

Strategic Management Practices and Performance of TransNzoia County Government, Kenya

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Abstract: Ricardo et al. (2022) noted that strategic management is undeniably essential for organizations to achieve a competitive edge and improve their performance. The purpose of the study was to examine the effect of strategic management practices on Performance of TransNzoia County. The study was guided by the following specific objective as; to explore the influence of strategic leadership practice on performance of TransNzoia County. The study used the following theories as goal setting theory, system theory, results based theory. The study adopted a descriptive research design. The target Population was all county directors from all the 13 departments in of TransNzoia county Data collection instrument was structured questionnaire. Both primary and secondary data was collected .The researcher self-dropped and pick the duly filled questionnaires. Piloting was done to test the validity and reliability of data collection instrument. Data was organised, coded, edited to bring a meaning. Data was analysed and presented using the statistical package for social science SPSS version 24. Both descriptive and inferential statistics shall be done. Multiple regression was done to test the significant levels of one variable over the other. Analysis of variance was done. Based on the findings, the study concluded that strategic leadership practices has significant effect on Performance of TransNzoia County government, Kenya $\beta_1=0.477$, p value= 0.003). The relationship was considered significant since the p value 0.002 was less than the significant level of 0.05. The study came up with the following recommendations; The county government should provide great leadership that creates a harmonious environment, entrusted with the role of communicating visions, organizational goals, and ideas to the people as well as developing a compelling vision and devise strategies to assist others in attaining the vision mandated with the task of implementing and maintaining key organizational systems and rules and even having an important say in the discipline of those within the organization as good strategic leadership enhances county government performance. The finding was significant to the researchers, academicians, stakeholders and to the entire economy as a whole.

Keywords: Strategic Management Practices, Strategic Leadership, County Government Performance.

1. INTRODUCTION

Gashayija et al (2024) states that the rapid changing nature of the world embraces strategic management practices to remain competitive. Momoh and Itohan (2023) define strategic management as the process by which managers develop and implement strategies that may result in a lasting competitive advantage in the long run. Consequently, every organization must tailor its strategy to its capacity in an ever-evolving environment. Kraus and Kauranen (2009) observed that strategic management involves identifying and exploiting novel and distinctive opportunities for growth and

sustainability. Hence, it is a process by which management takes a series of actions to transform a company's purpose into a practical strategy. Additionally, Fuertes et al. (2020) define a strategic management process as a deliberate and continuous series of operations carried out by a firm to successfully achieve its objectives and minimize dependence on unplanned occurrences. Ibrahim et al. (2023) defined strategy as the comprehensive plan and course of action used by a firm to gain a competitive advantage by efficiently allocating its resources in response to a changing business environment and meeting the requirements of its stakeholders. A strategy is a framework that combines a company's main goals, actions, and principles into a unified entity; it involves creating unique situations within the competitive landscape (Leppänen et al., 2023). Therefore, strategic management depends on managers who think clearly and make wise decisions. Scholars have categorized strategic management differently based on their distinct origins and study contexts (Gashayija et al, 2024).

Strategic management is the management of an organization's resources to achieve its goals and objectives (Ibrahim et al. 2023). Strategic management is the methodical process of developing, implementing, assessing, and supervising strategies to accomplish a company's immediate and long-term goals (Iyobhebhe et al., 2024). Strategic management practices involve the art and science of formulating, implementing, and evaluating cross-functional decisions that enable an organization to achieve its objectives (Strickland, 2013). It is the formal process, or set of processes, used to determine the strategies (actions) for the organization. It focuses on many areas, including the integration of management, marketing, finance/accounting, production/operations, research and development and computer information systems (McKiernan, 2006). Simsek, et al.,(2015) states that strategic leaders include chief executive officers, company directors, and top managers, leading middle line managers and the wider organization workforce to deliver shareholder and stakeholder value. Strategic leaders are charged with critical choices to facilitate transfer of information, influence and resources with implications for organization performance (Simsek, Heavey & Fox, 2018). Strategy as practice perspective looks at strategy as something people do. Strategic practice is based on the common sense idea that we have to relate tactics to strategy and strategic goals (Marodin, et al.,2023). This involves asking what kind of choices organizations must make in order to be effective in the short term and at the same time take on this challenge (McKiernan, 2006).

Globally, due to competition and turbulent business environment, achieving operational performance in organizations is dependent on multiple factors which may be internal and external (Quinn & Hilmer, 2014). Burak (2013) observe that in the modern competitive business environment, organizations from one sector to another can utilize strategic resources in attaining long term and short term goals. According Momoh, et al., (2023), strategic management is the management of an organization's resources to achieve its goals and objectives. Strategic management practices involve the art and science of formulating, implementing, and evaluating cross-functional decisions that enable an organization to achieve its objectives (Strickland, 2013). It is the formal process, or set of processes, used to determine the strategies (actions) for the organization. It focuses on many areas, including the integration of management, marketing, finance/accounting, production/operations, research and development and computer information systems (McKiernan, 2006). Strategy as practice perspective looks at strategy as something people do. Strategic practice is based on the common sense idea that we have to relate tactics to strategy and strategic goals. This involves asking what kind of choices organizations must make in order to be effective in the short term and at the same time take on this challenge (McKiernan, 2006).

