

Corporate Governance And Healthcare Service Delivery In National Government Referral Hospitals In Kenya

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Abstract

In recent years, effective corporate governance has gained increasing importance in enhancing healthcare service delivery (HSD), particularly within National Government Referral Hospitals (NGRHs) in Kenya. However, despite the adoption of corporate governance practices, significant challenges in the delivery of healthcare services persist, raising concerns about the effectiveness and implementation of these governance mechanisms. The objective of this study was to examine the effect of corporate governance on healthcare service delivery in NGRHs in Kenya and a corresponding hypothesis was formulated and tested. The study was theoretically grounded in Stakeholder Theory, Resource-Based View (RBV) Theory, and Contingency Theory. Collectively, these frameworks underscore the significance of leadership, transparency, stakeholder engagement, and the strategic optimization of resources in enhancing governance practices and improving service delivery outcomes. Using a positivist philosophy and a descriptive research design, the study targeted a sample of 199 hospital management respondents and 100 patients from National Government Referral Hospitals in Kenya. Data was collected using structured questionnaires and data collection sheets, ensuring validity and reliability through expert reviews and Cronbach's Alpha. Statistical analyses, including descriptive analysis, factor analysis, and regression analysis, were employed to test the hypotheses and assess the statistical significance of the effects. The results indicated that corporate governance exerts a positive and statistically significant effect on healthcare service delivery.

Keywords: *Corporate governance, Healthcare service delivery, Stakeholder Theory, Resource-Based View Theory and Contingency Theory.*

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I. Introduction

Healthcare service delivery constitutes a critical pillar of any health system, aiming to provide care that is effective, efficient, timely, and aligned with the needs and expectations of patients. In the context of NGRHs in Kenya, healthcare service delivery entails the provision of high-quality, accessible, affordable, and responsive care to a diverse patient population. However, the quality and overall perception of healthcare service delivery may be compromised by inadequacies in corporate governance structures. Key governance dimensions such as decision-making processes, accountability frameworks, and broader institutional dynamics have been identified as influential factors in shaping service delivery outcomes (Mourajid et al., 2023).

The Constitution of Kenya (2010) mandates the national government to formulate health policies and build capacity within the health sector, thereby guaranteeing citizens the right to access healthcare services free of charge (Emmaculate et al., 2022; Miseda et al., 2017). Following the devolution of governance in 2013, Kenya adopted a two-tier system comprising the National and County governments (Gwidi & Kilei, 2022). Under this arrangement, the healthcare system was similarly devolved: County Government Hospitals were assigned the responsibility of delivering basic healthcare services, while NGRHs assumed the mandate for managing specialized care, offering technical support to counties, and overseeing health policy development and regulatory functions. Despite the national government's continued support in areas such as infrastructure, human resources, quality assurance, and research (Kenyan Parliament, 2019), NGRHs continue to face persistent challenges related to Corporate Governance and the effectiveness of referral systems (Omondi et al., 2024).

Given their expanded responsibilities, NGRHs must align their operational frameworks with best practices in corporate governance to ensure the effective delivery of healthcare services. Central to this alignment is the concept of corporate governance, defined as the set of systems, processes, and policies that guide the management and strategic direction of healthcare institutions. Effective corporate governance plays a pivotal role in fostering transparency, accountability, and ethical conduct within healthcare organizations,

factors that are essential for improving the quality of care and achieving favorable health outcomes (Gupta et al., 2023).

The healthcare sector in Kenya faces significant challenges, including limited resources, and high demand for services (KNBS, 2024). These challenges necessitate effective corporate governance mechanisms that can facilitate better decision-making, resource allocation, and patient care outcomes. According to Abdi et al. (2023), healthcare delivery parameters such as customer satisfaction, service timeliness, and the accessibility of medical services are crucial for assessing performance in hospitals. When governance structures are effective, they help mitigate inefficiencies and improve the quality of services delivered, ultimately benefiting patients and the broader health system.

Globally, empirical evidence indicates that effective corporate governance contributes to a sense of security among healthcare workers, enhances service delivery, and encourages investment in modern healthcare technologies (Mannion et al., 2023; Silpachai, 2023). In Kenya, recent policy reforms including the Digital Health Act (2023) and the Social Health Insurance Act (2023) reflect government efforts to modernize and improve the health sector. However, translating these policy frameworks into effective practice remains a significant challenge, underscoring the persistent gap between policy formulation and implementation.

This study seeks to examine the effect of corporate governance on healthcare service delivery within Kenya's National Government Referral Hospitals. By exploring governance practices, the study aims to identify strategic approaches that can enhance the efficiency, quality, and responsiveness of healthcare service delivery.

