

**ORIGINAL RESEARCH ARTICLE****The influence of transformational and transactional leadership styles on the implementation of strategic plans by devolved governments in Kenya***Godfrey K. Gichuki<sup>1</sup>, Kabare Karanja<sup>2</sup>, Rukia Atikiya<sup>3</sup>**<sup>1</sup>Department of Entrepreneurship, Technology, Leadership and Management, Jomo Kenya University of Agriculture and Technology, Nairobi, Kenya**<sup>2</sup>Kenya School of Government, Nairobi, Kenya**Corresponding author email: [kibuchiqq@gmail.com](mailto:kibuchiqq@gmail.com)***ABSTRACT**

Strategy implementation is only successful when backed by an effective leadership defined by how well leadership functions are carried out and how managers typically behave towards members of an organization. The purpose of the study was to investigate the influence of leadership styles on the implementation of strategic plans by devolved governments in Kenya. The study is anchored on Higgins's model of strategy implementation, and transformational and transactional theories of leadership. The study employed a cross-sectional descriptive survey research design. The target population was the 47 devolved governments in Kenya represented by the five devolved units in the Nairobi Metropolitan area comprising of Nairobi Kiambu, Murang'a, Machakos and Kajiado. A stratified random sampling technique was applied to Yamane' formula to select 217 respondents from 474 senior county officers the five counties. Data was collected using a semi-structured, self-administered questionnaire. A pilot test was carried out to assess the reliability and validity of the data collection instrument. Descriptive data analysis and inferential statistics were produced using SPSS and presented in figures and tables. Qualitative data collected using the open-ended questions was transformed into quantitative data by use of content analysis. The study findings revealed that the transformational leadership style had a positive and significant influence on strategy implementation while the transactional leadership style had a negative and insignificant influence on strategy implementation by the devolved governments in Kenya. The study found other factors such as lack of prioritization of projects, lack of public participation and feedback and political interference were important. The study therefore provides empirical evidence in evaluating transformational and transactional leadership styles, adds valuable insights on how to improve strategic management practice, and presents recommendation for leadership policy development by devolved government and options for future research studies.

**Keywords:** leadership styles, strategy implementation, devolution, transformational leadership, transactional leadership, strategy implementation, devolved government

## 1.0 Introduction

The responsibility for the implementation of strategic plans is an important function of the organization's leadership (Hendriks & Reddy, 2017). According to Mapetere, Denver, Mavhiki, Nyamwanza, Sikomwe, Mhonde (2012) strategy implementation is backed up by effective leadership. Fiedler (1996), a respected researcher on leadership, provided a treatise on the importance of leadership by arguing that the effectiveness of a leader is a major determinant of the success or failure of a group, organization, or even an entire country (Puni, Ofei & Okoe, 2014). Effectiveness in leadership is closely linked to a leader's behavioral style. The most effective leadership styles require investigation.

Since the publication of the seminal work by Michael Porter on the competitive advantage of nations, many governments worldwide have embraced the idea of strategic management as a means to create competitive advantage (Cho & Moon, 2000). Porter argued that national or regional prosperity was created and not inherited, and that in an increasingly competitive world, a nation's competitiveness depended on its industry's capacity to innovate and upgrade its internal values, culture, economic structures, and institutions (M. E. Porter, 2011). The growing pressure on governments around the world to become efficient in service delivery to their stakeholder inspired the Kenya Vision 2030 (Government of Kenya (GoK), 2007) as a national development blueprint covering the period 2008 to 2030. The core objective of Kenya Vision 20230 was to transform Kenya into a newly industrializing, middle-income country providing a high-quality life to all its citizens by the year 2030.

Devolved governments in Kenya are charged with the mandate of implementing development programs at the local level. To achieve this, devolved governments develop five year County Integrated Development Plans (CIDPs) prepared in line with the Kenya Vision 20230 (GoK, 2007), the Medium Term Plans (MTPs), United Nations Seventeen Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Constitution of Kenya 2010 (GoK, 2010) and Public Finance Management Acts, 2012 (PFMA) (GoK, 2012). A review of the second round of CIDPs covering 2018 to 2022 reveal the numerous implementation challenges among the them delays in completion of projects and programs, lack of coordination between devolved units and national government and other development actors. Devolved units has reported delays in disbursement of financial resources, conflicts between national government, state agencies in respect to shared functional responsibility, slow adoption of the Integrated Financial Management Information System (IFMIS) and inadequate monitoring and evaluation of development projects and programs.

### 1.1 Strategic planning and implementation

Strategy implementation is the next logical step that follows strategy formulation in the strategy management process. The four main steps in the strategic management process involve environmental scanning, strategy formulation, strategy implementation, and evaluation. Strategy implementation, defined as the totality of activities and choices made by an organization in executing a strategic plan (Wheelen & Hunger, 2012) includes the processes by which objectives, strategies, and policies drawn during the strategy formulation stage are put into action, that include projects, budgets, and policies and procedures.

Well-understood, strategic management is the set of decisions and actions that result in the formulation and implementation of plans designed to achieve a company's objectives (Pearce, Robinson & Mital, 2012). Strategy implementation is regarded by scholars and practitioners as the most difficult, challenging, and time-consuming activity (Barnat, 2012; Mwangi, 2016; Sial, Usman, Zufiqar, Satti & Khursheed, 2013). Researchers have carried out far more research on strategy formulation than on strategy implementation despite the obvious importance of the implementation process (Chiuri, 2015; Okumus & Roper, 1998; Schaap, 2012).

Crittenden and Crittenden (2008) opined that the successful implementation of a well-formulated and appropriate strategy helps organizations produce excellent performance (Schaap, 2012). Practical experiences and management scholarship demonstrate that strategy implementation has a significant influence on organizational performance (Hrebiniak & Joyce, 1984; Li, Guohui & Eppler, 2008). While strategy implementation plays an important role in determining organizational success, there remain few studies that examine the dynamics of strategy implementation by public service organizations (Bryson, Berry & Young, 2010; Elbanna, Andrews & Pollanen, 2016; Poister, Pitts & Edwards, 2010)

Around the world, the largest business corporations in the world as well as start-ups apply many of the concepts and techniques in strategic management (Wheelen, Hunger, Hoffman & Bamford, 2017). However, research evidence on strategy implementation reveals that organizations fail to implement up to 70% of their strategy implementation initiatives (Franken, Edward & Lambert, 2009; Hammer & Champny, 1993; Higgs & Rowland, 2000; Higgs & Rowland, 2005; Kotter, 1990; Miller, 2002; Siddique & Shadbolt, 2016). Additionally, about 40-60 percent of the potential value of a strategic plan remains unrealized due to system inefficiencies during implementation (Franken et al., 2009; Mankins & Steele, 2005). Strategic plans in some cases, deliver only 63% of their promised financial value (Mankins and Steele, 2005) with 66% of corporate strategy being never executed (Johnson, 2004). Unfortunately, many business leaders and managers know more about developing strategy than they do about its implementation (Epstein & Manzoni, 1998; Hrebiniak, 2006, 2008, 2013). Further, the developers of the balanced scorecard (Kaplan & Norton, 2005) argued that 95% of a company's employees are unfamiliar with their company's strategy.

Failure in strategy implementation can be very costly to an organization (Kalali, Anvari, Pourezzat, and Dastjerdi, 2011) and thus identification of the effective factors for success is highly important. Strategy implementation is only successful when effective leadership backs it. Accordingly, effective leadership is the hallmark of strategy implementation that turns plans into action assignments and ensures that such assignments are executed in a manner that achieves the organization's stated objectives (Mapetere, Mavhiki, Nyamwanza, Sikomwe & Mhonde, 2012). Effectiveness in leadership is premised on a leader's behavioral style. Igbaekemen and Odivwri (2015) defined leadership style as how leadership functions as well as how managers typically behave towards members of the group. A study by Koech and

Namusonge (2012) found that there was a positive correlation between transformational and transactional leadership styles on the performance of state-owned corporations in Kenya.

## 1.2 Devolved governments

Devolution is a system of government designed as a strategy to enhance efficiency in the delivery of social services. It allows the matching of the desires and needs of local people with the governance of public institutions (Keraro & Isoe, 2015). Many countries around the world have successfully implemented devolution such as Britain, Germany, the United States of America, Canada, and Australia. Regionally, South Africa, Nigeria, and Ethiopia have implemented devolution (Rodríguez-Pose & Gill, 2004).

Devolution is an extensive form of decentralization that involves the transfer of authority, decision-making, and resources to sub-national tiers of government that elect their leaders and raise revenue. Although legislative frameworks differ from country to country, some of the devolved government units have independent authority that extends to making investment decisions (Ong'olo & Awino, 2013). Kenya adopted a devolved system of government through a constitutional referendum that transformed the government structure from centralized to decentralized, and from "top-down" to "bottom-up" in decision-making in 2010 (Otieno & Theuri, 2016). This changed the relationship between government and citizens with emphasis being on public participation.