Regionally, firm's performance requires strategic management practices involving the art and science of formulating, implementing, and evaluating cross- functional decisions that enable an organization to achieve its objectives (Strickland, 2013). According to Agrawal (2016), it is the formal process, or set of processes, used to determine the strategies (actions) for the organization. For organisational performance to be of quality, strategic management has to focus on many areas, including; the integration of management, marketing, finance / accounting, production/operations, research and development and computer information systems, hence; Strategy as practice for organisational performance perspective looks at strategy as something people do. Strategic practice is based on the common sense idea that we have to relate tactics to strategy and strategic goals. This involves asking what kind of choices organizations must make in order to be effective in the short term and at the same time take on this challenge. Slabbert, et al (2018) did a study on the role of Strategic Management Practices on Organizational Performance of United Nations Development Programme in Mogadishu, Somalia. The findings revealed that there is a strong relationship between strategic management practices and organisational performance. Locally, strategic management practice consists of four basic elements, strategic planning, implementation, evaluation and control (Makanga, 2017). It is within these four elements that strategic management practices are manifested and is also described as the strategic management process. Strategic leadership is a component of

strategic management practice that involves provision of direction and leadership toward implementation of planned strategy. Strategy formulation is the development of long-range plans for the effective management of environmental opportunities and threats, in light of corporate strengths and weaknesses. It includes defining the corporate mission, specifying achievable objectives, developing strategies and setting policy guidelines (Iravo et. al., 2013).

Strategic leadership is the leader's ability to anticipate, envision, and maintain flexibility and to empower others to create strategic change as necessary (Hitt, Ireland, & Hoskisson 2007). Mungania and Karanja (2015) established that leadership is a major factor affecting the implementation of strategic plans. Understanding the effects of leadership on organizational performance requires examining multiple levels of leadership simultaneously. In organizations of any size, it is likely that organizational performance should be related to the aggregate effects of leaders at different hierarchical levels. Regardless of the effects of an individual leader, alignment or misalignment of leaders across hierarchical levels may enhance or detract from the successful implementation of a strategic initiative. Nzuve and Nyaega (2012) opined that Performance management and improvement is at the heart of strategic management because a lot of strategic thinking is geared towards defining and measuring performance. Awino (2011) asserts that for an organization to be successful it has to record high returns and identify performance drivers from the top to the bottom of the organization. Organizations create transformational leadership teams who have the knowledge, insight and experience to help organizations create a flexible, scalable and cost effective platform for delivering functional and business enabling processes. Tamrakar (2010) indicate that improvement in Organisational performance is also informed by the need to grow and expand services, take advantage of opportunities or merely to implement new knowledge which can come up with action plans.

In many developing countries, the issue of firms performance is a challenge that needs to be addressed given the low quality of service provision and the pressing needs of the poor (Besley and Ghatak, 2007). Khalid (2010) supports this view when he states that local councils in Malaysia continue to face pressure to improve their firms. The increased level of education of the population has led to a more vocal and more discerning citizenry that expects better services and accountability from its local government. Moreover, rapid industrialization and urbanization of countries have created a challenging environment for the local government (Khalid, 2010). Gwayi (2010) argues that Nzuve and Nyaega (2012) opined that Performance management and improvement is at the heart of strategic management because a lot of strategic thinking is geared towards defining and measuring performance. Awino (2011) asserts that for an organization to be successful it has to record high returns and identify performance drivers from the top to the bottom of the organization. Municipalities in South Africa face serious challenges in implementing organisational performance options that will enhance existing structures in the sphere of local government points towards the need for strategies to improve organisational performance. To date, there are limited studies that have formally investigated the causes of poor organisational performance and the strategies that can be implemented to improve the organisational performance in local authorities. The Rwandese Association of Local Government Authorities (RALGA) in 2010 reported on the factors affecting Organisational performance in local governments.

With certain autonomy power, the County is measured to enhance the increased demand from the communities for a more customer oriented and higher standard of both rural and urban services. The County Government of TransNzoia county, has the following thirteen (13) departments/ministries: office of the governor, human resource department, county public service board, Finance and Economic Planning, Lands, Housing and Physical Planning, Trade, Industry, Cooperative Development and Tourism, Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries, Public Service Management, Public, Works, Roads and Transport, Water, Energy, Forestry and Natural Resources, Information, Communication and E-Government, Education, Youth Affairs, Culture and Social Services and Health Services. For effective County government performance aforementioned mandates, there creates need to employ strategic management practices to ensure utmost value for the public (County Government of TransNzoia county Website, 2017).

