

**TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP, STRATEGIC ORIENTATION AND
PERFORMANCE OF COUNTY GOVERNMENTS IN KENYA: A CASE OF
MAKUENI COUNTY**

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Declaration

I declare that this is my original work and has not been submitted to any other institution for academic credit.

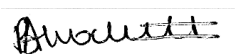
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Dedication

To my parents; Mr. William Wachira and Mrs. Annah Wachira. I also dedicate this work to my wife, Mrs. Edith Kamau and our adored children, Erica and Favour.

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Abstract

The introduction of devolution in Kenya was intended to enhance service delivery, equitable resource distribution, accountability, and socio-economic development. Despite substantial fiscal transfers and expanded governance autonomy, many county governments persistently experience performance challenges characterized by low development budget absorption, delayed project implementation, and growing public discontent with service delivery outcomes. While leadership and strategy execution are widely acknowledged as critical drivers of organizational performance, empirical evidence remains inconclusive regarding the mechanisms through which transformational leadership influences county performance and whether strategic orientation strengthens this relationship within devolved governance systems. This study, therefore, examined the influence of Transformational leadership on performance of County governments in Kenya. It also assessed the mediating influence of strategic orientation on the relationship between transformational leadership and performance of the county governments. The study was anchored on the Transformational Leadership Theory and supported by the Upper Echelons Theory and Dynamic Capabilities Theory. A pragmatic research philosophy informed the study guided by an exploratory sequential mixed methods design. A census sampling approach was used to select 116 staff of Makueni County. A structured research questionnaire and key informant interview guide helped to collect quantitative and qualitative data respectively. In addition, a secondary data collection sheet was used to obtain performance data. The returned questionnaires were analyzed using SPSS (Version 25). Descriptive analysis was done using measures such as mean, mode, standard deviation and percentages. Inferential analysis was also done using multiple linear regression and Pearson Correlation analysis techniques. Prior to the actual analysis of the data, diagnostic tests for linearity, multi-collinearity and normality were performed. Results show a very strong and positive correlation ($R=0.787$) between transformational leadership and county performance. Strategic orientation did not significantly mediate this relationship in the context of county governments in Kenya. Moreover, the aggregate effect of transformational leadership on county performance was positive and statistically significant ($\beta=0.656$, $p<0.001$). Also, a statistically significant influence ($\beta=0.594$, $p<0.001$) of transformational leadership on county performance emerged regardless of the county's strategic orientation. The indirect effect was non-significant ($\beta=.062$, 95% CI $[-.214, 0.264]$), indicating that strategic orientation does not mediate the relationship between transformational leadership and county performance. The findings provide evidence-based insights to policy makers, county leaders, and practitioners on how transformational leadership can enhance fiscal management, development planning and county performance with practical benchmark for other counties in Kenya. It highlights leadership practices and strategic approaches to good governance, sound decision-making, service delivery and sustainable development.

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

ADKAR:	Awareness, Desire, Knowledge, Ability and Reinforcement Model
CEC:	County Executive Committee
CECM:	County Executive Committee Member
CEO:	Chief Executive Officer
CIDP:	County Integrated Development Plan
CoVID:	Corona Virus
CRA:	Commission for Revenue Allocation
DCT:	Dynamic Capabilities Theory
DLOQ:	Dimensions of Learning Organization Questionnaire
EU:	European Union
FY:	Financial Year
GDP:	Gross Domestic Product
IFMIS:	Integrated Financial Management Information System
ISERC:	Institutional Scientific and Ethics Review Committee
KENHA:	Kenya National Highways Authority
KERRA:	Kenya Rural Roads Authority
KIIs:	Key Informant Interviews
KURA:	Kenya Urban Roads Authority
MDG's:	Millennium Development Goals
MLQ:	Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire
MPs:	Members of Parliament
MTP:	Medium-Term Plans
NACOSTI:	National Council for Science Technology and Innovation

OAG	Officer of the Auditor General
OCOB:	Office of the Controller of Budget
PFM Act:	Public Finance Management Act
PFM:	Public Finance Management
PHW:	Public Health Workers
RBV:	Resource Based View
SciMAT:	Science Mapping Analysis Tool
SDG's:	Sustainable Development Goals
SEKEB:	South Eastern Kenya Economic Bloc
SME:	Small and Medium Enterprises
SPSS:	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
TL:	Transformational Leadership
TLT:	Transactional Leadership Theory
U.S:	United States
UET:	Upper Echelons Theory
UK:	United Kingdom
USA:	United States of America

Definition of Terms

County Governments: Devolved units of government established by the constitution of Kenya (2010) replacing the former provincial administration in decentralizing government services within the respective geographical boundaries (The NCLR, 2010).

Idealized Influence: It is the capability of a leader to inspire people, win their respect, trust and confidence acting as their role model influencing their decisions and action (Koske & Munjuri, 2023).

Individualized consideration: The support a leader provides to each individual follower through mentorship, coaching and attending to individual needs of each team member (Atoko, 2023)

Inspirational Motivation: A leader's capability to articulate the organizational vision in a way that inspires employees to perform beyond expectations, manage the followers' expectations, communicate effectively and provide unbiased feedback (Khan et al., 2020).

Intellectual Stimulation: A leader's deliberate effort to encourage his team to flexibly adapt to their environment so as to drive change initiatives (Priscilla, Shitseswa & Kwendo, 2024). It takes wittiness to motivate independent, critical and creative thinking towards realization of organizational goals.

Performance: Actual result attained against the expected outcome, which can be financial, non-financial or both (Odhiambo, 2014) depicting the success achieved by applying skills and competencies in implementing policies, programmes or projects (Wanjiku, 2022)

Strategic Orientation: Values and strategic direction guiding actions the decisions and behaviour towards strategic goals, vision and objectives while adapting to external environments (Nasir et al., 2017).

Transformational Leadership: An innovative leadership style that drives change by influencing people's perceptions, attitudes, decisions and actions through motivation, inspiration, empowerment and personal development (Khan et al., 2020).

Chapter One: Introduction and Background to the Study

Introduction

This chapter broadly introduces the research in terms of what the study sought to address, why it is timely and the specific milestones to be achieved. It covers the key highlights on the background against which the study was informed, the research problem, research objectives, the hypotheses tested, rationale for the study, assumptions, scope as well as limitations and delimitations.

Background of the Study

Organizations and the environments within which they operate change so rapidly and so do governments, their governance structures, leadership, systems and processes (Ogamba & Moronge, 2023). Leadership remains an indispensable anchor in the realms of organizational effectiveness and public sector transformation. Within this broad spectrum, transformational leadership has emerged as a pivotal construct associated with the capability to shape an organization's strategic direction, enhancing operational efficiency, inspiring change, driving innovation and bolstering organizational performance. There has been a tendency towards devolution of authority, power and resources across the globe, regions and nations with expectations of efficiency, equity and accountability in managing public resources. Rodriques-Pose and Gill (2008) explain some rarely discussed pitfalls of devolution citing leadership and performance challenges notably in the United States of America (USA), Brazil, Mexico, India, China and some of the European countries. The cross-cutting performance problems relate to uneven infrastructure penetration, inequitable resource allocation and marginalization in development. In Georgia (USA), the local self-government failed to operate independently due to budgetary dependence with limited

financial resources that inhibit the government from performing their functions freely and adequately (Phirtskhalashvili & Gavatdze, 2024).

Empirical evidence from the developed economies in the USA attribute successful performance management in U.S city and county governments to devolved decision authority among program-level managers (Ammons & Roenigk, 2020). The USA stands out as an example to many nations on successful decentralization, with both federal government and all the states pursuing development goals and objectives. With the devolved decision authority to leaders and managers, it has taken goal clarity, more emphasis on outcomes, engagement of top executives coupled with leadership and managerial flexibility and accountability in utilization of financial, material and human resources to transform both the city and county governments. All over the world, public organizations continue to recognize and appreciate the continuous improvements, institutional capacity strengthening and advancement towards good governance and leadership practices to enhance service delivery and citizen satisfaction (Ammons & Roenigk, 2020).

However, some parts of the world face different dynamics in leadership and management of public organizations leading to inconsistent performance. According to Helms (2017), there is a more dampened peculiarity of both collective and dispersed leadership in the European Union (EU) than is the case in the USA with pronounced leadership and followership problems. In many developing countries, public organizations are characterized by bureaucratic and transitional tendencies hindering transformational leadership from thriving.

According to Hidayat (2017), political devolution in Indonesia has weak governance structures, lacks proper accountability and has limited capability to drive good performance. It only lures the citizens with illusion for better governance of

health and education sectors but fails to deliver stable infrastructure for citizen control over allocation and utilization of resources. The decentralized government system in Nepal is shrouded in administrative ambiguities and glitches arising from weak policymaking and implementation leading to the wide social and economic gaps which the provincial and local government interventions have failed to address (Bhusal & Breen, 2024). This is evident through the imbalanced regional infrastructure development, lack of a proper legal and institutional framework for enhanced performance and the existing policy gaps arising from the weak policymaking systems and structures.

In Africa, some degree of central government control and influence still inhibits devolved units from performing their functions independently and effectively. Most municipal actors in the continent lack the requisite capacity, decision-making power and resources and, therefore, fail to provide adequate infrastructure and amenities to the growing populations (Guthiel, 2024). While Mohammed et al. (2024) report discontent in Ghana's local assembly performance in sanitation, governance and gender issues, some citizens are satisfied with delivery of health, energy, education and water supply. Significant challenges associated with service delivery backlog, capacity constraints, poor financial management, fragmented governance with overlapping districts and poor coordination do not only hinder planning but also adversely affect the performance of decentralized governments in South Africa (Nkoana et al., 2024). Economies such as Nigeria, South Africa, Mali, Ghana Mozambique and Ethiopia have, however, successfully decentralized governance, leadership, decision-making and service delivery despite preliminary challenges (Barasa & Omariba, 2024). Reforms in many developing countries seek to devolve fiscal, administrative and political functions yet, a dearth in literature relating

transformational leadership and performance of devolved units of government exists with limited scholarly evidences.

In Kenya, notable performance by some county governance is well documented yet gaps persist especially in counties that previously faced marginalization, low infrastructural penetration, structural and other socio-economic challenges (Muwonge et al., 2022). At the county levels, performance in planning, budgeting and implementation of development budgets has been sub-optimal, thereby undermining the quality and sustainability of services being offered. To survive and stay abreast with the ever changing dynamics, governments have adopted various reforms in leadership, governance, development strategy and adopted region-specific strategic orientations to support social, political and economic transformation (Ammons & Roenigk, 2020). At the nerve center of organizational transformation, leadership plays a central role in designing change initiatives, mobilizing the requisite resources, prioritizing interventions, enlisting adequate stakeholder buy-in and support, crafting appropriate development strategy and spearheading the actual transformation process. Whereas various leadership approaches and styles have emerged, transformational leadership remains popular as it involves both developmental and transitional changes leading to greater community outcomes (Atoko, 2023; Ogamba & Moronge, 2023). In its fullness, transformational leadership approach encourages exceptional performance by encouraging the pursuit and achievement of extraordinary outcomes.

Transformational leadership style has found application globally in both public and private sector organizations (Barasa & Omariba, 2024). In this study, transformational leadership dimensions (idealized influence, individualized consideration, inspirational motivation and intellectual stimulation) and organizational

strategic orientation are examined as a driving force behind devolution and decentralization of functions for effective, efficient and impactful service delivery (Ammons & Roenigk, 2020). In Kenya, leadership under devolution has been implemented with remarkable achievements and mixed perceptions about performance have been documented across the counties. However, members of the public continuously discern poor leadership and sub-optimal performance by the county governments and other public organizations. This often triggers public uproar and skepticism about resources management, leadership and governance (Otwoma et al., 2021).

Transformational leadership

Transformational leadership (TL) has its foundations in the scholarly works of Downton (1973), Burns (1978), Bass (1985) as well as Bass and Avolio (1990). Downton (1973) who introduced the concept of TL by examining the role of leader charisma and commitment to organizational vision. Burns (1978) advanced the idea by expounding TL as a relationship in which leaders and their followers motivate each other towards achieving high levels of performance while Bass (1985) interrogated why some select leaders inspire extraordinary performance when many others merely attain above average results. Bass and Avolio (1990) further advanced the understanding of transformational leadership by introducing a multifactor leadership questionnaire which is widely used in measuring transformational leadership. While considering the needs and interests of all followers in creating change, transformational leaders typically inspire, motivate, and elevate their followers by aligning individual goals to organizational goals and values (Burns, 1978). The concept of transformational leadership has since gained popularity in theory, practice

and research. Various definitions of transformational leadership have emerged (Khan et al., 2020; Korejan & Shahbazi, 2016).

Khan et al. (2020) define transformational leadership as an approach involving leaders transforming their followers, inspiring them by building leader-follower trust, influencing their perceptions, attitudes, decisions and actions by motivating them, recognizing their innovative ideas and continuously developing their capabilities to perform better each day. Similarly, Gomes (2014) defines transformational leadership as a process by which a leader effectively stimulates a change of the followers' attitudes, beliefs, perceptions, values and views towards enhancing harmonious understanding and pursuit of common organizational vision goals and objectives. A common attribute of transformational leadership manifests in how leaders influence their followers' values, beliefs, decisions and goal orientation while recognizing the need for change (Korejan & Shahbazi, 2016). This study adopts Khan et al. (2020) definition which is broad and transcends mere understanding of influence and manipulation of the follower attitudes, beliefs and values.

Transformational leadership is further expounded in terms of four distinct dimensions commonly referred to as the four I's of TL (Korejan & Shahbazi, 2016). These dimensions include; idealized influence, inspirational motivation, individualized consideration and intellectual stimulation. Idealized influence manifests when a leader efficiently understands the organization's mission and appropriately visualizes it (Bass, 1985; Bass & Avolio, 1990; Burns, 1978; Kayago et al., 2024). Leaders with idealized influence are perceived role models and believed to have gained trust and respect of employees to make sound decisions. Inspirational motivation is all about a leader creating positive emotional connection with the followers, supporting them to build confidence in themselves and their respective sub-

teams and contribute to the desired team performance, communicating effectively and providing unbiased feedback (Khan et al., 2020). Through inspirational motivation, a leader articulates the organizational vision clearly and consistently thereby inspiring the followers to perform beyond expectations.

Intellectual stimulation calls for deliberate efforts by the leadership to enthuse teams and followers to adapt to changes and be flexible to drive change initiatives. Leaders with intellectual stimulation possess the wit to motivate independent, critical and creative thinking of followers towards realization of organizational goals (Priscilla et al., 2024). Individualized consideration is about support that a leader provides to each individual follower. It expresses in leadership that mentors followers and attends to individual needs of each team member (Atoko, 2023). This leadership style focuses on strong motivational relationship between leaders and their followers and subordinates influencing them to create desired results and outcomes (Gomes, 2014).

To address the contemporary challenges facing devolved and decentralized units of government, various strategies have been adopted using transformational leadership and other approaches guided by proper strategic orientation with well stated, clearly articulated vision, mission and strategic intent. These interventions are intentioned to enable both levels of government to deliver services and programmes addressing specific needs and to turnaround the poorly performing units (Atoko, 2023; Daud et al., 2022; Dalton & Coggins 2023; Hidayat, 2017; Jeptepkeny & Kipkorir, 2021; Ogamba & Moronge, 2023; Phirtskhalashvili & Gvartadze, 2024; Pope et al., 2024). This study examines how county government performance is influenced by transformational leadership dimensions considering the place of strategic orientation as a mediator of the said relationship.

Strategic Orientation

An organization's strategic direction guides an entity towards its vision and long-term goals, making informed choices and decisions while adjusting their strategies, activities and processes to the dynamics of the shifting environments. Essentially, the leaders require a strong sense of strategic orientation to champion the best interests of the organizations inspiring change, building and sustaining a strong guiding coalition within motivating the change agents, driving innovation and empowering the followers to achieve high performance. The concept of strategic orientation of organizations is a widely debated and researched topic attracting vast attention and discourse among researchers, scholars and strategic management practitioners (Micheni & Awuor, 2024; Han et al., 2022; Adams et al., 2019; Nasir et al., 2017).

Adams et al. (2019) define strategy orientation as a set of principles, values, guidelines, strategic inclinations, activities and behaviours that raise the organization's profile, viability and performance. This definition underscores the essence of identifying, collecting, and analysing intelligence to create organizational knowledge that can be utilized to effect change and enhance performance. Nasir et al. (2017) perceive strategic orientation as the strategic direction taken by an organization to create proper behaviours that help generate continuous superior performance. According to this definition, the focus can be on one or more facets including customer, market, employee, entrepreneurial, learning, interaction, innovation, cost, competitor or entrepreneurial orientation. On the other hand Han et al. (2022) define strategic orientation as a guideline for aligning a company's practices, procedures and processes towards pursuit of its strategic goals. Here, strategic orientation manifests in how an organization operates, uses the available organizational resources, the pattern

of informed choices in decision making and the approach in driving high performance by adapting and remodeling the actual organizational operating environment.

These definitions aptly outline the role of strategic orientation very elaborately citing principles, behaviour development and change, goal focus, values and the operating environment for the organizations. This study integrates the three definitions, complementing each other guided by key principles, values, vision, behaviour-driven direction and guidelines that are all necessary in pursuit of continuous superior performance by linking long-range vision to the daily work. In the context of this study, subsisting literature indicates that strategic orientation significantly influence organizational performance of county governments provided there is a clear vision that drives attainment of the development goals and objectives of the county (Micheni & Awuor, 2024).

Performance of County Governments

From a managerial view, performance refers to the extent to which an organization attains its intended objectives, delivers products and services efficiently and effectively, meets the customer expectations in compliance with legal, regulatory and institutional standards (Badarai et al., 2023; Gutterman, 2023). An in-depth analysis of an organization's performance encompasses both the qualitative and quantitative aspects of performance which can further be broken down and measured in terms of financial, non-financial, operational, marketing, economic, and development performance. Financial performance relates to how best an organization manages its financial resources in delivering on its mandate, and in the context of the county governments, it covers budgeting, budget absorption rate, revenue generation, fiscal discipline and compliance with financial laws and regulations. Economic performance addresses economic development, employment creation, investments,

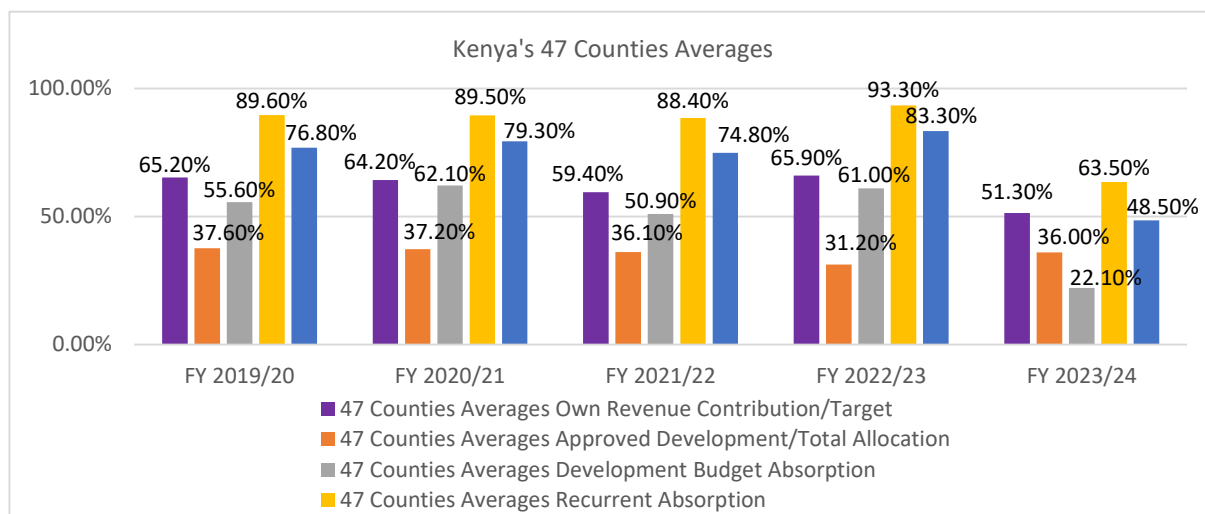
contribution to GDP and productivity while operational performance covers internal efficiency, governance, delivery of services and social impact. In measuring county government performance, literature evaluates the actual outcomes achieved against the county-specific development goals as detailed in their respective county integrated development plans and national development blueprint (Anguche et al., 2024).

The rationale for measuring the performance of county governments is to ascertain the achievements and progress made over time relative to the goals, targets and milestones set (Mbui & Minja, 2023). It also helps identify gaps and areas that need improvement. It is important to understand county performance by first defining performance in broader sense. According to Odhiambo (2014) performance refers to the actual result attained as measured against the expected outcome, which can be financial, non-financial or both. County performance, therefore, depicts the level of success achieved through application of skills and competencies in completion of tasks, implementing the county policy, programmes or projects (Wanjiku, 2022). Subsisting literature on the performance of county governments shows that the county performance has been measured by the level of citizen satisfaction, effective and efficient use of county resources, process quality and the county's ability to create new opportunities for business, employment and socio-economic development (Daud et al., 2022; Magani & Gichure, 2018; Mbui & Minja, 2023; Micheni & Awuor, 2024;).

The political class and elites argue for an increment of the equitable share of national resources from the current 15% to about 30% of the total national revenues (Magani & Gichure, 2018) to finance the counties' development and recurrent expenditures. However, execution of the development budget has been underwhelming across several counties performing below the expectations. There are

also glaring concerns regarding the performance of the county governments (Office of the Controller of Budget (OCOB) - Kenya, 2024; Office of the Auditor General (OAG)- Kenya, 2024). There's uncertainty about the stability and effectiveness of the devolved systems and institutions in service delivery and reduction of disparities in regional development within the country (Muwonge et al., 2022).

Leadership, strategy orientation and managerial capacity concerns also arise with mixed standpoints on the contribution of devolution to service delivery despite some promising signs amid uncertainty in performance. Like in the national government, the county wage bill takes vast resources with only a little allocation for development. Contrary to the Public Finance Management (PFM) Act (2012) requirement that each county allocates 30% of their budget to development expenditure, the OAG and OCOB have noted some non-compliant counties allocating less resources to development. While some county governments have consistently performed better than majority of the counties, the development budget absorption rates across all the counties has not been impressive. Majority of the counties spend below the recommended 30% of their budgets on development despite the burgeoning recurrent expenditure (Vita & Genga, 2018). Records from the Office of the Controller of Budget (OCOB) show inconsistent performance by the 47 county governments during the financial year (FY)2019/2020-FY2023/24.

Figure 1***National Averages of County Revenues and Budget Absorption in Kenya***

Source: (OAG, 2024; OCOB, 2024/2023/2022/2021/2020; Republic of Kenya, 2023; OCOB)

Figure 1 clearly demonstrates that the counties generated 65.2%, 74.8%, 64.2%, 46.1%, and 65.9% of the annual target in own revenues and absorbed 76.8%, 77.9%, 79.3%, 48.7%, and 83.3% of the budget implying that the counties did not utilize all the resources available to them. Achieving economic growth and development requires clear strategy, a stable leadership and management support system to deliver the desired outcomes. Leadership dynamics and strategic capabilities driving Makueni county's notable achievements justify the need to examine how transformational leadership and strategic orientation drive transformation and better performance of the counties in Kenya.