Corporate Governance

Bjegovic-Mikanovic (2023) defines corporate governance as a set of regulatory actions undertaken to plan, organize, operate, and evaluate the various interconnected components of a system, thereby enabling the achievement of predetermined objectives. For example, effective corporate governance involves raising awareness of the variables that influence the quality, efficiency, and accessibility of social services that depend on sound governance structures. Mourajid et al. (2023) assert that the decline in both the quality and public image of hospitals can be attributed to weaknesses in corporate governance, particularly in areas such as decision-making, accountability, and key institutional variables.

According to Aliow et al. (2021), accountability is a fundamental principle that underpins effective decision-making within governance structures. Mannion et al. (2023) assert that healthcare institutions should establish appropriate governance structures to promote a sense of safety among employees, enhance the quality of service provision, and encourage investment in modern technologies. Such governance practices contribute to building trust among key stakeholders, including management, employees, patients, and financiers. Silpachai (2023) indicates that the quality of corporate governance can be assessed through factors such as the strength of stakeholder relationships, institutional ownership, accountability mechanisms, and the extent of the duty of care exercised by governing bodies.

Stakeholder involvement in decision-making is a key determinant of effective corporate governance (Mourajid et al., 2023). Kesale et al. (2023) further highlight a strong correlation between corporate governance practices and the performance outcomes of health facilities, underscoring governance as a critical driver of healthcare service delivery. Toroitich et al. (2022) contend that institutions and shareholders face the complex challenge of assessing their performance not only against internal policies but also in relation to the expectations of the communities they serve, while concurrently evaluating outcomes against established benchmarking goals and objectives. Accountability and transparency, coupled with strict adherence to the rule of law, are imperative for referral hospitals, which are governed by numerous regulations pertaining to health and safety, patient confidentiality, and service provision.

Upadhyai et al. (2019) assert that service delivery entails the effective and quality execution of services. Effective corporate governance requires that these hospitals comply fully with all relevant laws and regulatory frameworks. Sharma et al. (2023) posit that a board's capacity to provide effective oversight and ensure legal compliance is critical to an organization's success. Similarly, Abu and Bamidele (2022) contend that the board's role in holding management accountable for performance is fundamental to enhancing organizational effectiveness. In this study, corporate governance is operationalized through key indicators, namely transparency, accountability, the composition and function of the board of directors, and internal control mechanisms.

Healthcare Service Delivery

Bonciani (2018) defines service delivery as the process of satisfying and delighting customers by providing services effectively and efficiently within a designated timeframe. Aliow et al. (2021) further conceptualize service delivery through the lens of equipment utilization, identifying patient waiting time, equipment performance, and equipment idle time as critical parameters for assessing hospital efficiency. In the

Kenyan context, the healthcare sector plays a pivotal role in enhancing population well-being, supporting economic growth, and sustaining the national workforce (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics [KNBS], 2023).

Jepkorir (2021) asserts that evaluating service delivery is essential for assessing whether organizations achieve their strategic objectives. Mburu (2020) further emphasizes that organizational performance is measured through predefined indicators, including effectiveness, efficiency, service quality, and environmental responsibility, which encompass metrics such as cycle time, productivity, and regulatory compliance. Compared to global trends, Kenya's health sector is expected to experience rapid growth, contributing approximately 2% to the country's gross domestic product, valued at an estimated USD 2.2 billion (National Treasury of Kenya, 2021).

Health service delivery is commonly measured by indicators such as accessibility, service availability, accommodation, acceptance, turnaround time, customer feedback, and the effective provision of services (Mutambi, 2022). These performance indicators are intrinsically linked to the fundamental principles of corporate governance. For example, Hunt et al. (2023) notes that the customer satisfaction index may be utilized to assess the level of healthcare service provision. Institutional performance serves as a reflection of service delivery quality and is significantly influenced by corporate governance practices. Panya and Abuya (2023) argue that addressing accessibility, timeliness, and resource allocation is crucial to strengthening universal healthcare. Accordingly, this study adopted four key indicators: access to healthcare, turnaround time, equipment utilization, and customer satisfaction index to measure healthcare service delivery.

National Government Referral Hospitals in Kenya

According to the Constitution of Kenya (2010), the Ministry of Health (MOH) is mandated to oversee and progressively uphold standards within the national health system. In pursuit of universal access to high-quality, affordable, and equitable healthcare, the MOH has implemented various policy reforms (MOH, 2023). Following the 2013 devolution, governance was divided into two tiers: the national government and county governments (Gwidi & Kilei, 2022). Correspondingly, healthcare responsibilities were allocated such that county governments are tasked with providing basic healthcare services, whereas national government hospitals oversee national referral facilities, provide technical support to counties, and manage health policy formulation and regulatory oversight.