A number of studies on strategic management practices in various organizations have been carried out in the past. On the international front Kandie (2010) who studied on influence of strategic management practices in governments in Europe using a correlational research design noted that change is needed when environmental conditions change. In Africa the Rwandese Association of Local Government Authorities (RALGA) in 2010 reported on the factors affecting Performance in local governments. However, it did not empirically examine the strategies that can be adopted to improve Performance in local authorities. Locally a study by Njau (2001) on challenges of strategy implementation concluded that whereas some firms realized the need to change their strategy due to change in the competitive environment, they lacked finances

and managerial empowerment to do so. This study therefore sought to explore the influence of strategic leadership practice on Performance of TransNzoia County, Kenya.

2. STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP PRACTICE AND PERFORMANCE OF TRANSNZOIA COUNTY

The county governments cannot be in competitive age with poor leadership. Strategic leadership research is primarily case studies and conceptually untested until recently (Asif and Basit, 2021). Strategic leadership is essential for driving organizational performance. Effective strategic leaders are able to set a clear vision, establish goals, and inspire and motivate employees to achieve them. They also play a key role in aligning the organization's resources, capabilities, and activities towards the strategic objectives. Strategic leaders are adept at making tough decisions, managing risks, and adapting to changes in the business environment. By providing direction, guidance, and support, strategic leaders can enhance organizational performance and drive sustainable growth. Strategic leadership-organizational effectiveness studies were also lacking (Smeureanu, I., and Diab, B., 2020). New research recommends strategic leadership research (Alayoubi, Al Shobaki, and Abu-Naser, 2020). According to Yas et al., (2023), strategic leadership is defined by numerous sources.

Koros M. (2021) studied on strategic leadership practices and organizational performance of the Kenya national highways authority and revealed that strategic direction has positive significant influence on organizational performance. Leaders have the capability to influence organizational employees to participate in the fulfillment of set targets (Obiwuru, Okwu, Akpa and Nwankere, 2011). Strategic leaders scan the internal and external environment to obtain information on the environmental developments. Modern day leaders are pressured into delivering quick results and with less resources and equipment therefore strategic leaders should be capable of widening their vision past their work and duties approach (Wakhisi, 2021). A study by Umar (2020) reviewed how strategic alliances affected the performance of organizations. To achieve this, the study reviewed five theories such as resource based-view, transaction theory, knowledge-based view, resource dependency theory, and social capital theory. According to Umar (2020), as long as an organization's management provided a clear strategy on a direction on a course of action, the staff and other stakeholders automatically followed suit with less resistance hence leading to increased productivity. The only challenge came when every stakeholder was required to provide suitable strategic directions on a course of action. Additionally, Umar (2020) indicated that as long as the trust was cultivated in a well-coordinated system and resources provided, it led to excellence, team spirit, open communication, and agreements.

Mailu and Kariuki (2022) explored how non-governmental institutions' performance was affected by the strategies implemented by the leadership. Among the objectives examined strategic direction was one of them. Further, the target population was 636 finance departmental heads of 159 NGOs. They were sampled using a stratified method to obtain 244 respondents who were issued with questionnaires. According to Mailu and Kariuki (2022), the strategic direction offered by the leadership had a positive influence on performance. However, innovation and customer satisfaction were minimally supported. Additionally, Ng'ang'a et al. (2023) examine how the performance of Kenyan tourism agencies was affected by strategic direction. The study targeted to collect data from management and operations staff who comprised 420. The respondents who took part in the study were 328. Therefore, Ng'ang'a et al. (2023) established that strategic direction had a significant effect on performance whereby the operations staff were involved in process formulation while the managers set the direction. However, it was established that there was less training offered to improve strategic direction implementation among the operations staff. Additionally, Munyao et al. (2020) looked at how strategic direction affected the success of Kenyan theological training schools run by the Africa Inland Church and revealed that A.I.C theological training institutions in Kenya performed better when given a strategic direction. The report made a recommendation for top administrators of Africa Inland Church theological training institutes to be strategic as they lead their businesses into a challenging economic climate.

Strategies should therefore be put in place to cushion the businesses from the uncertainty that comes along with an unpredictable environment. Leadership is one of the most discussed concepts in organizational and business studies and scene (Bush & Glover, 2014). Sharma and Jain (2013) define leadership as a process through which one is able to influence others to make certain feats and accomplish specific objectives. Leaders are entrusted with the role of communicating visions, organizational goals, and ideas to the people (Avolio, Walumbwa, & Weber, 2009). Antonakis (2012) contends that leaders have to be able to develop a compelling vision and devise strategies to assist others in

attaining the vision. Leaders are also mandated with the task of implementing and maintaining key organizational systems and rules and even having an important say in the discipline of those within the organization.