County Governments in Kenya

County governments are devolved units of governance established by law and designed to bring government services and decision-making closer to the people. According to the National Council for Legal Reporting (2025), the Constitution of

Kenya (2010) and the Public Finance Management (PFM) Act (2012) clearly define the formation, establishment, functions, powers, responsibilities and functioning of the county governments in Kenya. In total, there are forty-seven county governments across the country with functional legislative and executive organs with clear systems for delivery of devolved services. According to Magani and Gichure (2018), the establishment of devolved system of government in Kenya was informed by wide public discontent with the centralized governance system, lack of equity in budgetary allocation, regional disparities in development, political marginalization, the need for inclusive public participation in governance and inequalities in ethno-regional development. However, the need for equitable sharing of the national cake and equitable development across the country actually catalyzed constitutional change and, therefore, ushered in the devolved governments in addition to the national government.

The county governments have distinct roles, functions and expectations in regards to revenue generation, budgeting, strategy development and implementation, service delivery and accountability to the stakeholders. The counties have a duty to develop and implement programmes, raise own revenues, deliver services that address local challenges and development needs while contributing to national development. From the inception of devolution in Kenya in March 2013, many parts of the country have realized some development with decentralized resources and decision-making. Areas that were considered politically and economically marginalized now have seen tremendous development, thanks to devolution. In the spirit of devolution, about 15% of the national resources are shared equitably across the 47 counties guided by Commission for Revenue Allocation (CRA) formula.

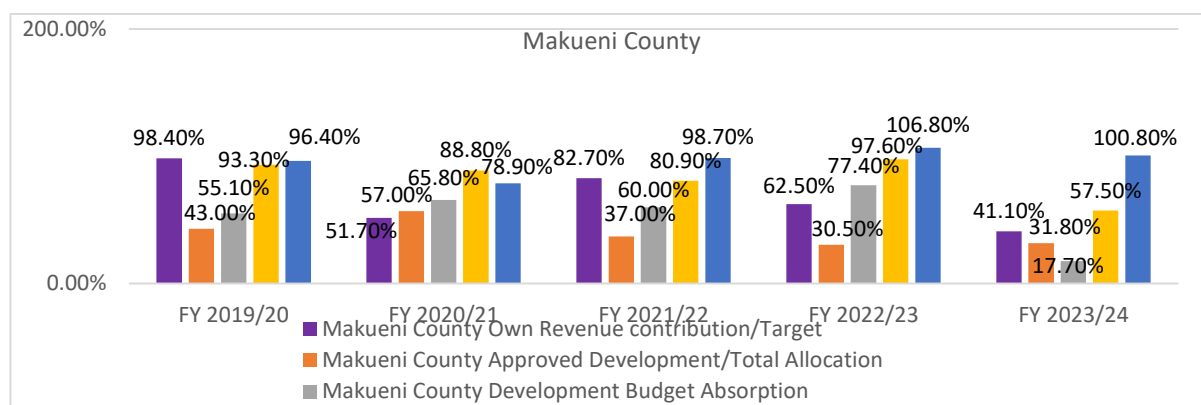
According to the OCOB (2024), most county governments incur high expenditures on personnel emoluments which is unsustainable despite their underperformance in own-source revenue collections. In fact, all the 47 county governments' aggregate own-source revenue collections for the last 5 financial years has remained below the annual target. Huge amounts of unpaid bills (some of which are doubtful) which ought to have been settled have also been noted across several counties which underutilize the exchequer disbursements. In addition, the reports indicate weak budgetary control without robust mechanisms for good internal controls in place to keep the county expenditures within the budget lines. Another concern is that several counties use commercial bank accounts for government business contrary to the regulations 82(1)(b) of the PFM Act which requires the devolved government units to maintain bank accounts at the Central Bank of Kenya. In some counties, employees have had to go for several months without salaries yet the county governments failed to absorb the allocations for the recurrent expenditure despite all the disbursements made every financial year (OCOB, 2024).

Over the last five years, the OCOB reports higher development budget allocation than the minimum requirement of at least 30% across the counties. It is interesting to note that Makueni County allocated 43%, 57%, 37%, 30.5% and 31% from FY2019/20 to FY2023/24 respectively with highest allocations over the 2 financial years preceding the elections in Kenya and a sharp decline in the proportion of development budget allocation below the national average under the new leadership as shown in Figure 1. However, OCOB statistics show that Makueni county is among the leading counties in both development and aggregate budget absorption with above-average performance since the inception of devolution in Kenya with notable development projects in healthcare, agribusiness, trade and other

sectors. Figure 2 shows the budget performance for 5 years against the national averages of all the 47 counties.

Figure 2

Averages Revenues and Budget Absorption by the County Government of Makueni



Source: (OAG, 2024; OCOB, 2024/2023/2022/2021/2020; Republic of Kenya, 2023; OCOB)

Generally, performance statistics from the OCOB show relatively low development attributed to low development budget absorption with colossal recurrent expenditure. In some counties, slow development is the order of the day occasioned by poor implementation, underutilization or misappropriation of the available finances. While subsisting literature attribute the poor performance to late disbursements, IFMIS challenges political interference, institutional incapacities (Mbui & Minja, 2023; OAG, 2024), appreciating how good leadership practices help in driving development in counties is worthwhile.

Statement of the Problem

Since the initiation of Kenya's devolution in the year 2013, public discontent with the services and performance by both the counties and the national governments has persisted (Muwonge et al., 2022). The poor performance stems from strategic planning challenges, leadership problems, late disbursement of resources, poor

implementation, governance and institutional capacity constraints (Hantiro & Maina, 2020; Mbui & Minja, 2023). Many county governments have registered suboptimal performance over the last decade. While the county governments' contribution to the national GDP varies, the aggregate budget absorption rate for all the 47 counties has never hit the 100% score with perennial aggregate fiscal deficit.

Development budget absorption has been noticeably less than the aggregate budget absorption implying the failure by counties to deliver the planned development projects. Records from OCOB show low own revenue collections as the counties generated 65.2%, 74.8%, 64.2%, 46.1%, and 65.9% of the annual target and absorption of 76.8%, 77.9%, 79.3%, 48.7% and 83.3% of the budget during the FY2019/20-2023/24 implying that the counties underutilized their resources. The statistics further show inconsistent budgetary allocation and absorption as Makueni county allocated 43%, 57%, 37%, 30.5% and 31% from FY2019/20 to FY2023/24.

While the PFM Act section 107(b) requires counties to spend at least 30% of their revenues on development, several counties' recurrent expenditure outweigh their development expenditure. The counties absorb less than the exchequer disbursements and still report pending bills every year (Republic of Kenya, 2023). Although the Kenya School of Government (2015) reports various challenges faced by counties in their efforts to put in place stable systems, enhance institutional capacity to invest and deliver services, the role of transformational leadership in driving county performance considering the mediating role of strategic orientation still lacks comprehensive scrutiny. Subsisting literature has hardly interrogated the role of Transformational Leadership in performance of county governments in Kenya considering the mediating role of strategic orientation (Daud et al., 2022; Khan et al., 2020; Ogamba et al., 2023).

This study developed more detailed, up-to-date and meaningful literature on the place of transformational leadership in promoting proper fiscal management for sustained devolution in Kenya. Also, the lack of concurrence among existing theories and empirical studies on the place of transformational leadership in county performance in Kenya informed this study. Similarly, mismanagement, misappropriation and embezzlement of resources akin to leadership and managerial inadequacies, reaffirm the problem of leadership incapacity to develop the counties (Sungu & Aila, 2022). Despite the foregoing concerns, the county government of Makueni stands out with consistent high development budget allocation and absorption, viable projects done, strategy execution and service delivery hence the motivation to examine what works best for the county's leadership, strategy orientation and performance.

Sungu and Aila (2022) review of 14 counties attributes poor performance to low budget absorption, lapsed resource disbursements to the counties, limited resources and slow implementation of development projects. It is also unclear in empirical literature as to why some counties outperform others significantly despite the equitable resource allocations and vast financial disbursements to the counties and further national government support. There is hardly any case study of Makueni county's transformational leadership and performance nexus. It is also not clear whether strategic orientation actually mediates the relationship between TL and performance of the county government. It is on these pedestals that this in-depth examination sufficed focusing on Makueni County as a case study by adopting the mixed methods approach is imperative.

Research Objectives

This study was guided by one general objective and six specific objectives

The General Objective

To establish the influence of transformational leadership on performance of county governments in Kenya while examining the mediating influence of strategic orientation on the relationship using the County Government of Makueni as a case study.

Specific Objectives

- i. To establish the influence of idealized influence on performance of Makueni County, Government, Kenya
- ii. To evaluate the influence of inspirational motivation on performance of Makueni County Government, Kenya
- iii. To assess the influence of Intellectual Stimulation on performance of Makueni County Government, Kenya
- iv. To examine the influence on Individualized consideration on performance of Makueni County Government, Kenya
- v. To determine the mediating influence of strategic orientation on the relationship between transformational leadership and performance of Makueni County Government, Kenya
- vi. To evaluate the combined influence of transformational leadership dimensions on performance of Makueni County Government, Kenya

Research Hypotheses

H₀₁: There is no significant effect of idealized influence on performance of Makueni County Government, Kenya

H₀₂: Inspirational motivation has no significant influence on the performance of Makueni County Government, Kenya

H₀₃: Intellectual stimulation has no significant influence on the performance of Makueni County Government, Kenya

H₀₄: Individualized consideration has no significant influence of on performance of Makueni County Government, Kenya

H₀₅: Strategic orientation has no mediating influence on the relationship between transformational leadership and performance of Makueni County Government, Kenya

H₀₆: Transformational Leadership dimensions have no significant combined effect on performance of Makueni County Government, Kenya

Assumptions of the Study

Whereas this research was done when the country was struggling with economic recovery post-CoVID-19 pandemic and the fiscal challenges linked with the Finance Bill (2024/25), it was assumed that despite budgetary constraints, transformational leadership behaviours positively drive high performance culture and good institutional values. The relationship between transformational leadership and county performance was assumed to be linear, normal and that strategic orientation would significantly mediate this relationship. It was also assumed that the execution of county development programmes would not suffer significantly from fiscal imbalances in the country and that transformational leaders at the counties have higher capability to shape the strategic orientation and enhance the performance of the county government. The study also assumed that the leaders practice transformational leadership effectively.

Significance of the Study

Existing literature has hardly interrogated the role of transformational leadership in the performance of county governments in Kenya considering the

mediating role of strategic orientation (Daud et al., 2022; Khan et al., 2020; Ogamba et al., 2023). This study presents more detailed, up-to-date and meaningful literature on the place of transformational leadership in promoting proper fiscal management for sustained development in devolved governments in Kenya. The study could benefit county governments, the political class, leadership practitioners, scholars, students, and future researchers. The study brings out the role of leadership in devising appropriate strategic orientation towards addressing county-specific interests in regards to budgeting and execution of the county budgets.

Other counties that have perennially performed below the standards of Makueni County have a point of reference based on research evidence to learn and adopt some of the best practices that have elevated levels of performance of Makueni County Government. The county chiefs, departmental directors, and the entire leadership can understand the dynamics of effective leadership and proper strategy orientation towards the immediate and long-term aspirations of the devolved units as enshrined in their respective CIDPs for better performance. Besides, taking Makueni County as a case of study permitted an in-depth analysis of the best leadership practices and strategies which inform action and policy interventions catalyzing development in all counties in Kenya.

Overall, this study provides evidence-based insights to policy makers, county leaders, and practitioners on how transformational leadership can enhance fiscal management, development planning and county performance with practical benchmark for other counties in Kenya. It highlights leadership practices and strategic approaches to good governance, sound decision-making, service delivery and sustainable development.

Scope of the Study

This study explores the relationship between TL and Performance of county governments in Kenya considering the mediating influence of strategic orientation using Makueni County as a case. The study was conducted in Makueni County headquarters and involved 116 management-level staff including county chief officers, county executive committee members, directors across the administrative departments of the county, health unit managers, office of the senator, municipal managers, office of the governor and deputy governor respectively. The research was underpinned by the Transformational Leadership Theory, Upper Echelons Theory and Dynamic Capabilities Theory. Taking a mixed methods approach, the researcher used different techniques and methods at various research stages to achieve the stated objectives. It took a period of twenty months from August, 2024 to March, 2026 with a budget of Ksh. 234,000.

Limitations of the Study

This study was conducted at a time when the country was undergoing serious financial strain occasioned by the withdrawal of the Finance Bill (2024) and without a budget for the financial year ending 30th June, 2025. Considering county performance for the preceding years and significant differences in terms of the political leadership, management and administrative capacity, resource endowments and county-specific demographics, contextual differences inhibit generalizability of the findings. On the case study approach, this study was geographically limited to the county government of Makueni, though its findings are construed to be representative of other counties in Kenya. The single case study, therefore, potentially constrains external validity of the findings beyond Makueni County considering the heterogeneous social, economic and political dynamics and needs across the counties. In this view, the results of this study

lack perfect generalizability to other counties in Kenya. In addition, the intrinsically heterogeneous nature of county government departments makes it practically complex to apply a unified model for measuring the study variables especially when examining a nuanced interplay between all the variables under investigation across multiple counties.

This scenario inhibited the implementation of County Integrated Development Plans (CIDPs), hence, affecting the performance of both national and county governments of Kenya. Also, the protracted authorization procedure at the county government of Makueni truncated the data collection window and, therefore, necessitated intensive data collection over a shorter period that was initially intended. Whereas this challenge could limit the depth and breadth of cross-sectional engagement with the participants, the researcher got the logistical support of the county administration and reached out to various departments administering structured questionnaires and conducting KIIs.

While focusing on transformational leadership, this study excluded the effect of other leadership styles such as the transactional leadership, servant leadership, authoritarian leadership or even situational leadership which may also influence county performance. In addition, the study relied on data and perceptions gathered from high-ranking county officials and those serving in strategic positions creating room for the risk of bias or exaggeration. These implied skewed responses more to the senior managers' perspectives without the input of the many front-line and junior employees who play a pivotal role in implementing the development projects. The study, however, took cognizance of the need for leader-follower perspectives and therefore makes provision for diversified sample selection involving different ranks of

respondents across the functional departments of the county so as to include the follower perspectives.

Delimitations of the Study

It is imperative to align the study with the existing financing framework for the devolved governments in Kenya. In addition, examining the performance of county governments from the start of devolution in Kenya to-date is equally important instead of merely focusing on the FY 2024/2025. Taking the mixed methods design, this study incorporated a broad-based approach to selecting respondents from all county departments at different levels of hierarchy. In this approach, a more balanced pool of respondents from all leadership, administrative and operational echelons within the devolved government structures was selected. While the study did not involve all the operational staff, it is important to note that respondents from all levels of the county government were selected from all departments to provide insights and unbiased perspectives on the relationships under investigation.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, a contextual account of how transformational leadership dimensions influence the performance of devolved governments in the presence of strategic orientation has been presented. The study variables have been conceptualized with reference to perspectives from literature. Key components of the study have been highlighted and justified with relevant evidences starting from the background, the research problem, general and specific objectives, research hypotheses, significance, scope, limitations and delimitations of the study. The next chapter reviews extant theoretical, conceptual and empirical literature in details.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

Introduction

In this chapter, an elaborate account is presented of the published literature on each study variable, relevant theories underpinning the study in light of their evolution, development, application, criticisms and emerging issues. It also covers the conceptual framework, some of the identified research gaps as well as a summary of the entire chapter.

Conceptual Literature Review

Transformational leadership style is a widely debated and researched concept that continues to shape the contemporary leadership theory, practice and organizational change. Various scholars have advanced diverse definitions of the concept transformational leadership (Bass, 1985; Burns, 1978; Gomes, 2014; Khan et al., 2020; Kotamena et al., 2020; Korejan & Shahbazi, 2016; Sigalingging & Azmy, 2023) and even developed multiple facets that altogether constitute the TL as a leadership style and an approach in which individuals, followers, teams and organizations are transformed. According to Gomes (2014) transformational leadership is a process where a leader stimulates change in the followers' attitudes, beliefs, decisions and values towards a unified attainment of organizational goals and objectives. TL is believed to have been founded on the scholarly works of Downton (1973), Burns (1978), Bass (1985) as well as Bass and Avolio (1990) which birthed the transformational leadership theory.

Accordingly, Downton (1973) introduced the concept of TL in terms of the leader charisma and commitment to organizations' vision. Burns (1978) explains TL as a relationship in which leaders and their followers motivate each other to achieve

high performance while Bass (1985) explain the leader's role in inspiring extraordinary performance. Bass and Avolio (1990) introduced the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) to advance the understanding of transformational leadership by breaking down the concept into specific indicators per dimension considering the needs and interests of all followers in creating change, empowering, inspiring, motivating and aligning individual goals to organizational goals and values (Burns, 1978).

According to Kotamena et al. (2020), transformational leadership entails setting attainable and realistic goals, creating an enabling work environment that inspires acceptance of change, new ideas and innovative approaches to implementation of the desired change. This argument stems from a review of literature across nations showing that TL fosters inspiration that transcends personal interests of individuals in organizations, encourages idealized power, intellectual stimulation and sound individual judgement. In Ghasabeh et al. (2015) view, the concept of transformational leadership in the Australian context focuses on satisfaction of the fundamental needs followed by meeting higher expectations through motivating followers with charisma, inspiring them to innovatively execute change.

With its focus on developing strong interrelationships between leaders and their subordinates, TL puts emphasis on inspiration, vision, motivation, and enhanced organizational performance. It is through TL that organizations optimize individual distinctiveness to achieve organizational vision, build leader-follower trust, recognizing everyone's innovative ideas and continuously developing their capabilities to achieve greater results (Sigalingging & Azmy, 2023). Considering the role played by leaders in follower and organizational transformation, the discourse on

TLT provides a strong conceptual foundation upon which the four dimensions of TL have been built and examined (Siangchokyoo et al., 2020).

Idealized Influence

According to Sigalingging and Azmy (2023), idealized influence relates to the ideal influence by the leader who provides a vision and mission, leads the pack towards attaining the desired future and winning the trust and respect of the subordinates. Hosna et al. (2021) underscore the role of idealized influence in communicating the collective purpose, vision and values while instilling determination and commitment to delivering stellar performance. This definition generally depicts the level of charisma that leaders need to exhibit to earn respect, trust and confidence hence making the subordinates to follow the leaders objectively. Kariuki (2021) explains idealized influence as a charismatic way of inspiring an organizational vision, articulating it effectively, exhibiting behavioural integrity and maintaining emotional attachment between leaders and subordinates. According to this definition, leaders with idealized influence are role models considering their moral behavior and perceived behaviour, enthusiasm, risk-taking propensity.

Inspirational Motivation

Leaders with a strong sense of inspirational motivation inspire their subordinates by clearly articulating the organizational vision, inspiring enthusiasm amongst the team members by involving them at every stage of the change process and supporting them to understand the goals they are to achieve (Sigalingging & Azmy, 2023). According to Hosna et al. (2021), idealized influence enables the leader to give meaning and value to work so that individuals within an organization can purposefully unite to pursue a shared vision. This dimension is about inspiring teamwork amongst individuals in order to achieve a common goal or objective for

mutual benefit of both the organization and individuals within it. In other words, it entails the leader's ability to effectively champion a vision clearly to encourage the followers to forgo their personal interests for the common good of the entire organization. In this way, the leader intimates the followers to develop the requisite skills and competencies, build individual confidence, rallies the followers towards an envisioned greater future that addresses collective interests of the entire organization (Kariuki, 2021).

Intellectual Stimulation

This is about intellectually stimulating the desire and commitment to greater performance, giving the team members an opportunity to think, make informed decisions and choices, take risk by trying new ideas, innovate and provide solutions creatively (Hosna et al., 2021). Through intellectually stimulating engagements with subordinates, leaders have a chance to gather the individual members' insights and perspectives towards addressing pressing challenges and emerging problems in organization. Accordingly, this dimension involves creating a challenging but fulfilling environment where individuals feel motivated to explore and try new approaches to problem solving. As Sigalingging and Azmy (2023) observe, intellectual stimulation as a dimension of TL entails creative and effective utilization of a leader's intellectual capabilities to instigate the creativity and innovativeness of the team members while leveraging their rationality and problem-solving capabilities to effect the desired change and possibly surpass targets and expectations. It is about encouraging the subordinates to go beyond the individual comfort zones to embracing challenges and the opportunities brought about by the challenges.

Individualized consideration

According to Hosna et al. (2021), individualized consideration relates to how best a leader understands the unique needs and interests of each of their team members and hence addresses each unique interests and needs hence enhancing emotional bond not only between every follower and the leader but also with the organization as a whole. It entails attending to individual needs and interests of the subordinates and followers while aligning with the organization-wide interests (Sigalingging & Azmy, 2023). While arguing that TL has become an imperative for better performance by many devolved organizations, Kirichu et al. (2024) expound individualized consideration from the lense of transformational behaviour making individuals feel valued and treating them as essential organizational assets.

Kayago et al. (2024) aver that individualized consideration involves a leader considering the individual needs of each team member and provides mentorship support and insights to help the subordinates align to the organizational interests. This basically involves listening to the unique needs and interests of every individual member of an organization, focusing on their individual concerns, creating a supportive environment where they can evolve and grow. It also involves a transformational leader supporting their followers through personalized training and mentorship, showing them how to tackle challenges while maintaining open communication with them for better organizational outcomes.

Strategic Orientation

One of the prominent pillars that inform organizational structure, priorities, systems and firm-to-market relations is strategy. Having a clear and practical strategy helps organizations device solutions to problems and drive performance. But strategy alone is not enough. According to Obeidat (2016), every organization needs to have a

clear strategic orientation that guides it towards a desirable direction for the attainment of the organizational vision. Mwenda (2020) defines strategic orientation as the guiding actions and practices informing strategic choices and decisions taken within organizations to utilize available resources in pursuit of organizational growth. In this view, strategic orientation manifests in the manner in which organizations operate, make decisions and choices and utilize resources. Manifesting in an organizational culture, strategic orientation refers to the general direction, inclination or course of interest that an entity takes by focusing resources to its desired goals and adjusting flexibly to the dynamics of its internal/external environments.

Han et al. (2022) explain that it is the strategic action taken to eliminate constraints, enhance informed choices and decisions geared towards achieving the strategic goals of an organization. While acknowledging three key strategic orientations; market, entrepreneurial and technology orientations, Han et al. (2022) and Obeidat (2016) underscore the need to adopt different orientations since a single orientation may not lead to the desired better performance. There's, however, a lack of a universally accepted conceptual understanding of strategic orientation for devolved governments. This study, therefore, explores the underpinnings and bounds of strategic orientation at Makueni County Government as a case of study.

Performance of County Governments

Performance relates to the measure of the extent to which organizational plans are executed and expectations are achieved. Generally, it involves the evaluation of the actual outcomes attained against the planned activities, interventions and outcomes (Guttermann, 2023). Performance of county governments has been an emotive topic owing to gaps between the expected and actual performance as reported by OAG and OCOB in Kenya. For many stakeholders, so much is expected of the

county governments to deliver yet suboptimal outcomes dominate most of the devolved governments. In this study, understanding the concept of county government performance is imperative as it informs the measurement of the variable. According to Obado et al. (2023), county performance is a matter of efficiency and effectiveness in pursuit of the county priorities and goals.