The national government referral hospitals in Kenya comprise Kenyatta National Hospital, Mathari National Teaching and Referral Hospital, Moi Teaching and Referral Hospital, National Spinal Injury Referral Hospital, and Kenyatta University Teaching and Referral Hospital (MOH, 2023). These institutions receive comprehensive support from the national government, including investments in infrastructure, human resources, quality assurance, and research initiatives (Kenyan Parliament, 2019). However, despite this support, these referral hospitals continue to encounter significant challenges in strategic management, particularly concerning the implementation of corporate governance practices within referral systems and the dynamic nature of service delivery (Omondi et al., 2024).

II. Research Problem

Healthcare remains a fundamental pillar of societal well-being, prompting the Kenyan government to increase its budget allocation for the sector from KES 226.4 billion to KES 286.1 billion in the 2023/2024 fiscal year, with the objective of enhancing access, affordability, and quality of care (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics [KNBS], 2023). Despite these substantial financial commitments, the healthcare system in Kenya continues to grapple with persistent challenges, particularly within NGRHs. These challenges have adversely affected healthcare delivery effectiveness, manifesting in elevated mortality rates, inefficiencies in service provision, and diminished patient satisfaction (Nyawira & Wainaina, 2022).

The principal challenges affecting healthcare delivery stem from governance and management deficiencies within these institutions, which manifest as operational misalignments (Nyawira et al., 2023). Although recent legislative measures such as the Digital Health Act (2023), Social Health Insurance Act (2023), and Facility Improvement Fund Act (2023) have been enacted, significant gaps persist in the effective implementation of corporate governance frameworks within NGRHs. These governance shortcomings have exacerbated systemic challenges by undermining decision-making processes, weakening accountability mechanisms, and impeding the efficient allocation of resources.

Research indicates that poor corporate governance leads to inefficiencies and reduced responsiveness to patient needs, negatively affecting healthcare service delivery (Ogunyemi & Onaga, 2023). This issue is heightened amid growing public demand, increased government funding, and evolving policies. While international studies confirm the positive role of corporate governance in healthcare performance (Yammeesri & Herath, 2010; Yeung, 2018; Silpachai, 2023), there remains a significant gap in examining these mechanisms within Kenya. Despite global recognition of governance challenges (Brown, 2020; Jani & Chaudhary, 2023), few studies rigorously explore the relationship between governance and service delivery in the Kenyan context.

Nyawira et al. (2023) note that despite formal coordination, operational misalignments and stakeholder fragmentation in Kenya increase costs and reduce performance. Although increased funding and legislation exist, effective implementation depends on strong stakeholder engagement, underscoring the critical role of corporate governance.

Munene and Muriuki (2024), a direct and significant relationship exists between multiple dimensions of corporate governance and the quality of service delivery. Furthermore, Toroitich et al. (2022) emphasize the critical need for accountability and transparency, alongside strict compliance with the rule of law, given that referral hospitals are governed by numerous regulations encompassing health and safety, patient confidentiality, and service provision. This gap hindered the development of targeted strategies to address the unique challenges faced by NGRHs in Kenya. This study sought to investigate the effect of corporate governance on healthcare service delivery in Kenya's NGRHs.

III. Scope Of The Study

The scope of this study encompasses both the geographical and temporal dimensions of the research. Geographically, the study focuses on healthcare service delivery within the five NGRHs managed by the National Government of Kenya (Ministry of Health, 2023). Temporarily, to enhance data reliability and facilitate trend analysis, the study incorporates secondary data spanning a ten-year period from 2014 to 2023. The study operationalizes corporate governance as the independent variable and healthcare service delivery as the dependent variable. Healthcare service delivery is assessed through four key indicators: access to healthcare, turnaround time, equipment utilization, and customer satisfaction index. The target population comprises all five NGRHs, with the units of analysis being the hospitals themselves. Units of observation include hospital management personnel, as well as inpatient and outpatient populations. The research aims to identify and analyze effective corporate governance practices that contribute to the enhancement of healthcare service delivery within these institutions. Data collection and analysis were conducted in 2024.

IV. Justification Of The Study

Corporate governance constitutes a strategic management approach that significantly affects organizational performance and productivity. Its effective implementation requires the systematic integration and alignment of institutional resources to achieve organizational objectives. Within the context of NGRHs, where operations are complex and stakeholder interests are diverse, it is essential to examine the specific corporate governance elements that support and enhance service delivery. This includes understanding how governance practices affect various stakeholders and translate into measurable healthcare outcomes. This study contributes to the broader discourse by providing empirical evidence on the implementation and effectiveness of corporate governance within Kenya's NGRHs. Furthermore, it enables comparative analysis with existing local and international studies, thereby enhancing the generalizability and applicability of the findings. Ultimately, the study aims to inform policy and operational strategies that strengthen healthcare service delivery through robust quality management systems in Kenya's NGRHs.