Strategic leadership can be seen as “the leader’s ability to predict, and maintain flexibility and to empower others to create strategic change as necessary” (Hitt et al., 2012; Voelpel et al., 2006). It is multi-functional and relates to managing others as well as organizations in managing the challenges of today’s globalized business environment. Strategic leadership also requires expertise in managing both internal and external business environment and engage in a complex information processing (Deeboon-Mee & Ariratana, 2014). Over the past 20 years, the field of strategic leadership has undergone many changes. Good business leaders are able to identify and overcome obstacles that exist at a practical level. Distinct elements describe a leadership environment in three levels: complexity, time horizons and focus (Guillot, 2003). Leaders are required to be direct, general and strategic (Jacobs, 2006).

The effective work of strategic leaders plays a key role in enhancing the well-being of society and delivering sustainable triple bottom line economic, environmental and social outcomes (Collier & Evans, 2020). Economic sustainability considers the ongoing financial viability and solvency of the firm, environmental sustainability the firm’s commitment to environmental quality, social sustainability the health and well-being of organization stakeholders and the community (Collier & Evans, 2020). These sustainable organization outcomes are wide-ranging and can include as examples job creation, indigenous employment outcomes, firm profit, quality of financial institution loan portfolios, better community healthcare, air quality, water quality and protecting the environment (O’Shannassy, 2018). This is why better understanding of strategic leadership in organizations is important to business, society and the planet.

A number of scholars have defined strategic leadership practice as a leader’s ability to anticipate, envision, maintain flexibility, think strategically and work with followers to initiate changes that create a viable future for the organization (Ireland & Hitt, 2005; Serfontein, 2010; Jooste & Fourie, 2010). The available discussions on strategic leadership practice indicate that strategic leaders influence others, is futuristic and that the strategic leader holds both short term and long term goals simultaneously. Omar and Mahmoud (2014) argued that organizational capabilities relating to strategic leadership are key in the competitive landscape expected in the twenty first century. The Researchers further argue that human and social capitals can be avenues through which organizations attain and sustain competitiveness and should therefore be carefully nurtured and developed. Hitt, Ireland and Hoskisson (2007) note that every individual that takes part in management of change has duties and responsibilities, and it is important for the organization to realize leadership role in implementation of strategies to enhance effectiveness of the delegating role. Holman (2011) describes strategic leadership as the ability to influence others in decision making to enhance the prospects of the firm’s long -term success while maintaining long- term financial stability.

Strategic leadership practices enable organizational leaders to influence their followers to contribute effectively to the accomplishment of the goals and objectives of the organization (Obiwuru, Okwu, Akpa, & Nwankwere, 2011). Strategic leadership practices have also been argued as being able to lead to organizational performance for which it has also been averred that strategic leadership practice is equally fitting for not-for-profit organizations as they also require performance (Awan, Qureshi, & Arif, 2012). According to Kirimi and Minja (2010) organizations’ failures results from the lack of strategic leadership practice which results from the leaders’ failure to sell the organizations’ vision to its followers, not being able to convince followers to be passionate about the organization and also failing to make employees loyal to the organizations’ vision. Different leadership approaches impact on the vision and potential success of the organization. To effectively manage change, strategic leaders must provide a sense of direction and build ownership and align workgroups to implement change. Qu, Weng and Xie (2012) found that firms that complied with ethical codes of conduct were able to create ample time and resources towards achieving their set goals and targets. According to Bateman and Snell (2011), strategic leadership forms the purpose and gives meaning to an organization. It basically involves envisaging and anticipating a future for the organization or perhaps a government body as is our case and working with others to secure a viable future.

Strategic leaders play a critical role in aligning employees and organizational resources in the same direction (Akinyele & Olufunke, 2007). There are several strategic leadership practices adopted by organizations. A strategic leader must maximize use of the firm’s internal resources and capabilities to realize set goals in a competitive environment. Hsieh and Yik (2011) contend that a strategic leader motivates employees to put efforts and commit themselves in giving their best. Strategic leaders must have functional skills which are essential in enabling the firm to deliver unique products having.

The influence of strategic leadership on organizational performance has been of interest to many scholars (Marc and Susan, 2006). For instance, Maurice (2011) undertook a study on the influence of contextual factors on the deployment of innovative performance systems. The study examined the association between strategy, structure and environmental uncertainty, and the design and the use of performance measurements systems. The study provided empirical evidence on the contextual factors associated with the use of financial and non-financial measures, process and outcome measures and the deployment of innovative performance measurement systems in manufacturing business units (Maurice, 2011).

Qingmin et al (2012) undertook a study to investigate the relationship between strategic leadership and organizational performance including organisational performance. The findings from this study by Qingmin et al (2012) reinforced the influence of support systems on performance as indicated by studies carried out by Paurav (2009) on the same subject. In studies carried out by Qingmin et al (2012), leadership and structure were found to have more influence on organizational learning than on innovation. In addition, whereas organizational strategic leadership were found to have a direct influence on performance, organizational learning was found to have an indirect influence on performance.