The change was Kenya's strategy to accelerate growth and address long-standing inequalities in economic opportunities, investment, and service delivery in different parts of the country. This change created a system of government consisting of a central government and forty-seven (47) devolved units named County Governments of Kenya (GoK, 2010). The devolved system of government in Kenya became operational after the 2013 general elections and county governments were given charge of education, health, water, sanitation, local roads maintenance, fire, housing, agriculture, and social welfare functions (The Constitution of Kenya, 2010 - Fourth Schedule; Kagumu Odhiambo & Waiganjo, 2017). The County Government Act 2012 became the legislative framework that empowered the devolved units to collect revenue in their areas of jurisdiction such as taxes on property and entertainment (Kimenyi, 2013; Otieno & Theuri, 2016).

The Constitution of Kenya 2010 created a system of funding county governments that required the central government to allocate a minimum of 15% of the revenue to the devolved units as provided in Article 203 section 2 (GoK, 2010). The distribution of the 15% revenue to the devolved units is based on a horizontal formula that was developed by the Commission of Revenue Allocation (CRA) whose weightings are population 45%, poverty index 20%, land area 8%, basic equal share 25% and fiscal responsibility 2% (Kimenyi, 2013; Otieno & Theuri, 2016). During the first six years of devolution, the national treasury had disbursed over 1.7 Trillion shillings to the devolved governments (GoK, 2019).



Every five years the devolved government units are required to formulate County Integrated Development Plans (CIDP) in line with the Kenya Vision 2030 and the central government's Medium Term Plans (MTP). According to the Ministry of Devolution and Planning policy of 2016 (GoK, 2016), integrated development planning process seeks to match the planning efforts at devolved units with those at the national government and other relevant public institutions. The aim is to ensure that economic, social, environmental, legal, and spatial aspects of development come together to produce a plan that meets the needs and targets set for the benefit of local communities.

If well-implemented devolution by design aims at the development agenda envisaged in the Kenya Vision 2030 and supports Kenya's effort to reach the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) number one which seeks to alleviate poverty everywhere on the planet earth by the year 2030. Aside from the enhancement of poverty reduction, devolution aims at service delivery, economic growth, and improved governance at the local level (World Bank, 2016). The implementation of devolved services is to ensure that social, economic, and environmental development benefits local communities as envisioned in the Kenya Vision 2030 agenda (GoK, 2007).

A review of the first round of County Integrated Development Plans covering 2013 to 2017 reveal county government did not achieve their stated strategy objectives. For example, County Government of Machakos achieved 46.4% of budgeted local revenue targets for the period 2013-2017 (County Government of Machakos, 2018). The Annual County Budget Implementation Review Reports (CBIRR) of financial year 2018/2019 showed that devolved governments failed to fully utilize their annual development budgets and largely missed on their annual revenue collection targets (GoK, 2019). A review of previous annual reports reviewed that the budget absorption rate across all the counties reached 48.1% of the 2017/2018 financial year development budget, 57.8% in 2018/2019, 55.6% in 2019/2020 and 62.1% in 2020/2021. County governments failed to achieve their annual own revenue collection targets with the average collection rate being 66% in the 2017/2018 financial year, 74.8% in 2018/2019, 65% in 2019/2020 and 64.2% in 2020/2021. The notable failure in absorbing more than one third of development funds and achieving own revenue collection targets demonstrates the gap between planning and implementation of development plans by devolved governments.

### **1.3 Leadership Styles and Strategy Implementation**

According to Mapetere et al. (2012) effective leadership is the hallmark of strategy implementation that turns plans into action assignments and ensures that such assignments are executed in a manner that achieves the organizations stated objectives. The authors argue that strategy implementation was only successful when effective leadership backed it. Fiedler (1996), a respected researcher on leadership, provided a treatise on the importance of leadership by arguing that the effectiveness of a leader is a major determinant of the success or failure of a group, organization, or even an entire country (Puni et al., 2014). A frequently cited example of the impact of leadership on performance is the detailed study of leadership in

the somewhat surprising context of Icelandic fishing ships. Thorlindsson, (1987) found that variations in the performance of different fishing ships, under identical conditions, could be accounted for by the leadership skills of captains (Koech & Namusonge, 2012). The three-year period study revealed that the leadership qualities of the ship captains accounted for 35 to 49 per cent of variation in the catch of different crews.

Effectiveness in leadership is therefore premised on a leader's behavioral style. Igbaekemen and Odivwri (2015) defined leadership style as the way in which the functions of leadership are carried out as well as the way in which managers typically behave towards members of the group. The leadership competencies required for successful strategy implementation including; integrity/honesty, communication, technical competence, diversity consciousness, developing others, results orientation, change management, interpersonal skills, problem-solving, decision making, political savvy, strategic/visionary thinking, customer focus, business skills, team leadership, influence skills, conflict management, emotional intelligence, social and environmental responsibility (Mapetere et al., 2012).

Studies in leadership show that traits, style, and contingency theories dominate the leadership literature (House & Aditya, 1997; Puni et al., 2014). Leadership style theory appear to be most dominant of the three and this movement finds its roots in the 1945 studies at the Ohio State University which provided us with the basic dimensions of leadership behavior in formal organizations. These early contributors among them Kahn, Likert, Katz, Maccoby expanded the works of their predecessors by analyzing the relationship between supervisory behavior, employee productivity and satisfaction in 1947 at the University of Michigan (published in 1951 by Michigan University). Ogbonna and Harris (2000) posit that early studies on leadership (frequently categorized as 'trait' studies) focused on identifying the personality traits which characterized successful leaders (Argyris, 1955; Mahoney, Jardee & Allan, 1960; Puni et al., 2014). However, style and behavioral theorists shifted the debate away from the characteristics of the leader to the behavior and style the leaders adopted (Hemphill & Coons, 1957; Likert, 1961; Mwanje, 2016).

Mullins (1999) pointed that the major weakness of style and behavioral theories was that they ignore the important role which situational factors played in determining the effectiveness of individual leaders (Ogbonna & Harris, 2000). It is this limitation that gave rise to the 'situational' and 'contingency' theories of leadership of the 1960s to 1970s promoted by Fiedler (1967), House, Filley and Kerr (1971), and Vroom and Yetton (1974) which shift the emphasis away from 'the one best way to lead' to context-sensitive leadership, that is the situational and contingency perspectives.

Situational and contingency perspectives posit that leadership effectiveness is dependent on the leader's diagnosis and understanding of situational factors, followed by the adoption of the appropriate style to deal with each circumstance. However, in an apparent return to the 'one best way' of leadership theories of the 1940s to 1960s, recent studies emphasize leadership

styles contrasting transactional leadership with transformational leadership (Bass & Avolio, 1993; Bycio, Hackett & Allen, 1995; Howell & Avolio, 1993; Ogbonna & Harris, 2000).

According to Wang Chich-Jen and Mei-Ling (2010), modern leadership style theories posit five leadership styles; charismatic leadership, transactional leadership, transformational leadership, visionary leadership, and culture-based leadership (B. M. Bass, 1985, 1990; Bernard M Bass, 1995; Bernard M Bass & Riggio, 2006; Sashkin, 1996; Sergiovanni, 1987; Sila & Gichinga, 2016; Yukl, 1994). However, the most researched styles are transformational leadership, transactional leadership and laissez-faire or non-leadership (Avolio, 1999; Bass, 1998, 2007; Chan, 2005; Judge & Piccolo, 2004; Muchiri, 2017; Murphy & Drodge, 2004).

Murphy and Drodge (2004) argue that transformational leaders go beyond transactional leadership and are characterized as visionary, articulate, assured, and able to engender confidence in others in order to motivate them to surpass their usual performance goals. To them transformational leadership is defined as the leader's ability to motivate followers to rise above their own personal goals for the greater good of the organization. Further, there are four types of transformational leadership behavior, namely idealized influence (charisma), inspirational motivation, individualized consideration, and intellectual stimulation (Muchiri, 2017).

Further, transactional leaders, as initially theorized by Bass (1985) appeal to the subordinates' self-interests (Chan, 2005). He further argued that transactional leaders attempt to meet the current needs of their subordinates through bargaining and exchanging. Consequently, transactional leaders expect their followers to attain agreed-upon goals without encouraging them to take on greater responsibilities for self-development or leading others. The two main components of transactional leadership are contingent reward and management-by-exception where contingent reward is seen when the leader provides rewards if the subordinate performs in accordance with the performance expectations or expends the necessary effort (Muchiri, 2017).

#### **1.4 Higgins eight 'S's model of strategy implementation**

Higgins Eight 'S's Model is a heuristic framework that integrates all the important factors for successfully executing strategy that was introduced by James Higgins in an article published in 2005. The model is based on the McKinsey Seven 'S's model first introduced in 1982 by Peters and Waterman (Peters & Waterman, 1982). The model emphasizes a cross-functional way of thinking about strategy execution or implementation across an organization. It identifies strategy and purpose, organizational structure, leadership or management style, staffing (number and types of employees), organizational resources (people, technology and finances) shared values (culture). The models postulates that strategic performance is a derivative of the other seven 'S's as it is possessed by the organization as a whole. Performance can be measured at any level and usually financial performance is the critical indicators of strategic performance. Higgins noted that the key to effective implementation is to align all the factors with strategy in order to achieve desired objectives. By applying this model organizational leaders as well as

managers can foresee the changes needed to make the strategy workable (Higgins, 2005). This model serves as a road map for strategy formulation and implementation and helps uncover the causes of failure during implementation (Gichuki, Karanja, & Atikiya, 2024; Kibicho, 2015). In adapting this model this study considered that the leadership style of devolved government was bear a critical influence in strategy implementation thus informed the study's theoretical framework.