V. Review Of Literature

This section delineates the theoretical framework and synthesizes empirical literature that underpins the study, drawing upon both historical and contemporary research on corporate governance and its effect on service delivery within NGRHs.

Theoretical Framework

This study is grounded in Stakeholder Theory and complemented by the Resource-Based View Theory (RBVT) and Contingency Theory. Collectively, these theoretical frameworks offer complementary perspectives for analyzing the effect of corporate governance on healthcare service delivery within Kenya's NGRHs.

Stakeholder Theory, originally proposed by Freeman (1984), posits that the success and sustainability of an organization depend on its capacity to address the needs and expectations of all stakeholders, extending beyond shareholders to include employees, patients, regulators, donors, and the broader public. The theory contends that effective governance necessitates balancing these diverse interests through inclusive decision-making, transparency, and ethical management practices. Contemporary research substantiates this perspective, highlighting that organizations with governance frameworks that actively consider stakeholder interests are more likely to achieve superior outcomes in public service delivery (Rahman et al., 2023; Marcon et al., 2023). In the healthcare context, Stakeholder Theory is especially pertinent given that hospitals function within highly sensitive environments where active stakeholder engagement is crucial for legitimacy, trust, and continuous service improvement. For NGRHs, where public accountability and patient satisfaction are paramount, this theory provides a valuable lens for understanding how governance frameworks that effectively involve diverse stakeholders can significantly enhance healthcare service delivery.

The Resource-Based View Theory (RBVT), advanced by Penrose (1959) and later expanded by Barney (1991), posits that organizations achieve sustainable competitive advantage through the effective use of internal resources that are valuable, rare, inimitable, and well-organized (the VRIO framework). The theory's core premise is that the strategic deployment of internal resources—such as leadership, systems of governance, and organizational culture—can significantly improve institutional performance. In the context of healthcare, these internal capabilities help hospitals optimize service delivery despite external challenges such as budget constraints or staffing shortages. Utami and Alamanos (2022) and Murcia et al. (2022) emphasized that governance structures themselves can be seen as strategic resources that, when effectively designed and managed, enhance service quality, accountability, and operational efficiency. This theory informed the study by illustrating how strong governance systems within NGRHs serve as organizational assets that support improved healthcare delivery outcomes.

Contingency Theory, initially developed by Joan Woodward in the 1950s and further elaborated by Donaldson (2001), posits that there is no universally optimal approach to organizational management. Rather, the effectiveness of organizational structures—including governance systems—is contingent upon their alignment with specific contextual variables such as organizational size, technology, environmental complexity, and institutional dynamics. This perspective implies that governance frameworks within National Government Referral Hospitals (NGRHs) must be adaptable to the distinct operational conditions and challenges faced by each institution. Recent empirical studies by Gleim et al. (2023) and Oyadomari et al. (2023) affirm that flexible, context-sensitive governance arrangements are vital in public healthcare environments characterized by uncertainty and evolving stakeholder expectations. Accordingly, Contingency Theory informed this study by emphasizing that effective healthcare governance necessitates customization to organizational and environmental contingencies to enhance performance outcomes.

These three theories are interconnected through their shared emphasis on responsiveness, alignment, and the optimization of organizational performance. Stakeholder Theory offers a normative foundation advocating for inclusive, ethical governance that addresses the interests of diverse stakeholders. The Resource-Based View Theory conceptualizes governance capabilities as critical internal resources that can be strategically leveraged to enhance institutional outcomes. Contingency Theory underscores the necessity for adaptive governance practices tailored to the specific contextual conditions of organizations. Collectively, these theoretical perspectives provide a robust and integrative framework for examining the influence of corporate governance on healthcare service delivery within Kenya's NGRHs.

Empirical Review

Empirical evidence consistently underscores the critical role of corporate governance in influencing the performance and service delivery capacity of healthcare institutions. Corporate governance encompasses the systems, structures, and processes through which organizations are directed, controlled, and held accountable. In the healthcare sector, this includes mechanisms for decision-making, transparency, stakeholder engagement, and internal controls (Bjegovic-Mikanovic, 2023). Effective governance frameworks are essential for enabling health systems to fulfill their mandates by enhancing accountability, cultivating stakeholder trust, and optimizing organizational efficiency.

The healthcare sector is undergoing rapid expansion, with both public and private institutions striving to broaden service coverage, enhance the quality of care, and increase sectoral investment (Jani & Chaudhary, 2023). Ouma et al. (2020) contended that the success of healthcare delivery in Kenya is contingent upon the adoption of effective management strategies, particularly the implementation of strong corporate governance frameworks. Yammesri and Herath (2010) and Yeung (2018) contended that corporate governance involves fostering and maintaining constructive relationships among various stakeholders while promoting long-term business sustainability.

