Effect Of Structure Fit On The Performance Of Insurance Firms In Nairobi City County- Kenya

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Abstract: This study sets out to determine the effect of structure fit on performance of insurance firms in Nairobi City County. The study adopted both descriptive and explanatory research designs. A total of 55 registered insurance firms in Nairobi City County were targeted. A population of 521 general managers, underwriting managers, claims managers and marketing managers from the 55 registered insurance firms and employees who were not in management were targeted. A sample size of 226 respondents was purposively and randomly sampled. Questionnaires were the data collection tools where drop and pick later approach was used. Content validity was ensured by discussing the questions in the questionnaire with the supervisor while a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.7 or above was regarded sufficient to quantify the reliability of the data collection tool. Descriptive analysis was done while inferential statistics involved linear regression. The correlation results showed a positive and significant linear correlation between structure fit (r=0.862, p=0.000) and performance of insurance firms. The regression results show a positive and significant effect of structure fit (β = 0.096, Sig. = 0.000) on performance of insurance firms which implies that structure fit affects performance of insurance firms positively. Though the strategic fit components are interrelated and have effect on the performance of insurance firms structure fit weighs more on the influence. Therefore, the study recommends that organizations should continuously work towards attaining structure fit because it affects profitability, customers' loyalty, customers' satisfaction and market share of insurance firms.

Keywords: insurance firms, structure fit, strategic fit, organization performance.

I. INTRODUCTION

Organizational performance is a key factor in the success of any business, which means its capacity to effectively implement strategies to help in the achievement of institutional goals and objectives (Randeree & Al Youha, 2009). Further, it largely depends on the skill level its leaders have when it comes to implementing strategies (Bashaer et al., 2016).

Silva (2014) suggested that the core of leadership is a conditional association existing between managers and their followers. Given that there are always challenges in the achievement of objectives of organization, it is imperative that the practices that leaders utilize be flexible adequately in accommodating change. Organizational performance is also dependent on its staff, who are a significant organizational part and form the team that works towards achievement of the organizational objectives (Bashaer et al., 2016).

Further, Johnson and Whittington (2005) denoted that strategy fit entails the management and modification of strategies including forming business structure supporting the operation of the business via the progression and relationship and achieving success using the accessible resources like individuals and making adjustments on the strategy to face coming challenging circumstances. When strategic fit is achieved, the reaction and efficiency balance in an organization is ensured thereby fulfilling the demands of the targeted customers (Johnson & Whittington, 2005).

The degree at which an organization has effectiveness in running its operations and maximizing it gains is a factor determined by the difficulties in the management of strategic fit (Okebaram & Onuoha, 2018). Accordingly, Kale and Singh (2009) cited that there has been investment by organizations in

the formation of alliances which has evidently contributed to a stronger competitive position of the organizations. Day (2000) indicated that when there is appropriate allocation of resources across correlations and happenings in an organization, maximization of an organization's entire effectiveness is possible in cases where the organizational effectiveness is termed under a model which views organizations as endeavoring productivity and efficiency

A structure fit usually specifies the alignment between the tasks division in an organization with how they are coordinated, or the harmonization of the tasks in their working. The tasks can be mutually dependent and undefined (Lee et al., 2015). It also shows the fit between the mission and the vision of an organization. Further, there is a strong emphasis on the importance of structure fit as its important in allocating resources and varying action in the organization and in the definition of power and authority positions (Rivkin & Siggelkow, 2003).

II. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The Kenyan insurance industry has gone through a sequence of changes via reforms, communication advancement and information technologies, internationalization of services and development in the economy in the recent years (AKI, 2019; Gachanja & Wambua, 2018). The changes have significantly affected the efficiency, productivity, market structure and the performance of insurance firms. Downside economic risks (political risks, COVID 19 pandemic and heightened inflation uncertainty) and uptake of insurance policies have also negatively affected the profitability of insurance industry (AKI, 2020). Further, the success or survival of the insurance firms as a result of the changes and the risks is dependent on their capability to act on the transformations and the risks thereof (Kogo & Kimencu, 2018). Research has also shown that the performance of all kinds of products and services tendered by the insurance industry in Kenya is affected with some mutual challenges. Customer satisfaction, loyalty and uptake of insurance policies are key setbacks encountered by the insurance industry (Gachanja & Wambua, 2018). Further, there has been competition in the various services offered by the insurance firms affecting their market share and subsequently their profitability.