### **1.5 Transformational leadership theory**

Established in the 1980s transformational leadership is considered one of the most widely researched styles of leadership. Transformational leadership is rooted in James Macgregor Burns' seminal work captured in his book titled Leadership which described leadership styles of political leaders and explained the term 'transforming' leadership (Burns, 1978). The scholar's conceptualization of the relationship between leaders and followers was in contrast with the traditional view of leadership that is grounded in power and authority. Accordingly, the main characteristics of transforming leadership were inspiration, moral purpose and mobilization.

Avolio, Bass and Jung (1999) later translated transformational leadership to mean the leaders ability to motivate followers to rise above their own personal goals and the greater good of the organization (Bernard M Bass & Avolio, 2004; Muchiri, 2017). The scholars argued that transformational style of leadership comes from deeply held personal values that cannot be negotiated and appeals to the subordinates' sense of moral obligation and values (Muchiri, 2017). Chan (2005) on the other hand, observed that transformational leaders attempt to stimulate the undeveloped or dormant needs of their subordinates. Bass, in his extensive scholarly work on leadership, expounded that transformational leadership is to see the leader moving the follower beyond immediate self-interests through idealized influence (charisma), inspiration, intellectual stimulation, or individualized consideration (Bernard M. Bass, 1999; McCleskey, 2014).

Idealized influence is the degree to which the leader behaves in admirable ways that cause followers to identify with the leader (Judge & Piccolo, 2004). Idealized influence (also referred to as charisma) represents role-modeling behavior where the leader instills pride, faith, and respect, has a talent for seeing what is important, and transmits a sense of mission. In essence, the idealized influence factor describes people who are special and make others want to follow the vision they put forward. According to Northouse (2013), idealized leaders usually have a very high moral standard of ethical conduct and can be counted on to do the right thing. Transformational leaders are known to provide followers with a vision and sense of mission (Muchiri, 2017).

Inspirational motivation is the degree to which the leader articulates a vision that is appealing and inspiring to followers (Judge and Piccolo, 2004). This leadership behavior represents the use of images and symbols that enable the leader to raise the expectations and beliefs of their follower concerning the mission and vision. Here, leaders inspire through motivation so that



the workers become motivated and committed to the organization. Team spirit is enhanced as well as leaders communicating high expectations to followers.

On the other hand, individualized consideration is the degree to which the leader pays attention to each follower's needs, acts as a mentor or coach to the follower, and listens to the follower's concerns and needs. Individualized consideration stimulates experiential learning and occurs when the leader delegates a project, provides coaching and teaching, and treats each follower as an individual (Muchiri, 2017). Individualized consideration is considered the major characteristic of transformational leadership since it treats each follower as an individual rather than an employee and draws from the individual's talents and knowledge to decide what suits him or her to reach full potential.

Intellectual stimulation is the degree to which the leader challenges assumptions, takes risks, and solicits followers' ideas. As Northouse (2013) notes, this type of leadership provides support to followers as they try new approaches and develop innovative ideas for dealing with organizational challenges. This leadership believes in challenging not only the leader's own beliefs and values but also those of the organization they lead (Muchiri, 2017). Overall, as Burns (2008) argues transformational leaders have a higher motivating effect on employees and are preferable to transactional leaders because they help motivate employees to excel even in situations that lack any chance of receiving commendation (Muchiri, 2017). It is for this reason that transformational leadership theory is an anchoring postulation of this study.

### **1.6 Transactional Leadership Theory**

Similar to transformational leader, transactional leadership emerged from the work of James MacGregory Burns in 1978 and was further elucidated by Bass and Avolio in 2004. As its name implies, transactional leadership involves a "transaction" or quid pro quo between a supervisor and a subordinate. The transaction is either for a reward or for discipline and depends on the employee's performance. According to Bass (1985), transactional leaders appeal to the subordinates' self-interests and attempt to meet the current needs of their subordinates through bargaining and exchanging (Chan, 2005, Muchiri, 2017). Transactional leadership theory assumes that motivation is dependent on punishment or reward and thus employees have to follow and conform to instructions given by their bosses. It also assumes self-motivation by employees is absent and as a result, employees need to be observed, managed, and monitored (Oberfield, 2012; Reddy, 2017). In the context of the public sector, this type of leadership may explain the poor performance associated with public servants.

The leader-follower exchanges of transactional leadership include three main features; contingent reward, management by exception-active, and management by exception-passive. According to Judge and Piccolo (2004), contingent reward is the degree to which the leader sets up constructive transactions or exchanges with followers, clarifies expectations, and establishes the rewards for meeting these expectations. On the other hand, management by exception is the degree to which the leader takes corrective action based on the results of leader-follower transactions. However, the difference between management by exception—active and

management by exception—passive lies in the timing of the leader’s intervention. Judge and Piccolo (2004) expound that active leaders monitor follower behavior, anticipate problems, and take corrective actions before the behavior creates serious performance difficulties while passive leaders wait until the behavior has created problems before taking action. Transactional leadership may largely explain the cause of poor service delivery associated with the public sector. This study therefore seeks to explore the role of the transactional leadership style in the implementation of strategic plans.

### **1.7 Statement of the Problem**

Empirical evidence reveal that effective leadership is the hallmark of strategy implementation that turns plans into action assignments and ensures that such assignments are executed in a manner that achieves the organization's stated objectives (Hendriks & Reddy, 2017; Koech & Namusonge, 2012; Mapetere et al., 2012; Mwangi, 2016; Obiwuru, Okwu, Akpa & Nwankwere, 2011; Puni et al., 2014). A leader’s effectiveness is premised on their behavioral style. Studies have shown that the leadership styles adopted by senior managers significantly influence the success of strategy implementation (Hendriks & Reddy, 2017; Mapetere et al., 2012; Mwangi, 2016; Odero, 2023; Reddy, 2017).

Studies on the link between leadership styles and organizational performance significantly differ in their analysis, methodological approach and findings. For examples, Mwangi’s (2016) study that found transformational leadership style had a positive and significant influence on strategy implementation among manufacturing SMEs in Kenya while Hendriks and Reddy (2017) study of department of trade and industry in South Africa found transactional leadership style to have a positive and significant influence on strategy implementation. Koech and Namusonge (2012) study of state corporations in Mombasa and Gachingiri (2015) study at UNEP only examined the correlational effect of transformational and transactional leadership style. Muchiri’s (2017) study focused on the influence of transformational leadership style in commercial banks in Kenya but failed to identify which aspects of the employee’s engagement were affected by the transformational leadership style.

Studies of the influence of leadership styles in SME sectors produced conflicting results to those studies that examined large organizations. Obiwuru et al (2011) study showed that transactional leadership style had significant positive effect on performance of Nigerian SMEs while transformational leadership style had positive but insignificant effect on performance of the same. Mwangi (2016) study showed that transformational leadership style had a positive and significant influence on strategy implementation while transactional and passive/avoidant behavior were of insignificant influence in Kenyan manufacturing SMEs. Özer and Tinaztepe (2014) case study of an exporting SME firm in Turkey showed transformational leadership to have a stronger relationship with performance than transactional and paternalistic leadership styles. Transactional leadership style had a positive and significant influence on Greek public procurement units (Samanta & Lamprakis, 2018) and in private sugar manufacturers in Kenya (Odero, 2023). The conflicting results of the reviewed studies provide the rationale for the present study.



In addition to noted contrasts in findings, the studies also differ in context, concept, methodological approach and depth of analysis. Some studies only provided a correlation analysis (Gachingiri, 2015; Koech & Namusonge, 2012; Mapetere et al., 2012) while others are single county government case studies (Galgallo, 2015; Gichuhi, 2015; Kitumu, 2016; Psiwa, Irungu, & Muriithi, 2017) whose findings do not address the distinction between transformational and transactional leadership styles. The present study not only bridges the conceptual, contextual, and methodological gaps, it goes further to investigate the distinction between the influence of transformational and transactional leadership styles on the implementation of strategic plans by public sector organizations. It offers insights into how leadership styles influence strategy implementations in the public sector context that at the present has received very little attention by leadership scholarship. This study will broaden strategic management scholarship and deepen our understanding the link between leadership styles and the implementation of strategic plans.

Failure to understand the critical role of leadership styles on strategy implementation by devolved government leadership has resulted in unsatisfactory performance by devolved government system. A study by Nyareru and Gichunge (2017) raised questions on the competencies of leadership and the link between the leadership style and county performance. Devolved system of government in Kenya aimed at addressing development inequalities and disparities between regions by transferring additional resources, discretion over resources, and policy decision-making power to the devolved units (Khaunya, Wawire & Chepng'eno, 2015; World-Bank, 2012). Despite the establishment of a Commission for Revenue Allocation (Government of Kenya (GoK), 2010) to ensure sufficient and equitable allocation of funds to devolved units, developmental disparities remain. A 2016 World Bank report revealed that the performance of the devolved units during the first five years of devolution was varied (World Bank, 2016). Research evidence on strategy implementation reveals that organizations fail to implement up to 70% of their strategy implementation initiatives (Siddique & Shadbolt, 2016). A further review of the performance of devolved governments in Kenya raises questions about the competences of leadership and the link between the leadership style and devolved government performance (Nyareru & Gichunge, 2017). For example, County government failed to account for 16 Billion Kenya Shilling according to a report by the Auditor General Report in 2019 (Ireru, Namusonge, & Nyang'au, 2022). A review of County Integrated Development Plans covering 2018-2022 found that there was a disconnect between county leadership and activities undertaken by its units, lack of prioritizing projects, political interference and resistance to change in adopting technology such as the Integrated Financial Management Information System (IFMIS) in Murang'a and Nairobi counties (County Government of Murang'a, 2018; Nairobi City County, 2018).