Mourajid et al. (2023) established that the decline in healthcare quality and public trust in hospitals is frequently associated with weak governance structures, particularly in contexts where decision-making and institutional accountability are inadequately executed. Their study of Moroccan public hospitals revealed that fragmented governance and unclear responsibility channels significantly contributed to operational inefficiencies and increased patient dissatisfaction. These findings underscore the critical need for robust governance frameworks, reinforced by active stakeholder involvement and transparent decision-making processes, to enhance the effectiveness of healthcare service delivery.

Similarly, Silpachai (2023) examined corporate governance mechanisms in Thai-listed firms and identified a positive correlation between strong internal governance practices and enhanced institutional performance. Although this study focused on a corporate business environment rather than the healthcare sector, the core governance principles—such as transparency, stakeholder engagement, and duty of care, remain pertinent across contexts. The findings demonstrated that organizations with well-defined governance structures were more effective in achieving strategic objectives and sustaining stakeholder trust, aligning with prior

research by Yammeesri and Herath (2010) and Yeung (2018). Nonetheless, the limited application of these insights within public health institutions highlights a critical contextual gap, particularly in relation to Kenya's NGRHs, thereby underscoring the need for targeted investigation.

Kesale et al. (2023) also affirmed that corporate governance significantly influences the operational output of health facilities. They noted that institutional transparency, inclusive decision-making, and accountability mechanisms are critical in enhancing service efficiency and responsiveness. Likewise, Toroitich et al. (2022) emphasized the importance of aligning hospital performance metrics with governance practices, arguing that health institutions must not only comply with legal and ethical standards but also engage communities and stakeholders in evaluating performance outcomes.

Jepkorir (2021) emphasized that patient access to healthcare, the timeliness and appropriateness of care, ease of access, and the effective utilization of available resources are critical factors in evaluating the performance and outcomes of a healthcare system. Silpachai (2023) asserted that there is a significant relationship between internal corporate governance mechanisms and the achievement of organizational objectives. Further, Mourajid et al. (2023) posited that the decline in quality of care is primarily due to insufficient accountability measures, which has consequently led to increased patient dissatisfaction.

In the Kenyan context, corporate governance in NGRHs has come under increasing scrutiny due to persistent challenges in quality of care, resource mismanagement, and weak accountability frameworks. According to Toroitich et al. (2022), institutions and shareholders face challenges in measuring their performance both against internal policies and the broader operational environment within which they function. Mannion et al. (2023) emphasized that safe and structured governance systems in hospitals are crucial for fostering employee engagement and enhancing service delivery. They further argued that investments in technology, internal controls, and stakeholder communication are key governance pillars that directly affect patient outcomes.

Despite these insights, much of the empirical research has been conducted in private sector contexts or outside sub-Saharan Africa, resulting in a notable contextual gap. Although prior studies have operationalized corporate governance through indicators such as board effectiveness, transparency, and stakeholder engagement (Mourajid et al., 2023; Silpachai, 2023), there is limited empirical evidence on how these governance dimensions affect healthcare delivery within Kenya's NGRHs. This study aims to address this gap by investigating the effect of corporate governance on healthcare service delivery in NGRHs, focusing on key governance indicators including accountability, transparency, internal controls, and board of directors.

VI. Methodology

This section outlines the research methodology employed to ensure credible and reliable findings. The chosen methods align with the study's objectives and provide a sound justification for the overall research design, thereby ensuring methodological rigor and relevance within the research context.

Research Philosophy and Research Design

The study adopted a positivist research philosophy, which emphasizes objectivity, empirical analysis, and quantifiable outcomes. As noted by Kouam (2024), positivism assumes that reality is measurable and best examined through systematic, outcome-oriented methods. Azegele (2021) further supports its suitability for analyzing the relationship between institutional practices and performance. To enhance analytical rigor and minimize interpretive bias, a descriptive research design was employed. This design allows for detailed observation and the analysis of multiple variables (Boru, 2018). A quantitative approach, supported by statistical modeling, was used to examine the effect of corporate governance on healthcare service delivery in Kenya's NGRHs. The combination of positivism and descriptive design facilitated a structured and valid evaluation of governance effects on service delivery outcomes.

Target Population and Sampling Design

The study was conducted across five NGRHs in Kenya: Kenyatta National Hospital, Moi Teaching and Referral Hospital, Kenyatta University Teaching, Referral and Research Hospital, Mathari National Teaching and Referral Hospital, and the National Spinal Injury Referral Hospital. The target population comprised 217 hospital management personnel and 100 patients (inpatients and outpatients). Using Slovin's formula at a 5% margin of error, a sample of 199 management staff was determined. Additionally, 10 inpatients and 10 outpatients were selected from each hospital, yielding a total sample size of 299 respondents. Stratified random sampling was employed for management staff, grouped into directors and supervisors, while patients were selected through convenience sampling.