Performance of the county governments can, therefore, be understood as a goal, an end in itself or a measure of the level of effectiveness and efficiency attained in delivery of services and priorities of the county. It is measured in terms of own-revenue collections, service quality, development budget absorption, adherence to the budget, pending bills, project completion rate and capabilities developed to deliver services (Anguche et al., 2024). While explaining performance in terms of an organization's operational success, Sigalingging and Azmy (2023) argue for performance measurement on the basis of established criteria and standards. Waikenda (2019) explains performance of county governments as a measure of progressive growth and development through devolution by using sustainable balanced score card. In the Kenyan context, the performance of county governments is measured in terms of budgetary indicators such as the amount of own-source revenues generated, allocation towards development and recurrent expenditure, magnitude and value of projects implemented, proportion of completed projects among others.

Empirical Literature Review

This section details an empirical review of literature on all the study variables relating the dimensions of TL to the performance of the county governments and further considering strategic orientation as a mediator of this relationship. It takes

cognizance of the global, regional and local perspectives and developments in leadership, strategy and organizational performance literature.

Idealized Influence and Performance of County Governments

According to Pope et al. (2023), international empirical evidences relating devolution and economic performance are neither consistent nor conclusive. However, the study shows that the link between devolution and economic growth is not automatic. In their study on how devolution can help deliver regional growth in England, Pope et al., (2023) assessed how and when devolution improves the economic outcomes as well as how and when it cannot. The assessment adopted a costs and benefits framework to examine how devolution could be delivered most effectively within England. The study revealed mixed and inconclusive findings with some parts of the country reporting causality between devolution and economic performance and otherwise. The study further indicated that devolution is not always a silver bullet for development in all contexts. The costs and benefits approach adopted in this study only confines the study to financial correlates of performance with little consideration of the non-financial drivers of county performance such as strategic orientation and transformational leadership.

Hambleton et al. (2022) examined how place and power in urban leadership relate considering the change of leadership after adopting Mayoral Model of Leadership in Bristol, UK. The study sought to establish how effective a directly elected mayor would be exercising leadership and governance of the city as opposed to the centralized leadership model and the extent to which a leader's qualities and style may affect city governance. By interrogating the leadership style in terms of the way power is conceived and exercised by a leader and the objectives pursued by the leadership, the study adopted a qualitative content review approach in which

leadership was evaluated by focusing on the leader's exercise of power on one hand and the agenda pursued by the leadership, whether political or change-oriented. It emerged that devolution gives people expressive power and enhances governmental effectiveness.

Suttipun's (2024) studied how both transformational leadership and economic sufficiency practices influence the performance of coast tourism business in Thailand. Relying on data from a sample of 407 coast tourism businesses, the research adopted a path analysis and factor confirmation to test the correlational causality on the coast tourism business performance in Thailand. The analysis indicated high level causality between the variables in Thailand with both direct and indirect influences of idealized influence and further associated better organizational performance with transformational leadership practices relating to the idealized influence dimension. Whereas the objective of path analysis is to enable a researcher to understand and determine the best among the possible relationships, the Suttipun's (2024) study only details the correlational causality between leadership and practices of economic sufficiency and performance without ranking the dimensions of transformational leadership on one hand and economic sufficiency practices on the other hand. The current study, however, examines the association between each dimension of transformational leadership, taking note of strategic orientation on the performance of county governments by analyzing both qualitative and quantitative data in a mixed methods approach.

Ogbeta (2024) examined how idealized influence of leadership affects the performance of local councils in Gambia focusing on the leadership roles, effects of the leadership and challenges thereof and how all these reflect on performance. Taking a survey research method, 384 respondents from a population of 402,284

individuals provided data for analysis. The data was rigorously analyzed by both the correlation and multiple regression analysis techniques. The results indicated that the practice of idealized influence (charisma) and acts of inspirational motivation improved the local council performance significantly unlike the leader's higher intellectual stimulation which was associated with lower performance levels. Moreover, the study demonstrated negative relationship between leadership challenges and performance of the local councils necessitating proper recourse for the leadership challenges. While the survey approach was appropriate for the study, it is not clear why the researcher chose only 384 from the larger population, hence posing a concern about adequacy in representativeness of the study sample. The current study, however, takes a census approach using Makeni County as a case to enhance the representativeness and obtain data from as many participants as possible.

In their analysis of how idealized influence relates with performance of road agencies in Kenya, Githui et al. (2024) adopted a convergent mixed methods approach with a pragmatic philosophy guided by transformational leadership theory and public management theory. The study targeted top-management staff in job group 6 or higher from three major agencies including Kenya National Highways Authority (KeNHA) Kenya Urban Roads Authority (KURA) and Kenya Rural Roads Authority (KeRRA). Qualitative data from the roads agencies obtained through interview guides and research questionnaire was analyzed both descriptively and inferentially and hypotheses tested scientifically. The results indicated that idealized influence not only predicted the performance contracts process, but also influenced the outcomes of the roads agencies in Kenya. Accordingly, the analysis indicates that leaders who took part in the interviews practiced integrity and good leadership behaviours that their followers considered worth emulating. Although the study presents important insights

from the roads sector, its findings are highly unlikely to be generalized to other sectors that are also part and parcel of the devolved units of government in Kenya. This study assessed all the sectors and departments of the County Government of Makueni, whose findings and best practices can easily be generalized and mapped onto other counties in Kenya.

Kayago et al. (2024) explored how idealized influence impacts the performance of county governments within the South Eastern Kenya Economic Bloc (SEKEB) which comprises Machakos, Kitui and Makueni counties. The study adopted a pragmatic research philosophy with a descriptive study design, transformational leadership theory supported by strategic leadership, RBV, and stakeholder theories. An unbiased stratified sample of 289 respondents from a population of 408 county officers was used involving CEC members, chief officers, directors and deputy directors from whom the study data was obtained using a structured research questionnaire. The data was analyzed using descriptive and inferential techniques. The effect of idealized influence on the county performance was significant and positive depicting transformational leaders as good role models who often inspire their teams and therefore make significant contributions towards attaining greater performance of the county governments. Whereas idealized influence strongly predicts county government performance, innovation was observed to be insignificant. In fact, the study of the entire regional bloc did not present in-depth insights into the leadership and strategic orientation dynamics of county performance, which this study intends to do, taking Makueni County as a case for a more detailed and in-depth examination using mixed methods, to disentangle the facts and details on why the county stands out.

Gichuki et al. (2024) studied how transformational and transactional leadership influence the execution of strategic plans by five county governments - Nairobi, Kiambu, Machakos, Kajiado and Muranga in Kenya. The study was guided by Higgin's Model of strategy implementation, transformational leadership theory and the transactional leadership theory. The survey took a cross-sectional descriptive research design and a stratified sample of 217 respondents drawn from 474 senior county officers. The study relied on self-administered open-ended questionnaire to collect data from the respondents. The data was analyzed both descriptively and inferentially. It emerged that transformational leadership style significantly drives strategy implementation at the five counties. In addition, the study indicated that political interference, limited public participation and improper prioritization affected execution and performance by the county governments. While presenting important insights on how transformational leadership enhances development and county performance, there is a lack of consensus by county governments on their level of effectiveness and efficiency in strategy implementation. This informs the need to evaluate how transformational leadership influences the performance of county governments considering the counties' strategic orientations.

Inspirational Motivation and Performance of County Governments

Megheirkouni (2017) investigated the influence of transformational and transactional leadership styles on organizational learning at both for-profit and non-profit sports organizations in the United Kingdom. The study relied on quantitative survey research method in which structured questionnaires were administered on a stratified random sample of 300 domestic, multinational and global sports organizations. Guided by the MLQ, the study data was analyzed on SPSS using hierarchical linear regression model and the results indicated no significant impact of

inspirational motivation on organizational learning. It was further observed that leaders with inspirational motivation behave in ways that motivated subordinates, inspired them for high achievement and demonstrated commitment to the shared vision. Despite the weaknesses of the hierarchical regression approach, this study's mixed methods approach overcomes the said limitations as it combines qualitative and quantitative techniques to understand the complexities around inspirational motivation and performance.

Isaacs (2016) examined the impact of transformational leadership on the performance of South African local governments using Chris Hani District Municipality as a case. Guided by the Transformational Leadership Theory, the study combined varied methods to collect data and to further analyze the data to gain an in-depth understanding of the interrelationships between the variables. In particular, the research entailed the use of semistructured interview guide and a Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) to help measure the variables under analysis. The qualitative data from journals and government documents was analyzed with the help of content analysis technique. While appreciating the values, vision and inspiration in addressing social, political and economic interests by the devolved units, transformational leadership was common. However, the choice of content analysis method for the qualitative secondary data only presented secondary insights from studies covering previous periods unlike the current study which sought to adopt a mixed methods approach and gather qualitative primary data to be validated with quantitative data on leadership and performance.

Komakech et al. (2021) examined the efficacy, influence and the degree of inspirational motivation on the performance of middle-level public health workers

(PHW) in the local government of Lira District in Uganda. The study adopted a cross-sectional design taking a stratified simple random sample of 164 workers representing 250 workers in Lira district., the study incorporated a mixed methods both qualitative and quantitative methods. SPSS software was used for analysis of quantitative data by use of Pearson product moment correlation technique. A linear regression analysis was performed to examine how the performance PHWs in Lira District responded to inspirational motivation. The results revealed that inspirational motivation significantly influenced the performance of the PHWs.

In order to examine the poor performance of county governments amidst leadership challenges, Kayago et al. (2024) studied how inspirational motivation influences the performance of county governments in SEKEB. Using TLT, Strategic Leadership Theory, RBV and Stakeholder Theory, the study adopted a descriptive research design on a sample of 289 respondents from a population of 408 county officers to collect data using a structured research questionnaire. Data was analyzed descriptively and inferentially using Pearson moment correlation, simple linear, hierarchical and multiple regressions techniques. The results showed that inspirational motivation significantly influenced the performance of the county governments in SEKEB, moderated positively and significantly by innovation. By studying the entire SEKEB, an in-depth examination of the variables was impossible owing to the wider scope unlike the current study of Makueni County Government as a case, using mixed methods, to generate more detailed and up-to-date insights.

Koske and Munjuri (2023) studied how the dimensions of TL influences change management among devolved governments in Kenya. A descriptive research design was adopted, guided by Transformational-Transactional Leadership Theory,

Kotter's 8-step Change Model and the ADKAR Model. Taking all the 47 counties as the target population, the study employed a census approach to administer a single questionnaire in each of the 47 counties to the county chief officers, the executives, and employees from various departments. The primary data was analysed using correlation and multiple regression methods. In addition, a descriptive analysis was also done. Whereas the results indicate that all the dimensions of TL significantly enhance change management, it is noted that intellectual stimulation had the greatest predictive power. The analysis further showed that inspirational motivation, individualized consideration and idealized influence respectively predicted change in the county governments. Whereas these findings echo the results of Njiiri et al. (2024) study in which intellectual stimulation and inspirational motivation ranked highly, the study only relied on respondents' perceptions from qualitative data analysis only. The study did not take an in-depth analysis of actual performance data unlike the current study that sought to interrogate the performance of county governments using both primary and quantitative secondary data.

Muriithi and Muchelule (2018) conducted a descriptive survey design study on the influence of transformational leadership on performance of devolved governants in Nyeri County, Kenya. With 200 county employees they found out that the governance of the counties was significantly shaped through inspirational motivation to the county officers with majority (70%) of the respondents appreciating the leadership support towards enhancing governance and performance of the county. This is unlike Kizito and Muchelule (2024) study which indicated significant negative effect of inspirational motivation on the performance of Administration Police Service in Kiambu County, Kenya. This shows inconsistent findings against, with hardly any clarity on the representativeness of the sample size and sampling technique, which the

current study sought to establish with details on the association between inspirational motivation and performance of the county governments.

Intellectual stimulation and Performance of County Governments

Marfo et al.(2024) investigated how government interventions and transformational leadership affected COVID-19 containment measures and performance of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in Ghana. Taking exploratory and cross-sectional research designs with a quantitative research method, self-administered research questionnaire aided the study in collecting data from 500 leaders, owners and CEOs from 100 SMEs in Ghana. Structural equation model was also used for analysis and the results indicated that transformational leadership greatly enhanced the performance of the beverage-manufacturing SMEs in Ghana. Also, transformational leadership significantly mediated the the relationship between government interventions and organizational performance. Considering the caliber of the respondents, the study presents arguably biased responses by relying on top-tier leaders as respondents without considering other cadres of stakeholders. However, the current study took a broad-based approach where respondents were drawn from various departments irrespective of their hierarchies and ensured inclusivity of everyones views and perceptions on leadership and performance.

Awale (2024) assessed how transformational leadership practices impact the performance of public sector agencies in Somalia using a desk review approach relying on published literature. The study examined how the performance of public sector organizations are influenced by each of the dimensions of TL. The analysis indicated that the four dimensions of transformational leadership positivey influence organizational performance in Somalia with improved levels of employee job

satisfaction, commitment, employee buy-in and support leading to greater organizational effectiveness. Whereas the study also noted instances where the transformational leaders create conducive environment supporting employee creativity, innovativeness, service effectiveness and increased efficiency, it did not clarify the levels of governance that were investigated. The current study focuses on the devolved systems of government and further considers the interplay between strategic orientation, transformational leadership and performance, in spite of the constraints and challenges faced by the counties in implementing development projects.

While seeking to develop a leadership style that promotes positive work-related attitudes and organizational commitment, Garg and Ramjee (2013) examined the effect of TL as a predictor of organizational commitment in South Africa's organizations. The study entailed a survey of 58 managers and 290 subordinates from whom data was collected using the multifactor leadership questionnaire (MLQ) and organizational commitment questionnaire. The study relied on questionnaires from 34 managers and 163 subordinates for analysis. From the statistical analysis, a weak but positive and statistically significant relationship emerged between transformational leadership and affective commitment, normative commitment and continuance commitment. The results further indicated the critical role of leadership in shaping the affective, continuance and normative commitment within organizations. However, the study was too broad in scope to analyze South Africa's organizations without a focus on any sector, the findings of which could not adequately be representative of and generalizable to all organizations. As a result, this current study focused on county governments in Kenya and, by extension, took a closer look at a case of Makueni County to conduct a detailed examination and analysis to inform future policy, action

and research on performance of the counties. In contrast, the results of this study found application and relevance to all other counties not only in the country, but also beyond the national borders.

Kayago (2024) explored how intellectual stimulation influences county government performance in SEKEB taking innovation as a moderator of the relationship. The study was guided by pragmatism philosophy TLT, Stakeholder Theory, Strategic Leadership and RBV Theory. Taking a random stratified sample of 289 respondents from a population of 408, data was collected using questionnaires and analyzed using descriptive statistics and regression analysis techniques entailing simple, multiple and hierarchical analysis. The results showed significant negative effect of intellectual stimulation on county performance in SEKEB, Kenya. In order to improve the effectiveness of intellectual stimulation, it was imperative that the county leaders ought to embrace employee innovativeness, enhance inclusivity in decision making, planning and execution of county development projects. Since the study only relied on respondents' views gathered using the structured questionnaire and the qualitative data analysis only, a detailed in-depth analysis of actual performance data is imperative. Hence, this study used both qualitative and quantitative data to assess the performance of county governments employing qualitative and quantitative analysis techniques.

Koske and Munjuri (2023) study sought to determine how intellectual stimulation influences change in devolved governments in Kenya guided by Transformational-Transactional Leadership Theory, Kotter's 8-step Change Model and the ADKAR Model. Taking a descriptive research design and further targeting 47 counties, the study employed a census approach owing to the small population size. A

research questionnaire was administered in each of the 47 counties to the county chief officers, the CEC members and employees from various departments to collect primary data. Both correlation and multiple regression methods were used for analysis in addition to the descriptive analysis. While the results indicate a statistically significant positive effect of intellectual stimulation on change management, it appears the change management was measured based on perceptions and hardly any quantitative data. This study takes a different approach in its analysis which started by qualitative data analysis and then validation with quantitative data from annual reports of the counties.

In their study Priscilla et al. (2024) examined how intellectual stimulation affects strategy implementation in county governments in Western Region, Kenya adopting the Power and Influence Theory. Taking a positivism paradigm, a descriptive correlational research design was adopted and used research questionnaires to collect data from a census involving 268 respondents. Data analysis was done both descriptively and inferentially using SPSS version 23. Both regression and correlation analyses were conducted to explore how the two variables relate. The results of the analysis indicated that intellectual stimulation informs about 30.1% variation in strategy implementation and that intellectual stimulation significantly affected the execution of county strategies in western Kenya. While focusing on the western counties only, the findings did not necessarily apply to all other regions since the dynamics revolving around leadership, strategy and performance vary with the priorities across the regions.

Individualized Consideration and Performance of County Governments

Karakose et al. (2023) investigated intellectual architecture of the knowledge base in educational administration considering the evolution of transformational school leadership. The study entailed an analysis of over 300 articles obtained from Scopus database using SciMAT software and covered three distinct periods; Incubation Period being 1989-2009, Development Period covering the years 2010-2020 and Maturation period being 2021 to 2022. From the analysis, it emerged that the incubation period chiefly conceptualized transformational school leadership, while the development period focused on self efficacy and that the leadership dynamics were weakly addressed during all the three periods. It was observed that teacher mentorship and capacity-building were poorly done. The study suggested the need to further examine the antecedents of transformational leadership, actual acts of leadership that boost organizational performance and their relationship with employee commitment, organizational resilience, turnover intention, extra work behaviours and achievement. By relying on secondary data from already-published data, there is very little new knowledge that the study contributes in literature other than processing what has already been researched. This study filled this knowledge gap using primary data and further validating the findings with quantitative secondary data to yield new and up-to-date knowledge to inform policy, decision and action towards equitable development across the counties in Kenya

In their attempt to understand how transformational leaders gain influence and motivate their teams, Bakker et al. (2023) integrated the TLT with Job-Demands Resources Theory to establish what the leaders transform in their followers in Norway. The study purposed to demonstrate that transformational leaders lead their

followers to proactively identify and leverage the follower strengths to foster active and motivating work environment where greater performance can be driven. The data was collected from 57 Norwegian Naval cadets by filling out a 30-days' diary booklet. It was observed that the followers were more likely to take initiative and surpass the desired results when the leaders practiced individualized consideration and intellectual stimulation in running organizational affairs.

The relationship between individualized consideration and intellectual stimulation and change-oriented organizational citizenship behaviour was empirically tested by Malik (2023) using a nested data model. The moderating role of employee resilience on the relationship between job crafting and change-oriented organizational citizenship behaviour was also assessed. The study relied on a sample of 210 employee-supervisors dyads from Indian Information Technology companies. Taking a hierarchical linear regression modeling approach, it emerged that individualized consideration significantly influenced the change-oriented organizational citizenship behaviour, with even higher employee performance and organizational outcomes especially when the employee resilience increased. These findings support individualized leadership programs and practices for better organizational performance. While the hierarchical regression arguably yields unstable results due to its inability to account for multicollinearity, the mixed methods approach in this study offers a more nuanced understanding, combining both qualitative and quantitative approaches which the hierarchical model might miss

Kayago et al. (2023) examined the influence of individualized consideration and the moderating effect of innovation on performance of county governments in the SEKEB, Kenya. Guided by pragmatism philosophy, the study was hinged on TLT

supported by Stakeholder Theory, Strategic Leadership Theory and RBV Theory. Taking a random stratified sample of 289 respondents from a population of 408, research questionnaires were used to collect data. The data was analyzed using descriptive statistics and regression analysis techniques entailing simple, multiple and hierarchical analysis. Precisely, Pearson moment correlation analysis was done to assess how county performance responds to the application of individualized consideration by the leaders. The study established that individualized consideration significantly enhances the performance of SEKEB county governments. This implied that the county performance was greatly influenced by the leader's individualized care, justifying the need to leverage individualized consideration in supporting the needs and potential of each follower to drive better performance.

Strategic Orientation and Performance of County Governments

While exploring the impact of strategic orientation on organizational performance in Jordanian Telecommunication Companies, Ashal et al. (2021) considered the mediating role of learning culture. The analysis covered market orientation, technology orientation and entrepreneurial orientation and used the Dimensions of Learning Organization Questionnaire (DLOQ) to assess the learning culture in the companies. From 2,211 managerial and non-managerial employees, an electronic questionnaire was administered to a sample consisting of 318 employees of three different companies. Correlation and regression analyses were conducted and indicated a positive and statistically significant correlation between strategic orientation and performance. The study did not examine strategic orientation as mediator, but rather an independent variable whose direct effect on organizational performance was measured. It is for this reason, that the current study considered strategic orientation as a mediator in the relationship between transformational

leadership and performance of county governments in Kenya. Due to the increasing customer demands, competition and rapid advances in technology, the study recommends appropriate strategic orientation leveraging the marketing, operational and entrepreneurial capabilities for optimal risk-taking and proactive investment in development projects.

Through a survey research design and relying upon the structured research questionnaire, Uzoamaka et al. (2022) examined the effect of strategic orientation on the performance of food and beverage companies in Nigeria focusing on the association between market orientation and market share of the food and beverage firms using 200 employees. The data was analyzed both descriptively and inferentially using simple regression analysis technique and SPSS. The results attributed the growth in the company's market share to the strategic orientation taken by the individual firms. It was further observed that the firms should be alert to the market dynamics and be flexible to adjust their strategies to stay abreast or beat the market. Whereas the census approach was deemed necessary for enhanced inclusion of the target population in the study, it is possible that the study data may have been obtained from some junior employees who were not entirely privy to specific strategy and performance details, hence the current study only picked informed respondents from different levels of hierarchy across various departments of the County Government of Makueni.

Micheni and Awuor (2024) investigated how strategic direction related with organizational performance of Tharaka Nithi in Kenya. Guided by the Strategic Leadership Theory, descriptive research design, the study targeted 139 management-level staff in the county. From this population, a simple random sample of 124 respondents was selected including county chief officers, county executive committee

members, directors, assistant directors and various section heads. Data was collected from the sampled employees of the county using structured questionnaire and then analyzed both descriptively and inferentially. The inferential analysis entailed the use of both Pearson correlation and regression analysis techniques and indicated positive and statistically significant association between strategic direction and the county performance. Generally, the study results indicated that strategic orientation significantly determines the performance of the county government, especially, when there is a clear vision that drives attainment of the development goals and objectives of the county.

Machiri et al. (2024) examined how strategic direction influences the organizational performance of state-owned corporations in Kenya. Guided by the Contingency Theory and descriptive research design, the study focused on Agricultural Finance Corporation from where 204 management-level employees were sampled using a simple random sampling method. Primary data was collected using standardized research questionnaires. In addition, the study relied on quantitative performance data from annual financial reports and other publicly available publications to support the primary findings. Data analysis entailed both descriptive statistics including measures of central tendency and measures of dispersion. Inferential analysis also employed Pearson correlation and regression analysis techniques in SPSS. The study established that a well-defined strategic direction enhances financial performance, operational efficiency and customer satisfaction, especially, when properly aligned to operations and gets communicated effectively and consistently to the stakeholders. However, it is not clear from the study how strategy orientation aligns with transformational leadership hence the need to assess

the mediating influence of strategic orientation on the relationship between transformational leadership and performance of county governments.