As indicated by Kungu, Kahuthia and Kinyua (2020) leaders at strategic level must develop knowledge and awareness, the ability to think creatively and should be capable of creating and connecting ideas. Therefore, leaders in organizations play a major role in providing strategic direction. In an organization, strategic leadership involves the ability of a leader to provide direction and opportunities for competencies development so as to ensure growth and an improvement in performance. In the study by Qingmin et al (2012), innovation and learning were found out to be the main factors influencing the relationship between strategic leadership and organizational performance. The study indicated that senior managers think organizational structure improves organizational performance directly through innovation while middle level managers think organizational learning has an important mediating effect on organizational performance. Learning as a cognitive factor influencing organizational performance was also identified by Dobbin (2012) while innovation as a factor influencing organizational performance was also identified by studies carried out by Paurav (2009). Therefore, organizational performance is depicted as a variable of both contextual and cognitive factors and not just the performance system in place.

In another study by Levant and Mehmet (2004) on the influence of strategic leadership on entrepreneurial orientation and expansion performance, the expansion decision-making process of an international hotel group was investigated. In the study, in-depth interviews, observations and document analysis were used as the data collection techniques. Findings from the study indicate that protecting and developing internationally recognized brands profitably caused the organizational systems to be centralized. These findings suggest that centralized organizational structures are likely to be formations of managerial insecurity. Angote (2009) observes the same trend in the public sector in Kenya where some departmental heads hardly delegate nor do they take leave sessions due to the centralized system of corporate governance.

As defined by Marodin et al. (2023), performance refers to the strategic attributes of companies measured using an operational-level approach, such as responsiveness and adaptability. Operational performance pertains to a company's ability to reduce management costs, order processing time, and production lead time while improving the efficiency of raw material consumption and distribution capacity (Thieme et al., 2023). The performance of companies is crucial as it enhances the efficiency of production and the development of quality goods and services, leading to increased revenue and profit for enterprises. In addition, Kinyua and Sije (2023) observed five essential "performance objectives" that are generally relevant to all types of operations. These objectives include quality, speed, reliability, adaptability, and cost. These elements operate as the catalyst for operations management methods and approaches, aiming to improve performance, increase speed, enhance efficiency, and reduce costs.

With successful strategic management practices means that the organisations will be able to achieve its objectives in a timely and in competitiveness since it is concerned with the overall productivity in an organization in terms of stock turnover, customers, profitability and market share. The concept of organizational performance is core to businesses because the major objective of businesses is to make profits. Iravo et. al., (2013) state that one of the important questions in business has been why some organizations succeed and why others fail and this has influenced a study on the drivers of organizational performance.

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has been why some organizations succeed and why others fail and this has influenced a study on the drivers of organizational performance. Fwaya (2006) views performance as a formula for the assessment of the functioning of an organization under certain parameters such as productivity, employee' morale and effectiveness.

Nzuve and Nyaega (2012) opined that Performance management and improvement is at the heart of strategic management because a lot of strategic thinking is geared towards defining and measuring performance. Awino (2011) asserts that for an organization to be successful it has to record high returns and identify performance drivers from the top to the bottom of the organization. Odhiambo (2009) identified three approaches to performance in an organization which are the goal approach, which states that an organization pursues definite identifiable goals. This approach describes performance in terms of the attainment of these goals. The second approach is the systems resource approach which defines performance as a relationship between an organization and its environment. This concept defines performance according to an organization's ability to secure the limited and valued resources in the environment. The third approach is the process perspective which defines performance in terms of the behaviour of the human resource of an organization (Waiganjo et. al., 2012). Kiragu (2005) highlights performance in terms of four perspectives which are the financial, customer, internal processes and innovativeness. The financial perspective identifies the key financial drivers of enhancing performance which are profit margin, asset turnover, leverage, cash flow, and working capital (Odhuno and Wadongo, 2010).

Fwaya (2006) views performance as a formula for the assessment of the functioning of an organization under certain parameters such as productivity, employee' morale and effectiveness. Nzuve and Nyaega (2012) opined that Performance management and improvement is at the heart of strategic management because a lot of strategic thinking is geared towards defining and measuring performance. Awino (2011) asserts that for an organization to be successful it has to record high returns and identify performance drivers from the top to the bottom of the organization. Odhiambo (2009) states that the first approach describes performance in terms of the attainment of these goals. The second approach is the systems resource approach which defines performance as a relationship between an organization and its environment. This concept defines performance according to an organization's ability to secure the limited and valued resources in the environment. The third approach is the process perspective which defines performance in terms of the behaviour of the human resource of an organization (Waiganjo et. al., 2012).

