger alignment between culture and strategy experienced improved performance. This supports the argument that culture is valuable when it reinforces institutional goals rather than when it exists as a set of abstract values. In professional regulatory bodies, cultural alignment may be reflected in employees' commitment to public-interest, fairness in regulatory decisions, responsiveness to stakeholders, and willingness to adapt to policy and technological changes. Gagné et al. (2022) also found that organisations that prioritised stakeholder engagement and collaboration improved legitimacy and effectiveness. This is particularly relevant to regulatory institutions because their performance depends not only on internal operations but also on how regulated professionals, government agencies, and the public perceive their credibility and fairness.

Core values and behaviours are a major dimension of organisational culture. Zeb et al. (2021) describe core values and behaviours as the visible principles and practices that define what an organisation stands for and how members are expected to behave. Blokland and Reniers (2021) found that value alignment was positively associated with organisational performance, suggesting that organisations perform better when employees' behaviours reflect institutional values. Akpa et al. (2021) similarly showed that deeply embedded values improve employee alignment with organisational goals. In professional regulatory bodies, values such as transparency, accountability, professionalism, and integrity are particularly important because they influence public trust and regulatory legitimacy. Udeh et al. (2024) further showed that accountability mechanisms reduce unethical practices and inefficiencies, while Sofyani et al. (2022) linked transparency and accountability to improved trust and collaboration. These studies support the expectation that core values and behaviours can contribute to organisational performance by strengthening internal discipline, stakeholder confidence, and consistency in service delivery.

Shared commitment is another important cultural construct. Rahmatullah et al. (2022) define shared commitment as the collective purpose and emotional attachment that unite members around common objectives. Na-Nan et al. (2021) found that shared commitment and related factors such as job satisfaction and organisational citizenship behaviour explained a substantial proportion of job performance. Similarly, Wiguna et al. (2022) reported that organisational commitment improved employee performance. These findings are relevant because professional regulatory bodies rely on employee motivation, teamwork, and willingness to pursue institutional goals beyond routine compliance. Park et al. (2022) further observed that transformational leadership strengthens the effect of commitment on performance, suggesting that leadership support is important in converting shared commitment into improved results. In the Kenyan regulatory context, shared commitment may be particularly important when institutions face resource limitations, public pressure, and complex mandates that require employees to work collaboratively toward common objectives.

Creativity and innovation also form a key part of organisational culture. Okwata et al. (2022) define creativity and innovation as a cultural orientation toward experimentation, risk-taking, and the generation of new ideas. Rumanti et al. (2023) found that creativity improved productivity, efficiency, and adaptability, while Razzaque et al. (2024) linked innovation to competitiveness and organisational performance. These findings are important for professional regulatory bodies because regulatory environments are changing due to digitalisation, emerging technologies, and new stakeholder expectations. Challoumis (2024) similarly presents innovation as an important driver of technological advancement, productivity and economic growth within evolving economic and regulatory systems. Ye et al. (2022) showed that transformational leadership strengthens the influence of innovation on performance, while Barrane et al. (2021) highlighted stakeholder engagement as important in maximising the benefits of innovation. Farida and Setiawan (2022) also connected innovation with resilience and adaptability. Together, these studies suggest that creativity and innovation can help professional regulatory bodies remain responsive, improve service delivery, and sustain long-term institutional effectiveness.

Overall, the reviewed literature shows that organisational culture can influence performance through values-based conduct, employee commitment, innovation, adaptability, and stakeholder trust. However, most studies have been conducted in private-sector, corporate, or general public-sector settings, leaving limited evidence on professional regulatory bodies in Kenya. This study addressed this gap by examining organisational culture through core values and behaviours, shared commitment, and creativity and innovation, and by testing its influence on organisational performance among professional regulatory bodies in Kenya.

Method

This study adopted a descriptive correlational research design. The design was appropriate because the study sought to describe respondents' perceptions of organisational culture and organisational performance, and to determine the statistical relationship between the two variables, without manipulating the study environment. Descriptive correlational designs are suitable where the researcher intends to examine the direction, strength and significance of relationships among variables as they occur naturally (Saunders et al., 2019).

The study was conducted among professional regulatory bodies headquartered in Nairobi County, Kenya. Nairobi was selected because it hosts the national headquarters of most professional regulatory institutions and serves as the main centre for regulatory coordination, policy implementation, licensing, standard-setting and compliance oversight.