This study aimed at investigating the influence of transformational and transactional leadership styles on the implementation of strategic plans by devolved governments in Kenya. This study addresses the public sector organizations and separately examines transformational and transactional leadership styles. The study employed a cross sectional survey approach and

employs multiple regression analysis to establish both the direction of the relationship between leadership styles and strategy implementation and measure the size of the effects of the leadership styles in public sector setting.

### 1.8 Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework is a visual representation of the relationship between the independent variable and the dependent variable. In this study, the independent variables were transformational leadership style and transactional leadership style and their influence on the dependent variable, strategy implementation. Transformational leadership style consists of subcomponents; idealized influence (charisma), inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation and individualized consideration. Transactional leadership style subcomponents consist of contingent reward, management by exception-active and management by exception-passive. Strategy implementation is measured in terms of timely completion, efficient use of resources and level of satisfaction. Figure 1 shows this relationship.

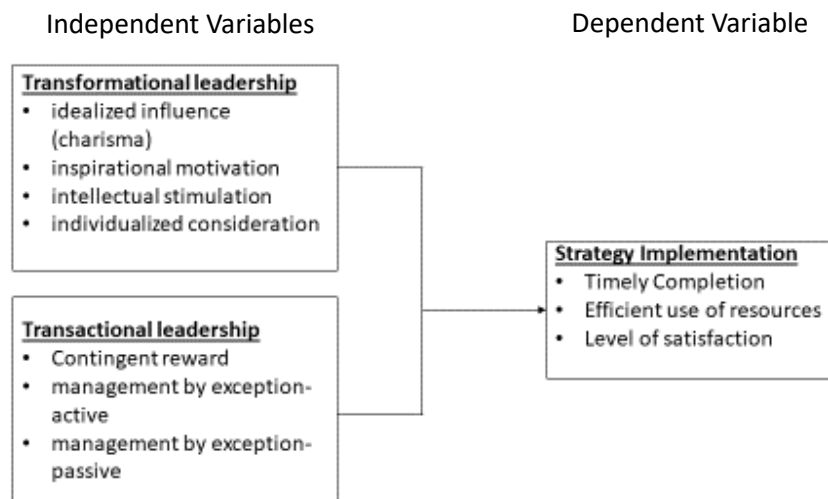


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

### 1.9 Empirical Review of Leadership Style and Strategy Implementation

Wang et al (2010) study of Kaohsiung's Nanzi Export Processing Zone in South Taiwan examined the relationships between leadership style, organizational performance, and human resource management strategy among the corporate owners, executors, and operators of firms. The study found that charismatic, transformational, and visionary leadership style was positively related to organizational performance. Obiwuru et al (2011) study of 18 small-scale enterprises in the Ikosi-Ketu Council Development Area of Lagos State, Nigeria investigated the effects of leadership style on organizational performance and employed the popular MLQ Form 5x version of measuring the effect of leadership styles. The study revealed that the transactional leadership style had a significant and positive effect on performance while the transformational leadership style had a positive but insignificant effect on performance. However, Obiwuru et al



(2011) study observed that while transactional leadership style was more appropriate in inducing performance for small enterprises, leadership transitioned into a transformational style as the enterprises grew and matured.

A study conducted on SME Export Companies in Turkey by Özer and Tinaztepe (2014) aimed at interrogating strategic leadership in terms of different leadership styles and testing their effect on performance. The results showed that relationship-oriented and transformational leadership styles were significantly related to firm performance and had a stronger effect on firm performance. The researchers however noted the limitation of their study as the study involved only one exporting firm in Turkey. The authors therefore suggested expanding the number of research participants by including other firms. Mapetere et al (2012) study involving 188 respondents randomly selected from four State Owned Enterprises in Zimbabwe set to explore the link between active leadership involvement and strategy implementation success. The research revealed a relatively low leadership involvement in strategy implementation leading to partial strategy success. The researchers concluded that leadership should be able to construct a vision for any strategic program, design effective communication strategies as well and role model behavior changes that are consistent with new strategies.

A study conducted on the Department of Trade and Industry in South Africa examined the influence of transformational, transactional and laissez-faire styles of leadership on strategy implementation (Reddy, 2017). The study found that transformational and transactional leadership styles on the part of senior managers had a positive and significant influence on strategy implementation than managers who portrayed laissez-faire leadership style. Several studies have revealed similarly mixed outcomes in Kenya. A study by Koech and Namusonge (2012) involving 30 State-owned corporations in Mombasa, whose aim was to determine the impact of laissez-faire, transactional, and transformational leadership styles on organizational performance revealed a high correlation between transformational leadership style and performance, followed by transactional style and performance. Expectedly, laissez-faire leadership style was insignificantly correlated to organizational performance.

Another study by Gachingiri (2015) involving 41 senior executives of the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP), investigated the leadership style(s) practiced at environmental body including their influence on organizational performance. The research findings revealed that the senior executives practiced transformational leadership and that the UNEP's leadership style had an influence on their organizational performance. However, the study was limited by its case study approach thus its findings may not be extrapolated to other organizations.

Mwangi's (2016) study of manufacturing SMEs in Kenya sought to establish the influences of leadership styles, organization structure, human resources, technology, and strategic direction on the performance of manufacturing SMEs in Kenya. Mwangi's (2016) study revealed that leadership styles, structural adaptations, human resources and technology embraced by the SME firm had a positive influence on strategy implementation. Muchiri's (2017) study, on the other hand, examined the crucial role of transformational leadership on the organizational

performance of commercial banks in Kenya. The study established that there was a positive link between leadership style and organizational performance. However, the author noted that future research should seek to establish the specific areas of employee engagement influenced by transformational leadership behaviors, as well as their contribution to organizational performance.

## 2.0 Methodology

This study employed a cross-sectional descriptive survey research design that allowed the researcher to collect a wide range of information from a sizeable population in a highly effective, easy, and economical way using self-administered questionnaires (Cooper & Schindler, 2011; Kagumu, 2018; Katana, 2017). The study included some open-ended questions that provided qualitative data that enabled develop a broad perspective and a rich understanding of the research problem (Sekaran, 2013). Content analysis was employed in analyzing textual data for patterns and common themes and hence the qualitative data was converted to quantitative results and presented in table format. Content analysis is appropriate where there is need to analyze textual data to determine words and word patterns and further code the data to produce categories presented in quantitative tables (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008).

The target population for this study was the 47 devolved governments in Kenya represented by the five counties that form the Nairobi Metropolitan Area. Nairobi Metropolitan Area was created by a presidential executive order of February 2017 that also created the Nairobi Metropolitan Area Transport Authority (NaMATA). The five devolved governments are Kajiado, Kiambu, Nairobi, Machakos and Murang'a. The research employed random sampling to drawn 217 respondents from 474 senior staff of the five counties.

*Table 1. Target Population in Nairobi Metropolitan Area Counties*

County Name	CEC members	Chief Officers	Directors	Sub-County Administrator	County Assembly Committees
Nairobi	10	22	42	17	21
Murang'a	10	9	11	7	21
Kiambu	10	10	41	12	23
Kajiado	10	15	25	5	20
Machakos	10	26	64	8	25
TOTAL	50	82	183	49	110

*Source: County Governments, County Assembly Forum, 2020*

To determine the sample size, the study applied Yamane (1967) formula often employed in many social science studies (Musi, Mukulu & Oloko, 2018) to determine the sample size and computed as follows;

$$n = N/[1+N(e^2)],$$

where;

n = Sample size;

N = Population size;

e = Precision level which in this case is 0.05.

Therefore, the sample size is given as;

$$474/[1+474(0.05 \times 0.05)] = 474/2.185 = 217$$

Table 2 shows the resulting sample sizes for each category of respondents

*Table 2. Sample Size*

County Official	Nairobi Pop	SS	Murang'a Pop	SS	Kiambu Pop	SS	Kajiado Pop	SS	Machakos Pop	SS	TOTAL SS
CEC members	10	5	10	5	10	5	10	5	10	5	25
Chief Officers	22	10	9	4	10	5	15	7	26	12	38
Directors	42	19	11	5	41	19	25	11	64	29	84
Sub-County Administrator	17	8	7	3	12	5	5	2	8	4	22
County Assembly Committees	21	9	21	10	23	10	20	9	25	11	48

*Source: County Governments, County Assembly Forum, 2020*

The questionnaires used included a Likert scale psychometric constructs ranging from 1-5 where each respondent was required to rate each given statement describing a variable. Each question in the constructs was set in unambiguous terms allowing respondents to respond without wasting time. A few open-ended questions were provided at the end of each set of Likert scale questions to allow respondents to provide additional information not captured in the Likert scale questions. This additional information was to enrich the study by capturing from the respondents understanding of their environment and its daily challenges.