Gachau (2018) studied the influence of strategic fit components on retirement benefits authority' performance and found that the independent and dependent variables were positively correlated. Hashem and Al-Maani (2019) identified the influence of strategic fit on the marketing performance of the Jordan's industrial corporations and found out that the influence of strategic fit was positive and statistically significant on the marketing performance. Okebaram and Onuoha (2018) studied the impacts of strategic fit and sustainability on effectiveness of an organization and their conclusion was that strategic fit is able increase effective information exchange to enhance effectiveness of an organization. Reviewed studies have shown that little attention has been given to strategic fit because of its elusiveness and thus need for further research. It is evident that in the studies

reviewed none has determined on strategic fit and performance of insurance firms which this study endeavors to establish. This research sought to fill that research gap by determining the effect of structure fit, technology fit, management fit and operational fit on the performance of insurance firms in Nairobi City County.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

✓ To examine the effect of structure fit on performance of insurance firms in Nairobi City County, Kenya.

RESEARCH QUESTION

This study sought empirical evidence to answer the following question:
✓ Does structure fit affect performance of insurance firms in Nairobi City County, Kenya?

III. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. THEORETICAL REVIEW

This study was anchored and guided by the diffusion on innovation theory and Resource dependency theory all of which are commonly significant in understanding strategic fit

a. RESOURCE DEPENDENCY THEORY

Pfeffer and Salancik (1978) proposed this theory. It states that organizations need resources for the sustenance of their long term existence. The theory also states that organizations have the ability to get the resources only from their own setting where there exists other organizations which need to utilize similar resources in the same setting (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978). The emphasis is that the change strategies established by firms in the magnitude of getting the resources raises their dependence level on the organizational setting or on other organizations (Fink et al., 2006). Further, Emerson (1962) denoted that it becomes needful in the management of the associations of dependence on power appropriately (Delke, 2015).

RDT suggests that players that lack fundamental resources usually seek to have associations with those having the resources so as to get the required resources. Further, organizations try to modify their dependence associations through reducing their own dependence or through enhancing other organizations' dependence on them (Selznick, 1957). In this viewpoint, organizations are regarded as alliances that alert their structure and configurations of behavior for the acquisition and maintenance of the required external resources (Pfeffer, 1994). Acquisition of the required external resources by an organization is possible through reduction of the dependence of the organization on others and/or through enhancing other organizations dependency on it which means that the power of an organization has been modified with other organizations.

The argument in this theory is that organizations are dependent on resources which eventually come from the

setting of the organization. The resources needed by one organization are usually held by other organizations which forms the foundation of power. Organizations that do not dependent on others can thus be dependent on each other since there is a direct relationship between power and resource dependence (Pfeffer, 1994). There are so many resources that organizations depend on and include labor, capital and raw materials and in most cases, most organizations are unable to emerge with countervailing schemes for all the many resources. This should make organization to move through the criticality and scarcity principle. The resources that organizations must have for their functionality are the critical resources.

The theory informed the study in that it is based on the principle that organizations like an insurance firm usually involves itself with other stakeholders and organizations in their business setting so as to acquire resources (tangible and intangible resources) which may create dependencies that are not although such transactions may be advantageous. This theory is important in addressing the performance of insurance firms in Nairobi City County since all insurance firms have people as their critical resources who need to buy their policies for the organizational performance.

b. DIFFUSION ON INNOVATION (DOI) THEORY

It was proposed by Rogers in 1962. The theory denotes the way, reason and the rate at which new innovations and technology persist through cultures and their operation at the personal and organizational level. The theory views innovations as being communicated via particular means over time and in specific social systems (Sarker & Sahay, 2004). Persons are viewed as having varying extents of willingness in the adoption of the innovations and therefore, the general observation is that the fraction of the population that adopts an innovation is estimated to have a normal distribution over time (Sense, 2008). When the normal distribution is broken into portions, five groups of personal innovativeness are highlighted (from initial to late adopters): innovators, early adopters, early majority, late majority and the laggards. Organizations that fall in the category of late adopters of technology have a tendency of having difficulty obtaining the support and participation of the players (Wallace, Keil & Rai, 2004).