Data Collection Instrument and Data Collection Procedures

Data were collected using structured questionnaires administered to both hospital management and patients, capturing information on corporate governance practices and healthcare service delivery. Additionally, secondary data spanning 2013 to 2024 were obtained from hospital records to support trend analysis. The research instruments underwent reliability and validity testing to ensure accuracy and consistency. Ethical clearance and research permits were secured from the Institutional Scientific and Ethics Review Committee (ISERC), the National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI), the Ministry of Health, and individual hospital administrations. Trained research assistants facilitated data collection, with a targeted response rate of 75%.

Data Analysis Plan and Data Management

The study utilized both descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive analysis was used to summarize the data, including means, standard deviations, and percentages. Simple linear regression analysis was conducted to test the hypotheses, with diagnostic tests performed to ensure model assumptions were met. SPSS and Excel were used for data analysis. Hypothesis testing was performed to determine statistical significance and study findings were presented in tables. Results were disseminated through the publication of the thesis and relevant journals.

To ascertain the relationship between corporate governance and healthcare service delivery, this study utilized a regression analysis model. Saldaña (2021) posits that regression models are effective tools for identifying variables of interest and examining the nature and strength of relationships among them. Accordingly, the following model was employed to test the direct relationship between the variables:

$$HSD = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \epsilon$$

Where: HSD = Healthcare service; β_0 = Y intercept (constant); β_1 = Regression Coefficients; delivery; X_1 = corporate governance and ϵ =error term

VII. Results And Findings

The study achieved an 80.3% response rate from hospital management, with 122 out of 152 questionnaires completed and returned, alongside the targeted 100 patient responses. This response rate is considered adequate according to Babbie (2004) and Meyer et al. (2020). Reliability of the Corporate Governance (CG) construct was evaluated using Cronbach’s Alpha, yielding a coefficient of 0.710 across 12 items, indicating moderate reliability and satisfactory internal consistency. Validity was assessed using the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure, which produced a value of 0.812, classified as “middling” and exceeding the acceptable threshold of 0.50. Furthermore, Bartlett’s Test of Sphericity yielded a Chi-Square value of 652.687 ($p < 0.001$), confirming the appropriateness of the data for factor analysis. Collectively, these results demonstrate that the Corporate Governance construct within the measurement instrument is both reliable and valid, justifying its use for further statistical analysis in examining the effect of corporate governance on healthcare service delivery.

Descriptive Analysis Results

The predictor variable examined in this study was Corporate Governance (CG). Respondents were asked to evaluate various dimensions of CG, including transparency, accountability, the board of directors, and internal controls. The findings are summarized in Tables 1 through 4. Specifically, Table 1 presents the transparency dimension of Corporate Governance.

Table 1: Corporate Governance – Transparency

Transparency	Mean	STD DEV
Open and honest communication with all stakeholders	4.5	0.83
Commitment to openness and accountability.	4.5	0.79
Organization decision-making processes	4.5	0.74
Aggregate score for Transparency	4.5	0.79

Source: Research data (2025)

As shown in Table 1, respondents strongly agreed that transparency is well integrated into the organization’s communication and decision-making processes, with an overall mean of 4.5 and SD of 0.79, indicating high consensus. These results highlight the facility’s effective transparency practices at all organizational levels. Table 2 presents Corporate Governance on accountability.

Table 2: Corporate Governance – Accountability

Accountability	Mean	STD D
Organizational culture, with clear expectations set for individual	4.5	0.74
Culture of ownership and responsibility, empowering staff members	4.5	0.73
Measurable goals and performance evaluation.	4.5	0.78
Aggregate score for Accountability	4.5	0.75

Key: SD = Strongly Disagree; D = Disagree; N = Neutral; A = Agree; SA = Strongly Agree

Source: Research data (2025)

As shown in Table 2, respondents consistently agreed on the organization’s accountability measures, with an overall mean of 4.5 and SD of 0.75. Clear performance expectations (M=4.5, SD=0.74), a culture of ownership and responsibility (M=4.5, SD=0.73), and the establishment of measurable goals for performance evaluation (M=4.5, SD=0.78) were all positively rated, reflecting a robust accountability framework. Table 3 presents corporate governance on board of directors.