The research instruments for this study was pilot tested on 17 respondents which is 8% of the calculated sample size of 217 and was drawn from Nairobi City County. Nairobi City County was selected because of its accessibility and was found to be representative of the other five counties in Nairobi Metropolitan Area. The subjects who participated in the pilot study were excluded from the final study to avoid survey bias and fatigue. The purpose of the pilot study was to assess the research instruments for reliability for use in the main study. Further, the research instrument was tested for reliability and for facial, content and construct validity.

Strategy implementation success measures constituted; an assessment of effectiveness and efficiency, that is, the extent to which strategy implementation decisions were timely and cost effective; an assessment of the extent strategy implementation decisions were equitable and aligned with CIDPs priorities and produced satisfaction in service delivery. A five point Likert scale was used to measure the county leader's agreement or disagreement with statements on strategy implementation (5=strongly agree, 4= agree, 3=neutral, 2= disagree, 1=strongly disagree). Leadership style constituted a measure of the dominance of leadership styles, that is, transformational (idealized influence, inspirational motivation, individual consideration, intellectual stimulation) and transactional (contingent reward, management by exception – Active, management by exception –Passive) styles of leadership. A five point Likert scale was used to measure the dominance of each style (1=Not at all, 2=Once in a while, 3=Sometimes, 4=Fairly often, 5=Frequently, if not always).

To demonstrate whether the model worked or not, the study employed the Pearson correlation coefficient and multiple regression analysis. A multiple regression analysis is used to determine if a set of variables predict a dependent variable (Maragara, Okaka, & Alkizim, 2023). The model was accepted against a probability threshold (p-value) at 0.05 (Téllez, Garcia & Corral-Verdugo, 2015). If the test generated a p-value greater than 0.05, it meant that none of the independent variables predicted the dependent variable and that the model did not work. On the other hand, a p-value of less than 0.05 implied that the independent variables predicted the dependent variable and the model worked. The study employed statistical diagnostic tests for normality, homoscedasticity, and Multicollinearity before proceeding with inferential analysis.

### 3.0 Results and Discussion

#### 3.1 Pilot and reliability Test

As noted, the pilot study was conducted to test the reliability of the research instrument. The respondents for the pilot test were drawn from Nairobi City County but were excluded in the final study. A reliability test aimed at establishing the degree to which individual items used in a construct were consistent with their measures was conducted. The Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha (Cronbach, 1951; Schrepp, 2020) that measures how well a set of items within a variable measure a single unidimensional construct (Katana, 2017) was employed. Reliability is expressed as a coefficient ( $\alpha$ ) between 0.0 and 1.0. A reliability coefficient alpha of 0.70 is deemed acceptable in basic research (Schrepp, 2020).

A sample of 17 respondents was obtained during the pilot study representing 8% of the whole sample. Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) recommend that a pilot study sample of between 1% to 10% of the actual sample size is adequate. The pilot study Cronbach's Alpha test results that strategy implementation construct had a coefficient of 0.9230 while leadership style had 0.9329 thus the variables under the study had a Cronbach' Alpha coefficient of more than 0.7 the items within each variable were deemed to provide a reliable measure. Table 3 shows the results of the reliability test for the leadership styles and strategy implementation constructs



*Table 3: Normality Tests Results for Variables*

Construct	Number of Items	Reliability Cronbach's Alpha	Comments
Leadership Styles	28	0.9329	Accepted
Strategy Implementation	7	0.9230	Accepted

### 3.2 Response Rate

The study administered 217 questionnaires using the drop-and-pick-later method between September 2021 and February 2022 in the five counties. Of the 217 questionnaires, 90 were returned representing a 41.5% return rate. According to Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2009) a 30-40% percent response rate is acceptable. Sekaran and Bougie (2013) noted that a 30% response rate is acceptable for mail-administered questionnaires. In Rogers, Miller and Judge (1999) response rate of 50% is acceptable in descriptive social studies, likewise, Hager, Wilson, Pollak and Rooney (2003) recommend a 50% response rate to be adequate for data analysis. Hence, the response rate of 41.5% in this study is sufficient for carrying out analysis and inferential conclusions. The response rate is comparable to a previous research study by Čater and Pučko (2010) which achieved a response rate of 49%.

### 3.3 Diagnostic Tests

Before carrying out the regression analysis the data was tested to confirm it satisfied the main assumptions of parametric tests; normality, homoscedasticity and Multicollinearity. An assessment of the normality is a prerequisite condition for carrying out a multiple linear regression (Oppong & Agbedra, 2016; Pallant, 2016). Shapiro-Wilk and Kolmogorov-Smirnov test of normality was applied to the study variables. Table 4 shows the Shapiro-Wilk test results which indicated that the p-values for all the study variables were less than 0.05 and therefore the study rejected the hypothesis that the variables were normally distributed and thus accepted the alternative hypothesis that the study variables are not normally distributed.

*Table 4. Normality Tests Results for all Variables.*

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov <sup>a</sup>			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Strategy Implementation	.167	91	.000	.957	91	.004
Leadership Style	.250	91	.000	.913	91	.000

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

The study therefore required to further interrogate the dependent variable Strategy Implementation (Y) by looking at the shape of the histogram and its normal Q-Q plot. The visual inspection of the shape of the histogram in figure 2 and Q-Q plot in figure 3 showed that the data collected closely approximated to a normal distribution.

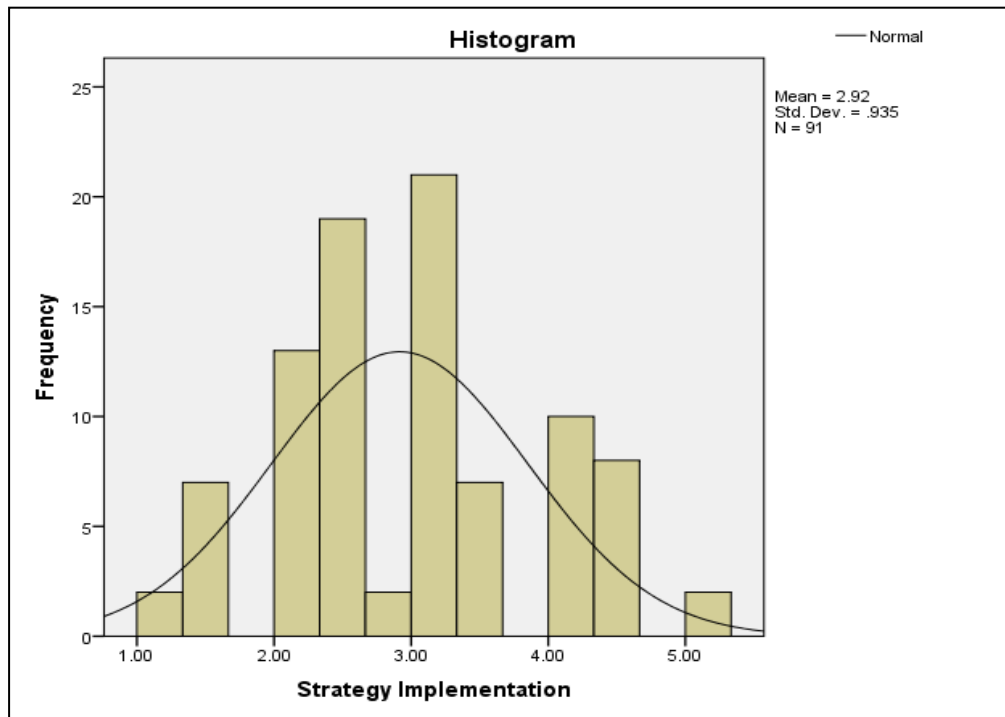


Figure 2. Histogram for Strategy Implementation

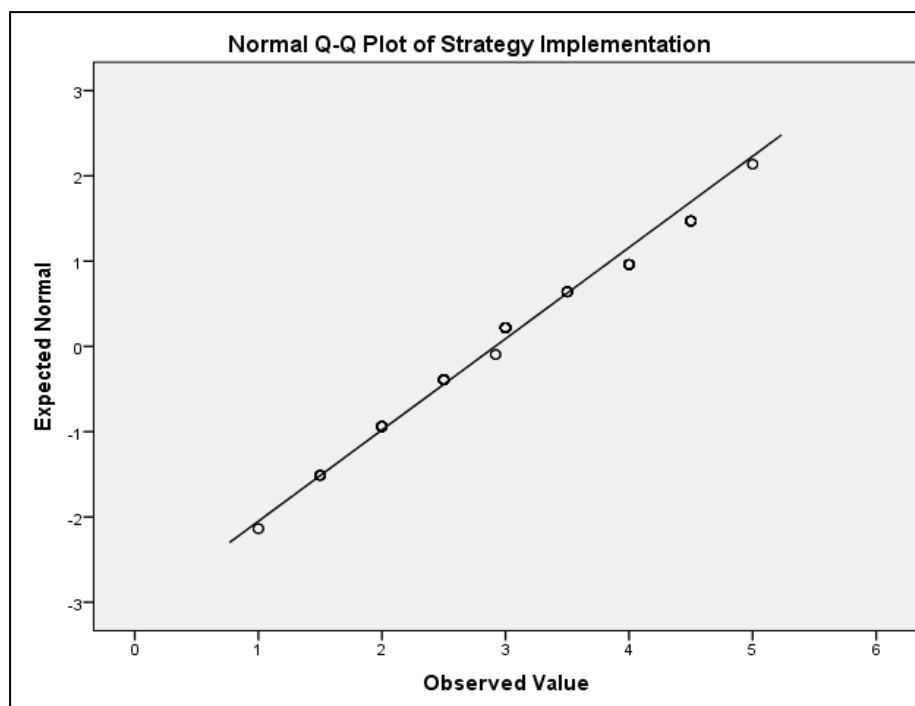


Figure 3. Q-Q Plot for Strategy Implementation

The test for homoscedasticity refers to the constancy of variance that is a requirement for any linear regression analysis. The test requires plotting a residual scatter plot for predicted scores

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against standardized residual values also referred to as errors of prediction. Figure 4 shows that the assumption of homoscedasticity is met as the scores are randomly scattered about a horizontal line.