The target population comprised representatives from 28 regulatory bodies that were members of APSEA as of December 2025 (APSEA, 2025). A purposive role-based sample of 140 respondents was selected, with five representatives drawn from each body. The role-based selection covered governance, standards, accreditation or licensing, compliance or inspection, finance and strategy, and external service-user perspectives. These categories were selected because they provided complementary information on organisational decision-making, regulatory operations, strategic management and service delivery.

Primary data were collected using a structured questionnaire between December 2025 and March 2026. Organisational culture was measured using three constructs: core values and behaviours, shared commitment, and creativity and innovation. Organisational performance was measured using four dimensions: financial performance, customer satisfaction, learning and growth, and internal business processes. Before the main survey, the questionnaire was pretested with five participants from the Kenya Institute of Surveying and Mapping (KISM). The participants comprised four managerial staff members, namely a compliance officer, head of human resources, head of accounts, and finance manager, and one external stakeholder representing consumers. They reflected the role structure of the main study population but were excluded from the final survey. The pretest assessed the clarity, relevance and comprehensibility of the questionnaire items, and the feedback received was used to revise unclear items. The organisational culture scale recorded a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .895, while the organisational performance scale recorded a coefficient of .913. Content validity was assessed by three research professionals specialising in strategic leadership and organisational performance. The Content Validity Index was .836 for organisational culture and .855 for organisational performance, with both values exceeding the minimum acceptable threshold of .78.

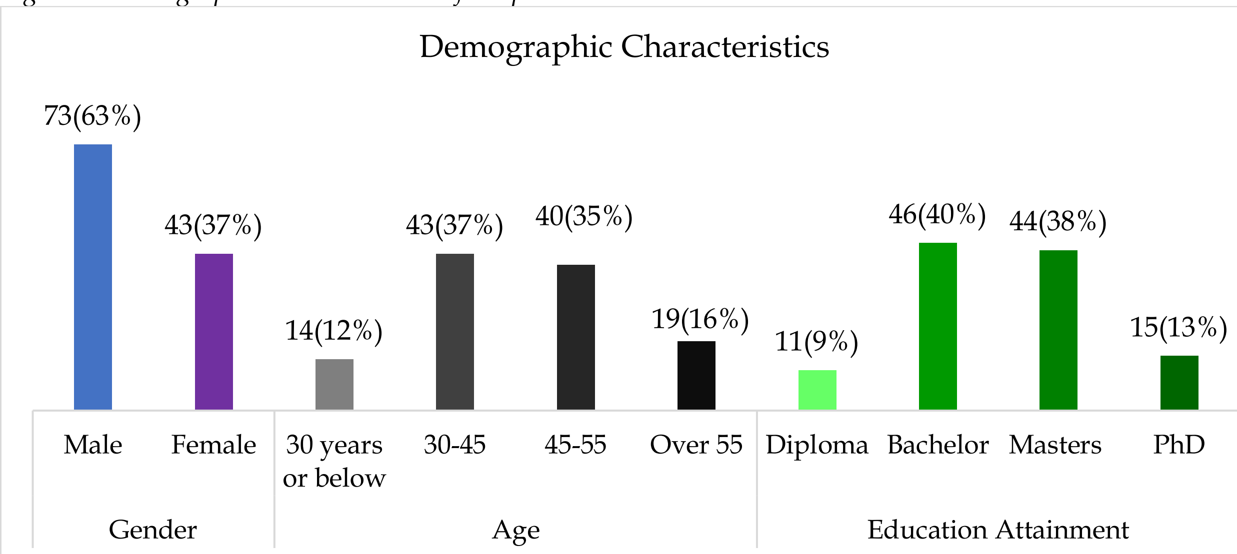
Quantitative data were coded and analysed using SPSS. Descriptive statistics, including means and standard deviations, were used to summarise respondents' perceptions of organisational culture and organisational performance. Pearson correlation analysis was used to determine the direction and strength of the relationship between the variables. A simple linear regression analysis was conducted to determine whether the composite organisational culture variable significantly predicted organisational performance. The study hypothesis was tested at the 0.05 level of significance.

Ethical considerations were observed throughout the study. Approval was obtained from the USIU-Africa ethics review committee and the National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation before data collection. Respondents were informed about the purpose of the study, participation was voluntary, and confidentiality was maintained through anonymous data collection and secure handling of the responses.