Kiragu (2005) highlights performance in terms of four perspectives which are the financial, customer, internal processes and innovativeness. The financial perspective identifies the key financial drivers of enhancing performance which are profit margin, asset turnover, leverage, cash flow, and working capital (Odhuno and Wadongo, 2010). The customer focus describes performance in terms of brand image, customer satisfaction, and customer retention and customer profitability. Internal processes involve the efficiency of all the systems in the organization while innovativeness is concerned with the ease with which a firm is able to adapt to changing conditions. Strategic management is essential for organizations to create value and make critical investment decisions. Additionally, strategic management improves customer satisfaction and diminishes occurrences of unethical behavior within organizations. In their study, Švárová & Vrchota (2014) advocated prioritizing strategic management in companies, emphasizing the importance of selecting strategies that align with the organization's strategic goals. According to Jengwa and Pellissier (2022), strategy implementation is the act of executing strategies and incorporating them into the day-to-day activities of an organization in order to achieve competitive advantage. Tedla (2019) noted that for successful strategy implementation, an organization must possess sufficient resources, well-defined decision-making processes, a clear organizational structure, a conducive culture, advanced information and communication technology, effective reward and motivation systems, efficient communication channels, educational programs, and the necessary capabilities and skills. Rhyme (2013) on the influence of strategic planning systems on financial performance organizations with strategic planning systems more closely resembling strategic management theory were found to "exhibit superior long-term financial performance both relative to their industry and absolute terms. Maurice (2011) studied the influence of contextual factors on the deployment of innovative performance and indicated that there was a significant relationship between strategy, organizational culture and environmental uncertainty and the use of non-financial and process measures. In addition, the results indicated that there is a relationship between strategy and environmental uncertainty and the deployment of innovative performance measurement systems in agreement with environmental theories on organizational performance. However, the study ignored cultural aspects of an organization's context. The work by Maurice (2011) can be enhanced by being cognizant of cultural influence on organizational performance by identifying factors such as team work, promptness to duty and clarity of organizational vision.

Levent and Mehmet (2004) examined the influence of strategic leadership on entrepreneurial orientation and expansion performance, the expansion decision-making process of an international hotel group. Findings from the study indicate that protecting and developing internationally recognized brands profitably caused the organizational systems to be centralized. These findings suggest that centralized organizational structures are likely to be formations of managerial insecurity. Levent and Mehmet (2004) did not address the influence of organizational strategic leadership, implementer attitudes and skills on organizational performance. Thus, it is clear that leaders at different levels influence strategic initiatives and their implementation, but how aggregate leadership influences service delivery is not straightforward. Odera & Shitseswa (2016), a study on influence of strategy implementation on parastatal's financial resources. Their research did not extend to testing of other factors like leadership and Sacco structure which could likely have an impact on strategy implementation. Kaplan and Norton (2005) studying on determinants of strategy implementation among local authorities found that 95% of a company's employees are unaware of or do not understand their organizational strategy. However, the reviewed extant literature above is not clearly showing why strategy implementation (execution of strategy) in Government's sometimes fail or the achievement is below desired levels. Nutt (2006) on Use of contingency frameworks by managers and found that a high proportion of failures applied implementation tactics that differed from those recommended by the framework.

Lehner (2004) proposes five implementation coordination tactics: command, change/politics, culture, collaboration and market. Command and politics/change are both somewhat dictatorial. In contrast, both collaboration and the market as implementation tactics utilize participation to a high degree and in a way, which gives subordinate groups a strong voice. Hofstede (2012) studying on barriers to strategy implementation he found the effectiveness of coordination of activities as a problem in most of the firms and distractions from competing activities in some cases. However, key tasks were not defined in enough detail and information systems were inadequate. Peters and Waterman (1982) examining determinants of organizational performance claimed that high performance firms could be distinguished from low performance firms because they possessed certain cultural traits and 'strong culture'. However, simple model relating organizational culture to performance no longer fits- a more sophisticated understanding of the tie between culture and performance must be developed.

Most managers know far more about developing strategy than they do about executing it. These researchers are not clear why strategy implementation sometimes fail. They should have delved much deeper into the causes of non-execution of strategies in organizations. UI Mujeeb (2011) on the relationship between the components of organizational culture and performance management practices. Results from the study indicated that involvement of employees had a strong correlation on performance. Although the study by UI Mujeeb (2011) is consistent with participatory management proposed by Mohan (2001) and Kamla (1991), the scope of the study can be extended to investigate the influence of organizational structure as well as cognitive factors on the relationship between performance management system and organizational performance. Pearce and Robinson (2011), argue that managing the strategy, culture relationship requires sensitivity to the interaction between the changes necessary to implement the new strategy and the compatibility or fit between the changes and the firm's culture.

They are not clear as to how culture as a factor affects performance. Additionally, there could be many other determinants of strategy implementation in county governments in Kenya which have not been researched.