Odero (2023) studied how strategic direction influences SACCO performance in Kenya using both descriptive and correlational research design. The study was anchored on TLT and relied on closed-ended questionnaire for collection of primary data from 126 senior managers of SACCOs in Nairobi, Kenya. An interview guide was also used to collect qualitative data from 12 CEOs of the SACCOs. The study data was analyzed descriptively and inferentially with the help of descriptive, inferential and content analysis methods and the results associated SACCO performance to the influences of strategic direction taken by the organizations. The strategic direction manifests through communication of the vision, mission, goals and objectives with a focus on the customers, members and other stakeholders. Despite the significant insights from the qualitative study, the study did not analyze any quantitative data on performance. This shows that the findings were based on respondent perceptions without accurate and quantifiable details on the performance. Also, the study only relied on senior management level staff excluding the perceptions of other members of the organizations. On the contrary, this study used quantitative secondary data to validate the qualitative findings thereby blending both the qualitative and quantitative data for a detailed analysis.

Theoretical Framework

This study was anchored on Transformational Leadership Theory (TLT) and further supported by Upper Echelons Theory (UET) and Dynamic Capabilities Theory (DCT).

Upper Echelons Theory

Developed by Hambrick and Mason (1984), the UET holds that performance depends on top executives' background, experiences, values, personalities, and other personal traits. The theory states that organizational outcomes, strategic choices and performance are partially predicted by individual managerial background, characteristics and idiosyncrasies. The UET's central premise is that the experiences, values and personalities of the top executives influence their perceptions and interpretation of the situations they face which further inform their choices. The theory underscores the dominant coalition of the organization's top managers whose values and cognitive prowess birth organizational strategies which influence corporate-level choices and performance. Arguing that individuals' cognitive base and values reflect their characteristics and idiosyncrasies, the theory demonstrates how top management team composition, processes, values, experiences, CEO characteristics can drive organizational strategy and outcomes. Building on the view that understanding strategists preceded the understanding of strategies, this theory applies to organizational performance attributed to the unique leader/manager qualities and capabilities to influence organizational strategy, decisions, choices, courses of action and performance. This application is grounded on the belief that the top management team attributes can be used to predict strategic choices and organizational performance. Despite a number of criticisms on the predictive power of the Upper Echelons Theory, skewness to top-management influence and little regard to underlying mechanisms through which organizational performance is driven (Bekos & Chari, 2023). However, the theory has also been found relevant to prior studies and across different organizational contexts (Plokinger et al., 2016).

Transformational leadership Theory

The Transformational Leadership Theory (TLT) was originally coined by James V. Downton in 1973 and advanced by James McGregor Burns (1978) and Bass (1985). The theory is about creating positive change considering the needs and interests of all followers. According to Burns (1978), the TLT fundamentally explains the leadership role in infusing organizational interests into follower interests and further creating mechanisms to advance both individual and organizational goals coherently. Accordingly, TLT contends that transformational leaders' interest is to stimulate employees towards attaining organizational vision, enhancing their autonomy and confidence, supporting social cohesion and aligning organizational values with individual values.

The theory has been applied to leadership studies in diverse contexts within Kenya and beyond (Atoko, 2023; Bakker, et al., 2023; Gichuki, et al., 2024) as it underscores the leader's role in building beneficial relationships with their followers, motivating them, inspiring their action and influencing them to effect the desired change. In a much broader perspective, Bass (1985) expounds the TLT to encompass four distinct dimensions; idealized influence, intellectual stimulation, inspirational motivation and individualized consideration. Idealized influence (level of charisma) in a leaders' approach, acting as role models to the followers building trust and respect while rallying the followers around the organization's shared vision. Inspirational motivation espouses the leader's role in motivating the followers, raising the team spirit with foresight, and fostering a sense of purpose while communicating the vision consistently, continuously and effectively. For intellectual stimulation, leaders encourage their members to be innovative, creative, embrace new ideas, critical thinking and autonomy to solve problems for the common good of the organization.

Individualized consideration covers how a leader attends to each follower's personal needs and interests in organizational pursuits (Korejan & Shahbazi, 2016).

Each dimension of transformational leadership outlines how leaders can change the course of their following by transforming the followers into better, properly aligned to the organizational interests and to be more productive. The theory relates to how leadership activities and practices influence the performance of county governments. In particular, the TLT applies to how leaders and followers engage collaboratively in undertaking activities that transcend personal interests in pursuit of common goals, values and vision.

Dynamic Capability Theory

The Dynamic Capability Theory (DCT) was developed by Tierce et al. (1997) as an advancement of the Resource Based View (RBV) (Sainsbury, 2020). It posits that organizations integrate, build, and reconfigure unique internal and external capabilities to be successful and responsive to the dynamic changes in the environment by modifying the resource base to their advantage. It emphasizes the organization's capacity to sense and shape opportunities and threats and effectively seize opportunities to maintain competitiveness while capitalizing on their internal and external competencies and strengths.

Applied to strategic orientation for the county governments, the DCT places both levels of government at the center of all initiatives aimed at attaining economic growth depending on the extent to which the government can build desirable capabilities to generate and enhance their competencies to take advantage of opportunities while dealing with challenges and threats to development (Sainsbury, 2020). The theory demonstrates how organizational strengths, capabilities,

competencies and resources enable the organization to effectively respond to opportunities and threats in the ever changing environment by adapting to the new environments and continuously innovating to remain relevant. The underpinnings of this theory transcend resource base of the firm and further extends to unique capabilities and advantages that can enable sound decisions, appropriate choices and superior performance. The theory finds application as a managerial framework that enables organizations to prioritize resources and dynamic capabilities they require to achieve sustained competitive advantage. The DCT provided an essential framework for explaining and predicting fundamentals of performance of the county governments taking into account the preferred development strategy and strategic orientations.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework explains how various concepts and the variables studied are inter-linked and measured guided by the empirical literature reviews. Accordingly, Figure 3 places TL dimensions correlating with performance which is measured by both financial and non-financial indicators. Strategic orientation is the mediating variable measured by vision alignment, medium term planning, resource considerations and continuous evaluation.

Figure 3

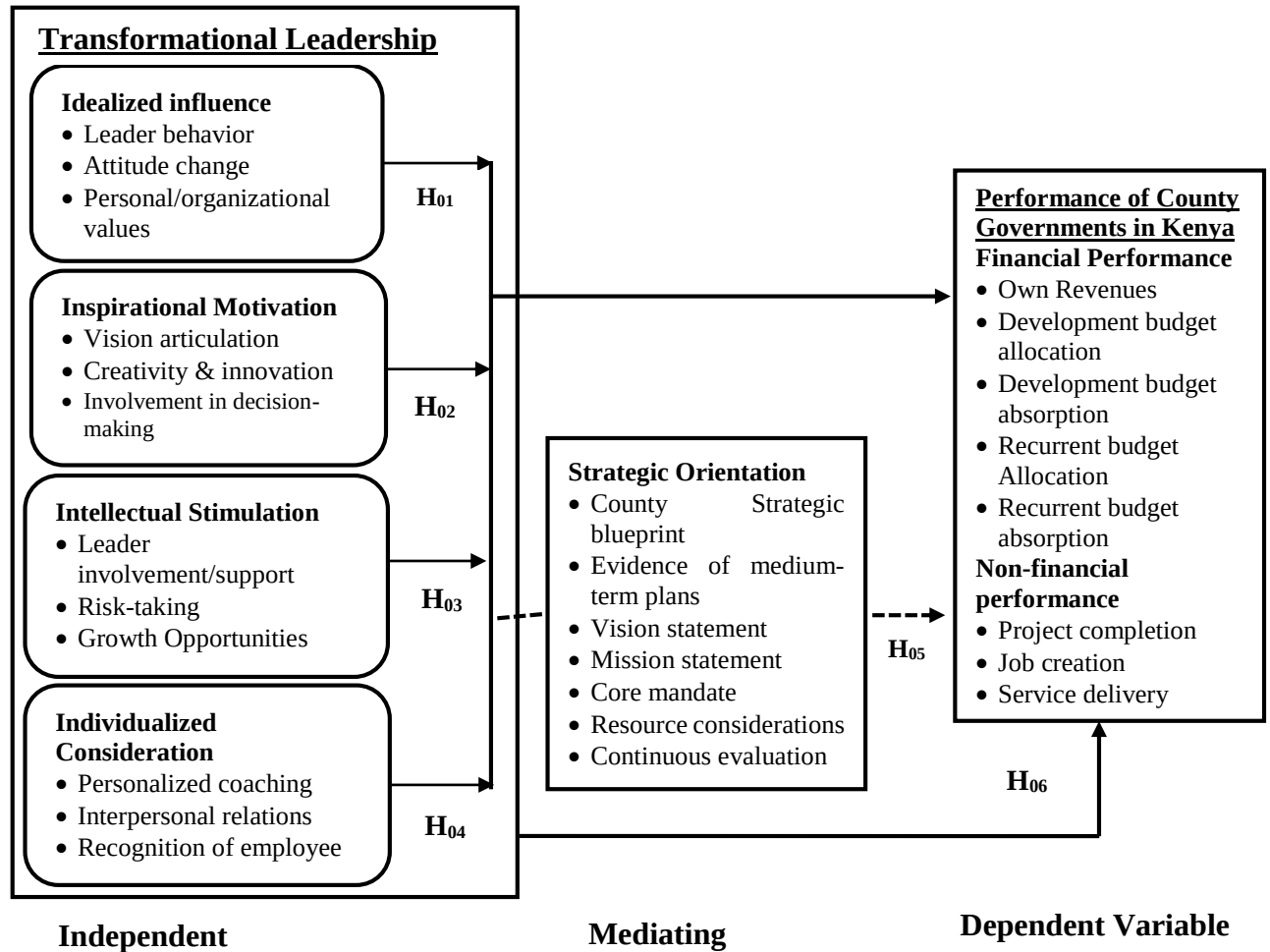
Conceptual Framework

Table 1

Operationalization Table

Variable	Author	Topic of Journal	Sub-Variable	Indicators
Performance of County Governments	Office of the Auditor General (2024)	2022/2023 County Government Audit Report	Financial Performance	Revenue raising, Development budget allocation, Development budget absorption, Recurrent budget Allocation, Recurrent budget absorption, Pending bills
	Mbui and Minja (2023)	Influence of Governance Practices on Performance of County Governments in Kenya: A Case Study of Embu County	Non-financial performance	Project completion, Job creation, Service delivery, Citizen satisfaction
Strategic Orientation	Boyd and Reuning-Elliott (1998).	A measurement model of strategic planning. <i>Strategic Management. Journal Vol. 19(2), pp. 181-192</i>	Strategy Orientation	County Strategic blueprint, Evidence of medium-term plans, Vision, Mission statement, Core mandate, Budget orientation/ Cost (financial), Continuous evaluation, employee (human Resources), technological
Transformational Leadership	Antonakis et al. (2003)	Context and leadership: An examination of the nine-factor full-range leadership theory using the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire	Idealized influence	Leader behavior, Attitude change, Personal/organizational values
			Inspirational Motivation	Vision articulation, Creativity & innovation Involvement in decision-making
			Individualized Consideration	Personalized coaching, Mentorship, Interpersonal relations, Recognition of employee efforts
			Intellectual Stimulation	Stimulate innovation/creativity Leader involvement, Leader support, Risk-taking, Growth Opportunities

Synthesis of Research Gaps

Table 2

Synthesis of Research Gaps

Author	Title	Area of the Gap	The actual Gap	How this study filled the gap
Pope et al. (2023)	How can Devolution Deliver Regional Growth in England?	Inconclusiveness / disagreement gap	Mixed and inconclusive empirical evidence on the relationship between devolution and economic performance across various contexts. While some areas reported causality between devolution and economic performance, other regions indicated that devolution is not always a silver bullet for development in all contexts.	This study assessed how devolution can help drive equitable development in the counties considering transformational leaders' idealized influence and strategic orientation in informing how and when devolution improves the socio-economic outcomes or otherwise.
Githui et al. (2024)	Relationship between Idealized Influence and Performance Contracts of Roads Agencies in Kenya	Methodological and contextual gaps	The study only targeted top-management staff from KeNHA, KURA and KeRRA indicating biased responses. Also, reliance on qualitative data obtained through interviews and questionnaire with no quantifiable performance data mainly presents the respondents' perception but omits the actual performance metrics. Lack of representativeness is evident as the study only focused on roads sector whose findings cannot be generalized to the counties	This study involves various respondents including the top leadership, CEC members, chief officers, directors, municipal board, various committees and staff from functional units in the county to eliminate information biases. Quantitative data helped validate the qualitative results with quantifiable performance data and insights.
Koske and Munjuri (2023)	Influence of Transformational Leadership on Change Management in County Governments in Kenya	Methodological data	A census of the 47 counties only one respondent per county shows how limiting the responses were. It demonstrates inadequate representativeness of the study data and a lack of generalizability of the findings to all counties. A single respondent may provide accurate in-depth insights about their department but not others or the	This study took a mixed methods design with a case of Makueni county involving several respondents from all departments of the county. The case study permits an in-depth investigation in the entire county thereby providing a detailed description of transformational leadership

entire county. Only one respondent per county indicates a possibility of biased findings.

and strategic orientation in making it stand out

Awale (2024)	Impact of Transformational Leadership on Organizational Performance in Public Sector Agencies in Somalia	Knowledge gap	The study used a desk review approach relying on published literature. Throug the review of subsisting literature, theres hardly any new knowledge contributed in literature by the study which is not documented in the reviewed studies	This study gathered qualitative primary data using questionnaire, interview guide and further validating the findings with quantitative secondary performance data. New and up-to-date literature with insights on the inconsistent and inconclusive findings are imperative.
Karakose et al. (2023)	Evaluating the Intellectual Structure of the Knowledge Base in Transformational School Leadership: A Bibliometric and Science Mapping Analysis	Methodological and knowledge gaps	The reviewed articles varied in context, study locale, scope, findings and significance and relied entirely on published information and did not contribute any first-hand new knowledge. This complicates generalization to any specific context or unit of analysis with no clear antecedents of transformational leadership, and impactful acts of leadership pointing out significant knowledge gaps.	Focusing on the county government of Makueni, this study generated fresh new data from various respondents across different departments and functions. The study considered specific constructs under each dimension of TL guided by the MLQ to explicate the antecedents of TL highlighting unique acts of leadership that are key to driving the performance
Micheni and Awuor (2024)	The Nexus between Strategic Direction and Performance of the County Government of Tharaka Nithi County, Kenya	Methodological and conceptual gaps	Data was collected using structured questionnaire only and the findings were based on the respondents' present perception without considering the trends and no reference to specific performance data. The perceptions expressed by the respondents may not accurately present the actual performance of the county.	This study incorporated quantitative performance data analysis alongside the qualitative primary data. By adopting the mixed methods design, clearer evidence-based insights from an in-depth cross-sectional analysis over the devolution period inform policy, strategy, decision and action across the counties

Chapter Summary

This chapter has elaborately appraised the conceptual, theoretical and empirical literature considered relevant to every research objective. Particularly, literature on the four elements of transformational leadership (idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, individualized consideration), strategic direction and performance of county governments has been reviewed. The chapter has also outlined relevant theories that the study was hinged on, the research gaps, the conceptual framework and operationalization of all the variables under study. The next chapter presents the research methodology.

Chapter Three: Research Methodology

Introduction

This chapter details some of the scientific approaches, methods and techniques that were adopted in pursuit of the stated research objectives. Particularly, the chapter provides a detailed account of the research philosophy, research design, target population, determination of the sample size, the sampling technique, research tools, piloting, the actual data collection procedure, data analysis, presentation and research ethics.

Research Philosophy

According to Saunders et al. (2016), a research philosophy is a set of beliefs, and assumptions that guide the development of knowledge in a particular area of study. Examples of the philosophies applied to leadership and management research include pragmatism, positivism, subjectivism, interpretivism, critical realism and post-modernism. To adopt an appropriate research philosophy, one considers a well-thought-out and consistent set of assumptions that underpin the choice of research methodology, strategy, data collection techniques and analysis procedures. This study adopted the pragmatic research philosophy which according to Allemang et al. (2021) applies to mixed methods research involving both qualitative and quantitative data analysis. Pragmatism applies when a study has to consider what works best in providing answers to a research problem at any stage in the research process (Allemang et al, 2021). The philosophy enables researchers to be innovative in choice of dynamic approaches to solving a research problem (Dawadi et al., 2021).

Research Design

This study adopted a mixed methods research design using: a case study of the County Government of Makueni; a descriptive research design to explain perspectives on leadership, strategy orientation and county performance; and a correlational research design to demonstrate interrelationships between the variables. This method integrates elements of qualitative research and quantitative research methods to address the problem (Dawadi et al., 2021). According to Caruth (2013), combining qualitative and quantitative methods enables a researcher to get enhanced insights in the research problem and research question(s) as opposed to when only one method is used. In particular, this study adopted an exploratory sequential mixed methods design entailing two distinct stages of research; the first involving qualitative data collection for insights while the second stage involves obtaining quantitative data to explain the findings from the qualitative data analysis (Subedi, 2016).

Target Population

The study targeted a population of 116 officers consisting of multi-level management staff of Makueni County Government. The target population included officers from the office of the Governor, Deputy Governor, County Attorney, County Secretary, 10 CECMs, 16 Chief Officers, 18 directors of various departments, 18 assistant directors, office of the senator, office of the women representative, 7 members of Wote Municipality, 14 Health Unit Managers and 27 members of the county health management team.

Table 3***Target population***

S/No	Office/Function	Number of Individuals
1.	Office of the Governor	1
2.	Office of the Deputy Governor	1
3.	Office of the Speaker of the county assembly	1
4.	Office of the deputy speaker	1
5.	County Attorney	1
6.	County Secretary/PSB	1
7.	Clerk of the county assembly	1
8.	County Executive Committee Members (CECM)	10
9.	County Chief Officers	16
10.	Directors	18
11.	Deputy Directors	18
12.	Wote Municipality	7
13.	Health Unit Managers	14
14.	County Health Management Team	27
TOTAL		117

Data collection method

Considering the relatively small population size, a census method fitted the anticipated in-depth study of Makueni County Government. According to Singh and Masuku (2024), a census approach was ideal for a population of 200 or less units of observation, hence, the entire target population in this study was surveyed. The complete enumeration of this population was necessary using Makueni County Government as a case to provide accurate information for analysis and

generalizability of the findings to county governments in Kenya. To enhance the effectiveness of the census, respondents were selected purposively through snowballing to ensure as many potential respondents as possible participate in the study leveraging trust within social connections among the respondents.

Data collection tools

This study relied on qualitative primary data and quantitative secondary data for analysis. A structured research questionnaire and key informant interview guide were used to collect qualitative data for all the variables. The research questionnaire was administered to CECM, county chief officers, directors of various departments, assistant directors and members of other boards and executive committees. The KII guide was utilized to gather primary data from offices of the governor, deputy governor, senator, women representative, county attorney and municipal board members. In addition to the primary data, quantitative secondary data on performance of the county was also collected with the help of a secondary data collection sheet.

Pilot Study

A pilot study was done in the County Government of Homa-Bay, which was not targeted in the actual study. It was selected because it stood out among many other counties with suboptimal performance occasioned by low development budget absorption but has since changed its development trajectory under new leadership (Office of the Auditor General, 2024). The purpose of piloting was to pre-test the data collection instruments to ascertain the levels of reliability and validity of the data collection tools. According to O. Mugenda and A. Mugenda (2019) a good pilot study can be done with a number of respondents equivalent to 1-10% of the sample size. Accordingly, 20 respondents participated in the pilot from whom 15 filled questionnaires were returned and only 12 responses representing 10.25% of the

sample (target population) selected randomly from various departments and directorates in the County Government of Homabay.

To ascertain the validity of the data collection tools, a content validity test was done with the support of the research supervisors. Content validity indicates the degree to which the data collection tools evaluate all relevant parts of a variable or the constructs it is intended to measure and yields precise results (Saunders & Lewis, 2016). On the other hand, reliability was determined using Cronbach's alpha with a reliability threshold of $0 \leq \alpha \leq 0.7$ for each construct of all the variables under study. The reliability analysis measured the internal consistency per variable to ascertain the instrument's capability to yield consistent results repeatedly (O. Mugenda & A. Mugenda, 2019).

Data Collection Procedure

The structured questionnaire was self-administered via a drop-and-pick method as well as via electronic means which was the most convenient when some respondents were not easily reachable. This method enhances data quality and completeness of responses. Mugenda, O. and Mugenda, A. (2019) affirm that the drop-and-pick method enhances participation as it enables the sampled participants to respond at their convenient times with ample time to think and therefore yield higher response rates. Key informant interviews with select executives and top-tier leaders of the county was conducted during the same period. In addition, quantitative secondary data from the annual reports of the county for the period 2014-2024 was useful in validating the qualitative findings.

Data analysis

All of the filled questionnaires from the respondents were subjected to completeness checks. This is necessary to identify skipped sections, unanswered questions, to ensure accuracy prior to analysis and validity of the results (Cooper and Schindler, 2014). The inclusion criterion required only those questionnaires that were filled completely, without ambiguity. These questionnaires were then coded for entries into SPSS version 29 for analysis. A descriptive analysis using frequencies distributions of the respondents, measures of central tendency and measures of dispersion was carried out. In addition, inferential analysis involving both multiple linear regression and Pearson correlation analyses helped examine interrelations and the nature of relationships between the independent and the dependent variables. The Pearson Correlation analysis examined the strength and direction of linear relationships among the studied variables while the multiple linear regression helped to determine the effect of multiple independent variables on a single dependent variable (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). Empirical models i, ii, iii and model iv were used to test statistical significance of the relationship between each independent variable and the dependent variable. In addition, the statistical significance or otherwise of the mediating effect of strategic orientation on the relationship between transformational leadership and performance of the county government was tested. In each case, the weighted averages of the constructs under each variable were used for analysis and testing of the hypotheses. The regression analysis for every research objective was guided by the following regression models:

$$Y_1 = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \hat{\epsilon}, \dots\dots\dots i$$

The simple linear regression model (i) was used to establish the relationship between idealized influence and performance of Makueni County

$$Y_2 = \beta_0 + \beta_2 X_2 + \hat{e}, \dots\dots\dots \text{ii}$$

Model (ii) was used to evaluate the relationship between inspirational motivation and performance of Makueni County

$$Y_3 = \beta_0 + \beta_3 X_3 + \hat{e}, \dots\dots\dots \text{iii}$$

Model (iii) assessed the relationship between intellectual stimulation and performance of Makueni County.

$$Y_4 = \beta_0 + \beta_4 X_4 + \hat{e}, \dots\dots\dots \text{iv}$$

The regression model (iv) was used to examine the relationship between individualized consideration and performance of the County Government of Makueni. To determine the combined effect of transformational leadership on performance of county governments, we run model (v)

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta_4 X_4 + \hat{e} \dots\dots\dots \text{v}$$

Where: Y = Dependent variable (Performance of County Government),

β_i = Coefficients (predicted),

β_0 = Constant,

X_1 = Idealized Influence,

X_2 = Inspirational Motivation,

X_3 = Intellectual Stimulation,

X_4 = Individualized Consideration, and

$\hat{e}$ = error term.