Table 3: Corporate Governance – Board of Directors

	Mean	STD D
Strategic direction and governance oversight	4.5	0.75
Legal and regulatory requirements adherence	4.5	0.77
Organizational goals and monitoring performance.	4.6	0.68
Aggregate score for Board of directors	4.5	0.73

Key: SD = Strongly Disagree; D = Disagree; N = Neutral; A = Agree; SA = Strongly Agree

Source: Research data (2025)

As shown in Table 3, the Board of Directors received a high aggregate score of 4.5 (SD = 0.73), indicating strong agreement on its role in strategic direction and oversight. Legal compliance (M = 4.5, SD = 0.77) and holding management accountable (M = 4.6, SD = 0.68) were particularly well rated, reflecting a robust governance structure. Table 4 presents Corporate Governance on internal control.

Table 4: Corporate Governance – Internal Control

	Mean	STD D
Establishment and maintaining effective internal controls	4.5	0.70
Identifying weaknesses and implementing corrective actions	5.0	3.85
Understanding of internal control principles and practices	4.6	0.77
Aggregate score for Internal Control	4.5	1.31

Source: Research data (2025)

As shown in Table 4, Internal Control scored an aggregate mean of 4.5 (SD = 1.31), indicating positive agreement with more variability. Regular assessments and risk mitigation scored highest (M = 5.0, SD = 3.85). Maintaining effective controls (M = 4.5, SD = 0.70) and staff training (M = 4.6, SD = 0.77) also received favorable ratings.

Regression Analysis

Simple linear regression analysis was conducted to examine the effect of corporate governance dimensions on healthcare service delivery. Table 5 presents the effect of corporate governance on healthcare service delivery.

Table 1: Effect of Corporate Governance on Healthcare Service Delivery

		Model Summary					
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin Watson statistics		
1	.760 ^a	0.578	0.532	7.67433	1.747		
		ANOVA					
Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	
1	Regression	4157.32	1	4157.322	60.075	.000 ^b	
	Residual	8304.24	120	69.202			
	Total	12461.559	121				
		Coefficients					
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	
		β	Std. Error	Beta			

1	(Constant)	11.448	2.683		4.267	0
	Corporate Governance	0.894	0.106	0.578	8.402	0
a. Dependent Variable: Healthcare service delivery						
b. Predictors: (Constant), Corporate Governance						

Source: Researcher Data (2025)

The findings in Table 5 indicate a significant and positive effect of corporate governance on healthcare service delivery in Kenya's National Government Referral Hospitals. The coefficient of determination ($R^2 = 0.578$) suggests that 57.8% of the variation in healthcare service delivery is explained by corporate governance, while the remaining 42.2% is attributable to other factors outside the study's scope. The p-value of 0.000 ($p < 0.05$) confirms the statistical significance of the relationship, underscoring corporate governance as a key contributor to effective healthcare service delivery.

To test for the goodness of fit of the model, an ANOVA test was performed. The ANOVA findings show the F-Calculated (1, 120) = 60.075, which is greater than F-Critical (1, 120) = 3.96 at a 95% confidence level. This indicates that the model used to predict the effect of corporate governance on healthcare service delivery has goodness of fit and is supported by $F = 60.075$, $p = 0.000 < 0.05$. The p-value of 0.000 is less than 0.05, further supporting the significance of the relationship, and confirming corporate governance is a strong predictor of healthcare service delivery.

To test the relationship between corporate governance and healthcare service delivery the unstandardized coefficients analysis was performed. The regression coefficient for the constant term ($\beta = 11.448$, $P = 0.000 < 0.05$) is statistically significant and the coefficient for corporate governance ($\beta_3 = 0.894$, $P = 0.000 < 0.05$) is also significant. This suggests that an increase in corporate governance by one-unit results in a 0.894 unit increase in healthcare service delivery, with this effect being statistically significant ($p\text{-value} = 0.000$). This leads to the rejection of the null hypothesis and supports the alternative hypothesis that corporate governance positively affect healthcare service delivery in national government referral hospitals in Kenya.

VIII. Hypothesis Testing

The study hypothesis stated in the null form is as follows:

H₀: Corporate governance does not have a statistically significant effect on healthcare service delivery in National Government Referral Hospitals in Kenya.

To test the hypothesis, a simple linear regression analysis was conducted at a 5% significance level, with corporate governance as the independent variable and healthcare service delivery as the dependent variable. The analysis aimed to determine whether corporate governance significantly affects service delivery in national government referral hospitals. The relationship was assessed using unstandardized coefficients.

The regression results indicate that the constant term ($\beta = 11.448$, $p = 0.000 < 0.05$) and the coefficient for corporate governance ($\beta = 0.894$, $p = 0.000 < 0.05$) are both statistically significant. This implies that a one-unit increase in corporate governance is associated with a 0.894-unit increase in healthcare service delivery. Given the significance of the relationship ($p < 0.05$), the null hypothesis is rejected in favor of the alternative, confirming that corporate governance has a positive and significant effect on healthcare service delivery in Kenya's National Government Referral Hospitals.