Individuals that wish to initially attempt to use a technology, venturesome and have an interest in new ideas are the innovators. They are the risk takers and mostly initiators in development of new ideas. This population of individuals need very little, if any, to be appealed (Dearing, 2009). Those individuals representing opinion leaders, enjoying leadership functions and embracing change chances are the early adopters. They have the knowledge of the need for a change and thus are comfortable to adopt new innovations. Strategies to appeal to this population include How-to manuals and data sheets on implementing the innovations is what is needed to appeal the early adopters and they do not require convincing information to change (Dearing & Cox, 2018).

Individuals who require seeing evidence of the working of an innovation before having the willingness to adopt it are the early majority. They seldom become leaders but adoption of new innovations does not take place earlier than the average person. Showcasing success stories and evidence of the effectiveness of an innovation is what appeals these individuals (Dearing, 2009). Individuals who are cynical of change and embrace an innovation long after many individuals have tried it are the late majority. Data on the many individuals who have tried and adopted the innovation successfully are the strategies that appeal these individuals. Individuals that are bound by tradition and are conservatives are the laggards. They are very cynical of change and it is very difficult to have them on board (Dearing & Cox, 2018).

According to Tabish and Jha (2012) the process of innovation in organizations is very complicated. In most cases, several persons are involved and include those supporting and opposing the new innovation yet all of them have a role to play in the decision making concerning the innovation. On the basis of this theory at the organizational level, individual traits, internal organizational structural traits within the organization and external organizational traits are the variables that innovativeness is dependent upon. Individual traits are the description of the leaders' attitude in regard to change (Zou et al., 2006). A leader who is flexible and readily accepts change means that the actors' views are put into practice because he/she does not value their views above those of the actors (Sense 2008).

Some of the limitations of this theory are that the theory works better with adoption of behaviors instead of cessation or prevention of behaviors and that it does not account for person's resources or social support in the adoption of the innovation. This theory is applicable in this study since its focus is on the identification and recruiting significant early adopters to assist in accelerating acceptance by the consumers and thus important to managers of insurance firms in seeking to identify and recruit people to have their policies penetrate in the market. It facilitated establishing the effect of structure fit on the performance of insurance firms in Nairobi City County.

B. EMPIRICAL LITERATURE REVIEW

This section provides a review of the findings for past studies to identify knowledge gaps in the subject of study and inform the current analysis. Diane et al. (2004). Conducted a research examining the degree to which the manager's span of control affects nurse, patient, and unit outcomes , the study used a descriptive correlation design using a survey method in collection of data from both individual and hospital units. The study was carried out at seven teaching and community-based hospitals, using 51 units in the hospitals. The respondents were 41 nurse managers, 680 patients and 717 staff. Findings denoted that wide span of control decreased the positive impacts of transformational and transactional leadership styles on nurses' job satisfaction, patients' satisfaction and increased turnover. In the current study, closed-ended questions to ensure consistency of data responses across respondents were used and analysis carried out using SPSS.

The correlation between span of control and labor turnover in Indian manufacturing firms was determined by Desta (2015). The study examined 200 firms using Enterprise Survey data done by The World Bank in 2009. Findings showed that an increase in the number of representative

production staff reporting to the top manager eventually leads to an increase in the number of staff exiting the firm. The present study focused on the insurance industry where operationalization of the structure fit may be different from the manufacturing industry.

Ogbo et al. (2015) researched the influence of structure on performance of selected technical and service organizations in Nigeria. Survey approach method was used. The sources of data were primary sources where eighty (80) respondents were administered with copies of designed questionnaires. Analysis of data was done using simple percentage, chi- square and correlation. The results showed the existence of significant positive correlation between narrow span of control and efficiency. However, the current study focused on the insurance industry where operationalization of the structure fit may be different from the technical and service industry.

A study was carried out by Staats and Gino (2012) in a Japanese bank to investigate how specialization and variety can bring varying productivity benefits over time. Thirty of transaction information from a home loan application-processing line in the Japanese bank was used. Findings showed that during a single day, specialization in comparison to variety enhanced staff productivity. On the other hand, when the experience of the workers across several days was examined, findings showed that variety helped in improving the productivity of the workers. The present study focused on the insurance industry where operationalization of the structure fit may be different from the banking industry.

C. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The conceptual model explains how the independent variable which is the structure fit has been operationalized. The model then illustrates how its variables have impacted on the performance of insurance firms in Nairobi City County

Independent variable   Dependent Variable
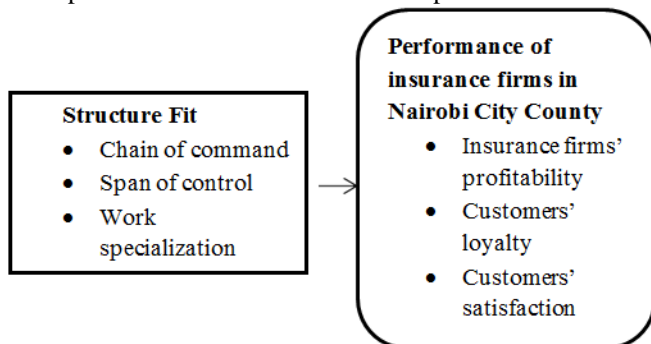
Source (Author 2022)
Figure 1: conceptual framework

IV. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A. RESEARCH DESIGN

Descriptive and explanatory research designs were adopted in the study. The research designs were applicable.

B. TARGET POPULATION

It comprised all the 55 insurance firms in the three categories of the insurance firms. General Managers, underwriting managers, claims managers and marketing managers and employees not in the managerial positions were the respondents who were targeted in the 55 insurance firms totaling to 226 respondents as illustrated in the table below

Category	population
General managers	28
Underwriting managers	28
Claims managers	28
Marketing managers	28
Other employees	114
Total	226

Source: (Author, 2022)
Table 1: Population Distribution

C. DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENT

Questionnaires were used in data collection. According to Saunders et al. (2007), a chance to give structured and informed responses by the respondents is offered when questionnaires are used for data collection. Closed-ended questions to ensure uniformity of data responses were used (Babbie, 2012).

a. RELIABILITY

To test the reliability of the questionnaires, a pilot study was carried out using INSURANCE FIRMS in Nairobi City

Questionnaire questions	No of questionnaires item	AlphaScore	Comment
Structure Fit	10	0.740	Reliable
Total	10	0.740	Reliable

Source: (Author 2022)
Table 2: Reliability Statistics

b. VALIDITY

County, Kenya. Cooper and Schiendler (2006) recommends that Cronbach's alpha which is beyond 0.7 is acceptable. The study variables aggregate alpha was of 0.740 and hence the research tool used was reliable as shown in table 2 below.

The study also involved validity tests to ensure that the research instruments actually measure the set-out parameters (Zikmund, 2003; Bryman and Cramer, 2005). In this study, the researcher considered three kinds of validity in undertaking this study; face validity, content validity and construct validity. The face validity addresses researchers subjective evaluation of the validity of the measuring instruments as well as the extent to which the researcher believes the instruments was effective. Secondly, the questionnaires were subjected to double check to guarantee content validity. This was ensured that the questionnaire appropriately covered all the main areas

of the study. The expert review of the questionnaire and judgment helped to confirm if the theoretical perspectives emerge as conceptualized. Finally, construct validity was achieved through operationalization of terms. The variables in the study were operationalized to reflect the theoretical assumptions that underpin the conceptual framework for the study.

D. DATA COLLECTION PRODUCEDURE

Questionnaires were given to the participants through physical delivery or via online Google documents format. Respondents were given sufficient time to fill the questionnaires and follow up was done to the respondents who had not responded after the two weeks.

E. DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTITION

Both descriptive and inferential statistics were done in analysis of the data. Descriptive analysis encompassed generation of summary statistics such as means, standard deviations and percentages while inferential statistics involved linear regression. Data was presented using graphs and tables. To explain the relationship between independent and dependent variables, the empirical model was used in linear regression. The direction of the relationship between the study variables is predicted using linear regression and therefore very important (Kothari, 2008).

The regression model is as shown

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \varepsilon_o$$

Where:

Y = Performance of insurance firms

β_0 = Constant

β_1 = Coefficients of structure fit

X_1 = Structure fit

ε_o = Error term assumed to be a constant

V. RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION RESPONSE RATE

The study targeted general managers, underwriting managers, claims managers, marketing managers and other employees in the departments totaling up to 226 participants in the 55 insurance firms in Nairobi City County. With the targeted sample size of 226, 185 questionnaires were correctly filled which translated to 81.9%. Babbie (2012) argued that response rates are termed acceptable, good and very good if 50%, 60% and 70% respectively are achieved and thus accepted for analysis and publication. The high response rate obtained in this research is attributable to self- administration of the questionnaires.