Tamrakar (2010) on Effective Organisational performance in Government States that public organisational performance is characterized by compliance with rules and it is determined by inputs. Public services should be concerned with what customers want rather than what providers are prepared to give. However, this study did not take in consideration the unique circumstances surrounding county governments which differentiates them from the national government. Jolise (2007) investigating organisational performance to the community by local municipalities indicated that if there is commitment within the organization, then employees will identify with their organization and its goals and will deliver the service more effectively. However, the study ignores the fact that its commitment from the executive team that inspires employees to commit to the organizational strategy and operations.

3. METHOD

The study adopted a descriptive research design with a target population for the study was 45 respondents comprising of heads of departments in the county government of TransNzoia. Since the study population is small, the study worked with entire population which is census. Data collection instrument was a structured questionnaire and other information relevant to the study. Both primary and secondary data was collected. The research instrument was pretested at Bungoma

County so as not to interfere with the study sample. A pilot group of ten percent (5) respondents was targeted. Data was then be coded, entered and analysed descriptively using IBM Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SSPS 23). Pearson correlation analysis was used to test the relationship between variables in the study hypotheses. ANOVA multiple linear regression analysis adopted computed to determine the statistical relationship between the independent variable and the dependent.

4. DISCUSSIONS

4.1 Strategic Leadership Practice on Performance of TransNzoia County Government, Kenya

The specific objective of the study was to establish the influence of strategic leadership practice on Performance of TransNzoia County government, Kenya. The respondents were requested to indicate their level of agreement on various statements relating to influence of strategic leadership practice on Performance of TransNzoia County government, Kenya. A 5 point Likert scale was used where 1 symbolized strongly disagree, 2 symbolized disagree, 3 symbolized neutral, 4 symbolized agree and 5 symbolized strongly agree. The results were as presented in Table 4.1.

From the results, the respondents agreed that Great leadership creates a harmonious environment to the organisation and is considered the management framework adopted to oversee the various activities of institutions project or other activities of an organization. This is supported by a mean of 3.936 (std. dv = 0.708). In addition, as shown by a mean of 3.828 (std. dv = 0.925), the respondents agreed that the strategic leader outlines how activities including task allocation, supervision and coordination are directed towards its individual aims. Further, the respondents agreed that strategic leadership should be able to influence others to make certain feats and accomplish specific objectives. This is shown by a mean of 3.742 (std. dv = 0.821). The respondents also agreed that leaders are entrusted with the role of communicating visions, organizational goals, and ideas to the people as well as developing a compelling vision and devise strategies to assist others in attaining the vision. This is shown by a mean of 3.738 (std. dv = 0.809). With a mean of 3.610 (std. dv = 0.981), the respondents agreed that leaders are also mandated with the task of implementing and maintaining key organizational systems and rules and even having an important say in the discipline of those within the organization as good strategic leadership enhances county government performance.

Table 4.1: Influence of Strategic Leadership Practice on Performance of TransNzoia County Government, Kenya

	Mean	Std. Deviation
Great leadership creates a harmonious environment to the organisation and is considered the management framework adopted to oversee the various activities of institutions project or other activities of an organization	3.936	0.708
The strategic leader outlines how activities including task allocation, supervision and coordination are directed towards its individual aims	3.828	0.925
Strategic leadership should be able to influence others to make certain feats and accomplish specific objectives	3.742	0.821
Leaders are entrusted with the role of communicating visions, organizational goals, and ideas to the people as well as developing a compelling vision and devise strategies to assist others in attaining the vision	3.738	0.809
Leaders are also mandated with the task of implementing and maintaining key organizational systems and rules and even having an important say in the discipline of those within the organization as good strategic leadership enhances county government performance	3.610	0.981
Aggregate	3.742	0.865

4.2. Performance of TransNzoia County Government, Kenya

The respondents were requested to indicate their level of agreement on various statements relating to Performance of TransNzoia County government, Kenya. A 5 point Likert scale was used where 1 symbolized strongly disagree, 2 symbolized disagree, 3 symbolized neutral, 4 symbolized agree and 5 symbolized strongly agree. The results were as presented in table 4.2.

From the results, the respondents agreed that with successful strategic management practices means that the firms will be able to achieve its objectives in a timely and in competitiveness since it is concerned with the overall productivity in an

organization in terms of stock turnover, customers, profitability and market share. This is supported by a mean of 4.084 (std. dv = 0.997). In addition, as shown by a mean of 3.917 (std. dv = 0.831), the respondents agreed that a suitable strategies should assist the management team to achieve high performance in the organization. Further, the respondents agreed that Inclusion of stakeholders in the top management team only enhances firm performance if it brings about a long-term orientation among management. This is shown by a mean of 3.858 (std. dv = 0.563). The respondents also agreed that for a firm to be successful it has to record high returns and identify performance drivers from the top to the bottom of the organization. This is shown by a mean of 3.831 (std. dv = 0.851). With a mean of 3.751 (std. dv = 0.935), the respondents agreed that the concept of organizational performance is core to businesses because the major objective of businesses is to make profits through customer satisfaction e.t.c.