Analysis of the mediation effect of strategic orientation on the relationship between transformational leadership and county performance

The mediating effect of strategic orientation on the relationship between transformational leadership and performance of county governments was assessed guided by the Hayes' (2022) Bootstrapped Model, also referred to as the Hayes' process macro. This model for analysis of the effect of the mediating variable on the relationship between the independent and dependent variables considers the direct effect, indirect effect and the total effect paths. It is empirically robust since it focuses on the indirect effect of an independent variable on the dependent variable and uses bootstrapping to estimate confidence intervals for direct effects (Bozkur et al., 2026). Unlike the classical Baron and Kenny's (1986) Model which relies on inferences, the Hayes Process Model uses bootstrapped confidence intervals which improve the model's statistical power to detect mediation even when the total effect is non-significant or when the indirect effect exists independently (Rizvi et al., 2026).

Step 1: A Regression analysis with TL predicting County Performance

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_{TL} X_1 + \varepsilon \dots\dots\dots (vi)$$

Step 2: A Regression analysis with TL predicting Strategic Orientation

$$I = \beta_0 + \beta_{TL} X_1 + \varepsilon \dots\dots\dots (vii)$$

Step 3: A Regression analysis with Strategic Orientation Predicting Y

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_{SO} X_2 + \varepsilon \dots\dots\dots (viii)$$

Step 4: A Regression analyses with TL and Strategic Orientation Predicting Y

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_{TL} X_1 + \beta_{SO} X_2 + \varepsilon \dots\dots\dots (ix)$$

Where: Y = County Performance; X_1 = Composite of Transformational Leadership (Idealized Influence, Inspirational Motivation, Intellectual Stimulation and Individualized Consideration); X_2 = Strategic orientation; β_0 = Constant; β_{TL} , β_{SO} ... = Beta coefficients for transformational leadership and strategic orientation respectively; ε = Error term.

Step 1 checked the effect of transformational leadership on county performance, step 2 focused on the effect of transformational leadership on strategic orientation and step 3 examined the effect of strategic orientation on county performance. These paths were used to establish whether zero-order relationship existed among the study variables. Accordingly, if one or more of these relationships are non-significant, the conclusion is that intervening is not possible (Hayes 2022). If there are significant relationships from step 1 through 3, one proceeds to step 4 where intervening is supported if the effect of TL remains significant after controlling Strategic Orientation. If Strategic Orientation is not significant when TL is controlled, there is full intervention, and if both TL and Strategic Orientation significantly predict County Performance, there is partial intervention. In this case, the mediator would be considered significant if the p-value is less than 0.05, and if its coefficient is positive (negative) then the relationship between TL and performance of county governments was deemed to strengthen (weaken) as β_{SO} increases.

Quantitative data collected through questionnaires was analyzed using both descriptive statistics and inferential statistics. The descriptive statistics used included frequencies, means, and standard deviations while the inferential statistics used entailed Pearson correlation and multiple linear regression. Essentially, the inferential statistics were used to examine relationships and to test hypotheses. In addition, qualitative data obtained through the key informant interviews was analyzed

thematically and the findings used to not only complement but also to validate the quantitative results. This mixed approach to data analysis was consistent with the mixed methods research design that the study adopted (Creswell & Creswell, 2017).

Diagnostic tests

Diagnostic tests in research are performed to determine the root causes of certain anomalies, issues, patterns, trends and /or events to enable researchers address such problems (Li et al., 2023). In this study, various diagnostic tests were conducted to validate the regression models and assess potential data-related issues. Some of the diagnostic tests conducted included the tests for heteroscedasticity, normality, linearity and multicollinearity.

Heteroscedasticity test

Heteroscedasticity arises when the variance of residuals in a model is not constant across observations. It checks whether residuals of a regression model have constant variance or otherwise. This was checked using Breusch-Pagan test (Asaad & Omer, 2024).

Normality test

Normality happens when residuals of a model are normally distributed and if violated, it affects the predictive power of inferential statistics. To ascertain the normality of the data, Shapiro-Wilk test was useful. In addition, linearity was tested using scatter plots.

Multi-collinearity test

Multi-collinearity arises when two or more variables are highly correlated to an extent that it destabilizes estimates of individual coefficients. A correlation matrix

was used to check if the independent variables are highly correlated (Asaad & Omer, 2024).

Ethical Considerations

Researchers ought to observe important moral and ethical principles in order to protect study participants and respondents (Fleming & Zegwaard, 2018). The following ethical principles was applied to this study: informed consent, voluntary participation and anonymity.

Conducting this study required mandatory approval from the university's Institutional Scientific and Ethics Review Committee (ISERC) a research permit from NACOSTI as well as official authorization from the County Government of Homabay and Makueni County Government during pilot and actual data collection exercises respectively. These approvals and authorizations were necessary to ensure the study was conducted within the bounds of ethical research practice.

A debrief to the research participants was important as it kept them informed about the study, its progress and outcomes (Cote, 2021). The respondents were informed about the purpose, content of the study, the data to be collected, how the data was to be used and reported before seeking their consent to participate in the study. The selected respondents were allowed to participate in the study voluntarily and no person was coerced or enticed in any way to participate in the survey or key informant interviews. Only respondents who consented participated in the study (Mirza et al., 2023).

The identified respondents were assured of confidentiality and anonymity of their responses, their own identities and of the data they provided. The researcher also ensured that no respondents' personal details were disclosed and that the study

responses was used for academic purpose only and would not be divulged to other unnecessary uses.

Chapter Summary

This chapter presented the research methodology outlining the research philosophy, research design, target population, sampling procedure, data collection instruments, and data collection procedure. It also captured aspects of pilot testing to check the validity and reliability of the tools as well as data analysis techniques, presentation and key ethical considerations that guided the entire research process. This methodology was intended to ensure collection and analysis of credible, valid and reliable data necessary for attaining the specific research objectives stated in chapter one. The next chapter presents the study findings and discussions based on the analysis of the collected data in line with the stated study objectives and research hypotheses.

Chapter Four: Results and Discussion

Introduction

In this chapter, findings and discussions on transformational leadership, strategy orientation and performance of county governments in Kenya taking the county government of Makueni as a case are presented. These results cover all the constructs under each research variable starting with the attained response rate, the reliability analysis results for the questionnaire, respondents' demographics, descriptive findings as well as the inferential results. The chapter ends with an elaborate discussion of the study limitations and the chapter summary.

Response Rate

The response rate of the study was determined before the commencement of data analysis. Essentially, the researcher administered the research questionnaire to 117 respondents out of which 98 questionnaires were filled and returned representing a response rate of 83.76%. This substantial response rate is highly representative of the unit of observation and, therefore, adequately represents the attributes and perspectives of the study population. As Satalof and Vontela (2021) observe, a response rate equivalent to 50% or higher is considered excellent and, therefore, the 83.76% response rate attained in this study suffices. For purposes of analysis, it is important to note that only 74 out of the 98 returned questionnaires passed the completeness test. The 74 responses were effectively used for analysis and interpretation of the study findings while 24 responses were excluded.

Reliability Analysis Results

The pilot study involved a total of 20 randomly selected managerial and supervisory staff of the County Government of Homa-Bay from whom 15 filled

questionnaires were returned and 12 responses used for analysis while 3 responses were excluded due to incompleteness and/or ambiguity in some responses. To ensure reliability of the research questionnaire, Cronbach's Alpha with a reliability threshold of $0 \leq \alpha \leq 0.7$ was used to test the internal consistency for all the study variables. Given the said reliability threshold, only the Cronbach's alpha coefficients equivalent to or greater than 0.7 were considered reliable for each and every variable under investigation. Indeed, all the constructs and variables surpassed the required reliability threshold. Table 4 shows the results obtained from the reliability tests done on the structured research questionnaire detailing the reliability results for every construct and variable. More detailed reliability analysis results are presented in Appendix vi for further reference.

Table 4

Reliability Analysis Results

Study Variable	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient
Idealized Influence	4	0.728
Inspirational Motivation	5	0.932
Intellectual Stimulation	5	0.902
Individualized Consideration	5	0.768
Strategic Orientation	8	0.965
County Performance	11	0.968
Average	6	0.887

From the results of the pilot data analysis shown in Table 4, it emerges that the questionnaire was highly reliable with an average Cronbach's alpha coefficient of $\alpha = 0.877$. In addition, all the study variables also passed the reliability test where: Idealized Influence ($\alpha = 0.728$); Inspirational Motivation ($\alpha = 0.932$); Intellectual Stimulation ($\alpha = 0.902$); Individualized Consideration ($\alpha = 0.768$); Strategic

Orientation ($\alpha = 0.965$) and County Performance ($\alpha = 0.968$) respectively. Appendix vi presents the detailed reliability analysis results for all the study variables with specific reliability statistics for each of the constructs per variable under examination.

Demographic Information of the Respondents

In this section, we present a detailed analysis of the respondents' demographic attributes including their gender, age, cumulative work experience in years, highest academic qualification and levels of hierarchy in the county government.

Gender of the respondents

Table 5

Respondents by Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Male	39	52.7
Female	34	45.9
Other	1	1.4
Total	74	100.0

Table 5 shows that most of the county staff are men (52.7%) as women trail them at (45.9%) and other gender (1.4%), going by the gender of the respondents who participated in the study. These findings show even gender parity and inclusion considering the diverse gender identities observed in the study. The results further show that the County Government of Makueni embraces the principles of diversity, equity and inclusion in managing their pool of human capital.

Age of the Respondents

Table 6

Respondents by Age

Age in complete Years	Frequency	Percent
18-30 years	17	23.0
31-40 years	26	35.1
41-50 years	20	27.0
51-60 years	11	14.9
Total	74	100.0

From Table 6, it emerges that majority (35.14%) of the respondents in leadership, managerial and supervisory roles are aged between 31-40 years followed by 27.03% aged 41-50 years then 22.97% aged in the range of 18-30 years and only 14.86% of the respondents were 51-60 years of age. These results show an even distribution of the county staff in terms of age with majority of them falling within the age bracket of 31-50 years. This further implies that the county governments maintain young, growing and productive personnel with a sizeable pool of new entrants aged 18-30 years as well as a senior and highly experienced staff aged 51-60 years who can provide coaching and mentorship to the younger workforce.

Highest Academic Qualification

Table 7

Respondents by Academic Qualification

Highest academic qualification	Frequency	Percent
Professional	7	9.5
Diploma	12	16.2
Undergraduate	28	37.8
Post-graduate	23	31.1
Other (Specify)	4	5.4
Total	74	100.0

The results of analysis presented in Table 7 show that the County Government of Makueni employs a pool of highly qualified professionals in varying levels of hierarchy across various departments and directorates. This is evident from the 37.8% of the respondents holding undergraduate degree, followed by 31.1% respondents with post-graduate qualifications, 16.2% diploma holders and 9.5% of the workers with professional qualifications. In addition, it is important to note that some of the county employees had attained professional certifications in addition to their academic credentials, demonstrating the staff and the county government's commitment towards attaining standards of professionalism as well as building staff capabilities and enhancing their strategic, operational and tactical capacities for better performance.

Respondents' Experience

Table 8

Respondents by Work Experience

Experience (in complete years)	Frequency	Percent
5 years and below	21	28.4
6-10 years	20	27.0
11-15 years	16	21.6
16-20 years	5	6.8
21-25 years	6	8.1
26 years and above	6	8.1
Total	74	100.0

In terms of the level of experience, Table 8 indicates that most (28.4%) of the respondents had experience spanning 5 years and below in various trades, followed by 27% employees having 6-10 years and 21.6% staff with 11-15 years' experience who apparently have grown within the structured of the devolved government. These statistics show that the county governments are predominantly supported by staff with up-to 15 years' experience. This argument is hinged on the fact that a cumulative 77% of the respondents' work experience not exceeding 15 years with 6.8% having 16-20 years' experience, 8.1% with 21-25 years' experience and a similar proportion taking pride in 26 and above years' experience. While these results show high number of new entrants into the counties, about one quarter of the workforce are highly experienced, creating room for mentorship and institutional knowledge transfer from most experienced staff to the mid-career and ultimately to the new entrants in the job market.

Positions Held by the Respondents

Table 9

Respondents by Position Held in the Organization

Position held in the organization	Frequency	Percent
Senior Management	20	27.0
Management Level	17	23.0
Supervisory Level	9	12.2
Entry Level	13	17.6
Other	15	20.3
Total	74	100.0

Table 9 shows that most (27%) of the respondents in this study held senior managerial positions followed by 23% management level staff, 12.2% supervisory staff, 17.6% entry level and other, (20.3%) roles across various departments, directorates and units within the county. These findings show a uniform distribution of the study participants representing employees of all cadres in the county government structures. Effectively, the perceptions obtained from the study represent views of all county staff irrespective of their seniority, roles and professional orientations.

Descriptive Results

This section presents the descriptive findings of this study. This study purposed to establish the influence of transformational leadership on the performance of county governments in Kenya by examining the mediating influence of strategic orientation on the relationship using Makueni County as a case. The descriptive results are presented depicting the relationships espoused in each and every specific research objective. In particular, the section presents the relationship between each of the four dimensions of transformational leadership and county performance on one

part as well as the mediating role of strategy orientation in the relationship between transformational leadership and county performance in Kenya, using Makueni County as a case of study.

Descriptive Analysis for Idealized Influence and County Performance

Idealized influence, an element of transformational leadership was examined in the study. It describes a leader's ability to connect emotionally with their followers. It was examined by looking at the leader's level of confidence in their teams, accountability, the followers' confidence and belief in the leader, and their ability to foster positive change in the organization. The results show the calculated means and standard deviations for the different aspects of idealized influence. Table 10 details the descriptive statistics from the analysis of the influence of idealized influence on county performance.

Table 10

Descriptive Statistics for Idealized Influence and County Performance

		Mini mum	Maxi mum	Mea	Std. Deviation
The leader has confidence in the team owing to their positive attitudes towards work.	74	1.00	5.00	4.149	.946
The governor always promotes integrity and accountability at all times as part of the core values of the county.	74	2.00	5.00	4.095	.814
Employees strongly believe in the leader's great ideas that enhance a highly productive work culture.	74	1.00	5.00	3.703	.903
The leaders foster an environment where their teams take well-calculated risks at work without fear.	74	1.00	5.00	3.892	.915
Employees take pride in the leader as their role model who inspires positive change.	74	1.00	5.00	3.919	1.03045

From the descriptive analysis results shown in Table 10, the respondents agree (Mean = 4.149, SD = 0.946) that their leader has confidence in the team owing to their positive attitudes towards work. They also agreed (Mean = 4.095, SD = 0.814) that their governor always promotes integrity and accountability at all times as part of the core values of the county, however, some dissenting perspectives were noted, consistent with Githui et al. (2024) study which averred that, leaders exuding integrity and good leadership practices influence good morals and high performance among their staff members. These were corroborated by one of the respondents' statements. Key Interviewee (KI)01 stated:

The governor cultivates an inclusive and collaborative work environment where servant leadership is driven by the clarion call of integrity and passion. The county leadership ensures every department and directorate abides by the governor's manifesto slogan titled "desire to work with passion and integrity". Taking a holistic approach, the leadership brings everybody on board, engages with all staff irrespective of their varying levels of hierarchy. Citing the Kivutha Care - Makueni Universal Health programme as a case, the leadership has normalized working task-forces and also involves all staff, top-down and bottom-up, and builds on the established public participation and community engagement platforms in planning and implementation of county policies, programmes and projects.

The study findings also show contradicting perceptions (Mean = 3.703, SD = 0.903) on whether the county employees believe in the leader's great ideas towards enhancing a highly productive work culture or otherwise. With regards to fostering an environment where employees are empowered to take well-calculated risks at the workplace, the results show divergent opinions (Mean = 3.892, SD = 0.915). Whereas most of the county staff showed pride in their leaders as their role-models inspiring positive transformation (Mean = 3.919, SD = 1.030), some of the respondents held contrary perspectives.

Descriptive Analysis for Inspirational Motivation and County Performance

The study also focused on inspirational motivation the second dimension of transformational leadership. This dimension explains a leader's capability to articulate organizational vision in a way that inspires the followers to achieve organizational goals. In this study, inspirational motivation was conceptualized in terms of: vision articulation, leader creativity and innovation, strategy communication and leader-follower involvement in decision-making. The study sought to evaluate how these constructs of inspirational motivation influence the performance of county governments in Kenya using the county government of Makueni as a case. Table 11 shows the descriptive statistics of this analysis.

Table 11

Descriptive Statistics for Inspirational Motivation and County Performance

	Mini mum	Maxi mum	Mean	Std. Deviation
The leader articulates the institution's vision in clear and concise terms.	74	1.00	5.00	4.0541 1.14547
Employees are always encouraged to be innovative and creative to be more productive.	74	1.00	5.00	3.9730 .95046
All employees are involved in goal setting and organizational planning.	74	1.00	5.00	3.4459 1.12435
The leadership is a source of inspiration for staff involved in project execution.	74	1.00	5.00	3.7838 1.03725
Organizational strategies and changes are communicated effectively.	74	1.00	5.00	3.7297 1.11401

Table 11 shows that most of the respondents concurred (Mean = 4.054, SD = 1.145) that leaders articulate the institution's vision in clear and concise terms. This perception aligned with the sentiments of KI03 statement:

The governor ensures his vision for the county government cascades down to the lowest levels of governance, leadership and service delivery within the organization.

The respondents indicated (Mean = 3.446, SD = 1.124) that the county practices participatory planning and goal-setting in which all stakeholders are involved at various stages. This finding, to a large extent, coincide with the assertions of KI01 who indicated that:

Planning, execution monitoring and evaluation of county programmes take participatory approach building on the strong mechanisms and framework that exists for effective public participation in all county activities.

The respondents alluded (Mean = 3.973, SD = 0.951) that the county employees are empowered to be innovative and creative in order to increase their productivity levels as espoused in Kayago et al. (2024) study which underscored the essence of inspiring followers through innovative leadership activities and practices. This perspective was echoed by KI02 observations:

The county employees enjoy considerable amount of autonomy and are supported to try new stuff. The leadership also promotes innovative problem-solving without much bureaucracy and encourages transparency at all times, allowing staff to say NO when necessary, especially in the event that things do not seem to work as expected. Also, new ideas are encouraged, supported and financed by the county government as the personnel are empowered to take personal initiative, freely pitch before stakeholders and instigate policy shifts to benefit the organization without fear of victimization.

Majority of the respondents also indicated the perception that their leaders inspire them to attain high standards of performance in their roles (Mean = 3.784, SD = 1.037). The leadership not only provides motivation, but also the impetus and strengthens the drive to deliver and exceed the expectations of the citizens. This view was reinforced by the perceptions of KI01 statements:

Through strong performance management practices, the organization conducts appraisals and rewards best performers, provides staff motivation, incentives such as the 13th salary for stellar performance. They also provide resources for continuous trainings with opportunities for personal and professional development. Every department allocates funds for staff training at the Kenya School of Government. Professionals are also facilitated by the county government to attend professional fora, conferences and obtain relevant certifications. Participants in search for a report after attending the events citing actionable learnings and actualize the new ideas.

The results also show concurrence (Mean = 3.7297, SD = 1.114) by the respondents that the county strategies and changes are often communicated effectively for exceptional execution. These perspectives reflect the views of Kariuki (2021) study which emphasizes the need to communicate organizational vision and priorities consistently and clearly, while intentionally creating stable and safe feedback loops to enhance stakeholder buy-in and support towards transforming the organization. The results from the key informant interviews validate this thought. For example, KI04 stated:

The county government strongly values transparency so much and accommodates feedback positively, especially on matters county strategy, governance policies, development programmes, projects, activities and decisions, even if the feedback is adverse or does not favour the leader's interest and expectations.

It is, however, noted that some of the respondents expressed contrasting views on all the aforementioned constructs indicating varying perspectives on the leaders' communication, vision articulation, and capability to manage diverse stakeholder expectations on matters strategy, planning and decision-making. These divergent opinions are critical for identifying areas that need improvement as well as areas of strength that need to be built on or even be enhanced for consistent outcomes.

Descriptive Analysis for Intellectual Stimulation and County Performance

This study also focused on intellectual stimulation as an element of transformational leadership. Intellectual stimulation was examined as the leader's

efforts at encouraging their followers to flexibly adapt to the organization's changing environments by motivating creative and critical thinking around situations as they unfold, providing solutions while pursuing organizational aspirations, goals and objectives. The constructs considered under this element of transformational leadership include: the leader's support, risk taking, opportunities for growth and strategy alignment. Particularly, this study assessed how these constructs work together to influence the performance of county governments in Kenya using the county government of Makueni as a case. The statistical results of the analysis are presented in Table 12.

Table 12

Descriptive Statistics for Intellectual Stimulation and County Performance

		Minim um	Maxim um	Mean	Std. Deviation
The leadership stimulates innovation and creativity amongst the employees.	74	1.00	5.00	3.7162	1.04055
The leader guides and supports employees towards finding solutions to problems.	74	1.00	5.00	3.8108	1.00240
Employees are challenged to be taking risks while exploring greater opportunities.	74	1.00	5.00	3.5270	.99620
The county decisions are re-examined and appropriate adjustments made in good time.	74	1.00	5.00	3.5946	.96399
Leaders empower employees to explore opportunities for personal and institutional growth.	74	1.00	5.00	3.6892	1.00581

According to the results from the analysis shown in Table 12, the respondents agree (Mean = 3.716, SD = 1.041) that the county leadership stimulates innovation

and creativity amongst the employees. Accordingly, the views expressed by KI01 during the key informant interview supported this:

The county promotes innovative culture and supports creativity in providing solutions to problems and challenges. The county staff are also encouraged and supported to try new ideas and approaches. The employees know very well that new ideas are highly encouraged and supported fully by the county government. For example, after gaps in the health sector emerged, the county supported the design and digitization of drug distribution and tracking system – a home-grown solution that was developed at the county's ICT hub leveraging local talents in software and systems development.

The respondents also agreed (Mean = 3.811, SD = 1.002) that their leaders guide and support the county staff to find and provide solutions to the problems at the county level. These results conform with the views of Koske and Munjuri (2023) study which emphasizes the need for leaders to provide professional and personal growth opportunities beside financing and other support for successful capacity enhancement. The respondents' perceptions varied (Mean = 3.527, SD = 0.996) on the impetus to take risks while exploring greater opportunities for growth and greater performance.

The key informant interviews showed that while the county government supports their employees to pursue professional development and further studies, there are robust mechanisms and committees that steer these programmes. These committees include the Departmental Human Resources Management Committee (DHRMC) and county-wide Human Resources Management Committee (CHRM) which identify skill gaps and approve beneficiaries for support (KI02).

While some of the respondents held contrary views (Mean = 3.595, SD = 0.964) others' perceptions insinuated that the county decisions are often re-examined and appropriate changes adopted in a timely manner. The results also showed mixed perceptions (Mean = 3.689, SD = 1.006) as some respondents either agreed or failed to agree to the view that the leaders empower county employees to seek opportunities for personal and institutional growth.

Descriptive Analysis for Individualized Consideration and County Performance

Individualized consideration is an important element of transformational leadership that was examined in this study in terms of the direct

personalized support a leader provides to their followers. The study examined the individualized support offered through follower-centered training, coaching and mentorship considering the specific follower needs and interests. Conceptually, the variable encompassed various constructs including; personalized coaching, mentorship, interpersonal relations, leadership support and the recognition of individual employee efforts and achievements aligned with organizational goals and aspirations. The study examined how these constructs influence the performance of county governments in Kenya using the county government of Makueni as a case study. The statistical results of the analysis are detailed in Table 13.