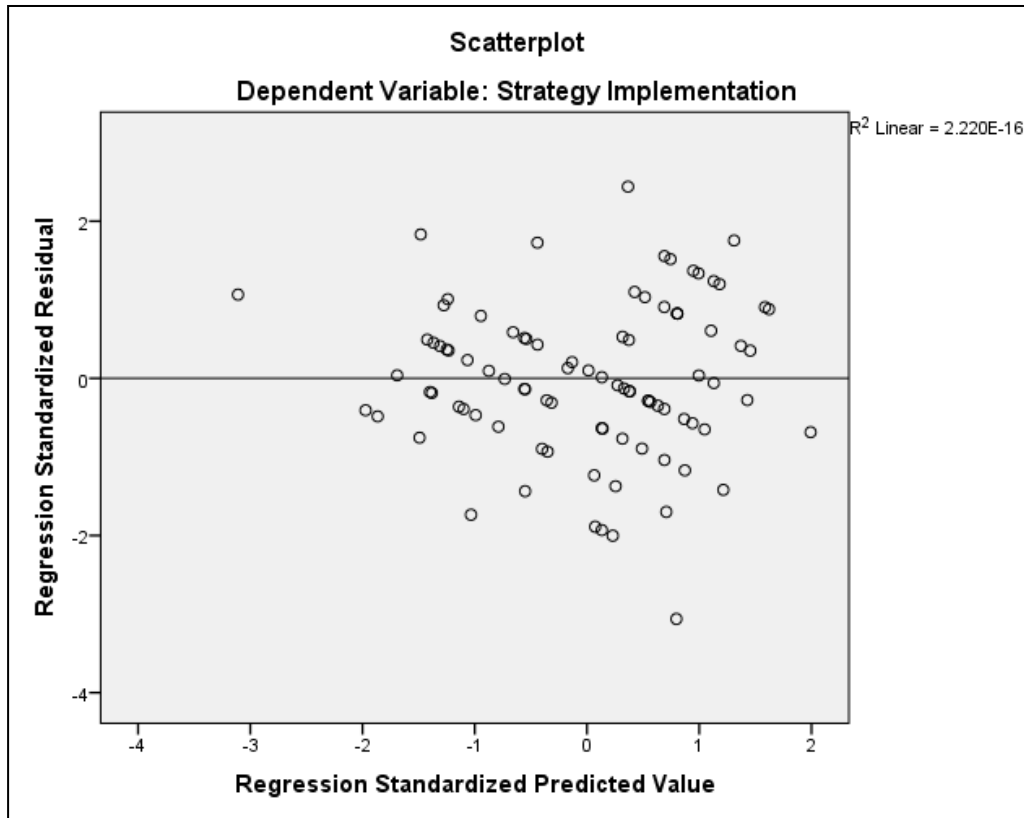


Figure 4. Scatter Plot of Standardized Predicted Values against Standardized Residuals

As shown in table 5, collinearity statistics for leadership style (VIF score of 1.083) indicated that Multicollinearity was not a problem.

Table 5. Multicollinearity Results between Dependent and Independent variables

Variable	Collinearity Statistics VIF
(Constant)	
Leadership Style	1.083

*Dependent Variable: Strategy Implementation*

### 3.4 Descriptive Results for Strategy Implementation

Using a five-point Likert Scale ranging from 1 to 5 the respondents rated each statement describing the implementation of strategic plans by their devolved units as ‘strongly disagree’, ‘disagree’, ‘neutral’, ‘agree’ or ‘strongly agree’. Table 6 shows the respondents rating of their agreement with the statements on strategy implementation. The results revealed that the majority (36 respondents representing 40.4%), were undecided on whether their “county gave

implementation priority to projects and programs that met the county development objectives” as captured in the CIDPs. Another 35 respondents representing 39.3% were undecided on whether “county citizens and stakeholders were satisfied with the delivery of projects and programs” by their counties. A further 33 respondents representing 37.1% were undecided on whether “development projects and programs were completed within budget” and whether “county ensured that projects and programs were distributed equality to all stakeholders including minority groups”. It is instructive that only 15 respondents representing 16.9% strongly disagreed that county “development projects and programs are completed on time”, followed by 29 another respondents representing 32.6% who disagreed with the same statement. The overall mean of 3.03 indicate that respondents were undecided on the counties effectiveness in strategy implementation. The overall standard deviation (.874) and variance (.764) indicate there was little variation in respondent’s views.

Table 6. Strategy Implementation

Statement	SD	D	N	A	SA	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance
	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)			
Our county completes all its development projects and programs captured in the County Integrated Development Plans (CIDPs)	13 (14.6%)	31 (34.8%)	21 (23.6%)	18 (20.2%)	6 (6.7%)	2.70	1.152	1.327
The development projects and programs are completed on time	15 (16.9%)	29 (32.6%)	24 (27.0%)	15 (16.9%)	6 (6.7%)	2.64	1.151	1.324
Development projects and programs are completed within budget	6 (6.7%)	21 (23.6%)	33 (37.1%)	22 (24.7%)	7 (7.9%)	3.02	1.044	1.090
Our county gives implementation priority to projects and programs that met the county development objectives as captured in the CIDPs	5 (5.6%)	10 (11.2%)	36 (40.4%)	25 (28.1%)	13 (14.6%)	3.34	1.055	1.112
Our county ensures that projects and programs are distributed equality to all stakeholders including minority groups	6 (6.7%)	13 (14.6%)	33 (37.1%)	24 (27.0%)	13 (14.6%)	3.28	1.097	1.204
Our county citizens and stakeholders are satisfied with the delivery of projects and programs by our county	6 (6.7%)	19 (21.3%)	35 (39.3%)	21 (23.6%)	8 (9.0%)	3.07	1.042	1.086
Overall, the level of implementation of the CIDPs is satisfactory	2 (2.2%)	24 (27.0%)	32 (36.0%)	22 (24.7%)	9 (10.1%)	3.13	1.002	1.004
Average Mean/Standard Deviation/Variance						3.03	.874	.764

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

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### 3.5 Descriptive results on the influence of transformational leadership style on strategy implementation

Table 7 shows the respondents rating of their agreement with the statements on the influence of transformational leadership style on strategy implementation on a scale ranging from 1 to 5. Respondents indicated either “not at all”, “once in a while”, “sometimes”, “fairly often’ or “frequently, if not always”. The study showed 36 respondents representing 40% indicated that fairly often their county leader(s) talked enthusiastically about what needed to be accomplished, 35 respondents representing 39.3% indicated that fairly often their county leader(s) emphasized the importance of having a collective sense of mission and expressed confidence that goals will be achieved“. In addition, 33 respondents representing 36.7% indicated that fairly often their county leader(s) specified the importance of having a strong sense of vision and talked optimistically about the future. Further, 40 respondents representing 44.9% indicated that sometimes their county leaders considered an individual as having different needs, abilities, and aspirations from others. The overall mean score of 3.48 indicates that fairly often county leaders employed a transformational style in their leadership function.