Table 4.2: Performance of TransNzoia County government, Kenya

	Mean	Std. Deviation
With successful strategic management practices means that the firms will be able to achieve its objectives in a timely and in competitiveness since it is concerned with the overall productivity in an organization in terms of stock turnover, customers, profitability and market share	4.084	0.997
A suitable strategies should assist the management team to achieve high performance in the organization	3.917	0.831
Inclusion of stakeholders in the top management team only enhances firm performance if it brings about a long-term orientation among management	3.858	0.563
For a firm to be successful it has to record high returns and identify performance drivers from the top to the bottom of the organization	3.831	0.851
The concept of organizational performance is core to businesses because the major objective of businesses is to make profits through customer satisfaction e.t.c.	3.751	0.935
Aggregate	3.836	0.818

4.3 Inferential Statistics

Inferential statistics in the current study focused on correlation and regression analysis. Correlation analysis was used to determine the strength of the relationship while regression analysis was used to determine the relationship between dependent variable (Performance of TransNzoia County government, Kenya) and independent variables (strategic planning practices, strategic implementation practices, strategic leadership practices and strategic evaluation practices).

4.3.1 Correlation Analysis

The present study used Pearson correlation analysis to determine the strength of association between independent variables (strategic planning practices, strategic implementation practices, strategic leadership practices and strategic evaluation practices) and the dependent variable (Performance of TransNzoia County government, Kenya) dependent variable. Pearson correlation coefficient range between zero and one, where by the strength of association increase with increase in the value of the correlation coefficients. The current study employed Taylor (2018) correlation coefficient ratings where by 0.80 to 1.00 depicts a very strong relationship, 0.60 to 0.79 depicts strong, 0.40 to 0.59 depicts moderate, 0.20 to 0.39 depicts weak as shown on table 11 below.

Table 4.3: Correlation Coefficients

	Performance of TransNzoia County government	Strategic leadership practices
Performance of TransNzoia County government	Pearson Correlation 1 Sig. (2-tailed)	
	N 42	
Strategic leadership practices	Pearson Correlation .910** Sig. (2-tailed)	1
	N 42	42

From the results, there is a very strong relationship between strategic leadership practices and Performance of TransNzoia County government, Kenya ($r = 0.910$, p value = 0.000). The relationship was significant since the p value 0.000 was less than 0.05 (significant level).

4.3.2 Regression Analysis

Multivariate regression analysis was used to assess the relationship between independent variables (strategic leadership practices) and the dependent variable (Performance of TransNzoia County government, Kenya) as shown on table 4.4 below.

Table 4.4: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.921	.848	.849	.10120

a. Predictors: (Constant), Strategic Leadership Practices

The model summary was used to explain the variation in the dependent variable that could be explained by the independent variables. The r-squared for the relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable was 0.848. This implied that 84.8% of the variation in the dependent variable (Performance of TransNzoia County government, Kenya) could be explained by independent variables (strategic leadership practices).

Table 4.5: Analysis of Variance

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	17.027	1	3.018	94.35	.000 ^b
1 Residual	6.568	41	.031		
Total	23.595	42			

a. Dependent Variable: Performance of TransNzoia County government, Kenya

b. Predictors: (Constant), Strategic Leadership Practices

The ANOVA was used to determine whether the model was a good fit for the data. F calculated was 94.35 while the F critical was 2.412. The p value was 0.000. Since the F-calculated was greater than the F-critical and the p value 0.000 was less than 0.05, the model was considered as a good fit for the data. Therefore, the model can be used to predict the influence of strategic leadership practices on the Performance of TransNzoia County government, Kenya.

Table 4.6: Regression Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients B	Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	0.406	0.038		5.395	0.000
	Strategic leadership practices	0.477	0.104	0.380	3.644	0.003

a. Dependent Variable: Performance of TransNzoia County government, Kenya

The regression model was as follows:

$$Y = 0.406 + 0.477X_3 + \varepsilon$$

From table 4.5, the results revealed that strategic leadership practices has significant effect on Performance of TransNzoia County government, Kenya ($\beta_1 = 0.477$, p value = 0.003). The relationship was considered significant since the p value 0.002 was less than the significant level of 0.05.

5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, the study concluded that strategic leadership practices has significant effect on Performance of TransNzoia County government, Kenya ($\beta_1 = 0.477$, p value = 0.003). The relationship was considered significant since the p value 0.002 was less than the significant level of 0.05. The study came up with the following recommendations; The county government should provide great leadership that creates a harmonious environment, entrusted with the role of

communicating visions, organizational goals, and ideas to the people as well as developing a compelling vision and devise strategies to assist others in attaining the vision mandated with the task of implementing and maintaining key organizational systems and rules and even having an important say in the discipline of those within the organization as good strategic leadership enhances county government performance.

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