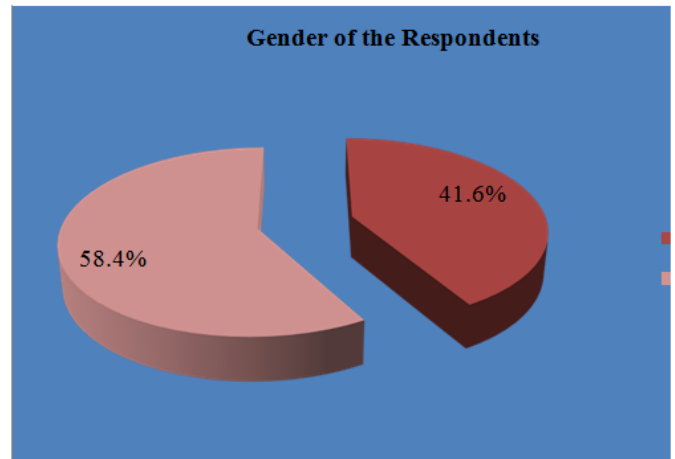## A. DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

a. GENDER

Figure 2: Gender

Results in Figure 2 showed that 58.4% of the respondents were male while 41.6% were female. This shows that insurance firms in Nairobi City County have employed more male staff compared to the female staff

### b. RESPONDENT POSITION IN THE FIRM

Position	Frequency	Percent
General managers	23	12.4
Underwriting managers	21	11.3
Claims managers	24	13.0
Marketing managers	26	14.1
Other employees	91	49.2
Total	185	100.0

Source: Survey data (2022)

Table 3: position of the respondents

Results in Table 3 shows that 12.4% of the respondents were general managers, 11.3% were underwriting managers, 13.0% were claims managers, 14.1% were marketing managers while 49.2% of the respondents were other employees in the different departments. The research findings showed that all the levels of staff were involved in the study and thus the data collected for this research can be validated since all the levels of staff participated in the study.

c. EDUCATIONAL LEVEL
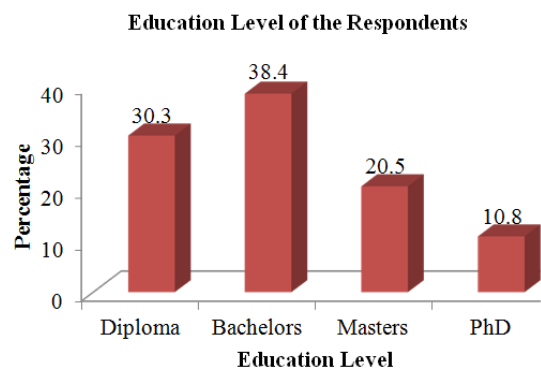
As shown in figure 4 above, this analysis majority (38.4%) of the respondents in this study had Bachelor's Degree. (31.3) percent had Post-graduate Degree and 30.3 percent had Diploma/ Certificates. None reported Secondary Certificate as their highest level of education Primary and other levels of education recorded zero respondents. This analysis implies that all insurance firms that took part in this study have hired highly qualified personnel in management positions.

B. STRUCTURE FIT AND PERFORMANCE

The study established the effect of structure fit on the performance of insurance firms in Nairobi City County. Structure fit was conceptualized to constitute chain of command, span of control and work specialization.

Structure fit statements	Mean	Standard deviation
This insurance firm has structures that help make clear who answers to whom in the chain of command	3.15	0.94
In this insurance firm, there is a chain of command where decisions are made and passed from the top management to the lowest level of staff	3.34	1.20
To enhance effectiveness in the insurance firm, managers or departmental heads are assigned manageable subordinates	3.22	1.12
This insurance firm encourages the staff to be specialized in their different areas of training	3.48	1.11
This insurance firm ensures that all the staff are experts in their area of specialization	3.64	1.11
Aggregate Mean	3.37	1.10