*Table 7. Transformational Leadership*

Statement	NA	OW	S	FO	F	Mean	SD	VAR
	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)			
My county leader(s) talk about the most important values and beliefs	3 (3.3%)	12 (13.3%)	26 (28.9%)	28 (31.1%)	21 (23.3%)	3.58	1.091	1.191
My county leader(s) specify the importance of having a strong sense of vision	3 (3.3%)	8 (8.9%)	26 (28.9%)	33 (36.7%)	20 (22.2%)	3.66	1.029	1.060
My county leader(s) consider the moral and ethical consequences	3 (3.3%)	12 (13.3%)	26 (28.9%)	28 (31.1%)	21 (23.3%)	3.58	1.091	1.191
My county leader(s) emphasize the importance of having a collective sense of mission	2 (2.2%)	10 (11.1%)	25 (27.8%)	35 (38.9%)	18 (20.0%)	3.63	.999	.999
My county leader(s) talk optimistically about the future	2 (2.2%)	7 (7.8%)	20 (22.2%)	33 (36.7%)	28 (31.1%)	3.87	1.019	1.038
My county leader(s) talk enthusiastically about what needs to be accomplished	1 (1.1%)	7 (7.8%)	21 (23.3%)	36 (40.0%)	25 (27.8%)	3.86	.955	.911
My county leader(s) articulate a compelling vision of the future	1 (1.1%)	13 (14.4%)	22 (24.4%)	29 (32.2%)	25 (27.8%)	3.71	1.063	1.129
My county leader(s) express confidence that goals will be achieved	0 (0.0%)	10 (11.2%)	20 (22.5%)	35 (39.3%)	24 (27.0%)	3.82	.960	.922
My county leader(s) spend time teaching and coaching	12 (13.5%)	21 (23.6%)	33 (37.1%)	16 (18.0%)	7 (7.9%)	2.83	1.120	1.255

*Leadership Styles in Kenyan Devolved Governments*

My county leader(s) treat others as individuals rather than just as a member of the group.	6 (6.7%)	17 (19.1%)	29 (32.6%)	30 (33.7%)	7 (7.9%)	3.17	1.047	1.096
My county leader(s) consider an individual as having different needs, abilities, and aspirations from others.	4 (4.5%)	10 (11.2%)	40 (44.9%)	26 (29.2%)	9 (10.1%)	3.29	.956	.914
My county leader(s) help others develop our strengths	3 (3.4%)	15 (16.9%)	31 (34.8%)	31 (34.8%)	9 (10.1%)	3.31	.984	.968
My county leader(s) re-examine critical assumptions to question whether they are appropriate	5 (5.6%)	19 (21.3%)	27 (30.3%)	30 (33.7%)	8 (9.0%)	3.19	1.054	1.111
My county leader(s) seek differing perspectives when solving problems	3 (3.4%)	15 (16.9%)	33 (37.1%)	26 (29.2%)	12 (13.5%)	3.33	1.020	1.040
My county leader(s) get others to look at problems from many different angles	5 (5.6%)	14 (15.7%)	28 (31.5%)	30 (33.7%)	12 (13.5%)	3.34	1.076	1.158
My county leader(s) suggest new ways of looking at how to complete assignments	2 (2.2%)	8 (9.0%)	32 (36.0%)	32 (36.0%)	15 (16.9%)	3.56	.953	.908
Overall Mean						3.48		

Key: NA=Not at all; OW=Once in a while; S=sometimes; FO=Fairly Often and F=Frequently, if not always.

### 3.6 Descriptive Results on the Influence of Transactional Leadership Style on Strategy Implementation

Table 8 shows the respondents rating of their agreement with the statements on the influence of transactional leadership style on strategy implementation ranging from 1 to 5. Respondents indicated either “not at all”, “once in a while”, “sometimes”, “fairly often” or “frequently, if not always”. The study showed 35 respondents representing 38.9% indicated that their county leader(s) fairly often “discussed in specific terms who is responsible for achieving performance targets”, while 34 respondents representing 37.8% indicated that fairly often their county leader(s) „expressed satisfaction when others met expectations“. Further, 31 respondents representing 34.4% indicated that fairly often their county leader(s) made clear what one could expect to receive when performance goals are achieved. On the other hand, 36 respondents representing 40.0% indicated that sometimes their county leader(s) focused attention on irregularities, mistakes, exceptions, and deviations from standards. The overall mean score of 2.99 indicates that only once in a while did county leaders employ a transactional style in their leadership function.

*Table 8. Transactional Leadership*

	NA	OW	S	FO	F	Mean	SD	VAR
	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)			
My county leader(s) provides others with assistance in exchange for their effort	3 (3.3%)	14 (15.6%)	34 (37.8%)	30 (33.3%)	9 (10.0%)	3.31	.967	.936
My county leader(s) discuss in specific terms who is responsible for achieving performance targets	2 (2.2%)	11 (12.2%)	30 (33.3%)	35 (38.9%)	12 (13.3%)	3.49	.951	.904
My county leader(s) make clear what one can expect to receive when performance goals are achieved	6 (6.7%)	19 (21.1%)	24 (26.7%)	31 (34.4%)	10 (11.1%)	3.22	1.109	1.231
My county leader(s) express satisfaction when others meet expectations	2 (2.2%)	12 (13.3%)	29 (32.2%)	34 (37.8%)	13 (14.4%)	3.49	.974	.949
My county leader(s) focus attention on irregularities, mistakes, exceptions, and deviations from standards	6 (6.7%)	20 (22.2%)	36 (40.0%)	18 (20.0%)	10 (11.1%)	3.07	1.068	1.142
My county leader(s) concentrate their full attention on dealing with mistakes, complaints, and failures	10 (11.1%)	23 (25.6%)	27 (30.0%)	21 (23.3%)	9 (10.0%)	2.96	1.160	1.346
My county leader(s) keep track of all mistakes	8 (8.9%)	28 (31.1%)	29 (32.2%)	16 (17.8%)	9 (10.0%)	2.89	1.116	1.246
My county leader(s) direct their attention toward failures to meet standards	13 (14.4%)	22 (24.4%)	28 (31.1%)	20 (22.2%)	7 (7.8%)	2.84	1.160	1.346
My county leader(s) don't interfere until problems become serious	10 (11.1%)	29 (32.2%)	18 (20.0%)	22 (24.4%)	11 (12.2%)	2.94	1.230	1.514
My county leader(s) wait for things to go wrong before taking action	25 (27.8%)	22 (24.4%)	18 (20.0%)	16 (17.8%)	9 (10.0%)	2.58	1.332	1.775
My county leader(s) is a firm believer in "if it ain't broke, don't fix it"	26 (28.9%)	13 (14.4%)	30 (33.3%)	13 (14.4%)	8 (8.9%)	2.60	1.288	1.658
My county leader(s) wait till problems become chronic before taking action	30 (33.3%)	17 (18.9%)	19 (21.1%)	14 (15.6%)	10 (11.1%)	2.52	1.384	1.915
Overall mean						2.99		

Key: NA=Not at all; OW=Once in a while; S=sometimes; FO=Fairly Often and F=Frequently, if not always.

### 3.7 Qualitative Analysis of Strategy Implementation

The respondents were provided with two questions in respect to strategy implementation and their responses were analyzed. Content analysis was employed in analyzing textual data for patterns and common themes and hence the qualitative data was converted to quantitative results and presented in table format. Content analysis is appropriate where there is need to analyze textual data to determine words and word patterns and further code the data to produce categories presented in quantitative frequency tables (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008). The respondents were required to indicate other aspects of strategy implementation not captured

but affected the county and secondly, the challenges experienced in strategy implementation during previous 5 years.

Table 9 shows frequencies of responses on other aspects of strategy implementation not included that affect devolved governments. The respondents indicated that the role of public participation in providing implementation feedback (40%) and adherence to monitoring and evaluation system for quality service delivery (33%) were the most important aspect to be included in assessing the implementation of strategic plans by devolved governments. Additionally, the respondents indicated that other aspects to be included were links with Nairobi Metropolitan Transport Authority agenda (13%), decentralization of implementation within devolved units (7%) and funding of emergency projects (7%).

*Table 9. Other aspects of Strategy Implementation not captured that affect your County*

Statement	Frequencies (N)	Percentage
Role of public participation in providing implementation feedback	6	40%
Adherence to monitoring and evaluation system for quality service delivery	5	33%
Links with Nairobi Metropolitan Transport Authority agenda	2	13%
Decentralization of implementation within devolved units	1	7%
Funding of emergency projects	1	7%

Table 10 shows frequencies of responses on challenge experienced in the implementation of strategic plans by devolved governments. The respondents indicated that poor prioritization of projects (23%) was the most important challenge followed by delays in implementation of strategic plans (20%), inadequate funding of projects (18%) and lack of goodwill from top management and national government (18%). The respondents further identified poor monitoring and evaluation (17%) and COVID-19 pandemic (3%) as additional challenge to strategy implementation by devolved governments. This confirms previous observations made in this study and frequent media reports of internal management conflicts and lack of sufficient funding of devolved governments to guarantee service delivery of devolved functions.

*Table 10. Strategy Implementation Challenges Experienced in your County*

Statement	Frequencies (N)	Percentage
Poor prioritization of projects	14	23%
Delays in implementation of strategic plans	12	20%
Inadequate funding of projects	11	18%
Lack of goodwill from top management and national government	11	18%
Poor monitoring and evaluation	10	17%
COVID-19 pandemic	2	3%



### 3.8 Qualitative Analysis of Leadership Style on Strategy Implementation

The respondents were provided two questions in respect to leadership styles and their responses were analyzed. The respondents were required to indicate other aspects of leadership styles that influence implementation of strategic plans by their county and secondly, the leadership styles challenges they had experienced in implementing county strategic plans during the previous 5 years

Table 11 shows frequencies of responses on other aspects of leadership styles not included that affect strategy implementation by devolved governments. The respondents indicated that decision-making capacity (30%) and leadership turnover (20%) were the most important aspect to be included in assessing leadership styles that influence the implementation of strategic plans by devolved governments. The other aspects to be included were leadership transparency (10%) and incentives for innovations (10%).

*Table 11. Other aspects of leadership styles not captured*

Statement	Frequencies (N)	Percentage
Decision making capacity	6	60%
Leadership turnover	2	20%
Leadership transparency	1	10%
Incentives for innovation	1	10%

Table 12 shows frequencies of responses on leadership styles challenge experienced that influence the implementation of strategic plans by devolved governments. The respondents indicated that lack of capacity for teamwork (47%) was the most important challenge followed by lack of professionalism (21%) and political interference (18%). The respondents identified lack of cooperation between executive and county assembly leaders (11%) and poor leadership of change (3%) as additional challenges to strategy implementation by devolved governments. This confirms observations made in this study and frequent media reports of conflicts between county assembly members and county executive leadership leading to attempted impeachment motions against governors of Nairobi and Kiambu counties.