This hypothesis was tested by regressing corporate governance's effect on healthcare service delivery guided by the following equation:

$$HSD = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \varepsilon$$

Where: HSD= Healthcare service delivery,

β_0 = Constant term (11.448),

β_1 = Regression coefficients for corporate governance (0.894),

X_1 = Predictor (corporate governance), and ε = Error term.

From the findings, the following equation was derived:

$$HSD = 11.448 + 0.894 X_1$$

Where HSD = Healthcare service delivery, X_1 = Corporate Governance

IX. Findings And Discussion

This section presents the study's findings in line with its specific objective, followed by a discussion that contextualizes the results within existing literature. The discussion highlights points of convergence and divergence with prior research and identifies the study's contributions to the field.

Findings

In light of the results presented, corporate governance demonstrated a significant effect on healthcare service delivery. Hypothesis testing confirmed a statistically significant relationship between corporate governance and service delivery outcomes. Various dimensions of corporate governance were evaluated, with respondents expressing strong agreement on the importance of transparency (mean = 4.5, SD = 0.79), indicating its critical role in enhancing healthcare delivery. Regarding accountability, the study reported an aggregate score of 4.5 (SD = 0.75), reflecting strong and consistent agreement among respondents on the effectiveness of the organization's accountability measures. The study found that the Board of Directors received a high aggregate score of 4.5 (SD = 0.73), indicating strong agreement among respondents regarding its crucial role in offering strategic direction and ensuring effective governance oversight in National Government Referral Hospitals.

The study findings for internal control showed a slightly higher aggregate score of 4.53 (SD = 1.31), indicating strong agreement on its importance, though with greater response variability. The study's finding that corporate governance positively affects healthcare service delivery in Kenya's national government referral hospitals ($p < 0.05$) indicates a statistically significant relationship. This suggests that improvements in governance practices such as transparency, accountability, internal controls, and board oversight are associated with enhanced healthcare service outcomes.

Discussion of Findings

This section critically examines the study's findings in relation to established theoretical frameworks and previous empirical research on corporate governance and healthcare service delivery. By employing a comparative and contrastive approach, the discussion contextualizes the results within the broader academic discourse, highlighting areas of alignment, divergence, and potential contributions to existing knowledge. The study found that corporate governance affects the healthcare service delivery in terms of transparency, Accountability, Board of directors and internal control.

These findings on transparency align with existing literature emphasizing its critical role in fostering trust, accountability, and improved decision-making in healthcare organizations (Mardiani et al., 2023; Ikegami, 2021). Transparent practices are associated with enhanced stakeholder confidence and more effective service delivery. The study findings on accountability align with and echo Radu (2023) and Sun (2024), who emphasize that clear performance expectations and measurable goals are essential for enhancing organizational performance and strengthening institutional accountability. Further the study aligns with Toroitich et al. (2022), who emphasized accountability and transparency within healthcare regulations. The findings on the Board of Directors are consistent with Sharma et al. (2023) and Abu and Bamidele (2022), who highlight the Board's crucial role in ensuring legal compliance and holding management accountable. The findings on internal control align with Lee (2023) and Sari (2022), who emphasize the importance of regular assessments and staff training to strengthen internal control mechanisms.

The study's findings suggest that corporate governance positively influences healthcare service delivery in national government referral hospitals in Kenya ($p < 0.05$). This aligns with existing literature emphasizing the critical role of governance in enhancing healthcare outcomes (Bjegovic-Mikanovic, 2023; Mourajid et al., 2023). The findings also align with Kesale et al. (2023), who linked corporate governance closely to healthcare facility performance. The study further underscores the importance of leadership, stakeholder involvement, and transparent decision-making, consistent with findings by Abba et al. (2018), Mannion et al. (2023), and Silpachai (2023). The study affirms that effective corporate governance encompassing transparency, accountability, and internal control is crucial for enhancing healthcare service delivery. These findings align with existing literature, demonstrating that strong governance practices lead to improved healthcare outcomes via better decision-making, stakeholder engagement, and regulatory compliance.

X. Conclusions

This study aimed to assess the effect of corporate governance on healthcare service delivery in National Government Referral Hospitals in Kenya. The findings revealed a significant and positive relationship between corporate governance and healthcare outcomes, with a beta coefficient of 0.894 and a p-value of 0.000. This indicates that effective corporate governance practices play a crucial role in enhancing management oversight, which ultimately leads to improved healthcare service delivery. The study concludes that the operationalization of transparency, accountability, and internal control within corporate governance structures is essential for achieving better healthcare outcomes.

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