Table 13

Descriptive Statistics for Individualized Consideration and County Performance

		Mini mum	Maxim um	Mean	Std. Deviation
The leader provides personalized coaching to the employees when it is needful.	74	1.00	5.00	3.4730	1.02333
Employees are mentored to continuously improve the county performance.	74	1.00	5.00	3.6216	1.14321
The leader provides the required material and other support to employees at all levels.	74	1.00	5.00	3.4054	1.08437
The organization nurtures healthy relationships between staff of all cadres.	74	1.00	5.00	3.5135	1.12558
Employee efforts are recognized and rewarded.	74	1.00	5.00	3.2568	1.20570

From Table 13, the results show inconclusive perceptions by the respondents regarding the leaders' practices touching on various constructs of individualized consideration in relation to county performance. More specifically, the results show that while various respondents agreed (Mean = 3.473, SD = 1.023) that the leaders

provide personalized coaching to the county employees as and when the need arises, there were some contrasting views. Personalized coaching and mentorship support enhance follower abilities and performance through interventions that are tailored to the unique individual needs as observed by Kayago et al. (2024) study. Whereas some county employees agreed (Mean = 3.622, SD = 1.143) that the leadership mentors them to continuously improve the county performance, some of them either disagreed or were unsure whether mentorship actually happens in the county. This opinion was supported by KI01 who avowed that:

The County Government of Makueni provides mentorship to their workforce through the “Anita Mbinya Foundation mentorship programme for young leaders. In addition, the county has policies, structures, guidelines and a clear procedure for approving study leaves for the staff pursuing further their studies.

The respondents agreed (Mean = 3.405, SD = 1.084) that the employer provides materials and resources they require to perform their duties and roles and also agreed (Mean = 3.514, SD = 1.126) that the organization creates an environment that permits healthy relations among staff of varying levels of hierarchy. The respondents also agreed (Mean = 3.257, SD = 1.206) that their efforts at work are recognized and rewarded for good outcomes though some contradicting views were observed.

Descriptive Analysis for Strategic Orientation and County Performance

While interrogating the relationship between transformational leadership and the performance of county governments in Kenya using the county government of Makueni as a case, this study sought to determine the mediating influence of strategic orientation on the said relationship. Taking strategic orientation as the strategic

direction guiding actions, the decisions and behaviour towards strategic goals, vision and objectives of the county governments, understanding how strategic orientation driven county performance directly or indirectly was imperative. The main constructs of strategic orientation that were relied upon in the study included: alignment with the county vision, mission, core mandate, values, CIDPs, MTPs, resource plans and continuous evaluations. Table 14 shows the results of the analysis.

Table 14

Descriptive Statistics for Strategic Orientation and County Performance

		Mini mum	Maxim um	Mean	Std Deviation
There exists a county strategic blueprint which guides in implementation of projects /programmes.	74	1.00	5.00	4.041	1.116
Medium-term plans are available for scrutiny and strategy execution	74	2.00	5.00	4.054	0.920
There is a clear vision statement for the county government.	74	1.00	5.00	4.297	0.947
The vision is properly aligned with county priorities.	74	1.00	5.00	4.135	1.128
The county mission statement is articulated clearly and consistently	74	1.00	5.00	4.243	.873
Core mandate of the county defines the purpose of the county government in its unique context.	74	1.00	5.00	4.041	1.026
Resources are considered in strategy development for proper implementation of programmes / projects.	74	1.00	5.00	3.581	1.060
The county strategy, programmes and projects are often evaluated for informed decision and action.	74	1.00	5.00	3.811	1.094

The results shown in Table 14 indicate the respondents' concurrence on the constructs of strategy orientation that the county adopts. Specifically, the respondents alluded (Mean = 4.041, SD = 1.116) to the fact that a strategic blueprint for the county exists and it is often relied upon to guide the implementation of county priorities, programmes and activities. They also affirmed (Mean = 4.054, SD = 0.92) the availability of the county medium-term plans (MTPs) which further guide the county strategy execution.

The county government has distinct five-year County Integrated Development Plan (CIDP) which is further broken down into Annual Development Plan (ADP), and fiscal strategy papers. There also exists a county strategic abstract that builds upon the data collected in partnership with the KNBS and, therefore, informs the county's budget and resource allocation for various priorities in every village. Each ward is allocated KES 33 million for development and is shared equally across the villages. In addition, the execution of the vision, CIDP and ADPs gained momentum from policies that align pre-election manifesto with county and national development priorities (KI01).

The respondents also strongly agreed (Mean = 4.297, SD = 0.947) that the county has a clear vision statement and further concurred (Mean = 4.135, SD = 1.127) that the vision is properly aligned with county priorities. Moreover, it was agreed (Mean = 4.243, SD = 0.873) that the county's mission statement is articulated clearly and consistently and also concurred (Mean = 4.041, SD = 1.026) that the core mandate of the county defines the purpose of the county government in its unique context.

The vision of the county is aligned with the Kenya Vision 2030 and the strategy adopted over the years entails zoning the county in terms of need and economic activities in pursuit of the county's vision and mission by implementing policies and strategies.

The responses showed (Mean = 3.581, SD = 1.06) that the county leadership considers resources in strategy development and execution stages and further indicated (Mean = 3.811, SD = 1.094) that the county deliberately evaluates their

strategy, programmes and projects for informed decision and action. Accordingly,

KI02 stated:

The County Government of Makueni has a very elaborate public participation model that decentralizes decision-making and enhances local participation before any project is undertaken. The model entails clusters that are made up of 10 villages from which a community resource person is elected to represent each village. Each cluster comprises of 12 members including the clergy and professionals. Through this framework, the people own the process and everything it yields and further demand accountability for every coin. As a matter of policy, every project is steered by a project management committee consisting of a project administrator, technical person and government representative who are tasked to ensure efficient and effective delivery. The county also engages diverse stakeholders during their annual strategic partners' conferences, further enhancing community involvement and sensitization for proper prioritization and ownership of development projects and programmes.

Descriptive Analysis for County Performance

County performance, being the dependent variable in this study, refers to the actual outcomes of county government interventions indicating the level of success achieved in executing county activities, programmes and projects. In this study, county performance was examined from both financial and non-financial perspectives in light of various constructs under each sub-variable. The constructs of financial performance included; the level of service delivery, citizen satisfaction, project completion, and job creation. Financial constructs on the other hand entailed: own revenues, development budget allocation, development budget absorption, recurrent budget allocation, and recurrent budget absorption. The study sought to establish how these constructs are influenced by the interplay between transformational leadership considering strategic orientation as a mediator variable. The statistical analysis results are shown in Table 15.

Table 15***Descriptive Statistics for County Performance***

		Min	Max	Mean	Std. Deviation
The county raises the required amount of own-revenues locally.	74	1.00	5.00	3.216	1.274
The county allocates at least 30% of the annual budget for development expenditure.	74	1.00	5.00	3.811	1.016
Development budget is fully utilized.	74	1.00	5.00	3.487	1.101
Recurrent budget allocation falls within the range prescribed by the Kenyan law.	74	1.00	5.00	3.405	1.158
Recurrent budget is fully absorbed every year.	74	1.00	5.00	3.73	1.038
The county carries forward pending bills every financial year.	74	1.00	5.00	3.905	.968
Development projects are completed promptly.	74	1.00	5.00	3.311	.950
There are stalled projects which need to be executed.	74	1.00	5.00	3.676	.9667
The devolved government creates job opportunities annually.	74	1.00	5.00	3.500	1.113
Services are delivered efficiently and effectively.	74	1.00	5.00	3.649	.943
Citizens are satisfied with the performance of the county.	74	1.00	5.00	3.338	.997

The descriptive results for county performance shown in Table 15 vary, on average, according to the respondents' diverse perceptions about the performance of the county government. The perceptions vary in the sense that while majority of the respondents concurred, some of them either disagreed or took a neutral standpoint, implying they were unsure, indifferent or merely average performance. Particularly, the respondents' opinions were evenly distributed (Mean = 3.216, SD = 1.274) though some of them agreed that the county raises the required amount of own-revenues

locally. It was largely agreed (Mean = 3.811, SD = 1.016) that the county allocates at least 30% of the annual budget for development expenditure. Most of the respondents also indicated (Mean = 3.487, SD = 1.101) that the county's development budget is often utilized accordingly. These views were strongly affirmed by KI01 statement:

The development budget absorption rate is high at 96% and above in the financial year ended in June 2025 and remained consistent in the preceding years. The community stakeholders are usually involved from ideation to design and delivery of the development projects. The county registered good project completion rates and compliance to the public finance management requirements.

It also emerged from the respondents (Mean = 3.405, SD = 1.158) that the county's recurrent budget is allocated within the range prescribed by the Kenyan law and also affirmed (Mean = 3.73, SD = 1.038) that the budget is fully absorbed annually. Besides, the respondents strongly agreed (Mean = 3.905, SD = 1.968) that every year the county defers some pending bills, occasioned by late exchequer disbursements, system downtimes affecting the IFMIS and eProcurement systems leading to delays especially towards the end of every financial year. According to KI02:

There are no huge pending bills except the debt inherited from local authorities' employee pension arrears. Attaining 100% account utilization is very easy considering delayed disbursements from the exchequer by 15th June yet the financial year closes on every 30th of June annually. There is, however, a small window of opportunity for reallocation of the resources after close of a financial year following the late disbursements to the counties.

This results further revealed mixed opinion (Mean = 3.311, SD = 1.95) regarding prompt completion of development projects as the respondents tended to aver (Mean = 3.676, SD = 1.967) that some stalled projects still need to be executed

to completion. Majority of the respondents indicated (Mean = 3.50, SD = 1.113) that the county government creates job opportunities every year and further asserted (Mean = 3.649, SD = 0.943) that county services are delivered efficiently and effectively. The results also show (Mean = 3.338, SD = 0.997) unsettled perceptions regarding citizen satisfaction with the performance of the county as some respondents state the need to enhance the county project outcomes.

Diagnostic Test Results

The data was subjected to diagnostic tests for heteroscedasticity, normality of the data and multi-collinearity to ascertain the level of suitability before conducting inferential analysis.

Heteroscedasticity test

Heteroscedasticity test was done to check whether residuals of a regression model have constant variance or otherwise. This was checked using Breusch-Pagan test (Asaad & Omer, 2024).

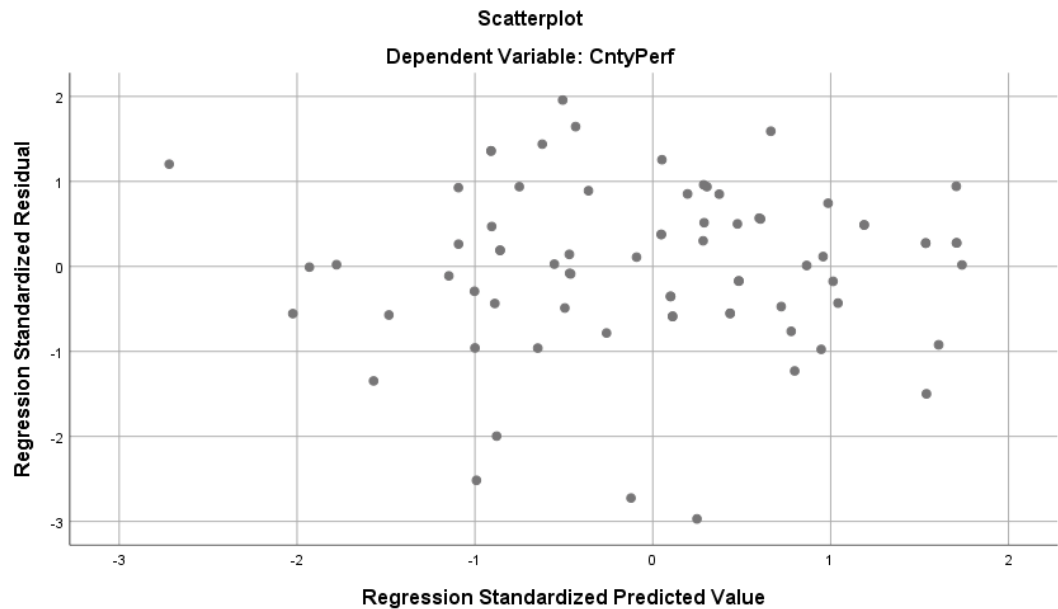
Table 16

Tests of Heteroscedasticity

ANOVA ^a					
Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	19.535	5	3.907	23.091	.000 ^b
Residual	11.506	68	.169		
Total	31.041	73			

a. Dependent Variable: County Performance

b. Predictors: (Constant), Strategic Orientation, Idealized Influence, Individualized Consideration, Inspirational Motivation, Intellectual Stimulation

Figure 4***Scatter plots***

The results on Table 16 and figure 4 clearly show a p-value of 0.000 which is less than 0.05 level of significance. This means that the data is heteroscedastic implying that the variance is not constant. This means that heteroscedasticity is present and, therefore, the data spread changes as the predictors change

Normality test

Normality happens when residuals of a model are normally distributed and if violated, it affects the predictive power of inferential statistics. To ascertain the normality of the data, Shapiro-Wilk test was used assuming the study data follow a normal (Gaussian) distribution provided the p-value exceeds 0.05.

Table 17***Tests of Normality***

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Idealized Influence	.161	74	.000	.929	74	.092
Inspirational Motivation	.115	74	.017	.946	74	.170
Intellectual Stimulation	.096	74	.092	.960	74	.200
Individualized Consideration	.076	74	.200*	.972	74	.094
Strategic Orientation	.128	74	.004	.896	74	.261
County Performance	.081	74	.200*	.970	74	.074

*. This is a lower bound of the true significance.

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

According to the analysis results presented in Table 17, the p-values of the variables under investigation were: idealized influence (p-value = 0.092), inspirational motivation (p-value = 0.170), intellectual stimulation (p-value = 0.200), individualized consideration (p-value = 0.094), strategic orientation (p-value = 0.261), and county performance (p-value = 0.074). From these results, all the variables data follow a normal distribution as indicated by the Shapiro-Wilk p-values exceeding 0.05 significance level. in addition, the scatter plots also affirmed that the study data follow a Gaussian distribution.

Linearity Test

In addition, linearity was tested using correlation analysis and the results of the analysis are shown in Table 18.

Table 18***Results of Pearson's Correlation Linearity Test***

		County Performance
Idealized Influence	Pearson Correlation	.517**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	74
Inspirational Motivation	Pearson Correlation	.525**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	74
Intellectual Stimulation	Pearson Correlation	.588**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	74
Individualized Consideration	Pearson Correlation	.774**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	74
Strategic Orientation	Pearson Correlation	.557**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	74

Table 18 shows linearity between each independent variable and the dependent variable, the performance of the county governments in Kenya. This is evident from the positive and statistically significant linear associations between: idealized influence and county performance ($P=0.000$); inspirational motivation and county performance ($P = 0.000$); intellectual stimulation and county performance ($P=0.000$); individualized consideration and county performance ($P=0.000$); and strategic orientation and county performance ($P=0.000$). These results are consistent with Mutungi (2023) study which also established linearity between variables using the same approach.

Multi-collinearity test

Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values were used to ascertain the level of multi-collinearity among the variables as presented in Table 19.

Table 19

Multi-Collinearity Test Results

Model Variable	Collinearity Statistics		
	Tolerance	VIF	Decision
(Constant)			
Idealized Influence	.530	1.887	No multicollinearity
Inspirational Motivation	.342	2.922	No multicollinearity
Intellectual Stimulation	.200	5.006	No multicollinearity
Individualized Consideration	.527	1.899	No multicollinearity
Strategic Orientation	.363	2.753	No multicollinearity

Table 19 shows the VIF for idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, individualized consideration and strategic orientation are 1.887, 2.922, 5.006, 1.899 and 2.753 respectively indicating some correlation although the VIF values are within the acceptable threshold $1 < VIF \leq 5$. Considering the tolerance statistics on table 19 alongside the VIF values, we observe low multicollinearity which is generally acceptable.

Inferential Results

This section presents the results of inferential analysis of the relationship between the study variables. In particular, the inferences are drawn from the results of correlation and regression analysis in seeking to attain the stated research objectives. Table 20 and Table 21 present the correlation and the regression results respectively.

Correlation Analysis

This study aimed at establishing the influence of transformational leadership on the performance of county governments in Kenya considering the mediating role of strategic orientation on the aforementioned relationship. In order to understand the nature, strength and direction of the relationship between the variables, a Pearson correlation analysis technique was used to examine the relationships between the variables of the study. The correlation results are detailed in Table 20 below.

Table 20

Correlation Analysis Results

Correlations		Idealized Influence	Inspirational Motivation	Intellectual Stimulation	Individualized Consideration	Strategic Orientation	County Performance
Idealized Influence	Pearson Correlation	1	.635**	.611**	.541**	.450**	.517**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	74	74	74	74	74	74
Inspirational Motivation	Pearson Correlation	.635**	1	.787**	.540**	.604**	.525**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	74	74	74	74	74	74
Intellectual Stimulation	Pearson Correlation	.611**	.787**	1	.656**	.792**	.588**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000	.000	.000
	N	74	74	74	74	74	74
Individualized Consideration	Pearson Correlation	.541**	.540**	.656**	1	.576**	.774**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000		.000	.000
	N	74	74	74	74	74	74
Strategic Orientation	Pearson Correlation	.450**	.604**	.792**	.576**	1	.557**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000		.000
	N	74	74	74	74	74	74
County Performance	Pearson Correlation	.517**	.525**	.588**	.774**	.557**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	
	N	74	74	74	74	74	74

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The results in Table 20 indicate a positive and statistically significant association between each of the dimensions of transformational leadership (idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation and individualized consideration) and county performance. Strategic orientation also correlates positively and significantly with the county performance. It is important to note that despite the positive correlations between the variables, the strength of the relationships between the variables is slightly above average except for individualized consideration which emerged very strongly.

In particular reference to the first objective of the study, the results in Table 16 show a fairly strong, positive ($r = 0.517$ and $P < 0.01$) and statistically significant influence of the leaders' idealized influence on the performance of county governments in Kenya. These results confirm the outcomes of Ogbeta (2024) study examined how idealized influence of leadership affects the performance of local councils in Gambia which indicated that the leader's idealized influence (charisma) improved the local council performance significantly.

The results of the study also reveal a fairly strong ($r = 0.525$ and $P < 0.01$) and statistically significant influence of inspirational motivation on the performance of county governments in Kenya. These findings are in concurrence with the results of Dero and Chiroma's (2025) study which also established that organizations with leaders who exhibit inspirational motivation are highly productive owing to their ability to inspire their teams by articulating their vision in ways that motivate them to perform beyond ordinary imagination. It also aligns with the findings of Kayago et al. (2024)

which showed that inspirational motivation significantly influenced the performance of the county governments, moderated positively and significantly by innovation

The findings presented in Table 20 indicate a strong ($r = 0.588$ and $P < 0.01$) and statistically significant correlation between intellectual stimulation and performance of county governments in Kenya. This inference is further drawn from the respondents' perceptions that the leadership creates an enabling environment for driving greater performance while challenging the employees to come up with new ideas on how to enhance county performance and achieve greater outcomes. These results support Priscilla et al. (2024) study on intellectual stimulation and strategy implementation in county governments in Western Region, Kenya indicating that intellectual stimulation significantly enhances execution by the counties.

Table 20 clearly shows that individualized consideration has a very strong ($r = 0.774$ and $P < 0.01$) and statistically significant association with the performance of county governments in Kenya using the county government of Makueni as a case. This stems from the opportunities the county creates for their employees' professional development, incentives and the resource allocation to support the staff's capacity enhancement initiatives. The results further correspond with Kayago et al. (2023) findings which established that individualized consideration significantly enhances the performance of SEKEB county governments. The the leader's individualized care supported the needs and potential of each follower to drive better performance

The findings from the analysis also indicate a strong ($r=0.774$ and $P<0.01$) and statistically significant relationship between the strategic orientation taken and the

performance of the county government. This observation is hinged on the participatory and inclusive planning and execution of strategies which are aligned with local, county and national development priorities. In concurrence with Ashal et al. (2021), the correlation analyses results also indicate positive and statistically significant link between strategic orientation and performance. The same relationship was also noted in Micheni and Awuor (2024) study indicating that strategic orientation significantly determines the performance of the county government, especially, where a clear vision drives attainment of development agenda

Multiple Linear Regression Analysis

A multiple linear regression analysis technique was used to examine the nature and extent of the relationship between the transformational leadership, strategy orientation and county performance. Creswell and Creswell (2017) emphasize the essence of multiple linear regression analysis where it helps examine interrelationships and the very nature of the relationships between several independent variables in a study. This study examined the influence of idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation and individualized consideration on county performance. It also considered the mediating influence of strategic orientation on the relationship between transformational leadership and county performance.

Test of Hypotheses

Moreover, the study also tested the hypotheses using the multiple regression analysis results. Each hypothesis was evaluated based on the statistical significance and the direction of the regression coefficients. The p-values associated with each hypothesis

were compared against a 5% level of significance to determine whether to reject or fail to reject the null hypotheses.

H01: There is no significant effect of idealized influence on performance of County Government of Makueni.

The regression results on the relationship between idealized influence and the performance of County governments in Kenya is presented in Table 21.

Table 21

Idealized Influence and County Performance

Model Summary					
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	
	.517 ^a	.268	.257	.56189	
a. Predictors: (Constant), Idealized Influence					
ANOVA ^a					
Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	8.309	1	8.09	26.36	.000 ^b
Residual	22.732	72	.316		
Total	31.041	73			
a. Dependent Variable: County Performance					
b. Predictors: (Constant), Idealized Influence					
Coefficients ^a					
Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	1.750	.356		4.910	.000
Idealized Influence	.455	.089	.517	5.130	.000
a. Dependent Variable: County Performance					

The Influence of Idealized Influence on the performance of County government of Makueni, Kenya

The study sought to establish how idealized influence relates with performance of County Government of Makueni in Kenya. Accordingly, Table 21 shows a fairly strong positive correlation ($R = 0.517$) between idealized influence and the performance of the county governments in Kenya. The coefficient of determination ($R^2 = 0.268$) indicates that the model explains 26.8% variability in the performance of county governments in Kenya using the model $Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \hat{e}$. This implies that that idealized influence explains a 26.8% change in county performance while the remaining 73.2% variability in county performance is explained by other factors not included in this model. In addition, the ANOVA results show that the model is statistically significant ($F = 26.316$; $P\text{-value} = 0.00 < 0.01$) and therefore it fits the study data well. This demonstrates that the county performance is significantly driven by the leaders' idealized influence. Accordingly, we reject the null hypothesis given the statistics explained herein and conclude that there is a statistically significant effect of the leader's idealized influence on county performance.

H02: Inspirational motivation has no significant influence on the performance of County government of Makueni, Kenya

This hypothesis was tested using regression results on the relationship between inspirational motivation and the performance of County government of Makueni, Kenya as presented in Table 22.