Source: Survey data (2022)
Table 4: Structure Fit

Results shown in Table 4 are mean summaries which showed that this insurance firm ensures that all the staffs are experts in their area of specialization as it had the highest mean of 3.64. There was a high variation (standard deviation (SD) of 1.11). This insurance firm encourages the staff to be specialized in their different areas of training had a mean of 3.48. There was a high variation (Standard deviation of 1.11). In this insurance firm, there is a chain of command where decisions are made and passed from the top management to the lowest level of staff had a mean of 3.34 and a high variation (Standard deviation of 1.20) while to enhance effectiveness in the insurance firm, managers or departmental heads are assigned manageable subordinates had a mean of 3.22 and an SD of 1.12 thus a high variation. This insurance firm has structures that help make clear who answers to who in the chain of command had a mean of 3.15 and an SD of 0.94 thus a low variation. The results implies that in the insurance firms, there is a likelihood that structure

fit affects performance and that chain of command, span of control and work specialization are critical factors in the insurance firms' profitability, customers' loyalty, customers' satisfaction and market share.

The findings of this study are supported by Adeyoyin et al. (2015) who denoted that specialization enables employees to focus on specific task hence allowing them to build expertise and experience, therefore enhancing production efficiency. It also allows employees to concentrate on their areas of strength thus leading to greater productivity which the insurance firms have keen interest on. Further, breaking down the job into a simple specific process also makes it easy for new employees to learn (Kimani, Omato & Gichuhi, 2020). However, the flip-side of work specialization is that it reduces the employees' ability to multitask since they perform the same task throughout (Zareen, Razzaq, & Mujtaba, 2013). Hierarchy determines the flow of commands and information through the official channel, however, in case of the extensive hierarchical structure; the chain of command is long and dealt tardily (Socha, 2019).

C. EFFECTS OF STRUCTURE FIT ON PERFORMANCE OF INSURANCE FIRMS IN NAIROBI CITY COUNTY-KENYA

Pearson correlation and regression analysis were carried out to find out the magnitude of the relationship between the study variable and the effect of the study variable on the organizational performance of insurance firms in Nairobi City County. The results are shown in table 5 below

Independent Variable		Coefficient	T-statistics	PValue
Structure Fit	Correlation-.862*** Sig(2tailed) -.000 N-185	0.096	3.681	0.000
Dependent variable				

Table 5

Findings shown in Table 5 demonstrated a significant positive linear relationship between performance and structure fit, the result implies that an increase in structure fit, increases performance of insurance firms positively and significantly.

Regression model was used to establish the effect of structure fit organizational performance of insurance firms in Nairobi City County. The results for model summary are presented in Table 5 above.

The results shows that the beta coefficient of structure fit was 0.096 which indicates that a unit increase in would result in a 9.6% rise in value of performance of the organization showing direct effect of structure fit on the performance of insurance firms in Nairobi City County. The t-statistic and corresponding P-value recorded was 3.681 and 0.000 respectively. At significance level of $P<0.001$, the assumption is rejected implying that structure fit had a significant effect on the performance of insurance firms in Nairobi City County. Based on these statistics, the study found the presence of a significant positive effect of structure fit on the performance

of insurance firms in Nairobi City County. The research findings highlights the effect that structure fit can have on performance of insurance firms in Nairobi City County. This research finding is supported by the studies carried out by Ogbo et al. (2015) and Adeyoyin et al. (2013) showed the existence of significant positive relationship between narrow span of control (structure fit) and that job specialization speeds and hastens their work and improves their job performance.

VI. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study established the effect of structure fit on the performance of insurance firms in Nairobi City County. Structure fit determines performance of insurance firms as it had an aggregate mean of 3.37 and a high variation (standard deviation of 1.10). The correlation results show a positive and significant linear correlation between structure fit and performance of insurance firms ($r=0.862$, $p=0.000$). The regression results show a positive and significant effect of structure fit on performance of insurance firms ($\beta = 0.096$, Sig. = 0.000) which implies that structure fit affects performance of insurance firms positively and that an increase in structure fit leads to 0.096 increase in performance of insurance firms in Nairobi City County. For insurance firms to increase their profitability, customers' loyalty, customers' satisfaction and market share, there is need for the insurance firms to continuously work towards attaining strategic fit especially the structure fit of the insurance. Further, the study recommends insurance firms to be innovative and creative on the products and services they offer to their customers especially during this post-Covid season as a strategy for economic recovery.

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