Results

This section presents the study's findings on the influence of organisational culture on the performance of professional regulatory bodies. The results are organised into descriptive statistics and inferential statistics. The analysis was based on 116 satisfactorily completed questionnaires. Respondent characteristics are presented first to provide context for interpreting the findings. Figure 1 summarises respondents' gender, age and highest educational qualification.

Figure 1: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents



The results show that 63% of respondents were male and 37% were female. Age-wise, 37% were aged 30–45 years, 35% were aged 46–55 years, 16% were aged 55 years or above, and 12% were aged 30 years or below. Regarding highest education qualifications, 40% held bachelor's degrees, 38% held master's degrees, 13% held doctorates, and 9% held diplomas. The educational profile suggests that respondents had sufficient academic grounding to understand the issues examined and provide informed responses.

Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics were computed to summarise respondents' perceptions of organisational performance and organisational culture among professional regulatory bodies in Kenya. Organisational performance was treated as the dependent variable and was measured as a composite score comprising financial performance, customer satisfaction, learning and growth, and internal business processes. Organisational culture was treated as the independent variable and was measured using three constructs: core values and behaviours, shared commitment, and creativity and innovation. The mean scores and standard deviations were used to determine the level of agreement among respondents and the extent of variation in their responses. As presented in Table 1, the descriptive results show the composite organisational performance score, the scores for the three organisational culture constructs, and the overall organisational culture score.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics for Organisational Performance and Organisational Culture

Variable/Constructs	Mean	Std. Deviation
Organisational performance	4.02	0.885
Core values and behaviours	3.93	0.944
Shared commitment	3.96	0.948
Creativity and innovation	3.94	0.924
Overall organisational culture	3.94	0.939

The descriptive results in Table 1 show that organisational performance recorded a composite mean of 4.02 and a standard deviation of 0.885, indicating that respondents generally agreed that professional regulatory bodies in Kenya were performing positively across financial performance, customer satisfaction, learning and growth, and internal business processes.

Organisational culture was also positively rated across all three constructs. Shared commitment recorded the slightly highest mean score (M = 3.96, SD = 0.948), followed by creativity and innovation (M = 3.94, SD = 0.924), and core values and behaviours (M = 3.93, SD = 0.944). Since all three scores fall within the "agree" range, the findings suggest that respondents perceived organisational culture as supportive of employee motivation, teamwork, adaptability, innovation, and performance-oriented behaviour.

The overall organisational culture mean score of 3.94 indicates that respondents generally agreed that organisational culture was positively manifested in professional regulatory bodies in Kenya. This overall score was derived from the three organisational culture constructs: core values and behaviours, shared commitment, and creativity and innovation. Since the mean falls within the "agree" range, the finding suggests that the professional regulatory bodies had supportive cultural practices reflected in shared values, employee commitment, innovation, adaptability, teamwork, and performance-oriented behaviour. This overall result provides a basis for further inferential analysis to determine whether organisational culture significantly influenced organisational performance.

Inferential Statistics

Inferential statistical analysis was conducted to determine whether organisational culture was significantly associated with, and could predict, organisational performance among professional regulatory bodies in Kenya.

The study first applied Pearson correlation analysis to assess the relationship between organisational culture and organisational performance. Composite mean scores were computed for both organisational culture and organisational performance, and these scores were used in the correlation analysis. The results are provided in Table 2.

Table 2: Correlation Between Organisational Culture and Organisational Performance

		Organisational Performance
Organisational Culture	Pearson Correlation	.694
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	116

The results in Table 2 show that organisational culture had a positive and statistically significant relationship with organisational performance among professional regulatory bodies in Kenya, $r = 0.694$, $p < 0.05$. This indicates that improvements in organisational culture were associated with higher levels of organisational performance. The finding suggests that regulatory bodies with stronger cultural practices, such as shared values, employee commitment, creativity, innovation, and adaptability, were more likely to report better performance outcomes.

Simple linear regression analysis was then conducted to determine whether organisational culture significantly predicted organisational performance. This analysis was important because it directly tested the study's hypothesis by estimating the extent to which organisational culture explained changes in organisational performance. The regression, therefore, assessed the following null hypothesis:

H01: Organisational culture has no statistically significant influence on the performance of professional regulatory bodies in Kenya.