Table 22

Inspirational Motivation and County Performance

Model Summary					
Model R		R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	
.525 ^a		.276	.266	.55867	
a. Predictors: (Constant), Inspirational Motivation					
ANOVA ^a					
Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	8.569	1	8.569	27.455	.000 ^b
Residual	22.472	72	.312		
Total	31.041	73			
a. Dependent Variable: County Performance					
b. Predictors: (Constant), Inspirational Motivation					
Coefficients					
Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	2.086	.286		7.280	.000
Inspirational Motivation	.385	.073	.525	5.240	.000
a. Dependent Variable: County Performance					

The influence of Inspirational Motivation on the performance of County Government of Makueni, Kenya

The second specific objective of this study was to evaluate the influence of inspirational motivation on the performance of County Governments of Makueni. The stated hypothesis was inspirational motivation has no significant influence on the performance of county governments in Kenya. The results on table 22 indicate, a fairly strong positive correlation ($R = 0.525$) between the leadership's inspirational motivation and the performance of County Governments of Makueni. The coefficient of determination ($R^2 = 0.276$) indicates that the model explains 27.6% variability in the county performance using the model $Y = \beta_0 + \beta_2 X_2 + \hat{e}$ which effectively translates to $Y = 2.086 + 0.385X$. This implies that inspirational motivation explains a 27.6% change in county performance while the remaining 72.4% variability in the performance of County Governments Makueni is attributed to other factors that are not included in the model. The ANOVA results further show that the model is statistically significant ($F = 27.455$; $P\text{-value} = 0.00 < 0.01$) and therefore it fits the data well. This demonstrates the significant role of inspirational motivation in enhancing county performance. In this regard and considering the aforementioned results, we reject the null hypothesis and conclude that the leaders' inspirational motivation has significant influence on the performance of County Government of Makueni in Kenya.

H03: Intellectual stimulation has no significant influence on the performance of County Governments of Makueni

This hypothesis was tested using regression results on the relationship between intellectual stimulation and the performance of Makuni County governments in Kenya as presented in Table 23.

Table 23

Intellectual Stimulation and County Performance

Model Summary					
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	
	.588 ^a	.345	.336	.53124	
a. Predictors: (Constant), Intellectual Stimulation					
ANOVA ^a					
Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	10.721	1	10.721	37.99	.000 ^b
Residual	20.320	2	.282		
Total	31.041	73			
a. Dependent Variable: County Performance					
b. Predictors: (Constant), Intellectual Stimulation					
Coefficients ^a					
Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	
(Constant)	1.768	.25		5.990	.000
Intellectual Stimulation	.485	.079	.588	6.164	.000
a. Dependent Variable: County Performance					

The influence of intellectual stimulation on the performance of county governments in Kenya

The third objective of this study assessed the influence of intellectual stimulation on the performance of County Governments of Makueni. The stated hypothesis was on the relationship between intellectual stimulation and the performance of the County Government of Makueni. This relationship was examined and the results presented in Table 23 show a strong positive correlation ($R = 0.588$) between the leadership's intellectual stimulation and the performance of county governments in Kenya. The coefficient of determination ($R^2 = 0.345$) indicates that the model explains 34.5% variability in the county performance as a result of the leaders' intellectual stimulation, using the model $Y = \beta_0 + \beta_3 X_3 + \hat{e}$ which translates to $Y = 1.768 + 0.485 X_2$. The goodness of fit ($R^2 = 0.345$) infers that intellectual stimulation significantly explains a 34.5% variation in county performance while the remaining 65.5% variability in performance of the County Government of Makueni is explained by other factors not included in this model. The ANOVA results also imply that the model fits the data well and is statistically significant ($F = 37.989$; $P\text{-value} = 0.00 < 0.01$) and that the county performance is significantly modified by the leaders' intellectual stimulation of their followers and teams. Hence, the hypothesis was rejected and a conclusion made that intellectual stimulation significantly influences the performance of the County Government of Makueni.

H04: Individualized Consideration has no significant influence on the performance of County Government of Makueni

This hypothesis was tested using regression results on the relationship between individualized consideration and the performance of County Government of Makueni as presented in Table 24.

Table 24

Individualized Consideration and County Performance

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
	.774 ^a	.599	.593	.41583

a. Predictors: (Constant), Individualized Consideration

ANOVA^a

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	18.591	1	18.591	107.58	.000 ^b
Residual	12.450	72	.173		
Total	31.041	73			

a. Dependent Variable: County Performance

b. Predictors: (Constant), Individualized Consideration

Coefficients^a

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
Model	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	1.668	.188		8.887	.000
Individualized Consideration	.544	.052	.774	10.369	.000

a. Dependent Variable: County Performance

The influence of individualized consideration on the performance of County Government of Makueni

The fourth specific objective examined the influence of individualized consideration on the performance of County Government of Makueni using the stated hypothesis which was individualized consideration has no significant influence on the performance of county governments in Kenya. From the analysis of the study data, Table 24 indicates a very strong positive ($R = 0.774$) and statistically significant relationship between the leadership's individualized consideration and the performance of County Government of Makueni. Taking the model $Y = 1.668 + 0.544X$, the coefficient of determination ($R^2 = 0.599$) indicates that the model explains 59.9% variation in the county performance due to individualized consideration. These findings demonstrate that the leaders' individualized consideration significantly accounts for a 59.9% change in the performance of Makueni County Government, while the remaining 40.1% variability in the performance of county governments in Kenya is attributed to other factors external to the model. From the ANOVA results, the model is statistically significant ($F = 107.518$; $P\text{-value} = 0.00 < 0.01$) and therefore it fits the data well, indicating the significant role of individualized consideration in bolstering the performance the county government of Makueni. Effectively, the null hypothesis was rejected and the study concludes that the leader's individualized consideration significantly influences the performance of county governments in Kenya.

Mediating influence of Strategic Orientation on the relationship between Transformational Leadership and County Performance

The fifth objective of this study was to determine the mediating influence of strategic orientation on the relationship between transformational leadership and the performance of the County Government of Makueni. The tested hypothesis was that strategic orientation has no significant mediating influence on the relationship between transformational leadership and the performance of the County Government of Makueni. This was tested using Andrew Hayes Process Model's four-step approach as outlined by Hayes (2022) perspective where regression analysis is conducted, and the significance of coefficients is tested at each step. The test for the mediating influence of strategic orientation took the following steps:

Step 1: Modelling of County Performance as predicted by Transformational Leadership Style. The first step examined the direct relationship between transformational leadership and county performance controlling for strategic orientation. This path ascertained the relationship between transformational leadership (the independent variable) and the performance of County Governments of Makueni in Kenya (the dependent variable). Table 25 presents the results.

Table 25***Transformational Leadership and County Performance***

Model 1 Summary							
	R	R-sq	MSE	F	df1	df2	p
	.7151	.5114	.2106	75.3664	1.0000	72.0000	.0000
OUTCOME VARIABLE: County Performance Model 1							
coeff	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI		
constant			1.1084	.2860	3.8754	.0002	.5383 1.6786
Transformational Leadership			.6562	.0756	8.6814	.0000	.5055 .8069

The results in Table 25 show that the total effect (path c; $X \rightarrow Y$) from transformational leadership to county performance is positive and statistically significant ($\beta = 0.6562$, standard error = 0.0756, $p < 0.01$). Also, the coefficient of determination $R^2 = 51.14$ indicates that the model explains 51.14% variability in county performance. The remaining 48.86 % can be attributed to other factors excluded from the model. These statistics show that transformational leadership has a strong, positive and statistically significant total effect on county performance. Thus, TL significantly predicts performance in Makueni County

Step 2: This step examined whether transformational leadership significantly predicts the mediating variable (strategic orientation). It involved modelling Strategic Orientation (the mediator) as predicted by Transformational Leadership. This test was conducted to establish the significance of the relationship between the independent variable and the mediator variable ($X \rightarrow M$). Table 26 shows the results of this analysis.

Table 26***Transformational Leadership on Strategic Orientation***

OUTCOME VARIABLE: Strategic Orientation							
Model 1 Summary							
	R	R-sq	MSE	F	df1	df2	p
	.7142	.5101	.3670	74.9660	1.0000	72.0000	.0000
Model 1			coeff	se	t	p	LLCI
ULCI							
constant		.8139	.3775	2.1557	.0345	.0612	1.5665
Transformational Leadership		.8639	.0998	8.6583	.0000	.6650	1.0628

The results in Table 26 show a strong positive and statistically significant correlation between transformational leadership and strategic orientation. In addition, the results indicate that transformational leadership accounts for 51.01% of the variability in strategic orientation while the balance of 48.99% is more likely to be explained by other factors. In addition, the path from transformational leadership to strategic orientation (direct effect) was positive and statistically significant ($\beta = 0.8639$, standard error = 0.0998, $p < 0.01$). The p-value = 0.000 indicates a very strong statistical evidence that the probability of this relationship occurring by chance less than 1%, hence confirms a statistically significant relationship between the variables. These results show a statistically meaningful $X \rightarrow M$ relationship.

Step 3: Modelling of county performance as predicted by strategic orientation.

This step involved assessing the level of significance of the relationship between strategic orientation and county performance in the presence of transformational leadership ($M/X \rightarrow Y$). The results of this analysis are as shown in Table 27.

Table 27***Transformational Leadership, Strategic Orientation and Strategic Orientation***

OUTCOME VARIABLE: County Performance							
Model 1 Summary							
	R	R-sq	MSE	F	df1	df2	p
	.7182	.5158	.2117	37.8147	2.0000	71.0000	.0000
Model 1	coeff	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI	
constant	1.0502	.2958	3.5497	.0007	.4603	1.6401	
Transformational Leadership	.5943	.1083	5.4899	.0000	.3785	.8102	
Strategic Orientation	.0716	.0895	.7999	.4264	-.1069	.2501	

The results obtained from Table 27 show that the direct path from transformational leadership to county performance is positive and statistically significant ($\beta = 0.5943$, standard error=0.1083, $p = 0.000$) indicating that county governments with transformational leadership practices have higher chances of performing well unlike those with deficient leadership capabilities. It is, however, noted that the direct effect of strategic orientation on county performance was positive but statistically non-significant ($\beta = 0.0716$, standard error = 0.0895, $p = 0.4264$). It emerges from these findings that strategic orientation has a positive but statistically insignificant effect on county performance when controlling for transformational leadership. This essentially means that there is no statistical evidence of mediation in the study.

Step 4: Regression analysis with Transformational Leadership and Strategic Orientation Predicting County Performance.

This analysis was performed to establish any indirect effect of transformational leadership on county performance in the presence of strategic orientation. The indirect effect (0.0619) bootstrapped at 95% confidence interval which includes zero (-0.2139,

0.2644) implies that the indirect effect is not statistically significant. According to Hayes (2013) as cited in Omondi's (2021) study, if one or more of the three paths in the mediation analysis are non-significant, intervening is not possible as has been established in this study. Where significant relationships exist from step 1 through 3, it could be advisable to proceed to step 4 where intervening is supported provided the effect of TL remains significant after controlling Strategic Orientation. See Table 28 for detailed statistics on the mediating effect of strategic orientation on the relationship between transformational leadership and county performance

Table 28

Mediating Role of Strategic Orientation on TL and County Performance

Total, Direct, and Indirect Effects of X On Y					
Total effect of X on Y					
Effect	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
.6562	.0756	8.6814	.0000	.5055	.8069
Direct effect of X on Y					
Effect	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
.5943	.1083	5.4899	.0000	.3785	.8102
Indirect effect(s) of X on Y:					
	Effect	BootSE	BootLLCI	BootULCI	
Strategic Orientation	.0619	.1221	-.2139	.2644	

The fifth specific objective determined the mediating influence of strategic orientation on the relationship between transformational leadership and performance of county governments in Kenya using Makueni County as a case. Results of the mediation analysis shown in Table 28 indicates that strategic orientation does not mediate the relationship between transformational leadership and performance of the county

governments. This inference is drawn from the non-significant indirect effect of strategic orientation on county performance. Essentially, the mediation (indirect) effect is 0.0619 yet the confidence interval ranging from -0.2139 to 0.2644 includes zero and considering that if this range crosses zero in the process macro then the mediation is presumed to be statistically non-significant.

Whereas the results show that transformational leadership strongly and significantly ($\beta = 0.8639$, $p < 0.001$) influences a county's strategic orientation, the mediator fails to significantly predict county performance when controlling for transformational leadership ($\beta = 0.0716$, $p = 0.4264$). Moreover, the results show that the aggregate effect of transformational leadership, on its own, on county performance is positive and statistically significant ($\beta = 0.6562$, $p < 0.001$). Also, the data shows a direct and statistically significant influence ($\beta = 0.5943$, $p < 0.001$) of transformational leadership on county performance regardless of the county's strategic orientation. The indirect effect was non-significant ($\beta = .0619$, 95% CI [-.2139, .2644]), indicating that strategic orientation does not mediate the relationship between transformational leadership and county performance. This study finds no mediation effect of strategic orientation unlike Micheni and Awuor's (2024) study which established significant mediating effect of strategic direction in the relationship between transformational leadership and performance of Taraka Nithi County, Kenya.

Transformational Leadership and County Performance

The sixth objective of the study was to evaluate the combined influence of transformational leadership dimensions on the performance of County Government of

Makueni in Kenya. This was done using multiple linear regression technique and the results are in Table 29.

Table 29

Regression results for Transformational Leadership and County Performance

Model Summary

Model R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
.787 ^a	.620	.598	.41365

a. Predictors: (Constant), Individualized Consideration, Inspirational Motivation, Idealized Influence, Intellectual Stimulation

ANOVA^a

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	19.234	4	4.809	28.103	.000 ^b
Residual	11.806	69	.171		
Total	31.041	73			

a. Dependent Variable: County Performance

b. Predictors: (Constant), Individualized Consideration, Inspirational Motivation, Idealized Influence, Intellectual Stimulation

Coefficients^a

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta			
(Constant)	1.306	.276			4.734	.000
Idealized Influence	.073	.089	.083		.817	.417
Inspirational Motivation	.067	.093	.092		.725	.471
Intellectual Stimulation	.027	.112	.033		.242	.809
Individualized Consideration	.463	.071	.658		6.496	.000

a. Dependent Variable: County Performance

The results for the combined effect of transformational leadership on performance of the County Government of Makueni are presented in Table 29. These results show a very strong and positive correlation ($R = 0.787$) between transformational leadership and county performance. The coefficient of determination ($R^2 = 0.620$) indicates that the model explains 62.0% variance in county performance explained by the four sub-variables of transformational leadership. This relationship is presented using the model $Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1X_1 + \beta_2X_2 + \beta_3X_3 + \beta_4X_4 + \hat{e}$. Generally, the results indicate that transformational leadership traits (idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration) explain a 62.0% change in county performance. The ANOVA also points out that the regression model is statistically significant ($F = 28.103$; $P\text{-value} < 0.01$), implying that the model fits the study data well and that transformational leadership significantly boosts the performance of the Makueni County Government.

Furthermore, the regression coefficients also revealed a positive association between each dimension of transformational leadership and county performance taking a constant of 1.306. Of all the 4Is, it is only the leader's individualized consideration that significantly ($\beta_4 = 0.463$, $p = 0.000$) influences the county performance at 99% confidence level. The other factors, although positively associated, neither show strong influence nor any statistical significance in this model. Taking the model: $Y = 1.306 + 0.073X_1 + 0.067X_2 + 0.027X_3 + 0.463X_4$, a unit rise in the performance of the county government of Makueni is triggered by a combined impact of; 0.073 (idealized influence), 0.067 (inspirational motivation), 0.027 (intellectual stimulation), and 0.463

(individualized consideration) respectively. These results are consistent with the literature (Dero & Chiroma, 2025; Kayago, 2024; Ogbeta, 2024; Priscilla et al., 2024).

Chapter Summary

This chapter detailed the descriptive and inferential analysis results and the related discussions starting with respondents' demographics. The descriptive analysis followed the order of all the specific objectives of the study. On the other hand, inferential analysis involved both Pearson's correlation analysis, multiple linear regression and Hayes process macro analyses for checking any mediation effect in the model. The study results inform the summary of findings, recommendations, and conclusions in the next chapter.

Chapter Five: Summary of Findings, Recommendations, Areas for Further Research and Conclusion

Introduction

This chapter summarizes the findings of the study per specific research objectives followed by recommendations which are based on those findings. Conclusions drawn from the inferences and outcomes of the analysis are also presented as per the specific research objectives. The main objective of this study was to establish the influence of transformational leadership on the performance of county governments in Kenya by examining the mediating influence of strategic orientation on the relationship using Makueni County as a case. The study was guided by the Transformational Leadership Theory, the Upper Echelons Theory and the Dynamic Capabilities Theory. The study targeted senior management-level staff of the county from whom data was collected and analysis done both descriptively and inferentially depicting the relationships espoused in the specific research objectives against which this chapter presents a concise summary of findings, conclusions and recommendations

Summary of Findings

The main objective of the study was to establish the influence of transformational leadership on performance of Makueni County Government, Kenya considering the mediating role of strategic orientation in the said relationship. The study employed a mixed methods research design within a pragmatic research philosophy and involved a total of 116 participants from various departments of the devolved government of Makueni. The study tested the null hypothesis that strategic orientation has no significant mediating influence on the relationship between transformational

leadership and Makueni County Government performance. The demographics show even distribution of the participants in terms of gender, age, academic qualifications, roles in the county and work experience in complete years.

In addition, the descriptive statistics showed that: the leader's idealized influence (charisma) was pivotal to performance especially when it comes to the implementation of county priorities; leaders inspire high performance culture among the staff; provide opportunities, mechanisms and support for the county staff to undergo appropriate capacity enhancement and; that the leadership excels in providing personalized coaching, on-the-job training, mentorship and technical support to the juniors and peers alike. The results also show great milestones in participatory planning, policy and decision-making where the county government deliberately involves the publics from every village and staff of all cadres in its decision process. The findings and discussion of this study are presented for each research objective as follows

Idealized Influence on performance of Makueni County Governments in Kenya

This study was conducted to establish the influence of idealized influence on the performance of county governments with Makueni County as a case study. The null hypothesis was that idealized influence has no statistically significant influence on the performance of Makueni County Governments in Kenya. The descriptive analysis established that: The respondents indicated their leaders' confidence in the teams citing their positive attitudes towards work. Whereas the governor promotes integrity and accountability at all times as part of the core values of the county, ethical practices still need to be strengthened in the counties. There exists an inclusive and collaborative work environment where servant leadership is driven by integrity and passion. Taking a

holistic approach, the leadership brings everybody on board, engages with all staff irrespective of their varying levels of hierarchy in planning and implementation of policies, programmes and projects. Also, the employees are empowered to take well-calculated risks in discharging their duties and providing solutions to the county needs. These findings are consistent with literature and the presuppositions of the Transformational Leadership Theory. In addition, the inferential analysis results indicated a fairly strong and statistically significant effect of idealized influence on the performance of county governments in Kenya. This implied that the leaders' idealized influence is critical to the organizational transformation though the county is yet to exploit its full potential. It is therefore imperative to align personal goals and values more to the county vision, lead the teams in driving attitude change towards higher performance with great new ideas to deliver the promises.

Inspirational Motivation on performance of Makueni County Governments in Kenya

This study evaluated how inspirational motivation influences performance of Makueni County Government in Kenya. The null hypothesis stated was that inspirational motivation has no statistically significant effect on the performance of Makueni County Governments in Kenya. Descriptive analysis results showed that whereas the leadership articulate the county's vision in clear and concise terms, there is need to consistently communicate with all stakeholders, ensuring the vision cascades down to the lowest levels of governance, leadership and service delivery. Participatory planning and goal-setting at various stages in planning, execution, monitoring and evaluation of county programmes builds on the strong mechanisms and framework for effective public participation in all county activities. The county invests in innovation

and creativity for better outcomes. The employees enjoy autonomy and are supported to try new ideas, opportunities and innovative problem-solving devoid of bureaucracy. The staff interact, communicate freely and can say NO when necessary, especially when things go astray. New ideas and policy shifts benefit from the county government support mechanisms. The county leaders inspire excellent performance through robust performance management practices, periodic appraisals and rewards for stellar performance. Staff motivation through incentives such as the 13th salary for exceeding targets and opportunities for personal and professional development. Every department allocates funds for staff training at Kenya School of Government. Leaders also communicate with teams consistently and effectively and accommodate feedback on matters of priority even if the feedback is adverse. The results of the inferential analysis showed a moderately strong, positive and statistically significant effect of inspirational motivation on county performance implying that the county government need to enhance their practice of idealized influence more strategically and tactfully to enhance their performance. In conclusion, always improving organizational communication, vision articulation, and capability to manage diverse stakeholder expectations is paramount as underscored in the Transformational Leadership Theory (TLT).

Intellectual Stimulation on performance of Makueni County Governments in Kenya

The third specific objective of this study was to assess the influence of intellectual stimulation on the performance of the County Government of Makueni. The null hypothesis was “intellectual stimulation has no significant influence on performance of Makueni County Governments in Kenya. The results of the descriptive analysis show that the county leadership stimulates innovation and creativity amongst

the employees and promotes innovative culture and supports creativity in providing solutions to problems and challenges. Leaders challenge staff to try new ideas and approaches, knowing very well that new ideas are supported fully. The leaders also guide and support the county staff to find and provide solutions to local problems, encouraging risk-taking while exploring greater opportunities for growth and greater performance. The county encourages informed decision-making guided by data in addressing the needs and interests of the people. The inferential analysis results showed a strong positive and statistically significant influence of intellectual stimulation on the county performance indicating not only the merit-based staffing but also high academic and professional achievement by the leadership who influence their followers towards higher targets and achievement. In fact, considering that critical decisions are often re-examined and appropriate changes adopted in a timely manner, these findings reflect in prior studies that relied on the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire which informed the design of the research questionnaire used in this study. With highly competent and qualified staff in leadership roles, the chances of requisite knowledge transfer increase and the followers get challenged to be more creative and innovative in addressing the needs and challenges of the county. Other counties need to emulate the County Government of Makueni by depoliticizing appointment of staff to key positions. Instead, intentionally attracting and retaining performing staff even when regime changes occur after every election cycle serves the greater interests of the entire county rather than individual interests.

Individualized Consideration on performance of Makueni County Government in Kenya

The study also sought to examine the influence of individualized consideration on the performance of county governments in Kenya using Makueni County as a case. The null hypothesis tested in this case was “individualized consideration has no significant influence on the performance of county governments in Kenya. Respondent perceptions informed the descriptive and inferential analyses. According to the results of the descriptive analysis, the respondents’ perceptions were unsettled on the leaders providing personalized coaching to employees. However, the county stands out with their mentorship programmes, supporting the staff professional development and a decentralized budget for staff capacity enhancement. The county employees have opportunities to further their studies with support of the employer. The organization provides materials and resources required to perform various tasks, duties and roles. Moreover, the inferential analysis results demonstrated a very strong positive and statistically significant relationship between individualized consideration and county performance implying that by paying close attention to the individual employee needs, and interests while providing opportunities and support for growth, they become more productive and this reflects in the county performance. In addition, maintaining a conducive working environment that permits healthy relations and fosters opportunities for personal development and professional growth among staff of varying levels of hierarchy is imperative. The leadership of various county governments need to recognize employee efforts at work are more and reward them for attaining greater outcomes. These views have been emphasized in extant literature on transformational

leadership and performance in the context of devolved governments in developing countries.