*Table 12. Leadership Styles Challenge Experienced*

Statement	Frequencies (N)	Percentage
Lack of capacity for teamwork	18	47%
Lack of professionalism	8	21%
Political interference	7	18%
Lack of cooperation between executive and county assembly leaders	4	11%
Poor leadership of change	1	3%

### 3.9 Statistical Model and Hypothesis Testing

The objective of the study was to establish the influence of transformational and transactional leadership styles on the implementation of strategic plans by Devolved Governments in Kenya.

*Hypothesis (H<sub>01</sub>):* Transformational Leadership styles have no significant influence on the implementation of strategic plans by devolved governments in Kenya.

*Hypothesis (H<sub>02</sub>):* Transactional Leadership style has no significant influence on the implementation of strategic plans by devolved governments in Kenya.

Multiple linear regression analysis was conducted to test the strength, direction and significance of the relationship between the independent variables and dependent variable. The statistical analysis was conducted at 95 percent confidence level to test the hypotheses. The significance level of independent variables was measured using Fischer distribution test (F-test). The significance of each variable in the model was based on the p-value and where the p-value was greater than 0.05, it was concluded that there was no significant effect and that factor cannot be used to explain the variations in the implementation of strategic plans (dependent variable).

The predictive model of the relationship between Transformational Leadership Styles (X<sub>1</sub>) and Transactional Leadership Styles (X<sub>2</sub>) on Strategy Implementation (Y);

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \varepsilon$$

Where;

Y = Strategy Implementation

X<sub>1</sub> = Transformational Leadership Style

X<sub>2</sub> = Transactional Leadership Style

$\beta_0, \beta_1, \beta_2$  = regression coefficients to be estimated

$\varepsilon$  = Error Term

### 3.10 Model Summary and Analysis

The study hypothesized that leadership styles had no significant influence on strategy implementation by devolved governments in Kenya. The regression test results in Table 13 show that leadership styles had a positive and significant influence on strategy implementation by devolved governments (Adjusted R<sup>2</sup> = .268, p = 0.000). This implies that a one-unit change in leadership style results in a .268 change in strategy implementation by devolved governments in Kenya. The results show a strong and significant positive correlation (R = .534, p = .000) between leadership styles and strategy implementation.

The results agree with studies by Özer and Tinaztepe (2014) of Small and Medium Enterprise firms in Turkey, and Mwangi (2016) study of Small and Medium Enterprise in Kenya. The results

also agree with Muchiri's (2017) study that examined the crucial role of transformational leadership on the organizational performance of commercial banks in Kenya. Similarly, (Katana, 2017) study of shipping firms in Kenya found a positive and significant influence of strategic leadership on performance.

Table 13. Model Summary

Model	Change Statistics								
	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.534 <sup>a</sup>	.285	.268	.74770	.285	17.130	2	86	.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), Transactional Leadership, Transformational Leadership

Table 14 shows the ANOVA test results for the overall model. The F statistic and p-value results ( $F_{(2, 86)} = 17.130, p = 0.000$ ) indicate that the model is significant at a 95% level of confidence. Given that p-value is less than 0.05 the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative is taken. This means that leadership styles are a significant predictor of strategy implementation by devolved governments in Kenya.

Table 14. ANOVA

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	19.153	2	9.577	17.130	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	48.079	86	.559		

a. Dependent Variable: Strategy Implementation

b. Predictors: (Constant), Transactional Leadership, Transformational Leadership

Table 15 shows the analysis of the model coefficients. The results show that transformational leadership style has a positive and significant influence (beta coefficient  $\beta_1 = .593, p\text{-value} = 0.000$ ) while transactional leadership styles have a negative and insignificant influence (beta coefficient  $\beta_2 = -.023, p\text{-value} = 0.860$ ) on strategy implementation. Given that the p-values for transformational leadership were less than 0.05 the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternative hypothesis was accepted. Therefore, it can be concluded that the transformational leadership style has a positive and significant influence on strategy implementation by devolved governments in Kenya. The findings agree with results of previous studies (Obiwuru et al., 2011; Özer & Tinaztepe, 2014; Reddy, 2017; Wang et al., 2010).

In addition, the results show that the p-value for transactional leadership style is greater than 0.05 and thus the null hypothesis was accepted and the alternative hypothesis rejected. Therefore, it can be concluded that the transactional leadership style has a negative and insignificant influence on strategy implementation by devolved governments in Kenya. This contradicts the findings of the study by Obiwuru et al (2011) who found transactional leadership styles to have a significant influence on the senior managers of small and medium enterprises

in Ikosi-Ketu Council Development area of Lagos State, Nigeria. Reddy (2017) found a positive and significant influence of transaction leadership style on strategy implementation.

*Table 15. Table of Coefficients*

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B	
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t		Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1 (Constant)	1.045	.421		2.485	.015	.209	1.881
Transformational Leadership	.593	.111	.541	5.355	.000	.373	.813
Transactional Leadership	-.023	.131	-.018	-.177	.860	-.284	.237

*a. Dependent Variable: Strategy Implementation*

#### 4.0 Conclusion

The overall finding of the study is that devolved governments in Kenya are undecided on the effectiveness the implementation of their strategic plans. The study shows that county were undecided on giving implementation priority to projects and programs that met county development objectives. The study also confirmed that development projects were not completed on time due to lack of prioritizing of projects and that there was lack of goodwill from top management and national government actors. Additional insights were obtained from the qualitative data showed that other factors such as public participation in providing feedback and adherence to monitoring and evaluation for quality serve delivery were important and thus should be investigated in future study.

In respect to transformational leadership style the study revealed that county leaders preferred a transformational leadership style by talking enthusiastically about what needs to be done and having a collective sense of mission in what needed to be achieved. The study showed that county leaders considered an individual as having different needs, abilities, and aspirations from others, which confirms a preference for a transformational leadership style. Analysis of the qualitative data showed that other factors such as lack of leadership capacity building and senior leadership turnover were important to strategy implementation. The study found that political interference was a challenge to strategy implementation.

This study concludes that the transformational leadership style has a positive and significant influence on strategy implementation by devolved governments in Kenya. The conclusion of this study agrees with the study by Wang et al (2010) of export processing zones in South Taiwan, the study by Ozer and Tenazpete (2014) of SME in Turkey and Koech and Namusonge (2012) study of state firms in Kenya that all found a positive link between transformational leadership style and organization performance.



The study concludes that transactional leadership style has a negative and insignificant influence on strategy implementation by devolved governments in Kenya. This finding contradicts other studies (Obiwuru et al., 2011; Odero, 2023; Samanta & Lamprakis, 2018) that found transactional leadership style had a positive and significant effect on performance of SMEs in Lagos State Nigeria Private Sugar manufacturers in Kenya and Greek Public procurement units. It is noteworthy that Koech and Namusonge (2012) found that both transformational and transactional leadership styles were highly correlated to performance of state corporations but transactional leadership style had a lower correlation. This analysis indicates that transactional leadership styles is more suited to small and medium enterprises but fails to account for performance in large firms (Obiwuru et al., 2011). However, the suitability of transactional leadership style within SME context requires further research investigation.

The study concludes that a transformational leadership style is most suitable in supporting the implementation of strategic plans by devolved governments in Kenya while a transactional style of leadership is unfavorable to strategy implementation success.

## 5.0 Recommendation

The study recommends that devolved governments should promote a transformational leadership style that builds trust, and confidence and attracts followers. County leaders should ensure they build the morale and motivation of their teams, and promote cooperation between executive and administrators. Devolved governments should focus on building capacity of county leadership to support successful implementation of strategic plans. Devolved governments should strengthen their monitoring and evaluation systems and capacities, ensure public participation in providing feedback, ensure prioritizing of development projects that meet the stated development objectives and avoid delays in implementation.

The study recommends that future researchers should investigate the influence of public participation in providing feedback, the role of monitoring and evaluation, impact of senior staff turnover and the challenge of political interference to strategy implementation by devolved governments in Kenya.

## 6.0 Acknowledgment

### 6.1 Funding of the Study

None

### 6.2 Conflict of Interest

None

### 6.3 Presentation of Study Findings

The findings of this study were presented at the 17<sup>th</sup> JKUAT Scientific, Technological and Industrialization Conference and Exhibition on 23<sup>rd</sup>-24<sup>th</sup> March 2023 at Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and technology, Juja, Kenya. The abstract appeared on page 50 of the

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conference's schedule of abstracts, see link:  
[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1\\_ur3PD3OcdOGbJmy\\_YnISHmTak6JQYqf/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1_ur3PD3OcdOGbJmy_YnISHmTak6JQYqf/view).

#### 6.4 General Acknowledgement

None.

#### 6.5 Declaration of Interest

The present work fulfills the requirement of award of degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Strategic Management of the Jomo Kenya University of Agriculture and technology. The writers indicated above are responsible for the content, editing, decision, manuscripts, composition, viewpoints and expression. Acceptance of final contents and consent to publish if any error remain.

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