The regression model summary, ANOVA results, and regression coefficients are presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Regression for Organisational Culture on Organisational Performance

Model Summary

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
.694[a]	.481	.476	.42524

a. Predictors: (Constant), Organisational Culture

ANOVA[a]

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	19.106	1	19.106	105.660	.000[b]
Residual	20.614	114	.181		
Total	39.721	115			

a. Dependent Variable: Organisational Performance
b. Predictors: (Constant), Organisational Culture

Coefficients[a]

	Unstandardised Coefficients		Standardised Coefficients		
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	1.650	.234		7.041	.000
Organisational Culture	.604	.059	.694	10.279	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Organisational Performance

The regression results in Table 3 showed that organisational culture had a positive relationship with organisational performance among professional regulatory bodies in Kenya, R = 0.694. The coefficient of determination (R^2) was 0.481, indicating that organisational culture explained 48.1% of the variation in organisational performance. This suggests that organisational culture accounted for a substantial proportion of differences in performance among the professional regulatory bodies studied.

The ANOVA results further indicated that the regression model was statistically significant ($F = 105.660$, $p < 0.05$). This means that the model was appropriate for explaining the influence of organisational culture on organisational performance. The finding also indicates that organisational culture made a statistically significant contribution to explaining performance outcomes among the institutions.

The regression coefficients confirmed that organisational culture had a positive and statistically significant influence on organisational performance, $B = 0.604$, $\beta = 0.694$, $t = 10.279$, $p < 0.05$. This implies that a one-unit increase in organisational culture was associated with a 0.604-unit increase in organisational performance. Therefore, strengthening organisational culture through shared values, supportive behaviours, employee commitment, creativity, innovation, and adaptability is likely to improve the performance of professional regulatory bodies in Kenya.

Based on these findings, the null hypothesis that stated that organisational culture has no statistically significant influence on the performance of professional regulatory bodies in Kenya was rejected.

Discussion

The descriptive pattern of results suggests that the three dimensions of organisational culture were experienced at fairly similar levels. Shared commitment was rated slightly higher than creativity and innovation, and core values and behaviours, but the mean differences are only 0.02–0.03 and do not indicate a clear hierarchy. According to Schein (2017), culture can be understood as a process that evolves over time, grounded in shared assumptions that enable internal integration and adaptation to external requirements. This may account for the higher rating for shared commitment, as coordinated action is required among the various functions of licensing, standard-setting, inspection, and enforcement. This interpretation is also in line with Denison and Mishra's (1995) position on involvement and shared sense of mission, which asserts that involvement enhances organisational effectiveness. The slightly lower rating for core values and behaviours may indicate that respondents distinguished between formally stated values and those actually demonstrated in everyday decisions. This interpretation does not suggest a lack of integrity, accountability, or professionalism on the part of the institution, but rather that the institution's values need to be linked to its performance assessments, its relationships with stakeholders, its resource allocation, and its enforcement of rules. This can be attributed to the high degree of functional interdependence among staff delivering similar institutional mandates, and perhaps to differences in the formalisation of the values expressed and in the manner in which those values are used in actual regulatory decisions in the Kenyan context.

Positive evaluation of creativity and innovation reflects the adaptability dimension of organisational culture, as described by Denison (1990). Professional regulatory bodies exist in an environment shaped by digital service delivery, evolving professional practices, new compliance risks, and learning cultures that foster innovation and initiative and support responsible experimentation, thereby fostering institutional agility. This is in line with Rumanti et al. (2023), who cite creativity and open innovation with organisational adaptability and performance. Strategic Leadership Theory also views the fostering of an effective culture as an organisational practice that can support strategic goals and performance (Shafique et al., 2021; Iastremska et al., 2023). Leadership behaviour was not, however, assessed in this article, so the theory explains the relationship between culture and performance in a context rather than providing evidence that leadership directly led to the cultural conditions observed.

This study had limitations that should be considered when interpreting the findings. First, the study focused on professional regulatory bodies headquartered in Nairobi; therefore, the findings may not fully represent regulatory institutions operating in other geographical contexts. Second, the study adopted a quantitative questionnaire-based approach, which provided measurable relationships between organisational culture and performance but did not capture deeper employee experiences and cultural meanings. Future studies may therefore incorporate qualitative approaches, longitudinal designs, or comparative studies across different regulatory environments to provide a broader understanding of cultural dynamics.

Conclusion

Organisational culture is a critical institutional foundation for improving performance in Nairobi-based professional regulatory organisations through core values and behaviours, shared commitment, and creativity and innovation. Accordingly, professional regulatory bodies should reinforce mechanisms that translate stated values into day-to-day practice, strengthen commitment across functional units, and support responsible experimentation and process improvement. Such measures can enhance stakeholder responsiveness, institutional learning, service delivery and internal processes.

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