The mediating role of Strategic Orientation on Transformational Leadership and Performance of Makueni County Governments in Kenya

The mediating role of strategic orientation on the relationship between transformational leadership and county performance was evaluated in this study. The null hypothesis tested was strategic orientation has no significant mediating influence on the relationship between transformational leadership and performance of Makueni County Government in Kenya. This hypothesis was tested using Hayes process macro whose results are statistically robust considering the bootstrapping of the confidence intervals as recommended in contemporary empirical studies.

Descriptive analysis was carried out and it revealed the existence of a strategic blueprint for the county which is often relied upon to guide the implementation of county priorities, programmes and activities. The CIDP, MTPs, ADPs as well as the fiscal strategy papers guide the county strategy and project execution. The county strategy, budgets and resource allocations to priority areas at all levels is informed by data collected in partnership with the KNBS. The execution of county vision, CIDP and ADPs hinges on policies that align pre-election manifesto with county and national development priorities. The vision aligns with the country's vision 2030 as well as the county priorities. The mission and core values are articulated clearly and consistently. Resources remain a critical factor in strategy development and execution as well as informed decision and action.

From the inferential analysis results, it emerged that strategic orientation does not significantly mediate the relationship between transformational leadership and performance of Makueni County governments in Kenya. The results imply that despite the need for proper strategic alignment, transformational leadership still influences county performance with or without mediation of the strategic orientation. Essentially, attaining strategic priorities of the counties call for robust strategic alignment which can be augmented by good transformational leadership practices in order to enhance county performance. Important to note is the fact that at the heart of the county's strategy and policy implementation, there exists robust public participation framework that enhances inclusivity, equity and transparency in decision-making and management of public resources. Whereas these findings reveal significant effort towards aligning leadership with strategy for efficient and effective execution of county priorities, the study identifies a number of operational and tactical strategies and activities that need proper reinforcement and realignment in order to bolster performance of the counties.

County Performance

According to the study participants, on average, Makueni County Government raises substantial amounts in own-revenues, though some non-finance respondents are sparsely informed about the financials of the county. It was reported that the county complied to the legal requirement to allocate at least 30% of the annual budget to development expenditure. The county's development and recurrent budgets are often utilized as planned hence the high development budget absorption rate that has remained consistent every year. The community stakeholders are usually involved from ideation to design and delivery of the development projects. The county registers high project

completion rates and compliance with public finance management requirements though some stalled projects still need to be executed to completion. There are, however, some pending bills arising from statutory obligations inherited from local authorities and late disbursements from the exchequer. IFMIS system downtimes and failures affect procurement and payments to vendors especially towards the end of every financial year. The county always endeavors to enhance efficient and effective delivery of services and programmes. Citizen satisfaction surveys reveal high performance and the need to augment project outcomes in the entire county.

Conclusion

This section presents the conclusions that were drawn from the study findings and the inferential results. The conclusions are presented in this section as follows:

Winning the respect and trust of a leader's team remains an important milestone any serious leader would want to attain. Although this study reveals a fairly strong, positive and statistically significant influence of the leaders' idealized influence on the performance of Makueni County Government in Kenya, it is important for the leader to be a role model with great charisma and capability to influence teams towards the desired organizational vision and aspirations.

Leadership in any organization has an onerous task to not only drive transformation and good performance, but also inspire and motivate the team members to own and actively contribute to the pursuit of the organization's desired outcomes. This study revealed a moderately strong and statistically significant influence of inspirational motivation on the performance of Makueni County Government in Kenya.

The study demonstrates that leaders inspire their teams by articulating their vision in ways that motivate them to perform beyond ordinary expectation.

Good leaders create an impressive environment that challenges the employees with new and brilliant ideas on how to do things differently and achieve greater outcomes. The new ideas and perspectives bring new curves to organizational processes, systems and structures which reflect in performance. Accordingly, this study reveals a strong and statistically significant correlation between intellectual stimulation and performance of county governments in Kenya. Intellectually stimulating leadership creates an enabling environment for driving greater performance while challenging the norm and exploring new approaches, and ideas on how to enhance county performance and achieve greater outcomes.

This study examined how individualized consideration relates with county performance and the results revealed a very strong and statistically significant association with the performance of county governments in Kenya with Makueni County as a case study. This strong association is grounded on the numerous opportunities the county government has created for their employees' personal and professional development. It also stems from the incentives and resources the county provides to support the staff's capacity enhancement initiatives including the leaders' individualized care in response to the staff needs in order to consistently achieve better performance

The mediating influence of strategic orientation on the relationship between transformational leadership and county performance was assessed. The findings showed

that despite a very strong and statistically significant relationship between the strategic orientation and the performance of the county government, strategy orientation did not mediate the direct relationship between transformational leadership and county performance. The respondent, however, commend great efforts that allow inclusive planning and execution of strategies, projects and development programmes.

Recommendations

This section details some of the recommendations based on the outcomes from the perceptions and observations from the study as follows:

This study has shown that the leadership of County Government of Makueni has excelled due to the confidence in their staff and team members in various projects and programmes. The emphasis placed by the leadership on accountability and integrity in handling public resources has been a major boost in an environment where employees are encouraged to take reasonable risk where necessary in discharging their duties in the best interest of the county at large. Whereas the leaders embrace new ideas from their teams, it is imperative for the leaders to deliberately stand out as dependable role models bringing new perspectives to their mandate through policy interventions and appropriate action toward executing the policies. The new ideas need to be articulated clearly and consistently for maximum stakeholder buy-in, ownership and seamless execution.

The leadership of the county has done a tremendous job by articulating the organizational vision and mission with clarity. However, it appears that some of the respondents are not well acquainted with some critical information regarding the strategic direction and performance the county should take. In addition, the leaders

inspire innovativeness and creativity among the team members yet a little more still needs to be firmed. For example, while cascading goal setting and planning to the lower levels, leaders need to sensitize and engage all internal stakeholders more extensively. The leaders also need to come out as agents of transformation acting as critical source of inspiration to the teams at all levels of hierarchy. Importantly, the county needs to streamline communication about new changes and use channels that not only clear noise, but also ensure inclusion of both internal and external stakeholders.

The county also stands out as an exceptional devolved unit of governance that guides its people, supports them well and provides stimuli for impactful innovation and creativity in addressing local problems and pain-points. There is, however, the need to encourage risk-taking when it comes to trying new approaches and ideas for the employees to confidently innovate and change service delivery. The study also recommends continuous review of progress and re-examination of decisions to deliberately allow for timely recourse in the event that unexpected deviations from standards are encountered.

Whereas the study has proven significant efforts and milestones so far in regards to practicing individualized consideration, personalized coaching and on-the-job mentorship need to be enhanced and sustained for skill and knowledge transfer from senior to junior staff. The county leadership and management teams should provide material support to the teams in a timely manner for efficient and effective service delivery to the end-user's satisfaction. County governments need to rethink the staff recognition, and rewards systems to not only enhance co-opetition among workers, but

also employ the best practices towards attaining the set financial and non-financial goals efficiently and effectively.

Matters of strategy require resources, time and reasonable scope to execute effectively. It is therefore important to ensure adequate resources to support strategy development and implementation. County governments also need to augment their development strategies with enhanced transformational leadership practices to attain greater performance and development outcomes. Strengthening monitoring, evaluation and learning initiatives bearing in mind the principles of diversity equity and inclusion for purposes of advancing, informed decision-making and appropriate action towards better outcomes.

Suggestions for Further Studies

The current study's focus was two-fold: on the relationship between transformational leadership and performance of county governments in Kenya, and the mediating role of strategic orientation in the relationship between transformational leadership and performance of county governments in Kenya using the County Government of Makueni as a case study. Further studies should replicate this study in devolved governments that have been accorded the city statuses in order to check whether significant differences arise or otherwise. Future research could expand the geographical scope to include county governments from diverse regions, capturing a broader representation of the devolved governments. It is also suggested that a comprehensive survey of all the county governments in Kenya be undertaken using mixed methods design for purposes of comparison and scholarly ranking based on actual performance. Scholars and researchers should also consider conducting comparative

studies on the leadership experience and performance of county governments in Kenya considering age, gender and political affiliation of the governors to inform policy. Further studies examining both high-performing and low-performing counties should be conducted. It is also important to incorporate external stakeholders in future studies on leadership, strategy and county performance in Kenya to provide a more balanced assessment based on diverse stakeholder perspectives. Finally, this study recommends future research to evaluate whether county performance actually translates into improved livelihoods for tey citizens across the counties in Kenya.

Chapter Summary

This chapter has outlined how transformational leadership influences the performance of county governments in Kenya, considering the mediating role of strategic orientation on the aforementioned relationship. The chapter has demonstrated the role of visionary, inspirational, intellectually advantaged and supportive leadership in strengthening the performance of devolved governments highlighting key findings, drawing conclusions from inferences and making actionable recommendations that advance the essence of devolution in the county.

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Appendices

Appendix I: Introduction Letter

Alex K. Wachira
Pan Africa Christian University,
P. O. Box 56875 - 00200
NAIROBI
30th September, 2025

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Dear sir/madam,

RE: DATA COLLECTION FOR ACADEMIC RESEARCH

I am a post graduate student at Pan Africa Christian (PAC) University (Kenya) pursuing a Master of Arts degree in Leadership. As part of the requirement for my postgraduate studies, I am conducting an academic research titled “**Transformational Leadership, Strategic Orientation and Performance of County Governments in Kenya – A Case of Makueni County**”. With your permission, I will administer a structured research questionnaire and further conduct key informant interviews to obtain relevant data on the aforementioned topic.

Therefore, this study requires honest perspectives on the leadership practices and performance of county governments in Kenya using the County Government of Makueni as a case and Homabay County for pilot testing. The purpose of this letter is to request you to participate in the study by providing responses to all the sections of the attached research questionnaire. Kindly note that any data obtained from you as well as your responses will be used for academic purposes only and that the data will not be divulged to other uses whatsoever.

Kindly see attached herewith, copies of my research questionnaire, interview guides, research authorization letter from PAC university and a valid research permit from the National Council for Science Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI) in support of this request.

Thank you for your consideration

Yours sincerely,

Alex Kamau Wachira
MALD/9622/0/17

Appendix II: Research Questionnaire

SECTION A: Bio Data

1. Gender

Male ☐
Female ☐
Other ☐

2. Age (in complete years)

8-30 years ☐
31-40 Years ☐
41-50 Years ☐
51-60 Years ☐
60 Years and above ☐

3. Academic Qualification

Professional ☐
Diploma ☐
Undergraduate ☐
Post-Graduate ☐
Other (Specify) ☐

4. Experience (in complete years)

5 years and below ☐
6-10 Years ☐
11-15 Years ☐
16-20 Years ☐
20-25 Years ☐
26 Years and above ☐

5. Position held in the organization

Senior Management ☐
Management Level ☐
Supervisory Level ☐
Entry Level ☐
Other ☐

SECTION B: Idealized Influence

This section seeks your views on how your organization's leaders practice idealized influence and how these practices reflect on the performance of the organization's outcomes. Provide only one response for every statement on a scale of 1-5. Where: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, and 5 = Strongly Agree, indicate your response to the following statements

No.	Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
	The governor always promotes integrity and accountability at all times as part of the core values of the county					
	Employees strongly believe in the leader's great ideas that enhance a highly productive work culture					
	The leaders foster an environment where their teams take well-calculated risks at work without fear					
	Employees take pride in the leader as their role model who inspires positive change					
	The leadership accommodate and supports new ideas from team members					

SECTION C: Inspirational Motivation

This section seeks your views on how your organization's leaders inspirationally motivate the staff consideration and how these practices reflect on the performance of the county government. Provide only one response for every statement on a scale of 1-5. Where: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, and 5 = Strongly Agree.

No.	Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
	The leader articulates the institution's vision in clear and concise terms					
	Employees are always encouraged to be innovative and creative to be more productive					
	All employees are involved in goal setting and organizational planning					
	The leadership is a source of inspiration for staff involved in project execution					
	Organizational strategies and changes are communicated effectively					

SECTION D: Intellectual Stimulation

This section seeks your views on how your organization's leaders intellectually stimulate colleagues and how these practices reflect on the organization's outcomes.

Provide only one response for every statement on a scale of 1-5. Where: 1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Neutral, 4 = Agree, and 5 = Strongly Agree.

No.	Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
	The leadership stimulates innovation and creativity amongst the employees					
	The leader guides and supports employees towards finding solutions to problems					
	Employees are challenged to be taking risks while exploring greater opportunities					
	The county decisions are re-examined and appropriate adjustments made in good time					
	Leaders empower employees to explore opportunities for personal and institutional growth					

SECTION E: Individualized Consideration

This section seeks your views on how your organization's leaders practice individualized consideration and how these practices reflect on the performance of the county government. Provide only one response for every statement on a scale of 1-5. Where: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, and 5 = Strongly Agree.

No	Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
	The leader provides personalized coaching to the employees when it is needful					
	Employees are mentored to continuously improve the county performance					
	The leader provides the required material and other support to employees at all levels					
	The organization nurtures healthy relationships between staff of all cadres					
	Employee efforts are recognized and rewarded					

SECTION F: Strategic Orientation

This section seeks your views on your organization's strategic orientation and how this reflects on the performance of the county government. Provide only one response for every statement on a scale of 1-5. Where: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, and 5 = Strongly Agree.

No.	Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
	There exists a county strategic blueprint which guides the implementation of projects or programmes					
	Medium-term plans are available for scrutiny and use in strategy implementation					
	There is a clear vision statement for the county government					
	The vision is properly aligned with county priorities					
	The county's mission statement is articulated clearly and consistently					
	Core mandate of the county defines the purpose of the county government in its unique context					
	Resources are considered in strategy development for proper implementation of programmes /projects					
	The county strategy, programmes and projects are often evaluated for informed decision and action					

SECTION G: Performance of County Governments

This section seeks your views on the performance of the county government. Provide only one response for every statement on a scale of 1-5. Where: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, and 5 = Strongly Agree.

No.	Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Financial Performance						
	The county raises the required amount of own-revenues locally					
	The county allocates at least 30% of the annual budget for development expenditure					
	Development budget is fully utilized					
	Recurrent budget allocation falls within the range prescribed by the Kenyan law					
	Recurrent budget is fully absorbed every year					
	The county carries forward pending bills every financial year					
Non-financial performance						
	Development projects are completed promptly					
	There are stalled projects which need to be executed					
	The devolved government creates job opportunities every year					
	Services are delivered efficiently and effectively					
	Citizens are satisfied with the performance of the county					

Appendix III: Key Informant Interview Guide

Section A: Transformational Leadership

1. How would you describe the leadership approach adopted by the county executive or departmental heads in driving county development initiatives and reforms?

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2. In what ways do county leaders inspire, motivate, and influence employees toward achieving the county's strategic vision and service delivery goals?

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3. How do leaders within the county government promote innovation, creativity, and professional growth among employees?

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4. How do leaders within the county government challenge employees to think critically, question existing practices, and develop innovative solutions to emerging county challenges?

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5. In what ways do county leaders recognize, mentor, and support individual employees' professional growth and unique contributions within their departments

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Section B: Strategic Orientation

1. How does the County Government of Makueni align its strategies, policies, and resource allocation with long-term developmental goals?

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2. What mechanisms are in place to ensure adaptability and responsiveness to emerging opportunities or challenges in the external environment?

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3. In your view, how effectively does the county government foster stakeholder engagement, partnerships, and strategic positioning to enhance service delivery?

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Section C: County Performance

1. How would you assess the overall performance of the County Government of Makueni in terms of service delivery, resource utilization, and citizen satisfaction?

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2. What key performance indicators or outcomes best reflect the county's progress toward its strategic objectives?

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3. What major challenges or enablers influence the county's ability to achieve its desired performance outcomes?

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Section D: Wrap-up

1. What recommendations would you propose to enhance leadership effectiveness, strategic orientation, and overall performance in county governments in Kenya?

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2. Is there any additional information or perspective you would like to share on the topics discussed?

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Thank you for your time and valuable insights.

Your contribution is instrumental in advancing understanding of leadership, strategy, and performance in devolved governance system in Kenya.

Appendix IV: Hayes Macro Process 4 Mediation Results

***** PROCESS Procedure for SPSS Version 4.2 *****

Written by Andrew F. Hayes, Ph.D. www.afhayes.com

Documentation available in Hayes (2022). www.guilford.com/p/hayes3

Model: 4

Y: County Performance

X: Transformational Leadership

M: Strategic Orientation

Sample Size: 74

OUTCOME VARIABLE: Strategic Orientation

Model 1 Summary

R	R-sq	MSE	F	df1	df2	p
.7142	.5101	.3670	74.9660	1.0000	72.0000	.0000

Model 1	coeff	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
constant	.8139	.3775	2.1557	.0345	.0612	1.5665
TrnsLead	.8639	.0998	8.6583	.0000	.6650	1.0628

OUTCOME VARIABLE: County Performance

Model 1 Summary

R	R-sq	MSE	F	df1	df2	p
.7182	.5158	.2117	37.8147	2.0000	71.0000	.0000

Model 1	coeff	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
constant	1.0502	.2958	3.5497	.0007	.4603	1.6401
TrnsLead	.5943	.1083	5.4899	.0000	.3785	.8102
StrOrien	.0716	.0895	.7999	.4264	-.1069	.2501

***** TOTAL EFFECT MODEL *****

OUTCOME VARIABLE: County Performance

Model 1 Summary

R	R-sq	MSE	F	df1	df2	p
.7151	.5114	.2106	75.3664	1.0000	72.0000	.0000

Model 1	coeff	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
constant	1.1084	.2860	3.8754	.0002	.5383	1.6786
TrnsLead	.6562	.0756	8.6814	.0000	.5055	.8069

***** TOTAL, DIRECT, AND INDIRECT EFFECTS OF X ON Y

Total effect of X on Y

Effect	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
.6562	.0756	8.6814	.0000	.5055	.8069

Direct effect of X on Y

Effect	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
.5943	.1083	5.4899	.0000	.3785	.8102

Indirect effect(s) of X on Y:

Effect	BootSE	BootLLCI	BootULCI
StrOrien	.0619	.1221	-.2139 .2644

***** ANALYSIS NOTES AND ERRORS *****

Level of confidence for all confidence intervals in output: 95.0000

Number of bootstrap samples for percentile bootstrap confidence intervals: 5000

----- END MATRIX -----

Appendix V: Research Authorization Letter from PAC University



**Pan Africa
Christian University**

Thika Road Campus Valley Road Campus
P.O. BOX 56875 - 00200 +254 730955000 +254 730955501/2
enquiries@pacuniversity.ac.ke www.pacuniversity.ac.ke

Office of the Registrar Academic Affairs

30th September 2025

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Dear Sir/Madam,

RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION AND ETHICS CLEARANCE LETTER
FOR WACHIRA ALEX KAMAU REG. NO: MALD/9622/0/17

Greetings! This is an introduction letter for the above named person a final year student at Pan Africa Christian University (PAC University), pursuing a Master of Arts in Leadership.

He is at the final stage of the programme and thus preparing to collect data to enable him finalize on the thesis. The thesis title is ***“Transformational Leadership, Strategic Orientation and Performance of County Governments in Kenya: A Case of Makueni County”***

We kindly request that you allow him obtain a research permit so as to proceed and collect data from the County government of Makueni, Kenya.

Warm Regards,



Dr. Lilian Vikiru
Registrar Academic Affairs
Pan Africa Christian University
Lumumba Drive, Roysambu, off Kamiti Rd, off Thika Rd
P.O Box 56875-00200, Nairobi, Kenya
Email: registrar.aa@pacuniversity.ac.ke
Website: www.pacuniversity.ac.ke

PAN AFRICA CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY
REGISTRAR
P.O. Box 56875 - 00200.
TEL: 0721 932050; 0734 400694
NAIROBI, KENYA

Where Leaders are Made

Appendix VI: Research Authorization from County Government of Makueni

IREPUBLIC OF KENYA **GOVERNMENT OF MAKUENI COUNTY**




OFFICE OF THE COUNTY SECRETARY
 P.O. Box 78-90300 - MAKUENI Tel No.: 020-2034944
 Email: county.secretary@makueni.go.ke, info@makueni.go.ke
 web: www.makueni.go.ke

Ref: GMC/CS/ADM/12/VOLV.X(105) Date: 3rd December, 2025

Alex K. Wachira
 Pan Africa Christian University
 P.O. Box 56875-00200
 NAIROBI

RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION

We acknowledge receipt of research licence No. NACOSTI/P/25/4180569 dated 9th October, 2025 from Ag. Director General National Commission for Science Technology and Innovation licensing you to carry out a research on Transformational leadership, strategic orientation and performance of County Governments in Kenya: A case of Makueni County, for period ending: 09th October, 2026.

This is to inform you that you have been authorized to carry out the research in Makueni County Government as per your request. You will liaise with County Executive Committee Member; Devolution, Public Participation, County Administration and Special Programmes on the process.


 Dr. Justin M. Kyambi
 County Secretary

COUNTY SECRETARY
 MAKUENI COUNTY
 03 DEC 2025
 P. O. Box 78-90300.
 MAKUENI-KENYA

HEAD OF COUNTY PUBLIC SERVICE & SECRETARY TO COUNTY EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Copy to:

1. CECM; Devolution, Public Participation, County Administration and Special Programmes
2. Chief Officer; Devolution, Public Participation, County Administration and Special Programmes

Appendix VII: Research Authorization from County Government of Homa Bay

	COUNTY GOVERNMENT OF HOMA BAY OFFICE OF THE COUNTY SECRETARY HOMA BAY COUNTY HEADQUARTERS P.O BOX 469-40300 HOMA BAY-KENYA county.secretary@homabay.go.ke Website: www.homabay.go.ke	
REPUBLIC OF KENYA		HOMA BAY COUNTY

OUR REF: HB/CTY/CS/ADM/GENC/VOL.VII (243) DATE: 13th October, 2025

To:

Mr. Alex Kamau Wachira,
P.O BOX 56875-00200
NAIROBI

RE: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN HOMA BAY COUNTY

Reference is hereby made to your letter dated 30th September, 2025 in which you requested to conduct pilot study in Homa Bay County with county government of Makueni as a case.

This is to inform you that your request has been approved to conduct research on the "Transformational Leadership, Strategic Orientation and Performance of County Governments in Kenya - a case of Makueni County."

You are expected to comply with your research License conditions as per NACOSTI.



PROF. BENARD MUI, PhD
COUNTY SECRETARY/HEAD OF PUBLIC SERVICE



BM/vc

Appendix VIII: Research permit from NACOSTI

 REPUBLIC OF KENYA	 NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION
Ref No: 697106	Date of Issue: 09/October/2025
RESEARCH LICENSE	
	
This is to Certify that Mr.. Alex Kamau Wachira of Pan Africa Christian University, has been licensed to conduct research as per the provision of the Science, Technology and Innovation Act, 2013 (Rev.2014) in Homabay, Makueni on the topic: TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP, STRATEGIC ORIENTATION AND PERFORMANCE OF COUNTY GOVERNMENTS IN KENYA: A CASE OF MAKUENI COUNTY for the period ending : 09/October/2026.	
License No: NACOSTI/P/25/4180569	
697106 Applicant Identification Number	Ag. Director General NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION
Verification QR Code 	
NOTE: This is a computer generated License. To verify the authenticity of this document, Scan the QR Code using QR scanner application.	
See overleaf for conditions	